

# Vibrant Kirkland parish teems with ministries

*Welcoming and generous,  
 Holy Family community is  
 'like a second home' to many*

KIRKLAND  
 BY TERRY MCGUIRE

Newcomers to Holy Family Parish need only click on its Web site to get a sense of the vibrancy of this community of 1,700 households. More than 70 ministries, programs and activities are offered, from rosary makers, quilters and social justice and prolife activists to parishioners assisting people in need in their own neighborhood and overseas.

"It sounds like a cliché," said Father Kurt Nagel, who is starting his second year as Holy Family's pastor, "but this certainly is a very welcoming community." He sees that reinforced every month at the newcomers' social. "In going around the circle they mention that it's a very welcoming, warm spirit" here, he said.

Parishioners say Father Nagel adds to the vibrancy. His popular adult "catechism talks," for instance, regularly draw audiences of 100 and more people and also are available in audio form on the parish Web site and on Sacred Heart Radio AM 1050. The priest and parishioner Pam Gunderson are Monday morning regulars on Sacred Heart's "Sound Insight" program.

"We're just thrilled with his teaching wisdom," said 23-year parishioner Rick Altenhofen. "I get as proud as I can be when I hear him on Sacred Heart Radio."

## The Malawi connection

Two events scheduled for next spring reflect the energy of this faith community.

In May, the pastor of the sprawling Nguludi Catholic Mission in Malawi will visit Holy Family to renew its five-year covenant with the parish.

In June, the parish will mark a milestone when it breaks ground on the site of the old rectory for the approximately \$7 million, 20,000-square-foot parish center, which will accommodate 500 people seated at gatherings.

The relationship with Malawi has seen Holy Family provide the mission of 65,000 Christians with funds to develop a maze mill, two wells and a piggery. They've helped them replace their collapsed church and currently send from 65 to 70 of their children to the local school. Delegations from both parish communities have visited the other.

"It has given such blessings to the parish life here, and we know that we've blessed them," said Holy Family Pastoral Associate Damian Bastasini. The relationship "has changed us in the way we think about Africa."

Holy Family's planned parish center is but one example of the generosity found in the community, said Altenhofen, who chairs the parish finance committee. We have "probably the most generous people in the archdiocese," he said. "And that's easy for me to say, because I count the money. The same year that we raised money for that (parish center), Sunday donations went up."

But far more than its giving spirit is Holy Family's strong liturgical and spiritual life, he said. For example, there's a "vibrant life" that surrounds the full day of adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, he said.

Holy Family also plays a strong role in the wider community, assisting the homeless and others in need while forging ties with area churches through its participation in ecumenical efforts such as the Greater Kirkland Ecumenical Parish and Kirkland Interfaith Transitions in Housing.

The parish's St. Vincent de Paul Society conference and Knights of Columbus council also are active in responding to various needs. About four years ago, the society was revived under previous pastor Father Gary Morelli, said conference president Tom Roe. Since then, their collections have soared from \$15,000 a year to more than \$100,000 annually, he said.

Betsy Staal, Holy Family's pastoral assistant for Pastoral Care and Marriage Preparation, said the parish groups are working toward more collaborative ministry. For instance, the Social Justice Ministry and Respect Life Committee have joined forces on several efforts, she said, and will work in tandem again over the Sept. 13-14 weekend on a voter registration campaign and a "Faithful Citizenship" workshop.

## History dates to 1913

Holy Family was founded in 1914 as a mission of St. Anthony Parish in Renton. The previous year, St. Anthony pastor Father Nicholas O'Rafferty celebrated the first Mass in Kirkland on the third Sunday of August in the city council chambers, according to a parish history.

In 1914, parishioners — working without a contractor — donated their time and labor to build a 200-seat church at Sixth Ave. and Third St. The next year Bishop Edward O'Dea established the parish, appointing Father Thomas Madigan as the first resident pastor.

The parish went without a pastor for several years following World War I. A

## Holy Family Parish, Kirkland



The original church, above, seated 200. The current church, left, seats 750.

<b>Founded:</b> 1915	<b>PASTORS:</b>	<b>Father William O'Neil</b> 1934
<b>Households:</b> 1,700	<b>Father Thomas Madigan</b> 1915	<b>Father Robert Ryan</b> 1935
<b>Pastor:</b> Father Kurt Nagel	<b>Father James Wagner</b> 1917	<b>Father Donald Conger</b> 1955
<b>Street Address:</b> 7355 120th Ave. N.E., 98033-8121	(No pastor 1918-21)	<b>Father John Peeters</b> 1970
<b>Phone:</b> (425) 822-0295	<b>Father William McDonald</b> 1921	<b>Father Robert Daly</b> 1972
<b>Web site:</b> www.hfk2.org	<b>Father John O'Brien</b> 1922	<b>Father James Dalton</b> 1983
	<b>Father Philip Corboy</b> 1925	<b>Father Gary Morelli</b> 1997
	<b>Father John Murphy</b> 1928	<b>Father Kurt Nagel</b> 2007

succession of three pastors served from 1921 until 1935, when Father Robert Ryan began a 20-year pastorate that ended with his death. His successor, Father Donald Conger, oversaw construction of the new church, school, rectory, convent and parish hall on a 10-acre site along 120th Ave. N.E. and N.E. 70th St. The facilities were completed in 1957 and the new school opened in September with 220 students in six grades under the Dominican Sisters of Saint Thomas Aquinas.

## Recovering from the fire

In July 1988 parishioners were devastated when an arson destroyed their 31-year-old church building. Kathleen Huddleston, a member of the parish since 1971, who taught in the parish school for 27 years, recalled that gloomy Saturday night. In the hours after the fire, the parking lot was "full of parishioners (asking) 'What can we do to help? What can we do to help?'" she remembered.

"That's just the kind of parish we are," she said.

"When there's a need in the parish for anything — whether it's (following) a

death or an illness or a loss of a child or whatever — they give 150 percent," she said. "It's an incredible community...it's like a second home to most of us."

Following the fire, liturgies were held in the gymnasium over the next two years as the church was rebuilt and doubled in size.

The tragedy served as a lesson that the church consists not of its buildings but of its people, said Altenhofen. "Having Mass in that gymnasium really reinforced that," he said. It "was one of those things that drew the parish together."

Today, Holy Family is a parish of many young families, many of them working in the area's high-tech industry, said Father Nagel, who knows the Eastside well, having grown up in St. Madeleine Sophie Parish in Bellevue.

No longer the Caucasian-dominated area of his youth, he said the Eastside has become much more of a melting pot of cultures.

Holy Family's annual Fall Festival in November reflects the area's transition.

"We have nine or 10 ethnic food booths manned by parishioners," said chairperson Nancy Savage.



An early Holy Family Parish first communion class joins Bishop Edward O'Dea in this undated photo. At right, Archbishop Thomas A. Connolly presides at the dedication of the new church in 1957.



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