

## **Highlights of St. Mary's School First 100 Years!**

- 1871---St. Mary's Parish comes into existence with the decision to build a church.
- 1872---The new Catholic Church is completed. It is the first church of any denomination in the county and is located at Third and Seneca St. Mass is offered only once every three months by a priest from Fort Dodge and there are about 7 families for membership.
- 1878---Father M.J. Gaffney becomes the first resident pastor as St. Mary's Parish has grown to 50 families.
- 1909---Father William Cooke is appointed pastor in June. He begins preparations to open a parochial school. The promise of a school brings a greater influx of new members to the parish.
- 1911---Father Cooke travels back East in the summer to make arrangements for the teaching staff of the new school.
- 1912---Father Cooke buys the former Congregational Church, now unoccupied since their merger with the Presbyterian Church, at the corner of East 3rd and Cayuga Streets. The cost is \$3500.00 and it serves as the school for 15 years. It is also a boarding school housing about 12 boys and 20 girls a term.
- 1912---The School Teachers of St. Francis with their motherhouse at Clinton IA, accepts charge of the infant school. It opens with a full elementary and a ninth grade with a higher grade added in each of the next 3 years.
- 1916---The first students graduate from St. Mary's! They are Marie Bouchey, Grace Carey, John Connell, Doris Hopkins, and Ann Reilly.
- 1919---Lots are purchased just south of the rectory and it is announced that a new parochial school will be erected costing at least \$60,000.00.

- 1927---The cornerstone of the two-story fireproof brick building was laid in 1926 and the building is dedicated by Bishop Edmond Heelan and Monsignor Cooke.
- 1928---Father Joseph Fitzpatrick becomes the first priest to be ordained from St. Mary's Parish. Msgr. Cooke saw the school and the fostering of vocations to be the major accomplishments of his pastorate.
- 1934---Monsignor Clarence Conway is appointed pastor of St. Mary's following the death of Msgr. Cooke.
- 1935---Father Robert O'Reilly becomes the first assistant pastor at St. Mary's. He devotes much of his time to the school, especially in counseling and boys' athletics.
- 1938---St. Mary's became state-accredited. Seven nuns and the assistant pastor staff the school.
- 1945---Monsignor Cleo J. Ivis is appointed pastor after the death of Msgr. Conway. He had been serving as the diocesan Superintendent of Schools and the director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith.
- 1946---Panthers becomes the official team name following a vote of the high school students.
- 1949---The Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary came to Storm Lake replacing the Sisters of St. Francis who had served St. Mary's well for over 37 years. Ten sisters came and, due to increased enrollment, the first lay teacher, LeRoy Salem, was hired to teach and coach.
- 1957---The new St. Mary's High School with gymnasium and auditorium was dedicated by Bishop Joseph Mueller. The contracts for the new building totaled \$301,489.00

- 1963---An addition of several classrooms was added to the high school at a cost of \$61,375.00
- 1964---A band was started along with a drill team and girls' track and basketball.
- 1966---St. Mary's School Board was established by Msgr. Ivis. The 1966-67 school budget was \$68,600.00 and the enrollment was 452 students in grade and high school.
- 1967---After a pastorate of 22 years and many accomplishments—building the church, high school, and convent—Msgr. Ivis decides to take on fewer responsibilities and becomes pastor at Lidderdale.
- 1967---Monsignor Richard V. Sweeney is named pastor at St. Mary's. The old rectory is torn down and parking provided next to the high school.
- 1967---Sacred Heart Parish of Early elects to send their high school students to St. Mary's and the two parishes join in providing an excellent Christian education for their young people.
- 1973---Three priests, eleven Sisters and fourteen lay teachers staff the school with an enrollment of 467 students.
- 1973---Father Daniel Lynch becomes pastor at St. Mary's. Playground is added for the school and facilities are updated. He starts the annual parish golf tournament to benefit the parish and school.
- 1977---St. Mary's offers Kindergarten for the first time. Lee Naughton is the teacher.
- 1986---Father Paul-Louis Arts is named pastor at St. Mary's. The elementary school is renovated and up-dated during his pastorate.

1990---This is the first year for St. Mary's Ball and Auction. Co-chairs are Bob '54 and Fran Lenhart and Jim and Laurie Murray. It continues to be a major fundraiser for the school.

1993---Father Clair Boes becomes the pastor at St. Mary's.

1993---The St. Mary's Boys' Baseball team wins the State 1A championship.

2000---Father Robert Schimmer is named the pastor at St. Mary's.

2002---St. Mary's offers a pre-school program for the first time. It is housed on the first floor of the convent.

2003---Father Bruce Lawler becomes the pastor at St. Mary's. The parish debt is retired under his leadership!

2004---St. Mary's Scrip is organized to help with tuition costs and general school expenses.

2005---The SOS (Save Our School) Thrift Store is organized. As of January 2012, it has contributed \$612,000 to aid the school!

2009---The last Presentation Sisters leave the parish, and the school is staffed completely by lay teachers. The students and parishioners of St. Mary's were blessed by their presence for 60 years!

2011---The St. Mary's Boys' Basketball team wins the state 1A Basketball tournament.

2012---St. Mary's School celebrates 100 years of educating young people!

2013 – Rev. Dr. Timothy A. Friedrichsen is named pastor of St. Mary’s Parish and later priest-president of St. Mary’s School.

2016 – St. Mary’s Parish Center opens and is used for a variety of parish and school activities including awards days, school dances, faculty gatherings, DARE graduations, Irish Teas, Catholic Schools Week activities, youth parish activities and parish fellowship gatherings.

2017 - The St. Mary’s community was joined by the family of Kathy (Christenson ’73) Nemmers to dedicate the renovated science room named for Kathy, who had died 11 months earlier. Her widower, Joe, contributed the funds to renovate the room, implement a \$100,000 STEM challenge gift for the entire school and purchase computers and equipment for the science room. Many members of the Nemmers and Christenson families were in attendance for the groundbreaking and dedication.

2018 – Work began on the Bernard and June (Beck) Christenson Science Room renovation to upgrade the high school science room/laboratory. Not only will the facilities be upgraded to match the middle school room, but new computers, lab equipment and supplies will be purchased to dovetail with the efforts made in 2017 by Joe Nemmers in honor of his in-laws.

