



175th Anniversary Moment

“He who promised is faithful” (Heb 10.23)

ENERGIZING THE PARISH: THE MINISTRY OF REV. ROBERT POHL

In 1978, First Saint Paul’s Church Council determined that the congregation needed to expand its outreach to the community. After prayer and deliberation, they created the position of Parish Program Director. They issued a call for a candidate and found the Rev. Robert Pohl, who was serving a congregation in suburban Calumet Park. Pastor Pohl arrived with his wife, Anne Marie, and their four young boys (Christopher, Jon, Benjamin, Nicholas), which seemed suddenly to double the number of children in Sunday services.

Pastor Pohl worked with FSP’s groups, both young and old (including a Single Adult Fellowship program), and assisted with worship services. Pastor Pohl also created a “Social Concerns Committee” to address the needs of the community. Under his leadership, and with the assistance of members who provided professional knowledge and experience, the congregation created the community meals program. This program, which serves meals on Saturdays at noon, was designed to provide food, fellowship, and spiritual encouragement for neighborhood residents, many of whom lived in public housing and in single-room-occupancy residences that were then prevalent in the Old Town area. The community meals program continues to this day.

Following the retirement of Pastor James Manz, Pastor Pohl was formally called by the congregation to become FSP’s seventh pastor and was installed on January 16, 1981. After a few years living in a rented townhouse on West North Avenue, Pastor Pohl and family purchased a house in the Lincoln Square neighborhood with the congregation’s assistance. In December 1984, Pastor Pohl accepted a call from the Lutheran Church of the Cross in Hanover, Massachusetts. From there he eventually moved on to a congregation in Sarasota, Florida, where he endured the full force of a hurricane. Having enough of the subtropical climate, he moved on to lead a small congregation in Cornwall, Connecticut. Pastor Pohl retired from the ministry in 2021.



In his congratulatory letter to the congregation, Pastor Pohl wrote: “What a blessing you continue to be as you work together to build Christ’s Church in these challenging times. You give welcome to fellow-sinners in his name. You bring his Gospel message to children who are hearing it for the first time and to the homebound who continue into old age to feed on his word. Through you the light of Christ shines for neighbors in the surrounding community in the great city of Chicago.”