

PARISH PROFILE

Elma parish, Montesano mission serve several rural communities in Grays Harbor County

ELMA
BY ARMANDO MACHADO

St. Joseph Parish and St. John Mission are blessed with many families that have been part of the faith community for several generations, rooted in Catholic tradition, says Diane Young, pastoral assistant for administration.

"Both are experiencing growth and are working to build the ministries and outreach programs – and both are busy with activities for parishioners throughout the year," said Young, who is also pastoral assistant for youth ministry.

"St. Joseph is especially expanding in population of Spanish-speaking parishioners — and it is working to build community and include both Spanish and English in the liturgy."

Young also noted that staff and members are fortunate to have the opportunity to welcome new families to the area, and often new parishioners who are not new to the area but new to the Catholic faith.

Elma and Montesano are about 10 miles apart. St. Joseph in Elma became a mission in 1890 and a parish in 1908. St. John in Montesano has been a mission since 1890. In all, the churches currently have 309 registered households (163 at St. Joseph; 146 at St. John). St. Joseph Catholic Cemetery is located in Elma.

The two churches serve the rural communities of Elma, Montesano, Brady, Satsop, Oakville, McCleary, and Summit Lake. Father David Gese has been pastor since 2000. Deacon Tom Hawkins also helps the faith community.

The churches are served by a two person staff — a pastoral assistant for administration (Diane Young) and an administrative assistant (Diane Robbins). The office is located in McLaughlin Hall next to St. Joseph Church. It is open all day on Mondays – and from 9 a.m. to noon on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays.

The ministries include: Pastoral Council, Finance Council, Liturgy Committee, Children's Faith Formation, Adult Faith Formation, and RCIA Program, Youth groups for teens, Altar Society, Baptism Preparation, Marriage Preparation, and Eucharistic Ministers to the Sick.

Here are samples of recent parish activities:

- Benefit Bake Sale/Coffee Hour—After Mass at St. Joseph: All proceeds will benefit Heart and Hands Pregnancy Crisis Center in Aberdeen. Please come downstairs and help support this pro-life agency.
- At St. John's we are practicing Catholic social justice. Help our Faith Formation kids support Friendship House, which assists unwed mothers and their children. It is located in Aberdeen. Please bring items from the list below; we will be collecting the next two Sundays (Items include baby clothing and essentials).
- Plans have begun for this year's Community Bible Camp. Volunteers from St. John's organize this with other Christian churches in Montesano. It will be held July 10-14. The theme is "Son Treasure Island" and we will be learning and talking about God's love. All kids from preschool through sixth grade are invited. Teens and adults are invited to help.
- Stewardship Thought: The disciples in today's Gospel came to know Jesus in the breaking of the bread. When we share what we have with those who are in need, we too will discover Jesus in our midst.

St. Joseph Parish

Founded as Parish: 1908

Founded as Mission: 1890

Registered Households: 163

St. John Church

Registered Households: 146

A Mission Church since: 1890

Later became a mission of St. Joseph

Pastor of both churches:

Father David Gese

Mailing address for both:

P.O. Box AA
Elma, WA 98541

Phone: (360) 482-3190

April 6 & 7 St. Joseph and St. John Mission participated in the new Progress P3 subscription program. Five dollars from each subscription they sold went to their youth group. For more information on this program contact **Marketing Associate Keri Hake at 206-382-2075** or kerih@seattlearch.org.