

# SPIRIT LINK

St. Gerald Catholic Church † SpiritLink Newsletter † Volume 25 - Number 1 † February 2021

## The Kambachs - Decades of Involvement

By Sherry Wachtler

Involvement. That's how Fred and Marie Kambach sum up their 36 years at St. Gerald Parish. Of course, they were involved in all the parishes they joined in Wisconsin, Chicago, Iowa, Minnesota and other places. Wherever Fred's work took them, they joined a parish and jumped right in. Fred was the first lector on the radio from St. Michael's in Sioux City, Iowa.

"I think we helped build four different churches," Fred said.

They had no sooner arrived at St. Gerald in 1984 when Marie talked to founding Pastor Father Foster and volunteered to clean the Lakeview Church. Soon, she was helping in the office with bulletins and in the classrooms at St. Gerald School. "When we moved here, our children were grown and starting families of their own. St. Gerald became our extended family," Marie said. "We enjoyed being a part of what's going on. Everyone was cheerful, helpful and we just loved the people."

Growing up in Wisconsin Fred and Marie learned at an early age the virtues of serving others. "My faith has always meant a lot to me," Fred said. At St. Gerald, their lives were soon filled with activities – from Renew groups – four different ones - to the Welcoming Committee. It wasn't long before Father Foster tapped Fred for the Parish Council, on which he served for five years, serving one stint as president. When Father Foster retired, he was succeeded by Father Dorsey who held elections for parish positions. Fred was re-elected to the Parish Council, then later served as Trustee. He then became chairman of the Executive Building Committee. "We had such a great group of people, everyone just worked so hard."

In 1997, after Father Dorsey died, Father Gary Ostrander asked Fred to continue his duties and also oversee the Fellowship Hall. "Fred will tell you I go up there and clean the toilets," Marie said. "Actually, I worked for Cheryl Bolin (parish secretary at the time)." Fred laughed. "We worked like a well-oiled machine." "I recruited Nick Steinbach and his primary job was the school," Fred said. "We had so many people helping who took ownership of the parish – that was the generosity of the people. There were so many good people who pitched in over the years, but two people who deserve praise were Jerry Wellendorf and



**Fred and Marie Kambach**

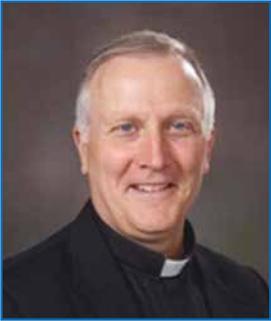
Gary Hacker, both such dedicated workers for the parish. They worked so hard and we had a lot of fun. We worked so well together."

While overseeing the parish maintenance, Fred, a member of the Knights of Columbus, also ordered the food for the several years of Lenten fish dinners. In addition, he served as a lector and EMHC, plus he and Marie also volunteered for RCIA and more recently, Alpha. They still find time to enjoy visits with their three children, seven grandchildren and two great grandchildren. Marie plays bridge, Fred plays golf and they treasure their lifelong friendships at St. Gerald.

Like the Energizer Bunny, Fred hasn't stopped. In 2011, he was elected president of his Home Owners Association and has been re-elected ever since. "I think they lost their minds," he said. In addition, he has volunteered at the CHI Health Center in the mail room and continues doing so even while undergoing chemotherapy for bladder cancer. "I told my oncologist, 'Just give me 10 more years, I've got more work to do,'" he said.

After nearly seven decades of involvement, Fred insists, "It's not about me, it's all about the parish."

## A Future Full of Hope from our Pastor, Fr. Mark Nolte



*For I know well the plans I have in mind for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for woe, so as to give you a future full of hope. When you call me, when you go to pray to me, I will listen to you. When you look for me, you will find me. Yes, when you seek me with all your heart, you will find me with you, says the Lord, and I will change your lot; I will gather you together from all the nations and all the places to which I have banished you, says the Lord, and bring you back to the place from which I have exiled you (Jer. 29:11-14).*

Written by the prophet Jeremiah, this was God's love letter to the nation of Israel—a nation in crisis very much like our own nation today. Like our own nation, it was a suffering nation—a nation under siege and in exile, cut off from loved ones, from a country they once knew and cherished, and from all that was close and dear to their hearts. Like many of us, they were a nation whose future was uncertain and they were beginning to lose all hope.

As a contemporary evangelist once said, "we may not know what our future holds, but as believers we do know Who holds our future". We know that God has a plan for our welfare and not for woe.

This Lent let us take time out of our busy days to call on Him and pray to Him. Let us take comfort in knowing that when we look for Him with all our heart we will find Him and He will change our lot.

God's message to Israel is a message for all of us and for all humanity. It is a message of restoration and of hope. God's promise of restoration, however, is not merely a restoration to "normal", but something far greater. It is a restoration to a peace and a hope that only God can give us. It is a restoration to a whole new life in and with Christ. A life of profound joy and true freedom. A life that our world and its leaders promise to give us, but fail to deliver time and time again.

My hope and my prayer for all of us this Lenten season is that as we look to the future, let us first look to the present and find that God is with us. And, come hell or high water, that it is in Him and Him alone that we will find a future full of hope.

 **JOHN PAUL II Healing Center**  
*Transformation in the Heart of the Church*

*Healing  
the  
Whole  
Person*

**THIS EVENT OFFERED IN-PERSON OR VIA LIVESTREAM!**  
**ST. GERALD CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
**OMAHA, NE** **APRIL 29-MAY 1, 2021**

**CLICK TO REGISTER ONLINE AT: [JPIIHEALINGCENTER.ORG](http://JPIIHEALINGCENTER.ORG)**

*This event is sponsored by Spirit Catholic Radio 102.7 FM KVSS*

[www.StGerald.org/give](http://www.StGerald.org/give) - Make your one-time or recurring donation using your debit or credit card, checking, or savings account.

# Spargo Family Traditions

By Joan Squire

Listen to Jay Spargo talk and you will hear stories about family, their family. Jay and Anna Marie have 5 children and 25 grandchildren. Jay and Anna Marie moved to Omaha and St. Gerald Parish 40 years ago when Jay's job with Pamida transferred them here from Boston. Jay has since retired but Anna is in her 32nd year working for The Process Measurement Company. Before Covid Anna and Jay spent an hour of adoration together. This summer when the church was reopened Anna found the best time for her was an hour before daily Mass either at St. Gerald or St. Thomas More. Jay belongs to the Knights of Columbus and especially likes to help with the Lenten Fish Fries. Jay is a regular Red Cross donor making 21 donations a year of either platelets or whole blood.

Back to those family stories. Jimmy lives with them, Kevin lives in Maryland and David, Kathleen and Joseph live in Omaha. Kevin has the oldest grandchild (aged 20) and Kathleen the youngest (to be born in the spring). The Spargo children and now the grandchildren have been helping make candy cane reindeer for many years. Jay



**Anna Marie and Jay Spargo**



**Jay Spargo and some of the grandchildren working on candy cane reindeer.**

tells of the time he sent candy cane reindeer to school for a bake sale. Later in the day the school called wondering if he had any extra. He did. When he got back to school children were patiently waiting in line to buy reindeer. One child complained that his reindeer only had one eye. Jay told him that reindeer needed more love.

What started as a family Advent project grew over the years to be shared at hospitals, nursing homes, shelters and food pantries. Jay tells the story of one hospital visit when he was on his way to give some candy canes to a priest there. In the hall he met a nurse and gave a candy cane to her, and then to a patient whose "eyes twinkled and she smiled," just to receive the reindeer. It made her day. The most reindeer he ever made was 5,000. That year, starting in September with the help of the family and some women from Pamida 5,000 candy canes became reindeer. This year the grandchildren helped Jay make 2,400 reindeer. They insist that when Jay finds he is unable to keep doing it they will keep the tradition alive. This year's reindeer went to the Stephen Center along with the St. Gerald Thanksgiving food donation, to the Juan Diego Center pantry and counseling center, and to the Angel Tree project.

The Spargo's daughter Kathleen has 9 children, she home schools and one child has special needs. Jay started going over to help her out a little. That help has grown to doing the family laundry 3-days a week. Jay and the little boys have their routine, sorting the laundry into baskets and when done each child putting their own clean laundry away. Socks are the most fun as they can be tossed. Jay says that between loads he also finds time for a little light housekeeping.

Jay loves Advent and Christmas. He has numerous Nativity sets and a large light display in his yard. When the Christmas tree goes up after Thanksgiving it has only purple lights on it until the week before Christmas when the ornaments are added.

With such a large extended family traditions and stories will continue to be shared for many years to come. Jay and Anna Marie feel blessed in their own family and the family of St. Gerald.



Mrs. Sullivan's 5th grade science class conducted an engineering challenge trying to build the tallest standing structure using just spaghetti and marshmallows. Tyler Lecher displays his attempt.



Mrs. Cunningham's kindergarten class enjoying socially distanced outdoor class on a beautiful fall day.



St. Gerald School students attend Mass every Wednesday. Alternating grades attend mass in the gymnasium while the others attend via live video stream into their classrooms. Mrs. Ackerman's class is shown in their classroom. Mrs. Gann's class among others is in the gym.



Quarantined due to COVID-19 exposure, Owen Tejral is shown 'Zooming' with his 6th grade class. Teachers work individually with the remote learning students under quarantine and engage in live interactive video calls.

*NOTE: St. Gerald School has remained open throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic. From the start of the school year through the middle of December, the school reported:*

2 positive staff cases      3 quarantined staff  
3 positive student cases    70 quarantined students

**If families are interested in enrolling in St. Gerald Catholic School for the 2021/2022 school year, please contact Mrs. Christy Keenan, Principal at [ckeenan@stgerald.org](mailto:ckeenan@stgerald.org) or 402-331-4223.**



## St. Gerald School Alumni Spotlight

Travis Jorgensen, son of Chris and Kim Jorgensen, has gone far since graduating from St. Gerald Catholic Grade School. He graduated in 2003 as a 6th grader before St. Gerald had added the Middle School.

He has a fond memory of Mrs. Morris teaching the 3rd grade class about birds. To this day he can remember almost every bird they studied.

Travis is currently serving as a United States Air Force military pilot as well as an airline pilot. He flies cargo all around the world to people who need it. Travis says, "I know I am making a difference. I also enjoy flying around the world and seeing how people live in different parts of the globe, a very awesome part of my job." Travis says he always wanted to be a military pilot. "I have been extremely passionate about it my entire life."



**Brooks lights a candle at the conclusion of his First Reconciliation while his parents Marc and Cara Skradski look on.**



**John and Kathy Yochum pose with their family to mark the occasion of Carly's First Reconciliation.**



**Several adults and youth volunteered to help clean up the area around St. Gerald Church with new mulch on October 3rd.**



**Mark Gerow and Pat Garnatz donated blood at the K C sponsored blood drive on October 3rd. 89 life saving units were collected. The next blood drive is scheduled for June 5th.**



Barb Considine is shown dishing up stuffing at this year's annual Salvation Army TurkeyFest. Fifty St. Gerald volunteers along with many others assembled and delivered over 1,000 Thanksgiving meals to Omaha seniors from the distribution point at the Omaha Kroc Center on Thanksgiving morning.



Glen Bennett is shown with just part of the donations that are collected from St. Gerald parishioners and delivered to Siena Francis House once each month.



Knight Bob Ryba presents a check to Sandy Gaub of Ralston Special Olympics. Funds are a portion of parishioner donations during the Knights of Columbus Tootsie Roll drive for People with Intellectual Disabilities.



Members of Life Runners and St. Gerald parishioners are pictured at the Omaha Life Chain Sunday, October 4, 2020.

# Family Formation Creates a Family Bond

By Bonni Pulte

Erica Campbell had a calling to learn more about her faith and to give back to the church by teaching children about the Catholic faith. When she saw an announcement in the bulletin one Sunday in 2005, saying that St. Gerald's needed catechists, she decided to become involved in the Family Formation program.

She was raised Catholic and attended CCD as a child. She remembers being taught CCD by nuns while attending St. Joseph's Church in the Lincoln diocese. She also attended the Godparent program as a teenager. The training Erica went through for Family Formation made her appreciate and understand her Catholic faith more as an adult. She enjoyed the planning required behind the scenes and meetings with other catechists in order to make the lessons successful. Friendships with the other catechists and parents of the students had a lasting effect on her.

As a parent of two daughters, Julia and Allison, currently 19 and 13, she appreciated the time it took to plan out what was going to be taught to the parents. She was able to bond with her daughters when doing the home lesson. One of the benefits of Family Formation was the closeness that is established and having important conversations about beliefs in a comfortable setting. She observed that parents and students learned from each other. She became more comfortable with the sacrament of reconciliation due to teaching Family Formation.

Erica is no longer part of the Family Formation program but has been a full-time public school teacher for 26 years. She is currently focusing on getting through 2020 as this year has been extra demanding for teachers due to Covid 19. She has lasting memories of her time teaching Family Formation.



**James and Erika Campbell with daughters  
Allison and Julia**



**SAVE THE DATE**  
**St. Gerald Parish Mission**  
**Sunday to Wednesday, March 7-10**

Each of the four nights starts at 7 PM, with praise and worship preceding. The presenter will be Deacon Keith Strohm, a deacon of the Archdiocese of Chicago and founder of M3 Ministries. Attend the mission in person at 96th and Q or via live-stream.

**Stay in touch... sign up for FlockNote, "like" us on Facebook, visit our website**



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## ST. GERALD CATHOLIC CHURCH

[www.StGerald.org](http://www.StGerald.org)

### MASS TIMES

#### Church - 96th and Q Street

Saturday: 5:00pm

Sunday: 8:00am, 11:00 am, 5:00pm

Daily: 12:15pm (M-F), Rosary begins at 11:45am

Holy Days: Check the bulletin and online

#### Chapel - 78th and Lakeview

Daily: 6:45am (Mon, Tues, Thur, Fri)

Daily: 8:15am (Wed, Sat)

### RECONCILIATION TIMES

#### Church - 96th and Q Street

Saturday: 3:00-4:30pm

Daily: 12:00-12:15pm (M-F)

#### Chapel - 78th and Lakeview

Daily: 6:30-6:45am (Mon, Tues, Thur, Fri)

Daily: 8:00-8:15am (Wed, Sat)

### SOME MASSES STREAMED ON FACEBOOK & YOUTUBE - GO TO WWW.STGERALD.ORG FOR INFO

Adoration Chapel at 96th and Q is accessible for adoration any time with access code. Contact the parish office.  
Adoration in front of the Exposed Eucharist is available Wednesdays and Thursdays.

## Our Vision: Encountering Jesus • Making Disciples • Transforming Lives

**St. Gerald Parish Mission Statement:** Led by the Holy Spirit, we are a Catholic community of faith whose primary purpose is to know Jesus, to love Him, and to serve Him in serving others. Sent to make disciples, we invite and welcome everyone to come and share our Master's joy.