



FROM THE HEART

Sacred Heart Alumnus Deacon John Rogers:

A Journey of Success and Service

Sacred Heart Catholic School takes pride in its alumni, and one such distinguished graduate is Deacon John Rogers. A former student who walked these very hallways, John has gone on to achieve remarkable success in his career while giving back to his community in meaningful ways.



John attended Sacred Heart Catholic School from 5th to 8th grade after his family moved from Minneapolis to New Hope. He remembers the strong sense of community within the church and school as they celebrated their faith. Some of his favorite teachers included Mrs. Greshwalk, whose dedication to her students left a lasting impression. He recalls participating in the 1996 mock election held in the lunchroom, a memorable experience that sparked his interest in civic engagement. Mr. Ziebol helped students develop technology skills to support learning, a valuable foundation for the future. He also has fond memories of reading *The Westing Game* in literature class and learning how to play chess, which was central to the novel. His class was especially close-knit, with no cliques or divisions—everyone got along well, fostering a strong sense of belonging.

After Sacred Heart, John continued his Catholic education at Totino-Grace High School. He then attended St. John's University, where he earned a degree in English education. Following graduation, he dedicated himself to teaching, serving as an English teacher at Transfiguration Catholic School for 2 years and at St. Thomas Academy for 8 years. John also received a Master of Arts in Catholic Studies from St. Thomas.

John and his wife Sara have been married for 18 years. They have four children: Anna, Josie, Eliason, and Jude. They reside in St. Paul and attend St. Joseph's Parish in West St. Paul. Through his dedication to faith and service, John exemplifies the values instilled at Sacred Heart, inspiring both students and the wider community.

As John's family grew, he felt called to transition into a new career as a fundraising consultant, utilizing his skills as a writer and public speaker. Currently, he serves as the Vice President at Prenger Solutions Group and Director of the Catholic Social Media service, where he helps churches and religious nonprofits minister more effectively.

In 2019, John entered the Diaconate Formation Program at the University of St. Thomas. Former Sacred Heart Pastor, Father Michael Creagan, was instrumental in his discernment of pursuing the Diaconate program. After he and Sara experienced their third miscarriage, he found solace in his faith and realized that his experiences could help him support others facing similar struggles. Today, he serves as a deacon at Holy Spirit Parish in St. Paul, offering guidance and comfort to those in need.



John's hobbies include playing board games with his family, reading, travel and camping, watching motor sports and is an avid Twins fan. John's favorite prayer is the Prayer of St. Thomas Aquinas, a guiding reflection that can be prayed in all circumstances. This prayer serves as a foundation for living a well-ordered life, and John often turns to it at work and home for strength and direction.

Faith has always been central to John's life. Raised Catholic, he attended Mass weekly and served as an altar boy. John's parents, Robert and Kay were members of Sacred Heart from 1994-2002. His deep-rooted beliefs continue to shape his daily life through prayer, providing purpose and strength during both joyful and challenging times. He believes his Catholic faith influences everything he does and gives meaning to all aspects of his life.

Remembering the 1970s Church Fire

Note: Information and photo with permission from the Robbinsdale Historical Society.



In the history of Sacred Heart Parish, few events remain as vivid or as deeply felt as the fire that engulfed the old church in the 1970s. For many of our parishioners and alumni, that moment marked not just the loss of our old church building, but a powerful reminder of community, faith, and resilience.

The fire broke out suddenly, consuming the beloved structure that had stood for decades as the heart of parish life. As smoke rose into the sky, the Sacred Heart community quickly gathered—not only to watch in disbelief, but to act. Inside the old church were the 2nd and 3rd grade classrooms, and in those critical early minutes, a line of volunteers formed to rescue books, supplies, and classroom materials before the flames could fully take hold.

The loss left a noticeable gap in the school's facilities. The classrooms housed in the church were suddenly gone, displacing students and disrupting routine. The old church was also used for gym class and lunchroom. In a remarkable act of kindness, Elim Lutheran Church graciously opened its doors to our community. During the recovery period, gym classes and the 2nd and 3rd grade classrooms were temporarily relocated there, allowing learning to continue with minimal interruption.

Luckily, the parish had been planning to demolish the building before it burned. Less than a year after the devastating blaze, Sacred Heart built our activities building to include a gymnasium, parish office, meeting rooms and a kitchen.

A Message from the Principal

As I celebrate my 25th year as principal of Sacred Heart Catholic School, I am especially proud to share that I am also an alumna of our amazing school. It is a true blessing to walk the same hallways I once did as a student—now as a leader, mentor, and lifelong member of this faith-filled community. Sacred Heart has always been more than a school—it's a family. We remain deeply committed to academic excellence while nurturing the values of service, compassion, and community that define who we are.



Our school first opened its doors in the fall of 1926, and we are excited to begin celebrating our 100th anniversary in May with our 100th graduating class. We will continue the celebration throughout the 2026–2027 school year. Please stay tuned for ways that our alumni can join in marking this remarkable milestone in Sacred Heart's history.

With gratitude,
Karen Bursey
Principal



Sacred Heart Catholic School is thrilled to kick off our centennial celebration in May 2026! Our upcoming eighth-grade class will mark the 100th graduating class, and we can't wait to celebrate this incredible milestone with you—our cherished alumni, families, and friends who make Sacred Heart so special. Join us for a year of exciting events, including an all-school reunion, a special centennial gala, and many more opportunities to reconnect, reminisce, and rejoice.

Stay connected and be the first to hear about upcoming events by following us on social media. Let's make this 100th year unforgettable—together!

Sacred Heart Middle School Students Making a Difference

At Sacred Heart Catholic School, service is at the heart of our mission. This year, our middle school students have taken part in a variety of service projects, demonstrating their commitment to giving back to the community. Through their time, effort, and compassion, they have made a meaningful impact in several ways.

One of the ways our students have served is by volunteering at our Lenten Fish Fry dinners. They assisted with take-out orders, bussed tables, and poured beverages, helping to create a welcoming and efficient dining experience for our parish and community members.

In addition, our students participated in a service project at Feed My Starving Children. They packed meals to be sent to children in need around the world and organized a penny war fundraiser, which helped raise funds for this important cause. Their enthusiasm and generosity contributed to making a difference in the lives of those struggling with food insecurity.

Another heartfelt initiative was the creation of blankets for children at Children's Hospital. Our students worked together to make cozy, comforting blankets, bringing warmth and support to young patients facing health challenges.

Acts of kindness continued as our students wrote birthday cards for parishioners each month, spreading joy and reminding members of our faith community that they are cherished. This simple yet thoughtful gesture helped strengthen the bonds between our school and parish families.

Lastly, our students participated in "Operation Empowering Hope" in Brooklyn Park, writing letters to service members. These heartfelt messages of gratitude and encouragement uplifted those who serve our country, reminding them that they are appreciated and supported.

At Sacred Heart Catholic School, we strive to instill a spirit of service in our students. Through these initiatives, our middle schoolers have embodied the values of faith, compassion, and generosity. We are proud of their dedication to making the world a better place, one act of kindness at a time.





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