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History of Sacred Heart Parish, Anderson

This article was put together by Father John Boll from historical documents from the parish archives and newspaper articles written during the development of the parish.

In 1913, Father Thomas Nugent, a priest from the Redding parish, dreamed of a church in Anderson. Every Sunday morning he made the trip to Anderson by horse and buggy to celebrate Mass at the home of Mrs Margaret Roycroft at 2091 Howard Street. There were only a handful of Catholics in the area at the time. This small community wanted their own church and in 1913 they circulated a petition for construction of a new church. Seventeen people signed the petition and pledged \$575 for the building; another \$200 was donated by the Catholic Church Extension Society. This small amount was enough to start laying the foundation and the building of the Anderson church which was completed in 1914 on the site of the Anderson Post Office. This church continued to be a mission of the Redding parish for the next 35 years.

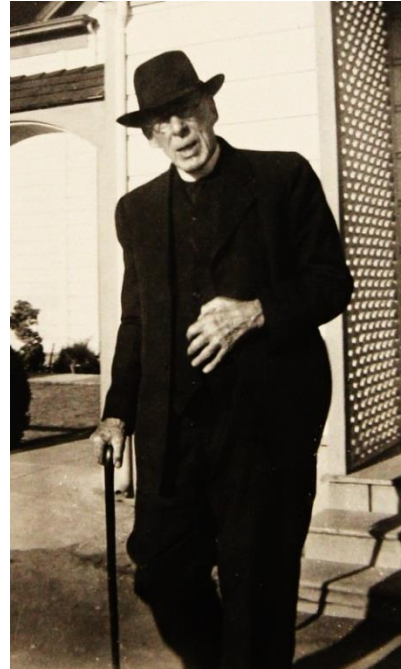


Photo on right is Monsignor Thomas Nugent in his senior years of ministry. It was his dream to build a church in Anderson.

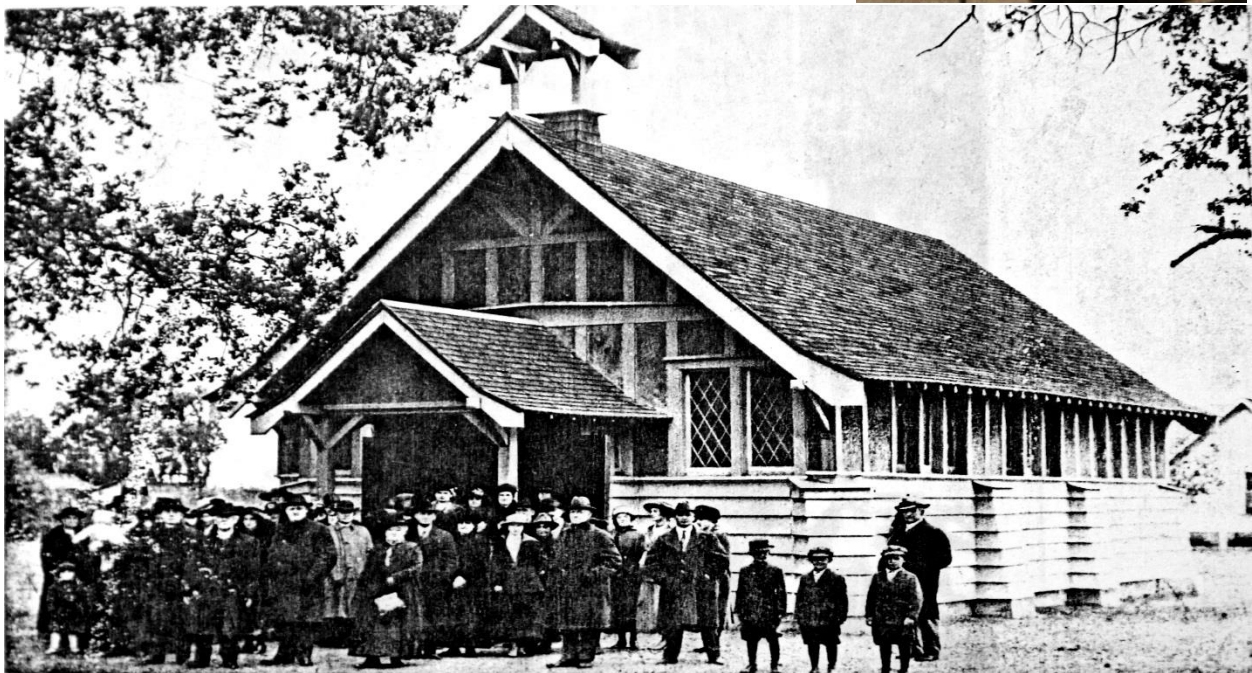
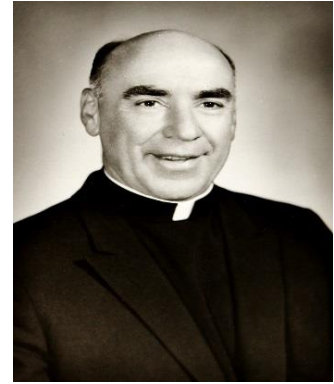


Photo from the collection of Mrs. Dan Coughlin

The First Sacred Heart Church, Anderson, Dedicated on October 26, 1919

Creation of Sacred Heart Church as a Parish

On Thursday, October 27, 1949, Bishop Robert J Armstrong, bishop of Sacramento, formally created a new parish in Anderson called Sacred Heart. Father Walter Albrecht, who had been an assistant pastor at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Sacramento, was named the founding pastor of the new parish. The parish boundaries were carved from Saint Joseph Parish, Redding and Sacred Heart Parish, Red Bluff. Saint Anne Church in Cottonwood, which had been a mission of Red Bluff, became a mission of the Anderson parish.



Raising the Funds to Build the New Church

In 1955, plans were completed to build a new church that would seat **Father Walter Albrecht** 400 people. With more than \$7000 in cash and pledges already in the construction fund, 25 two-man teams visited every home of parishioners in the Anderson-Cottonwood area seeking a pledge for the new church. This one day drive held on Saturday, April 2, 1955, from noon to 9 pm had a goal of raising an additional \$33,000 for the proposed new church building. A total of 139 pledges were received during the campaign.

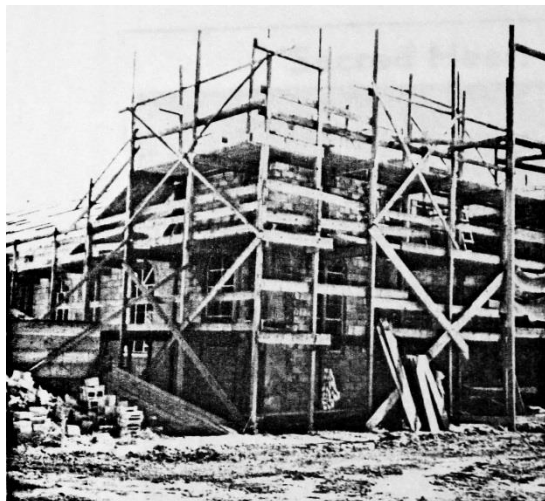


Stephen Roycroft

The fund drive was a success and Stephen Roycroft, in whose home the first Mass in Anderson was celebrated in 1913, donated the 23 acres of land on which the church was built.

The general design of the new church was the creation of Dick Fox, an Anderson engineer and building contractor. He was assisted by George W Reed of Yuba City. The design was patterned after a sketch of a similar church in Guatemala and the architectural style was Spanish Romanesque. The floor plan is cruciform with a sloping floor that leads to the altar. The sanctuary conveys a dramatic illustration of the hill of Calvary with a large crucifix behind the altar. Indented high in the wall is a circular window of the Risen Savior.

Construction Begins



The building project began on June 6, 1955 when 155 men, women and children of the parish, in one day's time, laid the entire foundation for their new church. Each Thursday after that, members of Saint Joseph Men's Club met and accomplished practically all the heavy cement and carpentry work needed to complete the new church. Eighty percent of the construction of the church was done by volunteer help from parishioners.

These noble men and women were inspired by the same spirit as those who raised the mission churches in the early days of California. Like the missions of

California, the Anderson church was built by volunteer labor and from materials close at hand.

The Important Contribution of the Women of the Parish

The women of the parish played a significant role in the building of the church. The men hauled to the building site raw materials for the tiles, screened the sand and helped with the heavier work. Then the women took over and make the tiles for the roof. Under the direction of Mrs Edward Harmon and her assistant, Mrs Jean Rice, 88 women worked for over seven months making 186 cement tiles a day until they reached 9550 tiles. They mixed water, cement, sand and a waterproofing compound in a power mixer. The slush was poured into a table with its top divided into 9 by 18 inch compartments. Each tile was reinforced with imbedded steel wire. The cement tiles were left to cure in the forms for 24 hours, then a water solution of red pigment was applied to their upper sides with paint brushes.

After the tiles dried and were sufficiently solid they were placed in the open air and left to cure under water-moistened cloths for approximately six weeks. Keeping the tiles moist with damp clothes prevented the tile from cracking.

When the tiles were ready for application to the building, the men of the parish carried them onto the roof and nailed them through the single hole left in each tile. The tiles were also imbedded in asphalt and the sticky asphalt applied to the edge of each piece sealed the butting points.

The church was constructed from concrete blocks and it sits in the middle of an open field. The setting heightens the appearance of the early mission churches. Two bell towers flank the front of the church.



Father Albrecht with his Dog



The Newly Built Sacred Heart Church, Anderson in 1956



Photos from the Diocesan Archives

Interior of Sacred Heart Church in 1956

Bishop McGucken Dedicates Sacred Heart Church

Bishop Joseph McGucken, bishop of Sacramento, officiated at the dedication and blessing of the new church on March 15, 1959. Father Albrecht stayed two more years before he was transferred to Saint John the Baptist Church, Folsom on February 16, 1961. His last appointment was to St Anthony Parish, Mount Shasta and he retired from active ministry in 1978 due to failing health.



Father Thomas O'Brien, pastor of Holy Family parish in Portola, was assigned to replace Father Albrecht. After assessing the needs of the parish, he saw the need and advantage of a Catholic school in the parish. Father O'Brien announced plans in April 1963 to build a parochial school. He worked with dedicated parents and parish members who gave of their time and money to make this dream a reality. Stephen Roycroft donated land and money to build Sacred Heart School.

The parish school opened in September 1964. The Mercy Sisters of Auburn, who had agreed to teach in the school, commuted from the convent in Redding until 1969.

Sister M. Celine, the founding principal, assisted by Sister M. Annunciata and Shirley Mottern opened the school on September 14, 1964 with 114 students in grades 1 – 5. A grade was added each year and in June 1968, the first 8th grade class graduated. In October 1968, Father O'Brien was transferred to Saint Patrick Parish, Placerville.

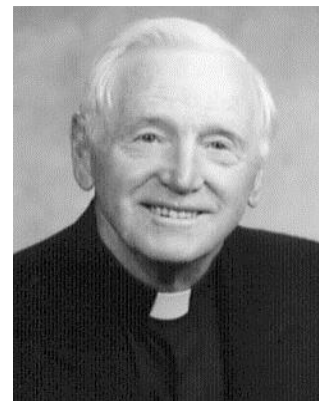


Photo from Sacred Heart Parish Archive File

Sister Mary Celine Hennegin, RSM at the new Sacred Heart School

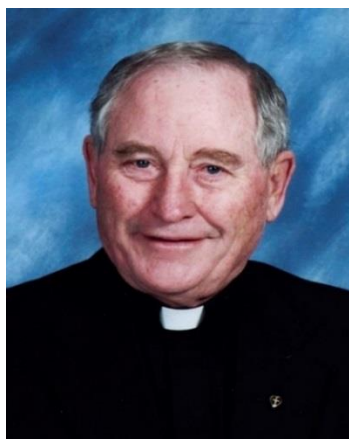
Father William Broderick Appointed Third Pastor of Anderson

Father William Broderick (right), who had just completed three years in Vietnam as an Army chaplain, was named the third pastor of Anderson. The parish purchased a home in the Wooded Acres development, remodeled and furnished it as a convent for the school sisters in 1969. The Sisters took up residence there in September of that year.



After only two years, Father Broderick was transferred to Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Del Paso Heights, in November 1971. He was later transferred St Joseph Parish in North Sacramento as pastor.

Fourth Pastor, Father William Kinane



Father William Kinane (left) replaced Father Broderick but served only two years as pastor as well, from November 1971 to October 1973. The idea of a parish hall was formed during this time and the first steps were taken to finance and build a hall.

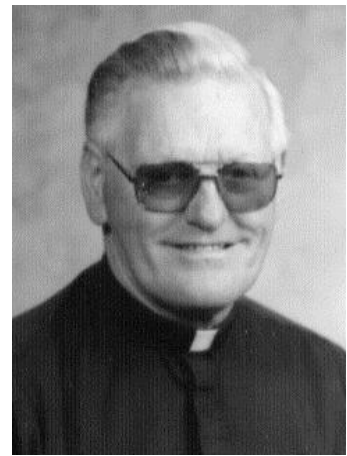
While Father Kinane was making a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Monsignor Higgins on behalf of Bishop Bell contacted him to ask if he would accept the pastorate of Saint John the Baptist Parish in Folsom. It was with great reluctance that Father Kinane accepted the bishop's request to be pastor of Folsom.

Father James McKnight Named Pastor

Succeeding Father Kinane was Father James McKnight who arrived in Anderson in October 1973. The Parish Council was formed in 1975 in accord with the decrees of the Second Vatican Council. Bishop Bell, recognizing the growth of the parish, assigned Father Thomas O'Sullivan as associate pastor in March 1977.

During the spring of 1977, a fund raising committee with Bill Duval and Dr Vince Hagus as co-chairmen, was formed to solicit pledges to build a parish hall and rectory. Jerry Hietpas was appointed chairman of the parish hall building program. The Parish Council agreed to use volunteer help, wherever possible, in the construction of the hall.

On Sunday, March 19, 1978, a ground breaking ceremony was held and construction of the hall began immediately. A new rectory next to the church was also constructed at same time. The new priests' residence provided much needed office space and private conference rooms in addition to living quarters for two priests. In 1981 Father McKnight was appointed to the pastorate of Saint Monica Parish in Willows.



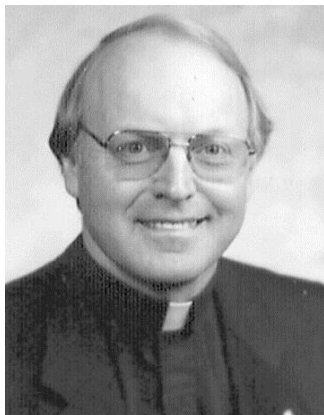
Father James McKnight



Photo by John E Boll

The Parish Hall Built by the Parishioners in 1978

Father Michael Kiernan Succeeds Father McKnight

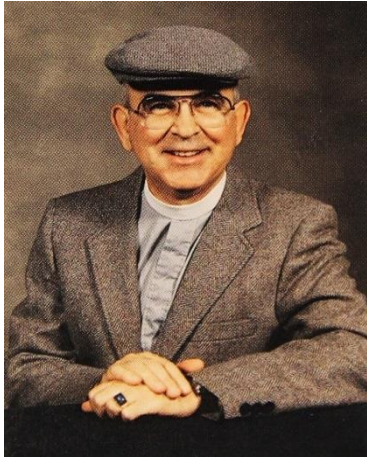


Bishop Francis Quinn succeeded Bishop Bell in 1980 and he appointed Father Michael Kiernan to be the new pastor of Anderson in 1981. Father Michael would have the longest pastorate of Anderson of any of his predecessors. He served as pastor for 20 years. During his first three years in Anderson he began to do pastoral planning which included building up the ministries of the parish. He also worked on raising the annual income of the parish.

Church Renovated to Conform to the Liturgical Norms of Vatican II

In 1983, the parish embarked on a major renovation of the church including an extension to the entrance of the church to provide a gathering space and the placement of a new baptismal font with running water. These changes brought the church up to date so the liturgy could be celebrated in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council.

Creation of a Parish Pastoral Plan



Following the model of the diocesan pastoral plan, the 800 families of Sacred Heart Parish took up the challenge of developing their own pastoral plan. For fourteen months the parish planning committee under the leadership of parochial vicar Father Michael Tamburi and Deacon Michael Evans did extensive gathering of information necessary to formulate a pastoral plan for the parish.

Father Michael Tamburi - left

The parish was divided into thirty-six areas where home Masses were celebrated. At the Masses, questionnaires were handed out and explained. The answers were typed and returned to all thirty-six areas for approval or change. All the data was collated and a master list created from which the pastoral plan committee was formed. About 25% of the parishioners participated through the questionnaire or by oral communication. The eleven members of the committee took all the data and created a five year plan

A parish convocation was held on March 9, 1984. The theme of the parish plan was ***"Create a New Heart in us, O Lord."*** A video overview of the proposed plan was shown followed by discussion, workshops and a buffet lunch. Although the plan was meticulously organized, the process was "free and open to the Spirit," according to Father Michael Kiernan. Bishop Quinn came to Anderson that day to celebrate Mass at 1 pm.

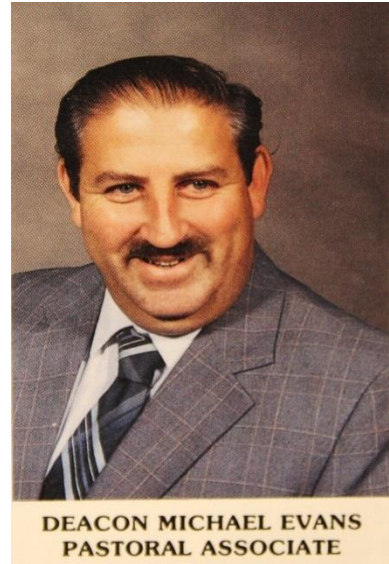


Photo by John E Boll 2014

New Baptismal Font in the Church Narthex



Photo by John E Boll

Sacred Heart Church Renovated during the Pastorate of Father Michael Kiernan



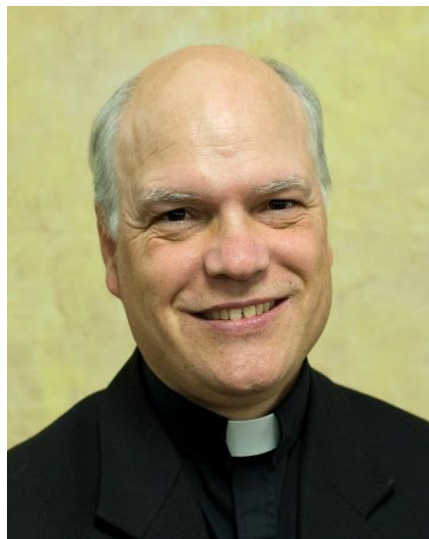
Photo by John E Boll 2014

Interior of Renovated Church

Father Kiernan Appointed to Head Catholic Charities

In 2001, Bishop William Weigand asked Father Kiernan to head the Diocesan Department of Catholic Charities in Sacramento. Father Kiernan's successor was Father Eric Lofgren who had been pastor of the Burney Parish.

Father Eric Lofgren, Seventh Pastor of Sacred Heart Parish 2001-2006



Father Eric Lofgren succeeded the long pastorate of Father Michael Kiernan in 2001. He did what he could to help at Bishop Quinn High School in Redding as well as keeping the parish grammar school moving forward. The parish subsidy to the school was high but the school was holding its own.

He was pleased with the excellent work of the parish social service ministry through the food closet in the Anderson and Cottonwood area under the leadership of Deacon Michael Evans and the volunteers.

The parish had a strong Hispanic community and transitional deacon Efren Garcia spent his pastoral year working at Sacred Heart Parish. Bishop Weigand ordained Efren a priest in the Anderson church and Father Eric felt that was a memorable event for the whole parish to see and experience an ordination in the parish church.

Father Eric enjoyed working with the excellent parish staff since everyone worked together in a positive way. In 2006, Bishop Weigand asked Father Eric to become pastor of Sacred heart Parish in Red Bluff.

Father Patrick Henry Appointed Eighth Pastor 2006-2008

The next priest to pastor the Anderson parish was Father Patrick Henry who had previously served as pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in Alturas. He came to Anderson in 2006.

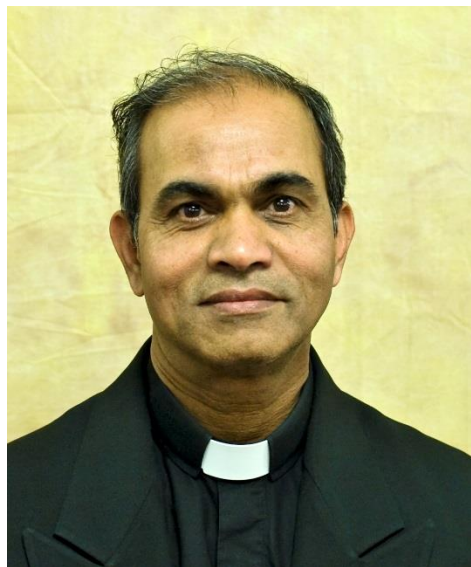
Responding to the needs of the community, Father Henry began teaching classes on Scripture, helping the people to grow in their knowledge and love of the Bible. Parishioners wanted to know how to respond to Evangelical Christians who came to their door. In his classes Father Patrick gave background on the formation of Scripture and focused on the way individual Gospels presented the teaching and mission of Jesus. He also reviewed the Acts of the Apostles showing how the Early Church developed under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and through the ministry of apostolic witnesses. Parishioners were better prepared to discuss their Catholic faith with others because of these classes.

A second gift he brought to the parish was a compassionate heart for the sick. He was always ready to reach out to those who were ill and in need of the sacraments of healing.



Father Henry enjoyed his two years of ministry at Sacred Heart Parish and was disappointed when Bishop Weigand asked him to make a lateral move with Father Mathew Rappu who needed to move from the high desert to a lower altitude for health reasons.

Father Mathew Rappu Succeeds Father Henry



The appointment of Father Mathew Rappu as pastor of Sacred Heart Parish was for only two years, 2008-2010. He had been pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in Susanville but the altitude there affected his heart and his doctor recommended that he move to a lower elevation. In response to Father Mathew's medical need, Bishop Weigand initiated a lateral transfer of Father Mathew to Anderson and Father Henry to Susanville.

Father Mathew says his experience in Anderson was very positive. The parish school was struggling because it had a small student enrollment of 35 students. The parish was subsidizing the school \$75,000 a year. Father Mathew decided to encourage parishioners to send their children to the parish school and to pay what they could of the tuition cost. During those two years, the enrollment increased to 112 students. Parishioners did everything possible to keep the school going -- fundraisers, bake sales and dinners. Even some teachers volunteered their time at the school without taking a salary.

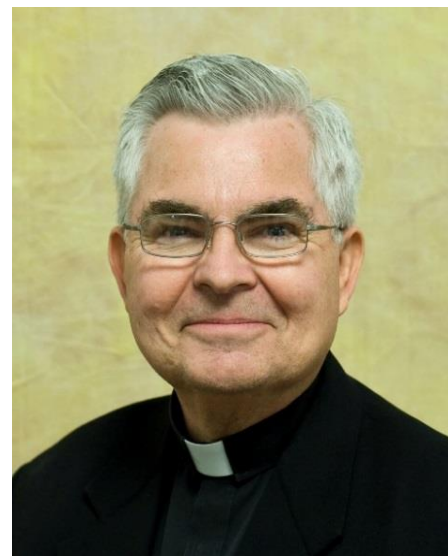
Father Mathew gave a series of Bible study classes and 30 or more people attended these classes. However, on July 1, 2010, he was assigned as pastor of Saint Joseph Parish in Vacaville.

Native Son Father Philip Wells Named Pastor

Bishop Jaime Soto appointed Father Phil Wells as pastor of Anderson beginning on July 1, 2010. Father Phil was faced with a number of expensive maintenance issues that needed attention. New roofs on all parish buildings had to be installed. This was an expensive undertaking but had to be done.

Painful Closure of the Parish School

Sacred Heart Parish, along with Sacred Heart Parish-Red Bluff and Saint Joseph Parish-Redding, was one of the first parishes in the diocese to change to the new school governance model established by Bishop Soto. The bishop appointed a lay board to oversee the governance of the parish schools in an attempt to strengthen Catholic schools in the diocese.



In 2011, after years of declining enrollment and financial loss, with the enrollment of only 40 students over nine grades, the new governance board recommended closure of the parish

school. Although painful, given the rich history of the parish school, the closure at mid-year was ultimately approved by Bishop Soto and the Parish Pastoral Council.

Although the school families were encouraged to continue the Catholic education of their children at one of the other two Catholic schools in the area, the closure was still painful to school families and the wounds of many in the parish have still not completely healed.

Focus on Adult Faith Formation

Father Phil turned his attention to adult centered faith formation and Bible studies. Adult faith formation is helping parishioners grow in their faith. Two adult groups meet weekly, one on Monday mornings and the other on Wednesday evenings.

Loss of Hispanic Priest a Blow to the Hispanic Community

The Anderson parish has a strong Hispanic community. Until July 1, 2014, the shared Hispanic parochial vicar working in both Red Bluff and Anderson/Cottonwood ended when the bishop moved Father Eugenio Lopez-Restrepo to Knights Landing as parish administrator. The Anderson parish had to change the Sunday 8 am Spanish Mass to Saturday evening. Because of this change, Father Wells says the Spanish Mass attendance has dropped drastically. The priests from Our Lady of Mercy Parish in Redding have been generous in giving Father Phil a hand twice a month by coming to Anderson to celebrate the Saturday evening Spanish Mass.

Focus on Hospitality and Parish Safety Issues

Father Phil, in an attempt to pull the parish together again, is focusing on creating a spirit of warmth, hospitality and welcome in the spirit of Pope Francis. He is also addressing safety issues affecting parish facilities.

Final Thoughts by the Diocesan Archivist

Every parish goes through a cycle of life. The first burst of enthusiasm from the Catholic community of Anderson came in 1919 with the building of the first Catholic Church in Anderson as a mission of either Red Bluff or Redding. The creation of Anderson as a parish in 1949 with Father Walter Albrecht as founding pastor was a defining moment. The building of the church became a community bonding experience of the men, women and children of the parish who participated in the actual construction of the church.

The establishment of the parish school in 1964 under the leadership of Father Thomas O'Brien was another graced moment in the life of the parish. Then came the building of the parish hall during the pastorate of Father James McKnight when he rallied the community to rise to the occasion once again.

During Father Michael Kiernan's 20 year pastorate, the Anderson parish community renovated the church to conform to the renewed liturgy of Vatican II, built a new gathering space at the entry of the church and brought the people together to develop a new vision for the parish by creating a parish pastoral plan to achieve that vision.

The parish is now going through a period of diminishment until the Holy Spirit ignites anew the cooling embers into an intense fire of love and enthusiasm as the parish bursts into new life once again.

PASTORS WHO HAVE SERVED THE ANDERSON PARISH OVER THE DECADES

Founding Pastor Father Walter Albrecht	1949-1961
Father Thomas O'Brien	1961-1968
Father William Broderick	1968-1971
Father William Kinane	1971-1973
Father James McKnight	1973-1981
Father Michael Kiernan	1981-2001
Father Eric Lofgren	2001-2006
Father Patrick Henry	2006-2008
Father Mathew Rappu	2008-2010
Father Phillip Wells	2010-Present

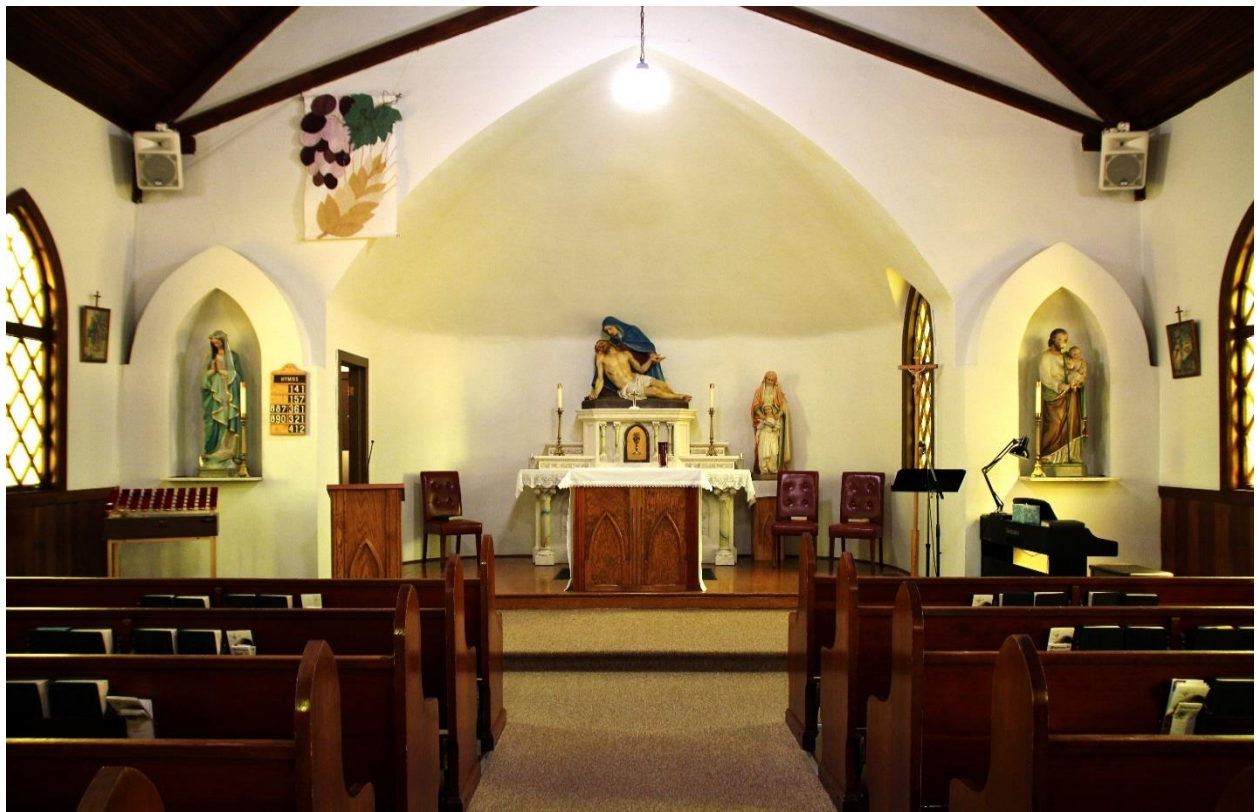


Photo by John E Boll 2015

Interior of Saint Anne Mission Church, Cottonwood



Window of the Good Shepherd, Sacred Heart Church, Anderson