

FEATURE

Community has lived up to its name, members say



Parish Profile
Church of the
Resurrection, Perinton

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

PERINTON — When Linda Graves first came to the Church of the Resurrection seven years ago, various people at the parish encouraged her to volunteer for activities, she said.

Impressed by the invitation, she eventually helped to organize a women's retreat and taught in the parish's religious education program.

Currently, she puts her accounting background to work as the parish's part-time business manager, she said. Graves also participates in a small Christian community — one of several groups averaging about eight members that are organized around regular shared Scripture study and prayer.

"I came from another parish," Graves said. "I wasn't involved in anything. Resurrection was true to its name because it gave me new life."

Resurrection has been giving new life to Catholics since it was founded by 205 parishioners and Father Robert G. Kreckel in March 1973. The parish was established, in part, to accommodate the membership overflow from Church of the Assumption in Fairport, according to newspaper reports from that time.

But Bishop Joseph L. Hogan also wanted the parish to be a "post-Vatican II parish" — a church, in other words, marked by strong lay participation in its planning and running, as newspaper reports and a parish history noted. Parish and volunteers and staff members interviewed by the *Catholic Courier* stressed that the parish has, in many ways, fulfilled that mandate.

Since its founding, Resurrection has grown to encompass 579 families, according to Father Louis A. Vasile, pastor of the church for the last five years. He replaced Father Lawrence V. Murphy, who had tak-



Bill Hewken

Dick Manca of Walworth, left, and other parishioners perform "Gestures and Movements" while celebrating the Mass of the Lord's Supper, Holy Thursday, April 9, at Church of the Resurrection, Perinton.

en over in 1985 from Father Kreckel. Father Vasile himself will leave the parish June 30 to take over as pastor of St. Alphonsus in Auburn. Replacement staffing has not been announced.

Father Vasile spoke of Resurrection as a lively, dedicated parish with programs for youth and adults as well as outreach programs to the poor and those in crisis.

"The community is very gifted, articulate and capable of living out the principles of Vatican II," Father Vasile said. "It's based on the principle that 'We are the church.'"

That 'we' includes Sharon Layer, a parish volunteer, who has done everything from serving on the parish council to working on a parish newsletter. She's also helped to raise funds for the church and works with its Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults program.

Layer and her husband, Dan, came to the parish 14 years ago, and, like Graves, she said Resurrection changed her spiritual life.

"We came here at a time when we were having a little crisis in our faith," Layer said of herself and her husband. But only one day after she registered at the church, she was invited to volunteer at the parish, and she has immersed herself in it ever since, she said.

"Everything just fell into place," Layer

said. "It must be where the Lord wanted us to be."

Jan Harmon, a parish secretary and volunteer on the liturgy committee, has belonged to the church for 22 years. Although she's a mother now, when she and her husband, Jim, moved to Perinton from Michigan in the 1970s, their only relations in the area were spiritual.

"Because we had no family here, this church became our family," she said.

Bob Majewski, a volunteer on the parish's building committee, has attended Resurrection for 20 years. Like other parish volunteers, he noted that he and his wife, Betty, settled on Resurrection after sampling other parishes.

"We went to a number of different churches," he said. "We liked the people here."

Virginia Halleran began volunteering at the parish 23 years ago and is currently a parish secretary. She shared many of Majewski's sentiments.

"I've always liked it here," she said. "I've been here through three priests, and I just keep coming back. I've really enjoyed it. People have been great."

One of the parish's strongest aspects is its dedication to its young people, according to Cathy Allard, who works as a youth minister, faith formation administrator and parish life coordinator. Resurrection offers catechism classes for more than 200 preschool and elementary age students, as well as two weekly youth group meetings for teens, including some who are Protestant, she said.

The parish's inclusive atmosphere has enveloped Suzie Scoppa, parish council chairperson. Scoppa noted that one of her three children, Anne, 23, has Down's syndrome and serves as a minister of hospitality at the parish. The fact that Resurrection's members so readily accepted her daughter was the biggest factor in her family's decision to attend the church, Scoppa said.

"(Anne is) as much at home in this building as she is in our home," Scoppa said. "She's just one of the people."

The parish not only includes its own, but it also emphasizes social outreach, according to Bob Fries, chairman of the social ministry committee.

In particular, he noted that the parish has embraced the diocesan synodal goal of promoting the consistent life ethic, which opposes abortion, war, poverty, euthanasia and the death penalty. In fact, Resurrection was among eight parishes that recently endorsed the Faith Community Pledge for Life, he said. The pledge, which was promoted by the diocesan consistent life ethic office, commits a parish or faith community to helping women who face crisis pregnancies find emotional and

SNAPSHOT

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Ministerial Staff:

Pastor:

Father Louis A. Vasile

Weekend assistant:

Father Protus Hamisi

Business manager:

Linda Graves

Faith Formation & Youth Ministry:

Cathy Allard, Annette Truby

Music ministry coordinator:

Brian Waldmiller

Parish Life coordinator:

Cathy Allard

Support Staff:

Maintenance: Dan DeVito

Secretaries:

Virginia Halleran, Jan Harmon

Parish Council Chairperson:

Susan Scoppa

material support.

Members of Resurrection's social ministry committee have also chosen to advocate for various life issues throughout the year, Fries said. He explained that committee members are working on everything from garnering parish support for social agencies to educating the faithful through forums and bulletin blurbs.

Social outreach is also a priority for Resurrection's small Christian communities — another diocesan synodal priority — according to Patricia Pelano, who is helping to coordinate the small Christian communities at the parish.

In addition to a men's group and a women's group that meet at the church on Saturday mornings, Pelano said, six new groups formed during Lent are continuing to meet regularly. She added that not only are these groups studying Scripture and sharing prayer, but they have also taken on various social ministry projects.

For example, she said, one group plans to volunteer to work at an area soup kitchen, while another group is collecting clothes for the needy. Such work allows the groups to nourish the wider community while enriching themselves spiritually, she noted.

"I think it's in the small Christian community that you get an opportunity to share your faith with others, and you get a chance to focus on what your baptismal call is in an intimate way," Pelano commented.

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