

# St. Thomas of Aquin

**ADDRESS:** 3949 Iowa Avenue

**FOUNDED:** 1882

**NUMBER OF FAMILIES TODAY:**

350 of Vietnamese descent, about 40 percent of whom live within or near parish boundaries, plus 30 long-term members.

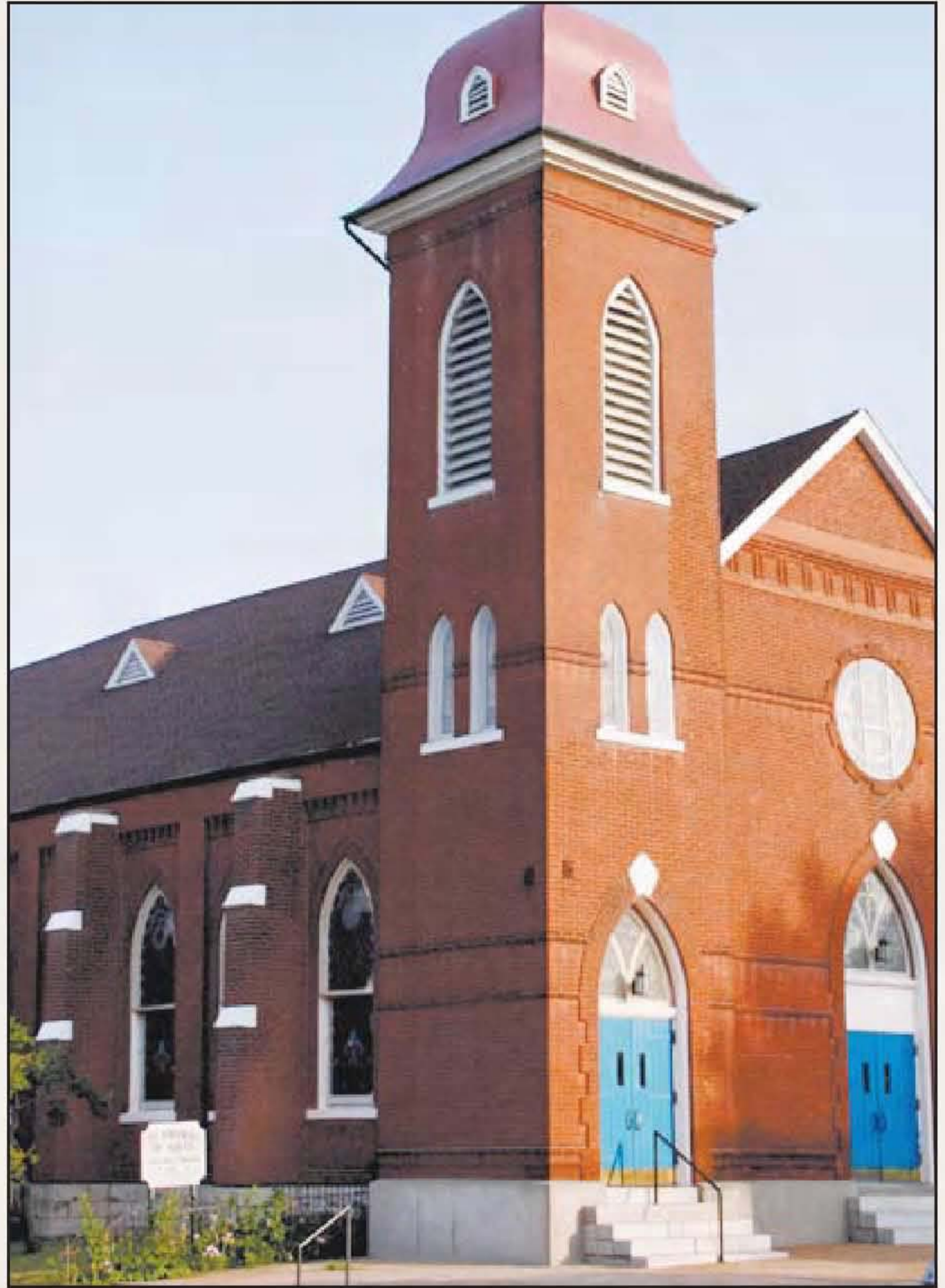
**NUMBER OF FAMILIES AT PEAK:**

More than 1,000 in the early 1960s, when 250 children attended the grade school. Ninety students were enrolled when the school closed in 1989.

**NAMESAKE:** Thomas of Aquin, Italy, the Catholic church's foremost medieval philosopher and theologian. He died in 1274.

**PASTOR:** The Rev. Peter De Ta Vo from the Society of the Divine Word.

**OF NOTE:** The archdiocese in 1997 assigned the church to the local Vietnamese congregation, but it continued some services in English.



**SID HASTINGS** / POST-DISPATCH

**THE CONGREGATION:** The parish's Irish founders wanted to hear sermons in English, rather than the German uttered from the pulpit of St. Anthony's. They appealed to a kinsman, Archbishop Peter Kenrick, who created the parish of St. Thomas. They built the church in 1883 for \$12,000.

The parish prospered and built a distinctive school in 1932 that was trimmed in terra cotta. But migration to the suburbs after World War II steadily reduced the population after the 1970s.

The congregation's Vietnamese families will move to Resurrection of Our Lord, 3900 Meramec Street, and Resurrection parish will be merged into neighboring St. John the Baptist. The parish territory of St. Thomas will be merged back into St. Anthony of Padua, to its southwest.

— Tim O'Neil