

Many Changes to St. James School in the 1960s



(St. James School 1960)

The new St. James school, dedicated in January, 1959, soon experienced growing pains. It's no wonder with large families like the Faheys (10), the Hebbs (17), the Tillers (11), the DiMaggios (13), the Wrights (14) and many more families.

Alum Jim Schneider remembers that there were 54 kids living on Pine Street, just off of Park Street, in the 1950s and 1960s, and nearly all of them went to St. James.

The 1960-61 school year started with 481 students, with 65 students in first grade, 76 students in second grade, 65 in third, 59 in fourth, 62 in fifth, 53 in sixth, 54 in seventh, and 47 in eighth grade. In 1963, the enrollment was at its highest enrollment for the decade at 483, but by 1969, enrollment dropped to 241. To accommodate the large number of students in a given class, some grade levels had combined classes, i.e., one room with all the same grade and one room with a mix of two grades.



In September 1959, the 1st graders who began their career at St. James School were the first class to attend all 8 years at the new St. James. Here are five of that 1st grade class. The girls are Ray Foley, Sue Schaub and Peggy Shea. The boy holding the door is Wayne Pedder.

Active PTA

The PTA played a big role in connecting families to the school, and it was the "real" PTA affiliated with the Madison public schools and the national PTA. A message to the parents included, "Since we consider PTA meetings so important for the benefit of the children, special homework has been assigned to the children that evening. It is the same for all. Send your mothers and dad to the PTA meeting."

The PTA sponsored or coordinated events and activities, including the room mothers, a parish dance, hot lunch, presentations on education topics, and the school picnic. Each grade had from three to six room mothers, all identified by their husband's names. Cost of lunch was \$1.25 weekly for the first child and \$1 for each other child in the family.

The all-school picnic was at Vilas after the 8 o'clock school Mass for which the students were expected to "dress well for Holy Mass." They could change at school or at their house if they lived nearby. The PTA provided ice-cream, potato chips, and chocolate milk for the students who brought their lunch. Teachers stayed until 3 o'clock with the students at the park. Parents were invited and asked to bring a dish to pass to share with the teachers.

The St. James PTA sponsored a parish dance Feb. 3, 1961, in the church auditorium. "Here is a splendid opportunity to enjoy a major social activity with your friends and at the same time to make an important contribution to the educational potential of St. James School," read the letter to the parents. Tickets were \$1 with proceeds going for the purchase of colored science filmstrips and a screen, a cost of about \$700. "This addition will go a long way towards making St. James School a leader in the visual education. . ." Benny Ehr's eight-piece orchestra provided the music "to please both young and old." For those who didn't dance, cards and card tables were provided. Promoted in the local newspaper, the dance was opened to the public and included refreshments and door prizes.

No Tuition but Book Fees

Parents paid no tuition but a small book and supply fee. The crowded condition in some classrooms prompted Fr. Louis Scheuring, pastor, to write in the 1963 financial report that "some student will have to be

turned away. Those parents whose children will use the school in the future must do their honest share to support it with sacrifice."

In that same financial report, Fr. Scheuring welcomed new members from the old St. Joseph Church which had been razed during the urban revitalization movement of the 1960s "We hope they will feel at home in their new parish, and we look forward to their contribution to the parish spiritually, socially, and financially."

With four Masses on Sunday and three on weekdays and four on the First Friday of the month, the parish was vibrant. It was the time of Vatican II and many changes in the church, as well in society. By 1965, the 8 o'clock daily Mass became optional for student attendance.

Changing Society

In 1963, the SSND sisters changed their habits were able to change from wearing a habit to regular clothes. By 1968, the sisters were able to wear regular clothes and not the religious habit. For some of the students it was a bit of a shock to see the full face and hair when the sisters no longer wore their veils. Alumni interviewed from the 60s have significant



(1963-Sr. Gerardis and Sr. Luanne)

memories of the turbulent times., including the deaths of President John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, and Robert Kennedy; the Viet Nam War, and the protests occurring throughout the country and not far from the school and church on the University of Wisconsin campus.

Alumni from the 1960s recall with appreciation their seventh grade teacher, Sister Lorraine, (who helped them not just learn the events of the day but to reflect on them). "She was able to nurture an appreciation of the complicated world that our society was struggling with at the time," Tim Martinelli.

Children's Choir

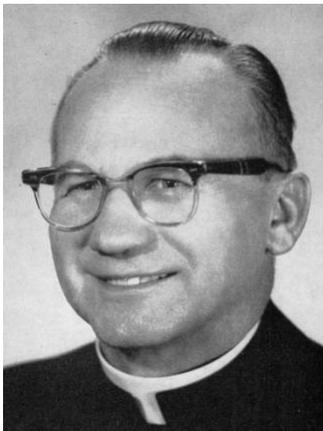
The music program at St. James School in the 1950s and 1960s included a Children's Choir that sang for funerals and for weddings*. During the 60's, the Choir was directed by Sr. Philomena. Sr. Lorna, who was an 8th grade teacher in the later 60's, was a particular

favorite of the students. She was remembered fondly because of her "smiley face" and the hootenannies she would lead in the gym. "How many times we sang 'This Land if Your Land'." Alumna, Peggy Shea, remembers the Children's Choir taking bus trips to Milwaukee and other areas paid for by the stipends earned by the choir singing at the funerals and weddings.* Peggy says the favorite trip that the Children's Choir took was to the Dickeyville Grotto.

The girls sang in the choir; the boys served at Mass. The boys were scheduled to serve Mass during the week including the early Masses before the school day started. The first Mass was scheduled for 6:15. Parents would often need to bring the boys to church to serve the early Mass, take the boys home so they could eat breakfast, and then return them to school to start their school day. For school masses, there were often four boys serving at the Mass.

Kathy Fedele Harper attended St. James from 4th through 8th grades, graduating in June 1964. She has fond memories, including of field trips to Milwaukee to the zoo and museum. She looked forward to Friday afternoons when the upper grades gathered in the gym to sing songs, after which the girls walked to West High School for home ec class. "That was really fun!"

Cathy Howe Doyle finished at St. James school in 1971 and eight years later she came back to teach at the school. She remembers her education during the 1960s with fond memories. "The thing that sticks out most in my mind is the example that my parents and my teachers at St. James set for me. The example was one of respect for others and sacrifice."



By 1968, Fr. Scheuring found it necessary to be reassigned to a less demanding pastorate, and Fr. William DeBock became pastor. He had suffered a heart attack in 1961 but with the many prayers, he recovered and was able to continue as pastor after time at home with his mother in Iona, MN. Dane County Sheriff Franz Haas, a trustee of the church, and Traffic Safety Officer Arden Pope drove him to his mother's along with a nurse, for his recovery.

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Athletic Association



(Boys Basketball 1962-63)

While athletics and sports were important throughout St. James history, it wasn't until 1961 that the St. James Athletic Association was formed to "provide a sound athletic program." Parents and alumni helped with coaching times. In the 1960s, team sports were only for the boys. Bob Cerniglia, who had successful



softball, basketball and football teams, left a lasting impression on many of his student athletes and has continued contact with many of his former team members.

Athletes raised money for their programs, selling candy around St. James and in their neighborhoods. The St. James parking lot was used to sell parking for the University of Wisconsin football games. The student athletes were often given \$1.00 for their work in parking cars. The boys would quickly run over to Camp Randall and be able to purchase a ticket and watch the Badgers play their football game.



(1965 Vilas Park Champs)

During the summers, Vilas Park was a great training ground for St. James athletes. In the city summer leagues particularly in the 60's, there were several champion baseball teams made up of mostly St. James students from the neighborhood. In this picture in fine print, it says, "Vilas Champs, 1965"

Christmas Programs and Theater at St. James

Music and theater continued to be popular in the school and parish. The stage in the church auditorium served as the site of many plays and performances over the years, with money earned going to the school and parish. An April 1963 photo in the Capitol Times showed a scene from "High Ground" featuring Cathy Cooper, Phyllis Schuchardt, and Jim Deuppen.

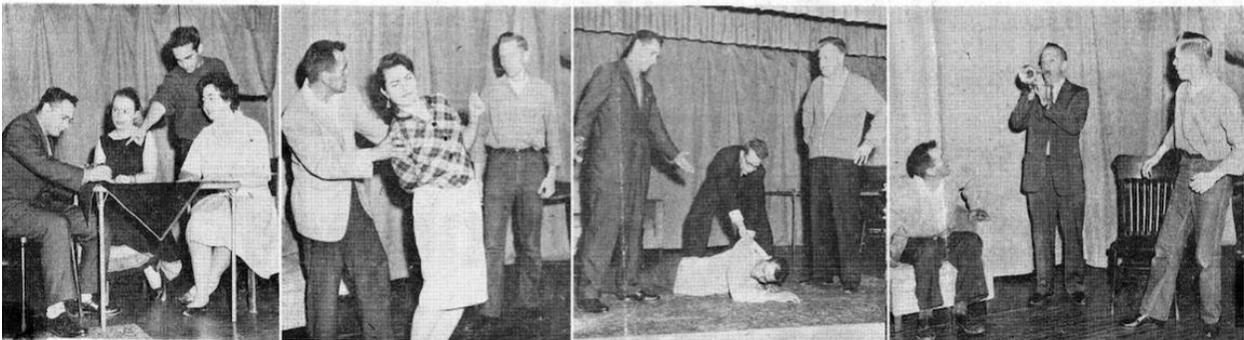


St. James Players will present "High Ground" at St. James auditorium, 123 St. James Ct., at 8 p. m. Saturday, and at 7 and 8 p. m. Sunday. Shows here in a scene from the mystery drama.

St James Players 1963.jpeg

THE CAPITAL TIMES, Tuesday, Oct. 18, 1960—3

St. James Players Open Season With Comedy



The St. James Catholic Theater group will open its season by presenting the three-act comedy, "Arsenic and Old Lace," at 8:15 p.m. Saturday and Sunday in St. James auditorium. In the picture at left, Joe Barrie, 910 Delaplaine Ct., who plays Mr. Gibbs, is about to enjoy a glass of poisoned wine

provided by Neida Roemer, 116 S. Orchard St., (Aunt Abby), and Kathy McCloskey, 326 Westmorland Blvd. (Aunt Martha). Upsetting their plans is Bill Messinger, 3002 Oakridge Ave., as Mortimer Brewster. The second scene shows Elaine Moeller, 121 State St., who as Elaine Harper, is about to be

thrown into the cellar by Dick Roemer, 116 S. Orchard St., at the left, and Victor Crapp, 1129 Bowen Ct., who take the roles of Jonathan Brewster and Dr. Einstein. In the third picture are (left to right) standing—Joe Barrie, 910 Delaplaine Ct.; Paul Moubry, 124 S. Mills St., and Tom Segerson, 505

Leonard St., and lying on the floor is Dick Roemer, 116 S. Orchard St. As Teddy Brewster, Tom Jafferis, 1325 Vilas Ave., in the scene at the right, is shattering the quiet of the Brewster home. At the left is Dick Roemer, and at the right is Victor Crapp. (Photos by DeLange Studio)



Christmas Program 1960--Choir: Marilyn Forrer, Judy Wimmer, Susan Esch, Linda Coyle, Barbara Hoffman, Ann Marie Lee, Linda Endres, Nancy Rapp and Kathy Eckstein as Mary

Christmas Programs were a time for all the students to shine in front of their parents and families. The programs were presented on the stage in the auditorium. Besides the singing of traditional Christmas carols, the story of the Nativity was and continues to be the focus of the St. James Christmas programs.

The Bell Towers

The ladder to the Bell Towers in the St. James Church were an interesting part of the 1960's video. Have you climbed up to the Bell Towers and seen the sights from up there?

* Patricia Brummal (Molitor) fondly remembers the children's choir singing at her wedding June 5, 1965. She was particularly grateful because the inside of the church ended up being worked on the weekend of her wedding. There was scaffolding throughout the church. Fr. Jones, associate pastor, helped Patricia and her husband prepared for her nuptials. He was also an affiliate of the Dominic Society. The Dominic Society was a community group who organized social and religious activity for single adult Catholics. It was in the Dominic Society that Patricia met her husband.