

PARISH PROFILE

'They're just the most giving people'

Puyallup parish reaches out to wider community with ministries of service and entertainment

PUYALLUP
BY TERRY MCGUIRE

Whenever supplies were running low at All Saints Community Services, director Eileen Paterno would put a plea in the parish bulletin or turn to the parish school, and *voilà* — the need would be filled.

"Every time [I asked], I would get donations coming in like crazy," she said. "They're just phenomenal."

She was speaking of her parish of 2,064 households and its school of 420 students. Whether requesting money, food, toiletries or volunteer help, she knew she could depend on them.

"They're just the most giving people," said Paterno, who retired Sept. 8 after approximately 19 years directing parish outreach services for people in need.

All Saints is a good fit for Puyallup, a city whose Native American name means "generous" and "welcoming," according to the Puyallup Indian Tribe website.

'An extended family'

The parish's welcoming spirit is what drew Paula Schmitz to become a parishioner 11 years ago. A single person who had just moved to the area, she had visited a number of parishes before deciding on All Saints.

"The people befriended me, and I felt like I grew an extended family right away," she recalled recently.

Schmitz was a mechanical engineer at the time, but she took her passion for liturgy and music and volunteered in the parish music program. Now she is the parish pastoral assistant for liturgy and music, a position she accepted in 2006.

"It's the community here that really drew me to consider and decide to work here," she said.

Pastor Father Richard "Woody" McCallister said in an email that the parish's many strengths include its "commitment to outreach to the poor," as displayed in the fact it has a full-time pastoral assistant for outreach.

Making home deliveries

He and Paterno note that All Saints operates the area's only food bank that regularly makes home deliveries to its clients.

"The way we looked at it when it first started [in 1982] was that if people

COURTESY ARCHIVES OF ARCHDIOCESE OF SEATTLE



The Puyallup Valley's first brick veneer structure, the Gothic-style All Saints Church was built in 1911 and renovated in 1962 and 2005. All Saints was established as a mission in 1890 and as a parish in 1899.

need food, they sure don't have the gas to come down and get it," Paterno said.

Last year the food bank provided 120,060 meals to 1,648 families. Paterno said the ministry relies on a "big group of volunteers" to stock the shelves, prepare the boxes and make the deliveries.

Among other services, the ministry also provides financial assistance for people facing eviction or utility shut-off, and help for people unable to pay for their prescription medications. In another effort, the parish's prayer shawl ministry meets every Friday morning to pray and socialize while making shawls to comfort people who are ill.

All Saints has long provided temporary and permanent housing in the area through its involvement in the Phoenix Housing Network, Habitat for Humanity and Mi Casa, an independent, affordable housing organization that grew from a parish RENEW group in the 1980s. Mi Casa (Spanish for "My House") owns duplexes and fourplexes around the valley for single-parent families.

Theater group shows talent

A ministry that has taken center stage in recent years is the parish's theater group, ASTRA (All Saints Theatrical Repertoire Association). Its production last July in the parish center of "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" attracted more than 2,000 people to its 10-show run and involved more than 200 volunteers, including cast members, a live orchestra, set designers, lighting technicians, kitchen staff and sales and marketing people.

Patrons also brought canned food for the food bank.

Launched in 2004, and staged in a dinner show and dessert matinee format, ASTRA seeks to "nourish the Body of Christ" and build community and fellowship by drawing on the talents of parishioners and people from the wider community.

ASTRA was the brainchild of parishioner Mario Penalver, who was just out of college when he proposed it to the parish in 2003.

Other efforts inspired by parishioners include the annual Good Friday Cross Walk and St. Francis House. The Cross Walk, started with help by Mario's father, Ovidio Penalver, is an ecumenical gathering through which participants reflect on both Christ's crucifixion and contemporary social issues. Stan and Doris Michalek were founders of St. Francis House in 1974, a nonsectarian outreach effort that provides clothing, household items, meals and other assistance to people in need.

'Phenomenal school'

Parishioners and staff are especially proud of All Saints School, which collects food and money for the various outreach efforts. There's a "strong, positive relationship between the parish school and all the other parish programs/services," Father McCallister wrote in his email.

"The school is phenomenal," Paterno said, recalling the children who have asked for cans of food to donate in lieu of birthday gifts.

Father McCallister said other parish strengths include its strong liturgical music program and the Rite of

All Saints Parish, Puyallup

Founded: 1890 (mission),
1899 (parish)

Households: 2,064

Street Address: 503 Third St. S.W.,
Puyallup, WA 98371

Phone: 253-845-7521

Website: www.allsaintsparish.com

PASTORS:

- Father John Rohlinger, 1890
- Father Henry Frenchen, 1894
- Father Arthur LeBlanc, 1896
- Father P.C. A. Winter, 1898
- Father Anthony Fischer, 1903
- Father Joseph Schmidt, 1909
- Father Michael Mackey, 1915
- Father John Power, 1919
- Father Peter Ryan, 1945
- Father Bernard Cremer, 1946
- Father William O'Brien, 1949
- Father Timothy Moynihan, 1970
- Father John Duffy, 1971
- Father John O'Sullivan, 1972
- Father Arthur Rafferty, 1973
- Father Thomas Quinn, 1977
- Father Gerald Stanley, 1983
- Father Patrick O'Neill, 1986
- Father Alan Marshall, 1995
- Father Robert Riler, 1997
- Father Richard Basso, 1999
- Father Richard "Woody" McCallister, 2001

Christian Initiation of Adults, which prepares people for entry into the Catholic Church. Parishioners have also displayed an "ability to get along with each other and to handle change graciously," he said.

In the 1990s the parish was put to the test when two consecutive pastors left the priesthood to marry. Pastoral associate Deacon Eric Paige, a parishioner since 1994, remembers that difficult period and how their next pastor, Father Richard Basso, helped them through it by reminding them that the parish is organized around Jesus Christ rather than any one pastor.

"It helped us keep perspective," Deacon Paige said, "and I think it was testament to the character of the people of All Saints that — while it wasn't the sort of thing we would want to happen — it was something where our focus in Christ enabled us to carry on and do the work that we needed to do."



Father Richard "Woody" McCallister