



Sw. Jozefa

September, 1902

September, 1977

(We are indebted to Rose Mary (Mrs. Edmund) Dorzinski and Regina (Mrs. Vencil) Laban For gathering and presenting the historical material of this brochure for us. We hope that this brochure will encourage other present and former members of the Church of St. Joseph; Lexington to assist us in gathering complete and accurate historical material so that soon we may publish a complete history of the parish.)

St. Joseph's Church

Today, Sunday, September 4, 1977 is a very special day because St. Joseph's Church is celebrating its 75th Anniversary. Rev. Joseph J. Quinlan, Pastor at St. Scholastica; Heidelberg and Administrator at St. Joseph's, officiated at the 10 A. M. Mass. St. Joseph's Church is located about a half mile east of Lexington near Le Center, MN 56057.

As the early Polish settlers came to America from Poland, it was only natural that they settle in a central location. One of the earliest churches around was the one located in Derrynane Township. This church, called the Church of St. John the Evangelist, was built in the late 1850's. This church disbanded with the Irish going to St. Thomas, the Germans going to St. John's at Union Hill, and others to the new parish of St. Scholastica at Heidelberg. Some of the graves are still on the farm now owned by Mr. & Mrs. Robert Meger, who bought it from Mr. & Mrs. Joe Hinderscheid.

These early Polish settlers worshipped in the churches at St. Scholastica and surrounding areas. Until one day, near the turn of the century, they congregated and decided to build their own church. In this way, they could worship in their native tongue. It appears that Joe Rekowski was the one responsible for getting the church started. So plans developed. Work began for the new Polish church at Lexington.

The two acres of land for the new Polish Parish was donated by John Peloski. The Contractor was a Mr. Dollie (Dolly) from St. Paul with his helper, Clyde Beer, and others, plus donated help from the early settlers.

The rock was gotten by horse and wagon from Kasota. This was some 12 miles to the Southwest from the church. The farmers left at 4 A. M. for the loads of rock. Among the farmers getting the rock were Martin Trezcinski, John Meger, John Peloski, Joe Efta, John Schiprett, John Raschke, John Miska, Joe Singer, John Ceasfsky & others.

St. Joseph's Church is a 60 by 30 foot wooden church which was completed in Sept. of 1902. The estimated cost was around \$4,000. The heating box stove was put in the middle of the church because of no basement at that time. Mr. Joe Singer was the fireman for twenty years or more. Mrs. Martin Malinski, Sr., and Benzick Brothers have a picture in which you can see the stove pipes plus the lamps, and, of course, the altars still present in this church.

Another interesting note was in the naming of the church. It seemed there was a verbal contest going on that stated right at the beginning that the persons giving the most money would have the church named after them. Apparently, the "Joes" donated the most money because the Polish Church was called St. Joseph. An appropriate name which we remember each year as we celebrate the feast of St. Joseph the Worker.

Another interesting fact is, if a parishioner donated enough money to buy a beautiful colored window, his name was placed on the window. As you are in the church notice the names on the windows. Some of which are: Jana Werkuse, Josefa Efta, Jana Jentia, Jana Magera, Michael Peloski, and others because some have been broken throughout the years. An example of a name plate was thus:

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Parrishka

Jana Wekkusen

Idego Familia

St. Joseph's Catholic Church has been chiefly a mission church. Therefore, the first pastor to officiate at the first Mass was Rev. A. Kotouc, who came from the St. Scholastica Parish at Heidelberg. Rev. Kotouc served these two churches from 1899 - 1904. He is buried in the St. Scholastica Cemetery, Heidelberg.

Some of the early parishioners were:

Mike, John, & Joe Ceasfsky; Mike & Frank Benzick; Leon Modriesky; Joe Singer; Matt, Peter and Frank Plonski; Joe Rekowski; Frank Holtz; Jacobe Dorzinski; Mike Blank; Mike, John, & Jim Pelowski; Ignatius, Frank, Valentine, & John Retka; John Wohlers; Ben Glisczinski; Tom Ginter; John Schiprett; Frank Cemensky; Martin & John Ginter; Anton Sweda; Peter Spiczak; John Mager; Steven, Paul, & Michael Gostomzick; Joe Miska, Martin Laban, Mike Gontarek; Henry Pianko, John Bulaski; John Gaiovnik; Kasloski; and others.

The first baptisms, according to Church Records, on Sept. 28, 1902 were Joe T. Binzcik, Michael Glisczinski, Sr., and Michael B. Benzick. Others baptized a week later, on Oct. 5, 1902 were Anna Pianko and Sophia Plonski.

The first marriage was between John Ceasfsky and Martha Meger on Feb. 23, 1903. Martha resides in Wisconsin today. Other marriages were: August Holza & Augusta Marciniak on Nov. 23, 1903; Joseph R. Benzick & Josephine Plonski on Jan. 12, 1904; Jim Pelowski & Ludmilla Gostomcik on Feb. 9, 1904; Joe Rekowski & Anna Novak on 2/11/1907.

The first Mass Servers were Frank Singer, John Retka, John S. Pelowski and Joseph F. Benzick.

The deaths according to church records are:

Anton Sweda - Jan. 2, 1905; Julia Zavodan - Jan. 28, 1905; Eva Rekowski - Jan. 31, 1905; Elizabeth Stipp -- March 1, 1905. According to the tombstones, the first burial was Genowefa Blaszejzyk in 1903.

Rev. Godyoszus wrote to the Bishop asking permission to build a rectory beside the church on April 7, 1907. It was completed under the direction of Rev. Skluzacek. Estimated cost of the rectory was \$3,000. Assessment was as follows: \$30 for 40 acres of land; \$45 for more than 40 acres; \$25 for renters; and \$15 for workers. Carpenters that built the rectory were: D. H. Van Buren; Foreman; George Smith; Maurice Clifford; George Delaska; F. W. Hinze; & Vernon Hinze. Lumber for the rectory came from the Lambert Lumber Co. in Le Sueur Center.

Mr. Joe Rekowski bought the original bell which cost \$30. However, this bell cracked and was replaced by another in 1922. Frank Singer, John Retka, & Stanley Cap were way up in the church, ready to reach the bell as it came up, and place it in the right location. They were assisted by lots of ground help from the other parishioners. One early parishioner remembers that C. N. Cosgrow of Green Giant of Le Sueur donated \$25 towards this bell. Each family was assessed \$3.75 for this bell. Some parishioners remember a bushel basket placed beside the bell before it went up in the church. If you donated any money towards the bell and placed it in the basket, you were given the privilege of giving the bell a "dong."

The metal fence was put around the cemetery in 1909. It was taken down in the 1960's.

The original cross on the top of the church decayed. It was replaced by another in 1937. Vince Hammernick climbed up and put it in place on the church.

Priests that served St. Joseph's Catholic Church from Heidelberg were:

Rev. A. Kotouc --1902-1904; Rev. W. J. Skluzacek - 1904-1907 (1908); Rev. M. Godyoszus came in March and stayed until about August in 1907. Rev. Skluzacek came back again and stayed until Rev. Broskowski arrived. Rev. Anthony Broskowski -1908-1923; Rev. Stephen Zdechlik - 1923- 1948. The rectory became the home for the first parish Pastor when Rev. John D. Sliwa came in 1948. After his death in March of 1960, St. Joseph's Parish once again, and still is served by Heidelberg Pastors as follows:

Rev. Louis J. Heitzer --1960--1966; Rev. Wallace Hermes -- 1966- 1968; Rev. Eugene Paschol -- 1968 - 1969; Rev. Joseph J. Quinlan -- who came in 1969 and is our present pastor at both churches today. We are proud of our Rev. Quinlan. He has guided us faithfully for the past eight years.

St. Joseph's Church looks much the same as it did in 1902. The following improvements have been made over the years: A basement was added in 1940. The interior walls were remodeled in 1948. However, the main and side altars, station pictures, statues, and other religious objects are mostly base they have been in 1902. As you look at the main altar, notice the unusual swan near the bottom. The cross to the entrance of the cemetery was donated in memory of Julius Sprey - 1965.

The first Trustees of the parish were Martin Treczinski, Cashier; and Matt Plonski, Sec. The Trustees today are Ben Glisczinski and John J. Pelowski.

Our first organist was John Gaiovnik. We must give honor to Mr. Bernie Ademmer of Heidelberg who played the organ for many, many years at St. Joseph. According to an old record book, he was playing in 1909. Our present organist is Mrs. Norbert Cemensky.

Members of our Parish Council are Francis Benzick, Ray Mager, Ben Glisczinski, John J. Pelowski, Mrs. Richard Meger, and Mrs. Martin Malinski, Jr.

Officers of our Rosary Society are Mrs. John J. Pelowski and Mrs Sylvester Glisczinski.

Members of the Cemetary Board are Ben Glisczinski, Richard Meger, Larry Plonski, Henry Retka, and Tony Pelowski.

Lectors are Michael Krenik, Norbert Krenik, John J. Pelowski, Michael Pelowski, and Francis Benzick.

The first Mass Servers at St. Joseph were Joe Singer and Mike Gaiovnik. Mass Servers today are Brian Krenik, Andrew Krenik, Martin Malinski, Richard Meger, Peter Meger, Charles Meger, Mark Cemensky, Mike Cemensky, Ray Mager, Ed Dorzinski, & Steve Reak.

There are 47 Families that belong to St. Joseph's Church today; 190 souls.

Interesting Items of Yesterday As taken from the Le Center Leader:

- Sept. 25, 1902 - A picnic will be held at the Polish Church on Sept. 28, 1902.
- Oct. 16, 1902 - Rev. Kotouc held services at the Catholic Polish Church Sunday.
- Nov. 13, 1902 - Rev. Kotouc held service at the Catholic Church at Lexington on Sunday.
- Dec. 11, 1902 - Rev. Kotouc held services at Lexington on Monday and Tuesday.

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Oct. 24, 1907

Nov. 7, 1907

Nov. 28, 1907

Wanted:

We wish to get a losn of \$3,000 at the going rate of interest. Will give good security on mortgage or notes.

St. Joseph Catholic Church Parish
Lexington, Minn.
Bernard Glisczinsky - Secy.
R. 3 Montgomery, Minn.

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We invite you to tell us of any ommissions, or corrections, or any additional information you may have.

This concludes the history of St. Joseph's Church to Sept. 4, 1977. We have gained by the toil, endeavor, and sacrifice of our forefathers. We shall always cherish their memory in our hearts. May God bless them and us.

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Tak jest zakonczenie historia Swietego Juzefa kasciota miesiaca wrzesier rok 1977.

My mtodcze dzienarejszen mamy powodzenia przy pomocy naszej dziatkow co ciezko pracowali i afiarowali sie dla naz.

Te pamiatke niezapomniemy na wieki.

(Written by Mrs. Louis Prosocki -
A Former Member of St. Joseph's)