

# The history of Saint John Paul II Parish and a message from Fr. Johndamaseni Zilimu

Dear Parishioners,

It is truly right and just to give thanks to God who has enabled us to continue to grow our Catholic community in Kewanee. It reminds us of where we came from, where we are and where we are going. The first Catholic Church in Kewanee was built in 1855 and named for St. Mary. The parish was later renamed the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary when a new church was built in 1885. In the early 1900's the Kewanee Catholic community built four Catholic Churches: St. Stanislaus Church (1906), serving people of the Polish decent; St. Anthony Church (1913), serving the Lithuanians; St. Joseph Church (1917), serving the Belgians; and the present Visitation Church (1915), which was dedicated to serve English-speaking Catholics.

In 1982 the four Churches merged into two parishes: St. Stanislaus and St. Anthony became St. Francis of Assisi Parish and continued to use St. Stanislaus Church as the site of worship, and the new parish created by the merger of St. Joseph Church and Visitation was named St. Mary Parish in honor of the first Catholic Church in Kewanee. St. Mary Parish community continued to use the Visitation Church as their site of worship.

In 2013 the two parishes which were created in 1982 merged to form Saint John Paul II Parish. Now we have one strong parish in Kewanee, Saint John Paul II Parish, which uses the Visitation Catholic Church as the site of worship.

Comparing our past to our present, we all have reasons to thank God who has blessed us with loyal and faithful people. Please enjoy perusing the pages of our beautiful directory as you come across the many dedicated families and individuals who faithfully serve Saint John Paul II Parish in so many different ministries. These are the people who have embraced the past, now love their new parish and work harder for a healthier future. **Once Sr. Augustine Scheele said "I am not afraid of tomorrow. I have seen yesterday and I am in love with today."**

Saint John Paul II Parish is a stewardship parish guided by the four principles of stewardship: Ownership, Responsibility, Accountability, and Reward. We are God's stewards and so we are called to take the "ownership" of our parish, to know that we are "responsible" to manage it and one day each one of us will be called to give an "account" for how we have managed what God has given us (The Parable of the Talents: Matthew 25: 14-30). As faithful stewards of all God has given us we expect to be "rewarded" incompletely in this life, but fully in the next (Colossians 3: 23-24; Matthew 25: 21).

Peace and Joy,



Fr. John, Pastor