



Mrs. Stephens, Mrs. Mee, Mrs. Wilbur, and Mrs. Butler enjoy a game of bridge at St. Monica's.



Mrs. Marie Dedie is ready for craft time at St. Monica's.

Part of the Community

It was St. Monica's that planned the first two ecumenical services, arranged by SWEM, for the elderly residents of Plymouth Gardens. The parish also has supported and contributed to the SWEM food cupboard.

St. Monica's School has welcomed open enrollment families. Sister Clare Francis Mogenhan, new principal of the school, said that statistics on the percentages of Catholic and non-Catholic students are not kept, but that 46 per cent of the students are nonparish and 56 per cent are black. The Concerned Parents Group, which has pledged itself to raising \$9,000 by March and has already succeeded in raising \$4,000, is reportedly very mixed both racially and denominationally.

St. Monica's old school is rented to Action for a Better Community and used for a day care center. The 19th Ward food cooperative also uses parish property as a distribution center.

For the past three summers St. Monica's has offered neighborhood children and youth a daily recreation program. Around 325 kids attended the federally funded Summer '75 at the parish. Program activities were designed to encourage a child to develop a positive self-image and an understanding of children with different interests and backgrounds. Activities included crafts, sports, nature studies and camping, cultural and literary explorations.

Sister Sheila Walsh, religious education coordinator, supervises programs for pre-schoolers through high schoolers. The large high school group meets informally on Sunday evenings for discussion or guest speakers. They

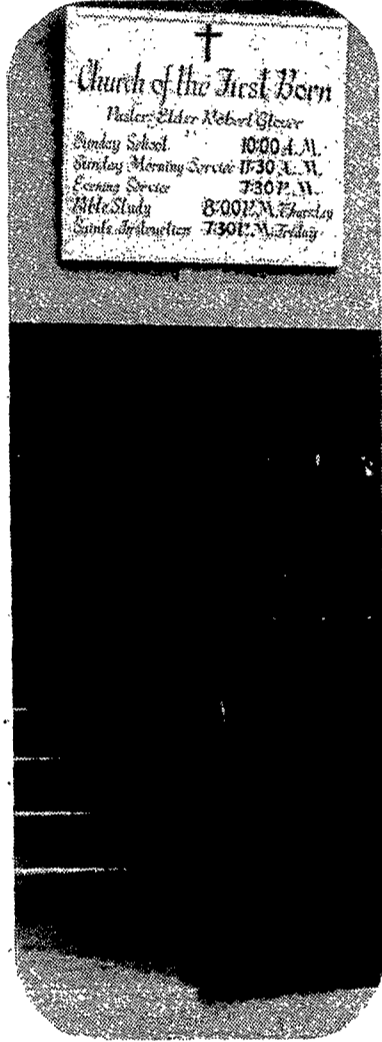
have experimented successfully with drama and dance in a religious context.

St. Monica's also uses a block leader system to reach out to its community. Block leaders become known as sources of information about public services, emergency help, senior citizen groups. Church staff is alerted to individual or group needs when appropriate. Block leaders welcome new neighbors, help them get acquainted, and thus contribute to the closeness of the neighborhood.

A similarly broad-based outreach to the community was conducted at Eastertime last spring. Called a Parish Mission, pairs of missionaries agreed to visit 15 homes. Over 600 new homes were visited and invitations to the Easter celebration were extended to those without a church.

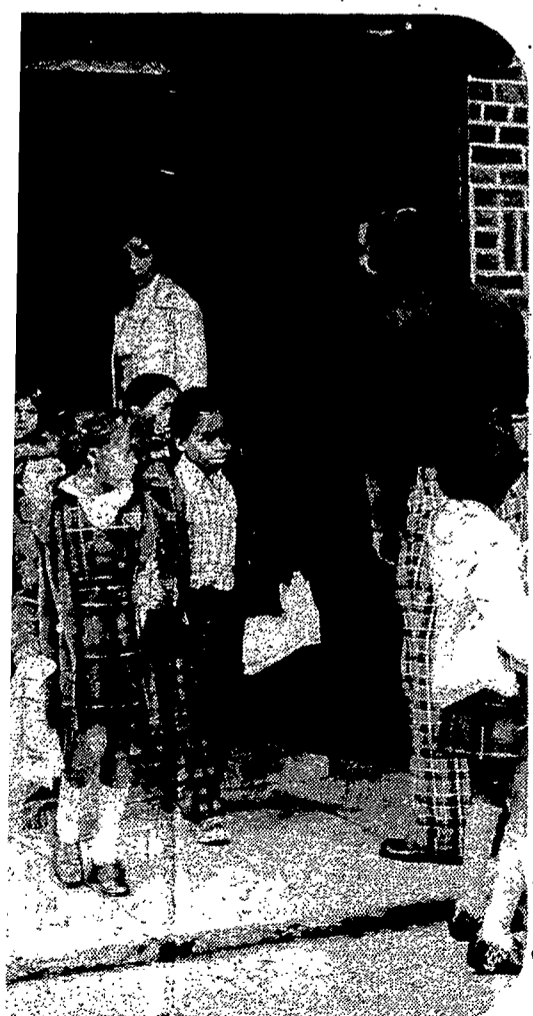
The elderly enjoy three different groups at the church. The Golden Agers have been meeting twice a month for the past five years to dance and play bingo. The parish human development committee sponsors a craft group that also meets twice monthly, and a third group enjoys playing cards together. Notices of the meetings are sent to all the neighborhood churches.

Members of the church staff conduct several personal ministries with an ecumenical thrust as well. Father Stacy visits neighborhood residents in jail and Sister Barbara Moore conducts a nondenominational Bible study at Montgomery Neighborhood Center. Parish visitor, Sister Agnes Clare McGrath, doesn't care what a person's denomination is when she rings their bell to comfort or encourage.

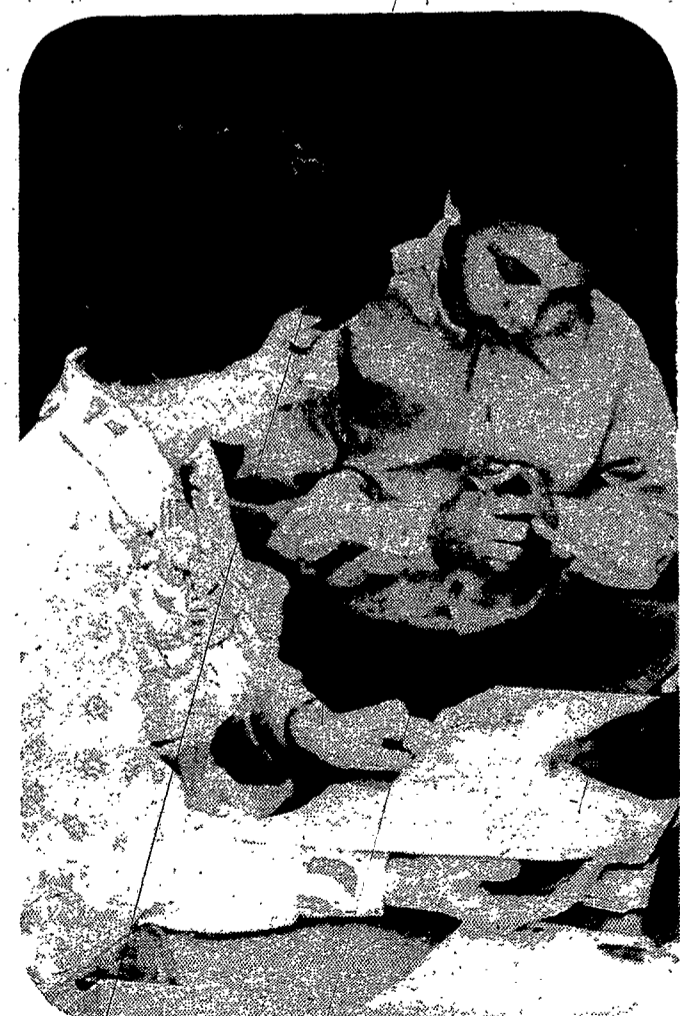


A Protestant group rents part of St. Monica's old school.

Text by Bonita Baldwin
Photos by Susan McKinney



Leo Finucane, Mrs. Richard Ricketts and David Vasallo say good-bye to their students at the end of the year. Leo Finucane gets help from his teacher Mrs. James Heagerty.



Michael McKnight, left, and Tramaine Samuel figure arithmetic problems at St. Monica's school.