

Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church was founded in July of 1984. A mobile home, which served as a rectory, was set in a previously purchased five acre parcel of land west of the elementary school. Bishop Speltz appointed Father Nicholas Zimmer as the first pastor of the most eastern parish in the Diocese of St. Cloud.. Sunday services were celebrated in the Braham High School.

The first trustees were Fran Nordeen and Kenneth Ethan, who along with Kenneth Shockman, were instrumental in requesting a new parish in Braham. Religious education classes began in the fall of 1984 and were held in the high school and elementary school buildings. Early in 1985, a women's group was organized and included all the women of the parish. They were divided into 4 geographical groups to provide funeral luncheons, to welcome newcomers, to help with parish projects and fundraisers, to pray for families of the parish and to form a Prayer Chain as a means of forwarding prayer requests. A building committee was formed on May 1, 1985 and in early 1986, a twelve acre parcel of land was purchased and became the present site of the church and cemetery. Ground breaking for the building was held on April 13, 1986. Though the building was still incomplete, the first mass was held on December 21, 1986. Father Zimmer and his housekeeper, Judy Schneider, moved into the rectory on June 18, 1987. The total cost of the building and furnishings was \$690,000. Bishop Jerome Hanus dedicated the building on June 19, 1988.

The Knights of Columbus chapter in Braham was started on April 1, 1989. They continue to sponsor meals and fundraisers to support our religious outreach and local needs. Our parish community has sent many youth groups on pilgrimages to visit the Pope. They represented our parish at World Youth Day gatherings in Denver, Rome, Toronto and Germany.

In July 2001, Father Zimmer retired and Deacon Don Tzinski became the first deacon in the diocese to become a Parish Life Coordinator. With the help of Deacon Don and his wife Jan, new activities and organizations were started, such as, Rosary making for the missions, a Squires group for young boys and a Little Flowers group for young girls, a prayer group for all, as well as, a parish library. In the spring of 2003, Deacon Don introduced plans to make a shrine on our church property - The Mercy Walk: Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy. The shrine was completed with lots of hard work and help by all. On October 10, 2003, Bishop John Kinney came to bless the Mercy Walk. After five years of faithful service by Deacon Don and his wife, Jan, Deacon Tom Pinataro was appointed as our second parish life coordinator by Bishop Kinney on August 1, 2006. Many capital improvements to the building and grounds were made during the next 7 years. The Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul and the Sacrament of Confirmation were celebrated on June 27, 2009 followed by a delicious catered banquet to mark our 25th Anniversary. We commemorated Father Nicholas Zimmer's 50 years as an ordained priest with a special mass and reception in the newly named, Zimmer Hall.

Bishop John Kinney foresaw the needs of the three parishes in Isanti County and appointed Father Donald Wagner as our priest in July of 2013. We welcomed three Parochial Vicars during the next 4 years: Fr. John Paul Knopik, Fr. Gabriel Walz and Fr. Derek Wiechmann. We were also the teaching parish for Gregory Sauers, who became Fr. Gregory in 2019. Although Fr. Don resides in Cambridge, he is available to preside at mass, to administer the sacraments and to oversee our parish. When our diocese made plans to implement the concept of Area Catholic Communities, thanks to Fr. Don, we had some of the criteria in place.

Although we are called Isanti Area Catholic Communities and have many combined programs, like Family Faith Formation, we still maintain our parish name and identity, while also, functioning as a Tri Parish. For over twenty years, Sts. Peter and Paul Parish family has regularly provided shelter for the homeless in Zimmer Hall through the New Pathways program. Our parishioners arrange family sleeping accommodations in the classrooms. Food for breakfast and evening meals and fellowship are our extended outreach ministry. We are blessed to have the talented Anna May McCallum as a parish member. Her very beautiful artwork and statues can be seen throughout our sanctuary. Her original Resurrection cross leads us to focus on the reason we are together: to celebrate the Eucharist. Our Youth Group regularly attends NCYC and Steubenville gatherings to enrich their faith. Elizabeth Thrippleton made her first vows with the Order of the Oblate Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and became Sister Mary Elizabeth in August of 2021. She is the Great Granddaughter of a charter member, Barb Goor, who along with Fr. Zimmer, commissioned the artist Charles Kasper on our Tenth Anniversary, to paint the fresco Christ the Almighty which adorns the church's entryway and welcomes all who enter to "Come Follow Me". Our first parish festival was held on September 19, 2009 with plenty of activities and lots of fun. It has become an anticipated fun filled Parish Festival. Many events have been added throughout the years. Highlights include: Kids Inflatables/Activities, Live auction, Holy Fries, Farmers Market and Country Store, Concessions, Pick-A-Cork, Karaoke, Downhill Derby, Corn Hole Tournament, Pork Chop Meal, Live Band and the BIG Raffle. There is something for everyone! A committee of 13 or more excited members begin planning each June and the whole parish becomes involved by the third Saturday in September. During Lent for over 20 years, we have been hosting Friday Fish Fries that welcome families to Zimmer Hall for great food and fellowship. We love hosting these dinners and enjoy preparing and serving the meals as much as our guests enjoy eating Catholic Fish on Friday! Each spring as Fr. Nick's trees grow taller and the bushes are fuller, we are reminded of our loved ones who brought the vision of a Catholic Church in Braham to a reality. Fr. Nicholas Zimmer was laid to rest under the shadow of 'The Church that He Built' on November 17, 2020. Recently, a monument was erected with Anna May McCallum's Resurrection drawing etched in marble. It is at the entrance to our cemetery next to Fr. Zimmer's memorial bench, inviting all, as members of the communion of saints, to pray for our beloved dead. It is with humility and gratitude that we dedicate this pictorial directory to those who gave Sts. Peter and Paul its roots with nothing but faith to unite them and to our present members who continue to give it life by praying together, sharing God's blessings and enjoying each other as members of our parish family.