

**Church of the Holy Rosary
Lander, Wyoming
1942-1950**

History of the Lander Parish continued “Church of the Holy Rosary with its Missions of Hudson and Dubois.”

In January 1942, Father Marley was transferred and was succeeded by Rev. Charles Gormly. In May of that year his Excellency, Bishop McGovern visited the parish and administered the Sacrament of Confirmation. On August 30, 1942, St. Stephen’s parish was created by his Excellency, Bishop McGovern. Parts of the diminished Wind River Indian Reservation heretofore belonging to the Riverton and Lander parishes were withdrawn from said parishes and incorporated in the newly created parish of St. Stephen.

On February 12, 1943, Rev. Adolph Pate was appointed pastor to succeed Father Gormly. At this time the nation being at total war many old time residents left either for the armed services or for defense work elsewhere. Due to increased oil activities many others moved in but most of them were transient workers who came and went continually and were not much help to the parish. Father Pate finally cleared the debt that had been on the parish for years on January 2, 1944. At this writing the parish is free of debt. In September 1947 the Most Rev. P.A. McGovern visited the parish and administered the sacrament of confirmation.

With the end of hostilities and building materials becoming available Father Pate erected again a garage on the property in 1948.

Father Pate was transferred to St. Margaret’s parish, Riverton Feb. 10, 1949, and the Rev. Thomas Cleary was appointed to succeed him at Lander. The dean, Rev. Philip W. Krass on Feb. 20, 1949, installed Father Cleary.

Due to a cloud on the title to the property in Lander and to make everything secure, an abstract of title on the Lander Church property was obtained in 1950.

The growth of the parish has been slow. There are no industries in the area. Stock raising and farming are the principal means of livelihood. Most of the young people are not interested in this kind of work because it is seasonal; consequently after graduation they move out and look for more lucrative jobs. The 1950 census shows that Lander had only an increase of 750 over a ten-year period. Since then there has been a decrease with the big oil companies moving all their personnel except field workers to a few big centers like Billings and Casper. Since 1940 there has only been an increase of ten families in the parish.

Hudson is fast becoming a town of old people. It is essentially a coal-mining town. With the Northwestern railroad running only one train a week there is no mining of any account. The younger people have to look elsewhere for work and are gradually all moving away. The church is free of debt. In 1949 a hailstorm damaged the south side necessitating the reshingling of the roof on that side. A fence was also put around the property there, to keep wandering stock off. Mass is said there every Sunday with an average attendance of 25 people.

There are ten families in Dubois. All but one is mixed marriage, which reduces the Catholic membership. A project to erect a church in Dubois was started some years ago. During the war years nothing was accomplished because nearly all the Catholics left the area. There was no business. Dubois, situated in the heart of dude ranch territory, is essentially a tourist town and during the war there were no tourists. It was not until 1947, when some of the Catholic families moved back, that the dream of a church came true. Father Pate moved the church from Pavillion to Dubois and erected it on a lot that had been donated by Mr. William Watson. Improvements were carried out on the church in 1949 and in November 1950, a set of stations was erected. During the summer

months Mass is said every Sunday in Dubois. This time of year the church is filled to capacity due to dudes and tourists vacationing in the area. During the winter Mass is said every two weeks, weather permitting.

The records show the following confirmation classes for Lander and Missions since 1941:

Date

May 12, 1942 23 confirmed

Sept. 7, 1947 34 confirmed

Most Rev. P.A. McGovern, officiating prelate in both cases

Lander 1949-1960

The Reverend Thomas Cleary became pastor of Holy Rosary Parish, Lander, in February of 1949 when the Reverend Adolph Pate was transferred to St. Margaret's parish in Riverton. During Father Cleary's term as pastor many advancements were accomplished. In the summer of 1950 the parish purchased a piece of ground at the north east corner of the parish property on which a shed was located. The acquisition of the small piece of property gave the parish ownership of lots 11, 12, 13, 14, and the westerly 35 feet of block 22 of the City of Lander.

The roof of the church was replaced in September 1952. This long needed renovation was accomplished at the cost of \$2382.00. The following year the interior of the church was painted, the floor tiled and new pews installed at the total cost of \$3053.00. The pews taken from Lander were placed in the church at Hudson.

In the summer of 1954 a new steam heating unit was installed in the rectory at a cost of \$679.00 and in January of 1957 a gas-heating unit was installed in the church at a cost of \$1124.00.

On September 11, 1959 Father Cleary was appointed pastor of Immaculate Conception parish, Green River, and was replaced in Lander by the Reverend Michael Scullion. In October 1959, a Catholic Men's Club was formed in the parish and, through the cooperation of this organization many repairs and renovations were made in the church and rectory. In order to increase the seating space in the church new confessionals were built along the baptistery and a new entrance made to the two. This renovation made way for the installation of two more pews. A new altar was built in the summer of 1960 and new vestment closets were erected in the sacristy. The kitchen and parlor of the rectory were completely renovated by the men's club at the cost of the material.

Mrs. Frances Gallagher presented the parish with a new electric organ for Christmas, 1959. This was done in memory of her husband, Ambrose Gallagher. The Snyder, Bansept, Gallagher and Boeseke families presented the parish with a new tabernacle and crucifix for the altar, while Mrs. Bernard T. McManus gave a set of Stations of the Cross in memory of her deceased parents. In January 1960, the parish purchased the "Pioneer Rooms" adjoining the parish property to the east. A parishioner gave \$4500.00 towards the purchase, which left the parish an expenditure of \$4700.00.

United States Steel Corporation (Columbia-Geneva Division) announced in May of 1960 that they would start operating an iron mine at South Pass City, twenty-five miles from Lander. This meant an immediate increase in the number of parishioners. This increase made necessary to add a second Sunday Mass in Lander. The Jesuit Priests from St. Stephen's Mission are, at present, able to assist in this matter.

ST. HELEN'S MISSION, DUBOIS.

Since the present church in Dubois is much too small for the needs of the Catholics in that area two lots were purchased at the cost of \$1000.00. In July 1960, a few minor renovations were made in the sanctuary of the small church, which gave seating room for an additional twenty people. There was no cost involved. It is hoped that it will be possible to build a larger church in Dubois in the near future.

ASCENSION MISSION, HUDSON.

The church at Hudson underwent a complete renovation in early 1960. Through the volunteer help of the men, Catholic and non-Catholic of that area, the floor was tiled, padded kneelers and a new lighting system

installed. The sanctuary, complete with new altar and communion railing, is entirely new. The Stations of the Cross, which had been in the Lander church for many years, were refinished and erected in the Hudson church.

HOLY ROSARY PARISH LANDER, WYOMING

A history of the Holy Rosary Parish from the years 1960 to 1970

The present parish of Lander includes the Church of the Holy Rosary at Lander, the Church of the Ascension at Hudson, and St Brendan's Church at Jeffrey City. The church at Dubois was also a part of the Parish in the early 1960s, but with the assignment of an assistant priest to the Riverton Parish, the Dubois church was transferred to the care of the Riverton parish.

The growth of the parish and its missions during this ten-year period necessitated the building of new Churches at Lander, Dubois and Jeffrey City. The principal reason for the increase in the Lander area was the coming of the U.S. Steel Company to mine the ore deposits found at South Pass City. The increase in the Jeffrey City area was the finding of Uranium ore and location there of a modern plant to process it. The growth might be seen in the following figures. In 1960 the total number of families in the Parish was: Lander 120 families, 20 families at Hudson, 22 families at Jeffrey City, and 30 families at Dubois. The present breakdown of figures is as follows: 200 families at Lander, 25 at Hudson, and 30 at Jeffrey City. In 1960 the ordinary income of the Parish was \$15,056, whereas the ordinary income in 1969 was \$38,054.

The Pastor of the Parish in the years of 1960 to 1966 was Rev. Michael Scullion who had become the Pastor on September 29, 1959. With the need for new Churches becoming more evident each year, a campaign for raising the monies necessary was begun in 1963. With the encouragement of Bishop Newell and the direction of Father Scullion, a building committee was formed. The committee for Lander was composed of Mearl Moore, trustee, Merrill Olson, trustee, Jack Nicholas, Frank Dusl, B.T. McManus, and Tony Radman. A successful

financial campaign was held in 1964 in which \$175,000 in pledges was secured. Also, one of the parishioners, Mrs. Elmer Boeseke, donated the entire cost of the new hall, \$65,000, and this hall has been named Boeseke Hall in memory of her husband, Elmer Boeseke. Upon the completion of the pledge drive, a call for bids on a new Church was made. The architects of the Goodrich and Wilking firm of Casper, Wyoming, drew up the plans and specification for the buildings. The successful bidder for the general contract was D.W. Campbell Construction Company of Riverton, Wyoming.

A breakdown in the cost of the facilities is as follows:

Church Building, \$110,000
Grounds (roads and sewers), \$8,000
Stone Work, \$4,000
Bell tower and Bells, \$6,000
Parish Hall, \$59,500
Rectory, \$25,000
Architects Fees, \$12,650
Furnishings for Church and Hall, \$45,500
Grand Total, \$270,650.

The new buildings were erected on the hillside of a 26-acre tract of land purchased from Mr. Edward Baldwin of Lander. The entire project was completed in 1965 and was formally dedicated by Bishop Newell on September 1, 1965. The entire unit stands as one of the finest and most beautiful churches in the State of Wyoming.

The plans for a new Church at Dubois, Wyo. were begun in 1963 with the building committee being formed consisting of Mr. Hank Smith, George Burns, and James Mockler. The architects for the Church were Corbett and Dehnert firm of Lander. The successful bidder for construction was Roy Noble builders of Lander. The total cost of the building was \$27,500. \$10,000 of this amount was donated by the Catholic Church Extension Society of Chicago. The remainder of the

amount was raised by pledges from the parish. The beautiful new church, under the title of “Our Lady of the Woods” was dedicated by Bishop Newell on May 26,1964.

The plans for the new church at Jeffrey City, Wyo. were also begun in 1963.

The land for the church was donated by James Chapman of Rawlins, a director of Western Nuclear Corporation. A building committee was formed consisting of Muril Vincelette, David Gillen, and Patrick Clarke. The contractor for the church was Ed Polf of Riverton and its total cost was \$10,000. Again, the Catholic Church Extension Society of Chicago was most generous in helping to meet the cost of construction and donated \$5,000. The remainder of the amount needed was pledged by the people of Jeffrey City. The church was completed in 1964 and formally dedicated by Bishop Newell on May 27,1964. The church was given the name of “St. Brendan” after the Irish explorer.

During these years, the Extension Society helped in furnishing the parish and its missions with lay volunteers. The main duties of the volunteers were to teach C.C.D. classes and contacting fallen away and careless Catholics. Those serving during the years were: Mr. & Mrs. George Walter of Eau Claire, Wisconsin, during the school year of 1963-1964; Mary Beth Kreidler of Cincinnati, Ohio, and Frances Barry of Shawnee Mission, Kansas, during the 1964-1965 term; and Paula Woods of Minneapolis, Minn., and Anne Kennedy of Baltimore, Maryland, during the 1967-1968 term.

The present Pastor of the parish is Rev. Joseph Fraher who came to the parish from St. Edmund’s church of Ranchester, Wyoming. He was formally installed as pastor on August 2, 1966 by the dean, Most Rev. Msgr. Philip Krass.

Lander 1970-1980

Holy Rosary

In 1970, the changes, doubts, questions produced by Vatican II were pretty well accepted and there seemed to be a tapering off of the number of parishioners who either left the church or simply stopped attending. In short, everyone else seemed to be adjusting.

Despite losing so many, the growth of the parish was becoming more evident. Since this was an age of mobility, it was apparent that more people were moving to Lander than leaving it.

Fr. Joseph Fraher, who became pastor here in 1966, continued to be pastor until 1972. In 1970, the parish records show about 230 families. When Fr. Fraher arrived here, there was a church debt of \$166,000. Meeting the necessary payments was always a concern for the pastor.

Fr. Fraher was assigned to the Newman Center and Fr. Cletus Prado took over the reins in August 1972.

At that time the debt was probably \$89,000. A bequest from the estate of Michael Feery helped reduce this amount by \$10,000.

The Altar and Rosary Society, CYO and the Knights of Columbus were all active and all helped with fund raising activities to help reduce the indebtedness.

Early in the decade Helen Boosake had an underground sprinkling system installed. That was a great help in cutting down maintenance time.

It was about this time that Robert Olson and Emmett Gilmore succeeded Mearl Moore and Merl F. Olson as Trustees.

Father was able to sell the duplex which had been willed to the church by the late Art Faulkner. The funds realized from this sale were used to

pave part of the parking area. Then Father sold some gravel from the property in exchange for paving the rest of the area. What a relief. Until this time the parking area was just a big mudhole every time we were blessed with any moisture.

Father Prado started an organ fund and finally during the summer of 1975 the church acquired a beautiful organ. This contributed greatly to the beauty of our liturgies.

After a great many prayers, masses and novenas, the old church building at Third and Garfield was sold and Wonder of Wonders, the parish was debt free.

In June of 1977, Fr. Prado was transferred to Buffalo and he was replaced by Fr. John Murray.

The following fall the first Parish Council was elected by the parishioners to help plan the activities of the parish. They started planning for the building of a new CCD building and by the fall of 1979 the contract was awarded for the construction of the building. This beautiful building was completed in time for the beginning of the fall classes in 1980.

During the years 1979 and 1980, the local Knights of Columbus donated \$35,000 to the CCD building fund, this money earned by dint of hard work through the means of Weekly Bingo.

St. Anne's CCW also donated all monies earned through money making projects to the CCD building fund.

Through the generosity of many of the parishes in the diocese, enough money was borrowed to pay for the construction of the building.

We were all happy that Bishop Newell accompanied Bishop Hart to Lander on Oct. 28, 1980 and with 20 priests in attendance the new building was formally dedicated. The parish has a debt of \$250,000.

This was the decade that saw the beginning of the laity participating in church services. First laymen served as commentarians and Ministers of Communion, and by 1978 women were serving in this capacity as well.

The Lander Council of Catholic Women hosted the Thermopolis Spring Deanery Meeting in 1978.

Some of the activities that are traditional are a Parish dinner before Lent, A Ladies' Night the Saturday before Ash Wednesday, the men of the parish serving breakfast to the families for Mother's Day. And on Father's Day the ladies hold a breakfast for the men and families. In July the Knights hold a Steak Fry for the wives and friends. This is followed by the Parish picnic in August, the fall bazaar and dinner. During the holiday season we have Christmas parties both children's and adult's. A very gracious manner of greeting Newcomers are the after-mass coffees.

An Ecumenical event which has been very well received by the entire community for the past several years is a "Grandmother's Luncheon" held the Monday after Mother's Day. This is free to all who attend and is sponsored by St. Anne's CCW. Ladies of all religious faiths are invited and this event is receiving tremendous good will from all local churches.

Our membership also participate in World Day of Prayer services and many actively support the Right to Life Movement.

In October 1980 Sr. Angelita helped launch the program--Families For Prayer. It is hoped that this will be an ongoing program and that many blessings will accrue to the parish.

As of the end of 1980, the parish has grown to 400 families and approximately 1200 members. The following statistics were recorded for the period 1970-1980: 164 baptisms and 23 converts, 80 marriages plus 14 validations, 58 deaths and 211 Confirmations.

So many people have worked so tirelessly for the betterment of the parish that it would be impossible to recognize them all, but to each and everyone for whatever contribution given, go our sincere expression of gratitude.

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Lander 1990-2000
Holy Rosary
Patricia Forton, sec.
March 28, 2000

1. Names of clergy and religious serving during the decade and dates of service.

1990 Fr. Anthony Jablonowski

1991 Fr. Joseph Fraher

1992 Fr. John Savio

1997 Fr. Thomas Kadera

1999 Fr. Ray Rodriguez

2. Notable accomplishments by lay leaders and parishioners. (give dates)

1991 - Patricia Forton - Communion to hospital and nursing home.

1994 - Charles Viox - Communion to nursing home.

1996 - Peggy Roys - instructs parents for baptism

Delene Applegate - Communion to nursing home on Sundays

Peggy Tann - CCD teacher

Doris Pawol - Communion to hospital on Sundays

April Pendeton - CCD teacher

3. Notable accomplishments by the clergy and religious (give dates).

1990 - Sister Alice O'Keeffe - CCD and pastoral assistant

1994 - Sister Ruth - CCD and pastoral assistant

1995 - Fr. Savio remodeled church

1997 - Sister Dolores Herbeck - CCD and pastoral assistant

1999 - Fr. Ray Rodriguez - class on prayer, RCIA and Communion calls.

4. Construction - new or remodeling. (give dates)

1995 inside of church, moved altar, new carpeting, painted inside.

1997 new large stove in Boeseke hall, painted outside of church

1999 rectory, new carpeting, painted inside, new roof on convent.

5. Land acquisitions. (give dates.)

1990 Bought convent at 680 Bellvue

6. Lay trustees and term of service for each.

1990 Robert Olson, Larry Englert

1993 Charles Viox, Larry Englert

1996 Wayne Robillard, Charles Viox

1998 Judy Legerski, Ron Pieracini

7. Pastor's overview of the decade.

Fr. Ray said that beings he was here for a short time, he didn't feel he could write about this. So, I will fill in. Holy Rosary is a very friendly community. We have grown in faith and in holiness. I feel that we have had too many priests in the last ten years. Pat Forton

8. Significant parish events and programs. (give dates.)

1990 Parish debt paid off; convent was purchased.

1991 Tri Country Picnic, also 1992, 1993.

1992 cement in front of church. Chip coating around church driveway

1995 new floor in CCD basement. Outdoor light poles installed

1997 Soup Suppers during Lent

1999 Fr. Carl Millis ordination

1999 Youth Minister hired part time

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