

CHAPEL

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Sioux City, Iowa, was also designed by Schulte.

The Bishop Marty Memorial Chapel stands nearly 200 feet high from the ground to the tip of the cross at the peak of the chapel. Inside, the chapel includes a 10,640-square-foot upper chapel and a 9,266-square-foot lower chapel. A crucifix hangs at the focal point of the upper chapel church, surrounded by angels and stained-glass windows.

The interior of the chapel was constructed with stone quarried from St. Meinrad, Ind., where Bishop Marty was the first Abbott.

"The upper chapel has changed very little, except that after Vatican II, we put in a removable altar that could be closer to the people," Panowicz said. "The current (altar) was actually constructed using some original materials from the chapel."

"Just this summer, we took out a couple pews in the front to accommodate a couple of our elder sisters so they can come to mass," she added.

The lower chapel is used primarily by the Benedictine Sisters for daily prayer and liturgies, as well as by students from Mount Marty College.

Students from the college are sometimes married in the upper chapel.

Sister Delores Rush, the chapel sacristan, or person in charge of taking care of the chapel and its contents, often sees college students using both the upper and lower space during the day.

"Our chapel is so peaceful to come in and you know it's always quiet here," she said. "The college students just love it. Very often, when I come in during the day, you'll find them praying in the front pews or together just visiting. I think it's a good place for them if they want to talk things out with each other."

Holding about 600 people, the upper space is used for Sunday



mass and prayer, holidays and special events. Between 200-300 people, both from the monastery and the community, gather for Sunday mass every week, Panowicz said.

While the chapel remains in good shape, Rush said there is constant maintenance done on

the structure. On a regular basis, the exterior stone and roof is updated. Just this year, the roof leaked and some interior stone was replaced because of water damage.

"You don't have the deterioration you might have in a wood building," Panowicz said. "But

still, you need to take care of the stone, as well as the terrazzo floors."

Rush and other volunteers shine the pews, wash the windows and provide weekly maintenance. The floors are burnished every two weeks and waxed twice a year. Large



Above: Sister Delores Rush, the Bishop Marty Memorial Chapel sacristan, lights candles at the front of the chapel. Rush, who has been part of the monastery since 1951, oversees the chapel and its contents. Left: This photograph was taken in 1950 at the Bishop Marty Memorial Chapel consecration mass. The consecration mass was a special dedication to celebrate the finished chapel.

machines are used to propel janitors high enough to clean the walls, angels and light fixtures.

"We people who clean weekly have it easier than (the janitors) do," Rush said with a laugh.

While the high ceilings may be a challenge for cleaning duties, they are certainly appreciated during mass, she said.

"One of the striking things about the chapel is just the soaring ceilings, the architecture, Peak added. "That is very distinctive about the chapel: the gothic architecture. ... When you fill it with sound, it's just gorgeous."

Holidays and jubilee celebrations are quite an experience in the chapel, too.

"I think our Christmas celebrations are very beautiful because the music is very beautiful, and on Christmas Eve we carry candles in," Rush said.

The chapel was built for music, both instrumental and vocals, Panowicz added.

Rush, who joined the Sacred Heart Monastery in 1951, has used the chapel since it was

built. In addition to constant maintenance, she has seen the chapel go through some technological advances.

"It wasn't air conditioned then. It was very hot," Rush said. "We were dressed as the nuns used to dress, and it made it very warm. Somehow, you didn't mind because you were together as a group."

While the Bishop Marty Memorial Chapel is visually appealing, the Benedictine Sisters made it clear that the space is important to them because of what happens there. The sisters see the chapel as a symbol of what they stand for.

"Hopefully it gives people some sense of the sacred, whatever their tradition might be," Panowicz said. "Here is a place where people come to pray individually, to pray with each other."

Peak added, "I'd say it speaks very strongly of our commitment to witness the presence of God in this place, in this city. You don't build a structure like that if you're not committed to where you're at."

Neb. Court Supports Rejection Of Medicaid Policy

BY TIMBERLY ROSS
Associated Press Writer

OMAHA, Neb. — The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services has no power to withhold Medicaid coverage under a welfare-to-work program, the state Supreme Court said in a ruling released Friday.

"If the Legislature had intended Medicaid to be removed as a sanction for noncompliance, there was no reason not to have stated so" in the statute, the high court wrote in its decision.

HHS had appealed a decision by Lancaster County District Judge Karen Flowers dismissing the state policy that tied Medicaid coverage for poor families to weekly work requirements.

Flowers' 2009 ruling said HHS exceeded its authority when approving the work requirement, saying it was a matter for lawmakers to decide.

Her decision stemmed from a class-action lawsuit filed by the Nebraska Applesseed Center for Law in the Public Interest on behalf of more than 400 impoverished parents. Plaintiffs argued the state's Welfare Reform Act allows only cash assistance to be taken away as a penalty for violating the terms of Employment First. HHS may not impose a stricter policy by also tying the Medicaid coverage to the work requirement, they argued.

But in HHS' appeal, attorney Matthew Dunning said state statute grants the department the authority to set rules for public programs and that the Welfare Reform Act does not limit that power.

The Supreme Court rejected that argument, saying: "We will not ignore the meaning of the statutes relevant to this case simply because DHHS has passed a regulation and the Legislature has since failed to amend its law to correct DHHS' error."

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