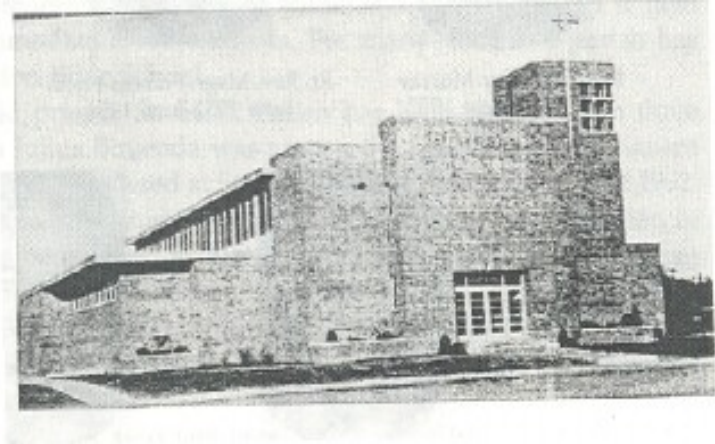


St Mark Parish History From St Mark Parish records.



Church I



First Parish Building 1943

The first pastor, Fr. Timothy Murray (1942 - 1952) had a vision: that church should embrace a person's life from womb to tomb. Fr. Murray held the first mass at the U.S.O. Building (now known as the Fitzgerald Recreation Building). By fall 1942, masses were held in the unfinished hardware building on Nine Mile Road.

On Palm Sunday 1943, the parishioners gathered in the new St. Mark Church on Ryan Road (a 4000 sq. ft. cinderblock building). Two masses were held each Sunday. By that fall, two classrooms opened in the basement of the church under the direction of Sister Theodora and Sister Teresita, of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

The first school building was completed in 1945, despite construction delays, quite common during the war years.

Four more Sisters of St. Joseph were added to the staff. The sisters lived in a rented house on Cunningham Street.

Fr. Murray lived in Jack Korte's home on LeFever Street until January 1948 when the rectory on Ryan Road was built. Since this area was quite rural, there were no paved streets or sidewalks. During spring thaws, the roads often became impassable. On one visit by Cardinal Mooney and other dignitaries, their vehicle became stuck in the street forcing everyone to walk through mud and weeds to reach the rectory.

In 1952 Fr. Francis Flynn (1952 - 1954) began his first pastorate at St. Mark following a teaching career at Sacred Heart Seminary. During this time the convent was built on Bart Avenue to house the Sisters of St. Joseph. The convent was a two story building with 12 bedrooms upstairs.

Fr. Robert Mulcahy (1954 - 1959) assumed pastor duties and inherited a parish that was outgrowing its present buildings. Due to a large influx of families, Fr. Mulcahy spearheaded a campaign to construct a new church building and to expand the school. The new church (9500 sq. ft. with a seating capacity of 1250) opened Palm Sunday, 1956 to standing room only worshippers.

In 1957, Fr. Mulcahy celebrated the 25th jubilee of his ordination in the new church.

Fr. Joseph Bohr (1959 - 1961) followed Fr. Mulcahy as pastor. During his short stay, the rectory was expanded to include six bedrooms and an office addition.

Fr. Maurice Veryser (1961 - 1970) became pastor in 1961.

Additional property was acquired, parking lots were added, and sixteen new classrooms (as well as a playground) were added to the school complex. In 1965, an addition was added to the convent building. The parish had outgrown the church (today's gym) and plans for the current church began.

In August 1969, Cardinal John Dearden dedicated the present church (15,000 sq. ft. with a seating capacity of 1500 and dome height of 42 ft). The building is a beautiful mixture of natural light oak and gray concrete. The church seating is in the round (a difficult concept to accept at that time) creating an open, all-inclusive feeling, which affords a good view of the altar from all seats.

Fr. Veryser retired in 1970 and St. Mark welcomed Fr. J. Walter Stanievich (1970 - 1991) as new pastor. In 1971, we celebrated Fr. Stans silver anniversary of priesthood. That same year, St. Mark School closed and Fr. Stan, in cooperation with the public school system, initiated an effective release time program so our children could continue their religious education. The marble statue of St. Mark was blessed and dedicated on December 1, 1976. Long-time parishioner, Julius Binienda was ordained as Permanent Deacon on June 14, 1980.

(His was the first class of deacons to be ordained in the Archdiocese of Detroit.)

Over the next few years the buildings began to be used to serve the community in new ways. In 1980, the parish opened a Clothes Closet which continues to help the less fortunate. The convent became the home of the Macomb County Youth Interim Facility. The School has been utilized by Stroh's, JOA job placement. Great Lakes Academy for Dental Hygienists training, Warren-Center Line Special Education, FEMA, AA, Recovery, Spirit of Love, Senior Citizens Club, and Bingo. The parish extended community outreach by beginning a Food Pantry, Funeral Luncheon Program, Emergency Transportation, "Sharing the Harvest" Project, and in 1993 began hosting MCREST, the Macomb County Rotating Emergency Shelter Team.

In October 1990, Deacon George Posavetz began his ministry as Permanent Deacon and continues to serve today. In 1991, Fr. Stan retired and passed on the leadership to:

Fr. Robert Ruedisueli.

Deacon Julius continued to serve our parish until his death in June 1992. In August 1992 Deacon Frank Alex joined Deacon George in parish ministry until his move to the Diocese of Saginaw in 1996.

The 1990's marked a new phase in the development of St. Mark Parish. Fr. Ruedisueli placed special focus on liturgy and lay ministry.

He formed a Festival of Ministries which began and/or expanded ministerial areas: Pastoral Care of the Sick, Marriage Preparation, Liturgy Planning Team, Bereavement, and the Christian Formation Program which includes: Infant Baptism Catechesis, Religious Education, Youth Ministry, Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA), and Adult Formation.

1992 marked a year of celebration, as St. Mark Parish commemorated its 50th Anniversary. A special highlight of that year was the consecration of the first permanent altar by Archbishop Adam Maida on June 28.

The parish Mission Statement, which was formally proclaimed on Pentecost Sunday, May 30, 1993, acknowledges and reflects all the work that has gone before and will shape the future of the parish for years to come.

Changes continued throughout the 1990's. By June of 1995, the rectory and convent were sold to Fitzgerald School District. The parish house on Kendall was purchased, and renovation of classrooms to form the new Parish Center began. By 1998, the renovations continued with the Library and conversion of two classrooms into a large meeting room. We closed the decade with the remodeling of Rev. J. Walter Stanievich Hall.

The Parish of St. Mark moved into the year 2000 with enthusiasm and continues through 2002. As Christians of all ages, we are called to a continuing growth in Faith through classes, celebration of the sacraments, communal worship, and service to others.

60 years ago, the seed of Fr. Murray's vision, that church should embrace a person's life from womb to tomb, was planted at St. Mark Parish.

Our parish history reflects how that seed has grown into a living, thriving faith community that will continue to flourish throughout the 21st Century.

Complete renovation of the remaining church building was complete in 2006 and every facet of our parish life is under one roof, offices~worship space~new gathering space~outreach.

Dedication Mass 10/1/06

STATUE OF ST. MARK

On July 31, 1962 the ship, S.S. Montrose, carrying the white Carrara marble statues of St. Mark, St. Peter and St. John, collided with a barge and sank in the Detroit River under the Ambassador Bridge. The cargo was salvaged, stored and forgotten in the Detroit Harbormaster's warehouse until 1976 when the parish was contacted and offered the St. Mark statue. By December 1, 1976 the 9 ton statue became a permanent fixture of our Parish.