

The History of St. James Catholic Church





His Holiness, Pope Paul VI



Rt. Rev. Vincent S. Waters
Bishop of Raleigh



Fr. Edward Beatty,

Former priests, missionary and pastors

1842 Fr. Gifford

1848 Fr. J. J. O'Connell & Fr. L. P. O'Connell

1854 Fr. A. J. McNeal

1855 Fr. Joseph P. O'Connell

1865 Fr. L. P. O'Connell (Vicar General)

1876 Fr. Herman Wolfe & Fr. Joseph Keller, OSB

1879 Fr. Stephen Lyons

1884 Fr. Rudesind Schrembs, OSB

1885 Fr. Julius Pohl & Fr. Patrick Doulon, OSB

1886 Fr. Walter Leahy, OSB

1887 Fr. John Hill

1888 Fr. Julius Pohl

1891 Fr. Bernard

1892 Fr. Joseph Mueller

1901 Fr. Albert

1903 Fr. Peter

1904 Fr. Matthew

1906 Fr. William

1908 Fr. Gregory Windschegl

1911 Fr. Leo Kuny

1913 Fr. Celestine Bache

1914 Fr. Mark Cassidy

1915 Fr. Maurus Buckert

1920 Fr. Gerard Rettys

1925 Fr. Herman J. Goines

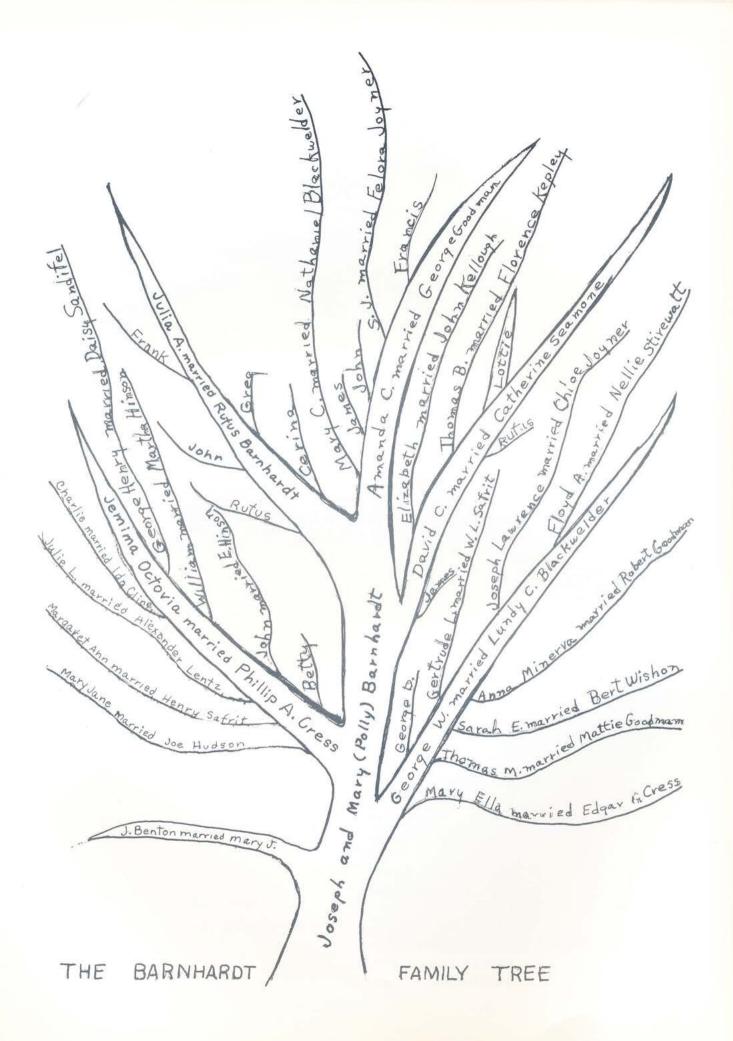
1934 Fr. James Cowan

1946 Fr. Thomas Curran, (first resident priest)

1960 Fr. Edward L. Gross

1962 Fr. James G. O'Brien

1968 Fr. Edward Beatty



"From the lowly acorn a mighty tree grew."

And from a seed implanted in one man's mind, a Catholic parish was started, then nurtured by his family and friends. One hundred years later the descendents of Joseph Barnhardt - the Blackwelder's, the Goodman's, Kellough's, Safrit's, Cress', Miller's, Joyner's, LLentz's and others are still members of this fast growing parish, taking part in the services, belonging to the various organizations and joining in with the social gatherings of St. James.

And from a seed implanted in one man's mind, a Catholic parish was started, then nurtured by his family and friends. One hundred years later the decendents of Joseph Barnhardt - the Blackwelder's, the Goodman's, Kellough's, Safrit's, Cress', Miller's, Joyner's, Lentz's and others are still members of this fast growing parish, taking part in the services, belonging to the various organizations and joining in with the social gatherings of Sf. James.

Through the years many other families moved into the parish and have become an important part of the congregation. All the way from Lebanon came two young men who, together with their families, have played an important part in the development of the parish...the Williams and the Boulus's. From other parts of this country and in more recent times came the MacGregor's, the Stanley's, Windle's, Joachem's, Klimas's and many more.



Most of the records of the early church have been lost or destroyed, but one account of the early church is found in "Catholicity in the Carolinas and Georgia" by the Rev. J.J. O'Connell, O.S.B., who at one time served the Concord mission.

"There was but one Catholic family in the community on my first visit---the Barnhardts, received into the church by Father Guifford in 1842. The children were well instructed, the mother, a woman of rare excellence, and Joseph Barnhardt, a man of superior intelligence, held in deserved esteem by his countrymen."

Joseph Barnhardt had borrowed a book on religious controversy. He studied it closely and found logical answers to the religious questions he had in his mind. He decided to become a Catholic.

It was through this family that Catholicity found its way into Cabarrus County. Joseph Barnhardt had been a Lutheran until his conversion. He was influential with his family and friends, supplying them with literature on Catholicity. Within the space of 25 years nearly all the settlement was converted. His wife and children became Catholic and brought their companions into the church. This original group included Blackwelders', Goodmans', Cress', Seamones', Safrits', Joyners', Wishons', Kelloughs', and others.





They were regularly visited by priests to prepare the children for Holy Communion, visiting the parishioners and making the acquaintance of their friends.

Joseph Barnhardt always dreamed of having a church in the community instead of holding services in the homes. He often talked of donating land. However when he died in 1858, he had made no practical plans to have a church built.

On June 1, 1869, according to the wishes of his late father-in-law, George C. Goodman deeded a picturesque plot of ground, atop a hill surrounded with pines - a plot on the Gold Hill Road. And so the first St. James Catholic Church was erected.

George Goodman, husband of Joseph's daughter, Amanda, helped superintend the work done by the members of the parish. He gave generously of his time, labor and money as did all the other members of the small parish.

On August 1, 1869, St. James Catholic Church was dedicated by the Rt. Rev. James Gibbons, D.D.V. of North Carolina, who was assisted by Father J. J. O'Connell and his brother, Father L. P. O'Connell, who were responsible for a vast mission including half the state of South Carolina and large part of North Carolina.

The Rev. Herman Wolfe, O.S.B. of St. Mary's Help Abbey, Belmont, took over the Concord mission in 1876, assisted by the Rev. Joseph Keller and the Rev. Stephen Lyons.

In the fall of 1880 the Rev. John J. Keene, newly consecrated for the Richmond Diocese, acting as administrator of the North Carolina diocese, administered Confirmation and appointed the Rev. Stephen Lyons to take charge of the mission.

During these years, Mass was held about once a month with priests coming from Belmont, Greensboro and Salisbury.





In 1901 Fr. Albert from St. Mary Help Abbey in Belmont was appointed to serve the Concord mission. On August 9, 1903, St. James was the scene of its first High Mass, celebrated by Fr. Albert, assisted by Fr. Chillian with choir chanters Fr. Stephen and Fr. Avabert. Later in the afternoon Fr. Chillian delivered a sermon followed by Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

Father Mathew was appointed in June 1904 and organized a First Communion class. He spent nine days preparing children for their First Holy Communion and giving the adults a series of sermons. The following made their First Communion: Chloe Joyner, Carrie Blackwelder, Margaret Blackwelder, Mary Barnhardt, Leroy Blackwelder, Gertrude Barnhardt, Garvis Blackwelder and Walter Barnhardt.

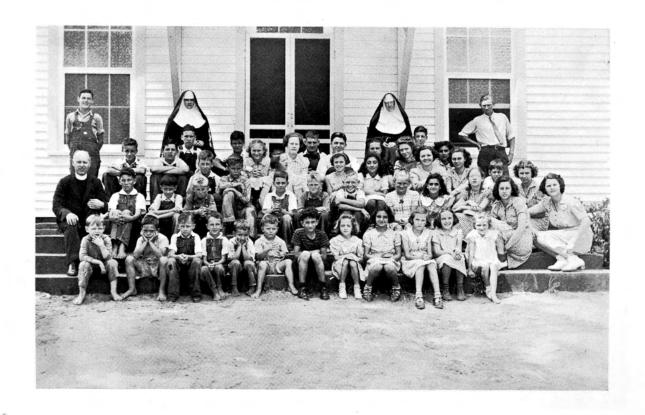
The Rt. Rev. Bishop Heid confirmed a class of twenty-two in October of that year after Parishioners renovated the church. Other improvements included a new stove, carpet for the sanctuary and a new organ.



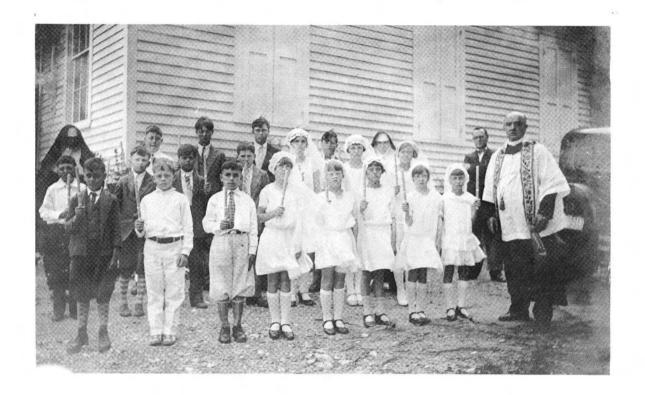
From 1906 Fr. William, Fr. Cornelius, Fr. Gregory, Fr. Leo, Fr. Celestine Bache and Fr. Mark Cassidy, all of Belmont, served. Fr. Maurus Buchert was assigned in 1915 and served for five years, and was succeeded by Fr. Laurence Mohale in 1920.

In 1925 Fr. Herman J. Goines of Belmont Abbey was appointed. Father Herman, as he was known and loved by Catholics and non-Catholics alike, stayed for nine years. He endeared himself to the children by giving them candy after Mass and he always gave prayer books and rosaries to members of the Communion classes. He was a war veteran and spent his pension on the needs of the people. He would come from Belmont Abbey on Friday and stayed with the Joyners (in a room of their home they built specially for him) until his return to the Abbbey late Sunday. He worked around the cemetery and visited the people before going back to Belmont.

Father James Cowan became pastor of the church in Albemarle in 1934 and served St. James as a mission. The parish grew rapidly during these years. Fr. Cowan encouraged the people to work together through the Altar Society. Many of the members still remember the meetings in the homes, then as the group became larger, in the Coca Cola Hall in Concord.



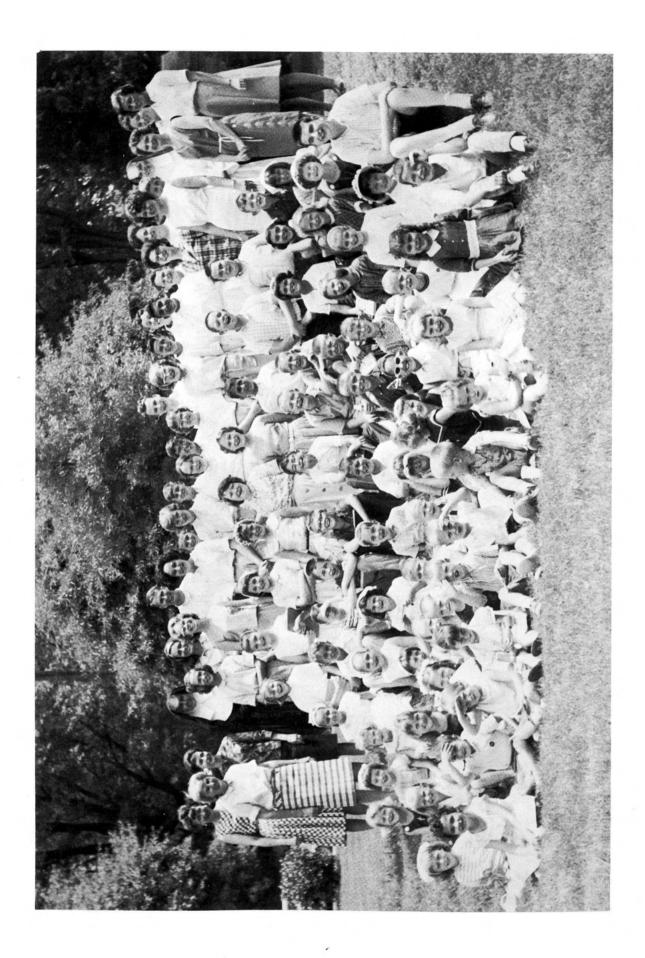




By 1945 Father Thomas Curran replaced Fr. Cowan as pastor of St. James. Then in 1947 St. James was a mission no longer. Fr. Curran was named pastor and first resident priest. The property on North Union, site of the present chuch was purchased. The home on the property was old but Fr. Curran used it for a rectory and remodeled two of the rooms into a chapel.

Then one February afternoon in 1954, Mrs. Guy Cress saw black smoke pouring from the church on the hill. She spread the alarm but when the Concord firemen arrived, the church was a mass of flames. Only the organ and one hymnal were saved. The loss of the church, estimated to be worth about \$20,000 was only partially covered by insurance.

The old house on North Union Street was torn down to make way for a new church. The members of St. James, disheartened by the loss of the historic old church, attended mass in many places in the year that followed. The city of Concord offered the use of the Community Center. Then Fr. Curran rented the old Calvary Lutheran Church building on Buffalo Street. But the building was sold and members had to attend mass at St. Joseph's in Kannapolis until the new church was completed.



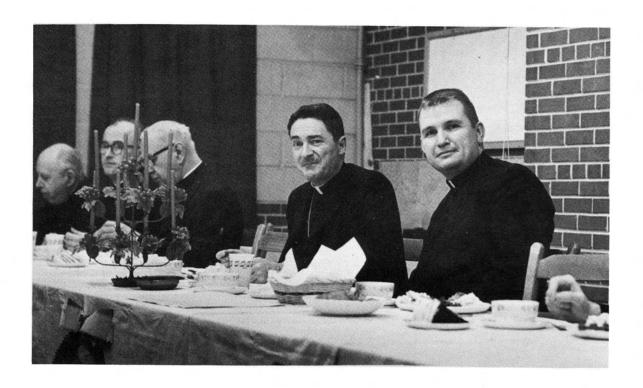
The new church was dedicated on May 22, 1955 by the Rt. Rev. Vincent S. Waters, Bishop of Raleigh. Also in attendance at the dedication was the Rev. James Navagh, D.D., Auxiliary of Raleigh and Father Gregory from Belmont Abbey.

Fr. Curran was transferred to High Point in 1960 and Fr. Edward L. Gross came to Concord from Hickory. He encouraged the Guild to establish a nursery in the downstairs hall for infants and small children. The nursery is still used for tots too active for church attendance.

Fr. James O'Brien, a native of Boston, was sent to Concord from Brevard. Fr. O'Brien loved music. He sang and encouraged singing among the members. He also organized Boy Scout Troop 73 with Walter Furr, Jr. as scoutmaster. Charles Williams and Swindell Williams had started a troop a few years before but at that time there were not enough boys of scouting age to operate a troop.

Fr. O'Brien registered the new scouting group while the boys were away on their first Campout Retreat. Walter Furr, Jr., was later succeeded by Dallas Stanley, Frank Sloop, Charles Thomas and Jim O'Brien.





Father Richard Allen came to St. James in October, 1963, about the time of the Second Ecumenical Council. Changes were in order and the parish was a beehive of activity.

A new electric organ, magnificent stained glass windows for the whole church, new property on Elm Street, a bus for youth activities! Then a need for rearranging the altar so that the priest faced the congregation. Fr. Allen decided to renovate the entire church while making the necessary changes.

He planned everything months ahead. He canvassed the parish to get everybody's cooperation. All the work was done between the last mass on one Sunday and the first mass the following Sunday.

Immediately after the 11 A.M. mass, a crew of members started dismantling the old altar. The walls were patched and painted; the pews and floors were sanded and refinished; beautiful mahogany paneling was installed around the altar. Men worked at night, women worked during the day, even the Boy Scouts helped. Work continued most nights until 11 P.M. Saturday night the last details were completed. It was almost 11 o'clock when Louis Stipic called from Harrisburg to say the front altar was ready. Tommy Williams took his truck to pick it up and brought it into the church around midnight.

Early the next morning before the 8:30 mass, Ruby Lentz slipped into the church with a beautifully hand finished altar cloth she had just completed.

The transformation was complete. The sun shone through brilliantly colored stained glass windows. The effects of mellow mahogany panelling was unbelievable. It seemed like a completely different church, and it was all done in less than a week! A few months later wall to wall carpet was installed at the altar and in the aisles. Marg Cress made new vestments and finally came air conditioning for the church.







The physical changes in the church were only surpassed by new interest in the youth. Father Allen found time to start the Cubs, the Explorers, the Brownies and the Girl Scouts. He organized the Altar Boys and arranged trips to Charleston, Wrightsville Beach, the Appalachian Trail. He bought an old bus and drove it himself on many of the trips.

The old bus was used so much it kept breaking down, so St. James bought a new bus. The first trip was a canoeing trip to Wisconsin by the Explorers. He took a group of 24 boys on a three week trip to New York, Nova Scotia Scoutenniel and Expo '67 in Canada. He was bus driver, guide and advisor.

The CYO became very active too. In 1964 the entire CYO went to Our Lady of the Hills Camp in Hendersonville. This has become an annual affair and St. James members still talk about the time they won the talent show with the boys doing a ballet.







Nine CYO members from St. James left with Fr. Allen from Douglas Airport in November 1965 for the National Catholic Youth Convention in Chicago. Dennis Blackwelder of the Gold Hill Road served on the fifty-member National Credentials Committee. Philip Williams, Elizabeth Miller and Elaine Furr voted three of the ten votes allotted to North Carolina. Robert Ross, Martha MacGregor, Linda Blackwelder, Taffy Williams and Taffy Davis were elected to serve as alternate delegates to the North Carolina Delegation.

The CYO visited other young people in the community and invited them to St. James as their guests. Then in 1967 they again started off to the National Convention...this time by bus to Miami.









During those months St. James was using the building on Buffalo Street, the parishioners lead by Charlie Williams had their first barbecue. This has become an annual event and the largest of the fund-raising events. St. James barbecues have grown tremendously in size and reputation. Charlie still heads the group who does the barbecuing.

Careful planning and hard work start months ahead of the big event. There is wood to be sawed and stored, people to be called, cakes to be made. The kitchen is completely house-cleaned and polished. Even the children gather after school to fold boxes for take-out orders. Those who can, arrange to take their day off the day of the barbecue so they can help. Those who can't take the day off help in other ways. But no matter how many helpers, everyone depends on Ruth Blackwelder to give directions. She always knows how much of everything is needed as well as the various kinds of help needed.

The Woman's Guild, started in 1946, included a small group of women of the parish who wanted a study group. After the group was organized they saw the need to use their time and energy working for much-needed church supplies. They started selling Christmas cards to their friends and families. Then they sold hangers, flavoring, and eventually their treasury grew and grew until they were able to give a \$1,000 check toward the purchase of the church property in North Union, the site of the present church.

This is the same Guild that is presently the largest of the parish organizations and includes all the women of the parish. Their contributions have bought religious books for the church library, and they have contributed money from their treasury to every church project that needed it. They have paid for vestments, curtains, parties, and other items. They have provided their members with many interesting and informative programs of civic interest. They have also held cake sales, fish dinners, bazaars, covered-dish suppers, etc.









The St. James Sunday School was begun in the distant past. Parents, priests and relatives have taught the children down through the years. The Sisters of Mercy from Sacred Heart Convent in Belmont have always been ready and more than willing to help when they were needed. Sister Jean Baptiste has taught in the St. James Sunday Schools so many years she calls the younger generation her grandchildren because she taught their parents and even some of the grandparents. She is seen in many of the pictures taken of the group at the old church.



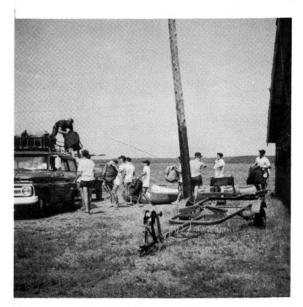


PAGE 29













In keeping with the Vatican Council's movement to encourage the Catholic laymen to participate fully in church activities, the members of St. James elected its first Advisory Council on December 4, 1966. The main purpose of the group is to relieve the parish priest of much detail work and provide opportunities for laymen to serve in positions of leadership in the congregation.

The group includes eight standing committees which are concerned with eight areas of church interest. The first Advisory Council included Guy Cress, H. E. MacGregor (St. James' accountant), George Monk, Tom Simpson, Anthony Tokarz, Lorraine Williams, Rocco Trombello and Ruth Blackwelder.

In August 1967 St. Joseph Church in Kannapolis became part of St. James. Fr. Allen and now Fr. Beatty serve both parishes. Many of the members of St. Joseph's are former members of St. James and the two parishes have always been close, attending each others' gatherings.







During this Centennial Year Father Beatty brought to the Parish a Community of three Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters of Monroe, Michigan who wished to experiment in different type works and in small community living. They took up residence in the Convent and are a most welcome addition to the Parish. Sister Mary Curtin does Guidance Counseling work on the Junior High level and conducts an Adult Religious Education Class for the Parish. Sister Rita Konesny teaches English on the College level and also takes our CCO class of Juniors and Seniors for instruction. Sister Regina Abell is Parish Sister full-time, in charge of the CCO Program and various other activities.









When Father Allen was transferred to St. Patrick Parish in Charlotte, N.C., Father Edward J. Beatty was transferred here from St. Gabriel Parish in Greenville, N.C., to become our new Pastor. Existing Church organizations and activities have been continued in operation. Father's special interest is in the field of Church renewal through Adult Discussion groups.

St. James parish this year of 1969 is a thriving congregation of more than six hundred. Fr. Edward Beatty is pastor. The present Advisory Council includes George Monk, Ruby Lentz, Walter Furr, Jr., Leo Barnhardt, James Jochem, Guy Cress, Glenn Wishon and H. E. MacGregor.

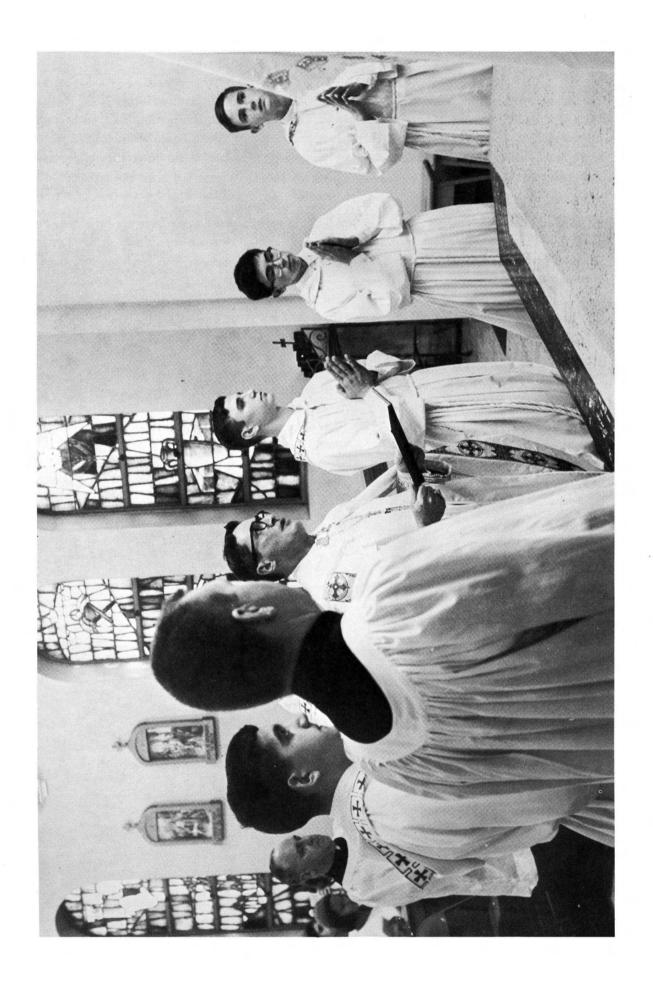
St. James Sponsors the Cub Scouts with James Jochems, Club leader; Den Mothers Joy LePage and Marie Blount, Webelo leader, Bob Larkin; Scoutmaster Jim O'Brien, and and Explorer Post with Fr. Beatty and Tony Blackwelder as Advisor.

The CYO is headed by Mr. and Mrs. Alan Santa Kruz.

The property on the Gold Hill Road has been improved during the last few years. This project is not yet complete. The land should be landscaped. The old cemetery is being enlarged and beautification is taking place over the rear of the property where so many important events took place. Eventually the parishoners hope for a beautifully planted area where parish picnics will again be held.















Present members of St. James and St. Joseph parishes

Mr. & Mrs. Wayne Adams

Mr. & Mrs. William Ahern

Mr. & Mrs. Earl Aube

Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Ball

Mr. & Mrs. Paul Barber

Mr. Ben Barnhardt

Mr. & Mrs. Charles Barnhardt

Mr. & Mrs. Floyd Barnhardt, Jr.

Mr. Floyd Barnhardt

Mr. & Mrs. Fred Barnhardt

Mr. & Mrs. George Barnhardt

Mr. & Mrs. Harry Barnhardt

Mrs. Jessie Barnhardt

Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Barnhardt

Mrs. Frances DeSales Barnhardt

Mr. & Mrs. J. Thomas Barnhardt

Mr. & Mrs. Leo Barnhardt

Mr. & Mrs. Michael Barnhardt

Mr. Otho Barnhardt

Mr. & Mrs. T. M. Barnhardt, Sr.

Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Barnhardt, Jr.

Mr. Tommy Barnhardt

Mr. & Mrs. Walter J. Barnhardt

Mr. & Mrs. Walter J. Barnhardt, Jr.

Carole Beaver

Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Benfield

Mrs. Margaret Benfield

Mr. & Mrs. W. W. Benfield

Mr. & Mrs. Don Berrier

Mr. & Mrs. Michael Beverage

Mr. & Mrs. W. N. Beverage

Mrs. Annie Blackwelder

Mr. Boyd Blackwelder

Mr. Charles Britt Blackwelder

Miss Grace Blackwelder

Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Blackwelder

Mr. Paul F. Blackwelder

Mr. & Mrs. Spencer Blackwelder

Mr. & Mrs. Tony Blackwelder

Mr. & Mrs. W. A. Blackwelder

Mr. & Mrs. W. E. Blackwelder

Mrs. Dawn R. Boatwright

Mr. Eugene Beasley

Dr. & Mrs. John Blount

Mr. David Bond

Miss Elizabeth Boulus

Mr. & Mrs. Michael Boulus

Mrs. Earl T. Brown

Mr. John Butler

Mrs. Peg Cannon

Mrs. J. O. Carroll

Mr. & Mrs. Smoot Casper

Mr. & Mrs. Phil Castor

Mrs. Ruth Castor

Mr. & Mrs. John Chubirko

Mr. & Mrs. Charles Chunn

Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Cobert

Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Cooley

Miss Jackie Cornelius

Mrs. Marzetta Cornelius

Mr. & Mrs. George Chandler, Jr.

Mr. & Mrs Carl Cress

Mr. & Mrs. Ed Cress

Mr. & Mrs. Eugene Cress

Miss Frances Cress

Mr. & Mrs. Guy Cress

Mr. & Mrs. Tracy Cress

Mrs. J. E. Crowe

Mr. & Mrs. John Culp

Mrs. Kay Davis

Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Davis

Mr. & Mrs. Myles Decker

Mrs. Rose Drolette

Mr. & Mrs. E. Earnhardt

Mrs. Thelma Estrada

Mr. & Mrs. Ray Eury

Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Ferraro

Mrs. Rose Fisher

Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Flowers

Mr. Charles Freeze

Mr. & Mrs. Walter Furr, Jr.

Mrs. Fred Furr

Mrs. Cecil Gabriel, Jr.

Mrs. James O. Garibaldi

Mr. George Goodman

Mr. & Mrs. George Goodman, Jr.

Mrs. R. J. Goodman

Mr. Raymond Goodman

Mrs. Melvin Greene

Mr. & Mrs. Ronald Gregory

Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Gray

Mr. & Mrs. Ed Hall

Mr. Walter Hamel

Mr. & Mrs. Perry Harris

Mr. & Mrs. Billy Harrison

Mr. & Mrs. Dwight Hartley

Mr. & Mrs. F. X. Heitter

Mr. & Mrs. George Higgens

Mr. & Mrs. James Helms

Mr. & Mrs. Charles Honeycutt

Mrs. Frances Honeycutt

Mr. & Mrs. Donald Howard

Mr. & Mrs. Eugene Huneycutt

Mr. Robert Jarvis

Mr. & Mrs. James Jochems

Mr. Vernon Jordan

Miss Bertha Joyner

Mr. John Kellough

Mr. & Mrs. Clyde Kemp

Mr. & Mrs. Hugel Kidd

Mr. & Mrs. Argil Lee Kirk

Mr. & Mrs. Albert Klimas

Mr. & Mrs. Frederick Kohman

Mrs. Doris Kosma

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Larkin

Mr. & Mrs. Keith Lemly

Mr. & Mrs. C.O. Lentz

Mr. & Mrs. Keith LePage

Mr. & Mrs. Edgar Lentz

Mr. & Mrs. James Lentz

Mr. & Mrs. Francis LePage

Mr. & Mrs. Dean Lewis

Mrs. Pauline Linker

Mrs. Fetzer Litaker

Mrs. Sadie Long

Mr. & Mrs. David Love

Mr. & Mrs. H. E. MacGregor

Mr. & Mrs. Charles McBride

Mrs. Lillian McIlroy

Mr. & Mrs. James McKay

Mr. Robert Mee

Mr. & Mrs. W. J. Martin

Mr. & Mrs. Boleslaw Mielnik

Mr. & Mrs. James Miller

Mr. & Mrs. Jean Miller

Mr. Joseph Miller

Mrs. Frank Miller

Mr. & Mrs. George Monk

Mr. & Mrs. Martin Mooring

Mr. & Mrs. B. G. Moore

Mrs. Annie Moose

Mr. & Mrs. James T. Moose

Mr. & Mrs. Chip Myers

Mr. & Mrs. Seamon Nabors

Mr. & Mrs. James O'Brien

Mr. Timothy O'Sullivan

Miss Charlotte Oshowski

Mr. & Mrs. Edmund Panzer

Mr. & Mrs. John Pare

Mr. & Mrs. John Penninger

Mr. & Mrs. D. B. Pennington

Mr. & Mrs. Antonio Perez

Mrs. Calvin Phillips

Mr. & Mrs. Mike Phillips

Mr. & Mrs. Frank Pless

Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Pless

Mr. & Mrs. Ned Plott

Mrs. Lewis Reid

Mr. & Mrs. John Reilly

Dr. & Mrs. W. J. Robinson

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Ross

Mrs. J. A. Rowe, Jr.

Mr. Brown B. Russell

Mr. & Mrs. Rodney Ruth

Mr. & Mrs. Fred Rymer

Mr. & Mrs. Hugh Safrit

Mr. & Mrs. James Safrit

Mrs. John Safrit

Mr. & Mrs. Alan Santa Kruz

Mr. & Mrs. Charles Schmitz

Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Seamone, Jr.

Mr. & Mrs. Ronald Sechler

Mr. & Mrs. Edwin Shaver

Mrs. Donald Shipwash

Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Simpson

Mr. & Mrs. Bert Sieh

Mr. & Mrs. Frank Sloop

Mr. & Mrs. C. A. Smith

Mr. & Mrs. Wayne Smith

Miss Virginia Smith

Mrs. Ernie Snow

Mr. & Mrs. John Stanley

Mr. & Mrs. Phillip Stanley

Mr. & Mrs. Louis Stipic

Miss Marion Tamin

Mrs. Aike Tate

Mr. & Mrs. Anthony Tokarz

Mr. & Mrs. Rocco Trombello

Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Vancheri

Mr. & Mrs. Colon Wellman

Mr. & Mrs. Edward Wickerson

Mrs. Carlton Wilburn

Mr. & Mrs. C. J. Williams

Mr. & Mrs. Norman Williams

Mrs. R. B. Williams

Mr. & Mrs. Swindell Williams

Mr. & Mrs. T. J. Williams

Mrs. Elizabeth Wishon

Miss Gennie Wishon

Mr. Glenn Wishon

Mr. & Mrs. James Wishon

Mr. & Mrs. Patrick Wishon

Mr. Frank Yodice

Mrs. Anna Youngs

Mr. & Mrs. Paul Zerbinos







