

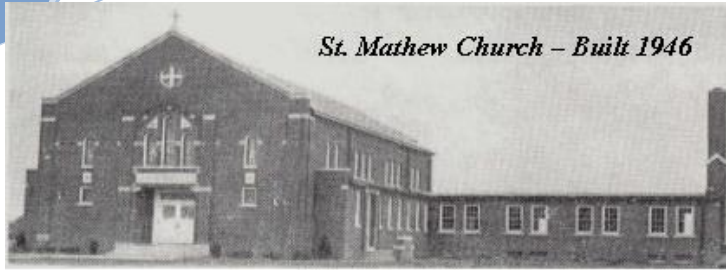


St Matthews Church

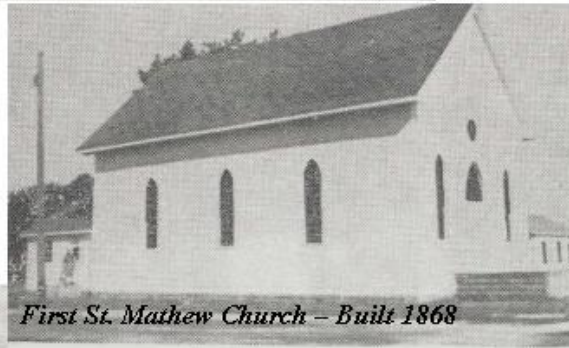
A Historical View

St Matthews church has a rich history. This document attempts to document the significant past events and contributions over the past 140 years in the church history.

Noel
4/4/2008



*Click 1868 Church for
Church History*



In commemoration of the St Matthews Parish 140th year anniversary.



The Most Reverend
STEPHEN S. WOZNICKI, D.D.
Bishop of Saginaw

DIocese OF SAGINAW
CHANCERY
124 N. HAMILTON STREET
SAGINAW, MICHIGAN

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

April 22, 1968

Very Rev. James F. Gavit
St. Matthew Church
Zilwaukee, Michigan

Dear Parishioners of St. Matthew Parish:

I take this opportunity to join with you on the joyful occasion of the dedication of your new church and also the celebration of the Centennial of St. Matthew Parish. I am indeed happy to see such a beautiful House of God in your parish and to note the tremendous progress that you people have made, especially within the last twenty years.

The history of St. Matthew's is indeed a long one. The original St. Matthew's Church was one of the oldest in the Saginaw Valley. When it was founded in 1868 it was the fourth Catholic church to be built in this area. Its early history was connected with the thriving lumber industry of the Saginaw River territory. It also had its share of difficult years but now it is a parish that will become one of the larger ones of our diocese as the population increases every year.

It is well for all of us to recall the many sacrifices made by your forefathers in establishing the parish of St. Matthew's. We know that all of you are indeed proud of the past achievements of the former parishioners and we congratulate you on the sacrifices you have made in building this new church in your parish.

May God grant all of you His abundant blessings and the graces you will need to carry on the work of bringing the Good News of Salvation to the people of this area.

Cordially yours in Christ,

+ *Stephen A. Hoznicki*
Bishop of Saginaw

FOURTH OLDEST CHURCH IN SAGINAW VALLEY

The beginning of Catholicity in the Saginaw Valley actually began with the missionary activity of such priests as Father Martin Kundig, Father L. Kilroy, Father Peter Kindekens, Father Louis Monaghan and others who came to the area from Flint between the years 1829 and 1850. However, nothing was done by way of settlement at Zilwaukee until the year 1847 when two brothers, Daniel and Solomon Johnson, came from the East and purchased from the U.S. Government the land along the shores of the Saginaw River at Zilwaukee.

The name "Zilwaukee" intrigues many who hear it. The probable explanation of its origin is that the founders of the community, the Johnson brothers, coined the name to sound like Milwaukee in hopes of attracting the numerous German immigrants to the settlement on the Saginaw River. Soon after the Johnson brothers came to the area they built their saw mill, dock, warehouse, boarding house and several dwellings. It was probably shortly after its founding as a lumber community, that Catholicity began in the area. In the year 1850 Father Joseph Kindekens visited Bay City and began St. Joseph's Church. This was the first church in the Saginaw Valley. There is no evidence that Father Kindekens administered to the residents of Zilwaukee. The priest made monthly visits from Flint to the mission Church in Bay City until the year 1852 when Bishop Peter P. Lefevre of Detroit sent Father Henry J. H. Soffers-Schutjes to succeed him. From 1852 until 1855 Father Schutjes resided in Saginaw City and cared for the Bay City Parish. Thus Father Schutjes became the first resident priest of the Saginaw Valley. In the back of his first Baptismal book, Father notes that during the years 1850-1862, his parish embraced Saginaw, Bay, Tuscola, Huron, and "Middleland" Counties.

The first resident of Zilwaukee to be baptized by Father Schutjes at St. Joseph's Church, Bay City, was Thomas Molony, son of Michael Molony and Bridget Riley. The boy was born on Dec. 17, 1853 and baptized Dec. 25 of the same year. The first marriage recorded at St. Joseph Parish of Zilwaukee residents was that of John Cragg and Dena Hosp.

It would seem that Father Schutjes must have often visited Zilwaukee by boat during these early years. It is estimated that in 1858 there were about 200 people located here, all of them connected with the lumbering industry. Slowly Zilwaukee grew in size and ten years later the settlement numbered about 500 people.



FIRST ST. MATTHEW'S CHURCH

The history of St. Matthew's Church begins with Father Reinurus J. Van Der Heyden. This dedicated priest was born in Holland and came to the Diocese of Detroit after his ordination. He was sent by Bishop Lefevre into the Saginaw area sometime in 1861. In 1862, Father Van Der Heyden organized St. Andrew's Parish, Saginaw, and built its first Church in 1865. With the organization of St. Andrew's Parish, the Zilwaukee territory was taken away from the charge of Father Schurjes and made the responsibility of Father Van Der Heyden.

On January 9, 1867, Father Van Der Heyden purchased a parcel of land on the northwest corner of Westervelt and Green Streets in Zilwaukee, which would serve as the site for a new Church to be dedicated to St. Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist. This land was purchased from Patrick and Bridget Clark. As soon as spring came the residents began to build their first Church. Lumber and sash were donated by the lumber mills along the river. The labor was also donated. Some of the men who toiled so hard to build this frame building were: Pat Carey, John H. Doyle, Alfred and Eleazim Bourdow, Andrew and Oliver Meriva, Jessie LaCount, Peter Cassidy, Joseph Osier, Trefele Dumont, Ezechiell Griffore and Louis Bocaw. Sometime during the year 1868, the 34' x 52' Church with its home-made Altar and pews was completed.

We know that Father Van Der Heyden said the first Mass in the new Church sometime in 1868. The exact date it was completed, when it was blessed, who its first committee men were are items that have been lost because of the lack of clear records during these early years of its history.

During the years following the completion of the new Church, the population of Zilwaukee grew steadily. One factor that aided in its growth was the building of the Jackson, Lansing and Saginaw Railroad in 1868 directly through the village on its last leg from Chicago to West Bay City. With the building of the railroad the community possessed passenger and freight service to all parts of the United States. The products of its saw mills and salt mine could be sent by rail to all corners of the world.



LUMBERING ERA

The lumber industry grew rapidly. Saw mills sprang up on both sides of the Saginaw River at Zilwaukee. In 1858 there were three: Johnson's (John Drake), B. F. Fisher, and J. A. Westervelt. These were followed by Whitney & Batchelor; Rust, Eaton & Co.; E. F. Gould; Bliss, Brown & Co.; C. L. Grant & Co.; all on the West side of the river. On the East side of the river the following mills were located: Saginaw Lumber & Salt Co.; Melchers & Nerreter; and S. W. Tyler & Co. These mills were the mainstay of the community. In 1874, for example, the saw mill of Wellington R. Burt & Co. employed 230 men who lived in cottages owned by the Company. There was also a Company school house where the children attended classes for seven months of the year. This settlement also possessed in the words of one writer, "a fine public library."

MISSION OF SACRED HEART

In the year 1876 the French and Irish Mission of Zilwaukee was attached to Sacred Heart Parish, Saginaw. From that year until 1885, when Zilwaukee was taken away from Sacred Heart Parish, the saintly Father Reis ministered to the spiritual cares of the people of Zilwaukee. Beside his own parish of Sacred Heart, Saginaw, Father Reis cared for the missions of Zilwaukee, Carrollton, Hermansau, Bridgeport, Bloomfield (near Reese), and Birch Run. In 1877 Father Reis made a report to the Detroit Chancery of the mission at Zilwaukee. It is noted that eleven of the 91 children baptized by Father Reis in that year were from Zilwaukee. In 1883 a class of thirty Zilwaukee residents was confirmed by Bishop Richter. During this period the township of Zilwaukee had a population of 1,630 in four different settlements. These settlements and their population in the year 1881 were: Zilwaukee, 915; Melbourne, 315; New York Works, 145; and Bliss Mill, 174. The Township outside these communities counted 81 persons. The lumbering industry reached its peak in the year 1882, when Saginaw River mills cut over a billion feet of lumber. From that year the slow deadly decline in lumber production began to take its toll on such communities as Zilwaukee. It is stated that within a half century the vast forests of lower Michigan were destroyed. By the year 1893 the scarcity of lumber in Michigan made it necessary for lumber to be brought in from Canada on barges to the Saginaw River mills. It was the last struggle to keep alive the once prosperous business.

In the year 1885, St. Matthew's was again attached to the parish of St. Joseph's, Bay City. On July 4, 1885, twenty-one Zilwaukee children received their first communion from the hand of Father J. M. Thibodeau, Pastor of St. Joseph, Bay City. About this time another event of importance took place for Zilwaukee and that was the completion of the Toledo, Saginaw and Mackinaw Railroad through the village on its way to West Bay City. In 1893 this railroad, as it is today, became the Grand Trunk Railroad.

RETURNED TO ST. ANDREW'S

After two years, St. Matthew's Mission Church was returned to the charge of Father Van Der Heyden at St. Andrew's, Saginaw. At this time Father Joseph Benning came from Grand Rapids and lived at St. Andrew's Rectory in Saginaw. He was ordered to found two new parishes, one at Carrollton and another south of Court Street in Saginaw. During this time Father Benning had charge of St. Matthew's Mission in Zilwaukee. When the Church in Carrollton was about half finished, Father Benning retired. His place was taken by Father Edward C. Lefevre who also cared for the residents of Zilwaukee.

CARROLLTON CHAPTER

On November 18, 1888, Bishop Richter blessed the new Church of St. John the Baptist at Carrollton. This begins the "Carrollton Chapter" in the history of St. Matthew's. The following year Father John Baptiste Dupuis became the first resident Pastor of Carrollton. He took up residence in a newly constructed rectory. During his years as Pastor of St. John's, Carrollton, Father Dupuis founded Holy Family Church in Saginaw. The first marriage entry in the Carrollton register is that of Henry Vanase and Adeline Lefebvre, both of Zilwaukee, who were married on February 11, 1889. Bishop Richter confirmed at St. John's Church children from both parishes at Carrollton and Zilwaukee in the years 1889, 1892, 1894 and 1896.

Father Dupuis, after his six year stay, was succeeded by Father Michael J. Gallagher (later Bishop of Detroit), who attended to the needs of both parishes from December 1, 1895 until June 1, 1896.

Father Gallagher was followed by Father A. Fournier, who served as pastor of both places until 1898. During his pastorate, Father Fournier conducted a census of the Kochville section of his parish in 1897 which showed a Catholic population of 17 families. He lists their names as: Theodore and Zoe Martin, Frand and Elizabeth Perry, William and Delina Keller, John and Ellen Martin, John and Adele Plowdrey, Alfred and Adeline Bourdow, Patrick McGuire, David and Emily Walters, Charles Fordney, Eliza Friffore, Catherine Brandle, William and Mary Duleck, Josephine Davis, John and Eliza Corbett, Alfred and Ellen Griffore, Bridget Hickey, and Frank and Lucy Hill.

The whole of Kochville Township is located within the territory of St. Matthew's Parish. It might be well to note the Catholic History of this Township. The name comes from one of its original settlers, Frederic Charles Koch, who came from Germany. He died in 1862. At that time the area was mostly woods which slowly gave way to farms. As the lumber industry died along the Saginaw River, many of the people purchased land in this Township and became farmers. In the year 1880 the Township boasted a population of 1,768 persons. Very few of these were Catholic although there was a group of Catholics in the Eastern end of the Township, known then as "Hard-scrabble" (now the North Michigan, Liberty Road area). These Catholics attended Church at Zilwaukee and later at Carrollton.

ST. MATTHEW'S CARES FOR CARROLLTON

On February 6, 1898 fire destroyed St. John's Church in Carrollton. The congregation, since they were without a Church, attended Mass at St. Matthew's, which for the first time had two Masses on Sundays and Holy Days. The care of the Mission was given to Father Napoleon Poulin and then to Father Edward H. Racette of Holy Family Church, Saginaw. Records of Sacraments administered during this period are kept in Holy Family's archives. It was not until 1913 that the Church of St. John could be rebuilt at Carrollton. During this period of time the Assistants stationed at Holy Family cared for the Mission Church of St. Matthew's. Father Racette was transferred to St. Michael Church, Pinconning, in 1905 and he was succeeded by Father Louis M. Prudhomme. While he was Pastor at Holy Family, a number of his Assistants cared for the Mission of St. Matthew's: Father John Blain from 1905-1906; Father John A. Mulvey (former pastor of St. Boniface Parish, Bay City) from 1906 to 1907; Father Frederick Williams from 1907 to 1908; and Father Joseph V. Barrette from 1908 to 1910. Then Father George O. Dequoy was given the task of building a new Church at Carrollton. He cared for the parishioners at St. Matthew's from December of 1910 until September of 1911. It is noted that Bishop Schrembs, Bishop of Cleveland, confirmed 90 children at St. Matthew's on June 3, 1911. Bishop Schrembs had formerly served in St. Mary's Parish, Bay City, from 1889 until 1900. Father Dequoy lived at St. Mary's Rectory, Saginaw, while caring for the people of Carrollton and Zilwaukee. He was transferred before he could rebuild a new Church in Carrollton. Father Prudhomme, Pastor of Holy Family Parish, Saginaw finally succeeded in finishing the new Church at Carrollton in 1913. At this time, Father Joseph V. Barrette was transferred from Assistant at Holy Family to that of Pastor of St. John's, Carrollton, and St. Matthew's, Zilwaukee.

With the appointment of Father Barrette to Carrollton, St. Matthew's again knew a regular Sunday Mass. It is noted that during the declining years of the lumber industry Mass was said only occasionally at Zilwaukee. During the period from 1882 until 1913 Zilwaukee settled down to a quiet village. Many residents were forced to move because of the lack of work. The settlements at Melbourne, the New York Works, and the Bliss Mill slowly disappeared as their mills were dismantled or burned. The only community to survive was Zilwaukee where its men sought employment in the shops of Saginaw or turned to market gardening. While Father Barrette was Pastor of St. John's Parish in Carrollton, Mass was said every

Sunday and Holy Day and also on Most Wednesdays during the week. It is noted that regular religion classes were held after Mass for the children.

During these and succeeding years many improvements were made to the old Church. The inside of the Church was finished with sheeting and later tinned. The old wood post foundations were replaced with cement blocks and a cement porch was added. A basement furnace room was dug and the sacristy enlarged. The interior was decorated and statues added until gradually St. Matthew's Church was changed from its original rough appearance to a fine temple of Divine Worship.

On August 15, 1915, Father George Lavallee succeeded Father Barrette, who was transferred to St. Anne Parish, Linwood. Father Lavallee served both parishes for ten years. In 1917, Bishop Gallagher returned to his first pastorate and administered the Sacrament of Confirmation to the children from Carrollton and Zilwaukee.

CONSUMERS POWER PLANT

During Father Lavallee's tenure new life came to Zilwaukee in the form of the new Consumers Power Company's plant which was built on the West side of the Saginaw River. It opened in March of 1924 with transmission lines carrying 140,000 volts of electricity to the substation from dams on the Au Sable River. At the Zilwaukee Plant the power was stepped down for distribution to Saginaw, Bay City, Flint and other cities. This new generating plant is capable of generating 200,000 horsepower and at one time it employed 150 men, many of them living in Zilwaukee. It was the main source of electricity for the company's lines serving the greater part of lower Michigan excluding Detroit. The Plant is still in operation although most of the electrical power used by Consumers Power Company is now served by their plant in Essexville.

On August 15, 1925, Father Alfred J. Camirand succeeded Father Lavallee as Pastor of Carrollton and Zilwaukee. He immediately began a house-to-house visitation of his Parish. He notes that of December of 1925 there were only 57 pew-holders in St. Matthew's Church. According to his records the Zilwaukee people gave on January 3, 1926 the sum of \$12.27.

DEPRESSION YEARS

Father Camirand died of a heart attack in 1931 and was succeeded by Father Eugene A. McCarthy on September 10, 1931. During his pastorate St. Matthew's suffered trying times. The country was in the midst of the great depression and the financial condition of the people was indeed terrible. Many of the old-timers recall that it was through the kindness of Father McCarthy that the people of this poor Parish held on and persevered. The financial situation became so dire that Bishop Pinten ordered St. Matthew's Church to be closed in July of 1932. The people were so upset with the closing of their House of God that they formed a delegation and went to Bishop Pinten and urged that the Church be reopened. The Bishop acceded to their request and the Church was reopened after being closed for only six weeks. During this time Father McCarthy formed the Ladies' Altar Society and the present Holy Name Society.

Father McCarthy was succeeded at Carrollton and Zilwaukee by Father Cornelius A. Bates who took over as Pastor on July 24, 1942. During his stay the celebration of two Masses on Sundays and Holy Days began with the help of the Franciscan Father from St. Leonard's Friary in Saginaw. Under his supervision a great deal of work was done on the old Church. The interior was redecorated, a vestibule was added to the front of the Church along with a steeple and belfry. Father Bates resigned on July 7, 1944 and was succeeded by Father R. Emmet Fitzpatrick.



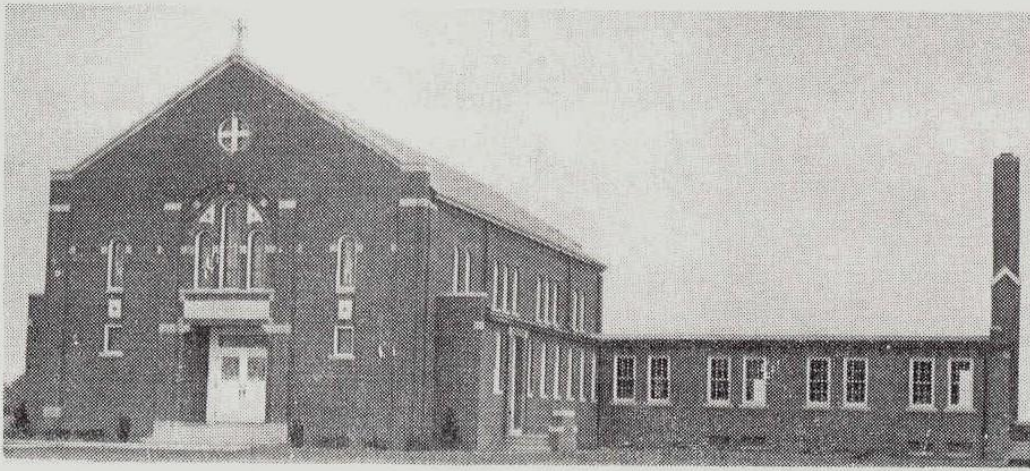
FATHER R. EMMET FITZPATRICK

CHURCH DESTROYED AND REBUILT

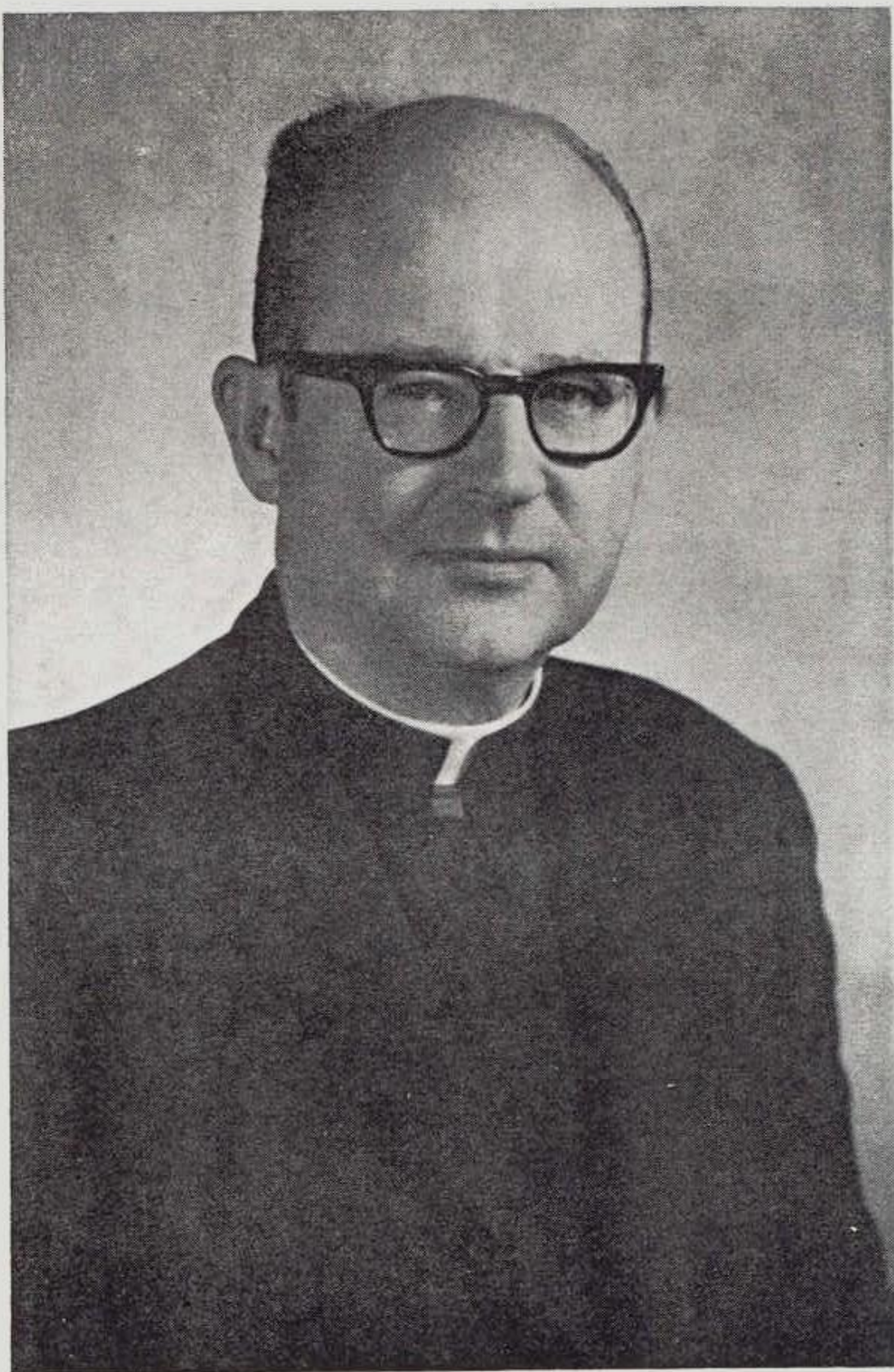
Five months after Father Fitzpatrick's appointment as Pastor of Carrollton and Zilwaukee, disaster struck St. Matthew's Church. On the night of December 3, 1944, fire broke out in the furnace room and quickly destroyed the building made out of the rough-hewn logs that had been erected in 1868. Within five hours the Church was nothing but a pile of ashes. The Blessed Sacrament was saved by some of the Parishioners who quickly gathered at the first alarm. It would be impossible to describe the feelings of the people of Zilwaukee as they watched their beloved Church burn. However, it was from the sparks of this disaster that a resurgence of parish spirit was brought about. Due to the leadership of Father Fitzpatrick the Parish of St. Matthew's, that had known so many sad years of history after its prosperous beginning, rose anew to build another Church. During the time when they were without a building to have their liturgy, Mass was celebrated in the auditorium of the Zilwaukee Public School. It was decided by Father Fitzpatrick that the old site was not adequate to contain a parish plant so two acres of land were purchased on January 25, 1945 at the West end of Cornell Street. Donaldson & Meier, Architects from Detroit, were engaged to draw plans for a new Church. The general contract was let to Engelhardt Construction Company, Bay City. The Church was finished and blessed by Bishop Murphy on June 16, 1946. Much of the work that went into the Church was donated by parishioners. The pews for the Church were taken from the old basement Church at Sacred Heart Parish, Saginaw. These were refinished by the volunteer labor of the parishioners. The communion rail, light fixtures, sanctuary lamps and baptistry gates were of hand-wrought iron — the work of parishioners of the Parish. Along side and attached to the Church a social hall and kitchen were also built. The total cost of the building was only \$90,000.00 due to the large amount of donated labor and materials.

During the pastorate of Father Fitzpatrick regular instruction classes were begun for the public school students from both Zilwaukee and Carrollton. He engaged two Dominican Sisters to attend to the instructions. The children from Zilwaukee were transported to Carrollton for their weekly religion classes by bus. The older parishioners will remember the Assistants of Father Fitzpatrick's who often served at Zilwaukee. The first was Father Keogh who was his Assistant in 1945. Father Leo F. Skornia (presently Pastor of St. Mary's Parish, St. Charles) served in this capacity from February 5, 1946, until March 8, 1947. He was followed by Father Joseph A. Castanier (presently Pastor of St. Elizabeth Parish, Reese), who remained until March 30, 1949.

A Rectory was begun by Father Fitzpatrick on May 22, 1948 with Frederick C. Wigen, Architect of Saginaw, drawing the plans. No contractor was engaged to build the Rectory. The parishioners did most of the work with Father Fitzpatrick purchasing the materials from where ever he could obtain the best prices. The total cost of the Rectory was \$30,000.00.



ST. MATTHEW'S CHURCH



MONSIGNOR EUGENE A. FORBES

FIRST RESIDENT PASTOR

On March 29, 1949, Bishop Murphy established St. Matthew's as a territorial parish. After 61 years this fourth Church to be built in the Saginaw Valley was no longer just a Mission Church dependent upon the services of priests from other parishes. It finally became a parish of its own right.

The territory of the new parish consisted of all of Zilwaukee Township, all of Kochville Township and that part of Carrollton Township enclosed by Schust Road, North Michigan Road, Tittabawassee Road, and Venoy Road. Father Eugene A. Forbes (presently Pastor of St. Mary's Cathedral, Saginaw) was appointed administrator of the parish and later was made its first residential pastor by Bishop Stephen S. Woznicki on September 4, 1950. After a short stay when he lived with Father Fitzpatrick at Carrollton, Father Forbes was able to move into the Rectory. In 1949 he began to bus the children from Kochville into St. Matthew's for religious instruction.

Under the direction of Father Forbes the Parish of St. Matthew's took on new spiritual life. He visited every home in his parish and was instrumental in getting many lax Catholics back to the Sacraments and in convalidating many marriages. During his tenure from 1949 until his transfer in 1962 the Parish grew from 170 families to some 400 families.

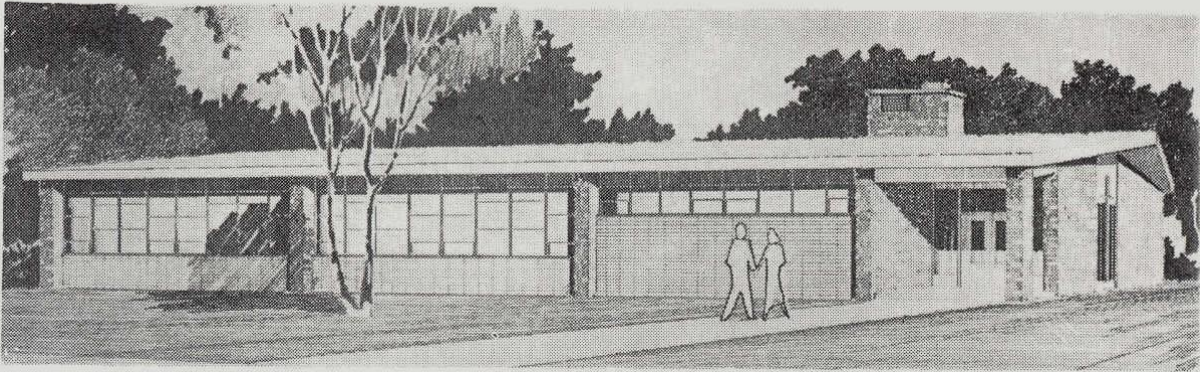
PARISH HALL BUILT

While Father Forbes was Pastor a new Parish Hall was built at a cost of \$100,000.00. It is furnished with a complete kitchen and is capable of serving up to 250 people for dinners. The Hall was opened with the serving of a Turkey Dinner and Festival on June 11, 1958.

During the pastorate of Father Forbes the Mission Sisters began to take charge of the religion instruction of the public school students. Sisters Estelle and Joseph cared for the children from Carrollton and Zilwaukee. They were able to offer instruction to all the public school children from the Parish after school and on Saturday forenoon. These Sisters have continued to the present time to care for the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine program at St. Matthew's Parish.

The people of St. Matthew's rejoiced on December 7, 1958 with their Pastor when he was invested as a Domestic Prelate. He was so honored by the late Pope Pius XII with the title of Right Reverend Monsignor. Monsignor Forbes all during his 13 years of serving St. Matthew's, also worked in the Chancery as Chancellor of the Diocese.

During this period many improvements, such as the stoning of the Church parking lot and the addition of sidewalks around the parking lot and the upkeep of all the parish buildings were taken care of by Monsignor Forbes. He was appointed as Pastor of St. Mary's Cathedral, Saginaw and was succeeded by Father James F. Gavit on September 4, 1962.



PARISH HALL



FATHER JAMES F. GAVIT

NEW CHURCH PLANNED

Shortly after Father Gavit became Pastor a Sacrificial Offertory Campaign was begun. Its aim was to try and get all parishioners to give their fair share towards supporting their Parish through their regular Sunday contributions. Due to the success of this campaign all other money raising projects were discontinued. During the summer of 1963 the parish hall was divided to add two permanent classrooms for religious instruction. The new classrooms were needed due to the large increase in the number of students.

In the fall of 1963 there were 331 students enrolled in the CCD classes from grades one through eight with fifty-one enrolled in the high school religion class. Although these two new classrooms were built there still was room in the Parish Hall to serve up to 225 people.

In the spring of 1964 a special committee was formed to investigate the need for a new larger Church. Morris & Wesolek, Architects from Bay City, were hired to draw plans for the new Church. During the year a meeting of all parishioners was held to discuss the need for more religion classrooms and the over-crowded condition of the present Church. It was decided that by building a new Church that would seat some 700 or so the old Church building could be converted into classrooms for religious instruction classes. The Architects discussed with the Pastor and parishioners the type of Church that should be built in light of the recent Decree of the II Vatican Council concerning the Liturgy and the introduction of English into the Mass and the fact that Mass was permitted with the priest saying the Mass facing the people. In light of these changes it was decided to build a Church to seat 750 people that would be so designed as to keep all the people close to the Altar. The final plans were approved and let for bids. On May 5, 1966 the bids were opened and the general contract was awarded to Gerace Construction Company of Midland for a cost of \$274,000; the mechanical contract was let to Kaufmann Plumbing and Heating of Saginaw for a cost of \$65,406; the electrical contract was let to Sink Electric of Saginaw at a cost of \$36,790. The building of the new Church began immediately.

Its basic structure was to be a hyperbolic type structure that would use poured concrete as its main material.

In the fall of 1966 a renewal drive of our Sacrificial Offertory Campaign was held with the intention of getting all parishioners to do their fair share in supporting the parish. All parishioners were contacted on Sunday, September 18, 1966 and the drive was successful with an increase of about 200 dollars a Sunday.

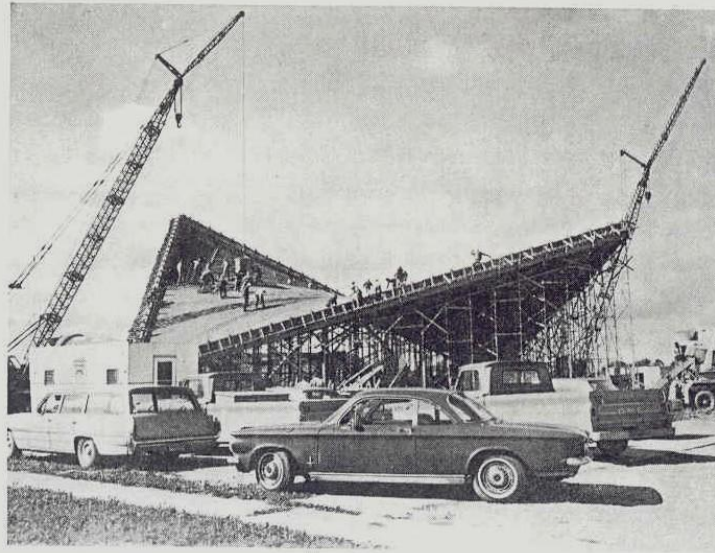
PLANNING FOR THE NEW CHURCH

One June 26, 1964, ground was broken for the new church. But before this was done many hours of preparation went into the plans for this House of God.

"When Churches are to be built, let great care be taken that they be suitable for the celebration of liturgical services and for the active participation of the faithful." (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of the II Vatican Council, Chapter VII, par. 124). This guideline from the II Vatican Council is the starting point in designing any parish church. A church is first and foremost a place of worship. It is the assembly hall where the People of God gather to encounter Christ in his Sacraments and to meet their brothers and sisters in the Lord to celebrate their sacred rites. The church should also be a visible sign of the working of God at this moment in the history of salvation. It is an occasion of grace for God's People. It is also a place for private prayer and meditation. It is the place where the individual meets His God of love, consolation and forgiveness.

With this new concept of what a church should try to represent, the Architect and Pastor began to plan a building that would serve this purpose. Following the advice of the Constitution on the Liturgy, the altar of celebration was the first point considered. It should be the focal point of the Church. It was also decided that modern contemporary materials should be used. The church was planned from the inside out. All agreed that the interior should denote the simplicity, humility and joy of twentieth century Christians.

The person most instrumental in its design is Douglas Morris, of the architectural firm of Morris and Wesolek of Bay City, Michigan. He with the Pastor, Father James F. Gavit, viewed all different types of contemporary churches. Advice was sought from architectural and liturgical experts. It was decided that a building should be built where the people would be as close to the altar as possible. The sanctuary was so arranged that there would be the needed relationship between altar, ambo (pulpit), and the celebrant's chair to highlight the liturgy. In order to bring the congregation into closer communion with the celebrant, the building is designed in a diamond shape. It is possible to seat close to 800 people within seventy feet of the altar.



STRUCTURAL FEAT

Architecturally the building is basically a poured concrete roof compound resting on two saddlelike hyperbolic paraboloids. This main part of the building which measures 120' by 120' is the largest hyperbolic-paraboloid structures in the area. The roof rests on two buttresses each containing over a hundred yards of concrete. The roof begins right at the ground level and rises to a height of 54' over the altar of sacrifice. This projects the idea of the church rising from the earth in a tent shape toward heaven. This plan tries to show that we make our pilgrimage through life to our life with God through the Church. A lower roof projects from the main building to provide a covered entrance. This is supported by a 70' bell tower which goes through the roof. A 1100 pound bronze bell is clearly visible in the tower which is topped by a stainless steel cross. The walls of the main part of the church are of aggregate faced concrete panels. The walls of the front entrance are of Bayport stone. In the rear of the church there is a circular low structure that covers the boiler room and the two side chapels. This is also covered with Bayport stone.

The building of this church is indeed a tribute to the main contractor, Gerace Construction Company of Midland, Michigan. The structural engineering was supervised by McClurg and MacMillan Engineering Company. These firms, along with the Architectural firm of Morris and Wesolek, can be justly proud of this engineering feat whose design won first place in structural design at a recent convention.

FACETED GLASS

The side walls of the Church are in a louvered type arrangement with narrow walls of faceted stainless glass laid in apoxy which go from the floor to the ceiling. This beautiful glass work was done by Architectural Research Company of Detroit, Michigan. It is composed of inch thick pieces of stained glass laid out in an abstract design. The colors run from the darkest shades in the rear of the church to the light shades over the sanctuary. These windows afford a variety of colors which reflect off the exposed bare concrete of the ceiling.

The sacristy is located off the narthex to facilitate the entrance procession from the rear of the church. The appointments include drawers and cabinets of birch. These match the woodwork in the other parts of the church. Another small sacristy is located behind the Blessed Sacrament Chapel and

may be used for Mass when only a small congregation is present. Located off the narthex is the combined cry room and bride's room, the ushers' room and rest rooms.

The floors of the sanctuary, the narthex and baptistry are of slate laid in a flagstone effect. This carries out the idea of simplicity that is the main characteristic of the monastic type interior.

ORGAN

The pipe organ, which was constructed by Hillgreen Lane Company of Alliance Ohio, is a dominant feature of the church. The pipes are exposed over the Sanctuary and clearly visible. This is to highlight the importance of music in the liturgy. The organ is composed of twelve ranks. Its console is located in the front of the church. The front pews are reserved for the choir. It is so located so that they will be part of the worshipping congregation.

AIR CONDITIONED

The church is heated by forced air. The source of heat is a hot water boiler that is then forced out through the church by air ducts. This same equipment is used for the air conditioning unit to provide a comfortable temperature during the entire year. The mechanical contractor was Kaufmann Plumbing and Heating Company of Saginaw, Michigan.

LIGHTING

The electrical contractor for the new church was Sink Electric of Saginaw, Michigan. The lighting is so designed that through the use of a dimmer panel it can be controlled in various areas of the church. Flood lights are used to highlight the tabernacle in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel and the Statue of Our Lady of the Word in the Chapel of the Word. The exterior lighting provides for illum'nation for the covered drive as well as for the sidewalk flanking the parking lot.



TWO SIDE CHAPELS

The sanctuary is flanked by two chapels; one, the Chapel of the Eucharist; the other, the Chapel of the Word. Both of these chapels open into the sanctuary to provide overflow seating. Yet they are so designed that they also give the intimate atmosphere of meditation rooms.

The Blessed Sacrament Chapel features the tabernacle which is placed on a small altar of limestone. The tabernacle is of sculptured bronze. It was designed by White and Associates, Liturgical Artists of Canton, Ohio. The tabernacle is lighted by two small flood lamps located in the low ceiling of the Chapel.

The Chapel of the Word is located on the other side of the sanctuary area. This features the Word of God as found in the scriptures. The Sacred Scriptures are exposed on a throne made of limestone and matching the altar of repose. This throne is so situated that the open Bible can be read while kneeling in front of it. The throne of the Word is guarded by our Lady of the Word. This is a three-quarter relief, made of linden wood, of the Blessed Virgin Mary under the title of Our Lady of the Word. This wood carving is a unique design planned by White and Associates and fabricated by the wood carvers of Ortisei, Italy. After a great deal of consultation, it was thought that Mary's roll in the liturgy is best carried out by depicting her as the guardian of the Word of God. The original statue is so designed that she appears in a seated position on the floor as if she were watching over her child, the infant Jesus. This relief is suspended on the wall behind the Bible throne and it gives the impression that she is guarding the scriptures enthroned before her. The hand carved statue of linden wood is a true work of art and is a testimony to the gifted wood carvers of the Tyrol Region of Italy, where it was made.

BAPTISTRY — THE SACRAMENT OF INITIATION

The baptistry is located in a depressed island in the narthex so that everyone entering the church will be reminded of the relationship between the Sacrament of baptism and their entry into membership in God's family. It is situated just inside the entrance and is clearly visible as the people enter the Church. The baptismal font is made of poured white concrete to match the main altar and ambo. The cover was designed by White and Associates of wrought aluminum as is the chain around the baptistry area.

CHURCH DEDICATED

The new Church was finished and opened for its first Mass on Sunday, November 26, 1967, which also marked the close of Forty Hours Devotion. The grounds around the new Church were landscaped with the help of donated labor from the parishioners. The parking lot to the north of the Church was also added through the generosity of some of the people of St. Matthew's Parish. The drive to the Church was blacktopped just before the new Church was opened.

On Sunday, May 19, 1968, at 4:00 p.m., The Most Reverend Bishop Stephen S. Woznicki, joined with the parishioners to bless the Church and to offer a Mass of thanksgiving.

The history of St. Matthew's from its humble beginning in 1868 until today has covered over a hundred years. It has seen the building of three Church buildings to care for its ever-increasing population. The number of families in its Parish presently number 524.

ST. MATTHEW CHURCH, ZILWAUKEE, MICHIGAN

When this new Church of St. Matthew, the Apostle and Evangelist, is dedicated by the Most Reverend Stephen S. Woznicki, D.D., Bishop of Saginaw, On May 19, 1968, an important step in the history of this parish will have been taken.

The present Pastor, Father James F. Gavit, came to St. Matthew's in September of 1962. At that time it was decided that a new larger church was needed to replace the old one. This decision was based on two considerations; first, the old church which seated only 280 people was overcrowded; and secondly, more classrooms were needed for the ever increasing number of children in our Confraternity of Christian Doctrine classes. It was agreed upon consultation with the Church Committee and with the Bishop that a new church to seat about 750 people should be built and that the old church building should be divided into classrooms.



MOMENT OF HISTORY

Through the sacrifices of the parishioners of St. Matthew's, this beautiful House of God was made possible. It is indeed a moment of history in the general history of the salvation of mankind. All of us rejoice in the Lord to see this building completed and ready to serve for many years the future generations of this area.

In the history of St. Matthew's contained in this booklet we see the many, many sacrifices made by the People of God in order to have a place of worship. We know that future generations will remember you who built this church and we hope that they will realize the sacrifices made in order to pay for its construction.