

St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Parish

1910 - 2010

No. 18 of a Series on Our Parish's First 100 Years



1917 started much the same as preceding years with the regular religious services and the various societies holding their card parties and social functions during the winter and pre-Lenten season. On the last Sunday in January, the congregation, at its annual meeting, re-elected William Wagner and Henry Pihringer as trustees. Reports of the previous year's work were very satisfactory.

During Lent Rev. John P. Pierron, pastor of St. Thomas Aquinas at Waterford from 1912 to 1934, conducted a five-week series of Lenten services at St. Charles. On March 27 Archbishop Sebastian G. Messmer, of Milwaukee, marked the silver jubilee of his consecration as bishop. At the time of his consecration in 1892, Messmer was professor of Canon law at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D. C. He was named bishop of the Green Bay diocese in December 1892 before becoming Archbishop of Milwaukee in November 1903.

April 6, 1917, saw the entrance of the United States into the war in Europe (now known as World War I). As war spread its pall of gloom over the nation, St. Charles added her quota to the youth of Burlington who went forth into the camps and battlefields or onto the ships to serve the nation. Before the armistice was signed in November 1918, sixty-four young men from St. Charles had entered service. Another twenty-four former or subsequent members of St. Charles also served in the war. Additionally, parishioner Clara Wegge, later Mrs. Louis Brehm, served as a Red Cross nurse, as did school nurse, Myrtle Rimert, who joined St. Charles after moving to Burlington in 1922. In September the congregation raised a fund of \$104 which was expended for gifts and necessities for those in service. The parishioners who served in World War I were:

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| Everard F. Alby | Frank Hinkamp | Lawrence E. Murphy | Joseph Schranz |
| Edward Beller | Joseph M. Hoelz | Leo J. Mutchler | Joseph M. Spieker |
| Frank Beller, Jr. | Leo G. Hoelz | Matthew Nelson | Henry N. Stang |
| John Beller | Simon Hoelz | G. Warren Newell | Joseph V. Stang |
| William Beller | William Hoelz | Vincent O'Connor | Lawrence J. Stang, Jr. |
| John Frank Bennett | Cecil Hurtgen | Peter S. Peterson | Robert Strassen |
| Philip A. Block | Alfred J. Ketterhagen | Henry Pfarrdrescher | Frank T. Tobin |
| Clara Wegge Brehm | Werner Ketterhagen | William J. Pieh | Andrew Verhalen |
| Louis H. Brehm | Peter Kramer | Ferdinand Rank | Bardo Verhalen |
| Raymond Bushman | Ardinal Langley | Frank Rank | Clarence Wagner |
| Carl Christien | John Frank Langley | Charles J. Reinardy | Charles Westrich |
| Frank P. Christien | John L. Leber | Francis C. Reinardy | Frank Westrich |
| Russell Cooney | Edward Lohaus | Joseph Reminger | Alfred Wiemer |
| Lawrence Daniels | Simon Madden | Louis F. Reuschlein | Henry Wisnefski |
| Edward H. David | Lawrence R. Mangold | Francis H. Rewald | Peter Wisnefski |
| Frank H. David | Eugene Martin | Myrtle Rimert | Aloysius Woeste |
| John Degen, Jr. | Charles McCourt | Leonard G. Robers | William Yambor |
| James J. Delano | George "Roy" McCourt | Francis Rose | Warner Zimmermann |
| Bernard J. Ferring | George McCarthy | William A. Rose | Leo Zwiebel |
| Edward Finke | Francis McCarville | Robert H. Schaub | Louis Zwiebel |
| Leo J. Flood | Floyd J. McCormack | Harry B. Scheibe | Otto Zwiebel |
| Joseph A. Grossman | Arthur Meyer | Edgar Schiller | Raymond G. Zwiebel |
| Clifford Hatch | Roman Meyer | | |

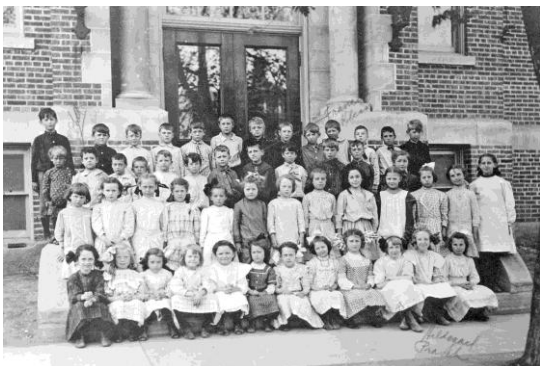
On Sunday, June 3, a class of twenty-six young people received their First Communion from Father Dreis at the 8 o'clock high Mass. The class included

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| Raymond Alby | Bernice Ebbers | Michael Juranek | Alma Rewald |
| Elmer Bauman | Lloyd Eckert | Philipp Klein | Harold Schneider |
| Stanley Bauman | Roman Eckert | Evelyn Kornhoff | Florian Stallman |
| Catherine Christien | Marion Finke | Edward Koenen | Clarence Trimberger |
| Marcella Christien | Gwendolyn Gorman | Anthony Mutchler | Lawrence Trimberger |
| Lucile David | Loyola Harding | Carlos Mutchler | Evelyn Vos |
| Ralph DeGrave | Leo Isferding | | |

An unusual feature of the class was that it included three pair of twins: Carlos and Anthony Mutchler, sons of Mr. and Mrs. Jerome Mutchler, Lawrence and Clarence Trimberger, sons of Mr. and Mrs. John Trimberger, and Marcella and Catherine Christien, daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph M. Christien.

Graduation exercises took place in the church on Sunday, June 17, with a fitting program. After a hymn by the school children, Father Dreis gave the address and conferred the diplomas. The St. Charles choir then sang a hymn, with Miss Lillian Bushman assisting with violin obbligatos. After a prayer and Benediction, the choir and school children together sang "Holy God We Praise Thy Name." Those receiving their diplomas were:

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|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Celia Alby | Edward Finke | Eugene Martin | James Pennefeather |
| Herbert J. Bauman | Catherine Holmquist | Virginia Murphy | George Trimberger |
| Margaret Cunningham | Lucille Hurtgen | Loretta Partee | Leone Wanasek |
| Eleanor Eckert | Leroy Ketterhagen | | |



Many or all of the 1917 graduates would have been in this photo of the younger students taken about 1911.

On the following Wednesday, the school children, carrying the lunches their mothers had fixed for them, enjoyed a basket picnic at Bohner's lake. A number of the parishioners took the children out in their autos and got them in the evening.

Later in June, the St. Charles Alumni association began organizational efforts under the direction of Father Dreis. Temporary officers were elected until the first regular meeting in August when Leo Warren '12 was elected president; Eleanor Reinardy '12, vice president; Frank Rose '14, secretary; and Sophia Huebner '13, treasurer.

The school Sisters and

the school board were present at that first meeting.

The association, which started with about sixty members, was one of the few grade school alumni groups in the state and probably in the nation. It lasted into the 1950s, with a meeting and banquet in St. Charles hall annually in June. To stimulate interest and attract as many graduates as possible to the reunions, the Sister Mary Hermana trophy was conceived in 1918. The trophy, dedicated to Sister Hermana, who taught at the school from 1910 until 1919, was awarded to the class,



Most or all of the 1917 graduates would have been in this photo of the upper grades taken in 1915 or 1916.

five years or more after graduation, with the highest percentage of graduates present at the reunion. In 1919 the association began sponsoring a dramatic play once a year, the proceeds of which helped defray the expenses of the yearly banquet. The annual plays lasted into the late 1930s or early 1940s.

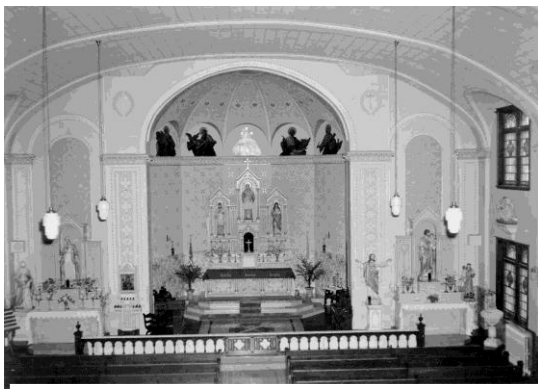
On July 6, the St. Ann's Society and St. Agnes Sodality held a strawberry festival in St. Charles hall. Freshly baked pie and home baked goods were sold during the day; and supper was served from 5 until 8 p.m. The menu included strawberry shortcake, sandwiches and coffee, strawberry ice cream, and cake. Even though it rained and the weather was very unfavorable, a great number of people attended the festival and a "neat sum" was realized.

On August 8 Mrs. Mary Smolensky, director of St. Charles choir, entertained the choir members at her home in honor of her niece, Miss Florence Verhalen, who planned to enter the novitiate of the Vincent DePaul's sisterhood in September 1917. Florence, the daughter of Peter and Margaret, nee Weiler, Verhalen, and a 1912 graduate of Burlington high school, was a member of St. Charles but had graduated from St. Mary's grade school before St. Charles was established. She was professed in December 1918 as Sister Cyrilla of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul.

Sister Cyrilla, who was pictured with her sister, Colletta Verhalen – Sister Mary Colette – in No. 16 of this series, held a bachelor's degree, a lifetime teaching certificate, and a library science certificate. She taught for thirty-five years in Daughters of Charity schools in New Orleans and Donaldsonville, Louisiana, and in San Francisco. She followed that with thirty-two years as a librarian at Daughters of Charity schools in St. Louis, Missouri; Keokuk, Iowa; and Northfield, Illinois. Retiring in 1987, Sister Cyrilla lived until February 1994, when she died at age 99 at Seton Residence in Evansville, Indiana.

"To pray for peace, honorable and fair, is a far greater and higher Christian duty, than to fight on the battlefield," said Archbishop Sebastian G. Messmer in a pastoral letter read at St. Charles and other Catholic churches in the Archdiocese on August 18. With the United States heavily involved in the war in Europe, the Archbishop granted special permission to all pastors of the parishes and chaplains of religious institutions to institute in their churches and chapels, public and private devotions for the purpose of imploring God's mercy in bringing on a speedy end of the war and granting a near and lasting peace to all nations. Announcement also was made of a special collection to be taken up on Sunday, August 25, with the funds to be used to support additional chaplains, for purchase of various articles needed in the Mass, and for religious and recreation centers for Catholic soldiers.

Also in August, the interior of St. Charles church was painted and decorated by Conrad Schmitt and four of his men from Milwaukee. Light colors and simple lines were the keynotes in the decorative scheme. Everything was along the simple early Christian lines of the mosaic type. The walls were very plain in light stone colors with a caen stone effect toward the bottom. (*Caen stone was a cream-colored limestone quarried near Caen, France.*) The tops of the pillars were gilded a dull old gold.



The oil paintings of Our Savior and the four evangelists, created and installed in 1917, are shown in this 1953 photo by Emmett Raettig.

The sanctuary was virtually a piece of art with its snowy white altars in marble effect and the artistic blending of colors and designs. Here also the art schemes of the early Christians were evidenced – reproductions of emblems of the catacombs were systematically arranged around the altars. Five oil paintings, which were under the artists brush in the Schmitt studio at that time, were to adorn the sanctuary. A picture of our Savior was to be in the center

with pictures of the four evangelists – Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John – on the sides. The paintings were installed and the decorating completed in September.

On August 23, St. Charles held its annual festival on the lawns of A. C. Schmitt (see photo in No. 17). There were various booths – candy, home baking, and needlework. Instead of the customary fish pond, there was a parcel post booth, which attracted considerable attention. Ice cream and cake were sold and supper was served. A feature of the program, “In Hawaii,” was given in the evening, one of the numbers of which was a Hawaiian dance by some of the younger girls of the parish. Miss Celia Rose gave several selections on the ukulele.

On August 28, the junior members of the St. Agnes Sodality had an outing at St. Francis. They took their lunch with them and ate it in the picturesque woods of St. Francis. At St. John’s Institute for the Deaf, the party admired a great deal of handiwork and painting done by the pupils. Other institutes visited included St. Aemilian’s orphanage, the convent of the Sisters of St. Francis, and the St. Francis Seminary. The party also took in the chapel of the woods and the wayside stations, ever popular with tourists.

St. Charles school opened the first week in September with about 160 children enrolled in the various grades. There was one change on the teaching staff. Sister Mary Ildephonse took charge of the intermediate classes in place of Sister Mary Dolores, who had been at the school since it opened.

With the war ongoing, various programs were started to involve the citizenry in the war effort. These included Liberty bond drives, Red Cross work, and, in Wisconsin, meatless and wheatless Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Seeking still other ways to contribute to the war effort, the women of the country formed the National League for Women’s Service. Many groups began knitting and sewing for the troops, but the ladies of Burlington gradually evolved a system of division of labor that the Standard Democrat called “astonishing in its results.”

Different societies in the community took up individual responsibilities. In September the paper reported that the St. Charles ladies were busier than most of the others just then. They were doing one of the things which the National League and the Council of Defense asked for. They were allowing no waste of foodstuffs, but were using their kitchens as they had never used them before canning fruits and vegetables. They sold jars of apples, jellies, and marmalade, not forgetting that at Christmas the boys in camp would relish these little tastes from home. Their fund grew, and when the National League found use for money, the St. Charles ladies were substantial contributors.

In November, the Knights of Columbus announced its intention to raise from Catholics throughout the country \$3 million for use in establishing and maintaining war recreation centers at home and overseas. In addition, Pope Benedict had asked the Knights to help support the American Red Cross in special work. Of the \$3 million goal, \$1 million had already been contributed principally by members of the Knights. The Knights’ war recreation centers, like those that the YMCA had set up, were to be open to all service members at all times regardless of creed. The religious needs of non-Catholics in the camps were being supplied by the YMCA; those of Catholics, composing about forty percent of the men in service, by the Knights. Burlington Council No. 1578 was to raise its quota of \$2,000.

(to be continued)

(Correction: In No. 16, we said that Rev. John Rittman-Heuel joined the Capuchin Friars in February 1924. A more contemporaneous source, found after that article was printed, showed that Father Heuel joined the Capuchins in February 1925.)