

# The Parish in the New Millennium:



This sign hung in the parish office window in January 2011

This article is the 12th and final article in our series about the history of our parish which we are running in celebration of our 50th Anniversary. All 12 articles are posted on our website at [stjoseph-wj.org](http://stjoseph-wj.org)

The year 2009 ended sadly for many parishioners –their beloved old church was gone as well as our dear Sister Fabian. Masses and everything else were held in the hall, now called Sister Fabian Hall. But the dark clouds and the winter inversion lifted on January 24, 2010, the day of the groundbreaking ceremony. Despite the cold temperatures, a



**Above:** New Church Chairman Ron White speaks at the Groundbreaking Ceremony. “I was new to the parish,” said Ron, “but I saw immediately how exceptional the parishioners of St. Joseph the Worker are. They are generous and always ready to pitch in. This new church is a testament to their dedication and love for their Catholic community.”

great crowd came to pick up a shovel and get this exciting project underway. Bishop Wester was here as well as the mayor of West Jordan, Melissa Johnson.

The dirt from the groundbreaking ceremony was later placed under the new altar and was mixed with dirt from both Bingham Canyon and Ireland. Parish children were asked to decorate stones with their names and messages. These were placed in the foundation of the new church at the first pouring of cement which took place on Ash Wednesday, February 17, 2010.



Children’s decorated stones are buried deep in the foundation of our new church.

The year 2010 was marked with frenetic activity and meetings and more meetings. Construction people were on site everyday. Pipes broke. Trees fell. But it was a year of great excitement and joy. Parishioners were greeted with exciting new vistas each weekend as they arrived for Mass and saw the new church coming to life. (See photos on page 6). It went up remarkably fast.

Before the roof was put on, the parish held a celebratory party, Tuxes & Tennies at Twilight, smack in the middle of the construction site. A Dedication date was set for December 19, 2010 and the Building Committee went into overdrive getting all the final touches together. They even mailed out invitations. There was just one major hitch...we still didn’t have our Baptismal Font! And, because of this, one window wall was little more than a sheet. It had been left unfinished to make room for the font’s arrival which wouldn’t fit through the front doors. With great reluctance the building committee decided to move the Dedication Day from December 19 to May 1, 2011, the Feast Day of St. Joseph the Worker. While this was a huge disappointment, it proved to be a wise decision. It would allow us time get the font and a few other things in place. We wanted the church to be perfect for the Dedication. We did, however, hold Masses in the new church beginning in December 2010. Photos from the Christmas of 2010 show an open space where the font would later be placed and the altar without a crucifix.



There was no crucifix (above) and no baptism font (below) at the 1st Christmas in the new church.



The parish offices moved from the hall to the new building in early 2011. As in all new construction, there were a number of things that needed fixing and adjusting- the locks, the phones and internet. Most, but



not all of these problems are behind us now. After working in the tiny office in the hall it was wonderful to have all that space— 3 offices, a copy room, a reception area AND a conference room.

It was also early in 2011 that our artist, Dung Hoang began painting our beautiful Workers Wall. The large mural is a huge visual reminder of our parish history and a celebration of the dignity of labor. The wall underwent a few changes along the way. The miners' tools were changed and a niche area had been cut into the wall for a future statue of Dorothy Day. (It was later filled in when we decided to create a large Dorothy Day mural instead.) The idea of honoring Dorothy Day was the idea of attorney Ronald Yengich. Day was expected to be named a patron saint of workers and Ron gave us some relics of Dorothy Day. The parish was later blessed with the visit of Dorothy Day's granddaughter, Martha Hennessy at our anniversary celebration on May 1, 2012.



Above: Workers Wall with a niche for a Dorothy Day memorial. This was later filled in.

The missing elements in the church were soon fixed. The crucifix was returned in a beautiful ceremony on Ash Wednesday, March 9, 2011. The Baptism font finally arrived from its long journey from China just before Palm Sunday, 2011.

All throughout the building project we kept in touch with Sister Fabian. We sent her pictures and she thought the new church was beautiful. Sadly within just a couple of weeks before the Dedication she died.

May 1, 2011 was coming quickly. Patio furniture and large umbrellas to keep off the sun were purchased for the planned outdoor reception. You can imagine our dismay when the tables were covered in snow on April 30! But the sun shone clearly and beautifully on Dedication Day and melted all the snow. All who attended our Dedication Mass will always remember it. The church was packed with people. Bishop Wester was here as well as several priests—

Fathers Patrick Carley, James Semple, John Cantwell, Vincent Brady, Monsignors Joseph Mayo, Matthew Wixted, Colin Bircumshaw, J. Terrence Fitzgerald, and Deacon Lynn Johnson.

We were all so very proud of our new church. A week later, on May 8, we scheduled a Ribbon Cutting ceremony. Representatives from the West Jordan Chamber of Commerce were here as well as neighbors of the parish who had been given hand-delivered invitations. However, none of us were prepared for one of the guests—the President of the LDS Church—President Thomas S. Monson!



Above: The courtyard was packed with well-wishers after the Dedication Mass.

It is hard to believe that it is already 3 years since our Dedication Day. The upheavals and disruptions which seemed so ever-present in our lives have become a distant memory. Since that time life has slowly returned to normal. But it is definitely a “new normal”. We are happy to have many new families many of whom are only now learning about our proud history for the first time. Many of our original founders have gone to God. Our church, once a humble structure, now attracts the attention of architects and designers. It has won many awards. It will soon be featured in Utah Style and Design magazine—be sure to check out their website when the issue comes out sometime this spring. It will feature time lapse photos of our new church construction.

We are coming up now on 50 years since the founding of our sweet parish. A very special anniversary celebration is scheduled for May 2, 2014. We hope to gather all parishioners—from the distant past as well as newcomers to join together in celebration of our Catholic community.

As we reach the end of this 12 part narrative, one can see how easy it is to boil a church's history down into its building and construction projects. These can be documented with photos and paperwork. But these tell only a superficial story. What is so much more difficult to write about is building a parish community— about its people, what their



parish means to them and what it does for them. There is a very deep love, loyalty and devotion to our parish that has existed from its earliest days, that exists even when there are clearly disputes, disagreements and disappointments. Father Carley describes this nebulous thing as "Plebs Sancta Dei". It means, says Father Carley, "the common holy people of God- no elites, just the deep, rich, personal histories of ordinary faithful Catholic women and men. This is what makes our parish history-which we rightly cherish. In the ordinary struggles and joys of life, God is honored and we are blessed. Thank God for our rich and varied past. May God bless and guide our steps into the future."

**Happy 50th Anniversary, St. Joseph the Worker!**

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**Parishioners were greeted with exciting new vistas every weekend of 2010.**

# Preserving the Old Church in the New One

*When Father Carley asked me to co-chair the New church building project, I was both, humbled and excited. I sincerely felt that one of the most important roles for me, was to listen to the thoughts and ideas and feelings of the parishioners. Many were concerned about loosing the identity of the original church and its history. But through the process, we were able to blend the old with the new, keeping our crucifix and stations of the cross in the new church and our Mary and Joseph statues in our day chapel. The support of all the parishioners made this amazing transition both successful and amiable. Together, we truly did do, "Something Beautiful for God" ... ..Tricia Johnson, Co-Chair, New Church Committee*

Stunningly contemporary and strikingly beautiful, the new church is far more than a "pretty" face along Redwood Road. Sparano + Mooney Architects made sure that the new structure honored the proud past and respected the strong sense of identity of our hard working parish. The architects did this in a number of creative and innovative ways:

**Design.** The design of the new church incorporates familiar materials which are manipulated to become something extraordinary. These materials are transformed by the "worker" or craftsperson into something which emphasizes the craft, not the raw material.

**Board-formed Concrete.** It is rough hewn , looks like aged wood and is a reminder of St. Joseph, a carpenter. It is extensively used throughout the new building.

**Rich hand-crafted wood.** Used throughout the project, the wood is reminiscent of the wood siding in the old church and is yet another reminder of carpenters, builders and crafts people.

**Copper Cladding.** Both the Day Chapel and the large skylight atop the sanctuary are covered in copper to honor the church's historic connections with the copper mine and the miners who founded the parish.

**Donor Wall.** The new donor wall lists of the names of original founders as well the names of those who have donated to the new church.

**Use of Items from the Old Church.** The old sculptured walls which stood outside of the old church have been carefully preserved and now stand outside the entrance to the new church. The old Stations of the Cross, and the beloved old Crucifix look beautiful in their new home in the new sanctuary. The old cornerstone (1964) stands opposite the new one (2011) at the entryway to the new courtyard.

**Time Capsule.** There is a space in the new courtyard reserved for a time capsule. The parish will bury relics of the past and present here so that future parishioners will gain an understanding of their particular identity as the parish of the worker.

**Workers Wall.** A larger than life mural dedicated to the Dignity of Labor. This mural celebrates the community's origins amid miners and farmers.

**Dorothy Day Memorial.** A mural dedicated to Dorothy Day, founder of the American Catholic Workers movement. Day's life was dedicated to the needs of working class people. Her cause for canonization is underway.