

SAINT CLARE PARISH PROFILE

MAXINE BEACH



After faithfully serving St. Clare Catholic Parish for more than a decade, parish secretary Maxine Beach is preparing to retire at the end of June.

“What I’m going to miss the most is helping the people of the parish I’ve gotten to know so well and communicated with so often,” she said. “I am grateful to have had the opportunity to get to know so many people, especially after not knowing anyone at all when I first joined the parish.

“The people of St. Clare Parish have truly inspired me. And it means a lot to me that so many people have prayed for me over the past year and continue to ask me how I’m doing (after her diagnosis of a rare form of leukemia).”

Maxine is in remission from leukemia and looking forward to enjoying retirement with her husband, Lee. They regularly attend Mass at the St. Mary Church location in Greenleaf, where they live.

Maxine was born and raised 15 miles southwest of Wausau on a dairy farm “so I can relate to the area here because we helped with everything on the farm when I was growing up.” She’s the fourth-oldest of 10 children in her family.

She attended Catholic grade school through eighth grade before moving on to Marathon High School.

Her family attended Sacred Heart of Jesus in the town of Cassel. “Faith was something instilled in us at an early age, and we participated in a lot of church functions,” she said.

After graduating high school, Maxine started working at a factory in Edgar in what was to be a summer job, but lasted a bit longer. About a year later, her mother encouraged her to pursue an opportunity in broadcasting. So she took classes at the Trans American School of Broadcasting in

Schofield and landed a job at a small radio station in Tomahawk, Wis., that played “beautiful music.” For a while, Maxine also had her own hour-long radio program. Maxine eventually transitioned to a job in Eau Claire, where she worked in the sales department for an AM/FM radio station. She then moved to the Fox Cities area and continued working in sales, this time for WLUK Channel 11 TV.

In 1991, while living in the Fox Cities, she met Lee through an ad in The Post-Crescent newspaper. Lee was working at St. Norbert College, and Maxine and Lee got married in 1993 at Old St. Joseph Church on the college campus.

“It was kind of funny,” Maxine recalled. “It was in the summer, and we were socializing after the wedding ceremony. And because the Packers had their training camp at St. Norbert College, all of a sudden here comes all the team players and Mike Holmgren and Brett Favre walking through the wedding party to get to their dinner. My nieces and everybody were trying to get autographs.”

Maxine left the TV station in 1996 and then worked for a recruiting company in Appleton. In 2000, she started her own recruiting business for about 10 years. The couple moved to Greenleaf in fall 2005 and shortly thereafter joined what is now St. Clare Catholic Parish.

In 2010, Maxine heard the parish was looking for a part-time secretary so she eagerly joined the parish staff under Fr. Dennis Bergsbaken.

“I thought, ‘Hey, I could do that,’” Maxine said. “When I worked at the radio station in Tomahawk I was sort of a one-person office staff way back in the early 1970s. I thought working at the parish would be interesting and something close to home. I learned everything you need to know about taking care of a parish office and Sacramental records.”

When Maxine started there were two other part-time parish secretaries and they all shared similar duties. But within the first year, the two other parish secretaries moved on so Maxine was elevated to full-time status — a role she has held ever since.

“One of the things I’ve always liked the most is interacting with parishioners and helping them,” she said. “I think it was a wonderful blessing to get this job — having not known a soul out here when we moved to Greenleaf. It was a wonderful way to get to know the community. I’ve been so impressed with the community because it has a strong family-based feel and there’s such a strong Catholic faith. I really like that. I feel like there couldn’t have been a better job for me to find.”

Maxine’s job has involved answering calls, scheduling Mass intentions, processing money given on Sundays, producing weekly bulletins and handling general office duties. She also served as a sacristan, lector and Eucharistic minister. And in previous years she worked closely with liturgical ministers.

“I met with people in the best of times and the saddest of times, and I wanted to them to leave the office with a little blessing,” she said. “So I created a sign and taped it to the front door. It says, ‘Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.’” (Joshua 1:9)

“I’m going to be 70 in June, so I just thought now is a good time to retire,” she said.

Over the past few months Maxine has been training fellow parishioner Lisa Kohlman to handle her duties when the transition occurs. With the onset of COVID and her leukemia diagnosis, Maxine has worked remotely for much of the past year (she was able to return to the office in May). “I want to especially thank Theresa, Kelly and Anne who helped cover my on-site duties while I worked from home before, during and after treatment last year,” she said.

Maxine and Lee plan to continue living in Greenleaf, participating at Mass, looking to retirement adventures and planning family trips. They enjoy the serenity of their wooded property, feeding birds, watching wildlife and caring for their trio of pets, including two cats and an Australian terrier.

“I’m looking forward to retirement,” she said. “I’m a project girl — I like working on all kinds of projects around the house. I’ve always got something going on — refinishing furniture, gardening, just a lot of different activities. So I’ll be staying busy.”