1911 - 2011
Celebrating 100 Years of Community
St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church
Scappoose, Oregon

Commemorative Booklet
First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association, Branch #139

Branch #139 of the First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association (FCSLA) merged with the Catholic Workman (Katolicky Delnik) in 2004. The branch was chartered in 1925, and took the name of Holy Cross. There are now 180 members. The St. Wenceslaus Catholic Workman group had provided over 70 years of manpower, community service, fund raising and fellowship to the parish, as well as providing annual scholarships to graduating high school seniors who were active in the parish.

We are proud to be a sponsor of the Saint Wenceslaus Catholic Church Centennial History Book.

Branch #139 congratulates and thanks the parish for 100 years of devoted service to the Catholic community of Scappoose, Oregon and beyond.

Mission Statement of FCSLA:

Founded in 1892 – provides financial security to members with life insurance and annuities, and to serve members of the community with financial and charitable opportunities while promoting Catholic and Slovak (Slavic) traditions. There are 90,000 members strong.

Interested in joining? Call 1-800-464-4642, or contact a local officer: Alfred Novacek or Sally Schmit.

St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church Centennial Committee thanks the FCSLA for their generous support of this booklet.
Rev. James Stange  
St. Wenceslaus Parish  
51555 Old Portland Road  
Scappoose, OR 97056

Dear Father Stange,

Soon you and your parishioners at St. Wenceslaus Church in Scappoose will be celebrating the parish centennial. I look forward to being there with you on Sunday, September 25th, to celebrate the Mass of Thanksgiving at 11:00 a.m. You and your people have been excellent partners with me in carrying out our church’s evangelizing mission. I am most grateful and I delight in the opportunity to celebrate this historic event with all of you.

They tell me that it all began when Mass was being celebrated occasionally in private homes in the area from 1885 to 1911. Given my own Bohemian ancestry, I obviously delight in the fact that your parish was named in honor of St. Wenceslaus, the patron saint of my grandparents’ homeland. The first church was dedicated by our fourth archbishop, The Most Rev. Alexander Christie, back in July of 1911. He was dedicating many churches in those years. It was a time of great growth in the archdiocese and Scappoose was one of the communities experiencing this growth.

Over the years the Bohemian (now most people say “Czech”) population increased greatly and priests were called upon to serve who could speak Czech. That situation has changed, of course, but the history of the parish intrigues me as I am sure it does you.

A centennial celebration is an opportunity to renew our commitment as a Catholic people to our work as disciples in mission, the mission of building the Kingdom of God here on earth. In St. Wenceslaus Church, over the years God’s presence has been felt through many sacramental celebrations and the devotional life of the people. I have always enjoyed my visits among you and have been blessed by close association with a number of your parishioners over the years. You can count on my abiding appreciation for all the good accomplished throughout the years by the people of St. Wenceslaus. As we remember and celebrate all that has been, we place our trust in the Lord that all that will be in the future may be in accord with His holy will. God bless.

Sincerely yours in the Lord,

+ John G. Vlazny

Most Rev. John G. Vlazny
Archbishop of Portland in Oregon
HISTORY OF ST. WENCESLAUS CATHOLIC CHURCH

LOCATION

The city of Scappoose, Oregon, 20 miles north of Portland, was founded in 1885. The name is of Chinook Indian origin meaning “gravelly plains.” The area about a mile south of the town center was sparsely populated and heavily wooded with old growth fir trees. Most of the residents were engaged in logging, land clearing and dairy farming. Often the logs were cut into cordwood and shipped out by boat to Portland. Any Catholics in the area would have shared an occasional Mass in a private home when a priest travelled out to the area by train or horseback.

The road to Portland was only a dirt road, dusty in summer and muddy in winter. Today it is called Old Portland Road and it runs right in front of St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church. This section originally was part of the main road south to Portland and north to Astoria and towns in between. The current Highway 30 from the intersections of Old Portland Road meeting the highway north and south to the meeting with Dutch Canyon Road was all farm lands from in front of church east to the Multnomah Channel waters. Later the highway would be “straightened out,” hence, the current reference as Old Portland Road.

More important transportation modes at the time were steamboats and the railroad. A river boat would stop regularly at Johnson’s Landing to take on passengers, freight, cordwood, and local agricultural products such as milk from the dairies and vegetables and fruits grown in Scappoose.

There are stories of members of the Havlik family taking the steamboat into Portland to go to Sunday Mass at the Cathedral (then at Third & Stark, much closer to the Willamette River), then running back to get on the last boat of the day to return home! The railroad was the main line between Portland and Seattle and trains passed through Scappoose every hour. They went as far as Goble; then a large train ferry cruised across the Columbia River into Washington.

PARISH PIONEER FOUNDING FAMILY ARRIVES IN 1905 – JOHN HAVLIK, SR.

John Havlik, Sr. may have visited the area south of Scappoose in 1899. In 1905, he and his wife Barbara, accompanied by children Lillian, Fred, Mary, Ella and Vladimir, moved west from Crete, Nebraska. They purchased the Farrell farm of 320 acres and an old store, formerly owned by a Mr. Creecy. The store would be moved to the junction of Dutch Canyon and Old Portland Roads. It offered a butcher shop and all kinds of food, gasoline, merchandise, clothing, and tools, and eventually had the only telephone for miles around. In the early years it put “Havliksville” on the map as a popular rest stop for bus travelers. “Havlik’s Cash Store” even had an ice house.

The store’s second story was suitable for meetings or dances. Folks would come from miles around for square dancing and stomping, remembered by the Havlik children as “shaking the whole store.” The store was later sold to Charles Koutek, then to Joseph Kocarnik, father of Delores Reed and Jim Kocarnik of the parish. It served the surrounding area until 1963 as a grocery and general merchandise store. The updated building still stands in 2011 housing Salon Halloo and an investment firm. It features living quarters behind the store and a full basement for storage.
The Havliks liked the community very much and were the first Catholic family to settle south of Scappoose. Occasionally a Benedictine priest from Mt. Angel would come to offer Mass in their home. The area was part of the Mission Territory established by Archbishop Blanchet in 1851. The first Columbia County parish was in Rainier. Clatskanie, St. Helens and Scappoose were all missions of Rainier for the pastor, Fr. Henry Bruenagel, so he welcomed the help of the Benedictines who came to say Mass once a month. Fr. Urban Fischer, O.S.B. was Czech and a professor at Mt. Angel, but he enjoyed mission work and was the brother of a future parish family who would move west from Minnesota. In time he would be the first St. Wenceslaus pastor.

The Havliks missed having a local Catholic Church, so Barbara began a campaign of writing letters and stories to encourage other immigrants from Czechoslovakia to come to South Scappoose so a parish would form. Letters were written to the newspapers Katolic and Hlas that were widely read by the Czech immigrants in the Midwest and Eastern states, and she contacted European publications such as Hospodar (Farmer) to run stories also. Fr. Fischer helped in this process. By 1906, people started coming, including the Frank Novak family from Chicago, and the Kostrba, Stasna, and Setvin families from Bohemia, now the Czech Republic. Alois Koutek and his Uncle Charles Koutek and family came from Minnesota in 1911, and in 1912 came the families of Ignatius Fischer, Martin Trtek, and Andrew Cholick, Sr., to be joined soon by Vaclav Roza, John Boukal, and Jospeh Bulanek. These are the founding families. Many of these families were given or sold parcels of land from John Havlik. He provided work in his dairy, on his farms, and on his land clearing stumps. People were often given a cow and some chickens. The dairy was a large-scale operation with about 60 milking cows, and the impoverished settlers were grateful for the work.

THE FIRST ST. WENCESLAUS CATHOLIC CHURCH – 1911

With Catholic families taking root in the area, Archbishop Christie gave approval in 1910 to start building a Catholic Church. The John Havlik, Sr. family donated two acres of land, one for the Church and one for the cemetery. They also donated all of the building material and paid the wages for some of the carpenters. The pioneer men helped with the work, which included major stump clearing. Fr. Bruenagel oversaw the project since Scappoose was still a mission of Rainier. That same year a parish church was built in St. Helens, St. Frederic’s. Lumber was
hauled from the Old Jeff Mill up Dutch Canyon and when the building was complete, the
tpledging parishioners furnished it with donated pews, a dozen statues and a crucifix. Barbara
Havlik did much of the inside painting and wallpapering, and she donated her parlor organ. At
first she played the organ and sang alone at Mass. The Kostrba family bought a fence and gate to
circle the church.

The church was completed, debt-free, in 1911,
and blessed by Archbishop Christie on July 2,
1911, under the name of St. Wenceslaus, in
honor of the martyrred Bohemian king and saint
(in Czech the name is Vaclav). The church
continued to be a mission for awhile with
monthly Masses, as Fr. Bruenagel could not
get to each mission every Sunday, and the
Benedictines from Mt. Angel also travelled by
train to the other missions in Columbia
County. (To think that in 2011, one hundred
years later, many Catholics take the availability
of Mass for granted and willingly skip worship
on a regular basis!)

Meanwhile more families were making South Scappoose their home, bringing their Czech
customs, optimism, and work ethic. Many left impoverished conditions both in the Midwest and
Czechoslovakia. To arrive in a comfortable ethnic community with a general merchandise store
and work provided by John Havlik, and then be able to purchase land and build a home was an
American dream come true. People were eager to use the Catholic Church they helped build and
furnish on a weekly basis, with a resident pastor of their own. In 1914 a parish house was built
from a Sears, Roebuck catalog kit for $1000.00. In 1915, a group of 10 children made their First
Holy Communion in the new church.

In reading about these parish beginnings, one sees a pattern of volunteer work which continues
100 years later. This is not just a church with buildings but an active community of people eager
to help their parish. A 1913 immigrant from Nebraska who responded to Mrs. Havlik’s
invitation, Vaclav Roza, would paint the new rectory, then organize a choir and play the organ.
He grew beautiful flowers that decorated the altars for twenty-two years. His wife Mary Roza
took care of altar linens and cleaned the church with Mrs. Havlik. Vaclav’s granddaughter
Adeline is still cleaning the church in 2011. Mrs. John Boukal organized an Altar Society to raise
funds for other parish needs, like electrical wiring for the church and rectory, which was then
installed by John and Andrew Cholick. A Parish Hall was built south of the church in 1923.
Before that, all social activities had been held on the Havlik property across the street from the
church.
THE FIRST PASTOR, FR. URBAN FISCHER, OSB, 1914-1927

When Fr. Urban Fischer, O.S.B. was appointed the first pastor in 1914, people were very honored with their learned Czech priest, a PhD, who had taught languages and other college subjects at Mt. Angel. In 1915 a group of 10 children eagerly made their First Communion in the new church. Fr. Fischer’s niece, Anne Geiger, had come to the parish on Saturday afternoons for catechism lessons. The parish grew during Fr. Fischer’s 13 years with numerous Czech families coming from Nebraska, Texas, Minnesota, Washington, Montana, Wisconsin, California and re-locating from Oregon towns. These include the family names of: Marek, Beno, Hobizal, Kocarnik, Vostral, Stehno, Hlavinka, Schmit, Mikesh, Valla, Kucera, Michek, Vopalensky and Bisek.

BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF CATHOLICS

The Katolicy Delnick (Catholic Workman Lodge) built a parish hall for social gatherings on Dutch Canyon Road just off Old Portland Road in 1923 (now the Scappoose Senior Center Thrift Store.) Parish traditions were established, some new and some based on customs from the Old Country. A favorite was the of Feast of Corpus Christi, still on the Catholic Church liturgical calendar today on the 4th Sunday of June as feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. Parishioners set up and decorated several outdoor altars near the church and in the cemetery. Some families stored their altars year after year, others grew and contributed flowers. The procession began at the parish hall, where Catholic Workman members dressed in ceremonial robes and carrying flags, banners, and a canopy began to walk towards the church. They were joined at the church by the priest, altar boys, and little girls dressed in white dresses, carrying baskets of rose petals. The priest carried the ornate monstrance, holding a large host under the canopy. At each altar there was the raised Exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament as the procession of parishioners with their prayer books knelt on the ground in praise and worship, amidst the fragrance of holy incense. This had been a traditional ceremony from Czechoslovakia.

Following the services, the parishioners processed back down Old Portland Road to the parish hall where refreshments were served. The seasonal strawberry shortcakes were the main attractions! Years after the processions were discontinued; the Strawberry Social makes an occasional appearance in our parish. One was held in 2011, but the berries were not yet ripe in the fields and frozen ones were used; parish ladies baked the cakes. Sometimes the berry dessert is combined with a spaghetti dinner.
The first parish dinners served in the hall were home-cooked and served family style with the “famous” Czech prune and poppy seed kolaches served as dessert. These are still baked today, donated by the best bakers in the parish or assembled at a baking day for newcomers to learn the art. The parish has enjoyed countless potluck dinners over the years as well as fundraisers featuring turkey, ham, chicken or spaghetti. In the early parish years, many dinners were followed by music. Men like Frank Adams, Victor Valla and Frank Kucera played violins and accordions for dancing into the wee hours. The Catholic Workman and Altar Society both sponsored functions for fun, fellowship, and fundraising.

After serving the spiritual needs of the parish for thirteen years, Fr. Fischer died on May 24, 1927. Within a month, arrangements had been made with the Diocese of Lincoln for Barbara Havlik’s brother Fr. Francis Zalud to come west from Bee, Nebraska to pastor the Czech community. He faithfully served until his death on June 16, 1931 at age 65 and is buried in the parish cemetery. Then for several months the University of Portland sent priests to offer Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation, often transported by a parishioner. Two newly ordained priests also helped out: Fr. John Larkin and Fr. Michael Fleming.

1931: THE PARISH IS TWENTY

The parishioners requested that Archbishop Howard find another priest who could speak Czech. On Sept. 20, 1931, the parish welcomed Fr. John Hotovy from Dwight, Nebraska. There were now 45 parish families and the original church was filled to capacity at both Sunday Masses. In 1933 a remodeling project enlarged the church by 20 feet with a new entrance, which at the time was considered to be ample for many years to come. At one Mass, Fr. Hotovy preached in Czech.
As Catholic Christians, parents were very interested in passing the faith on to their children and were assisted by weekly catechism classes, usually on Saturdays. However just eight miles north was the growing St. Frederic’s Catholic School. Fr. Hotovy approved the purchase of a bus to transport parish children to St. Helens for parochial school, an arrangement that continued for years with different buses and drivers, except for a few years during the Great Depression.

Fr. Hotovy wrote the first history of the parish in Czech and some parishioners still have copies of it and can read it! It was later translated by Helen Mikesh Bukovi. Fr. Hotovy was in Scappoose until his death in April, 1939. The next pastor was Fr. Michael Fleming and during his years the cemetery was improved. A new 40 passenger school bus was purchased and blessed by the Supt. of Catholic Schools, Fr. Arthur Sullivan. Fr. Fleming was appointed to another parish in 1941, necessitating a search for another priest who spoke Czech. Fr. Ulric Necid was sent by Archbishop Howard. His cousin, Fr. Ladislaus Necid and his sister Stella came from Ohio, and lived in the rectory with Fr. Ulric. Stella served as cook and housekeeper, and Fr. Ladislaus assisted Fr. Ulric. After serving for four years, Fr. Ulric retired to California due to ill health. Stella and Fr. Ladislaus are both buried in the Parish Cemetery.

Fr. Herman Hermann became pastor in 1945 and plans were beginning to form for a new, larger church. However, Fr. Hermann was sent to a parish in Sheridan in 1947. The Archbishop appointed Fr. Joseph Manik next, with the understanding that a new church would be built. Fr. Manik was Slovak but had some familiarity with the Czech language and was able to hear confessions in Czech. The parish was in good financial standing post-WWII, but the money that had been saved towards a new church would not cover a brand new structure. So the parish got creative.

**SURPLUS ARMY CHAPEL FROM FT. STEVENS BECOMES A CATHOLIC CHURCH**

Eight months into his parish appointment, Fr. Manik had the opportunity to apply for a surplus Army chapel with the consent of Archbishop Howard. In June, 1948, in spite of numerous applications by churches of many denominations, word was received that the chapel had been awarded to St. Wenceslaus Parish! The chapel was located at Fort Stevens, Oregon, ten miles from Astoria. The means to bring the building to Scappoose seemed fantastic at first, but later everyone agreed that in these post WWII year, anything was possible.
The chapel was cut in half and moved by the U.S. Army to the shores of the Columbia River, loaded onto a barge and brought seventy miles upriver to a landing east of Scappoose. Then it was moved three miles over agricultural fields to the present location where it was enlarged and remodeled into St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church. With great foresight, the parishioners decided to forego a painted structure, which would require more maintenance, and installed a brick exterior. An estimate of 5000 bricks was needed and, at ten cents a brick, the cost would be $500. Each family was requested to contribute as many bricks as they could afford. Sixty years later the building still is sturdy and beautiful.

The new Church was blessed by Archbishop Howard on November 6, 1949.

The parish was fortunate in having many skilled workers including carpenters, electricians, plumbers, and painters who generously donated countless hours to work on the church remodel, often in the evening and on weekends. The expense of excavating a basement for a parish hall, enlarging the chapel building by adding on the sacristy and the winter chapel (now the Reconciliation Room and storage) and a choir loft, and hiring two professional carpenters caused the parish to incur a debt of $25,000. A loan for the amount came from the Archdiocese of Portland.

The old church was razed to make way for the new church, and during construction Mass and services were held in the Catholic Workmen Lodge, which served as the parish hall. Fundraisers were numerous as the people were eager to pay off the debt as fast as possible. Besides the popular fall Turkey Dinner, a chicken dinner was added in the spring and the entire community was invited. The Altar Society, which numbered 49 members in 1948-1953, sprang into action. Bake sales were held at the Bill Phillips and Joe Kocarnik stores, and food booths at Columbia County Fair and Scappoose Pow Wow events. The ladies brainstormed other ideas: craft bazaars, strawberry shortcake socials, and dinners for the Kiwanis Club, served every Tuesday evening on alternate months. Rummage sales were popular and very profitable, both locally and at the Portland Rummage Center.

The small four room rectory had been used for 43 years and with a new church, it was showing signs of deterioration so a modern rectory was built in 1957, attached by a practical breezeway to the south entrance of the church. Fr. Manic celebrated his 25th Silver Jubilee in the parish. He had accomplished much, serving St. Wenceslaus from 1947-1966, helping the parish grow to
meet the needs of a post-War booming generation. He earned the respect, honor and love of many people in the parish and the larger Scappoose community before his next assignment.

Fr. Manik began an ambitious capital campaign in 1960 to raise funds for a Catholic school, since the debts for the church remodel and new rectory were paid off. For many years parish children had been transported by bus to St. Frederic’s Catholic School in St. Helens which was bursting at the seams with baby boomers. In fact, from 1959-1963 forty children went to Assumption School in North Portland which had more room for them. The other sixty elementary age parish children went to public school in Scappoose. Chairman Joseph Barta, co-chairs Edward Deal and Louie Kucera, and division leaders Les Mares, Henry Schmit and Joseph Trtek led a team of fourteen captains and another twenty men parish men to obtain financial pledges from parishioners for a three year Building Fund.

The funds were not fully realized, as the goal was quite ambitious for such a small parish. In fact, by 1968, St. Frederic’s Catholic school had its own financial problems, and grades 7 & 8 were discontinued. The school closed in 1974, along with many others in Oregon as the number of religious vocations for women dwindled. The good Sisters had staffed many a school, and now the need to finance lay salaries caused an increase in tuition which many families could not afford. St. Wenceslaus Parish would save its Building Fund for a more modest education center.

Fr. Karl Mai became pastor in 1966, but unfortunately died of a heart attack in May, 1967 while on retreat at Mt. Angel Abbey. Fr. John Domin become Pastor in 1967 and had the difficult assignment of beginning to implement the reforms of the Second Vatican Council. Change is never easy! The interior of the church took on a new look which caused many emotional reactions from both young and old. This happened all over the world!

Fr. Domin oversaw the purchase of two acres of land and a house from the John Vanderwerf family, and the construction of the Parish Center, which was completed in 1968. The Center has six classrooms, an office, a library/parish meeting room, modern restrooms, and sits on a basement commissioned by the Scappoose/St. Helens Knights of Columbus, which is also used for meetings. Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) classes began for children, taught by parish catechists, and their training was offered by the Archdiocese of Portland. It was a time of a new partnership between laity, religious and clergy.

Fr. Patrick Dooley became pastor in 1969, and hired Sr. Gertrude Schaeffers as Coordinator of Religious Education for two years, with a car provided by the parish. Children now had Sunday morning classes following the 8:30 Mass. A Saturday evening Vigil Mass began also, in line with Vatican II guidelines.

Fr. Joseph Cormier was pastor from 1972-1980. During his administration, Millie Gobel and Mary Kucera co-directed the children’s religious education program. With parish growth, new pews were installed in the church with a generous donation from the active Altar Society. Fr. Cormier retired due to ill health.

Msgr. Edmund VanderZanden, served faithfully from August, 1980 to June 1995, when he retired at age 85 to St. John Vianney Residence. Having grown up in the Banks/Roy area, Fr.
Van, as he was affectionately called, was eager to “semi-retire” at age 70 to Scappoose, and grew lavish, productive vegetable gardens on the parish grounds. He had the pleasure of a few years when his sister, Sr. Ludmilla VanderZanden SSMO, lived with him, as cook, laundress, and fellow canner in the summer.

A young adult parishioner, Warren Dever, Jr. died in 1984 and his parents made a donation to commission ten beautiful stained glass windows featuring highlights in the lives of Jesus and Mary. The windows were made at the local Willemse Glass.

Parish religious education was thriving with classes for preschoolers through 12th grade and continues today. Millie Gobel became the first fully trained Director of Religious Education (DRE) and served until 1994. After five interim directors, Elizabeth Millager became Coordinator of Religious Education (CRE) in 2004 and serves today. History shows that there have also been vacation bible schools taught by visiting nuns, and now shared with our Lutheran neighbors. Dozens of parishioners past and present have shared their Catholic faith with our parish children and adults over the years. Adult education has included guest speakers and courses, Bible Studies, fellowship groups, and diocesan programs such as Renew, Caring that Enables, and DeSales Adult Education.

Other changes after Vatican II included setting up Parish, Pastoral and Administrative Councils. Many parishioners have volunteered on these advisory boards to assist the pastors in making decisions and offering suggestions for new directions for the parish. Liturgical ministries began in 1972 and the ministry of altar servers has included girls for 25 years.

The parish has Youth Groups for both high school and mid-school (6-7-8) students, with very active service ministry components. The entire parish continually reaches out to the wider community with its Monday and Thursday Food Bank, monthly dinner for the 90 men at the Clark Center in Portland, collections of socks and other necessities for the women at Jean’s Place and assistance at Campo Azul in Hillsboro before it closed. If a project is suggested, people come forth with ample donations for shelters, birth centers, disaster victims, the homeless, youth in peril and more. We care! There are ministries of visiting the sick and shut-in, delivering food to families with new babies, preparing funeral luncheons for the bereaved, and opening our air-conditioned hall to the public during heat waves. The Knights of Columbus Columbian Council 3302 has been active in our parish for over 60 years.

The Altar Society has recently disbanded, but parish volunteers come forward as needed. It is a different world than when all the women stayed home with children and were able to do projects during the day. The Catholic Workman merged into the First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association as their members declined too. These two groups of parish women and men set the tone for a parish commitment to service and taking care of others, as well as sharing fun and fellowship. Groups like Women’s Club and Mom’s Group have come and gone but there is always potential for new groups to begin. A Men’s Bible Study is going strong after 3 years, for example.

Gwynn and Jeff Klobes have chaired a Parish Campout for 14 years. The first few years it was held at Ft. Stevens State Park, but when it became more difficult to secure campsites, they looked in our own backyard in Columbia County. Now the event is held at Big Eddy County
Park on the Nehalem River west of Scappoose and Warren where the entire campground is reserved for the parish. An outdoor Mass is a highlight along with a talent show, activities for all ages and group dining. St. Wenceslaus potluck style! Many non-camping parishioners come up for Saturday events.

Msgr. VanderZanden was followed by Fr. Neil Moore from 1995-1996, then Fr. Steve Clovis from 1996-1999. Fr. James Stange has been at St. Wenceslaus for the last twelve years including this 100th anniversary.

For many years there had been discussion of building a new parish hall, especially with awareness of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The steep stairs into the basement hall were troubling old and young alike. Leonard Aplet chaired a Building Fund, “Raising the Roof”, and the new hall was built and blessed in 2002. The parish had also earned some money for this project when its property across the street was sold to Fred Meyer. In the 2011 Capital Campaign for the Archdiocese of Portland, the parish has exceeded its goal by 30% as of this printing. The people of St. Wenceslaus Parish are very giving of time, talent and treasure.

From those first few immigrants who worked so diligently that they might have a Catholic Church in their little community, the parish has steadily grown for 100 years to over 300 families today. A walk through the cemetery is a visit to the pioneer families of the past. A few families are now in their fifth generation living in the parish. Newcomers have always been eager to help with caring for the church, providing funds for projects and carrying out their Christian mission to assist their neighbors.
PRIESTS SERVING AT SAINT WENCESLAUS 1905-2011

1905-1911: the parish was a mission, served by Fr. Urban Fischer, OSB, professor at Mt. Angel Abbey, and Fr. Henry Bruenagel, pastor in Rainier, Oregon. Mass was offered in private homes and the Watts & Price Hall in Scappoose.

1910- Fr. Bruenagel encouraged the community to build their own church. John Havlik, Sr. donated two acres, the parish men cleared the land and numerous laborers came forth to build the church from the timber. All the furnishings were donated by the people. The church was still a mission and Mass was offered when Benedictines came including: Fr. Fisher, Fr. Murphy, and Fr. Serves.

1911-1927: Fr. Urban Fischer, O.S.B. and he also served Rainier, St. Helens & Clatskanie traveling by train or horseback.
1927-1931: Fr. Francis Zalud from Bee, Nebraska, Mrs. John Havlik’s brother

1931-1940: Fr. John Hotovy of Dwight, Nebraska
1940-1941: Fr. Michael Fleming
1941-1945: Fr. Ulric Necid from Ohio (cousin Fr. Ladislav Necid helped)
1945-1947: Fr. Herman Hermann
1966-1967: Fr. Carl Mai
1967-1969: Fr. John Domin
1969-1972: Fr. Patrick Dooley
1972-1980: Fr. Joseph Cormier
1996-1999: Fr. Stephen Clovis
1999-present: Fr. James Stange
RELIGIOUS VOCATIONS FROM THE PARISH

Rev. Joseph Beno, son of John & Mary Beno, ordained May 18, 1957

Rev. Frank Knusel, son of Zavier & Florence Knusel, ordained May 12, 1973

Brother Charles Trtek, OSB, son of Martin & Rose Trtek, Sr.

Brother Charles Mertl, OSB, son of Mr. & Mrs. Charles Mertl

Sr. M. Leocadia Mertl, SSMO, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Charles Mertl

Sr. Joseph Catherine Trtek, SFCC, daughter of Joseph & Josephine Trtek

Sr. M. Adelaide Kocarnik, SSMO, daughter of Alois & Mary Kocarnik

Sr. Yolanda Marie Stehno, SNJM, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Vincent Stehno

Two daughters of Frank & Frances Baresh, Helen and Rosie, entered the convent in Iowa of the Sisters of Notre Dame, and did not come to Oregon with the rest of the family.

Ingrid Hoppert, in formation, June, 2011, Carmelite Sisters, Discalced (OCD)

Former religious vocations:

  Fr. Ken Jorgensen,
  Mary Mertl (Sr. M. Valeria, SSMO),
  Lillian Hlavinka (Sr. M. Romana, SSMO),
  Georgia Hlavinka Hastings (Sr. M. Adrian, SSMO),
  Carol Jean Fredericks Enloe (Sr. M. Lorraine, SSMO),
  Janice Barta Parker (Sr. Janice Marie, SNJM),
  Carol Barta Galloway (Sr. Carolyn, SSS)
IMMIGRATION TO AMERICA FROM CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Most of the parish pioneer families came west to Scappoose, Oregon from other American states, especially Nebraska and Minnesota. However, they or their parents had emigrated from Czechoslovakia in earlier years. Bohemia to the west and Moravia to the east were rural states in Czechoslovakia with worsening economic conditions and overpopulation at the turn of the 19th century. The 1870’s had borne crop failures and the 1880’s had agricultural depression.

There were also many people who wanted to escape the control of the Austrian Habsburg Monarchy and the constant conflicts with the German population. In fact, the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914 was the end of the 300 year Habsburg family rule and initiated World War I. The 20th century saw the revitalization of Slovak people in their homeland. However some of the German/Slovak difficulties were even brought to America. For example, the home parish of the Havlik family in Crete, Nebraska had been a German parish first! The Czech Republic was not unified until 1992.

Long before Barbara Havlik and Fr. Urban Fischer, OSB, encouraged Catholic immigration to South Scappoose through letters in the Czech press, the Burlington & Missouri Railroad was advertising land tracts along their lines in the Czech language newspapers, journals, and magazines such as Hospodar (Farmer), with reports of opportunities in the Midwestern states, especially Nebraska. The Homestead Act of 1862 in Nebraska offered a land claim of 160 acres of government land to citizens or “intended citizens” who would improve it with a house and crops and if they lived there 5 years it would be theirs.

Between 1856 and World War I, 50,000 Czechs moved to Nebraska, the #1 location for Czech immigrants in America at the time. Between 1870 and 1900, 2,000,000 Europeans came to the United States. The Bohemians tended to be farmers and the Moravians craftsmen and these skills were brought to America. In the move to South Scappoose, agricultural endeavors were the only jobs available at first, hence farming, dairying, logging, and stump clearing provided a living for many families.
PARISH PIONEER FAMILIES – FIRST 26 YEARS, 1905-1931

John & Barbara (Zalud) Havlik, Sr. and family, Crete, Nebraska 1905
Frank Novak and family, Illinois 1906
August Stasna and family, Czechoslovakia (Bohemia) 1906
John Kostrba and family, Czechoslovakia (Bohemia) 1906
Joseph Setvin and family, Czechoslovakia (Bohemia) 1908
Charles and Alois Koutek and families, Minnesota 1911

FIRST CHURCH IS BUILT 1911

Ignatius Fischer, Minnesota, married AnnMarie Koutek 1912
Andrew Cholick, Minnesota, married Lillian Havlik 1912
Martin Trtek and family, New York 1912
Vaclav & Mary (Barta) Roza, Nebraska 1913
Mr. & Mrs. John Boukal, Washington 1914
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Boulanek, Missouri 1914
Bohumil (Jeff) Marek and parents, Texas, married Ella Havlik 1919
John Beno, Washington, married Mary Fischer 1919
Matthew & Josephine (Hlavinka) Hobizal, Texas 1919
Charles Spacek, Illinois 1919
Joseph, Ann Kocarnik, Nebraska, (Joseph married Lillian Fischer) 1919
Frank Vostral and family, Washington 1920
Alois Kocarnik, Sr. and family, Nebraska 1920
Vincent Stehno and family, Nebraska 1920
Joe & Frances Hlavinka and family, Texas 1920
Jacob & Antonia Schmit and family, Gresham, Oregon 1921

PARISH IS TEN YEARS OLD

Francis Hlavinka and family, Texas 1922
Frank Mikesh and family, Washington 1922
Joseph Valla, Victor Valla and families, Minnesota 1923
Frank Kucera and family, Minnesota 1923
Joseph Michek and family, Minnesota  1923  
Frank Adam and family, Montana  1923  
Joseph & Ann Vopalensky and family, Wisconsin  1926  
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Bisek, California  1926  
Matthew Novak, Montana  1926  
Mrs. Louise Novak Larson, Montana  1926  
John Krivanek and family, Montana  1927  
Charles Mertl and family, Minnesota  1927  
John Vanderwerf, Portland (married Mary Roza)  1927  
Matthew Barta, Nebraska  1928  
Frank Nakvasil and family, Montana (married Marie Koutek)  1929  
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Hain, Nebraska  1929  
Charles Suchy and family, Nebraska  1929  
Vaclav Yanda and family, Oklahoma  1929  
Jaroslav (Jerry) Heindl and family, Scio, OR (married Albina Vopalensky)  1931

PARISH IS TWENTY YEARS OLD

From 1931-1941, the parish grew from 40 families to 100 families! Some of the children of the pioneer families grew up and married and stayed in the parish and other folks moved into South Scappoose, many still of Czech heritage. Newcomers on the 1941 roster include:

FAMILY AND PERSONAL MEMORIES

1. Anderson, Eldine
2. Aplet Family
3. Baresh, Henry
4. Baresh, Joseph
5. Barta, Helen Beno
6. Beno, Father Joe
7. Bender, Ben and Pat
8. Bisner, Phil and Rosemary
9. Brinster, Bob and Dolores
10. Burg Family
11. Dackins, Don
12. Duncan Family
13. Erhardt, Gene and Diane
14. Gobel, Millie and Tim
15. Greene, Maria
16. Greisen, Ed and Virginia
17. Greisen, Mike and Mary
18. Havlik, Albert and Pat
19. Hlavinka-Evert, Mary
20. Hobizal, Frank E. Sr., Family
21. Hobizal, John and Dorothy
22. Johnson, Nancy
23. Jones, Jim and Marianne
24. Kessi, Bill and Maureen
25. Kessi, Bob and Barbara
26. Klobes and Melton Families
27. Kocarnik, Jim
28. Kocarnik, Robert
29. Koutek-MacNeill Family
30. Kucera, Mary
31. Liewer, Vernie and Larry
32. Lomnicky Family
33. Marek Family
34. Marracci-Hugo Family
35. McCarthy, Laura (Lori Schmit)
36. McDonald, Gary and Mary Jane
37. Mikes, Chuck and Edith
38. Millager, Stewart and Elizabeth
39. Nakvasil, Charles
40. Novak, Frank and Pauline
41. Ollier, Bob and Darlene
42. Reed, Jan and Delores Kocarnik
43. Robinson, Andy and Mary Ann Havlik
44. Rocha, Larry and Nancy
45. Rocha, Ellen Goodrich
46. Sawyer, Agnes Mares
47. Schlosser, Millie
48. Schlosser, Orville and Mary Jo
49. Schmit, Henry
50. Sheldon, Virginia
51. Shoemaker, Robert and Jeanne Stevin
52. Shoemaker, Roberta Ann
53. Stokes, Newt and Martha Havlik
54. Trtek, Joe and Josie Nakvasil
55. Trtek, Bill and Ruth
56. Trudeau Family
57. Vanderwerf, Adeline
58. Vopalensky Family
59. Worley Family
Eldine Anderson

Having just graduated from the University of Portland, I was now in search of a secondary teaching position. My major was in Health and Physical Education with a minor in English. I received offers of employment for Newport High School and Scappoose Union High School. Since I was born, raised and schooled in Northwest Portland – St. Patrick Parish - I felt that Scappoose would be the better choice because I would still be close to my family and could easily commute, so I thought! After commuting for the first year, I found that there were too many evening events that I was required to attend, thus entailing a long, late drive home. So the following year, I moved into the Watts House. The James Watts family lived on the main floor and provided a rental for single women teachers in the upper story.

It was at the high school that I met my future husband, Bob Anderson, who was the Business Education teacher and the football coach. We built our house on the Anderson property located on Scappoose-Vernonia Highway. It was here that we raised our children: Sherrie, Tammie, and Robert, Jr. My husband passed away in 1972, so I returned to college to earn an elementary teaching certificate. In September, 1973 I was offered a first grade position at Grant Watts School where I taught until retirement in June 1994.

Originally I attended Mass at St. Frederic’s in St. Helens until my children were ready to start attending C.C.D. classes. Then we became members of this parish and got involved in various parish activities. For several years I was the second grade catechist. I enjoyed preparing the children for Reconciliation and First Communion. I also volunteered at social and fund-raising events. I especially remember turkey dinners in October and the Strawberry Socials (with spaghetti dinners) in June. Also the Christmas pageants and potlucks were special. I felt these activities fostered meeting each other in the parish and building camaraderie. I do miss the interaction of the parish members today. I continue to enjoy serving as a lector at 8:30am Mass.

Having been in the parish over 40 years, I have made many friends and have fond memories of events and people too numerous to mention. I feel very blessed to have been a member of St. Wenceslaus Community.

Note: As the youngest of seven children, I was not the happiest child because I felt I had to do many tasks my older siblings passed on to me. Anyway, I was somewhat rebellious. To this day, I remember my mother’s idle threat that if I didn’t shape up, she would send me to St. Mary of the Valley boarding school or to Scappoose to live with the Cernac family. The boarding school did not scare me but the threat of Scappoose did (not the Cernacs, but the primitive, sparse isolation of such a small, rural farm area). Well, guess what? I did end up in Scappoose. Hmmm!
The Family of Leonard and Brenda Aplet

Leonard Alfred Aplet was born in Salem, Oregon and raised in West Stayton on a row crop farm. Brenda Ann Aplet was born in St. Helens, Oregon and raised in Warren on a small acreage.

Daughter Marcy Jean Aplet-Zelen was born in The Dalles, Oregon and raised in Scappoose from Mid-School through Scappoose High School graduation, the Class of 1994. She graduated from the University of Portland and married Benjamin Zelen. They have one daughter, Arianna, born in Pasco, Washington where they now live.

Amanda Nicole was born in Portland, raised in Scappoose, and is currently a senior at the University of Portland majoring in Marketing Management.

Christina Marie was born in Portland, raised in Scappoose, and is currently a sophomore at the University of Portland majoring in Biology/Pre-Med.

Monica Lynn, born in Portland, raised in Scappoose, and will graduate from Scappoose High in June, 2012.

We moved to Scappoose from Columbia City in 1984, and then lived in Berkeley, California from 1985-1987, where Leonard earned a Master’s Degree at UC Berkeley. After graduation we returned to our small acreage in Scappoose where we raise a few beef cows. Leonard works in Portland for Columbia Management, and Brenda has worked in our home raising four wonderful daughters. Brenda has many happy memories of helping out in our daughter’s classrooms in the Scappoose School District, taking on volunteer projects for parent clubs, and helping at the Future Center at SHS.

Leonard received the sacraments of Baptism, Penance, First Communion and Confirmation at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Stayton, where Marcy was also baptized. Brenda and our other daughters received all their sacraments at St. Wenceslaus. We have been in the parish through a number of priests, Msgr. VanderZanden, Father Neil Moore, Father Steve Clovis, and now our dear Father Jim Stange.

We have enjoyed our lives in the parish, and have been blessed with wonderful priests, great parish members and staff, and dedicated Religious Education teachers. Brenda spent 8 years as a catechist, mainly in the first grade and enjoyed helping numerous children through the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. The girls have been active in the Youth Group and have enjoyed all the service projects arranged by the youth leaders. Leonard has served on the Administrative Council during two capital campaigns and has enjoyed that a great deal. One of his favorite memories is the construction of the new Parish Hall.

One of the highlights of our children’s Religious Education has been the annual Christmas Pageants. We have been the fortunate proud parents of two Marys, several archangels and numerous angels over the years. It never fails to be a wonderful experience for all who attend.

We have been very fortunate to live in Scappoose and St. Wenceslaus Parish. Happy 100th!
Henry Baresh

My name is Henry Baresh and this is my story.

My father, Frank Bares emigrated from ‘Bohemia’ in 1901. The region of Europe where the Czech language is spoken was called Bohemia after the Boii Tribe who inhabited the area from the first century, according to Roman sources. The area my parents came from was later known as Czechoslovakia. Our surname had the (’ˇ) over the letter ‘s’ causing the letter ‘s’ to be pronounced ‘sh’: hence the spelling change to ‘Baresh’.

My parents met and married in Chicago, Illinois around 1904. By 1906 they were farming in Poweshiek County, Iowa where there was a sizeable Czech community. My parents were able to read and write in their native language, and Mother had been following newspaper accounts of a better life in Oregon where there were abundant jobs picking fruit. This was something we children could do to earn an income and, therefore, improve our family’s situation. In 1936 the decision was made to move to Oregon.

We were a large Catholic family by now; twelve children, including two sets of twins; I was number six, born in 1917. My parents were religious and all of us prayed the Rosary every evening. There were no interruptions allowed, even a knock on the front door was ignored.

My oldest brother, Anton had married and settled in Clinton, Iowa. My sister Helen had gone into the Notre Dame Academy and Convent in Omaha, Nebraska. The Convent was significant for its ethnic association with the Czech population and, after making her vows, she taught on an Indian Reservation in South Dakota. Unfortunately, she contracted Polio and died there. Years later my sister Rosie followed in her big sisters footsteps and also became a Sister of Notre Dame.

In September 1936 we packed up our household belongings in a cattle truck and headed west. Upon seeing the mountains we assumed we could reach them in no time and walk up to the top. Soon, we found out that those mountains were a lot farther and a lot taller than they looked. One night we pulled onto the side of the road with a farmhouse in the distance. After midnight the police came, woke us up and told us to “Put away your knives”. The people in the farmhouse had called and reported us as Gypsies. My brother, James, explained that we were just passing through on our way to Oregon and all was well.

We drove for several days before reaching Oregon City, sleeping in and under our truck along the way and, of course, we were welcomed with a downpour. We traveled to Hubbard in Marion County then on to Scio in Linn County where we settled for a while. The fruit harvest was finished so we all got jobs harvesting English Walnuts. The bigger kids would shake the nuts out of the trees and we would shell them by hand. By the end of the day the palms of our hands were black.

In September 1939, after many letters from Scappoose, it was decided that we move there because they had a Catholic Church with a large Czech speaking congregation, and the younger
children could go to Catholic school in St. Helens. We children spoke English, but at home we spoke our parents’ language.

Father bought a thirteen acre farm about a mile north of Scappoose where the highway turns, on the river side of the road. Our house was wired for electricity, but we preferred to use our kerosene lamps, one on the wall and one that we carried from room to room. We grew Thornless Blackberries.

I enlisted in the Army during World War II and served in France and Germany. When the war was over I came home to Scappoose no longer content to be a berry farmer. I decided to go to school in Portland to learn a trade. I became a Machinist, and worked at Firtex in St. Helens making insulated ceiling tiles. There was a big union problem there resulting in a strike, and I decided to get out and find a more stable job. I went to work in a machine shop in Portland where we repaired machines. I continued working there until I was seventy years old.

I married Mary Jane at St. Wenceslaus Church in September 1969, and raised her children as my own. Mary Jane was born in Hood River, but was raised in Gobel.

My sister Mary Ardry passed away this July in Portland at the age of 90. Sisters and brothers living nearby: Gemma Hampton in Portland; Anna Dombroski and Alfonse in Gresham; Joseph is in Seattle.

**Joseph Baresh**

My name is Joseph M. Baresh and I was born in Chelsea, Iowa. My parents were born in what is now the Czech Republic, near Prague. After living in Iowa, my parents came out to Scio, Oregon on the advice of a friend. My parents traveled in a cattle truck, with Mom in the back with some of the children and others in the front with Dad. Two sisters stayed in Iowa at the convent, out of the twelve of us. We lived in Scio about three years, but there were no Catholic schools, and we heard there was a very friendly Czech community in Scappoose with access to a school a few miles north in St. Helens, St. Frederic’s, and that St. Wenceslaus Parish provided a school bus!

We rented a small farm abutting South Scappoose Creek from the Michaelbrooks. At home our family spoke English and Czech. Dad supported the family by harvesting lots of fruits and vegetables locally during the summers. Six of us were raised in Scappoose: James, Milo, Henry, Josephine, Alphonse and I. Al and I were altar servers and we sang in the choir under Fr. Necid. I have memories of Midnight Mass for Christmas and the fasting which preceded it. For Corpus Christi our family helped set up three altars on the church property for the procession, providing flowers, and we stored them on our property.

I really liked Fr. Manik, a Polish priest who could hear confessions in Czech! He was very considerate of the needs of parishioners, even teenagers. He tried to start a social program for us, but too few participated so it didn’t pan out. He was instrumental in having the old church razed and getting the surplus Army Chapel. Taking down the old church and building the new one on a
basement, under the direction of a willing contractor, was done mostly by the parishioners. It was a wonderful experience and many people helped.

With the good example of my Catholic parents and siblings, I chose to stay Catholic. Further training at the University of Portland convinced me that this was the religion that Jesus Christ instituted. I left the parish in 1957 to work for the Boeing Co. in Seattle. I retired after 35 years in the field of engineering. My friend Bernard Marek married my sister Josephine.

During World War II, many of the parish young men were drafted or joined the military effort. I seem to remember a flag being hung in church with 48 white stars on a blue background, each star representing one military personnel from our parish. At the time there were only 48 stars on the American flag! Interesting I thought! And also, if I am not mistaken, by the end of the war, all 48 returned home alive! God surely loved St. Wenceslaus parish! (Joseph Baresh Phone: 206-525-5504)

Helen Beno Barta

My grandfather, Ignatius Fischer, immigrated to St. Paul, Minnesota from Bohemia, and Anna Koutek, her parents and siblings also moved there from Bohemia. In time the two met, married and had six children. Ignatius worked for his brother-in-law, Charles Koutek, in his grocery store.

Letters and news article in the Czech language told of a new Czech Catholic community forming out west in Scappoose, Oregon, encouraging people to join then. Father Urban Fischer, OSB, wrote to his brother Ignatius urging them to come. Fr. Fischer had been serving Czech people in Scappoose at various times as a missionary from Mount Angel Abbey where he was a professor. Charles Koutek and family came to South Scappoose in 1911, and the Fischers arrived on March 31, 1912. They bought property and began a new way of living with deep faith and hope.

A church was built in 1910 and blessed on July 2, 1911 by Archbishop Christie, named St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church after King Wenceslaus, the Patron Saint of Bohemia and the Czech people. For awhile the parish was still a mission served by a variety of priests. Fr. Urban Fischer, OSB, became the first resident pastor in 1914 when a parish rectory was built. A new parish hall was built in 1923. Fr. Fischer died in May, 1927. Twenty feet were added onto the church in 1933, and by 1948 more room was needed for the growing parishioners. A new church was built in 1949, the main structure being an Army surplus chapel that had been floated down the Columbia River from Fort Stevens in two pieces, then pulled over fields to its present site. A new rectory was added next to the church in 1957.

John Beno, my father, came to the United States from Moravia in 1914. He joined the US Army in Illinois, served in World War I, and was discharged at Fort Vancouver, Washington. My father learned of the Czech settlement and Catholic parish in Scappoose, moved there, and felt at home. He came to church, met Mary Fischer, and they married on May 12, 1919. They purchased a home and acreage on the same road as the Fischer family, now known as the Old Portland Road. I was born in November, 1921, and my brother Joseph in July, 1923. As children
at home we learned the Czech language. We attended St. Frederic Catholic School in St. Helens, and then graduated from Scappoose High School. Our lives were centered on the church: Mass, devotions, rosary, picnics, basket socials, dances, and card parties for young and old. My mother died in 1940, and my father re-married and moved to St. Helens. He worked in the lumber mill there until retirement. He died in 1994 at the age of 99.

It was the Great Depression, and a young man named Joseph Barta came from Omaha, Nebraska to work on his Uncle Vaclav Rosa’s farm alongside his brother Mike. He graduated in the Class of 1934 from Scappoose High School. Years passed, we dated, and married on September 28, 1940. He was inducted into the US Army in April, 1945, served in Okinawa, Japan in the Occupational Forces, and was discharged in June, 1946.

We eventually moved into our family home, which was only two houses north of St. Wenceslaus Church. Brother Mike and his wife Ann (Vopalensky) Barta moved into a house on the other side of church. My husband was employed as a chemical worker, but his hobby was the fruit orchard he planted on our property. We were very active in parish life. I was a CCD teacher, organist, chaired Kiwanis dinners, co-chaired the Madonna Festival with Rose MacNeill, and helped with the Food Bank. I participated in many, many projects of the Altar Society: cleaning and decorating the church, funeral luncheons, fundraisers, parish dinners and kolache baking. My husband chaired the Parish Rectory Campaign leading to the 1957 rectory, and a Building Fund Appeal with the goal of a parish Catholic school, which led to the present VanderZanden Education Center. I was a Eucharistic Minister and a lector.

Our nine children (8 daughters and 1 son) attended St. Frederic’s School. Four girls graduated from St. Mary’s Academy in Portland the other five children are graduates of Scappoose High School. They too were active parish members: attending devotions and parish festivities such as the Corpus Christi processions in June and the Annual Christmas Party & Pageant in December. They served at parish dinners and strawberry socials, cleaned the church and rectory, sang in the choir, played the organ and attended the Youth Group. Janice, our oldest, even took charge of a Children’s Choir and our son Joe was an altar boy, serving at Mass. Daughter Mary was the flower girl when my brother became a priest and celebrated his First Mass at St. Wenceslaus on May 19, 1957. Each of our children attended college, eventually married, and moved from Scappoose. Many have children and grandchildren of their own. Our daughter Joanie died in 1979.

My husband Joe died on May 27, 2006. We had been married for 65 years. During his late retirement we had sold our family home and orchards and down-sized to a brand-new, smaller house on our property, at the corner of Old Portland Road and Jenna Lane, right across the street from Mary Mares to the east and Adeline Vanderwerf to the south, just a very short walk to church, where we usually attended daily Mass. Eventually I sold our house and moved to Beaverton in 2008 to live closer to my children. Although I no longer live in Scappoose, my heart is forever in St. Wenceslaus Parish. I have so many treasured memories and thank God for his richest blessings.
Father Joe Beno
(Written for Father Joe Beno by his niece, Janice)

Father Joe Beno was born in the Beno home in Scappoose on July 23, 1923, joining his “big” sister Helen. He grew up in Scappoose, but attended St. Frederic Catholic Grade School in St.Helens, then graduated in the Class of 1941 at Scappoose High School. During his youth he often went fishing with the pastors: Father Hotovy (1931-1940) and Father Hermann (1945-1947).

After graduation from SHS, he worked at Bonneville Power Administration for two years before serving in the US Army. After his discharge he enrolled at the University of Portland, graduating in 1950. In 1951 he entered Mount Angel Seminary to begin studies for the priesthood. He would return to Scappoose during the summers, living with the Barta family, and often helped Fr. Manik (1947-1966) around the parish.

Father Beno was ordained on May 18, 1957, at St. Mary’s Cathedral, and the following day said his First Mass at St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church. He was either the pastor or assistant pastor in many parishes throughout the Archdiocese: St. Joseph’s, Salem; St. Mary’s, Eugene; St. Michael’s, Oakridge; Sacred Heart, Medford; and St. Monica’s, Coos Bay. After his retirement he moved into his father’s house in St. Helen’s and continued to enjoy substituting for short-term assignments for his fellow priests. In 2008 because of health concerns, he moved to Blessing House in Tigard where he currently resides, only one mile from his sister Helen Barta, living in Hearthstone at Murrayhill.

Traveling was one of Father Beno’s passions as he loved to visit many countries and make many new friends. Always an active person, he enjoyed swimming, hiking, mountain climbing, fishing, camping, bicycling and skiing.

Ben and Pat Bender Family

Ben and I (Pat) Bender got married in 1962 at St. Cecelia’s Catholic Church in North Portland, which is no longer there. In 1966 we moved to our place, which is located at the top of Rocky Point and Dixie Mountain Roads in the west hills above Scappoose.

We went to St. Brigitt’a Church in Linnton for many years, then in 1985 we found out we belonged to St. Wenceslaus parish, where we have been since. Rev. Msgr. Edmund Van der Zanden was our priest at that time. I don’t know why, but he always reminded me of Pope John Paul II, a saintly person.

We raised 4 children: Kay, Don, Laurie and Angela. In Angela’s senior year, she helped with the preschool children for the CCD class, which she loved. Angela also received a scholarship from the Catholic Workman from St. Wenceslaus, which is now part of The First Catholic Ladies Slovak Association.
We have nine remarkable grandchildren and two great grandchildren. Three of our granddaughters made their First Holy Communion at St. Wenceslaus, Selena Cagle in 1993, Victoria Bender in 2004, and Alisha Bender in 2007. Before Alisha was old enough to receive Holy Communion, she did not understand why Victoria could receive Jesus and not her. Every time, while walking up to get the blessing, she would try her hardest to receive Holy Communion, by putting her hand or tongue out, only to be disappointed, as she walked back, little tears would be rolling down her face. When her day came she was very proud to receive Jesus.

The Turkey dinners were successful, and we met a lot of kind people. For the Strawberry social, if we didn’t sign up for anything special, the committee would make a list and assign us a task. Most of the time, I brought white cakes, sometimes coffee. We enjoy our parish community and plan on being there for a long time.

Phil and Rosemary Bisner Family

Phil was born the oldest of three children in Portland and grew up in St. John’s. Rosemary was the sixth of nine children (7 girls and twin brothers) born in Sioux Falls, SD. Her family moved to Oregon when she was a freshman in high school. She graduated from St. Francis High School in Eugene, and Phil from Benson High in Portland. They met in Eugene while attending Lane Community College (Phil would stop in frequently at the ice cream store where Rosemary worked.)

Phil was raised Baptist but converted to Catholicism when he married Rosemary in July, 1969. They moved to North Portland and attended Queen of Peace Catholic Church. After 10 years of marriage, they were blessed with daughter Angela and then son Todd three years later. In 1978 they moved to Scappoose where Phil worked for Transwestern Aviation, and Rosemary commuted to her downtown Portland job for Aon Risk Insurance Services. They have been members of St. Wenceslaus since moving to Scappoose, and Msgr. VanderZanden baptized both of the children. He was such a warm and caring priest.

Rosemary enjoyed teaching Sunday School when the kids were little, starting out teaching Kindergarten with Peggy Simpson then moving on to Grade 3 for several years. Phil loved working with the guys carving turkeys for the annual Turkey Dinners (they would enjoy a few drinks while carving). People came from all over to feast and even take out dinners were available. Our family all worked either in the kitchen or in serving, and it was a great social time.

We love the Christmas Pageants and watching the faces of the parents watching their children perform. Now we are grandparents to Ashton, who lives in the parish with Angie, and we get to see him in the pageant and other parish events like Saints Alive! Rosemary is a lector and Phil is a greeter, and both are part of the parish Prayer Circle. It has been heartwarming to see our daughter Angie continue in our legacy of service both as a catechist and singing at Mass with parish groups. Angie, Phil and Rosemary are actively involved in the 100th anniversary celebration plans for September, 2011.
Bob and Dolores Brinster Family

Bob and I were born in North Dakota and raised on farms, as were our parents Raphael & Katherine Decker Brinster and Sebastian & Agatha Gerhardt Frank, all of German-Russian descent. In our growing up years our parents spoke both German and English at home. We were married on October 2, 1951 and are celebrating our 60th this year. We lived on the Brinster farm until October, 1958 when we moved west to Portland with our three children: Ken was 5, Lenora was 3 and Duane was 5 months. We arrived at the home of Bob’s sister and her husband on Halloween!

Bob bought into Linnton Plywood in Portland as a share-holder. We purchased a home near North Catholic High School, and belonged to St. Cecilia’s parish in Portland. Cheryl and Curtiss were born in Portland, and Curtiss was only one month old when we moved to our present farm location, about four miles from St. Wenceslaus Church in July, 1961.

Bob worked at Linnton Plywood for 36 years until retirement in 1994. In the meantime he was also farming, raising hay and cattle, plus sheep. For many years we had a large vegetable garden. The kids learned responsibility on the farm and during strawberry season in June they got up very early to catch a bus to work in the local fields. Those were the days! All our children and grandchildren live near and around the area, at the most one hour from our home.

Some of the fun activities in the parish were the turkey dinners, strawberry socials and camp-outs. Special foods were strawberry shortcake with ice cream and the kolaches served at the turkey dinners. Those dinners were busy times for people to work together. The Chairmen always did an excellent job to organize them and make them successful fundraisers, and the food was always something we looked forward to eating.

Some of our favorite priests were Fr. Manik, Fr. Domin, Msgr.VanderZanden, and Fr. Steve. It was always a sad time when the priests were re-assigned to move elsewhere. We were so thankful that Fr. Van spent 15 years here. He certainly enjoyed the country setting and a chance to garden, being a farm boy from the Banks/Roy area.

I was active in the Altar Society and, besides working on all the dinners, I cleaned the church and cooked for Kiwanis dinners as a fundraiser. I still help in the kitchen as needed for funeral receptions. Bob has been an usher/greeter for many years, and we both enjoy greeting people before the 8:30 Mass on Sunday mornings. Our boys were all altar servers. Christmas memories are cherished. We still love the fully decorated church with greenery and poinsettias. We also looked forward to the Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve, and never missed a single one. The church used to be filled with people way back then and that was really nice!
The Burg Family

From Julie Ann Burg Willey:

August J. and Mary E. Burg moved to Scappoose in July of 1952. Mary was pregnant with their fifth child, who was born in September. They joined the faith community of St. Wenceslaus and by 1959 there were three more children. Gus and Mary with Julie, Carol, John, Thomas, Ramona, Donna, Loretta, and Cathy Jo filled their pew of the church with Fr. Manik presiding. The children all attended St. Frederic's and then Assumption for their early education. Mary even drove the dilapidated old school bus daily to the Assumption school. All attended and participated in working at the turkey dinners, strawberry socials, and Christmas programs. They made their First Communions, Confirmations, and most of them were married in St. Wenceslaus, and Gus and Mary are buried in the cemetery.

We each have extremely strong memories of growing up in that small community; our lives were touched deeply by all the families living there. The Burgs and Bartas seemed to be in competition for the largest family. The Bartas won.

The turkey dinners were the most fun, and there was a progression, or "rite of passage", as to what job you did. Boys and girls would progress through the jobs as they got older and for the girls the top job was wearing the frilly apron and working in the dining area. The adults worked extremely hard but had a little fun in the process. I always remember Tim Gobel's huge smile even as he worked in the very hot kitchen.

From Catherine Burg Adams:

My name is Catherine Jo Magdalena Burg Adams; I am the youngest of August and Mary Burg's eight children. Not sure what all you need regarding information but here is a little background. Born 2/21/59 and baptized 9 days later (doctors did not know if I was going to live or not). Married my wonderful husband Chris on November 3, 1979, and have 3 children, Jeremy August 9/12/81, Jacob Keith 5/8/84 and Lacy Christina 11/1/85. All three children are married:

Jeremy & Gina Adams - their children: Noah John, Carter James and Chloe Marie;
Jacob & Kendall Adams - Callie Mae;
Lacy & Alex Watson.

St Wenceslaus Catholic Church has always been a special place for our family, from our own Baptism to our children's Baptism. Some of my favorite memories are helping out during the church dinners. I usually was assigned washing the silverware and slowly moved up to waiting tables. I remember the wonderful smells of the Turkey Dinners; it was hard to concentrate during Mass because the smells came into the church.

The support columns in the basement were great fun hanging onto them and spinning around getting dizzy.
The Christmas Pageants were held in the basement for a while, and I was the Angel Gabriel one year - what a great honor. We always received a bag of candy, peanuts and either an apple or an orange.

Our Mother was the bus driver for the Catholic School, and had to back the old bus into a garage that was by the old CCD building - very tight squeeze, but she did it every day.

Many of the Priests became close friends and would come over to visit and play cards. That is when we found out they are "human" and can be fun. Father Vanderzanden was so good to our family when Daddy was so ill. He came to visit him several times while he was at the hospital, and it gave us great comfort.

It was wonderful growing up in a small community and being part of a great group of people. St. Wenceslaus will always be our church even though we no longer live in Scappoose. Our parents loved the Church and the community and we were so fortunate to grow up there. Happy Anniversary St Wenceslaus!

Don Dackins

I arrived in Scappoose in November, 1991, after an absence of 51 years from the Portland area where I was raised. In 1940, during my senior year at Grant High, I was called to active duty and, after a few months at Bremerton, I was transferred to Naval Air Station, Tongue Point, Astoria. During my tour there I traveled Old Portland Road, then part of the Columbia River Highway, many times, and I must have gone past St. Wenceslaus Church, but I don’t remember it. After my 1991 arrival here (before cell phones and Internet) I looked for a Catholic church in the directory at the telephone pay station in Chinook Plaza and found St. Frederic’s in St. Helens. (I must have missed the Scappoose section of the directory.) After quite a few trips to St. Frederic’s, I noticed from the highway the imposing spire of St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church across the field that is now Freddie’s. Guess I must have been concentrating on driving or I would have noticed it a lot sooner! Anyway, here I am!

In my earlier days in the parish, I served as a lector and helped out at our St. Vincent de Paul Food Bank. One of the first parishioners I met was parish patriarch Joe Trtek who took me flying, and he told me how he built his first airplane and taught himself to fly. The late Helen Bukovi told me how she held her breath as she watched Joe take off on his first flight – he was good and must have been a natural aviator. Joe also filled me in on some of the history of St. Wenceslaus. And of course there were others; some who are still here and others who have moved on. What a great bunch! I also drove Msgr. VanderZanden around as needed.

Sailing With Fr. Joe Beno, by Don Dackins

Some time back in a conversation with Fr. Joe Beno, before our new Parish Hall was built, I spoke with him at coffee and donuts in the Church basement. He said he had been given a sailboat and was looking for someone to help him sail it. Since I had learned to sail as a Sea Scout and had been sailing most of my life (except for during a couple of wars), I offered to help.
The sailboat was an 18-foot C-Lark or “flattie” and fun to sail. We set a date and I met Fr. Joe at Scappoose Bay Marina later in the week.

At the appointed time, Fr. Joe arrived at the launch site with his newly acquired sailboat in tow. We launched the flattie, stepped the mast and rigged the sails and lines. A moderate breeze was coming up the Scappoose Bay entrance channel so we had to tack a few times to reach Multnomah Channel and then the Columbia River at St. Helens.

For those not familiar with sailing, a tacking sailboat heels, or leans, away from the wind and the crew sit on the windward deck to provide balance. Fr. Joe seemed more comfortable sitting in the center of the boat so he didn’t have to change sides at each tack. After a few tacks we reached Multnomah Channel. Looking downstream towards the Columbia River I could see whitecaps forming off St. Helens. I knew there would be lots of spray when sailing there and we would get wet. It was probably not a good place for an introductory sail. So after a short run on the Channel we headed back to the marina. The weather was sunny and it was a great, if short, sail. Fr. Joe Beno was a very good sport!

**Duncan Family**

My name is Alice Marie Mares Duncan. My father was Frank Mares who came to Scappoose from Ord, Nebraska in 1936. My mother, Evelyn Mares Larsen, came from California. After they met and married, they lived on a farm on Highway 30 north of Scappoose. Dad worked at the paper mill in St. Helens while my mother was a full-time homemaker. My father was able to speak and understand Czech, especially with his parents. However, not much Czech was spoken in our home since my mother was not Czech. Gary Gene Duncan and I were married at St. Wenceslaus Church, and had a reception at the old Catholic Workman Hall. We have two girls, Darlene and Wendy.

Mary Lou Barta and I cleaned the church during our four high school years. I was in the girls’ choir from the age of 7, and sang in choirs at Mass until I was 61 years old. I knew and sang all the hymns as well as the Latin High Mass for many years. I especially enjoyed the Christmas Midnight Masses, and singing carols before Mass begun was a real treat.

Confirmation was a proud event for us. The Bishop came; we chose sponsors and a saint’s name. The Corpus Christi feast in June was exciting for us. We girls all wore white dresses and carried baskets full of rose petals which we dropped in front of the priest as he carried the Blessed Sacrament in the monstrance under a canopy to four altars, one on the front porch of the rectory and three out in the cemetery. We sang Benediction songs along the way and stopped at the altars for Adoration.

Our Youth Group gave us a chance to meet other Catholic teens as well as providing outings, movies, Youth Conventions and activities. The church supported us to go to St. Frederic Catholic School by providing a bus so we enjoyed Catholic education. When my daughters were teenagers, I was trained as the adult leader of the Youth Group and did the job for a few years when Millie Gobel was DRE.
I have lived in Scappoose all my life and for many years was a housewife and mother full-time. Next I drove school buses for 8 years, then started a sewing/alteration/upholstery business from my home.

My favorite priests were Father Mai, because he presided at our wedding, and Father Steve Clovis because he was a real asset for our parish youth and young adults. Our parish has gone through some very trying times, especially when Vatican II brought about many changes which were difficult for some parishioners to accept. Now we are celebrating our 100th anniversary and our parish community continues to grow.

Gene and Diane Erhardt (1965-1995)

Gene & Diane Erhardt moved to Scappoose as newlyweds in September, 1965. They first lived on a 14 acre farm on Coal Creek Road with numerous trees, just down the hill from long-time parishioners Tim & Millie Gobel. Both were born in Portland and came out to the country to live and farm. They raised six children, and two still live in Scappoose, including parishioner Gina (Erhardt) Means and family. Diane says, “I loved our years in the parish; they were a very important part of my life. I am thankful I had my beginnings as a wife, mom, and community member there.”

Gene was active in the Knights of Columbus, taught CCD classes, lectured, served on Parish Councils and worked on church dinners and socials. Diane taught religious education for 30 years and loved seeing the young people transform into adults. Both served as Eucharistic Ministers, Gene ushered/greeted and was a lector. Diane played the piano for Saturday night Masses for years and years. Their sons were altar servers and each of the children, when older, would do one of the seven readings at the Easter Vigil. David and April helped take care of the cemetery, and Diane remembers a scary day when a friend, Stacy Vopalensky, fell off a riding mower as it was being put away and was seriously injured.

The Erhardts have fond memories of Christmas, including making cedar swags and setting up the crib scene. The Christmas Choirs were special. The Nativity Pageants were a highlight of the year. Diane says, “With so many children, we had a few in the roles of Baby Jesus, Mary, Joseph, angels, shepherds, and narrators over the years.” Diane took a turn or two as pageant director.

“First Communion were a joy as we saw the Holy Spirit light up the eyes of the little ones. Confirmation was different; the teens rarely seemed ready. They marched through the process to please teachers and parents and to end CCD classes. That was sad. It is better nowadays. The kids get more involved in their religious education and actually decide for themselves if they really feel ready to grow in their Catholic Faith.”

We remember the Altar Society putting on the parish dinners for years all by themselves, and then men became active and all the parish was signed up to work, and they became social events for community building within the parish besides fundraisers. Diane remembers “The kolaches
were the best and I remember people stuffing their purses and pockets as they left the dinner tables. I think people came sometimes just for the kolaches! Gene always worked in the food industry in North Portland so enjoyed getting involved in the roasting and carving of the turkeys for the fall dinners. Diane worked in the kitchen and dining room and remembered “The ladies of the parish hesitated to share any of their secret recipes for the gravy, coleslaw or turkey dressing.” We chaired the Turkey Dinner and a Strawberry Social. We also started a Youth Club for teens in 1966, assisted by Gene’s sister Peggy and her husband Bill Simpson.

Gene and Diane were both raised Catholic. As a child, Diane had asthma and “prayed so hard for God to help me breathe and live through one more night. He became my friend at a very young age.” They shared this personal faith and relationship with God with all the kids they raised and taught. They also facilitated the adult education DeSales series in the parish, developing lasting friendships with the Reeds, Louies, and others in the parish.

Their favorite priest was Fr. Van and Fr. Jim Crunican from St. Frederic’s. Both became wonderful family friends and counselors. One year they took Fr. Van’s corn, beets and potatoes to the County Fair. They remember Fr. Pat Dooley as a man who had the knack of instituting an idea and making the teens seem like it was their idea. They have a funny Fr. Cormier story: One day after Mass, little four year old Gina innocently pushed Father’s “dress” with her foot while he was talking to her parents and made contact with his leg. He made a big deal about her kicking him! She simply wanted to know if he was floating! He did not seem to like children very well.

It was very difficult for Gene & Diane to leave the parish and Scappoose after 32 years to move to Bonney Lake, WA for his job promotion, leaving their six young adult children and several grandchildren in Oregon. Diane called it an “aging process”, that reality that one is past the child-raising years, which are very happy times for the most part. They now reside in Hermiston, and have been active parishioners wherever they live. HAPPY 100TH ST.W ENCESLAUS PARISH!!

**Millie Gobel**

Although my name was once Margaret Rosella Donertz, you know me as Millie Gobel. My husband Tim and I came out West from Nebraska in 1949 to work and then to stay in 1957. For awhile Tim worked for Ron Hein on Mr. Sherman’s ranch, 800 acres of farmland and pasture with many cattle and crops including grain and corn. Then we bought our own 40 acres atop Coal Creek Road where I live in the family farmhouse today with my daughter Linda. My parents were German and did farming in Nebraska, but we came out here because of hard times. We raised six children, and now Kathi and Linda are still in Scappoose with their children and grandchildren. Tim later worked for Halton Tractor.

Tim and I were always active in the parish and my special love was religious education for all ages. I was the first Director of Religious Education, following the former CCD classes, for 29 years. My favorite parish memories are of the annual Christmas Pageants, First Communions and Confirmations, and all the special dinners and potluck suppers where everybody gets involved.
The feast of Corpus Christi in June was very religious with a procession of the Blessed Sacrament all around the Church and cemetery and stops at little altars.

We had many pastors but my favorite was Fr. John Domin because he looked ahead, had vision for trying something new. He was only here from 1967-1969, and ushered in many of the Vatican II reforms of the church. Our parish had a difficult time handling such a wonderful person. I attended Marylhurst College classes as an adult, and every class the Archdiocese offered so that I could be a good D.R.E. for our parish. It was important to me that there were activities and classes for preschoolers-teenagers and adult education too.

The backbone of our parish was the Altar Society and also the Knights of Columbus; Tim was a member. Both groups actively supported parish programs. I am happy that the parish continues to grow; there is much potential in our young people.

The parish welcomed us from Nebraska with open arms and we fit right in, and our volunteer work was appreciated from the beginning. We always loved St. Wenceslaus Parish and I pray for continued involvement and outreach. God bless us all as we celebrate our 100th!

Maria Greene

My mom was raised in the Friends (Quaker) Church. When she lived in Mexico, she became interested in Catholicism. She said she found the churches there gave her a feeling of peace. She studied a bit about the religion at the University of Oregon’s Newman Center. My dad was also not raised a Catholic. He came to the religion when his mom met and married an extraordinary man who was a Catholic. Mom and Dad met in 1975 at Mount Hood Meadows. When they were first married, they attended St. Pius X Church. Mom had begun working at Scappoose High and Middle Schools as a Spanish and English teacher in January of 1971, but Dad worked in Hillsboro, so they settled in Beaverton. Eventually Dad went to work for the planning department of Columbia County. On the evening of his first day of work, one in which he had had to drive to various locations in the county, he announced that it was indeed an incredibly beautiful place. They began looking immediately but did not find the right location until three years later – a home in the forest on Holaday Road. My younger brother Matthew and I both grew up attending St. Wenceslaus.

The fondest memories I have of growing up in our parish were the amazing turkey dinners. While I never quite got the taste of a Kolache, the turkey dinner was one of the greatest times I had as a child. I remember the year that I was finally old enough to go from a runner to a server and was so nervous that I was removing people’s dishes from them before they were finished eating. After a gentle talking to, I didn’t make that mistake again!

Great memories are held of our high school religious education classes in the “grey house”. There were flies galore, but it felt like our place, a place for the older youth to hang out and learn. I remember classes with C.J. Marquardt, Angie Bisner, Aimee LaVoie and others who were taught by Ellen Rocha. It was more of a group of friends talking rather than a group of students and a teacher. The best weeks were those when we would leave early to prepare for
singing at 11 am Mass. Warm memories are also held of our high school trips to Catholic youth conferences. While some of the lessons may have been forgotten in the passage of time, the community that they helped foster still exists.

In our later high school career we were given the opportunity to receive the sacrament of confirmation. For our year, it was decided that those students from our vicariate, not just our local parish would be taught together. There were many Sundays of traveling to Vernonia or St. Helens to meet other Catholic youth. My Confirmation sponsor, Gwynn Klobes, has been an important influence in my life, offering advice and guidance as I have needed it.

**Ed and Virginia Greisen**

Ed and Virginia (Gina) Greisen moved to Scappoose in 1970 with their eight children. Two were in college and the rest were in school, from a senior down to a kindergartner. They had been living in North Portland. Gina was a “Berry Boss” for Joe Steven’s strawberry farm and she brought berry pickers from Holy Redeemer, Holy Cross and Queen of Peace parishes out to this area to work. Vera Havlik was the bus driver. The Havliks invited the Greisens to a church function at St. Wenceslaus, and there they met Hank Schmit. He sold real estate and told them about an old farm house on Wikstrom Road that would be perfect for their family. Around that time they were eager to move out here from the city, and had been looking for a few years.

Ed commuted to his Portland job. Virginia worked at the local department store, Johnson’s, then bought it and renamed it Greisen’s. She sold everything from gifts and greeting cards to fabric and notions, clothing, shoes and rain boots.

They became very active in the parish helping with turkey dinners and strawberry socials. Gina became an excellent baker of the Czech kolache. When Ed retired, he ran the Food Bank for years. Today three of their children live in Scappoose as very active citizens. Son Mike is the Fire Chief. Son Doug is the Police Chief. Daughter Janell is the St. Wenceslaus Youth Coordinator.

Ed is from Nebraska and Virginia from North Dakota, so they fit right in with the Czechs from that area.

**Mike and Mary Greisen Family**

Mike was born in Portland, Oregon and moved with his family to Scappoose in 1970 from North Portland. His dad worked for Portland Terminal railroad. His mom had worked part-time at Johnson’s V Store in Scappoose, and the “V” was for “variety” because the store had everything from boots and shoes to clothing to household items and greeting cards. The Greisen’s bought the store and re-named it Greisen’s Department Store. The location was on the highway where the current Burrito USA and other businesses are now located.
Mike married Mary Walsh and they have four children: Jessica, Steven, Katie and Robbie, who is in college and still lives in Scappoose when home. The family has a small farm on Wikstrom Road, near the old farm house where Mike grew up during his Scappoose years.

Mike and Mary have always been active in the parish, helping with all the dinners, even picking strawberries for the old June socials. They have enjoyed the Spring Flings and Annual campouts. Mary has organized a fun Middle School Youth Group and the monthly Children’s Liturgy of the Word (CLOW), as well as working on projects for Sunday School. She once ran a parish preschool. Mike has served on the Pastoral Council and volunteers in all liturgical ministries. Mary sings in a music group once a month at Mass.

Mike and Mary report that their children always loved the annual Christmas Pageants and then visiting Santa Claus after to get an orange and a chocolate bar. Their children acted out many pageant parts from angels and shepherds through Joseph and Mary over the years. First Communions were always special and they liked that the parish provide youth groups and teen retreats. Ski trips and beach retreats were special.

Working together as a family at parish dinners was fun and of course “the food was always good.” Today Mike is the Scappoose Fire Chief, and Mary teaches Kindergarten at Grant Watts School, so they are very connected to the community as well as the parish. They feel the great people here make this a vibrant parish.

A very special person for them is Millie Gobel, now 90 in this Centennial Year. She made you feel welcome and a part of the parish. She was patient and would ask if you could help in volunteer projects when you were ready. She was involved with Religious Education for all ages for more than 35 years. Mary remembers Millie asking her, when the children were babies, if she could help with CLOW, but, at the time, life was overwhelming with four little ones. When the youngest was one, Millie had Mary help her once in awhile with her taking the lead. Eventually Mary ran and continues to organize this ministry. Whenever Millie involved you in a project she was always there for support.

Albert & Pat Havlik

My name is Albert John Havlik; I am a grandson of John Havlik, Sr. who was one of the founders of St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church. My grandfather came to Scappoose in 1900 along with his wife Barbara, having migrated from Crete, Nebraska to a 1000 acre dairy in Scappoose. Both John and his wife were instrumental in establishing a Catholic Czech community in South Scappoose, by donating land and encouraging Czech priests to come west. Before the first church was built, Masses were often celebrated in the Havlik home.

My father, John, Jr. was born in Scappoose and was able to speak both Czech and English. He farmed from about 1920-1934, when he met my mother, Erma Dumbeck, an Irish-German teacher from Albany, Oregon. My dad then formed a heavy earth-moving construction company which employed several men from this area. My parents had three boys: myself, Robert and Steven, and one daughter Mary Ann (Robinson.) Dad’s construction company played a large part
in digging the basement and preparing the foundation for the new church in 1949. He also pulled the halves of the Army chapel over the fields to the parish property.

I, Albert, graduated in 1957 from OSU, and managed Dad’s construction company from 1957 until the present time. After graduation from college, I met Patricia Ann Taylor, an Irish girl from Capistrano, California, the daughter of a doctor and a teacher. Pat had graduated from Marylhurst College and interned at St. Vincent Hospital as a medical technologist, both in the Portland area. We were married in 1961, and celebrated our 50th Anniversary this year. We have four children: Jeanne, Michael, Sheila and Margaret. Michael, with his wife Sarah and children Anika and Kevin, still live here in Scappoose, and built a home on Havlik property.

I have great memories of childhood and growing up. I was fortunate to have a Catholic grade school education at St. Frederic’s where the sisters did a wonderful job of preparing us for life, both spiritually and intellectually. I enjoyed serving as an altar boy, especially for my favorite priest, Fr. Michael Fleming when I was in grade school. I served Masses for many years, the last being the final Mass in the original St. Wenceslaus Church with Fr. Joseph Manik in 1949.

Many favorite memories are centered on our parish. The annual Corpus Christi celebrations are especially memorable. Originally, members of the congregation met at the old Katolicky Delnik (Catholic Workman) Hall (now the Senior Thrift Store) and walked down the highway escorted by a policeman to the church, where three altars were erected outside the church and on the cemetery grounds. Everyone sang and processed: parishioners, altar boys, flower girls, all singing hymns. The priest carried the Blessed Sacrament under a canopy carried by four men and incensed by an altar server walking backward. Adoration was celebrated at each altar, concluding with a solemn Benediction in the church, after which everybody enjoyed a Strawberry Social. This feast was late in June on a Sunday.

Our favorite activities included receptions and wedding dances in the old K.D. hall where the children were treated with soft drinks and ice cream. In winter the lakes froze over and we had a great time ice skating. Some of us raced motor scooters. We also enjoyed fishing and hunting.

St. Wenceslaus parish became widely known for its Fall Turkey Dinners; many people came long distances, especially for the famous Czech kolaches. Scappoose was a wonderful place to grow up – everyone knew and helped each other. Our family never left this area. We stayed busy with our construction business; we repaired and worked on our heavy equipment while we bid on construction jobs to find work.

We have loved this area and this parish. Pat and I do volunteer work in the parish and in the St. Vincent DePaul Food Bank. Pat taught Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) classes from 1961-1968. We feel this is a very vibrant parish, and we are proud to be a part of it. Life has been good to us and God has blessed us abundantly.
Mary Hlavinka Evert

I am Mary Hlavinka Evert; I was born in Scappoose, and have lived here my whole life. My family came here in 1920, living on Dutch Canyon Road. Dad was Bohemian, born in Czechoslovakia, and Mom was born in the United States. Dad was a laborer to support our family.

I married William Evert and we raised two sons and a daughter here. I cleaned the Church on many occasions and helped with numerous dinners. The Turkey Dinner and Strawberry Socials were special. Kolaches are a favorite baked treat.

I went to St. Frederic’s Catholic School, and I am a cradle Catholic. I remember that for awhile, Sunday Mass was in the Czech language.

I still have a son in Scappoose, and my granddaughter Amber and her husband Steve Bates are raising my three great-grandsons in the parish.

Frank E. Hobizal, Sr. Family

My mother was born in Prague, Bohemia, now the Czech Republic, in 1888 and died in 1968. My father, of Czech descent, was born in Austria in 1895 and died in 1970. My mother worked as a maid, and the people she worked for paid her way to the USA when she was just 15. When she got to Texas she again worked as a maid to pay it off. She worked to bring her parents, three sisters and three brothers to America. I do not know how my father paid for his way to America. They met and married in Texas.

In 1918, they decided to move to Scappoose, Oregon after reading about all the Czech people living here in the Czech newspapers. Also the weather was more like it had been where they came from. They left by train with three children: Ann, Vicky and Martin. Mary was born in 1919 (Mary Hobizal Mares); I was born in 1921 and John was born in 1924. When John was born, Mary and I tried to look in the bedroom window but couldn’t see in!

I remember at that time all the big stumps that were 10-15 feet tall and 5-6 feet in diameter around the property. Dad used 20 sticks of dynamite to split them, and then hired Jeff Marek to pull them out with his big Caterpillar. Jeff also came from Texas in 1918, and married Ella Havlik, the daughter of Barbara & John Havlik. We lived on a 12 acre farm on Mountain View Road. To support the family, Dad worked in the local sawmill and sold produce from the farm.

During the summers while out of school, I worked for Fred Havlik in his potato and grain fields. In 1941, after graduating from Scappoose High School, I got a job under the Sauvie Island Bridge at the Kraft cheese box plant. In 1942, I was drafted into the U.S. Army. After two weeks of basic training I went to schooling for radio, radar, and motor repairing. I ended up in Radar Supply and was sent to the South Pacific to Australia, New Guinea, Admiralty Island, and then to the Philippines. I came home from World War II in December of 1945.
At the church dinners I cooked and mashed the potatoes with other helpers too. For several years I raised parsley for the turkey dressing. When the new church was being built from the Army chapel, I helped a Mr. Roberts with the wiring. Then I needed to return to the box plant as supervisor of the night shift, so Jim Schmit helped Mr. Roberts finish the wiring.

My wife Delores also worked at the box plant where we met. We got married in 1958 and raised four children at our place on Watson Road. Three are living in Scappoose and one is in Sandy.

In 1965 I got a job as a mail carrier on Route 1, Scappoose. I retired in 1984 after 20 years. Delores’ family owned a trailer park at the coast which was in money problems, so a judge asked me to run it for 30 days. It turned out to be 2 ½ years, no pay! After a few months, Delores moved there too. It was no fault of ours, but we still lost her family’s property.

Turning 90 years old this year, I remember most of the priests in our parish, but my favorite was Fr. Joseph Cormier. I delivered many boxes to his front porch as his mail carrier, and we often chatted. Delores always worked at the dinners, and still bakes kolaches for parish occasions like the 100th anniversary! For years I was an active member of the Catholic Workman (Katolicky Delnick) fraternal organization and was the president for almost 25 years. We merged with the First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association in 2004.

**HISTORY OF THE CATHOLIC WORKMAN (KATOLICKY DELNIK)**  
(As Frank Hobizal remembers it)

In the mid 1930’s many people would bring turkeys, ducks, geese, rabbits and garden produce to the gatherings. After a potluck dinner there would be an auction and a dance later. Whoever got the money I have no idea.

On Valentine’s Day the young ladies would bake cakes and then there would be an auction for them. If anyone knew that a man wanted a certain cake from a certain young lady, they would up the bids! It was a very fun time for all. Afterwards there would be cake eating and dancing.

In the late 1930’s there were many weddings and receptions and dances in the Hall. The K.D. held picnics at the Roamer’s Rest Park and Blue Lake. Jacob Schmit was the one who made arrangements. There were hot dogs, ice cream, pop and a pot luck lunch. Joe Kocarnik would drive a group over in the school bus the parish owned.

After World War II many more weddings, receptions and dances were held in the K.D. Hall. The music was loud and fast with polkas, schottisches, and waltzes. I don’t know how the building held up with all the stomping while dancing. Sometimes there would be a brass band or a Czech Women’s Band.

When the new church was being built from the Army chapel in 1949, Mass was held in the K.D. Hall. The new church included a full basement for parish socials. In the late 1970’s, the senior citizens were organizing and asked to use the Hall. It was rented to them for $1.00 a year. In about 1980 they got a government grant to buy the Hall for $15,000. The Catholic Workman, after much debate on how to use the money, decided to give two scholarships a year of $500
each to graduating seniors who were active in St. Wenceslaus Parish. With the high interest rates at the time, we were able to increase our money.

I was elected president in about 1980 and served until 2004. At that time the director of Catholic Workman had died and there was no one available to take over so the group decided to sell its assets to the First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association. Now they carry our life insurance; they get better dividends as a larger group. FCSLA also supports special projects from member’s parishes such as the St. Wenceslaus Centennial.

John and Dorothy Hobizal

The history of the Hobizal family, parents and grand-parents, is covered in the family history contributed by Frank Hobizal.

John was born in Scappoose, Oregon to Matt and Josephine Hobizal. He had two brothers and three sisters. He attended Scappoose schools; in 1943 he enlisted in the Navy and served in the Pacific war zone. After World War II, he returned to Scappoose and worked as a mechanic, carpenter and general construction worker at Western Wire Bound, Gunderson’s, and Hoffman Construction between 1946 and 1964.

Dorothy (Stoos) Hobizal was born in Iowa and came to Scappoose in 1953 to visit her aunt and uncle. Here she met John; they were married in June, 1954. She never went back to Iowa! John built their home where they raised four boys and one girl:

- Ray married Rhonda Caster; one daughter, Carrie Ann
- Phil married Patty Sachse; children: Natalie, Emily, Megan, Tim and Michael
- Larry married Trudy Anderson; children: Adrien, Shannon, Allison, David
- Pat married Julie Waller; children: Jacob and Alec
- Anne married Steve Edwards; children: Josh, Zach, Brock, Max

John and Dorothy have enjoyed an active and busy life. John served on the parish Property Commission for several years and helped with the building of the new church. He took over the management of the cemetery after the death of Joe Kocarnik in 1977. He has helped maintain the parish buildings and grounds and has helped repair various church equipment.

Dorothy was a Religious Education teacher for several years and promoted and directed the Nativity Pageant at Christmas. She undertook the chairmanship of parish dinners for several years and helped the Altar Society with church cleaning and decorating the altar.

Although none of the children live in Scappoose, the Hobizal family enjoys many large “get-togethers” several times a year. All the families are always happy to come “home” to Scappoose!
Nancy Johnson

I was born in Yreka, California. My mother and stepfather moved to acreage at the end of Siercks Road in 1958, and had a share in Linnton Plywood. My husband Richard P. Johnson and I moved here in 1978, after he retired from a career in the United States Coast Guard. Then he worked for Reidel Corp. in environmental cleanup for 15 years. We had five children. Two had graduated high school and never lived in Scappoose. Jill graduated from SHS in 1979, and Carmen grew up here from 7th grade, was confirmed, and graduated in 1984. Dickey did all his schooling here (Class of 1992), as well as celebrating First Communion and Confirmation. At this time daughter JoJo and son Dickey and families live in the community.

Our family has been involved in many volunteer projects in the parish. I was part of the Altar Society that put on fund-raisers until it disbanded. We collected recipes, had a craft fair, and bought items for the old kitchen in the church basement with our funds. I cleaned the church on Saturdays and helped arrange flowers with Martha Stokes. I helped make dressing for the Turkey Dinners every year, and Carmen waited tables. The children were in the Christmas Pageants, and Dickey was an altar boy. Grandson Alex participated in High School activities with Rick & MaryJane Weber. At different times the children and local grandchildren have been in CCD and Religious Education classes. I am currently a lector and have been a Eucharistic Minister.

I have wonderful memories of all the special parish times: picking strawberries for the June Social, seeing the little angels and shepherds in the Christmas Pageants, First Communions and Confirmations. The parish traditions were very important to me, and I learned a lot over the years working on those dinners and socials. My cherished memories are of my grandchildren being baptized at St. Wenceslaus: Fr. Van baptized Carmen’s children, Fr. Steve baptized JoJo’s Megan and Fr. Jim baptized Dickey’s Reed. When my husband became ill and died, Fr. Steve was there for me and the children and was so good to us.

When I lived in Porterville, CA, I did attend a Catholic School for a time and after high school graduation I became a Catholic in Astoria, OR. My husband was also Catholic, graduating 8th grade from St. Mary’s Home for Boys in Beaverton in the late 1940’s. We chose to move to Scappoose after Richard’s retirement because we had visited my mother often during holidays and vacations and became very familiar with the town. We never left after 1978. Burying my husband here was a very sad time. It was also hard to bid goodbye to Fr. Van who had been here from 1980-1995. My happiest times are when grown children return to church with their children, and when the grandkids come to Mass with me.

The nicest thing for me in this parish is meeting so many people and learning so much about my faith. All the different activities give me a broad view of the many ways to serve and in the process to interact with others. I have a real sense of belonging here, and when grandson Alex lived with me for awhile, I appreciated the way some members made him feel a welcomed part of the church family. The river keeps flowing and the continuity of our church just keeps going. It is really amazing to ponder.
Jim and Marianne Jones

Jim and Marianne Jones moved here in 1996 when Jim took a job at Scappoose High School. Jim is from Scappoose originally. Marianne has roots in two pioneer German Catholic families in St. Boniface Parish, Sublimity, Oregon, which is over 130 years old. Their children are: Eleanor (13), Jimmy (11) and Emma (9). They especially enjoy the parish campouts, Christmas Pageants, Spring Flings and Advent Fairs. Their family helps at most of the parish events and all the children are altar servers at Mass. Marianne has run the Advent Fair soup lunch and Christmas Potluck and organizes the monthly Coffee & Donuts socials after both Masses and she eagerly helps with funeral luncheons and other parish receptions.

Marianne says, “Our family loves the tradition of our Christmas Pageant and the children look forward to receiving the orange and candy bar from Santa Claus. We love spending time with our church family before Christmas. This parish is a wonderful place for our children to spend time and learn about their Catholic faith with other kids their own ages. Our children are really learning what a community is all about through this parish. When my father-in-law passed away, we appreciated the parish and everyone’s support.”

Bill and Maureen Kessi Family

The story of how I came to Scappoose and St. Wenceslaus Parish makes me always curious as to how couples have met! I was Maureen McMenamin from Tacoma, a new teacher 2 years out of Seattle University, in 1962 when I went abroad for two years to travel the world, and to teach with the Air Force Dependent Schools in Madrid, Spain. While teaching in Spain I met a fellow teacher, Mary Kessi, from Scappoose, Oregon and we became lifelong friends.

Mary’s parents had come to Scappoose as young teachers about 1935 and had six children, Mary, Bill, Bob, Judy, Jimmy and Georgia Kessi. They all went to school at St. Frederick’s parish in nearby St. Helens, started a dairy in Scappoose, and all graduated from Oregon State University. While teaching together in Madrid, Mary and I always joked that we each had a single brother the other one’s age, and we would get together when we returned home from our travels. Mary came back to Seattle to live and teach there with me, and I met her brother Bill in the fall of 1965. We were married the following July, ’66.

So I came to live in Scappoose, the wife of a dairymen and farmer here. I liked my new parish right away and became good friends with our priest Father Domin, a fellow artist. My first year here I taught 5th grade at Grant Watts School, and then we had our five children; Will, in ’67, Kelly in ’69, Matthew in ’73, Bobby in ’75 and Patrick in 1977. All of our children worked on our dairy farm, and through 4H and FFA each had their own little business, the boys raising and selling pigs, and our daughter Kelly had a large flock of sheep.

While my family was growing I taught Religious Education at the parish and enjoyed the small community feeling here. All graduated from University of Portland in Business, and many traveled themselves. Now three of our children, Will, Bob and Pat live nearby and come to our parish. They feel a nostalgia for the parish as they recall the many years of involvement in
serving on the altar, being "Little Drummer Boys" in the annual parish Christmas pageant, working on the annual Thanksgiving dinners, teaching CCD themselves, and trips with Bill and me as chaperones to the many Youth Conventions as teens. Now we all still enjoy the annual parish campout in the summers.

Bill, I and the kids all still help out at the St. Vincent de Paul Food Bank in our parish, and our parishioners continue to be very generous in aid to the hungry in the community at these tough times. Bill and I attend daily Mass often, and feel blessed that our parish continues to have a dedicated pastor and a congregation with yet a new generation devoted to coming together to worship as fellow Christians and laborers in the vineyard of the Lord. May our dear little parish be always blessed from above.

Bob and Barbara Kessi Family

My name is Robert (Bob) Kessi and I have spent my lifetime in Scappoose. My wife Barbara and I met and married in 1967 and raised our son and three daughters here, and now we share our home on the family farm with one daughter, her husband, and three of our grandkids. Dad, a WWII veteran, came here to teach agriculture at the high school in 1934. He met and married Mom in Corvallis in 1935, and her teaching career was in Scappoose. The family home is across the highway from the current Scappoose Middle School (formerly SHS) at SW 1st & Maple. It was built in 1908 on a half-block with a big garden plot, chicken house, pig pen, orchard, berries, and we even had a cow for awhile. At that time the population was around 400. Many people in town had livestock for home usage. My parents raised three sons and three daughters. My sister Georgia is now in the house.

Dad was of Swiss and American 1776 ancestry, born in 1897 in Indiana. Mom was of German descent born in 1908 on homestead land in Nez Perce, Idaho. Both were teachers but Dad wanted to have a dairy. Mom initially said “No”, but after a few years he won! The family then milked cows in the Scappoose bottomland for 45 years, where we still live and farm. My wife Barbara was raised on a homestead in Naples, Alberta, Canada and had gone to nursing school.

I have always been active in the parish, as a child, and then with Barbara and the children. I was an altar server, washed dishes as a kid at parish dinners, and then got involved in Mass ministries and taught CCD one winter before I got canned! When Fr. Van was here I counted money, did numerous repair jobs, and hauled in manure and did heavy tillage for his huge vegetable garden, located where the parking lot is now between the Center and the Hall. I have eaten lots of kolaches in my life!

Parish picnics were fun as a kid, at times they were at Oaks Park or Jantzen Beach. The men played poker after a delicious potluck lunch; the women loved talking the day away, and the kids enjoyed the midways or swimming.

I remember going to crowded, festive Midnight Mass and being very tired. All the singing came only from the choir loft. People were not allowed to join in until about 1965. First Communions, and Confirmations with the visiting Bishop, were long, drawn-out affairs with a lot of pomp and
circumstance, all in Latin, quite overdone in my opinion. Corpus Christi at times was rained out and had to be in the church, again a long sermon and a High Mass in Latin. What was the point?

My favorite priest was Fr. John Domin, 1967-1969, because he brought the Vatican II reforms to us, when the Catholic Church at last recognized a God of love rather than a God of fear. I learned about my faith mainly from the example of my parents at home. I also went to St. Frederic Catholic School on the parish bus, where the nuns did a great job of educating us. When I was a teenager, our pastor Fr. Manik taught a weekly CCD class which was a rather disastrous affair. I went mainly to be around the girls!

I have been involved in the family farming and dairy business since I was a teen. I diversified into heavy construction and tree farming. Scappoose has a great public school system, making it a good place to raise a family. The saddest times in a small town like ours is to lose a local boy or girl in a car accident. This is always a big community loss. The happiest times are the many celebrations of the younger generations growing up and moving on in the world with new families.

**Klobes Family**

Jeff Klobes came to Scappoose from Coon Rapids, Minnesota and met Gwynn Melton at Scappoose High School. The Meltons had moved from Great Falls, Montana in 1966. Jeff & Gwynn were married in 1981 at St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church with Msgr. Edmund VanderZanden presiding. In 1983 they welcomed their first child, Michael and he was baptized by Fr. Van, who would baptize future Klobes babies: Joey in 1985; Daniel in 1987; and Kassi in 1990. Kassi shared her Baptism Day with Robbie Greisen.

“We have enjoyed our community family here at St. Wenceslaus. God and community are the tenets of faith for us. The events that we have been involved with as a family such as ski trips and campouts are centered on that community.”

**Melton Family**

In November, 1966, Ed and Mary Melton and their five children left Montana and arrived at their new home in Scappoose, Oregon. It was a time of trial as Ed had waited a year for a corneal transplant, and with no facilities in Montana to help Ed, he had the procedure at Rose General Hospital in Denver, Colorado. Oregon was one of the states that had the facilities, so our family moved.

It was a good choice, as Scappoose was a small town, and it had a great community in the parish of St. Wenceslaus. At the first Sunday Mass we attended, we were greeted by two people – Joe and Josie Trtek. They were like our adopted parents. Their daughter, Sr. Katherine Trtek, has always been an inspiration in our lives. We have also met so many wonderful, loving people in this parish.
Our children Steve, Doug, Gwynn, Eddie, and Craig all received their First Communion and Confirmation sacraments at the church, and were honored at the annual High School Graduation Masses. We had the weddings of both Steve and Gwynn at St. Wenceslaus, and we buried our son Eddie in 1985 in the parish cemetery.

We have had wonderful years. Picking strawberries with our row boss, Dorothy Hobizal, for the Strawberry Socials was a wonderful experience. We learned many things from all the wonderful cooks, especially in terms of the Annual Turkey Dinner. We always had fun.

The years have gone by so fast. St. Wenceslaus has grown with talented and special people.

Jim Kocarnik

My grandparents, Ignace and Anna Fischer and family arrived from Minnesota in the spring of 1912. They first lived with Anna’s brother, Charles Koutek, on what is now Crystal Orchards, and then bought a farm just west of the present Scappoose totem pole. Their daughter Lillian, my mother, said the Czech Catholics of South Scappoose were looked down on by many townspeople, but Fischer butter and fresh produce were popular at the Watts & Price store in Scappoose.

Mom’s sister Anna married Andrew Rothmeyer and their daughter Virginia Sheldon still lives here. Mom’s sister Marie married John Beno and they became the parents of Father Joe Beno and Helen Barta (both now in retirement facilities). Her brother Wenceslaus (Jim) married and lived in Portland, while her brother Joe took over the Fischer farm after grandpa died. In 1921, Mom’s uncle Father Urban Fischer, OSB, the first resident pastor of St. Wenceslaus, presided over her marriage to Joseph Kocarnik, who came from Nebraska in 1919. Dad bought the general store at the intersection of Dutch Canyon Road and Old Portland Road from Charles Koutek. He and Mom had Robert, Delores (Reed), Joe, Joan (deceased) and me.

What I remember most about the old church were the many statues. St. Wenceslaus now stands in the niche above the outside entrance of the new church, but many of the others stood silent sentinel, in a storage cranny behind the choir loft for many years.

We had Mass in the church hall, now the Senior Thrift Store, while the new church was built in 1949 from the Army chapel. Father Manik vested in the kitchen. I happened to be there when the new statue of St. Joseph arrived and was uncrated, and I remember being somewhat in awe as it was so much taller than I was at the time.

For many years a statue of Christ in the Tomb was brought out on Good Friday. People would come throughout the day and bring flowers and the aroma of all the blossoms was almost overwhelming.

We had many evening devotions at church when I was young; three times a week during Lent, maybe twice a week in May and October. In the early 1950’s we had a week-long Mission in the
Czech language. I remember it was very well attended. The choir even learned some Czech songs for it.

Corpus Christi was a big occasion. I’m told an afternoon procession once began at the old church hall, but I recall it only from the church out to the cemetery. Along the way were three or four small altars set up by parish families and a stop was made at each one for prayers or Benediction. Young girls dropped flower petals in front of the priest carrying the monstrance with the consecrated host while the Catholic Workmen carried a baldachin (canopy) over him. The women’s choir walked as a group singing hymns, and there was incense.

Robert Kocarnik

Some 86 years ago, I was baptized in the first parish church built on the same site as the present one. Later, it became a vital part of my childhood and made a lifelong impression on me. The church was built of wood and was quite small. However, it had an elegant sanctuary, several steps higher than the nave and separated from it by a communion rail. Above the large main altar were elaborate niches for life size statues of the saints. A larger than life statue of St. Wenceslaus, now above the front doors of the present church, was in the center, larger niche above the tabernacle. There were additional statues, two to the right and two to the left of St. Wenceslaus. These were St. John, Christ the Good Shepherd, St. Joseph, and St. Nepulnik. All were donated by the pioneer parishioners.

The side altars were also impressive. The one on the left featured Mary, Queen of the Holy Rosary, with adoring, kneeling angels on each side of her. On the right was a large statue of St. Anthony. These two statues are now in the VanderZanden Center. The front panel of the right side altar was removed on Good Friday to reveal a statue of Christ’s crucified body lying in a cave-like sepulcher. During Lent, all the statues were covered with purple cloth.

When I was old enough, I became an altar boy and served at many Masses. There were usually four servers for the two Sunday morning Masses, and some scuffling as to who would bring in the water and wine, who would ring the bells at consecration, who would hold the paten under the communicant’s chin, etc. The older boys usually prevailed. Masses tended to be lengthy, as many of the older parishioners had come from Europe and did not speak English. So the readings and sermon were first given in English then repeated in Bohemian.

Serving for weddings was a cherished opportunity, because of a special custom. At the end of the ceremony, the altar boys would rush to the front doors and hold a rope preventing the bride and groom from leaving before giving a stipend to the servers, usually a dollar. This was a prized sum when large candy bars only cost a nickel!

The importance of the Catholic faith and the parish church in the lives of the pioneer parishioners bound them into a strong community and was also the source of their social life. Their dedication during those early, difficult times formed the foundation of the parish today. It has been quite a blessing to have participated in a small way in the early, unique history of St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church and Parish.
Our grandparents emigrated from Czechoslovakia in the early 1900’s. People came to Scappoose because the landscape was similar to Czechoslovakia. Both had other family members that settled in Scappoose as well. Grandpa Alois Koutek and his uncle Charles Koutek had come west from Minnesota in 1911 in response to the stories in the Midwest Czech papers about this area. Uncle Charles would purchase the Havlik Cash Store from the parish founder John Havlik, Sr., and manage it until the sale to Joseph Kocarnik in 1933. Grandma Agnes had a sister who married pioneer August Stasna, and this sister wrote to her and encouraged her to come to Oregon from Czechoslovakia and meet Alois Koutek as a possible marriage partner.

Alois and Agnes married in St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church in 1921. They had a farm on Old Portland Road not far from the church. The family grew as they were blessed with three children: Rose, Georgie and Robert.

Rose married in the 1950’s to Neill MacNeill. They married at St. Wenceslaus like her parents. They had three children: Neill, Terese and Denise. All were baptized, had First Communion and were confirmed in the church. Rose and her mother Agnes only spoke Czech at home. None of us knew what they were talking about. Unfortunately, we were never taught.

It was great growing up in our neighborhood. Half of the neighbors were our Czech cousins. Everything in our little world was centered around the Church and our Czech relatives. Rose was very active in the church. It was her passion! She loved being busy for the Lord. We cannot even remember how many Church dinners she chaired. She was a very, very busy member of the Altar Society.

We have lots of memories of great food at Church dinners, beautiful decorations at Christmas and seeing brother Neill as an altar boy. Neill married the love of his life, Kathy, in 1998, following the pattern of the two generations before him, at St. Wenceslaus. Our grandparents and Mom and Dad are all gone now, but all three of us kids still live in Scappoose. Thanks St. Wenceslaus for a great grounding in the Lord!

Mary Kucera

St. Wenceslaus is a thriving, growing parish with generous people and it has been blessed with a succession of good clergy.

I became a member of the parish when my seven year old was taking catechism lessons. Father Manik asked me if I had ever thought about joining the church. I hadn’t given it a great deal of thought but his timing was right and I took instructions and was baptized and confirmed. I admired and respected Fr. Manik. He had a vision for this parish and the education of its children.
I was involved with the CCD program for many years and also with the St. Vincent de Paul food bank. I had been volunteering at the Portland office of St. V’s, taking calls from people who needed emergency help. I felt there was a need in Scappoose for the kind of services they were providing in Portland and asked if our church could start a program here. With the help of Portland staff we got the food bank started. Gene DeSylva was the first manager, and then May Marracci took over. Larry Liewer is currently head of the program.

In the early years we had a limited supply of food and little cash. I remember writing a letter to parishioners asking for their help and getting the most generous response anyone could ever ask for. This parish has always been supportive of the food bank. It is filling a real need in our community.

Our annual turkey dinners always had parish support. The dinner was a fund raiser, but I always thought it went well beyond that in building a closer community within our church. It was a time for newcomers to get acquainted, all ages turned out to help, and it was a major social event with all working together. I’ve helped with almost all of the many tasks involved in putting on those dinners.

When the dinners first began, Ed’s aunt Cecilia Kucera and her sister Harriet Havlik prepared the turkey dressing from a family recipe. Aunt Cele told me that she laid the bread out to dry on a bed sheet in her home. It grew from that to a dozen women in the church basement mixing dressing in three large galvanized tubs. Then we filled roasters with the dressing and took them home to bake for the dinner on the following day.

My family first came to this country from England in 1607. They fought on both sides of the Revolutionary War and both sides of the Civil War. My great grandparents came out to Oregon in a covered wagon pulled by oxen in 1853. They established a donation land claim on Sauvie Island, part of which is still in the family. I grew up on the Island and attended Scappoose High School. My husband Ed and I raised our four children, Dave, Diane, Don and Laurel on our eight acre parcel of land on Callahan Road, now owned by a grandson. I am thankful every day for all my blessings, too many to count.

Vernie and Larry Liewer

We moved to Scappoose in 1990. One of our first stops was at St. Wenceslaus to register and meet our new pastor. Father Vanderzanden greeted us warmly and sent us over to the “center” to talk to Millie Gobel. Millie also greeted us warmly, welcomed us to the parish, signed us up, and gave us a parish directory. We felt like we belonged from the start.

Moving in at the end of October we were a little discombobulated that first Sunday and forgot to change our clocks to standard time. We dutifully arrived for the 8:00 AM mass about an hour and 15 minutes too early. The church was empty! We went in wondering where everybody was. Soon Father Van came down the aisle and asked us if we had forgotten to reset our clocks to standard time. Slightly embarrassed we returned home and tried it again and hour later. By then lots of parishioners were showing up.
One our first memories was that of next spring, when Fr. Van’s garden was plowed, and we’d see him in his overalls and a straw hat working his garden. Soon when we came to church fresh vegetable began showing up on a table in the back of the church, free for the taking. Fr. Van’s garden was an annual ritual. It was located where the parking lot is now between our hall and the Vanderzanden Center.

That fall we became involved with the “Annual Turkey Dinner” helping Tim Gobel with the potato peeling machine, carving turkeys, making kolaches, and mixing dressing in big tubs. Fr. Van would pitch in to help clean up and finish the potato peeling after the machine finished. Some of us men hauled the turkeys over to Safeway in St. Helens for baking, and then hauled them back to the walk in cooler in the rectory basement. The turkey carving was done in the basement garage. This whole operation was well organized. A couple of years later we helped chair the Turkey Dinner along with Mike and Gail Singh. It went off without too many problems, but we did have one glitch when the potatoes donated by a Sauvie Island farm disappeared. Somehow they ended up being given out by the Food Bank. We were lucky enough to get a second donation of potatoes from the Sauvie Island farm though, and it turned out all right.

I retired in middle of 1999 just when Fr. Jim Stange came. I was looking for something I could do around the parish, and Father mentioned that Ed Greisen wanted to retire from managing the Food Bank. I have been managing the St. Vincent de Paul Food Bank since that time with the help of my wife Vernie. Thank goodness for all the wonderful volunteers. Without their help we couldn’t do it.

**Lomnicky Family**

In 1918, after weathering many storms and tornadoes in East Bernard, Texas, Mathia and Josefa (Hlavinka) Hobizal decided to relocate their family. They read about Scappoose in the Czech newspaper, with a Czechoslovakian Catholic community where they could farm and grow fresh fruits. They homesteaded on a farm on Adams Road with daughter Vicky and other children.

In 1921, Wendel Lomnicky travelled from Vrbany, Czechoslovakia to Portland, Oregon to join his family. They had come to the area seeking work in 1908. Wendel met Vicky Hobizal at a church dance in Scappoose. They were married in 1934 at St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church, in a double ceremony, with his sister Pauline and Frank Gaman, by Fr. John Hotovy. By 1937 they had moved to Scappoose from Portland, making their home on an eight acre farm on Mountain View Road. Together they raised 7 children, and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren have enlarged the family over the years.

The Lomnicky family has belonged to St. Wenceslaus Parish for 93 years. All have enjoyed participating in the Church, and feel that it has enriched their lives.
Marek Family

My name is Bernard Norbert Marek, and I am the son of Bouhumil (Jeff) and Ella (Havlik) Marek. Bouhumil came to South Scappoose in 1919 from Granger, Texas, with the intention of farming. There he met and married Ella, a daughter of Barbara and John Havlik, Sr. Both were of Czech nationality, and all of us children (three boys and one girl) learned the Czech language. My father supported our family by farming, doing auto repair work and maintaining equipment for the construction company of John Havlik, Jr.

I was baptized in this church and received my sacraments here, and I was an altar boy. St. Wenceslaus was a very vibrant parish and the central activity center for all our Catholic families. I remember the Strawberry Festivals, picnic basket socials, dinners, and Czech kolache baked for these events. I attended many dances at the Catholic Workman Hall. As a boy I did yard work around the church and the priest’s home, and also picked and harvested crops. As an adult I drove the school bus to St Frederic’s Catholic School in St. Helens.

I enjoyed special times in the parish like First Communions, Confirmations, and weddings, but funerals were sad. My religious education came from home and catechism classes at Church. Christmas Masses were always special. Corpus Christi was always very special. We walked in procession to 3 out-door altars around the cemetery, then had Mass in the church. My father took home movies during the late 1930s and 40s. Some of these will be shown at the St. Wenceslaus Centennial Celebration.

My favorite priest was Fr. Manik who spoke very clearly. He was the priest who officiated when I married Josephine Baresh from the parish. After her death, I married Vlasta Kovarik. When I was 19, I left Scappoose to work at Boeing Co. in Seattle, WA. I joined the Navy, and so on, and entered a very secular world, much different than my sheltered upbringing in a Catholic community. I had to study my faith as an adult to be able to defend it as I interacted with others from non-Catholic religions, atheists, agnostics, etc. I stayed Catholic because I knew that Jesus Christ started the Catholic Christian Church and promised to stay with it.

Many of my precious childhood memories include St. Wenceslaus Church and Scappoose. I have visited Scappoose often over the years, and I am looking forward to the Centennial Celebration.
Marracci - Hugo Family
(Submitted by Josette Marracci Hugo)

My grandparents, Pete and Josephine Marracci, came to Warren in 1912, with their 7 year old son, Frederic. My grandfather had always wanted land of his own, but they couldn't afford to buy right away, so when they moved to Warren they rented a farmhouse on Hazen Road, and began farming. They mostly raised vegetables, and they rented farmland all over, including the dike lands around Scappoose, and as far east as Troutdale.

Sometime in the mid-30s they finally bought their own land and built what is now known as the House of Many Stones on Slavens Road in Warren. There they continued truck farming and also added a dairy operation. After my father, Fred, graduated from high school in 1924, he went to college for a while, but really was not cut out for school, so before too long, he was invited to wrestle for the Multnomah Athletic Club, which had a very well developed wrestling program at the time. He competed both regionally and nationally, and actually ended up coming in 2nd at nationals sometime in the late twenties.

Shortly after this, he was convinced that he should go professional, so that took him to many locations around the world. Fate would have it that he would be scheduled to wrestle in Johannesburg, South Africa, where he met my mother, May. She was from Manchester, England, and was traveling also, with the dance troupe known as the Tiller Girls. So, long story short, they fell in love. But it was not until 1937, five years later, that she would finally come to the US to marry my Dad. They had two children, Fred and Josette.

My parents wanted the best education available for us at the time, so they sent us to St. Frederic's Grade School in St. Helens. Getting to school was a bit of a challenge, and certainly would never be permitted today! We would catch the public school bus at our driveway, which would take us to the little gas station and grocery store at the end of Church Road and Hwy. 30, then the Catholic School bus would come by from Scappoose, pick us up, and take us the rest of the way to school. I loved it because I got to know all of the children in the area. I also recognized, at a very early age, that those public school kids were certainly unruly! Sister would never put up with any of that stuff!

We were also permitted to use some text books from the public schools. At that time, it was the local school's responsibility to see that enough books were ordered for every child in the district. Consequently, books sat in storage rooms unused for those children who attended parochial school. So, St. Frederic's worked out an agreement that allowed those books to be used by us. Each book was carefully wrapped in brown paper to insure that when it was returned to the school district at the end of the year, it would be in excellent condition. We would go through every book, page by page, and make sure there were no tears or marks, and if so, we would mend them.

Fast forward to our involvement with St. Wenceslaus Parish...after about ten years away from this area, I returned with my husband, Bruce, to raise our family. We have two children, Adrienne and Aaron; both attended Scappoose schools. St. Wenceslaus was attractive to us because it had a close knit, very child oriented environment. They offered 12 years of Sunday
School, and lots of opportunities to practice the faith. There were also church dinners and other ancillary activities that fostered community. And there was strong mentorship from people like Millie Gobel to become active contributors to the education of our children. Who could say no to Millie...not anyone that I know!

I would like to elaborate on the church dinners...we had two of them each year, the Strawberry Social and the Turkey Dinner. The Strawberry Social was held in June, and it was really a spaghetti dinner with strawberry shortcake for dessert. We would usually serve about 500-700 people. The Turkey dinner was held in late October and we would serve anywhere from 1000-1200 people! It is hard to believe that we could do that in our little basement. These dinners became a tradition, both in our church and the community, and the coordination was monumental...all hands on deck!

Finally, as we prepare to celebrate 100 years of community, I am grateful to be a member of this extended family. Although I did not grow up in this parish, I truly feel like an adopted daughter. God bless us, one and all, for yet another 100 years!

Laura (Lori Schmit) McCarthy

My family has been here in Scappoose for a long time. My father, Henry Schmit, moved here when he was three years old, living on Coal Creek Road with his parents. He remembers the first St. Wenceslaus Church. There were 5 boys, and all but one went into the service to fight in World War II. My dad built a house on Coal Creek Road also, and he and my uncles walked to and from church.

By the time I was born, the current church building was in place. My parents had eight children, and all of us were baptized by Father Manik. I remember my First Communion and singing in the choir. I think there was a Children’s Choir at one time, and one summer my sister Linda played the organ. I still remember walking to church on Saturdays to practice. Later I went to sing in the early Mass choir with the adults; I felt so grown up then!

We went to St. Frederic’s Catholic School, so we didn’t go to parish catechism classes, but as with all kids, my fondest memories are of food. The dinners we used to have were wonderful! They were in the church basement, which we called our parish hall. The turkey dinners where all the men would laugh and talk while carving the turkeys and all the women were bustling around the kitchen at the different preparation stations – it was so busy. The kolache were wonderful and all over the kitchen! Everyone used to bake them. I remember my mom spending all day making so many kolache and we were always lucky because she would make extra for us at home.

My favorite dinner was the Strawberry Social in June. All the girls would serve the food, and I remember waiting forever for my shift to be over so I could eat. It seemed like hours of smelling strawberries before we were able to eat. By the time I got the chance, I just went for the strawberry shortcake dessert!
Christmas too is a great memory. We still have our little angel costumes. We did have a live Nativity scene, and after that Santa Claus would show up. We all got a brown bag that was full of peanuts, an orange, candy and orange slice candies. We all looked forward to that.

I also have memories of funerals. My grandparents, uncle, and dear mother and father are in the cemetery behind the church. We used to have Corpus Christi processions that would go around the church or to the cemetery.

I myself moved away for about 20 years, got married, and then moved back with my four children. They have all been confirmed here, and went to Sunday School classes. I started to sing in the choir again, and my family is here nearly every Sunday. When I lived away I went to different Catholic churches, but this is the church where I feel most comfortable.

**Gary and Mary Jane McDonald**

Mary Jane was born in Lewiston, Idaho; Gary in St. Helens, Oregon. They met in high school and got re-acquainted at their 35th class reunion in Clareston, Washington.


Mary Jane taught school for the US Department of Defense for 30 years, first in Okinawa, then two years in Frankfort, Germany, and 28 years in England before coming back to the United States to marry Gary.

Gary owned and operated McDonald’s Carpet and Upholstery Cleaning until his retirement in 2008.

Gary and Mary Jane married on September 30, 1995 at St. Mary McGowan’s outside Chinook, Washington on the Columbia River.

Gary was baptized and confirmed on May 18, 2008 at St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church.

**Chuck and Edith Mikesh Family**

My name is Judith Ann (Mikesh) Pizzuti, and I was born in 1944 in St. Helens. I was the 2nd of four children born to Chuck and Edith Mikesh. My brothers are James, Joe and Charles.

My father’s family moved to Scappoose in 1922, and in 1925 they bought 40 acres on Heimuller Hill, now known as J.P. West Road. My father was born in Washington, and his family came to this area to farm. My mother, Edith Mares, was born in Nebraska, and her family came here in 1936 for better opportunities, and to join other Czech families already in Scappoose. They all enjoyed being able to hear the Mass in their own language, although my grandparents did learn to speak English.
My father worked in heavy construction with John Havlik and Parker Schram, and at Crown Zellerbach mill in Columbia City. My mother worked during the summer months for Fred Havlik planting crops, and also for Johnson Farms. I and my brothers attended St. Frederic’s Catholic School for eight years. We then went on to graduate from Scappoose High School. My first jobs were at Siracusa Jewelers and Dr. Hoag’s Dental Office.

My father was a member of the Knights of Columbus and my mother was a member of the Altar Society and Catholic Daughters. She also taught CCD classes, and one of the rooms was dedicated to her as a memorial when she died at the early age of 47.

As a young girl I attended the box social functions held at the church. Many dances were held at the old K.D. Hall. I enjoyed the music and dancing with my father. My parents actively took part in working the church dinners and strawberry socials, and I did as well. I also remember participating in the Christmas programs and Corpus Christi celebrations.

I now live in Canby with my husband Anselmo, and we have three children, Janet, Jeff, and Jennifer, all of whom live close by with their spouses and our six grandchildren.

Stewart and Elizabeth (Pitsch) Millager

Both Stewart and I were both born in California and moved to Oregon with our families when we were young. We attended school in Albany, Oregon, where we met in high school in the mid-1980’s. After going our separate ways, our paths crossed again in 1991. We were married at St. Mary’s in Albany in 1993, and lived in Portland for two years before moving to Scappoose in the fall of 1995.

Having no roots in the area, we were slow to settle in. We both worked in Portland, and we had no children, so we didn’t know many people out here. However, we eventually started our family and settled into our church and community. Chloe Anne was born in March 1998, and Mya Jane was born in September 2001.

I (Elizabeth) was specifically interested in settling into our new parish. I had spent four years as a youth minister at the parish in which I had grown up. After being so involved in my home parish, it was hard to start over in this new church! We were happy to attend a “New Parishioner’s Potluck” in late 1997. There was a sign-up sheet for a new Mom’s Group, and I signed up. This was an amazing opportunity to meet with other Catholic mothers from St. Wenceslaus, and to discuss motherhood and our Catholic faith. This group eventually expanded into a second group - Women’s Ministry - to include all the women of our parish. This group did service projects which included outreach to homebound parishioners, the Cabbage Bowling booth at the Sauerkraut Festival (community outreach), and deep cleaning the parish kitchen (then in the church basement) and church. Over the years, I have worn many hats…Parish Hall Coordinator, co-Youth Coordinator, volunteer support for Religious Education Director, and, currently, Coordinator of Religious Education. I enjoy every opportunity to work with other parishioners, and I appreciate the rich history shared with me at St. Wenceslaus.
We have been blessed to begin roots here at St. Wenceslaus. Our daughters were baptized here (Chloe by Fr. Steve, and Mya by Fr. Jim), they have attend Religious Education classes since they were 3 years old, and have made the church their second home. I love how we see the friendly faces of fellow parishioner in so many parts of our daily life – it reinforces to my children that we are a part of our Catholic Church community every day, not just on Sundays.

Charles Frank Nakvasil

My parents were both Czech. My father’s family came from Moravia and my mother’s came from Minnesota in the 1920’s. Their families came to Scappoose because of the economics of the times, religion, the Czech culture in the area, and to eat kolache. They spoke Czech at home at times, and I speak a very limited amount. They settled on an eight acre farm on Callahan Road. Father worked on the green chain at a lumber mill but the majority of his work history was as a machinist in northwest Portland. Our grandparents’ generation created the family farm concept to feed everyone in the family and preserve their health, and the surplus was sold to supplement the family budget.

I served as an altar boy and helped train new servers. I helped move many rocks when the Army chapel from Ft. Stevens was being placed on its new foundation with a basement. There was no Youth Group as there is today. South Scappoose was a Catholic community, and families spent lots of time together at home and at church events with all the generations participating. The first Christmas Mass at Midnight each year was an exciting event. Corpus Christi had a procession from the Church through the cemetery. Flower girls dropped rose petals on the ground, followed by the priest with the Blessed Sacrament in the monstrance under a canopy carried by four men from the Catholic Workman organization.

I went to St. Frederic’s Catholic School grades 1-8, but also learned much about the Catholic religion from my parents and grandparents. I was a member of the Columbian Squires, a Knights of Columbus club for young men. It was the first chapter in Oregon. In the Army I was an assistant to the chaplain, Major Barrett. When there was a parish dinner for fundraising, the whole family took part, and we looked forward to them every year. At our dinners the “kolache was king” for the entire community and still is today.

My favorite priest was Fr. Manik, a quality priest who was always very serious about the Mass and Catholic teachings. Fr. Dooley who taught me vocal music at Central Catholic High School had me destined for Gonzaga College to sing! He was a very devoted teacher. However, I went to the University of Portland.

When I lived at home I earned money doing agricultural jobs. Later I worked at Consolidated Freightway. After college graduation I taught school for awhile, then was drafted into the Army. After my discharge in Missouri, I moved to the Eastmoreland neighbor in Portland, where my four children were mainly raised. One lives in Scappoose today. Three years ago I built Cinema 7 in Scappoose which I operate.
I feel that a parish is vibrant due to its leadership. Kids need a solid and meaningful education along with excellent adult modeling. I stayed Catholic because I know the Lord wants me in the Catholic Church to practice the principles of the faith.

I’ll always remember wedding anniversaries in the parish, especially my father and mother’s 50th. My father put the ring on my mother’s wrong hand!

St. Wenceslaus Parish was a setting for several religious vocations. A number of priests and nuns came from the parish. My nephew Fr. Richard Nakvasil started his spiritual development when he was baptized in the Church. He is now a Catholic priest in Denver, Colorado and the parishioners love him and his exciting and very Christian homilies. I was asked to apply for the Superintendent of Catholic Schools in Oregon position in the late 1970’s but I did not as I had other responsibilities. My cousin is Sr. Katherine Trtek. Her mother who was 100 this year is my Aunt Josie, my father’s sister.

Frank and Pauline Novak
(Shared by Odessa Novak, widow of Fred, a son of Frank and Pauline)

Frank Novak was born in Pisek, Czechoslovakia in 1872. He came to America in 1888 along with his Aunt Roslie Jirack when they both were 18 years old. They settled in a Czech community in Chicago where he met Pauline M. Charvak from Budweiss, Czechoslovakia. Soon after meeting, they married and started a family. They had one son and three daughters in Chicago. They planned to take on a “homestead” in South Dakota, but the winters were so severe that they gave up the homestead and moved back to Chicago where another son was born.

At this time they read in the Czech newspapers about an offer to help any family with the expenses of transportation and housing to come to Scappoose, Oregon, to establish a Catholic Church in the small Czech community forming there. Their South Dakota venture had been a failure, but they decided that this offer was worth trying. They headed to Oregon on a train with their large family and personal possessions, full of faith and hope, to start life anew in a new place.

Mr. and Mrs. John Havlik, Sr. were generous in their offer and helped them to get established in South Scappoose in 1906. They lived on a small farm where they raised animals, including chickens, and planted a fruit orchard. They grew most of their food. Later they bought and cleared acreage, and, in about 1915, built a small grocery store with living quarters. This remained an operational business until 1958 at the corner of Highway 30 and E.M. Watts Road.

In the earlier years, there was a dance hall on the property, mostly a gathering place for the Czech families to socialize. There was a player piano provided by the Novak boys for music. Then the hall was torn down, and small rental cabins were built to provide housing for people working in the new pickle plant, and the Deering rose business.

Four more sons were born in Scappoose, making a total of ten children for Frank & Pauline. As they grew up, started working, and married, everybody moved on from Scappoose. But they
were a close-knit family and had annual reunions. The Catholic faith remains very important in their lives. In fact, one grandson is a Benedictine priest in Idaho.

**Fred and Odessa Novak**

I am Odessa Novak, born in Louisiana, and met my husband Fred Anthony Novak when he was stationed in LA during WWII. We married in 1944 and raised two children. We lived in Scappoose until 1964, and then we moved to Portland so our young son could attend Catholic school. I took my turn cleaning the church and volunteered on parish dinners. The turkey dinners were my favorites, but I sure had tired feet! That excellent Czech dressing was delicious and it was enjoyable to see people from other parishes come year after year. Everyone liked the Czech pastries, especially prune kolache.

I have many good memories of Father Joseph Manik, and the Midnight Mass at Christmas is a memory one never forgets. In the olden days, the Feast of Corpus Christi was a very moving experience, with altars set up along the walk from the church into the cemetery. They were adorned with beautiful fresh flowers. I haven’t seen that custom since I left St. Wenceslaus Parish.

All the Novak boys are deceased now, and I am the only daughter-in-law left. The family cherishes their history in Scappoose.

**Bob and Darlene Ollier**

Bob was born in Cincinnati, Ohio on May 26th, 1928. As a boy growing up, he did odd jobs to earn a little money, like selling corn cobbs, garden seeds and newspapers. At age 15 he enlisted in the Marines until his Dad found out and got him out. His Dad told Bob he would sign for him in a year if he stayed home. His Dad was sure the War would be over by then, so at age 16, Bob was off to the war again. When he returned home he stayed for a while, and then headed out with $5.00 and a full tank of gas to see the country. He did odd jobs in many states, then went back home, got married, had 8 children, of which only 5 are still living, 4 girls and 1 boy. Sorry to say, the marriage did not last after 18 years. In 1969, Bob worked in the largest Veterinary Hospital in Los Angeles as a head technician, doing all the hiring and firing. He also taught scuba diving at night and week-ends. In 1973 he went to a small town in the Bahamas called Current Eleuthera with a population of 130 people where he ran a diving operation at the resort, and also taught the people at the U.S. Navy base to dive. It was on Current Eleuthera that he met Darlene; she was 16 years old and a waitress at the resort called The Current Club.

Darlene has 3 sisters and 2 brothers still living, but her Mother and Father have passed away. She was brought up in a Methodist church. Going to church and Sunday school, she had a wonderful childhood, sports and swimming. When Bob came to Current, it was love at first sight and after two years they were married on May 9, 1975 by an Anglican priest because everyone thought the marriage would not last because of the age difference, including the minister at Darlene’s church. They lived in Current for a year, and then decided to move to Oregon where Bob lived in 1962 and wanted to return.
We have both worked for other companies, but a lot of our work in Oregon has been in owning our own businesses, including a Mom and Pop store, a custom slaughterhouse called BarBob Farms, raising 33,000 fryers for Willamette Poultry in Roseburg, and managing apartments and a manufactured homes park for over 10 years. Together we managed a high-rise storage facility and an office building in the Pearl District for 16½ years. Bob retired in 2009; Darlene is still there.

Bob was raised Catholic and grew up in the Catholic faith. Being an altar boy, he wanted to be a priest when he was young, but his Dad talked him out of it. Darlene was studying and reading and asking questions about the Catholic Church. “There were a few things I could not understand. I went to Mass with Bob in Santa Monica, CA a few times, then one day it hit me so hard I could not wait to become a Catholic and receive Jesus Christ. I was confirmed by Bishop Mahoney at St. John Chrysostom in Inglewood on April 14th, 1986, and I have never regretted becoming a Catholic. It felt like I had been searching for something and had finally come home.” We were married in the Catholic Church by Bishop Kenneth Steiner at St. Mary’s in Corvallis. We have attended many Catholic churches in many states and have been Eucharistic Ministers in several.

In August of 1996 we moved to Scappoose to live in Spring Lake Park. We remember going over to find the Catholic Church. When we drove up, before we could even get out of the car, Father Steve Clovis who had recently moved to Scappoose came out of the Church to greet us and we knew we would love it here and we were right. We became Eucharistic Ministers, and everyone we met have been so wonderful. We have come to know many people who are like family to us. Many dear people have died and some have become home-bound because of illness, but they are still our friends, and we love them.

When Father Steve left after 3 years, Father Jim came, and we also felt very lucky to have him. We love his Masses and can feel God’s presence with him. We both feel like this is our church, and the people make the church. “I feel if I had not met Bob, I may not know what I was missing. I thank God for that every day, and I also thank God that I know his family; they are wonderful people.” Bob has 11 grandchildren and 22 great-grandchildren. We celebrated our 36th Anniversary this year, 2011!

One of the most wonderful experiences we have had while being part of St. Wenceslaus Parish was the trip to Rome with Father Steve in 1999. We had a great group as travel-partners, and we still love to reminisce and look at our pictures. We learned so much history and saw wonderful sights we will never forget. It was the trip of a life-time!
Reed Family --- by Delores (Kocarnik) Reed

My father, Joseph Kocarnik Sr. enlisted in the U.S. Navy during WWI, and was a telegraph operator on a submarine. When the war was over he returned to Nebraska, but soon became interested in going west. At the urging of the Roza family, who lived in Scappoose and wished to build a Czech Catholic community here, he and his sister arrived in Scappoose, where he taught school for two years. My mother came from Minnesota with her family when she was 12 years old. Her uncle, Rev. Urban Fischer, was a professor at St. John’s Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota, but due to the extreme weather there, he transferred his vows to Mt. Angel Abbey, where he was in charge of the Department of Science. He was one of the priests who served the mission in Scappoose, beginning about 1905. In 1914 he was named pastor of the church here, and two years later was also assigned the missions in St. Helens, Rainier and Clatskanie, traveling by train and horseback until pastors were named for those churches. Originally, Mass was celebrated in some Czech homes until a small church was built. Mrs. Barbara Havlick donated a small organ, and a Czech choir sang religious hymns during the Mass accompanied by Vaclav Roza.

In 1920 my father bought a small grocery store from Charles Koutek, and then replaced it with a new store and home in 1932. The building is still used today. I was born at St. Vincent’s Hospital in Portland, and joined one brother, Robert, and later, two additional brothers, Joe and Jim.

Following Father Fischer’s death in 1927, several Czech priests served St. Wenceslaus parish. During the summers, two Holy Name nuns came to teach religious vacation school for two weeks. They stayed with the John Beno family while here, and prepared several children for First Communion. They held classes in the Catholic Workmen (KD) Hall.

About 1938 my father bought a small, used school bus, and many of the children of the parish were then able to attend Catholic school at St. Frederic’s. The bus was later replaced with a larger one. Fr. Hotovy drove the bus, as well as Milo Baresh, Jerry Heindl, Robert Kocarnik, Bernard Marek, and, later, Mary Burg.

During WWII, when many priests became chaplains in the service, and Czech priests were no longer available, my Dad drove to the University of Portland and brought one of the available priests to say Mass each Sunday. This continued until Fr. Hermann was assigned to St. Wenceslaus about 1946. Fr. Hermann organized a large campaign for a building fund to finance a new church. Joseph Barta, Sr. was in charge of the successful campaign.

Our summers were filled with wonderful “country-style” activities: the swimming hole in the creek, bike-riding, picking strawberries, wedding dances, climbing trees, making home-made root-beer. In winter, ice-skating on the frozen lakes, and sledding. Father Joe Beno would pull our sleds to the to the top of Callahan Rd with his pick-up, then we would coast down on our sleds. We even made home-made skis! We used our imaginations, and our simple life was magical!
When I was 15, the elderly Mrs. Helen Hein retired from playing the organ. Several girls of the parish formed a small choir. With the help of the nuns in St. Helens, I learned to play the pump organ. Some of the members of the girls’ choir still live in this area --Sally and Adeline Vanderwerf, Martha Stokes, Elizabeth Cernac, Alice Duncan, Mary Ann Robinson. We practiced and learned to sing the Latin High Mass, and sang for the dedication of the new church with Archbishop Howard in 1949. Father Manik called us his “angelic choir.” Mrs. Joseph Knusel donated a new Wurlitzer electronic organ for the exciting dedication of the new church. I had to go to the Joseph Lucas Music Co. in Portland to learn to play the new organ. The girls’ choir sang for weddings, funerals, Corpus Christi, Confirmations, and the first Masses for priests from our parish --Fr. Joe Beno, Fr. Frank Knusel, Fr. Ken Jorgenson.

Jan was also born in Portland, but moved to Scappoose about 1940 where his grandfather, John Shoemaker, Sr. had established the West Coast Shoe co. Jan attended Scappoose schools and graduated in 1950. After graduation he enlisted in the Navy and spent three years in the combat zone in Korea. While in the Navy, he became interested in the Catholic faith and was baptized and confirmed in 1952. At the end of the Korean War in 1953, he returned to Scappoose where I met him through my brother. We were married in 1954 and had 5 children, Mark, Paul, Maria, Lisa and Shawna. Those were very busy years. Jan built our home in 1960 where we still live today. While raising our family, Jan taught Mathematics at St. Helens High School and I worked part-time as a nurse. About 1961, Father Manik asked us to publish a weekly parish bulletin. He bought a used typewriter and mimeograph machine from Army Surplus (Fr. Manik loved Army Surplus!) which we used for 29 years. After that a new copier was purchased and the bulletin was then published in the Van derZanden Center.

Jan often served Mass for several of our parish priests. He was a lector, Eucharistic Minister, dishwasher at church dinners, helped maintain the cemetery, and was member of the Knights of Columbus, with a term as Grand Knight. I was a member of the Ladies of the Altar Society, and taught Religious Ed. for 30 years from Grade 1 through 12. The Ladies of the Altar Society worked hard to earn money, and were able to buy altar linens, vestments, altar breads, Christmas decorations, and flowers for the altars, through their many projects: bake-sales, raffles and providing dinners for the members of the local Kiwanis club (the Kiwanis men each paid $1 for a full meal with dessert, all homemade!!)

I am now a Eucharistic minister to the home-bound parishioners, and work at the St. Vincent’s food bank. Only a few of us elder parishioners are left but we feel we have set the corner-stone for a growing and vibrant church for all our children, as well as welcoming new-comers to our parish. We feel we have been blessed to live in a small town, a wonderful place to raise a family. Our parish has been very blessed with faith-filled priests to lead us. May all who follow us be as happy and proud of our church as we have always been, and we pray that God will continue to bless us.
Andy and Mary Ann (Havlik) Robinson

Mary Ann's maiden name is Havlik. Her parents were John and Ethel (Dumbeck) Havlik. Mary Ann’s grandparents were John J. and Barbara (Zalud) Havlik, very early pioneers of this parish. John J. and Barbara arrived in Scappoose in 1905 and purchased a section and ½ of land suitable for farming and a dairy and a general store. The general store, including a butcher shop, groceries, feed store, ice store and general merchandise, was at the intersection of Highway 30 (now Old Portland Road) and Dutch Canyon Road. Land was given for a Church and cemetery across the highway from Barbara and John's original home. Barbara wrote back to Crete, Nebraska and her homeland of Czechoslovakia inviting other Czech people to come to beautiful Scappoose. Several people did come and were given 2 acres and a cow and some chickens to help clear some land for farming. Each plot of land had access to the creek for watering animals. The new people and those Catholics already here cleared the church land, drug the huge logs with draft horses to a small sawmill owned by a parishioner located on the south fork of Scappoose Creek. The boards were used to build the church. The first church was truly a community effort. The men did the building and the women supplied all with wonderful food. Mass was celebrated with visiting priests in Barbara and John's house across the street until the little Church, St. Wenceslaus, could be dedicated in 1911.

Mary Ann’s father, John Havlik Jr., was the sixth child, of eight, of the original Havlik family. Her mother, Ethel, came to Scappoose in the Fall of 1932 to start a Home Economics and Art/History department at Scappoose High School. John Jr. met Ethel by giving her a ride to church. John and Ethel married in 1934, farmed for awhile and then started a construction business with several St. Wenceslaus men who learned to run heavy machinery. Several of these same men ran the heavy machinery to dig the basement, and to do the land work for the new church. Mary Ann and her three brothers, Albert, Bob, and Steve, all grew up in Scappoose, attended St. Frederics Catholic School in St. Helens, and then Scappoose Public Schools. Mary Ann went to Oregon State in Home Ec (BS ’68), got involved in Newman club, met and married Andy Robinson (’65 St. Wenceslaus), a graduate student in Plant Ecology and Natural History (MA ’67, PhD ’69), who had just returned from naval active duty as a Lieutenant.

Andy taught at Univ. of Minn., Duluth, and then moved to Dallas, Texas for consulting work. Next, Oak Ridge National Labs in Tennessee needed a plant Ecologist. Then the Forest Service Regional office in Atlanta, GA wanted an endangered species program. Finally, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service wanted Andy for the Portland Regional office endangered species program which meant a transfer home - (Home to stay!). Andy retired in 2005 after 31 years of Federal Service in the endangered species program. For twenty of those years Andy remained active in the Naval Reserve retiring as a full Commander.

We've raised seven children, three girls and four boys. Five of our children live within driving distance, while one family is in Rochester, MN, and the other lives in Kassel, Germany. We have five married children (three married in St. Wenceslaus) and 17 grandchildren so far. We treasure our little church and its pioneer cemetery. A trek through the graves is a hearty reminder that life is fleeting and God is in charge especially with names sounding so very familiar to our whole family. One grandchild said, “Grandma, are we related to EVERYONE in this cemetery!?”. Grandma said, “Close enough!”
Our family loves to come for Christmas Eve Mass and traditional festivities at home after Mass. Mr. Kocarnik, Delores Reeds dad, came to the Havlik home and several other St. Wenceslaus families in the “olden” days dressed as the treasured saint of the season. We continue that tradition still at home after 4:30 Mass. Carols and music are a necessary part of any Robinson Christmas starting with Mass! The Holy Names sisters taught Mary Ann piano at St. Frederics. Grandma Barbara Zalud donated her own organ, played and sang for the original church. When Mary Ann wanted some voice lessons, her dad said, “O.K, but you have to PROMISE you'll sing and play for church.” Little did she know what a heavy duty promise that was!

Andy has spent most of his married life involved with the Knights of Columbus. He’s been Fourth Degree Oregon District Master for four years. The St.Frederics-St.Wenceslaus Knights have been truly Catholic brothers here supporting the church, parishioners, each other and the community with their wonderful Catholic values and works. Such good fun! St. Wenceslaus is the home parish of the Havlik-Robinson family since 1911. We just love to be in our little church, even if only for a visit.

Larry and Nancy Rocha

We moved to Scappoose and joined the parish in August, 1981 with 3 children. We chose to live here because we were as close to Portland as we were to Larry’s job at the Trojan Nuclear Plant. After Portland, and with California roots, this was quite a small town and we loved it! We were impressed by the friendliness of Millie Gobel and Father Van immediately. We had always been active in parish life and have done the same here, a place where personal “gifts and talents” are nurtured. In other words, go ahead and volunteer! In fact when we started liturgical ministry scheduling, Delores Reed, who had played the organ since she was a teenager, and had created the weekly bulletin even while dating Jan, said, “Are you sure? Once you volunteer here you’ll do that job until you die!” So for 30 years we have trained and scheduled liturgical ministers, and Nancy is still a catechist, and Larry does the Men’s Bible Study, among other things.

We’ll never forget the Barta Orchards from our early years here, with Joe & Helen selling apples and prune plums during late summer and early fall. I can still smell the fruit on the branches! The prices were right and the offerings abundant. To see Joe and his brother out in their orchard all during the year was amazing. Obviously it was very hard work, but that generation never shied away from difficult tasks.

We were pleased to find such a comprehensive religious education program in place in a parish without a Catholic school. Not only were there classes for kids as young as 3, but there were Youth Group activities for teenagers like beach trips, conventions, and service projects. Millie Gobel was a whirlwind as RE director, and Nancy found herself actively helping with the program, as a volunteer and a few years as a 10 hour a week assistant. It is a parish where there is something for everyone, and if not, you can start something!

We raised our 5 children here; Daniel, Matthew, Ellen, Karen & Emily. The older ones have left, but Ellen returns to teach, and bring her babies to Mass because it “feels like home.” In a small
town you either like or hate that everybody knows your business! We like it, and the best part is knowing that the folks in your parish care about you and pray for your needs.

Father Van was an amazing pastor, to come here at age 70 and stay until 85, returning to his farming roots with his bountiful summer garden. His mantra was “Do this in memory of me.” He did many a sermon on this theme; this is the essence of what Catholics do – pray the Mass. Fr. Neil Moore during his brief year taught us to see the world “through Gospel eyes.” Fr. Steve Clovis reminded us that this is not “my church” but that we are part of the Roman Catholic Church of Jesus Christ with “big T and little t” traditions. Fr. Jim Stange has led us on a journey to develop “the interior life” so we are prepared for an eternity with our Maker.

So let’s make kolache together, share potlucks, bring food for Clark Center, go camping, smile at First Communions, weep at funerals, and be in awe as our teens act out Shadow Stations, or our youth stage Christmas Pageants with a real baby. WE ARE A VIBRANT PARISH. HAPPY 100th!

Ellen (Rocha) Goodrich

My name is Ellen (Rocha) Goodrich. My parents, Larry & Nancy, moved to Scappoose in 1981 when I was three, and Dad went to work at the Trojan Nuclear Plant. My brothers Dan and Matt were in 2nd grade and Kindergarten, and our rental house was a short walk from Grant Watts Elementary. Every day after the boys were off to school Mom and I went out with realtor Linda Bolen to look at houses to buy. My parents chose to have a new house built next to the Erhardt farm, where there were kids our ages to play with and Gina (Erhardt) Means to babysit us. Mom and I visited the building site every day and took pictures of the house going up. It only took three months for the house to be built, since there was a recession in 1981, and many construction workers needed jobs and eagerly worked for Fred Marracci, (Josette Hugo’s brother).

We moved in on Valentine’s Day in 1982, and the Erhardt’s brought us a cake and Valentines, and Gina organized my new bedroom. By August I had a baby sister, Karen, that my parents called “Our Scappoose Papoose”. Our family attended St. Wenceslaus, and I was in Sunday school classes from Preschool through High School. When I learned how to play the flute in 5th Grade Band, I joined Millie Gobel’s Folk Group and played at 11:00 am Mass every Sunday. I learned to play piano too and sometimes took a turn on the keyboard. I took my Confirmation very seriously as a high school junior, and taught preschool Sunday school my senior year, which was great fun since my baby sister Emily was in the class. In the late 1990’s, when the Folk Group was no longer and there was a need for new musicians to participate in Mass, I formed the Youth Music Group. There were more than a dozen high school youth who sang in the group, led by myself on the piano and Andrea Stanton on the flute. I also led the Youth Group for a few years, planning a weekly Youth Night as well as service projects and fun activities.

After high school, I attended PCC Rock Creek, had an office job for an electrical construction firm, and was thrilled to move to my Rock Creek apartment at age 19. I continued to attend St.
Wenceslaus and lead the Youth Music Group, and I taught middle school Sunday school for a couple years. When the Youth Music Group disbanded, I attended various churches in the Hillsboro/Beaverton area. I married my husband Doug at St. Pius X in May 2002, and we bought a home in Hillsboro. I returned to my beloved hometown parish of St. Wenceslaus to play piano at 11:00am Mass monthly from 2002 until 2007, when our daughter Gracie Lynn was born. Our son Joel Edward arrived in July 2010, and both our children have been baptized by Fr. Jim, Gracie on my parent’s 40th wedding anniversary. My favorite friend Angie Bisner, who I became close to during the Youth Music Group years, is Gracie’s Godmother, and my favorite baby sister Emily Rocha is Joel’s Godmother. My family attended the annual church campout in 2008, and realizing just how much I enjoyed the St. Wenceslaus family, I returned to Sunday school teaching that fall. Even though I live near several large parishes full of activities, I remain a committed member of St. Wenceslaus where I prefer the small-town camaraderie. I look forward to my daughter beginning Sunday school at St. Wenceslaus this fall.

Agnes (Mares) Sawyer

Thank you for including me in the invitation of St. Wenceslaus’ 100 Year Anniversary in September. I would love to attend if I am able to.

I am not much good when it comes to adding to your booklet because I was 19 when we arrived in Scappoose in 1936, and fairly soon afterwards began living and working as a domestic in Portland homes. My only day off was Thursday, and I got home as much as possible on those days, but not too much was happening in Scappoose on Thursdays. Sometimes my parents would have other Catholic families over for dinner, or we’d be invited to one of their homes, but mostly it was time spent with my family. We spoke Czech in the home, and I still understand it, but don't have much opportunity to speak it.

I was born in Ord, Neb., December 22, 1916 to Frank Josef & Anna Mary Mares. My dad came from Bohemia and my mother from Hrotovice, Morovia, Cz. I was born a Catholic and lived life as a Catholic. It was who we were and our main means of entertainment. We spent time with other Catholic families. It was all we knew growing up. I will always be a Catholic. It’s what I know and who I am and I am very comfortable with my religion.

My family had a small farm and home in Ord, and when the dust storms hit, our livestock and crops were destroyed along with our means of making a living. We lost everything, including our home, so several families decided to travel caravan style to Scappoose, Oregon, where the Novaks found moderate weather, abundant crops and better living conditions. Mr. Novak was writing into the Cz., paper; we were reading his stories and dreaming about his inviting town.

Our group of travelers included the Janacs and Slangels when we left in early Fall, 1936. The Janacs stopped when we reached Corbett, and the Slangels went to Scio. We stopped in Scappoose because we learned there were cucumbers to be picked there, which meant survival money, and besides, the Columbia River was close enough that we figured we could always fish for our dinner.
There were quite a few Czechs already living in Scappoose and they were very accommodating to us when we arrived. They got together at St. Wenceslaus Church, took up a little collection, and brought us a few used clothes and things that we needed to set up housekeeping. My father, brother Leslie, and I picked cucumbers until we found more lucrative work. Dad & Les then worked in the rose gardens on the dike while I worked in Portland homes. Eventually Dad worked in the railroad yards, and Les in the box factory in Portland. Together we were able to support our family, which included my sister Edith, a high school student, and brother Frank, who was in grade school.

My family lived in a rental house on the other side of the railroad tracks where the train ran right behind our house. We shared a grape garden with the neighbors and had a small plot of ground where we raised our own little garden. People told us we should try growing zucchini, so we did, but we weren't fond of them because they were new to us and we didn't know how to cook them properly.

By the time I married my husband, Thomas K. Sawyer, I was a bookkeeper for Montgomery Ward & Co. Since both of us were working in Portland, we lived there and began our family of 4 children.

Our children had the benefit of a Catholic education because we moved to Astoria and were members of St. Mary Star of the Sea parish. The Catholic schools were better then and it was easier to raise Catholic kids. It was just the way we lived. Today is much different and much more difficult. I think it's really important for Catholics to marry Catholics and raise their kids in a Catholic atmosphere. If it becomes a comfortable way of life, it's a strong start for the children.

During our early years in Scappoose I belonged to the Church choir and participated with my family in the wonderful dinners and dances they would have at the Catholic Workman's Hall. Everyone went and enjoyed themselves tremendously. I was married at St. Wenceslaus on August 31, 1946. Weddings always took place in the morning because we were all fasting from midnight on so that we could receive communion. After the marriage, everyone went home and then came back in the evening for the celebration which included wedding cake and dancing, plus sandwiches. I remember my mother and Julia Kocharnik in the kitchen preparing sandwiches as fast as they could for the hungry dancers!

My favorite memories of the parish church are of the Thanksgiving dinners we feasted on in the church hall. Everyone brought food to share and enjoyed their company while giving thanks as a community. We would have never thought of staying home on such an important holiday. I also looked forward to the Strawberry Socials they had every year although I wasn't able to go as much as I would have liked because of my work in Portland.

Absolutely my favorite memories of St. Wenceslaus Church also include my marriage to Tom and my son Michael's marriage to Elaine Barta October 16, 1969. Both were the traditional Czech events with the big evening dances! I only lived in Scappoose for a short while, but I call it home. It was a wonderful little place, close enough to the big city, yet filled with friendly neighbors who considered everyone as part of their group. I hope that I am able to enjoy the anniversary party in September and have the opportunity to meet you. Again, thank you.
**Millie Schlosser**

My name is Millie Schlosser and my husband Tony and I moved to Scappoose from Mott, North Dakota in 1968. We brought four of our five children with us: Dwight, who was a junior in high school, and our three daughters Toni, Sheila and Geri who were in grade school. Our oldest son Orville was serving in the US Army and was stationed in Germany at the time.

Tony’s sister was living in Canby, and after visiting Oregon we decided to move “out west.” Tony had a working share at the Linnton Plywood mill in Portland until he retired in 1983. I worked as a cook at the Wayside Inn in Scappoose until my retirement in 1990.

After my husband’s death in 1983, I continued to live in Scappoose and remained a member of St. Wenceslaus Parish. All my children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren live in the Scappoose or St. Helens area, and I feel blessed to be able to spend time with them.

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**Orville and Mary Jo Schlosser**

We moved to Scappoose from North Dakota in 1971, joining St. Wenceslaus Parish that summer. We had two sons, Jamie and Eric.

Orville worked at Linnton Plywood, an employee-owned plywood mill near the St. John’s Bridge in Portland until it closed in 1992. He then decided to become a truck driver and continues driving for LC Hall, a small company located in St. Helens. He plans to retire at the end of 2011. I was a stay at home mom until both boys were in school, at which time I agreed to work as the part-time bookkeeper for the nursing home in Scappoose, later transferring to their management office in Portland. I stayed with the nursing home industry until 1997, when I began working in our parish office. I now work two days a week at St. Wenceslaus and three days at Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Beaverton.

Both of our sons received their sacraments, participated in the children’s programs and activities, and attended religious education (first referred to as CCD) at St. Wenceslaus. Millie Gobel was running the program at the time and persuaded me to try my hand at teaching. I taught the preschool class for two years before deciding that teaching was definitely not my gift! I volunteered in various areas over the years, helping with dinners, cleaning the sanctuary, helping with funeral receptions, etc. There have been many opportunities to assist with special projects, such as the pictorial directories, a parish cookbook, and helping in the parish booth at the Scappoose Sauerkraut Festival. We introduced cabbage bowling! I also serve as a Eucharistic Minister.

Over the years we have had many pastors and they all influenced us and inspired us in their own ways. I must say that working in the office – first for Father Steve and now for Father Jim – has allowed me to get to know both of them not only as pastors, but as bosses and friends, for which I am thankful.
Orville and I love that many of our parish traditions remain the same. Since both of our sons still live in Scappoose, we’ve had the joy of watching our grandchildren participate in the same programs as our children did so many years ago. Our grandkids have been just as excited to receive their Hershey bar and orange from Santa Claus each year after the Christmas Pageant as their fathers were when they were children. We have been blessed to have our grandchildren as a part of the parish community and to watch them receive their sacraments here.

Over the years, many new families have moved to town and have joined the parish. The newcomers bring fresh ideas to mingle with the old traditions, as we always maintain a unique identity and community that is St. Wenceslaus Parish – hopefully for another 100 years!

**Henry Schmit**  
(Submitted shortly before his death on July 24, 2011)

I arrived in Scappoose, Oregon in 1923 when I was two years of age. I remember the small white church in South Scappoose where we attended Mass. The first priest was Father Urban Fischer, OSB, an uncle of Mrs. Joseph Kocarnik, who with her husband owned a grocery store in the same area, just down the street from the church.

Soon (after the first church was built in 1911) more Czechs moved in to South Scappoose and started a Czech community. Following Fr. Fischer was Fr. Frances Zalud, a Czech priest from Nebraska, who died at age 65 and is buried in the church cemetery. He was followed by Fr. John Hotovy who added twenty feet to the front of the church. Next came Fr. Fleming and then Fr. Necid. Fr. Hermann was here from 1945-1947, and he began a campaign to collect money for a new, larger church. He was replaced by Fr. Joseph Manik (1947-1966) who was familiar enough with the Czech language to help understand the older Czech parishioners with problems and confessions.

Fr. Manik came to Scappoose with the understanding from Archbishop Howard that a new church would be built. He should be recognized as the priest who brought the military chapel from Hammond, Oregon (Fort Stevens), close to Astoria. It was cut in half and sent up the Columbia River on a barge to a landing site over the dike and through the dike land fields to the site where the old church had been removed and a basement was ready for the new church, which was blessed in 1949.

I was in Chicago at the time when the military chapel was move and enlarged to the size it has today and brick veneer was added to the exterior. The current rectory was built in 1957. The first one was built in 1914, ready for Fr. Fischer, in the field behind the old church near the current VanderZanden Center. Fr. Manik later bought four acres from Frank Kucera who had quit farming and didn’t need the acreage. Fr. Manik conferred with me about the price of $2,000 an acre. At that time he had wanted to build a Catholic School across the street from the church since the old highway (Old Portland Road) wasn’t used much. Today, Fred Meyer stands in the middle of that property.
Fr. Manik stayed in the parish almost 20 years before his transfer. Fr. Carl Mai was assigned next but only served one year before he died. Several priests followed: Fr. Domin, Fr. Dooley, Fr. Cormier, Msgr. VanderZanden, Fr. Moore, Fr. Clovis, and now Fr. Stange, known as Fr. Jim.

**Corpus Christi by Henry Schmit**  
(Submitted shortly before his death on July 24, 2011)

Every year about the time the strawberries were ripe and the weather was suitable, we would celebrate the Feast of Corpus Christi. We would march to several altars inside the church and around the cemetery, with old members of the Catholic Workman elected to carry the canopy for the procession. Under the canopy the priest carried the Most Blessed Sacrament in the monstrance and he would stop at each altar for Adoration. Some of the members were Jacob Schmit, my father, Frank Kucera, John Kostrba, Frank Mares, Sr., and Matt Mazour. Victor Valla would carry the large American flag, and the procession was escorted from the KD Hall (Katolicky Delnik/Catholic Workman) by the only policeman in town, since Old Portland Road was the main road into Scappoose. After the procession, prayers, and Benediction, we returned to the KD Hall for a Strawberry Social.

**Notes on another parish building**

The parish bought the home site and two acres from Mrs. John Vanderwerf just north of church, and used the house for a rental, and then for Religious Education classes and socials, until it required lots of maintenance and was removed with the assistance of the Scappoose Fire Department. The site now holds the new Parish Hall dedicated in 2002.

**Virginia (Rothmeyer) Sheldon**

In 1911 Father Fisher wrote to my grandfather in St. Paul Minnesota, that there was a nice Czech community in Scappoose, Oregon and they were going to establish a Roman Catholic parish church. Father Fisher was traveling around from Mt. Angel, where he resided, to St. Helen’s in Columbia County to say Mass.

My grandparents made the move out to Oregon by train in 1911 but my parents Anne [Fischer] and Andrew Rothmeyer stayed in Minnesota. My father promised her that someday they too would move to Oregon. There was visiting back and forth, by train, but mother yearned to live near her parents. We finally made the move when I was 16. Being a teenager, I wasn’t happy about it, as I had to leave my friends and finish my last year of high school at Scappoose High.

Grandfather bought a strip of land, in town, extending from the main road back to the other side of Scappoose Creek. He farmed and sold his harvest as well as eggs and butter to the Watts-Price Mercantile Store in town.

Father built the white house on the highway near the road to the present day bread store. We were so close to the church hall (present day Senior Center store) that we could easily enjoy the music from dances, wedding receptions etc.
My husband, Harlow and I were married in 1944. He joined the Navy, and we spent the duration of the war in Lexington, Massachusetts where he was a Gunnery Instructor. After the war we went down to California and had a few businesses. Upon returning to Scappoose in 1952 we bought into part ownership of Coon Island Marina and were full owners by 1962. We’re still on the water and love it. Our grandson, Ryan, was born in Scappoose and lives here on land left to the family by his great-great grandmother.

We have many fond memories of activities at St. Wenceslaus, and my parents and grandparents are buried in St. Wenceslaus churchyard.

**Setvin – Shoemaker History**

I, Jeanne Marian Setvin Shoemaker was born to Eleanor Cecilia Ramey Setvin and Joseph Norman Setvin in my Grandmother Maria Setvin’s home on Apple Valley Road (now named E.J. Smith Road) in Scappoose, Oregon on April 14, 1923. I was later joined by siblings Melvin Joseph Setvin, Lois Eleanor Setvin Fontenot, and Maryanne Helen Setvin Harth.

We were all baptized, made our First Holy Communion, and were confirmed from St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church.

My father’s parents, Maria and Joseph Setvin came from Velky Borek, Czechoslovakia in 1908. They bought 21 acres on Apple Valley Road and built a home and barn. My grandfather died young of a brain tumor, so my father stayed with his mother to help take care of the younger children and the farm. While still helping his mother out, he brought his bride home to live in the Setvin house.

My father worked for the Clark Wilson railroad and the West Coast Shoe Company. He knew how to do everything, and was often called upon to do carpentry work in the local area.

My mother’s parents, Nellie Brennan Ramey and August Ramey, came from Covington, Kentucky to St.Paul, Oregon, and then to Scappoose where they farmed a parcel of land near the gravel pit. There were ten children in the family. Only my mother and her brother John Ramey stayed in Scappoose. He operated a lumberyard in Scappoose for many years.

I married Robert W. Shoemaker on July 5, 1942, at St. Stephens Catholic Church in Portland. We have four daughters. Three of them – Jeannie, Roberta and Peggy, own and operate West Coast Shoe Company, founded by their grandfather John H. Shoemaker in 1918. Our daughter Marilyn got her first teaching job at Kalani High School in Hawaii and remained there until she retired.

We have four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

My time in St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church has always been happy. Two of our daughters were married at the Church. The sad times were when we buried our parents from the Church.
My name is Roberta Ann Shoemaker, and I was born in Portland, Oregon, and have lived my entire life in Scappoose. My mother, Jeanne Marian Shoemaker was born in Scappoose, the daughter of parish pioneers Joe and Eleanor Setvin, who came here from Czechoslovakia in 1908. My father, Robert William Shoemaker moved to Scappoose in 1930 from Portland because his father, John H. Shoemaker, moved the West Coast Shoe Company from Portland to Scappoose after the Great Depression.

They lived on Apple Valley Road, which is now EJ Smith Road. My mother’s prominent background is Czechoslovakian and my father is Dutch. Only English was spoken however at home. My father worked in the family shoe business, and my mother embraced homemaking and continues to do a wonderful and loving job. We live just steps from the family business on Shoe Factory Lane.

Growing up in the parish consisted of attending religious education classes and going to Mass. There were no youth or teen activities. I helped with parish dinners, lots of work for everyone, and assisted with children’s religious education classes when I was in Scappoose High School. I am currently serving on the Administrative Council.

I have very fond memories of Midnight Mass, which holds the tradition of Christmas. I learned about my Catholic faith at home from my mother and in parish classes. Two of my sisters were married in the parish, and my maternal grandparents are buried in the parish cemetery.

I did go away to college, and lived, traveled and completed college during 6 ½ months in Europe. I am now fully immersed in the family shoe business, which has employed four generations of Shoemakers.

The Stokes Family by Martha Havlik Stokes

My grandparents, John Havlik, Sr. and his wife Barbara, came to Scappoose around 1902 with the intention of farming. They acquired property in South Scappoose and lived across from the present church property. They worked two dairies and operated a ferry service before a suitable road was built for travel to Portland. They also owned a small grocery store which they sold to Charles Koutek, who later sold it to Joseph Kocarnik around 1929. My grandfather donated property for the church and a cemetery. St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church was built starting in 1910 and dedicated on July 2, 1911. The small group of Czech Catholics who had moved to the area, many of them because of Grandma Barbara’s invitations through the Czech press, all chipped in with donations of money, pews and statues. Barbara Havlik donated a small pump organ.

My father, Fred Havlik, was born in Crete, Nebraska and my mother Harriet was born in Scio, Oregon. Both spoke Czech. I was born in Portland, and joined one brother, Edward. Later a baby sister, Barbara, completed our family. My parents supported the family by raising cattle and grain. They also maintained a turkey farm.
In 1954 I married Newton Stokes, and we had three sons, one still lives in Scappoose. We owned and operated a True Value Hardware Store; also had a liquor agency for 39 years. Newton died in 1999.

My favorite parish memories include serving at all the parish dinners, decorating the altars, and singing in the Girls’ Choir for 40 years. My favorite priest was Father Manik who loved music, and always took pride in our choir. He was instrumental in helping us learn the Gregorian Latin Masses. He presided at the marriage of Newt and I, and baptized our sons. Father Van was also a favorite of mine.

Corpus Christi, celebrated in June, was memorable, especially when we were little and served as flower girls in a procession to the cemetery with stops at the outdoor altars, one of which my parents built and decorated. Later I sang in the Girls’ Choir during the procession of the Blessed Sacrament. Christmas was always special with Midnight Mass and Christmas carols. Confirmation was slightly frightening, as we were afraid that the Bishop would call on us to answer questions about our Catholic religion.

I have lived in Scappoose all my life. I have been active in our parish, and am proud to still be a member. I continue to volunteer and have been a Eucharistic Minister for many years. I am grateful for the good example given by my grandparents and parents. I feel honored that my grandfather helped in getting this parish started and building the first church. He was a great man with a generous heart.

**Family Story of Josie Trtek**

I was born Josephine Katherine Nakvasil on April 2, 1911 on a prairie farm in Shawmut, Montana. My parents were Rose and Frank Nakvasil. They had emigrated from Czechoslovakia. When I was sixteen, my parents along with seven of my nine brothers and sisters moved to the Czech community of St. Wenceslaus in Scappoose, Oregon.

On July 16, 1935, I married Joseph Frank Trtek. We were both 24 years old. Joe’s family had moved to Scappoose from Long Island, New York when Joe was two years old in 1913. Later on, because of his love for aviation, Joe became known throughout Columbia County as “The Pilot.” He began building an airplane in his Dad’s shed on the Trtek farm at age 16. He flew his first plane, called the “Trtek Midwing,” when he was 19. Joe was later employed by the Clark Wilson Lumber Company.

At the beginning of World War II, Joe enlisted in the US Army Air Corps and was a B-17 Flight Commander in the European War Theater. His rank was Captain. I remember how proud our parish was of all those who were serving their country during WWII.

In 1936 our daughter Josephine Yvonne was born. She is now Sister Catherine Trtek. She is a member of the Sisters for Christian Community. Joe and I were married for 70 years and Sister
Catherine will celebrate her 55 years in Religious Life in 2012. Our parish always participated in our wedding anniversary celebrations. Joe died in 2005 at age 94.

Our families (Nakvasils and Trteks) were centered in St. Wenceslaus parish. We were active in all the parish socials, constantly baking kolaches, pies, and cakes, or roasting turkeys and baking hams for the dinners. In the old days the women were true homemakers and took pride in their cooking and baking. Nothing could top a Bohemian meal. I remember during our parish dinners when priests would travel from all over the Diocese just to have a Bohemian meal at St. Wenceslaus.

I proudly celebrated my 100th birthday on April 2, 2011. Happy 100th St. Wenceslaus Parish!!

**Martin William (Bill) and Ruth Trtek**

I am from a pioneer family that moved here in 1912, after immigrating to New York, and then responding to the invitations in the Czech Catholic Newspapers to come west to Scappoose. My parents first lived on a farm in the NE corner of Scappoose behind the gravel pit, near the current West Lane and Crown-Zellerbach roads. Then they moved to a South Scappoose farm in 1913-1914. At home we all spoke Czech. Ruth and I raised three sons, and they all live in Scappoose with their families. We have several grandchildren.

We have memories of the beautiful Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve, with the church full of decorations. We always went to the parish dinners and visited with all the people. We have never left Scappoose. I worked on and ran a tugboat in Rainier and St. Helens, and also had my own logging truck and equipment. Today, we live on “The Farm” and still raise rhubarb, blueberries and marionberries to sell to the public. We are right across from both the Senior Thrift Store and Bread Place, on the unpaved part of Dutch Canyon Road, and Uncle Joe & Aunt Josie Trtek’s home.

Here is my immediate family tree of men:

- Grandpa: Martin T. Trtek
- Father: Martin J. Trtek
- Me: Martin William (Bill) Trtek
- Sons: Martin J. Trtek, Joseph E. Trtek, Gary A. Trtek

**Insight into Martin T. Trtek’s immigration to the USA, as told by Frantisek Trtek (Grandpa’s brother Tomas’ son) who lived in Nivnice, The Czech Republic. Written Sept. 30, 2001:**

Martin T. Trtek’s parents had 7 children. Three were boys: Josef, Martin and Tomas, and four were girls: Dora, Katerina, Zofie and Anna. They lived on a farm in Nivnice, Bohemian, Austria, and now The Czech Republic.

The oldest son, Josef, left home first and started a family. He became a banker and lived well, until 3 people defaulted on their loans and he lost everything. He died of TB at the age of 40.
One of his grandchildren is Martina Nemeckova. Karal Trtek (Miroslav’s brother) is currently remodeling the original house owned by Josef.

After graduating from 12th grade, Martin wanted to go to Charles University in Prague to become a Dairyman. His 4 sisters tried to pressure him to stay and work in the fields, but he went to Prague anyway. While attending the University he met Rose Maria Kopfstein. Martin’s sisters continued to write him and ask him to return to the farm in Nivnice. He refused to return. His sisters didn’t know about Rose, but Tomas did. Martin and Rose Marie were secretly married in Prague, and Tomas was the only family member who knew of their marriage.

In 1907 after graduating from Charles University, Martin went to Bremen, Germany with Rose Marie. They then traveled to New York City. Ellis Island’s immigration records show conflicting information about their arrival in New York City. Records show that Rose Marie, possibly with a sister, arrived on May 30, 1907, on the ship Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse, and is listed as married and age 23. The records show Martin arriving on July 24, 1907 on the Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse, listed as single and age 21.

Martin was hired as the head of the dairy for the Vanderbilts in East Islip, Long Island, New York. Rose Marie got a job as a housekeeper for a parish priest, Father Sinkmier. On February 10, 1909 (Rose Marie’s birthday), they were remarried by Father Sinkmier. The current family in the Czech Republic believes they got remarried because Martin’s sisters were still writing asking him to come back to the farm and work the fields. He now had an excuse for not returning because he was married and had his own responsibilities.

Martin and Rose Marie had a son, Martin J., on November 14, 1909. Martin wrote to his brother Tomas, who was still living on the family farm, and encouraged him to come to the United States. Martin and Rose Marie had another son, Joseph F., on April 4, 1911. Tomas arrived on Ellis Island on December 21, 1911, on the ship Kronprinzessin Cecile from Bremen. He was 19 and single. Martin got Tomas a job at the dairy, where they now both had good paying work.

Martin began communicating with Mrs. Barbara Havlik in Scappoose, via Czech Catholic Newspapers. She encouraged him to move his family to Scappoose. Martin wanted Tomas to join them, but he stayed in New York, was laid off at the dairy, and got a good job in a manufacturing plant in New York City. The sisters continued to correspond with Tomas, and finally convinced him to return to the family farm in Nivnice to help his parents.

Martin corresponded with his parents in Nivnice. His father died in the 1920’s, and his mother in 1936. After their mother died, Martin’s 4 sisters and Tomas fought over their inheritance in a bitter fight with Tomas against the sisters. Martin stopped writing to his family after his mother’s death, causing them to think he had died or something bad had happened to him in America. He wrote to his brother Tomas in 1957, just before he left America on a trip to Nivnice.

As soon as he arrived in Nivnice in 1957, Martin was scolded by his sisters for not coming back to the farm and helping his parents. He had some strong words with them, telling them off, and never talked to them again. He did talk to Tomas, and told him he had made the mistake of his lifetime by not staying in the United States, which Tomas agreed with.
While Martin was visiting Nivnice, he came down with pneumonia and was very ill. He told Tomas if he died, he didn’t want to be buried in Nivnice but wanted to be sent back to the United States. Tomas was told to contact his sons and they would arrange for an airplane to fly his body back. However, Martin recovered and was able to return on his own to Scappoose.

Note: The current Trtkovi (Czech for Trtek Family) lost contact with the sister’s families, and no one knew much about Martin’s parents except that they were farmers.

Additional Information per Martin J. Trtek’s recorded conversation in 1987 about Grandpa and Grandma (Martin T. and Rose Marie):

Grandpa and Grandma took the train with Dad and Joe to Scappoose when Dad was 18 months old and Joe was 1 month old, this was around May 1911. Grandma cut tablecloths that she had sewed and made them into diapers for Joe, Dad said he didn’t need them, and that he knew “how to go”. Dad also said “Ma threw them out the window” after she changed Joe.

The first place Grandpa and Grandma lived with Dad and Joe in Scappoose was a two-story house behind what is now the Scappoose gravel pit. It was located near the northeast corner of where Airport Road (West Lane) and Crown Road are now. Dad doesn’t recall if they rented or owned; the house was still there in 1987 when he had this conversation.

Grandpa and Grandma moved to “The Farm” sometime in 1913-14, this was around the time Rose was born.

Grandpa (Martin T.) – worked for Nehalem Lumber Company building trestles when they were constructing the Scappoose Boom in 1912. He also worked in Portland at a dairy. He worked a few years during wheat harvest time in Eastern Oregon at C.L. Woodard Farm near Adams. This can be confirmed with his Draft Registration of June 5, 1917. Dad estimates he was gone for about 2 to 3 months at a time, and has no idea what Grandma did during this time other than take care of the kids at home. Grandpa had a business selling tomatoes to the hospitals in Portland and was known as the “Tomato King.” He worked at the Boom. He bought and donated the large marble statue that is in the St. Wenceslaus Church cemetery. He ordered it in 1958 from an Italian company, and it took ten years for the statue’s crates to arrive at the church. The arrival was on the day Grandpa died in a car accident in July 1968. He never got to see the statue.

Grandma (Rose Marie) made money doing sewing for her neighbors. She won 2 years straight the first prize at the State Fair for her sewing. She bought and donated the chimes/bells for St. Wenceslaus Church sometime after the Army chapel was moved to Scappoose from Fort Stevens in late 1948.
Trudeau Family Memories of St. Wenceslaus

Through friends in Knights of Columbus, Donna’s dad knew of a barber shop that was available in Scappoose. Roger bought it and we moved to Warren in November, 1977.

Roger was born in Framingham, MA, and grew up in nearby Marlboro. Because of their Canadian heritage, his parents spoke some French, especially when they did not want the children to know what they were saying. Donna was born and raised in Hillsboro, OR. Her paternal great aunts and uncles spoke a Swiss dialect on occasion. Her mother and grandparents often spoke Dutch to each other and older friends. Now our grandchildren are learning other languages; Chris’s boys understand some Korean, while Sara’s girls (one an infant) understand some Spanish.

In the mid 1980’s Roger sold the barbershop and worked first at Multnomah Plywood, then at Columbia Steel Castings, retiring in April, 2010. Donna worked as a substitute/part-time teacher/instructor before returning to full-time teaching at St. Helens High School. She retired from that in 2009, but continues with the part-time position at Portland Community College.

Chris and Sara were baptized by Fr. Cormier. They participated in religious education classes and various parish activities. Making the banner for First Communion was thought provoking and enjoyable for all of us. Fr. Vanderzanden assisted Chris with earning a Catholic scouting award. He was an alter server for many years, taking the position reverently and sincerely. Midway through 7th grade, Sara enrolled in Holy Cross School. Both graduated from Central Catholic. Because of Sara’s religious education, she was fortunate to be confirmed with Chris’s class. Donna, along with Geri DeSylvia, watched the teachers’ preschoolers while they taught. Chris and Sara assisted the first grade teachers as often as they could during high school. Chris was very proud to have received a parish sponsored scholarship ending his senior year.

Because Chris and Sara had Fr. Clovis as a teacher at Central Catholic, he was a favorite. His humor and knowledge made sermons easy to listen to. The personal relationship stories that Fr. Stange shares are always looked forward to—they remind us of our humanness. His explanations of the readings and the historical connotation make for better understanding of the Bible. He is a very good teacher; we are fortunate.

Sara never considered getting married at any other church. She so appreciated Father’s accommodations for the Mass despite his health issues and the hot August day. It made Albert’s and her day that much more special.

Our family has enjoyed helping in any capacity: with the spaghetti dinners, turkey dinners and potlucks, the after Mass coffees, campouts, Bible study, and many other church activities. Christmas pageants were always looked forward to, culminating with the orange and candy bar from Santa. We were thrilled and shocked to win the first cook-off award at the 2006 campout. Chris saved the day with a “new” barbeque grill. All interactions have strengthened St. Wenceslaus through new and continuing friendships and the faith-building of our community.
Adeline Vanderwerf - My Memories of St. Wenceslaus

My mother, Mary Vasko Roza Vanderwerf came to the United States from Czechoslovakia with her parents and her brother Henry, through Ellis Island in 1910. Her mother became ill with the dreaded TB on the boat and was placed in the hospital where she passed away. Her father continued on with the journey with my mother and her brother to a Czech community in Nebraska. Her father, consumed with grief over the loss of his wife, died leaving Mary, at age 5, and Henry, age 2, orphaned and placed in an orphanage.

Vaclav and Mary Roza were on their way to Oregon. The Roza’s were childless and stopped at the orphanage. Mary and Henry Vasko became their children, and were brought to Scappoose, Oregon in 1913.

Vaclav and Mary Roza purchased the land next to the church which they farmed. The white house on the south side of the church was their place. It is called the Mike Barta place. Mike and Joe Barta were the nephews of Mrs. Vaclav Mary Roza.

Old Portland Road used to be the main highway through the area. The Roza’s had a fruit stand and sold their vegetables, fruit and flowers.

Vaclav and Mary Roza like most pioneer families of the time did much for the church, ringing the bells for church and the angelus, playing the organ, caring for the altar linens, cleaning and decorating the church with flowers.

My father, John Vanderwerf, was born in the Netherlands and came to the United States after serving in the Dutch Navy. He was head gardener at the old St. Vincent’s Hospital in Portland, which has since been torn down and rebuilt on Barnes Road in Beaverton, Oregon. My mother was working there; they met, fell in love, and were married at St. Wenceslaus Church in 1928. The Roza’s gave them the house and 2 acres of land on the north side of the church. The house since has been torn down, and built in its place is the Parish Hall and the Vanderzanden Center.

John and Mary Vanderwerf had 6 children, Adeline, James, Loretta (Sally), Joseph, Larry and John. Most were born at home in the house next to St. Wenceslaus. They all attended St. Frederic’s grade school in St. Helens. After graduating grade school, all attended Scappoose High School with the exception of Sally and John. Sally attended and graduated from St. Mary’s Academy for Girls in Portland, and John attended Mt. Angel Seminary in Mt. Angel, Oregon.

All the boys served as altar boys and were called on at a moment’s notice. Our family, as all families in the parish, worked together on Turkey Dinners, Strawberry Socials, and Bake Sales. I remember one Bake Sale in particular at the Thriftway, a parishioner brought in two beautiful banana cream pies. As she handed them to my mother her husband grabbed them and said, “She can bake for you but not for me.” He paid for the pies and walked out. St. Wenceslaus women belonged to the Altar Society and the Catholic Daughters of America. The women of St. Wenceslaus parish cooked and served dinners for the Kiwanis Club. Another small group of women including my mother met once a week at Vickie Schmit’s home and made rosaries for the missions.
My brother James served in the Navy, and brothers Larry and John served in the Army. Brother Joe had had polio so was unable to serve in any of the services. The boys did serve in Japan, Korea and Vietnam.

There have been many changes in the neighborhood. The house, we grew up in was torn down to make room for the parish hall and center; the Barta Orchard has houses instead of trees; Highway 30 has replaced Old Portland Road for a main thoroughfare; the faces of our old neighbors have been replaced with new ones.

We have seen 100 years of laughter, smiles, tears, good times, hardship, friendships, births, and deaths, and now’s the time to celebrate them all. To celebrate the family that is St. Wenceslaus that will continue to change and evolve though time.

CONGRATULATIONS ST. WENCESLAUS – 100 YEARS AND COUNTING

Vopalensky Family
(Submitted by Ann Vopalensky Barta and Albina Vopalensky Heindl)

Joseph Sr. and Anna Vopalensky immigrated to the United States by ship with four children, Joseph Jr., Charles, Bessie, and William, from Czechoslovakia in 1910. They landed in New York and then settled temporarily with Dad’s brother in Wisconsin. Later they moved to a nearby town where Dad worked with masonry and carpentry. Ann was born in 1914 and Albina in 1920, both in Wisconsin. As the family grew up, they started farming, moving from place to place to make a living. Even as youngsters we realized that times were really hard.

Sometimes in the 1920’s, Dad had the opportunity to get a newspaper or magazine called “Katolik” and read about a Novak family from Scappoose, Oregon, who was inviting families to come west, to a nice locality in a community of Catholic Czech people, who spoke the language, and even had a Czech priest. We all moved (eight of us by then) to Scappoose in 1925.

When we arrived in Scappoose, we met the Novak family, but they were unable to find us a place to stay. There happened to be a vacant country store, with the front all in windows, and no beds, heat or water. That was our first home in Scappoose. Shortly after we found a rental house at “Norton’s Place,” and the men and Dad worked at the Clark & Wilson sawmill in Linnton. Later we moved to a farm in Dutch Canyon. We raised turkeys, chickens, and crops of peas for the cannery. Bill and Charley had a baler and threshing machine, and did custom work for local farmers. Brother Joe was our mechanic for our cars and machinery.

Soon the boys were married, and we lost our Mother (only 65 years old) on February 17, 1945. By then Ann had married Mike Barta, and Bessie had married Joseph Fischer of the parish. Then Albina married Jerry Heindl in 1946. Dad eventually re-married, and lived with his second wife Rose in a house right across the street from St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church until his death in the 1960’s.
Worley Family Story

Life is a puzzle. The puzzle fits together but the pieces are found at different times in our lives. We only know the picture when our life is completed.

David, the son of a pharmacist and a stay at home mother, was born in Silverton, Oregon in 1942, and raised in Mt. Angel. David was of the second family after his widowed father remarried. He had one sister and two brothers and two half brothers and one half-sister.

I, Donna (officially LaDonna Hassenstab) was born in 1944 to a seamstress and a band leader of the Big Band Era. I was the surprise puzzle piece arriving when Mom was 40. I was raised by my then-single mother who had been a hard worker since she quit school at 16 to work on the family’s Nebraska farm. She did numerous odd jobs to support us and I was usually at her side, or under a table!

The value of a Catholic education was important and instilled in me at a young age. When I was old enough, I would work in the fields picking strawberries, beans, cherries, etc. to help pay for my tuition and uniform. In high school I worked in the cannery in the summer, and during the school year I would be called in almost every weekend to see if I could work. During the school year, I did janitorial work for the Holy Name Sisters/school for music lessons.

In second grade I was in boarding school with the Benedictine Sisters in Mt. Angel; I made my First Communion at St. Mary's Church. That was the first time I saw David; he was one of the altar boys. When I saw him, I somehow knew that our paths would cross at a later time. We officially met in 1963 at Mt. Angel College. David was a junior Education major; I was in Fine Arts, and a work/study student in the college library. One could say David “checked me out”.

We were married at St. Joseph's Church in 1965. We had a lot more love than money. In 1966, our first baby, Joseph, arrived; Susan was born in 1968 and Matthew in 1969. We paid for the three babies on the revolving charge accounts of the hospital and doctor. David was a grade school teacher at St. Joseph's in Portland. The school closed. Then he taught at St. Peter's in Portland until that school closed. I started in the Tupperware business to keep us going. Also, at that time, the 205 freeway was getting ready to be built – through our house. Where do we go now?! No job, house being taken over, and 3 little ones. We just had to trust in the Lord.

A teaching position opened up at St. Frederic School in St. Helens. I had no idea it was a town; I thought it was a mountain. I went with David to find out where this town was. Highway 30 was two lanes with no shoulders to speak of. Where was he taking our family? Well, we were together. David was hired. We had one weekend to find a place to live as the State wanted our home right away; we had stalled as long as we could. We had the last house on the block to be moved or demolished.

We found a small house of 900 square feet a half block from St. Frederic School, handy for David's job, then two years later, the school closed. By that time, David had 10 years teaching experience. He applied for positions everywhere. The schools couldn't afford to hire an experienced teacher and many were seeking bilingual applicants. My Tupperware business was
going well. I had an insured company car to drive with no mileage restrictions, and we were furnishing our home from awards from Tupperware. We were getting by.

Plan B: David decided to go back to school to become an accountant, but his eye exam did not go well for that field or for teaching anymore! I was hired at the St. Helens Library to help pay the bills. I enrolled in a Library Media Program, and completed a two year degree as a “perk” of that job. I went to work for Multnomah County Library system; working at 3 different branches.

Plan C: Our next door neighbor told David that Safeway was hiring busboys. It was a job. David checked it out, and the manager off-handedly asked him if he had any baking experience. His two summers at a commercial bakery came in handy, as the baker at Safeway had quit that day! He began to “roll in the dough”.

As our children grew, the house seemed to shrink. We added two grandchildren - unexpected gifts from God. I sold that house from under us only to easily become aware of a house for sale in Scappoose. When David saw the greenhouse, he said, “We'll take it.” I didn't remember voting, but of course I was the one who first told him, “Honey, I sold the house!”

Changing jobs from Multnomah County to Lower Columbia College changed my commute. Once again I had the “perk” of more education. My “flat hat” on graduation in 2006 stated “44 YEAR PLAN”. Isn't it wonderful how God provides what we wish for? … But He doesn't own a watch! My Longview job ended; I rested, and then was hired at Scappoose Public Library.

Our boys finished college – one from U of O and one from Marylhurst. Susan graduated from PCC with an AA, and completed the “Women in the Trades” program. She shares our house as she is putting her two children through college. Her son has graduated from OSU, and her daughter is a senior in nursing at U of P. Interesting, each of us graduated from a different college. David still bakes for Safeway, and I still sell Tupperware and enjoy my local library job.

Our family enjoys being active in the parish. I have been in the 5th grade for sixteen years. The core curriculum of the Mass, the Sacraments, and Christian living are the beliefs and values we hold precious. My past experiences in Speech and Drama have been helpful when I’m a lector. As a Eucharistic Minister, it is humbling to know that I am holding our Lord and God in my hands and He is holding us in His Hands. We volunteer to bring items to the Clark Center.

Our family has adopted the Food Bank as “Night Stockers”. It's great to volunteer as a family, working together for a common goal. There wasn't a Food Bank when I was a kid. We believe in leading by example with prayer, Mass attendance, volunteerism, and the way we treat others at church, at work, and play. We look forward to the parish camp-outs, the parish social gatherings, and visiting the wonderful friends we have met through our parish.

Thank you, God, for bringing us to Scappoose and St. Wenceslaus Church. Our life puzzle is still in the making.
Father Francis Zalud, 1865 - 1931

Lillian Havlik, Andrew Cholick, Fr. Zalud, John Havlik and Barbara Havlik, on Lillian and Andrew’s wedding day, 1915
A gathering of the John Sr. and Barbara Havlik Family

Corpus Christi, 1937
Delores & Lorraine Kocarnik

Corpus Christi Procession, 1930’s or 1940’s

A Parish gathering around 1915, by parish rectory
First Communion 1915, Fr. Urban Fischer, OSB

Flower Girls at Fr. Joe Beno’s first Mass at St. Wenceslaus, 1957

First Communion, 1936. Rudy Marek, Delores Kocarnik, Mary Spacek, Albert Schmit

Frederick Wenceslaus Havlik, father of Martha Stokes

Birthday Party at John and Mary Vanderwerf’s

Charles Koutek, Scappoose Service Station

Novak Larson Garage 1936

Jeff & Ella (Havlik) Marek Wedding, 1921
Havlik Family 1902, John Sr., Fred, Lillian, Barbara (Zalud), Ella (Bernard Marek’s Mother)

John Havlik Jr. and Ethel Dumbeck, 1934
Parents of Albert, Steve, Robert and Mary Ann

John Havlik Jr. and Ethel Dumbeck Wedding, Summer 1934
1. Chapel being pulled by John Havlik Jr., 1949
2. Church construction, 1949
3. Church and rectory, 1961
Centennial History / Archives Committee:

Helen Beno Barta
Linda Egan Flynn
Albert Havlik
Josette Hugo
Delores Kocarnik Reed
Andy & Mary Ann Havlik Robinson
Nancy Rocha
Martha Havlik Stokes
Adeline Vanderwerf

Resources:

Archives, Archdiocese of Portland
Archives, St. Wenceslaus Parish
Archives, The Spotlight, Scappoose
General Research

Parish History written in Czech, Father John Hotovy, 1933
English translation of Parish History in Czech, Helen Mikesh Bukovi
History of Scappoose: 1852-1930, James Loring Watts, 1979
History of St. Wenceslaus Parish, Mary Roza Vanderwerf, 1982
75th Parish Anniversary Booklet, Helen Beno Barta, 1986

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We, the members of St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church, are a Christian community, called by God to be a visible sign of the living and active person of Jesus Christ.

“For where two or three are gathered there in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”

Matthew 18:20