

Corpus Christi

ADDRESS: 8449 Jennings Road **FOUNDED:** 1915

NUMBER OF FAMILIES TODAY: 360

NUMBER OF FAMILIES AT PEAK: 3,000 in the early 1950s

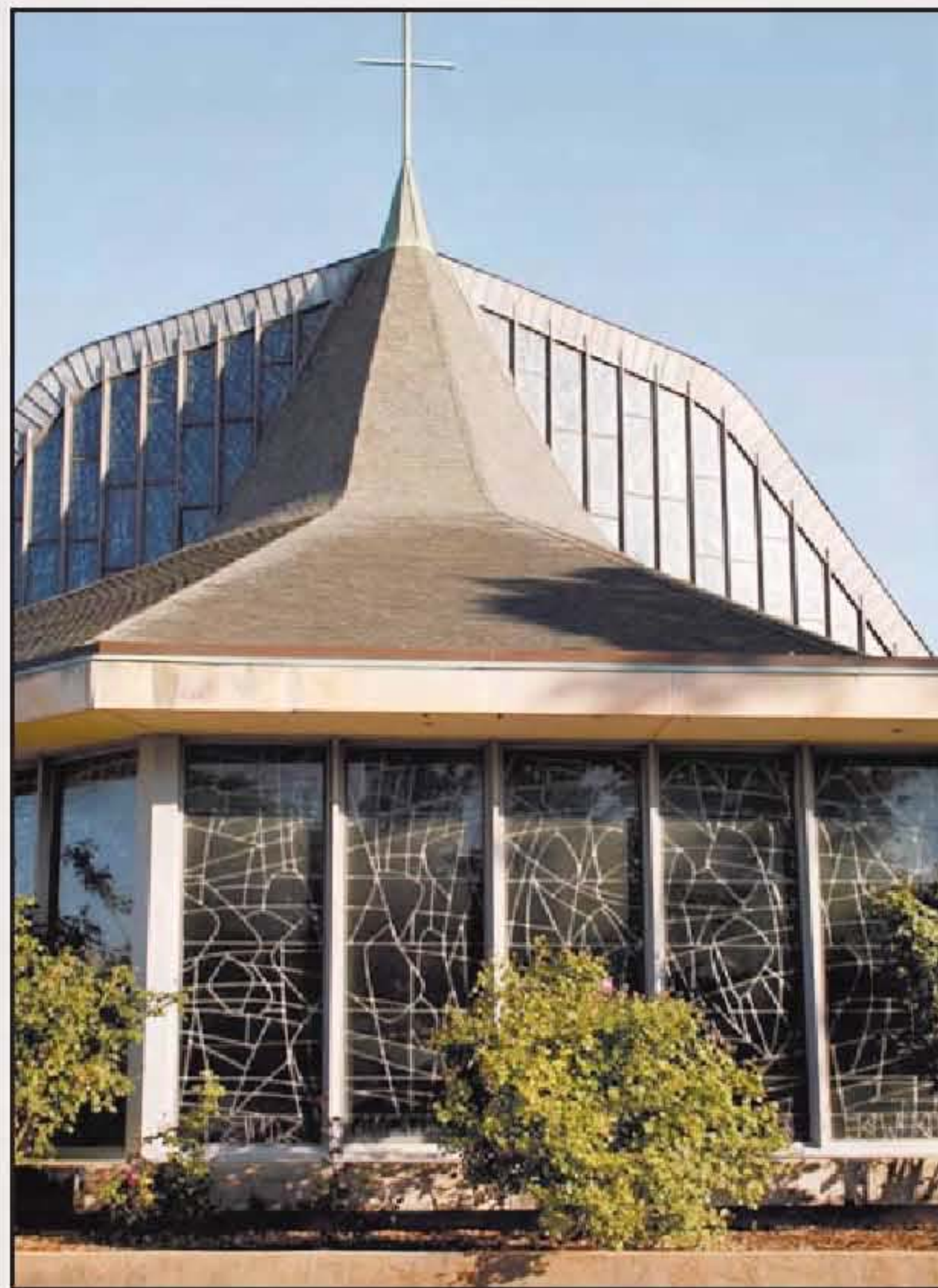
MOST FAMOUS FORMER PARISHIONER: Bishop Michael Sheridan of Colorado Springs, Colo., who sided with Archbishop Raymond Burke in denying communion to those who back abortion rights.

NAMESAKE: Latin for “the body of Christ”

PASTOR: Father Jim Foster

KNOWN FOR: Its school, educating low-income and minority students

OF NOTE: The school’s basement used to have bowling lanes.



SID HASTINGS / POST-DISPATCH

THE CONGREGATION: Last month, students and elderly members came together. It was the 25th anniversary of Father Jim Foster as a priest, and it was the school’s last Mass.

The longtime parishioners shuffled into church early in the morning. The children, all in uniform, filed in soon afterward. Students had worked on dance, song and speech to celebrate the occasion. Staff members brought old friends — pastors from other churches — to surprise Foster. As the ceremony began, middle-school boys started down the long aisles, swirling flags and singing. The choir danced to a popular Christian rock song, waving

arms and stomping feet.

Foster exclaimed his appreciation for the church and the priesthood.

“I have been places and done things I never would have imagined 25 years ago,” he said. Teachers and staffers tried to hold back tears. The congregation members pulled tissues out of purses.

But this is the cycle of life, said one of Foster’s old friends, Father Jack Schuler, pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe. It’s what the ministry is about, he said. “The dying and the rising.”

— *David Hunn*