The history of St. John the Apostle reaches back in time to the year 1961, when parishioners petitioned the bishop of Bismarck to establish a parish in the location where we are today. Through the years, the community of St. John the Apostle has grown from approximately 290 charter members in 1963 to approximately 422 families at the time St. John's celebrated its 25th anniversary in 1986, to a current 655 families. The original building has its roots dating back to July 25, 1961 when Bishop Hilary Hacker announced the fourth Catholic parish in Minot was to be formed and appointed Fr. Donald J. Becwar the first pastor. Fr. Becwar was given permission from the Minot Board of Education to use Bel Air School for church services until the newly established parish could build a church in northwest Minot. The Bel Air School gymnasium, on Sunday, August 6, 1961, was the site of the first worship service. The first members of the Parish Board were elected August 19, 1961.

Ground was broken on June 9, 1963, by Father Becwar, and the first services were held in the new church building at Midnight Mass, Christmas 1963. The church was originally designed with the intent of housing a grade school; however, due to the inability to secure the religious sisters as teachers, the school never became a reality.

Fr. Henry Schneider was appointed St. John’s second pastor and served for thirty-two years until his retirement in July, 2002. At the time, Bishop Paul Zipfel appointed Fr. David Zimmer, St. John’s third pastor. Eventually, a parish secretary, director of religious education and bookkeeper were added to assist with the administrative activities of the parish.

Soon after his arrival, the parish council and Fr. Dave and other parishioners began to assess our needs and areas to be updated and improved and a renovation began to evolve. Discussions followed and plans were drafted. A Renovation committee was formed. Bishop Zipfel granted his approval of the project to make the improvements to our parish. The project began and dust flew on February 7, 2003. With work being completed by many volunteers and the employment of many other skilled workers, progress was made each week.

Prior to its completion, parishioners were asked to sign the plywood on the newly constructed sanctuary floor before the new carpet was installed. Hundreds placed their signatures to show their support and “ownership” of this new phase of parish history. The majority of the work was completed by Easter, 2003. The final phase of the project was the construction of the "Children's Memorial Monument," which was dedicated on May 31, 2004 - Memorial Day. That same year, with a commitment to “honoring those who serve” our parish began recognizing our veterans and active military members with an annual Mass and dinner on National Military Appreciation Day, held on the third Saturday of May each year. A wall of honor, naming every person from our parish who has served our country was dedicated on May 16, 2009 and is proudly displayed in our new gathering space.

In September of 2005, St. John the Apostle church began a new chapter in its parish history as staff members and the parish and finance councils unanimously voted to become a stewardship parish. The process to incorporate the stewardship way of life into all aspects of parish life, would prove to have an enormous impact on St. John's. And with this important step out in faith, the parish is evolving and clearly focused on living our call as disciples of Jesus Christ through the grateful and generous sharing of our time, talent and treasure.

St. John’s has evolved into a vibrant, active Church community. However, our facility was so limited in space, it had become apparent that our needs had to be assessed and addressed. Plans for an extensive expansion began with much discussion and debate. Our new bishop in Bismarck, extended his encouragement to move forward with our
expansion and approval for the project was given his blessing. For the second time in our history, a ground breaking ceremony took place in August of 2013. Several of the original charter members were present. The much-needed building project was completed in 2014, which added “St. Francis Parish Hall” eight classrooms, a grand kitchen, new sacristy and pastor’s office!

The parish you see today represents the hard work and dedication of many people over time. It is filled with specially selected artwork that makes our parish a beautiful place to worship and demonstrates our sense of community, service and commitment to a place that is important to us and hopefully as well to all who enter our doors and visit us.

In the last five years, stewardship has radically transformed the people of St. John the Apostle from a stiff, somber parish to one that is full of joy, energy, and promise. This journey of spirituality through stewardship began in March 2005, when Fr. Dave Zimmer, pastor, attended a stewardship conference in Wichita, Kansas - the epicenter of present-day Catholic stewardship. The conference, and the prospect of beginning the "stewardship way of life" at St. John's, impressed Fr. Zimmer.

In August 2005, he returned to Wichita to attend another stewardship conference; this time, three lay leaders traveled with him. One month later, St. John's Parish Council and Finance Council recommended that Fr. Zimmer hire Catholic Stewardship Consultants (CSC) - a Christ-centered organization that specializes in helping Catholic parishes around the country develop the stewardship way of life. With CSC's help, St. John's established a monthly stewardship newsletter, it conducted a comprehensive parish survey, established a detailed stewardship plan and conducted its first stewardship renewal, during which parishioners made commitments to time, talent and treasure.

In its first five years as a stewardship parish, the atmosphere at St. John's has noticeably changed. The attitude of parishioners has turned from solemn to hospitable. The list of parish ministries has grown significantly, and continues to do so. It has become relatively easy for parish leaders to find volunteers willing to participate in all parish activities. The parish has also sponsored three successful events that drew attendees from across the diocese. Today, the parish anticipates the possibility of assisting other parishes in developing stewardship within their own congregations through the Institute for Stewardship Formation.

In 2009, Fr. Zimmer introduced to the people of St. John the concept of the four "pillars" of parish stewardship: hospitality, prayer, formation and service. These pillars do not replace the concept of "time, talent and treasure" that is so central to Catholic stewardship. Instead, they are tools that make it easier for the average Catholic to adopt and implement stewardship into their daily lives and the life of the parish.

Finally, stewardship is NOT about money. It is about our grateful response to God in light of His constant and generous provision. Part of this response does entail offertory giving, but it must be balanced with a fervent and healthy prayer life and faithful service to others. St. John's Stewardship Council has witnessed this take place, and the results have been overwhelmingly positive. After all, if parish life is filled with the Holy Spirit, then the Holy Spirit will fill the parish with life.

The four intersecting rings represent the four pillars of parish stewardship: Hospitality, Prayer, Formation and Service. Every function of our parish life strengthens each pillar and our life as faithful stewards of God’s gifts to us. The pillars intersect forming a Cross to signify that Christ is at the center of all that we do. The radiating ring around the four pillars indicates that our faith radiates from us and our parish to our community and others around us.
"Building Upon Our Faith" chronicles the building of the St John the Apostle's St Francis of Assisi Parish Hall and Catechetical Center expansion project.

**Building Upon Our Faith**

### Pastors of St John the Apostle

- **Father Donald Becwar** 1961-1970
- **Father Henry Schneider** 1970-2002
- **Father David Zimmer** 2002-2016
- **Father David Richter** 2016-Present