

PARISH FEATURE

Inner-city cluster ministers to neighborhoods



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer
Joan Joslyn and Adam Lange-Pearson lead the congregation in song during a Sept. 24 liturgy.



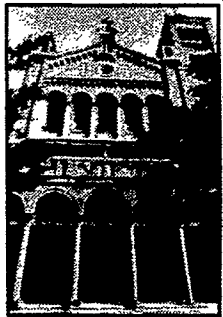
S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer
Ss. Peter and Paul Church, founded in 1843, is one of the oldest continuous churches in the Rochester diocese.



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer
Francine Keeton and Matthew Nelson attended the 10:30 a.m. Mass at Ss. Peter and Paul Church Sept. 24.

Parish Profile

Ss. Peter & Paul Church & St. Francis of Assisi, Rochester



By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — This city boasts two small, active parishes whose activities and ministries focus on the concerns of the neighborhoods in which they are located.

Ss. Peter and Paul Church, 720 Main St. W., and St. Francis of Assisi Church, 77 Whitney St., were clustered in June of last year. According to both parishes' staff members, even though the two church communities bring to their rela-

tionship distinctive characteristics, they each share a similar concern for the poor.

"In this diocese, inner-city churches like us have a chance," said the cluster's pastor, Father David P. Reid, SS.CC., noting that other dioceses have closed inner-city parishes in droves.

He added that both churches receive crucial financial support from several suburban parishes: Ss. Peter and Paul, for example, receives help from St. John the Evangelist in Greece, while St. Francis gets assistance from St. Pius the Tenth in Gates.

Fittingly enough, given the diehard spirit of the parishes he oversees, Father Reid is a member of a missionary order: the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Both parishes don't want the church to relinquish its role in the urban environment, he explained.

"We're very concerned that the church not flee the inner city," Father Reid said.

To that end, Ss. Peter and Paul this year has enlisted the support of its former school alumni who are contributing,

along with several parishioners, to a building repair and adaptation campaign, according to Mary Seebach, development director. The parish has had to concentrate on amplifying its commitment to the poor to attract donor dollars, she said.

"We're a little light under the bushel, and we're talking about lifting the bushel above," she said of the campaign's publicity.

The spiritual home to about 120 parishioners, Ss. Peter and Paul — the elder of St. Francis — was founded on the city's westside in 1843. In addition to leasing its former school for low-income housing, Ss. Peter and Paul also serves the city's poor through such ministries as a soup kitchen, a discount clothing store, a day care center and a neighborhood community center.

In addition to serving about 4,000 people a month through its various ministries, members of Ss. Peter and Paul serve each other in great numbers, according to Barbara Classen, pastoral associate. She noted, for example, that 20

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