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

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.