

In 1856 the first frame building church was built on land still owned by the parish. From these beginnings, we have seen this parish grow from a struggling Mission Church to the large parish it is today. From that frame church there came a beautiful church, a large school, a convent, a rectory/parish office and a parish center, but even more important than the buildings, from that mere handful of dedicated Catholics, the parish has grown to become one of the outstanding parishes in the Springfield Diocese. Our parish continues to grow spiritually and physically. In the early years of the 1850's, the Catholics who settled in Collinsville were few in numbers, but they were strong in the practice of their faith. They resolved to build a church, even though they knew they could not have a resident priest. Mass for a time was said by a visiting priest in the home of Octavius Lumaghi, one of the first families to settle in Collinsville. In 1856 the frame church was built, and priests came weekly from East St Louis to care for the spiritual needs of the people.

In November of 1857, Bishop Henry D. Juncher, the first Bishop of Alton, sent Father W. Repis to Collinsville to be the first resident pastor. In 1862 Father J.N. Pettitt, was appointed pastor. Father F.J. Fisher, during whose administration the first two bells were blessed and installed in the church, succeeded him. In 1863, Father Rustige bought the first ground for the cemetery. In 1867 lots adjoining the church were purchased from D. D. Collins, one of the founders of Collinsville, for about \$3,600.00.

In August of 1879 the bishop appointed Father Henry B. Degenhardt, a newly ordained priest, pastor. He spent the next thirty-one years here in that capacity. Father Degenhardt's mission was to build a new and larger church, as well as a new school. The school was started in his first year here. From 1879 to 1884 secular teachers were employed. In 1884 the Ursuline Sisters from Alton arrived to take charge of the school. From that day to the mid 1990's the Ursulines continued to bring the finest in education to the children. The new church was partially built in 1880. For ten years there remained only the sanctuary and the transept. In 1890 the nave and the steeple were added. In 1894 it became evident that a larger school was needed and in the spring of 1895 the school was completed. On Easter Monday of that year the Most Rev. James Ryan, the third and last Bishop of Alton, dedicated it. Some years later three large classrooms and an auditorium were added. In 1920 Father Degenhardt was replaced by Father Francis Marke. In July of 1933 Father B.N. Manning began his apostolic work by bringing back many people to the "Faith of our Fathers". Father Manning's accomplishments were paying off the parish debt, repairs of the rectory, church and the buying of ground for the parish center, and the buying of a home for the sisters. In 1937 Father Manning began a Convert Class in Maryville and adopted both of these communities as Mission Parishes. On April 17, 1938 the first Mass in Maryville was said in a converted movie theatre on Easter Sunday. In June of 1950 Maryville became a parish with State Park as its Mission. In 1950 Monsignor Manning recognized the need for a Parish Center. In May 1953, The Most Rev. William A. O'Connor D.D., the Bishop of Springfield, dedicated the Parish Center. In 1956 it was determined that a new school was needed to meet the needs of the parishioners. On October 14, 1956, the church looked back upon One Hundred Years of Catholic life and Parish activity in the City of Collinsville. On November 25, 1957 Monsignor Manning died and was buried from the parish church on November 29. During that same year ground was broken for a new school.

On January 14, 1958, Monsignor Eagear was appointed pastor of SS. Peter and Paul. The new school was opened on September 2, 1958 and dedicated by Bishop William A. O'Connor D.D. on November 2, 1958.

2007-2008 Summary: From the committee preparing prospective parents for the baptism of their expected child, to those who maintain the cemetery, SS. Peter & Paul Parish is definitely "A Spiritual Home for Everyone"! It was a busy year! September began the picture taking phase of the new parish directory. On October 7, 2007 parishioners participated in the annual National Pro Life Chain. The stewardship committee presented the results of the Gallup survey on November 2 and the plan for engagement by parishioners. The first Parish Town Hall meeting was held on November 8 to inform people of the upcoming disruption due to the widening of Illinois Route 159 and the changes we will be required to accept. In preparation for Christmas, the Glory Choir presented their annual Advent program – "Lessons and Carols." Members of the parish youth group traveled to Washington, D.C. in January for the annual Right to Life March. This was their fourth year to participate. In April, when Pope Benedict XVI visited the United States, one member was in the group from the Springfield Diocese who participated in the Youth Day which the Holy Father attended in New York City. The second Town Hall meeting was scheduled for January 31, 2008, but weather interfered. It was rescheduled for March 4, with the same result. It finally took place on April 10, 2008 with a large crowd in attendance. Catholic Schools Week "Catholic Schools Light the Way" was January 28 – February 1, 2008. Scout Sunday on February 3 honored the 67 young men from the parish sponsored troop who have attained the rank of Eagle Scout in the last 50 years. Spring is always busy. Bishop George Lucas confirmed a class of 36 on April 23. On May 4, a total of 37 students received their first holy communion. The 8th grade graduating class of 32 students received diplomas on May 20. The annual homecoming was held May 30 – June 1, 2008. Again the weather was a small problem. June 22 was a special celebration of couples married over 25 years. Twenty-four couples accounted for 1,297 years of marriage. Seven couples were over 60 years and one couple reached 70. July was the annual Vacation Bible School. This was the third year for the G.R.A.C.E. program. A parish mission "More Than Silver or Gold" was conducted by Fr. Daniel Mahan January 27-29. On June 12, David Heimann, a son of the parish, presented a special program, "Catholicism Across the World" as seen in his journey to nearly 40 countries. Two novenas were held. A novena for peace was November 29 thru December 8, 2007 culminating on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. The novena to SS. Peter & Paul was held June 21 thru June 29 in preparation for the celebration of the feast day of the parish patron saints. Celebrating vocational anniversaries was the highlight of the year. On January 20, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of Sister Julia, O.S.U. (Marie Genetti) a daughter of the parish. She resides at the convent in Alton and serves in the music ministry in the area. Her sister, Ruth Lohmann, is an active member of the parish. In May, we honored Fr. Donald Meehling, a former assistant, on this 50th anniversary. Fr. George Radosevich, a son of SS. Peter & Paul, was honored on the 40th anniversary of his ordination. He is currently pastor of St. Michael's in Staunton. His brother, Steve, is active in this parish. It was a year of many blessings!

2008-2009 Summary: This year was full of old, traditional experiences and new events.

Reception of the sacraments was #1! Eight weddings were celebrated 55 baptisms (some infants, some adults) welcomed new souls. Thirty-nine funerals were held as Christians left our world to be with their Lord and Saviour. Bishop Lucas confirmed a class of 35 on April 22. First communion was on May 3. The Wednesday Warriors assumed responsibility for many everyday jobs which keep the parish operational. The Red Bag collection, aka Angela Fund, Tuitions Assistance helps many children in our parish receive a Catholic education. Regular Sunday evening meetings of the youth group helped our teenagers grow in their faith and aid the community while enjoying the social side of life. Among their activities was a trip to the Holocaust Museum in St. Louis and they also participated in the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C. from January 20-24. The Sunday bulletin lists the names of 25 men and women serving in the armed forces, protecting us and needing our prayers for their safe return. We also include a prayer list to pray for our friends and family who have health problems. Meals on Wheels celebrated 30 years in Collinsville. October 4 a Re-marriage workshop, the first in the diocese, was held. Six couples participated. Why Catholic? A new program to learn more about our Catholic faith began October 5. Perfect weather encouraged 350 people to participate in the annual Pro Life weekend which included The Life Chain. Parish deer hunters donated 450 lbs. of meat to the CMA food pantry. The Glory Choir presented their annual Advent concert "Lessons and Carols". Catholic Schools week January 26-30 was cut short by weather, but the "Catholic Schools Celebrate Service" theme prevailed the whole year. The Sixth grade stewardship program collected over 200 winter coats and 1,161 food items for the CAMA food pantry. During the year, students brought home prizes in art, music and math competitions. Graduation of 28 students was held on May 19. Vacation Bible School for children K-4 was held July 6-10. The annual homecoming, with the usual interruption due to weather, was a great success June 5, 6, 7. A celebration of the 150th anniversary of the Ursuline nuns in the Alton area was on March 22. They were honored for their service in our parish on June 28. A daughter of Ss. Peter & Paul, Sister Julia Genetti, was present. On August 9, 34 couples, married over 25 years each, celebrated a total of 1,596 years at a special Mass followed by a brunch. On August 30 the Mass was dedicated to prayer for the election of a new bishop. Two major undertakings were initiated. The K of C hall was the scene of a family festival on April 26 to kick off the campaign for the new Fr. McGivney Catholic High School. Bishop Lucas was in attendance along with former Cardinal pitcher, Jason Isringhausen, a Brighton native, who is honorary chairman of the fund raising group. The goal is for the school to open in 2011 on an 80 acre campus in Glen Carbon. It will be the only Catholic High School in this corner of Madison County and will serve many parishes, not just one. The major project for the parish is "We Must! We Can! We Will!" Although it covers many needed improvements on our campus, the catalyst was the decision by IDOT to widen Illinois Route 159 (Vandalia Street) at our front door. On September 28, Cargill and Associates along with a committee of parishioners presented a Master Plan to cover these projects. Commitment Weekend, May 2 and 3 offered parishioners their first opportunity to make a monetary pledge towards the completion of the plan. Life in our parish will be disrupted to the extreme by demolition and construction for an extended period of time during this highway widening project, over which we have no control. However, we can kill two birds with one stone, by making our necessary improvements at the same time as the street project, rather than having two separate disruptions. With the help of our loving God, we will succeed!

2009-2010 Summary SS. Peter & Paul parish had the usual busy year in 2010. There were six

weddings and 20 baptisms. Twenty-eight received their first holy communion. Since the new bishop had not yet been named, Fr. John Beveridge had the honor of confirming 34 people. Graduation from the parish school was granted to 24 students. Funerals for 50 people were held in our church and 35 were buried in our cemetery. Many annual events were repeated. The "Why Catholic?" program was held for the third year. The youth group, Catholic Crew, traveled to Washington, D. C. on January 20 for the March for Life. On October 3, 36 members constructed "Cardboard City" and collected \$1,054.00 which they donated to the KC Blanket Drive and to St. Vincent DePaul society food pantry. Catholic School Week, planned for January 31 - February 5, was re-scheduled for March due to bad weather. On February 28 a day long Pre-Cana session for 30 couples was held in the parish center. One hundred eighty women participated in the retreat, "Blessed Art Thou Amongst Women", on April 17. The successful homecoming was held June 4, 5 and 6. Profit. \$35,000.00. An African Safari was the theme of the Vacation Bible School June 21 - 25. The annual celebration of wedding anniversaries over 25 years was held with a mass and brunch on August 15. Twenty-eight couples celebrated 1,367 years of marriage. Life Chain was held on October 3 with parishioners covering the route from Clay Street to the Belt Line. The K of C hall was the site of the annual school auction and party of November 13. The Glory Choir presented the beautiful "Lessons and Carols" on December 12, a highlight of Advent. Many new things also happened. Preparation for the change in the Roman missal was announced. They will go into effect at the beginning of the Advent season in 2011. Our new Bishop, Thomas John Paprocki, was installed at the Cathedral in Springfield on June 22. IDOT informed us of the many changes coming to Illinois 159 - Vandalia Street at our front door. It will be very disruptive. The state also passed a Cemetery Oversight Act to protect all cemeteries. Our bishop also announced additional regulations to preserve the integrity and security of Catholic cemeteries. Sister Michaeline Ryan ASC, a daughter of the parish, celebrated 50 years as a member of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ, at a private ceremony at the convent in Ruma, Illinois. A piece of parish history returned to Collinsville. The confessional from the 1890 church, razed in 1966, was returned to the Collinsville History Museum. Bob Crosby, a candidate for the permanent diaconate, was assigned to the parish for a two year internship. On April 18, Fr. John was honored at a reception with many surprises as part of the "Year of the Priest." On October 24 the first S. S. Peter & Paul Fall Festival was held at the K of C. Proceeds were given to the cemetery. Two large projects were on the calendar. Many fund raisers - a concert, golf tournament, 5K run/walk - were held for the Father McGivney Catholic High School. The sign went up at the location and the site preparation began on June 14. On September 14, all was put on hold - not canceled - until the economy improves. On December 4 an overflow crowd welcomed Matthew Kelly of Sydney, Australia as he presented "Living Every Day with a Passion and Purpose." He is the author of the New York Times best seller, "Rediscovering Catholicism." The years last project was the "Advent Giving Tree", where parishioners helped give those less fortunate an item from their Christmas wish list.