

## **ST. PATRICK'S PARISH . . . a small country church with a large history!**

St. Patrick's Parish continues today as it began, back in the early 1850's, a small country church perched on a rise, 10 miles west of the Lake Michigan Shores. The parish was founded by Irish immigrants. The workmanship and the heritage of those people still surfaces today as one looks upon the beauty and architecture of the 104 year old stone building, built in 1877, and still in use for Sunday Mass as well as on holy days.

Prior to gathering stones from the lake shore for construction of the building, and hauling them to the present site by oxen, Mass was held in a small log building. A priest traveled on horseback from Cascade on a monthly basis, arriving on Saturday evening and staying over at nearby homes of parishioners.

Alex McMullen, one of the craftsmen who assisted in the construction of the church, continues to be represented in the parish. Five generations of the McMullen family have been members. Isabel Hand McMullen is its oldest member, who far surpasses some of the young people with her vim and vigor at parish activities.

For many years, St. Patrick's was a mission parish of St. Mary's, Random Lake. In 1953, Father Raymond Sochurek became its first full-time pastor. He knew of the determination of the parish people and through his own unselfish concern, undertook this new challenge while continuing as Chaplain of St. Nicholas Hospital caring for the spiritual needs of the sick.

In December, 1990, at the age of 75, Father Sochurek retired, and history began to repeat itself. St. Mary's Pastor, Father Paul Janette, became administrator of St. Patrick's. Father Sochurek continued to celebrate Mass at St. Patrick's until November, 1991. The parish continues to retain its individuality by conducting its own CCD classes for the grade school children but combining resources for the high school students. It continues with its own fund raisers, and with the help of God, St. Patrick's will maintain its identity as a parish community.

Since 1999-2000 St. Patrick's has only been used for weddings, funerals, and St. Patrick's Day.