

# St. Christopher

**ADDRESS:** 11755 Mehl Road, Florissant

**FOUNDED:** 1967

**NUMBER OF FAMILIES TODAY:** 370

**NUMBER OF FAMILIES AT PEAK:**

900 in late 1960s and early 1970s

**FAMOUS PARISHIONER:** Bob Guelker, a soccer coach who won five titles at St. Louis University

**NAMESAKE:** All that's known of St. Christopher is that he died as a martyr in the third century. The legend of St. Christopher includes a story about a young boy who asked Christopher to carry him across a river. When he lifted the boy to his shoulders, he found that the boy was unbelievably heavy. The child was said to be Christ carrying the weight of the world. In 1969, the Catholic church began to review the veracity of saint histories. Christopher's was among many identified mostly as legend. He was dropped from the universal calendar of saints.

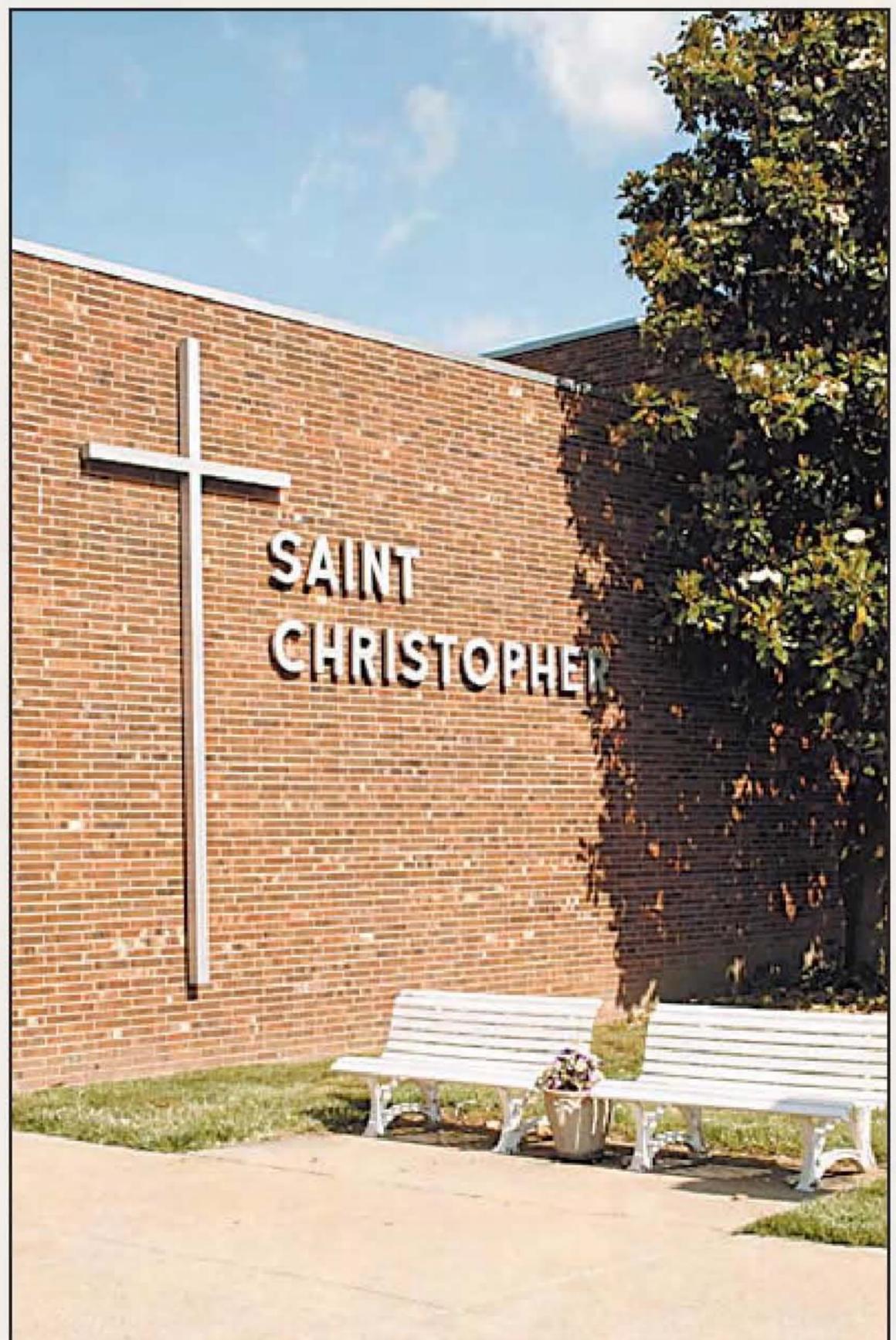
**PASTOR:** The Rev. Thomas J. Schaab

**KNOWN FOR:** The unusual cross behind the altar. One of the arms is about three times longer than the other, extending across the width of the sanctuary.

**OF NOTE:** For more than three decades, the church housed the learning center of the diocesan special-education program for children with learning disabilities, grades one through eight.

**CONGREGATION:** The parish has been home to an ethnically diverse membership, including Filipino, African and Hispanic immigrants. For years, the church's St. Vincent de Paul Society has provided food and money to low-income families. A group of parishioners has spent time traveling to retirement homes to deliver communion. About five years ago, the parish erected a grotto made of bricks that carry the names of deceased family members. Since the announcement of closing, the grotto was disassembled. Now, members are working with the St. Angela Merici parish, where many of St. Christopher's congregation will be relocated, to secure a space for the grotto to be rebuilt.

Other parishioners will be assigned to the new Holy Name of Jesus, which will be in the old St. Jerome Church building.



**SID HASTINGS** / POST-DISPATCH

—Emily Dulcan