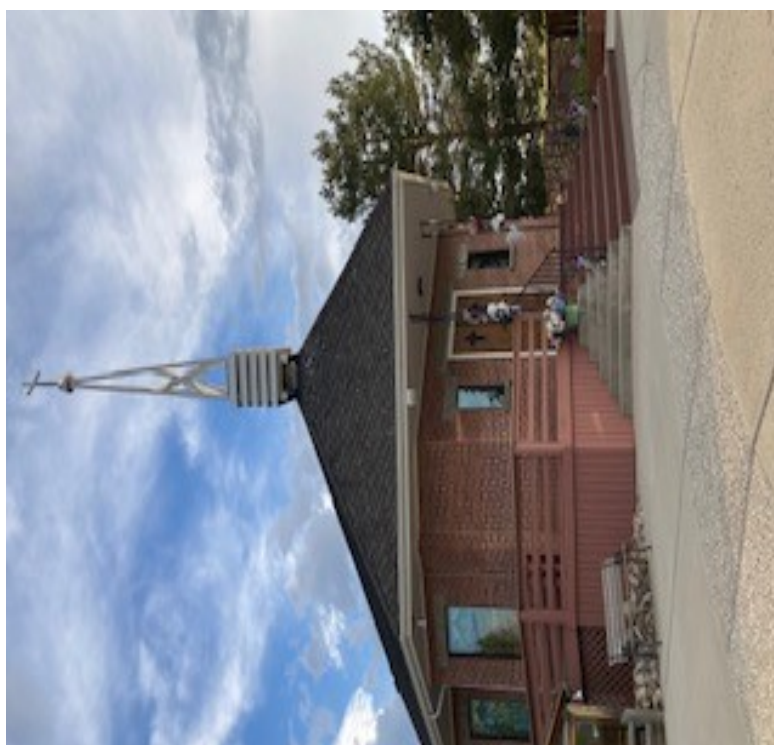


St. John the Baptist Catholic  
Mission 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
June 25, 2023



Historical Information

**March 28, 1948 – Easter Sunday Groundbreaking**

Mass was held at the John and Jere Giomi home until the completion of the church.

Norman Wolfsen and Gertrude Wolfsen Hickey donated the land. The siblings were the nephew and niece of Ida Compston.

**September 12, 1948**, Bishop Thomas K Gorman, and Father James Sheehy dedicated the cornerstone and said the first mass in the basement. More than one hundred people attended from Smith and Mason Valleys.

The completed church mass was on June 28, 1950, by Bishop Gorman.

**Father James Sheehy (1946-1951)**

**Father Florence Flahive (1951-1958)**

**Father H. A. Buel (1958-1962)**

**Father Robert Despars (1962-1968)** The Brothers of the Holy Rosary from Reno redecorate by painting the Stations of the Cross and the statues of Mary and Joseph, replacing the lighting, added wrought iron chandeliers, and added decorative paper to the windows.

**Father Gerald Fanning (1968-1976)**

**Monsignor Donald Carmody (1976-1979)**

**Monsignor Edward J. Thompson (1979-1980)**

**Father James Bevan (1980-1983)** Father finished the basement area. The church was carpeted and bifold doors were installed to separate the area for Religious Education classes. The kitchen was completely furnished and outfitted. The air conditioning and heating system was installed. The wood and brick pillar fencing and split rail fencing were also some of the renovations.

**Father Robert Simpson (1983-1984)**

**Father Joe Anthony (1984-1986)** During this time our numbers were growing rapidly and plans for an addition, or a new church was discussed at length. The outside Nativity Manger display was added along with a new wooden ramp.

**Father Harold Vieages (1986-1992)** He had the old steel sash windows replaced with large stained-glass windows. Every window was paid for by families of St. Johns. Ed Recanzone of Yerington made the windows.

**Father Thomas Wright (1992-2000)** During this time new chandeliers and a spotlight for the altar were installed. New carpeting and new oak wainscoting were installed in the basement. Stone benches were donated in front of the church in memory of Clare Popejoy and a sidewalk was completed to join the two ramps.

**Father Paul McCollum (2000-2005)** The Prayer Garden was built and dedicated. The work was done by parishioners and all the concrete work was donated by parishioner Joe Cabral. Wendell Presley of Yerington did the stone and brick work. First Friday Adoration began monthly thanks to Linn Wilder and continues the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Fridays of each month.

**Father Jorge Herrera (2005-2011)** The Knights of Columbus reinstated the Hawthorne Council in 2006 at Holy Family with Roundtables at St. John's and Hawthorne. The nave and sanctuary of the church were renovated in 2006 consisting of a newly textured and painted sanctuary, new pine baseboard, new carpet, and new lights. A new sound system was added, and the HVAC system was

extended to the west side of the nave. Brick pillars on the perimeter were capped in 2006 by Wendel Presley. A new cabinet for the Holy Oils was made and installed on the east wall of the sanctuary. The new Religious Education Building was built by Walter and Walter Construction and completed in 2009. The new building was dedicated on April 28, 2009, with Mollie and John Park donating towards this project as well as the engraved rock outside the Religious Education Building. A new fire and safety system was added to the church.

Father Ariel Arias (2011-2014) A covered patio was built by Walter and Walter construction and the Knights of Columbus in 2012 and was dedicated by Father Ariel in 2014.

Father Jesus Ballesteros (2014 to present day) Six windows were replaced in the nave of the church. February 2022 the stained-glass windows were modified with hinges to open to the interior for cleaning. Cedar lintels were added above the stained-glass windows in 2022. Four windows in the basement were replaced in May of 2023. The wood steeple is currently being removed to be replaced with an aluminum powder coated replica of the original. At this time, we will be replacing the gutters on the church and repainting the facia. Continued maintenance and projects are always ongoing.

## **Fun Facts about St. Johns.....**

**Father James Sheehy was the first priest ordained in the Diocese of Reno.**

**Father Sheehy worked alongside the builders of the church and fell from some scaffolding and broke his wrist and cracked several ribs.**

**Father Sheehy was an Army Chaplain from 1941-1946 and when he left Smith Valley/Yerington, he went back to the service in 1951.**

**Unusual architecture – It was a dream of Bishop Gorman’s and was designed for him by Reno architect L.S. Ferris. The bishop so loved the uniqueness of the brick wall he requested nothing be planted in front of the walls so everyone would be able to see the design.**

**A New Year’s Eve Dinner tradition and money-maker was held for many years. The main course was homemade ravioli made by many wonderful Italian ladies and their helpers. This was always a huge success.**

**Our one and only moneymaker for St. Johns is a Harvest Sale and Auction which began 44 years ago and has always been held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in October along with the Smith Valley Methodist members. This event has kept us in the black for all these years.**

**St. John the Baptist Mission will continue for another 100 plus years, the Good Lord willing!**

**March 1931 – Diocese of Reno was created with the following serving as our Bishops.**

**Thomas K Gorman (1931-1952)**

**Robert J. Dwyer (1952-1967)**

**M. Joseph Greene (1967-1976)**

**Norman F. McFarland (1976-1986)**

**Phillip Straling (1995-2005)**

**Daniel Walsh (1995-2005)**

**Randolph R. Calvo (2005-2021)**

**Daniel Mueggenburg (2021 – present)**

**May 2023 Pope Francis created a new ecclesiastical province in the United States to elevate Las Vegas to a metropolitan archdiocese which will include Reno and Salt Lake City as part of the Archdiocese of Las Vegas.**

