PARISH PROFILE

At Holy Spirit Parish, it's about faith, culture, and a welcoming spirit

KENT
BY ARMANDO MACHADO

Holy Spirit Parish in Kent has clergy, staff, volunteers and members who believe they are “called in the spirit of God to be a welcoming community.”

The church started as St. Anthony mission church in 1890 following years of “humble beginnings” when missionaries from Steilacoom and Seattle began serving the area nearly 30 years earlier. The mission church was established as a parish in 1906 with the same name.

Many decades later it became Holy Spirit Parish in May 1995 with construction of a new church building, to avoid confusion with St. Anthony Parish in Renton. This came after occasional boundary changes that stemmed from the start of parishes in nearby cities over the years.

Holy Spirit Parish has more than 1,000 registered households. Father Simon Kim has been parochial vicar since last July, replacing Father Michael J. Ryan. Father Michael A. Terrell has been parochial vicar for the Hispanic community for many years. The pastoral coordinator is Cathy Peters. Deacon Anselmo Pardo also assists the parish.

“We’re a very diverse community, so we have celebrations for a variety of cultures,” Peters said last week. As examples, she cited Our Lady of Guadalupe gatherings led by Hispanics, and Flores de Mayo events led by Filipinos.

She said organizers of the events are “very dedicated” to the Catholic faith and to their related cultural traditions. Peters also noted that there are some gatherings that are made multicultural. “Holy Thursday is always multicultural, and our Easter Vigil also is multicultural,” she said.

Other parish celebrations with culture in mind, she said, include St. Patrick’s Day, Kwanza, and a Polka Mass. During Holy Week, there is a live presentation of Christ’s Passion, led by the Hispanic Ministry.

Parish Outreach Ministries include the Christmas Giving Tree; the Christmas Stocking Program; and the Volunteer Core Ministry. Other parish ministries: The Jail Ministry; Visitation of the Sick; Clothing and Food Drives; and Maintenance and Repairs.

“Our goal is to encourage and assist every parishioner in being God’s steward,” coordinators tell parish members.

The parish hosts a men’s homeless shelter every February. And it offers space to the Hispanic Alanon group and the English-speaking Clean and Sober Program. Staff and volunteers also coordinate a Spanish pre-school program for parish families, where children and adults have the opportunity to learn Spanish. Counseling is made available on-site in English and Spanish, through Catholic Community Services, and the Blood Bank arrives every quarter for blood donations.

There is a monthly collection for St. Vincent de Paul — and volunteers use the church offices daily to distribute those donations to needy people from the Kent area.

In addition, the parish gives financial support in part to the Pediatric Interim Children’s Program for drug-addicted babies; Katherine’s House, a program for women leaving the Regional Justice Center; the Kent Food Bank; and Pregnancy Aid.