

St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Parish

No. 26 of a Series on Our Parish's First 100 Years

1910 - 2010



About two weeks after Rev. Philipp Dreis departed for his new assignment in Sheboygan, greetings of welcome were extended to Rev.

Frederick J. Hillenbrand by the people of Burlington at a public reception held in his honor on Sunday, February 27, 1927, at St. Charles hall. Between the hours of 3 and 5, over 600 persons, including those from Burlington as well as many from neighboring towns, met at the hall to extend welcome to the new pastor of St. Charles church.



Rev. Frederick J. Hillenbrand
(1928 photo)

There was no planned program. Instead, the time was spent in an informal manner, with Father Hillenbrand meeting the members of his new parish and the community, and in many instances renewing old acquaintances from his time as pastor of St. Joseph's at Lyons. Members of the St. Agnes, St. Ann's, and Sacred Heart-Holy Name societies and the St. Charles Alumni association acted as a general reception committee. Among those at the reception were Rev. John P. Pierron of Waterford, Rev. Joseph M. Keller of Brighton, Rev. Edward B. Schiefen of Dover, and Rev. Charles J. Lehwald of Paris.

Music was furnished by Joseph Hoffman's orchestra, which played from an alcove banked with ferns. Members of various civic and business organizations, as well as representatives from all parish societies, were present during the afternoon to pay respects to the new pastor and welcome him to the community.

Rev. Hillenbrand, the son of Ernest and Frances Fuchs Hillenbrand, was born in East Bristol in Dane county on July 17, 1875. He was educated in St. Joseph's school at East Bristol before entering St. Francis seminary when he was fifteen. He was ordained as a priest on June 18, 1899, and was sent to Kenosha as assistant at St. George's church, where he served until 1903.

In July 1903 he was assigned to St. Joseph's church at Lyons, where he also had charge of St. Kilian's mission. A few months later, on October 8, St. Joseph's school building burned to the ground. A new school was built and, in September 1904, the school re-opened. In 1910 the congregation, under Father Hillenbrand's leadership, erected a new church building when it was found that the original, and smaller, church building was no longer adequate for the growing congregation. The 1910 church is the one that exists today.

In December 1913 Rev. Hillenbrand was assigned to St. Mary's church at Random Lake and its mission congregation of St. Patrick at Adell. In 1924 the Random Lake congregation, under Father Hillenbrand's leadership, erected a substantial addition to the church and a new school.

Rev. Hillenbrand had been loved and respected in the churches and communities he had served. His promotion to the Burlington parish was a well-merited one and the members of St. Charles assured him the same loving cooperation they had been glad to extend to Rev. Dreis.

The transition to the new pastor went smoothly with parish, school, and society activities continuing to follow their normal routines. On Sunday, March 6, for example, about 200 members of the Holy Name society assembled for Communion at the 7 o'clock Mass, followed by a breakfast meeting and election of officers at St. Charles hall. On Saturday, March 19, the ladies of St. Charles held a bake sale at Spiegelhoff's store (which at that time was on Chestnut Street near Mill Street). In April, Rev. Eugene Gehl and Rev. Stephen Klopfer, of St. John's Institute for the Deaf at St. Francis, assisted Father Hillenbrand in conducting Forty Hours devotions.

On May 10, the St. Charles Alumni association presented its annual play at the Burlington opera house. The comedy, titled "The Youngest," was directed by Harold G. Reuschlein. The cast included

Laverne Hoffman, Marie Wagner, Robert Partee, Mrs. Myrtle May, Evelyn Bauman, Ralph Spiegelhoff, Anthony Rewald, Irene Richter, and Ruth Beix. James Mangold and Ralph Bauman headed the properties committee, Romana Weinman and Eleanor Eckert headed the committee on ticket sales, and Ralph Spiegelhoff was in charge of general arrangements.

According to the Standard Democrat, the cast succeeded in a delightful interpretation of a rather difficult play, one that depended on characterization rather than action to carry it along. A fortunate casting of the various roles, said the paper, allowed each actor to contribute successfully to the unity of effect that marked the play. The paper also said that the special features between acts were very much enjoyed. A Mother Goose divertissement in costume, a song picturization, and male quartet numbers were presented under the direction of Romana Weinman, Amanda Henningfield, and Evelyn Bushman. The paper added that the entire evening's performance showed a nice attention to detail that gave the entertainment the casual touch of professional effort and that St. Charles alumni were to be congratulated on their success.

In a new experience for the Alumni association players, the play was broadcast over radio station WCLO at Camp Lake on May 25. The original cast performed the play and a number of specialty music features were given. Director Harold Reuschlein gave the continuity and explained the settings while the play was in progress.

On Memorial Day all Burlington united in paying honor to the fallen heroes of our wars with solemn public ceremonies conducted at the cemeteries and at the Lincoln monument. As in previous years, the children of St. Charles and other schools marched with members of the Woman's Relief Corps, the American Legion, and the Legion Auxiliary to St. Mary's Cemetery, where special services at the chapel began the ceremonies. The school children and the officiating bodies visited the veterans' graves, with the children decorating each grave with a red geranium. At the Lincoln monument, two St. Charles' seventh grade students participated in the program. Catherine Itzin recited "Flanders Field," and the response was given by Norma Scheel.



On Monday, June 13, the eighth grade class members visited the various institutions at St. Francis, as well as the library and museum in Milwaukee. The previous evening, the class had graduated at exercises held in the church. Father Hillenbrand gave the commencement talk and distributed diplomas to the sixteen graduates, after which Benediction was held. The class colors were coral and blue, the class flower was the pink rose, and the motto was "God, our Refuge." Those receiving diplomas (seen in photo at left) were:

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| Herbert Alby (r2, #9) | Roseanne Hessefort | Grace Marck | Laverne Reuschlein |
| Evelyn Beuthling | Genevieve Huth | Mary O'Neill | Leander Rewald (r1, #2) |
| Margaret Forge | John Itzin (r2, #5) | Bernard Peeters (r2, #1) | Coletta Rossmiller |
| Helen Grossman | Rose Klein | Everett Reinardy (r1, #6) | Ruth Rossmiller |

Reminiscences of by-gone days at St. Charles, words of high praise for the Sisters and priests who had helped in building up a loyal membership, and an evening of general felicity and comradely spirit characterized the tenth annual banquet and reunion of the St. Charles alumni on June 16 in the

church hall. Two hundred members gathered around the banquet tables to enjoy the fine dinner prepared by the ladies of the church and to take part in the program.

Preceding the banquet, members of the association assembled in the church for solemn Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Rev. Philipp Dreis, of Sheboygan, founder of the association, officiated at the service assisted by Rev. Anthony Biber, of Lyons, as deacon, and St. Charles graduate, Philip Rose, of St. Francis seminary, as sub-deacon.

Thanking the association for its co-operation during the past year in all alumni undertakings, Ralph Spiegelhoff, president of the organization, presented the toastmaster of the evening, Harold Reuschlein. Welcoming the new class of 1927, Lester Harding was the first speaker. His welcome was answered by Grace Marck, president of the graduating class, who accepted for her class the honor of becoming alumni members. Responding to toasts, Philip Rose, John Forge, and Romana Weinman then gave short talks appropriate to the occasion. Some fine musical entertainment interspersed the talks, with a group of vocal selections by Adam Zeyen, of Kenosha, and vocal "interruptions" by George Weiler, accompanied by Miss Laurretta Uhen.

Most gratifying to all those present were the words of Father Dreis, as he gave high praise for the fine spirit manifested by the St. Charles young people and the splendid work accomplished in the school through the efforts of their pastor and the Sisters. Father Hillenbrand answered these words of praise by a tribute to the work of organization perfected by Father Dreis during his years as pastor. The Sister Hermana trophy for the class returning the largest percentage of members to the reunion was awarded to the class of 1922. The visiting priests were Rev. Biber of Lyons, Rev. Schiefen of Dover, and Rev. Pierron of Waterford.

At the business meeting, Ralph Spiegelhoff was re-elected president for the ensuing year, with George Weiler, Jr., as vice president, and Marie Wagner as secretary and treasurer.

A week later, the Alumni sponsored a June night party at the new Antlers pavilion at Brown's Lake.

On Monday, June 18, Father Hillenbrand was an honored guest at a namesday supper given by the St. Agnes Sodality in the church hall. The occasion marked the first celebration of Father Hillenbrand's namesday since his coming to Burlington. Rev. Lehwald of Paris and Rev. Biber of Lyons also attended. Following the supper, talks were given and Loretta Ebbers sang some delightful solos, accompanied by Ellsworth Rein.

During the first week in August, new playground equipment was installed on the school grounds. The donor, whose name was withheld at his request, gave the equipment as a gift to the children. The equipment, which promised many happy hours for St. Charles and neighborhood children, included a large frame that supported a merry-go-round swing on which several children could ride with safety, as well as a trapeze, horizontal bars, rings, and swings of varying sizes; a long, plank-like seesaw swing, which moved horizontally in a backward and forward movement and could seat from ten to sixteen children; a smaller seesaw swing which could be used individually or by two or four children; smaller swings for the younger children; and a chute, or slide. In November the school yard was leveled and covered with fine crushed stone.

In the first School Notes column published after school opened in September, authors Elizabeth Cunningham and Mary Floryan reported that the children of St. Charles heartily enjoyed the new playground equipment and wished to express their sincere thanks to the generous donor. They said that every recess was thoroughly enjoyed by the pupils now. They also reported that St. Charles' enrollment for the new school year was 190, with 94 boys and 96 girls. This was the largest enrollment St. Charles had ever had. Twenty-three pupils had entered the first grade and ten new pupils had entered various other grades.

On September 24 Henry Pihringer, who had been St. Charles' treasurer since the parish was organized, passed away. At Mr. Pihringer's funeral services, Father Hillenbrand read the solemn

requiem Mass, while Father Dreis, with whom Mr. Pihringer had worked for years, preached the sermon. In October Archbishop Sebastian G. Messmer named L. Reinhard Mangold as treasurer of the congregation to fill Mr. Pihringer's unexpired term. The appointment pleased members of St. Charles as Mr. Mangold was popular and well qualified to fill the position.

At the annual convention of the Milwaukee Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women held in Milwaukee in mid-October, two St. Charles women were re-elected to office - Mrs. Frank Beller as second vice president and Mrs. Michael J. Cunningham as a member of the board of directors. Convention delegates from St. Charles were Mrs. Reinhard Mangold and Mrs. Clarence E. Partee of the St. Ann's society, Miss Cecelia Rose of the St. Agnes Sodality, Mrs. Fred Ebbers of the Women's Catholic Order of Foresters, and Mrs. William Itzin of the Daughters of Isabella. Others from St. Charles who attended were Father Hillenbrand, Mrs. Fred Itzin, Mrs. John McCourt, Mrs. John Degen, Mrs. A. T. Spiegelhoff, Mrs. William Rose, Miss Katherine Partee, Mrs. Charles Beix, and Mrs. Laura O'Neill.

On Thursday, December 8, Archbishop Messmer administered the Sacrament of Confirmation at both Burlington parishes. In observance of the feast of the Immaculate Conception, the feast day of St. Mary's congregation, solemn high Mass was celebrated there at 9 o'clock in the morning, with pastor, Rev. Joseph A. Van Treeck, officiating. Archbishop Messmer delivered the sermon and, following the Mass, administered Confirmation. At 3 o'clock in the afternoon at St. Charles, he confirmed a class of seventy-three. They were:

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| Henry Ashner | Rosemary Forge | Grace Marck | Louis Rossmiller |
| Arthur Bauman | Loretta Gerloff | James McCarthy | Catherine Roter |
| Hieron Bauman | Frederick Grueter | Marie McCarthy | Eileen Roter |
| Alfred Bayer | Julia Grueter | Margaret Merrick | Norma Scheel |
| Richard Beix | Pearl Henderson | Ruth Merrick | Carl Schranz |
| Robert Beix | Catherine Huening | Edward Meurer | Mathilda Schranz |
| Evelyn Beuthling | Florence Isferding | Clara Mikula | Alice Sobbe |
| Evelyn Bockop | Albert Itzin | Johanna Mikula | Catherine Sobbe |
| Lucille Budd | Catherine Itzin | Mary Moe | Francis Sommers |
| John Busch | John Itzin | Mary O'Neill | Arthur Steinhoff |
| Alberta Bushman | Earl Jens | Bernard Peeters | Peter Tennesen |
| Robert Cook | Caroline Ketterhagen | Marcella Prasch | William Uhen |
| Elizabeth Cunningham | Rose Klein | Everett Reinardy | Carroll Vos |
| Dorothy David | Clarence Kornhoff | Laverne Reuschlein | Ruth Wagner |
| Mary David | Rosella Kornhoff | John Reynolds | John Weiler |
| Charles Ebbers | Dorothy Lehsten | Dorothy Riel | Catherine Weis |
| Mary Ebbers | Eva Lohaus | Walter Riel | Francis Weis |
| Anna Floryan | Helen Lohaus | Coletta Rossmiller | Lloyd Weis |
| Mary Floryan | | | |

For Christmas, three Masses were celebrated, including a solemn high Mass at 5 o'clock Christmas morning. The usual ceremony at the crib preceded the Mass and a musical program was sung by the choir. Soloists were Carroll Vos, Everett Reinardy, Loretta Ebbers, and Ellsworth Rein. Chanters were Francis Cook, Aloysius Vande Sand, Arthur Reinardy, and Laverne Hoffman.

(to be continued)