

Hugo NEIGHBORS

JANUARY 2026



Meet the
**ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST
MEN'S CLUB OF
ST. GENEVIEVE CHURCH**

POWERED BY

BVM
BEST VERSION MEDIA

COVER PHOTO BY JENESSA SCHERER - SCHERER PHOTO CO.



(L to R): Jerry Gonerka - Bill Courteau - John McKeown - Father Greg Esty - Dennis Stoterau

Meet the ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST **MEN'S CLUB** OF ST. GENEVIEVE CHURCH

BY ANGELA LUTZ | PHOTOS BY JENESSA SCHERER - SCHERER PHOTO CO.

The St. John the Baptist Men's Club was formed in 2002, founded by Don Schoeller, Mike Gibbs and Roland Stricklin, who gathered 30 members by posting a sign-up sheet for the newly formed club at the former Carpenter's Steak House in Hugo. Now over 23 years later, the club has 45 members who continue to contribute their time, skills, and fundraising money for local food shelves, church cemeteries, storm victims and the church parish. Four of the original members are still members today, including one of the club officers.



Fish Fry Cooks (L to R): Tim Rudy - Dean Faymville - Randy Kotval - Ed Bryant - Tom Renchin (Missing - Dan Nadeau)



Christmas Caroling at Keystone Place at La Valle Fields

The Men's Club mission statement is providing a social environment for the men of the parish for Christian fellowship. We promote and sponsor parish activities to bring parishioners and the broader community together. We contribute to the well-being of the parish through contributions of time, talent and treasure.

The group is best known for serving the "World's Greatest Fish Fry" at their Annual Lenten Fish Fry, but the club volunteers at events year-round, hosting St. Paul Saints baseball games, pancake breakfasts at Fortin Hall, and brunches at the Parish Center twice a year. "Pancake breakfasts and brunches are a free will offering and we will cover more than enough pancakes and sausage, which we get from Grundhofer's Meats," said Jerry Gonerka, the current President of the Men's Club. They also host brunch at the Parish Community Center, Hamburger

night for the Yellow Ribbon at the Hugo Legion, along with volunteering at the Parish Picnic and Christmas caroling at Chauncey Barrett Gardens, Keystone Place and Muller

Manor. Membership is open to all area men wishing to support the Men's Club mission. A \$10 annual membership is collected each year. The Men's Club usually meets on the

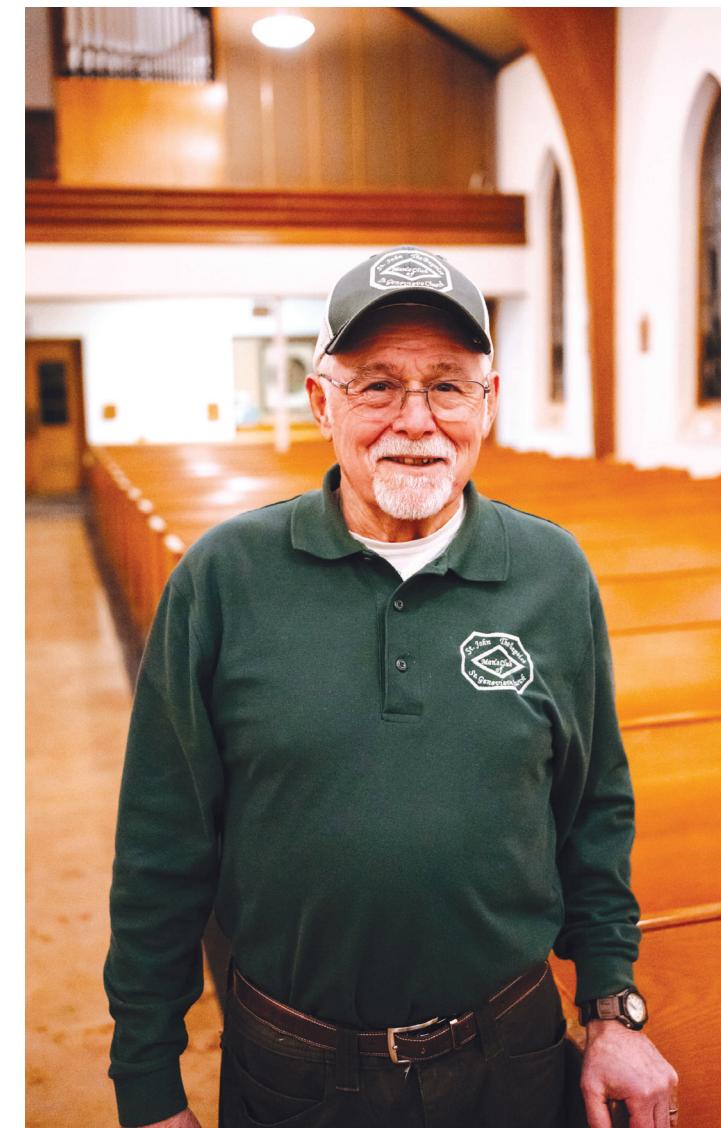
first Monday of every month year round at St. John's Campus - Hugo at 7 p.m. For more information contact the Parish Office at info@stgens.org or 651-429-7937.



FATHER GREG ESTY PASTOR

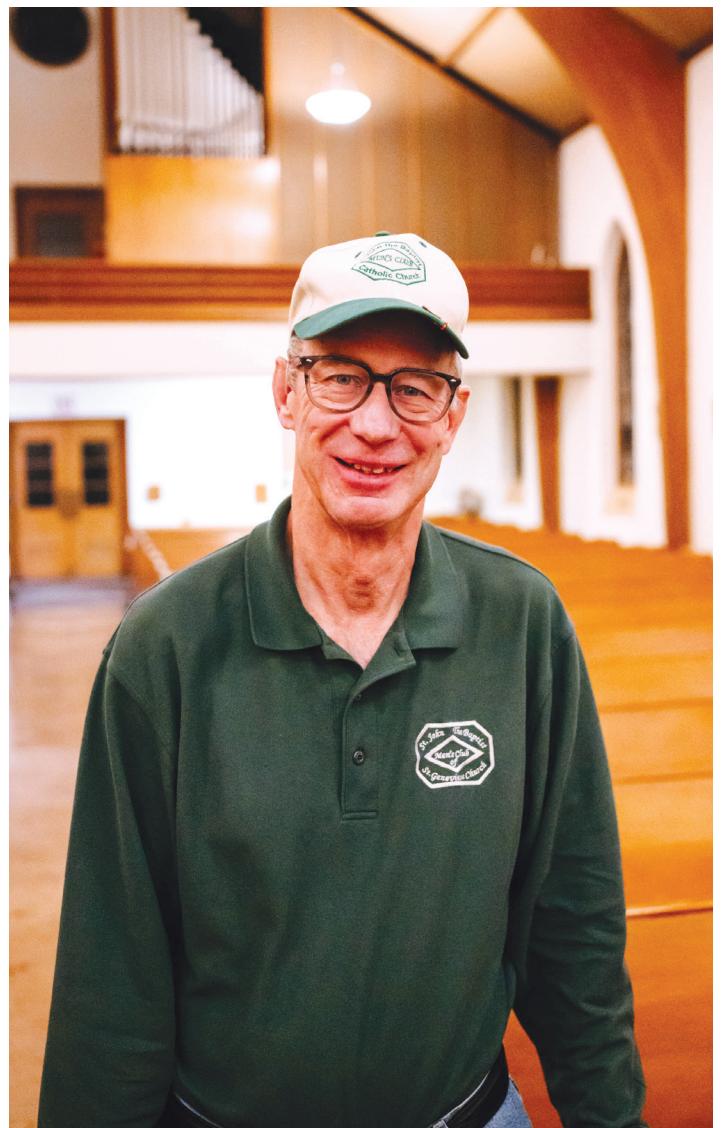
Father Greg Esty recently celebrated 50 years of ministry, and was assigned to the merger of St. John the Baptist in Hugo and St. Genevieve in Centerville in 2012. Although the first year proved to be difficult, Father Greg sums up the ultimate success to TEAM. "I like the acronym of TEAM - together everyone accomplishes more," he said. "In fact, that's one of the reasons I so appreciate our Men's Club! I think they are an example of how that can happen. Two parishes who were able to work out differences and become one united in faith, hope and love."

St. Genevieve Church is the longest assignment Father Greg has ever had in his career and also the most challenging, but the welcoming, friendly community made it worthwhile! "I love this parish," he said. "In a world that seems so divided people need a church where they feel they are welcome and can develop friendships with others with the same values!"



BILL COURTEAU SECRETARY

Bill became a member of the parish at St. Genevieve Church in Centerville over 20 years ago. In 2012, when St. Genevieve Church and St. John the Baptist Church merged together to become one church, the Men's Club welcomed Bill and other men who were interested in the club. "When we attended one of their meetings, we were greeted and welcomed with enthusiasm, which is the hallmark of the club," said Bill. Don Schoeller was the President of the club, responsible for purchasing all of the food for each event. Bill offered to help with the shopping as he was retired and owned a truck, and learned all about the internal process. "I observed how well organized the club was from stocking products, cooking, the serving line, ticket sales, to cleaning," said Bill. He also noticed the strong bond shared throughout the entire group. Upon Don's passing in May of 2014, Bill was elected President of the club and took over full responsibility of the entire process. He is proud to be a part of the group of volunteers who make a real difference in the community and share a common comradery. This month Bill is retiring as President after eight years, and will now take over as Secretary. "I am so proud of the guys in this club and how much fun they have working together," he said. "We're a good group of guys - best ever!"



JERRY GONERKA PRESIDENT

Jerry joined St. Genevieve Church parish upon the merger in 2012, also signing for the Men's Club after a neighbor encouraged him to get involved. "The club has a great bunch of guys who all work hard, hardly ever complain, and are always there when someone in the parish or community needs them," said Jerry. "Our meetings stay on task but they are fun! It is never a waste of our time or money for the parish and the community. At the Men's Club if something needs to get done, members will volunteer, even if it's on their own! They just help out no matter what!" Jerry will ring in the New Year as President of the club.



DENNIS STOTERAU VICE PRESIDENT & TREASURER

Dennis started attending St. John the Baptist Church over 25 years ago, and has been with the club since its beginning, serving as President for 3 years in the past. He joined the Men's Club when he saw the sheet posted at the old Carpenter's Steak House in Hugo. "We're a pretty close knit bunch, and we all enjoy most of the things we do," he said. "I think we are recognized in Hugo as a really good group."



JOHN MCKEOWN FORMER SECRETARY

John joined both the St. Genevieve Church parish and the Men's Club in 2021. He is the former Secretary serving for the last 3 years. He enjoys working at the Friday night fish frys, especially on the serving line!

**THE ST. JOHN'S MEN'S CLUB
ANNUAL FISH FRY**

GREAT MENU

**SIX FRIDAYS IN
2026**

February 20, 27
March 6, 13, 20, 27

****COST****

ADULTS \$15
SENIORS (60 & Older) \$12
JUNIORS (6-12) \$10
CHILD (5 & Under) FREE

AT ST. JOHN'S CHURCH IN HUGO
4:30 PM TO 7:30 PM

FREE DRAWING FOR A BIKE
**** ONLY YOUTHS 6 TO 12 YEARS OLD ELIGIBLE****

One Girl & One Boy
Drawing March 27, 2026 7:45 PM
NOTE: WINNERS DO NOT NEED TO BE PRESENT

LOCATION: 14383 Forest Boulevard North, Hugo, Minnesota
Corner of Highway #61 & County Road #14 "Frenchman Road"

For more information call
Bill Courteau at 651-246-3236 or the Parish Office 651-429-7937

**SPONSORED BY ST. JOHN'S MEN'S CLUB OF
THE CHURCH OF ST. GENEVIEVE**



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST MEN'S CLUB

ANNUAL LENTEN FISH FRY FRIDAYS



Hugo YRN Burger Night

Over the years many improvements and upgrades have taken place in the kitchen, such as new fryers and a new air make-up and fire suppression system, which keeps the kitchen safe during the high volume of kitchen activity over the first six Fridays of Lent. According to Bill, the Men's Club served over 3,600 meals during Lent last year, averaging out to over 600 meals served during each three hour event. The growth has continued from 2,214 meals in 2013 to 3,626 meals in 2025, a 64 percent increase year over year! The proceeds of their fish fry have allowed them to give back to those in need. In 2025, they were able to help the parish and community with over \$21,000 in donations! They also run a 50/50 raffle with the proceeds going to the Hugo Good Neighbor Food Shelf and the Centennial



Food Shelf in Circle Pines, donating \$1,187 to each organization in 2025. Another accomplishment is being awarded the "Best Of" in the local newspapers over the past four years! "It never ceases to amaze me how generous this community is," said Bill, who even got Archbishop Bernard Hebda to start attending the "World's Greatest Fish Fry" annually since 2016. Bill had been introduced to the Archbishop and thought he was a nice guy with a good sense of humor. "In his first year as archbishop, he gave a special dispensation to be able to eat meat on a Friday during Lent that happened to fall on St. Patrick's Day and we lost 200 meals," said Bill. "So I wrote him an invoice that said, I know your intention was not meant to hurt our fish fry but we lost 200 meals, so please find the attached invoice for \$2,000. You have two options, pay the invoice, or come have some fish with us! He was there the next week, and has been coming ever since!"