



Irish Rose

"Not my will, But thine be done." (Luke 22:42 and Matthew)
(This scripture passage is located on the George Devlin family headstone.)

Spring 2026

Heavenly Light

By Jill Palof

The aurora borealis showered heavenly light down upon St. Rose and across the entire sky for several hours on the evening of November 11, 2025. Spectacular shades of vibrant red, magenta, purple, pure white, and emerald green displayed a magnificent palette of evolving curtains of color that silently danced across the sky. See more about this intense solar storm and the spectacular Veterans Day display that created this magnificent sight to behold on page 12 of this newsletter.

This year, we did not have the number of significant restoration projects as in the past year. We did however have a year of success in other ways. St. Rose was among the 2025 Preservation Award Winners for the state of Minnesota. The awards were presented at the Rethos Wrecking Ball Gala held at the historic Landmark Center in St. Paul, Minnesota, on October 8, 2025. There were six awards presented that evening. St. Rose is the proud recipient of the Resilient Revival Award. This was truly a full circle moment for us after being listed as one of Minnesota's Ten Most Endangered Properties back in 2002. This award serves as a poetic bookend to our preservation journey from being slated for demolition, to being celebrated as a successful revival on this premier stage of historic preservation. We were proud to be recognized for the extraordinary dedication required to preserve this historic site which would not be possible without your support for over two decades. Learn more about this prestigious award on page 7 of this newsletter.

Jerry Vettel made and installed a new handrail on the west steps to help visitors traverse the stairs more safely. This double handrail is located in the center of the stairs.

We also celebrated the beautiful wedding of Sydney Chester and Steven Aanonson on September 18, 2025.

Mark your calendars! Open houses on the 3rd Sunday of each month from June - September with live music during the last hour. Visit our website for updates on upcoming musical performances throughout the summer.

Plein Air Painting is new this year! Come join us July 19th, starting at 10:00 am, for a day of creativity and community. Artists of all skill levels are invited to paint, share techniques, and find inspiration. Capture the beauty of the church, surrounding countryside, or the stunning interior of St. Rose. Visitors are welcome to come observe. We look forward to seeing you at all our upcoming events.

OPEN HOUSE HOURS 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

3rd Sunday of the month from June - September

- Live music performed by local talent from 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

- Plein Air Painting - July 19th from 10:00 am - 1:00 pm

2026 ANNUAL EVENTS

Memorial Day Mass: MONDAY May 25th 11:30 am

Ice Cream Social: SUNDAY August 16th 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Candle Lighting Ceremony: SUNDAY December 20th 2:00 pm

Visit www.friendsofstrose.org for more information.



Memorial Day Mass

By Jill Palof

St. Rose held its 18th annual Memorial Day Mass on Monday, May 26, 2025, with Father Randal Kasel presiding. A beautiful Mass and cemetery blessing were held under sunny skies and comfortable weather.

We invite you to join us as we celebrate our 19th Annual Memorial Day Mass on Monday, May 25th, 2026, at 11:30 am, and remember our deceased loved ones.

The church will be open on Memorial Day from 10:00 am until 2:00 pm for those of you that are unable to attend Mass.

As mentioned on the front cover, Open Houses begin on Sunday, June 21st from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm and continue throughout the summer.

Come enjoy visiting this historic site and feel free to walk the grounds of this peaceful setting when you are in the area.



Vocalists Above Left to Right: Leah and Tommy Palof, and Veteran Ann Tescher.

A beautiful Mass celebrated to honor our Veterans and remember loved ones laid to rest in the St. Rose cemetery.



Stettler and Bronner family members visit.



Above: Procession during cemetery blessing.

Cemetery Blessing

An annual tradition held by many families on Memorial Day weekend, is to visit local cemeteries to honor their loved ones, and spruce up their final resting place with flowers from home and nurseries. The descendants of the Stettler family is one shining example of carrying on this tradition. Decades ago, this family would step inside the slowly decaying church and think about what it must have been like when their extended families came and what life was like back in simpler times.

Another annual tradition is how local VFW chapters come a week prior to local cemeteries to mark the graves of military veterans laid to rest. St. Rose is served by the Kenyon VFW who marks each of the honored veterans with American flags in appreciation for their service to our country.

Father Kasel processed with five altar boys through the cemetery and blessed all who are laid to rest. Mike Comstock (pictured right and below), tolled the large 1896 bell as John Palof reverently played Taps. This experience makes you swell with pride and feel the emotion of the sacrifices of others for our freedom.



Fr. Kasel blesses our loved ones laid to rest.



Families respectfully observe the blessing.



Above: Tom and Rita Sundry visit familiar names in the cemetery.



Veterans Ann Tescher and Hugh O'Kane.



Altar Boys Left to Right: Max Lorentz, Gus Lorentz, Jim Keller, Jack Keller, and Ivan Ocariz.



Mike Comstock tolls the magnificent 1896 bell.

Ice Cream Social

By Kathy Luebke

For the second year in a row, the weeks leading up to the Ice Cream Social were plagued by sporadic storms. As we gathered to set up for our 20th Annual Event on Sunday, August 17, rain was predicted to fall throughout the afternoon. We had to make the difficult decision to cancel the Dixieland Jazz Band portion of the event to protect the musicians and their instruments. We continued setting up the tent and tables, though we shared concerns about a low turnout. Yet, as we approached 1:00, the sun broke through, accompanied by a light breeze and no sign of rain. And the people came.

Despite greatly missing the music, people lined up for their favorite ice cream treats and other delights. They enjoyed visiting with one another and the comfortable weather. The scavenger hunt planned for the kids had been altered due to the strong chance of rain, but none were the wiser. They happily colored pictures and ran freely around the church and cemetery grounds.



Arvid and Betty Boyum drive up to St. Rose in their 1926 Model T Ford Coupe.



99 years later, these are the vehicles driven for a Sunday drive to St. Rose.

The main event was the presentation given by Walt Rothwell of the Irish Genealogical Society of Minnesota. Using pictures, charts, and strong storytelling ability, he spoke about the Irish Immigration to America and to Minnesota. He gave an excellent presentation woven with history, facts, and stories that conveyed the hardships the immigrants faced, the despair of some, the fear of others, and the courage and leap of faith that drove them to leave the only home they knew. They undertook a treacherous journey to an unknown land in the hope of building a better life. For many in attendance, his presentation echoed the stories and history passed down through their own families.



Chad Lange visits Richard Henry. We are very grateful for the land Chad donated to provide much needed safer road access and additional parking.




Walt Rothwell
education@IrishGenealogical.org
www.IrishGenealogical.org



Above: Walt Rothwell, Co-President of the Irish Genealogical Society International, delivered an excellent presentation about Irish Immigration to America. Left: Walt answering questions after the presentation.

The Board Members were especially pleased to welcome - and for many, to meet - Chad Lange, who joined us that day. Chad is the generous donor of the land that made it possible to create the west parking lot, providing a safer entrance and exit, along with much-needed off-street parking. A century ago, people drove much more slowly; roads were unpaved, and automobiles were far different from those of today. See Arvid and Betty Boyum's 1926 Model T Ford Coupe compared to the vehicles parked here that day. This event gave Chad the opportunity to see firsthand how the donated land is being used and allowed us to personally thank him for his generosity.

Lisa Comstock made and donated another beautiful quilt that drew many to buy raffle tickets, with the proceeds going to both the Friends of St. Rose and the St. Rose Cemetery Association. Linda Broin was thrilled to be the lucky quilt raffle winner.

The rain did not come until we were almost done taking everything down after the event ended. What could have been a gloomy day turned out to be a great day. We missed the music but people still found a way to have a good time. We look forward to seeing all of you next year.



Above: Linda Broin won the homemade quilt. Left: Heavy rain came just after the event was over.



Live Music during Open Houses



Above: Karen Heimer playing the tin whistle (or penny whistle).

The early parishioners at St. Rose would have certainly enjoyed the concert performed by Susan Janicke of West Concord and Karen Heimer of Rochester on July 20th, 2025. They performed traditional Irish music with the flute, penny whistle, and tambourine during the final open house hour. Selections included Irish jigs and folk songs. A brief history of each selection was described and the composers names were announced at the beginning of each tune by Susan Janicke.

The tin whistle (penny whistle) is a popular, inexpensive six-holed fipple flute with a bright, two-octave range. The penny whistle is central to Irish and Celtic folk music that developed in the 19th century British Isles. The Eb piccolo is typically made of hardwood and produces a richer warmer tone that balances the brilliance of the whistle for jigs and reels where rhythmic clarity is key.

The next open house to feature live music was September 21st from 1:00-2:00 pm. Musicians included Nadine Langworthy on keyboard, Susan Janicke on flute & piccolo, and Heidi Runner-Brace on clarinet. A wide selection of classical music was performed from Beethoven, Brahms, J. S. Bach, the Scottish folk tune Loch Lamond, Panis Angelicus and other sacred music.

We look forward to welcoming more live music during upcoming open house concerts this summer. Check www.friendsofstrose.org for updates on performances.



Musicians: Nadine Langworthy on keyboard, Susan Janicke on flute & piccolo, and Heidi Runner-Brace on clarinet.



Above: Susan Janicke and Karen Heimer playing their flutes.

Below: Susan Janicke playing piccolo and Karen Heimer on tambourine.



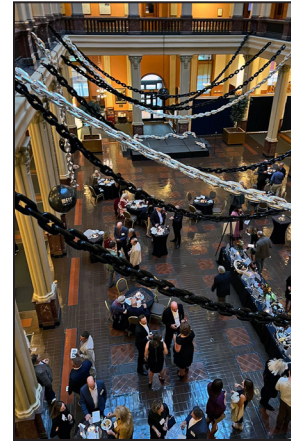
Plein Air Painting at Open House

Join us Saturday, July 19, 2026, at 10:00am for a warm, friendly Plein Air gathering at St. Rose. All artists, curious beginners to seasoned painters, are warmly invited to paint together, swap tips, and spark new ideas. Plein Air (French for “open air”) is painting outdoors to capture natural light, atmosphere, and the immediate feel of a place, perfect for studying landscapes, architecture, and changing light. Choose the sunlit countryside or the church’s beautiful exterior or interior as your subject, and bring your own art supplies. Come for the painting, stay for the conversation. Everyone is welcome even if you just want to learn by observing. Here are some pictures to inspire you ahead of time!



Resilient Revival Award

By Jill Palof



Jill Palof accepts Resilient Revival Award on behalf of Friends of St. Rose from Rethos Board President, Collin Kaas.

Congratulations to the Friends of St. Rose for being among the 2025 Preservation Award Winners! We were honored to receive the Resilient Revival Award at the Rethos Wrecking Ball Gala, October 8, 2025, at the Landmark Center in St. Paul, Minnesota.

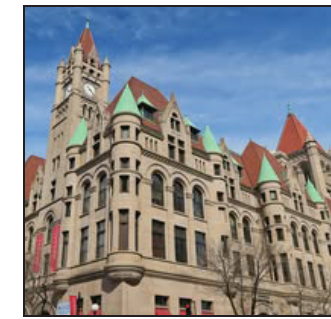
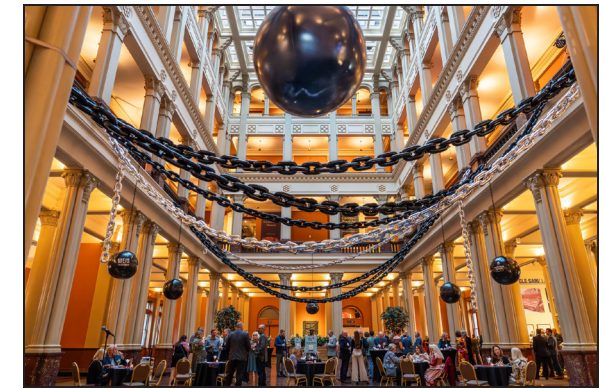
Heidi Swank Ph D, Executive Director of Rethos, stated it best during her presentation that evening:

“Thank you for being part of this community that is committed to our past as we build our future. I want to begin with why Rethos exists not with data, or buildings, but with us: with people, memories, stories that connect all of us. Historic places are more than old bricks and timber. They are the backdrop of our lives. The corner store where you got candy as a kid. The façade your grandparents passed by every day. The theater that held your first movie night. When those places are lost to neglect, to demolition, to being forgotten, we don’t just lose structure. We lose a part of who we are. We lose the stories that knit us together. That is why Rethos exists: to inspire people to connect with our shared places and spaces through preservation, adaptation, and activation. And we hold a vision: a world where every community thrives through meaningful connections to the spaces that shape their lives.”

This was truly a full circle moment after being listed as one of Minnesota’s 10 Most Endangered Historic Places back in 2002. Rethos is the same organization who placed St. Rose on this list when it was the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota, two decades before changing their name to Rethos. Heidi went on to reflect:

“This year, two of the projects nominated for Preservation Awards once appeared on our 10 Most Endangered Historic Places list. Think about that. Buildings that seemed destined for demolition now full of new life. That is the power of preservation. That is the work of Rethos. And it’s why we’re contemplating bringing that endangered list back: to shine a spotlight on places that matter.”

Thanks for believing St. Rose of Lima is a place that matters and for joining us on this preservation journey.



Held at the Landmark Center in St. Paul, MN.

Awards presented by Rethos:

- Advocacy & Impact Award: Wendy Menken
- Preservation Champion Award: Emily Winter
- Doors Open Accessibility & Engagement Award: K&K Recycling
- The Cornerstone Award: Faegre Drinker
- The Resilient Revival Award: St. Rose of Lima Church
- Excellence in Historic Rehabilitation: Landmark Tower Apartments

Below: St. Rose during the early years (left) and today (right).







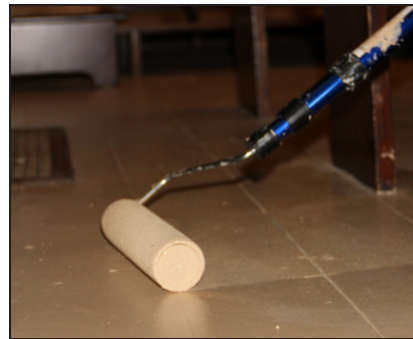
Repainting the Floors

By Jill Palof

Every maintenance project needs to be repeated at some point. It's been about 15 years since Bev Jacobson took on the difficult task of priming and painting the old gray floors after we discovered the current cream color hidden underneath.



The time came to paint the floors once again when the new sanctuary floor exposed original floorboards that had never been painted in January of 2025, but only the main isle and front of the nave was painted. Bev returned and finished painting underneath all the pews in 2026 and noted with a smile; "This is the last time I'll be painting these floors."



Double Gate Balustrades Preserved

By Jill Palof

Preservation is at the heart of nearly all our decisions at St. Rose. When the decision was made in 2025 to preserve the original design of the sanctuary floor, this meant a redesign of the communion rail. The double gate doors in the center of the communion rail were removed but we preserved the balustrades. This was not the first time in the history of St. Rose that the communion rail posts were rearranged. There were many clues of at least two different styles from exposed unfinished circles of woodwork underneath the top rail. If this communion rail could speak, who knows how many transformations it might share with us!

The solution came by using the balustrades in a kneeler that could be placed inside the sweeping transition space for weddings and during communion. John Palof meticulously drafted a plan and carefully considered how to design the end panels with cohesiveness.



The black caps found at the end of each pew were the inspiration for the tops of the kneeler.



Every detail of fine quality woodworking requires precise measurements and careful planning to create an esthetic that respects the surrounding architecture. Notice that the black caps on top of the end panels match the design and color at the end of each pew. This attention to historic detail made this project stunning and cohesive while preserving the historic balustrades from the communion rail gates.

The story behind this project was shaped by the tight timeline leading up to the wedding on January 25, 2025. In late November, we discovered the original sweeping design of the floor during the removal of the old sanctuary floor. This was an unexpected and inspiring discovery that came just weeks before the Candle Lighting Ceremony on December 17, 2024.

John quickly designed a custom kneeler for bride and groom. Construction began on January 17th with staining on January 22nd. Thankfully, the polyurethane cured just in time for the wedding!

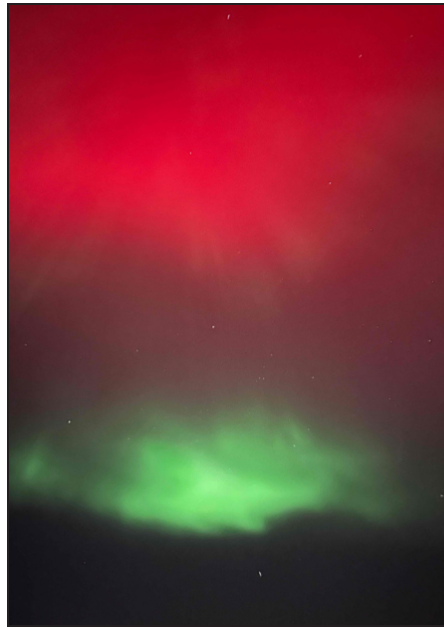
Preserved balustrades from the gates of the communion rail gates are in the new kneeler.



Stunning Aurora Borealis

By Jill Palof

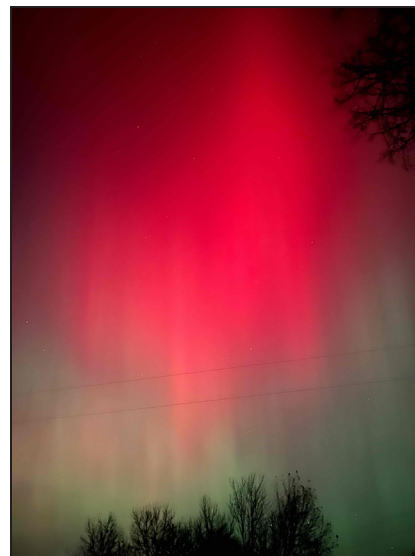
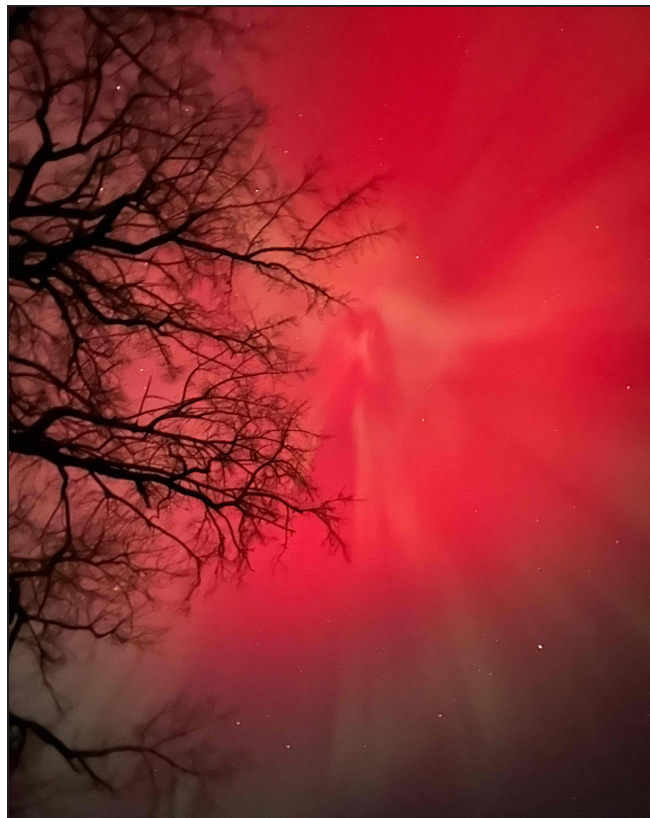
Some of the most amazing experiences at St. Rose are completely unexpected. This magnificent display is a rare G4-level aurora borealis that occurred Veterans Day evening, November 11, 2025. Categorized as a severe solar storm, this was certainly a storm for the ages! As mentioned in the front cover article, heavenly light showered down upon St. Rose and silently danced across the sky in every direction for several hours. These two pages show a small sample of a photographers dream. It makes us wonder if the early pioneers ever witnessed such a glorious sight and if so, was this was a sign from heaven?



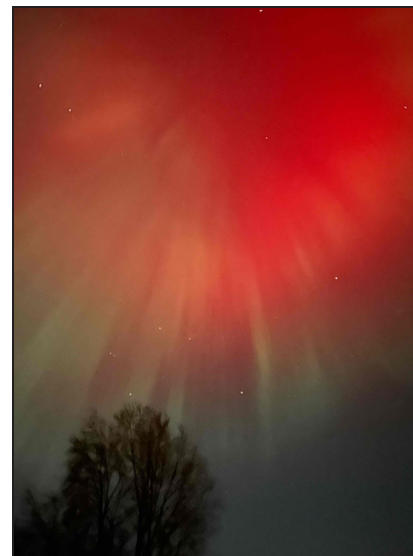
The Great Red Aurora

The vibrant curtains of red and magenta were impressive to behold. The intense red shades in these photographs are referred to as the “superstars” of this storm. The “Great Red Aurora” as described by The Amazing Sky, was so intense that evening that these rare high-altitude colors were visible as far south as Texas and Mexico.

Pinpoints of light from bright stars and distant planets pierced the veil of this celestial atmosphere. We are blessed with very little light pollution when viewing the night sky at St. Rose. Dark skies make the northern lights spectacular in Cherry Grove Township. The lack of light pollution must be why the Cherry Grove Observatory selected their location under two miles away to the southwest. We’re not certain if anyone was at the observatory to capture this memorable sight.



Above: View looking toward the northwest.



Above: View looking toward the southwest.

Left: View looking straight overhead at the Great Red Aurora.

Pure White Effect

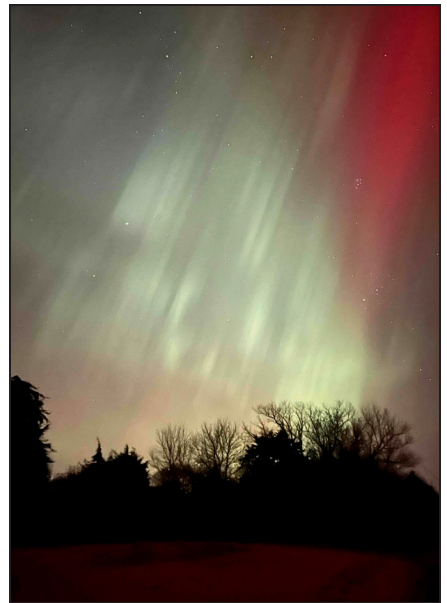
Pure white and shades of emerald green also dominated the sky as the energy of this slow moving storm continued its intense course. Known as the “Pure White” effect, the “white” shown in these photos was likely a visual overlap according to research on this subject. I also gained a deeper understanding from this explanation:

“When intense green (oxygen), blue (nitrogen), and red (high-altitude oxygen) emissions occur simultaneously and with enough brightness, they “saturate” our vision, blending into a brilliant, ghostly white or pale yellow-white.”



The picture to the upper right was taken from the south parking lot looking toward the east. The “Pure White” effect bathed the cemetery like angels coming down from above. It was an emotional sight to witness since we, the Friends of St. Rose, know so many great people and Veterans who are laid to rest in the St. Rose cemetery.

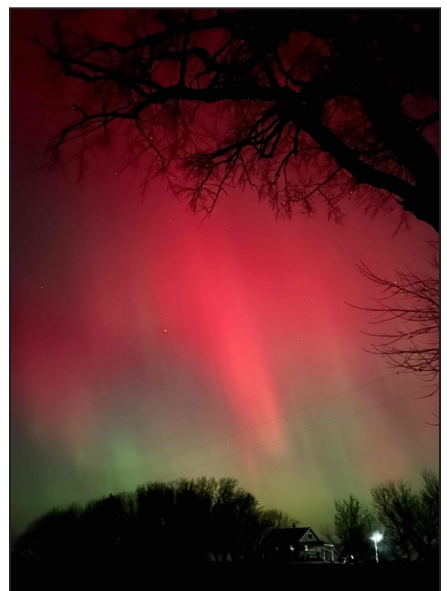
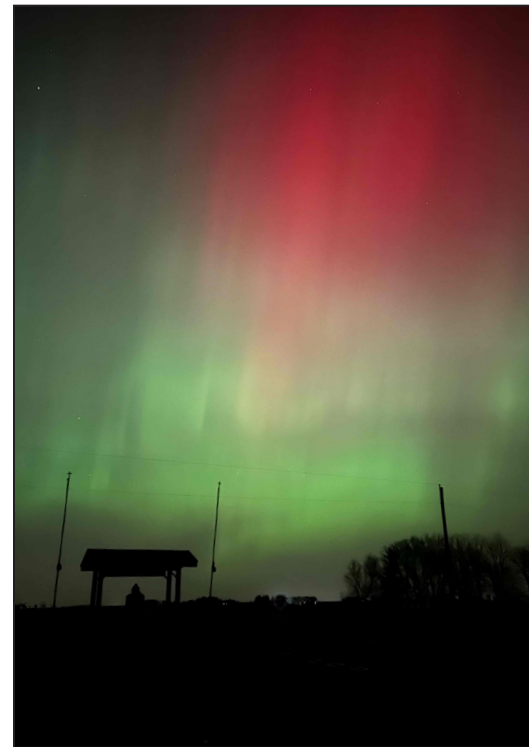
The massive wall of solar plasma that slammed into Earth’s magnetic field that night also produced intense greens which are considered the most common color observed during a ‘typical’ aurora. There is something profoundly humbling about watching a geomagnetic storm of this magnitude develop and evolve in total silence. There was nothing ‘typical’ about this incredibly beautiful solar storm. This event was part of a broader, highly active period of the Solar Maximum in 2025, making northern lights more frequent and visible at lower latitudes than usual.



Angelic “Pure White” effect over the cemetery.



Curtains of slowly changing colors filled the night sky when looking in every direction at St. Rose the night of November 11, 2025.





Candle Lighting Ceremony

By Jill Palof

The anticipation of Christmas filled the air during the 23rd Annual Candle Lighting Ceremony on Sunday, December 21, 2025. Deacon Newell McGee from Divine Mercy in Faribault and St. Michael's Catholic church in Kenyon, was the presider. Deacon Newell read from the 1849 bible of the Tunks family who were original parishioners at St. Rose. His heart-felt message about the true meaning of Christmas resonated with all.

We enjoyed the music of the season from members of Brass Etc., but with a few variables this year. The brass quintet was actually a brass quartet this year since they were missing a french player. The other variable was that their euphonium player, Mitch Stevenson, was in a car accident on his way to St. Rose. Fortunately, no one was injured in the accident, but we really missed Mitch and his outgoing personality.

Fortunately once more, we have a member of the Minnesota Music Hall of Fame on our board, Rick Keane, who was able to substitute at the last minute for Mitch, but Rick played trumpet since there was no euphonium available. Other members that afternoon included Micah Johnson and Richard Zeller on trumpets, and Chad Clasemann on trombone.



Deacon Newell McGee, Divine Mercy, Faribault, and St. Michael's, Kenyon.



Guests enjoyed visiting and celebrating together.



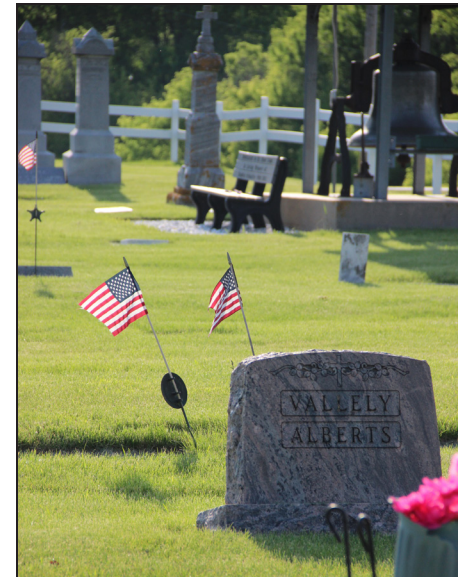
Brass Etc. members provided the music with St. Rose Board member Rick Keane filling in on trumpet.



Hugh O'Kane read a Christmas poem titled 'The Gift of Peace' before the service.



Thank You to our May 2025 - April 2026 Contributors



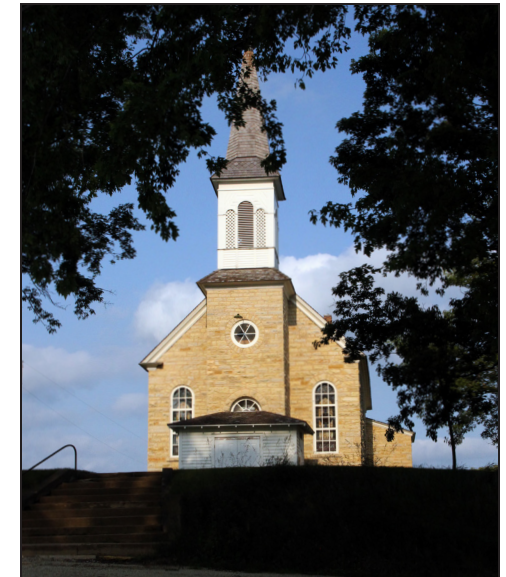
Dean and Chris Kneeland
 Father David Kohner
 Marjorie Kylo
 Gregg and Kathy Luebke
 Ann Majerus
 Brian and Angela McCullagh
 Alexa McDowell
 Newell and Ramona McGee
 Arlene Meyer
 MaryAnn and Ellen Mittelstadt
 Cynthia Nosek
 John and Jane Olive
 Stuart and Jennifer Ohr
 Hugh O'Kane
 Kristine O'Kane

General Fund Contributions:

Kevin and Mary Anderson
 Gary Bakko
 Larry and Paulette Barnhart
 Janet Bauch
 Rose Berg
 Brad and Mary Birmingham
 Michelle Brant
 Arvid and Betty Boyum
 Marvin and Alice Bronner
 Henry Carbone
 Al and SueAnn Collinge
 Gene and Glenda Dollander
 Father Henry Doyle
 James and Janet Edlund
 Benjamin and Jennifer Eirikson
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 Paul and Carol Tamminga
 Ren and Ann Tescher
 Ron and Carol Trelstad
 Margaret Tri
 Jeremy and Kerri Vangness
 Dianne Vangness
 Gerald Vettel
 John and Sheila Walsh
 James and Connie Wendt
 James Whalen
 Roland and Jane Vonder Haar

Josephine Befort Memorial
 Margaret Tri



Thank You May 2025 - April 2026 Contributors continued



Mary Jenniges Memorial

Loretta Froyum

John and Mary Ann O'Kane Memorial

Gregg and Kathy Luebke

LaVaughn Osborn Memorial

Harold Osborn

Rollie Paquette Memorial

Rick Keane and Jeanne Judge-Keane



Cara Cardinal Lardy and Carol (Bakko) Cardinal Memorial

Dave Lardy and Family

Tom and Ruth Comstock Memorial

Todd and Linda Broin
Mike and Lisa Comstock
Kenneth and Donna Lee

Dorothy DeGuise Memorial

Ryan and Missy Henry
Kelly and Joann Ronningen

Honoring our Families: Devlin, Hunt, and Kindseth Memorial

Bill and Arlene Kindseth

Gerald Gunther Memorial and In Memory of Loved Ones

Margaret Tri

Herbert Haberman (Father) and Daniel R. Haberman (Brother)

Susan Hauschildt

Mary Lou Hanson

Don and Wendy Stroebel

Tom Heinowski Memorial

Judy Heinowski
John and Jill Palof

Joe Palof Memorial

Rick and Jeanne Judge-Keane
John and Jill Palof
Tom and Kathy Palof
Kelly and Joann Ronningen

Sara Jane Ryan Memorial

John Ryan

Ruth Stiehl Memorial

Margaret Tri

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We were blessed with another year of generous support and great progress. We enjoyed seeing so many of you at our events at St. Rose. We express our heartfelt condolences to any of you who have been affected by the loss of a loved one over the past year. We greatly appreciate your words, kindness and personal notes of encouragement. You provide us endless energy and determination as we continue moving forward on this preservation journey.

The Friends of St. Rose Board thanks all of you who supported this non-profit over the past twenty-four years. Thanks to all tireless volunteers, gracious donors and all those who supported St. Rose in other ways. We greatly appreciate the significant dedication and shared mission of preservation at this historic site.

Friends of St. Rose, Inc., Board of Directors:

Mike Comstock, Ben Eirikson,
Richard Henry, Rick Keane, Kathy Luebke,
Jill Palof and Jerry Vettel.

