

St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Parish

1910 - 2010

No. 43 of a Series on Our Parish's First 100 Years



When St. Charles school opened for the 1942-1943 school year, its starting enrollment of 160 was about the same as the previous year's enrollment. The four-member teaching staff, however, had three new faces. Sister Mary Raphael, principal for the previous two years, was succeeded by Sister Mary Sebastian, who came from St. Rose in Racine, where she had been principal for five years. In addition to serving as principal at St. Charles, Sister Sebastian also taught the seventh and eighth grades. Sister Mary Antonia, who had been at Santa Fe, New Mexico, assumed direction of the first and second grades. She replaced Sister Mary Ambrose, who went to Little Chute. The fifth and sixth grades, formerly taught by Sister Mary Charita, who went to Detroit, were taken over by Sister Mary Lucy, who had previously taught at St. Catherine's high school in Racine. Sister Mary DePaul continued as third and fourth grade teacher. Sister Rose Ann also continued as music teacher.

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St. Charles'

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Advertisement in August 28,
1942, Standard Democrat

Also that fall, St. Charles graduate David Brehm, who had graduated from St. Mary's high school in June 1942, entered St. Stanislaus Seminary at Florissant, Missouri, where he started studies to prepare himself for the priesthood.

In September, the women of St. Charles joined with members of women's organizations at the various local churches to cooperate with Burlington's Red Cross committee in making and filling overseas kits for American servicemen. Mrs. Elfrieda McCanna was chairman of the Red Cross committee. Material for the kits was supplied by the Red Cross, and the kits were made by the church ladies. The items necessary to fill the kits were purchased with money raised by card parties and bake sales sponsored by the women's groups. Mrs. Norma Reuschlein was appointed to direct the project at St. Charles.

In October a two-week mission was conducted at St. Charles by Redemptorist fathers, Rev. George H. Strass, S. S. R., and Rev. Henry Sutton, C. Ss. R. The first week, which was the women's mission, closed on Sunday, October 18, with corporate Communion for women and girls of the parish. The men's mission closed with Communion for the Holy Name and Junior Holy Name societies on October 25.

Two Sisters and two pupils of St. Charles school received honors in November in the crusade to obtain subscriptions to the "Catholic Herald Citizen," official publication of the Milwaukee archdiocese. Sister M. Lucy and Sister M. Sebastian received the two divisional prizes offered in division 6. Fourteen other schools of like enrollment competed in the division. The two pupils who won the Archbishop's medal for securing the highest number of points per crusader in their respective rooms were Mary Ann Muller and Joan Bennett. The November crusade throughout the archdiocese for subscriptions to the Catholic weekly reached 44,503, breaking all previous archdiocese records.

On the feast of the Immaculate Conception in December, two Burlington young men, both from St. Mary's, were ordained to the priesthood at St. Francis Seminary with Archbishop Moses E. Kiley officiating. They were Rev. Cletus Uhen, son of Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Uhen, and Rev. George Schumann, son of Mr. and Mrs. George Schumann. The new priests' class

ordinarily would have been graduated and ordained in April 1943, but their graduation and ordination were pushed ahead to provide necessary replacements for the sixteen priests from the Milwaukee archdiocese who had answered the call to serve as chaplains with the armed forces.

St. Charles' students, together with both the senior and junior choirs and several pre-school age children, gave a Christmas program in the church on December 20 which included the operetta, "There Was One Who Gave a Lamb." Playing the part of Mary was Betty Bennett, with Eda Fulton as the baby Jesus. Other parts were played by Luella Schiller, Jerry Block, Kenneth Pihringer, Mary Hrobsky, Michael McCarthy, Dennis Boyle, and Russell Wegge. The cherub roles were taken by Barbara Bennett, Marcia Van Bolhuis, Marjorie Weiler, and Edna McCarthy, while a large number of the school girls sang in the chorus of angels. Soloists were Mary Lois Bauman and Luella Schiller; and the accompanists were Jack Peterson and Joan Bennett.

On Sunday, January 31, members of St. Charles choir gave a dinner party and program in honor of Mrs. Loretta Bauman who had been with the choir as soloist for 25 years. Over sixty active and retired choir members were present. Out-of-town attendees included Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Verhalen and Irene Woeste of Milwaukee, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Werwie of Kenosha, and Mrs. Emily Shouldis of Racine. Louis Brehm was in charge of the program following the dinner. On the following Tuesday, the choir re-elected Charles Wiemer as its president, Marie Scherrer as its vice president, and Marion Robers as its secretary-treasurer.

With the opening of the 1943 Lenten season, Catholics in the Milwaukee archdiocese were granted a dispensation from the usual Lenten law of fast and abstinence. In announcing the dispensation, which was the first time a general Lenten dispensation had been granted within the memory of local parishioners, Archbishop Kiley stated that he had granted the dispensation due to the "disturbed conditions" at that time and the uncertainty of being able to secure the quality of food in sufficient quantity, which would enable the faithful to observe the law of abstinence during Lent, and for the remainder of the year. Abstinence was still to be observed on all Fridays of the year, the vigil of Christmas, Ash Wednesday, and the forenoon of Holy Saturday.

A class of twenty-one young people made their first Communion at special services at St. Charles on Sunday, April 30. Those who received first Communion were:

Janet Bauman	Richard Eisenbart	Joyce May	Charles Peterson
Joan Bauman	Phillip Isferding	Thomas McCarthy	Patricia Shanahan
Kenneth Chesick	Albert Kresken	George Muller	Annette Trimberger
James Coughlin	Robert Krueger	Bernard Nelson	Robert Uhen
Roger Degen	David May	Bernice Nelson	Dorothy Wisnefski
James Eaton			

Also on April 30, a farewell reception was held in Rev. Francis J. McGarry's honor in St. Charles hall following his being sworn into military service earlier that day in Milwaukee. Father McGarry, assistant pastor of St. Charles for nearly two years, was commissioned as a lieutenant (j.g.) in the United States navy chaplain corps. He was the nineteenth priest from the Milwaukee archdiocese to be assigned to military service in the Second World War. He had been ordained to the priesthood on June 6, 1936, at St. Francis Seminary and, before coming to Burlington in July 1941, had been assistant pastor at St. Rose parish in Milwaukee.

Assembled in the hall to welcome Father McGarry as he appeared for the first time in his navy chaplain's uniform were the school children of St. Charles, the teaching Sisters, Msgr. Edward Kersting of St. Mary's, members of Lt. McGarry's family from Milwaukee, Rev. Charles Meyers and members of St. Charles, and other townspeople. Members of his family who were

present included his father, Francis M. McGarry, his brother and sister-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. William McGarry, and their children Terry and Clare Ellen.

Greeting Lt. McGarry with their rousing school cheers, the school children set the tempo of the evening. Louis Brehm, secretary of the parish, acted as master of ceremonies and kept the program moving with the wit and originality of his introductions. After singing the "Star Spangled Banner," the school children sang, "I Hear America Calling," and Joan Degen spoke the words of farewell for her schoolmates.

One by one, parish groups and organizations were called upon to add their words of God-speed to the newly commissioned chaplain. James Pihringer spoke for the junior choir; James Bennett spoke for the CYO; Robert Beix gave the greeting for St. Charles Alumni Association; Mrs. Hildegard Block represented St. Ann's Society; Mrs. Elizabeth Mangold spoke as prefect of the Third Order of St. Francis; Art Kayser spoke for the senior choir; Clem Vos spoke in behalf of the Holy Name Society; and John McCourt, as president of the St. Charles Ushers, spoke for the congregation.

After a farewell song by the school children, Ruth Ann Kayser presented Lt. McGarry a spiritual bouquet of prayers from the pupils of St. Charles and Mrs. Mangold presented a spiritual bouquet from the adult parishioners. L. Reinhard Mangold, parish treasurer, with words of appreciation for Lt. McGarry's service in the parish, presented him with a farewell purse.

Father Myers paid sincere tribute to Lt. McGarry's work with the young people and the church organizations during the time he was at St. Charles. The duties of a chaplain in the armed forces, Father Myers said, continue to be those of a priest to administer the sacraments, to be spiritual counselor to the men in service, and to offer the sacrifice of the Mass for the men on the battlefronts. Lt. McGarry's proven leadership of youth, he continued, would be St. Charles' contribution to the spiritual life of our boys at the front. "I am not leaving you," Lt. McGarry



Rev. Hugh Wishlinske (surname later changed to Wish) became assistant pastor in April 1943.

said, in acknowledging the good wishes of his parishioners, "I'm going away to another mission of the church, to minister to your boys and girls who are serving your country and mine."

After a hymn, "Song of Peace," by the senior choir, Father Myers introduced Rev. Hugh Wishlinske, who had been named as Lt. McGarry's successor as assistant pastor. Rev. Wishlinske (who later changed his surname to Wish) led the prayers for the success of the new chaplain's mission. Taps were then sounded for those who had given their lives in service, and the program concluded with the singing of "God Bless America."

Lt. McGarry went to Williamsburg, Virginia, where he took a two-month course in the navy chaplain school at William and Mary College, before being assigned to duty.

A week later, one of St. Charles' priest-sons, Rev. Cyril Spiegelhoff, who had been commissioned as army chaplain with the rank of first lieutenant, left for Boston, Massachusetts, where he was to take the prescribed army chaplain training course at Harvard University before being assigned to active duty. Before leaving for chaplain training, Father Spiegelhoff had the honor to read a special Mass at St. Charles to celebrate the fortieth wedding anniversary of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Albert T. Spiegelhoff. The Mass was followed by a family gathering and a family dinner at the Colonial Club.

Nineteen eighth grade students graduated from St. Charles at services in the church on Friday, June 4. The graduates are shown in the following photograph.



Class of 1943

First row (left to right): Margaret Nelson, Marjorie Coughlin, Joan Degen, Luella Schiller, Evelyn Marsili, and Kathryn Siehoff.

Second row: Rev. Hugh Wishlinske, Jerome Block, Donald Clausen, Florence Uhen, Joan Bennett, James May, Robert Overson, and Rev. Charles Myers.

Third row: John McCarthy, Harry Groessel, Thomas Busch, Donald Lois, John Martin, Elmer Wisnefski, and Robert Reynolds.

On the following Sunday, directly following the 11 o'clock Mass, which was offered for alumni members, over 200 people gathered in St. Charles hall for the twenty-sixth annual reunion banquet of the St. Charles Alumni Association. Following the singing of the national anthem, a prayer was offered for the alumni in the armed forces. Robert Beix, retiring president, then introduced the toastmaster, Edward Cook.

Rev. Edmund J. Goebel, Ph. D., superintendent of the Milwaukee Archdiocesan Catholic schools, was guest speaker. He addressed the group on the work of the Church during the past 100 years in the field of education. The speaker told of the general social alarm facing the country because of the increase of divorces, the lack of parental love for children, the lack of unified home life, and the increase in juvenile delinquency. "No personal or financial gain can make up for a broken home," said Dr. Goebel, referring to the mothers who leave their homes for work in war plants.

The address of welcome to the class of 1943 was given by Rev. Philip Rose, who had graduated with the first class to complete the full eight years of school at St. Charles, the class of 1918. The response was given by Luella Schiller.

Visiting priests who spoke briefly included Rev. Herbert Wagner, class of 1919, and Rev. Joseph Hanauska, assistant at St. Mary's. Congratulations were also offered to the group by the pastor, Rev. Charles Myers, and the assistant, Rev. Hugh Wishlinske.

At the business meeting, Aloysius Vande Sand was elected president for the coming year, with Myrtle Weiler May, vice president; Cecelia Warren, secretary; and Paul Steinhoff, treasurer. The class of 1938 received the Sister Hermana trophy for having the best attendance at the banquet. Out of a class of fifteen, eight alumni, or 53 percent, were present.

Vocal selections for the program were sung by Elizabeth "Fifi" David, accompanied by Jack Peterson, and by James Bennett, accompanied by his sister, Joan Bennett. Jack Peterson and James Bennett led the community singing. With the singing of "To St. Charles," written by Harold G. Reuschlein of the class of 1918, the program closed.

During the summer of 1943, the interior of St. Charles church underwent an entire renovation. The work was undertaken after the necessary priorities, required by war-time conditions, were obtained. After government officials inspected the church, they allowed priorities high enough to guarantee completion of the work.

In the main part of the church, a marble effect, hard surface wainscoting was installed on the lower part of the walls, including the outer sanctuary beyond the communion rail. The sanctuary for the main altar was finished with a special marbled hard surface wainscoting. Kneelers were upholstered with genuine "fabrikoid," padded with sponge rubber over heavy hair felt. This portion of the work was done by Middleton-Faase Co. of Milwaukee.

A new type of acoustical ceiling was installed, a perforated acoust-celotex in square tile pattern, with rolled ivory factory coat finish. This was applied on the panels between the beams, with the underside of the beams covered with plain surface tile. Edward T. VerHalen, Inc., of Milwaukee, was the contractor for the ceiling work.

In addition to the construction improvements, the church was re-decorated throughout by Conrad Schmitt Studios, the art firm which first decorated the church twenty-seven years earlier. This was the first time the church had been re-decorated since then.

The sanctuary ceiling was decorated in rich Arabesque pattern in colors and gold. Wall panels received appropriate decoration, and the sanctuary murals were cleaned, re-touched, and finished with a preservative lacquer. Panels above the side altars were decorated to harmonize with the sanctuary, and the statuary was retouched.

Photos of the church interior after renovation are shown below and on the next page.



Looking toward the altar after 1943 renovation.



Looking toward back of church after 1943 renovation.

Other activities during the summer included the “June Jive,” a dance sponsored by St. Charles CYO, to raise funds for athletic equipment. Anna Mae Crowley, director of girls’ athletics for the CYO, was general chairman of the dance. Committee chairmen were refreshments, Paul Spiegelhoff; program, Art Zimmermann; decorations, Carolyn Pieters; orchestra, James Bennett; advertising, Bill Vos; and tickets, Lois Reuschlein and Mary Ellen Vos.

School started on Wednesday, September 8. Sister Sebastian, the seventh and eighth grade teacher, began her second year at St. Charles. The other faculty members were Sister Lucy who taught grades five and six; Sister Delores, third and fourth; and Sister Eulalia, first and second. Sister Rose Ann continued as music teacher. There were 165 pupils enrolled in the school. Of these, 23 were in the first grade, 19 in the second, 28 in the third, 20 in the fourth, 17 in the fifth, 19 in the sixth, 19 in the seventh, and 20 in the eighth.

That fall the Daughters of Isabella undertook to send a prayer book to every Catholic in the service. Burlington Circle No. 55 took care of the young men and women from St. Mary’s and St. Charles in Burlington, St. Joseph’s at Lyons, and St. Thomas of Waterford. The mailing list at that time showed 90 in the service from St. Mary’s, 85 from St. Charles, 25 from St. Joseph’s, and 55 from St. Thomas. The Daughters of Isabella planned to make the project a continuous one, adding names as others entered the service.

(to be continued)