

1800 1900 2000

On **May 12, 1870**, St. Joseph Orphanage welcomed its first residents. Nearby, a small church was founded, which later became known as St. Joseph Parish. This church was dedicated by Bishop A.M. Toebbe, and a one-story school building was constructed as well. The initial Parish Committee consisted of Wolfgang Bessler, Samuel Hoffman, Rudolph Kroger, and John Holtz.

Following the destruction of the orphanages by two fires in **1884** and **1888**, a new three-story building was inaugurated with a lively celebration that included wagons, carriages, and marching bands.

In **1881-1882**, Rev. Herman Kramer suggested the construction of a new church, while parishioner Henry Baudensistel crafted bricks from clay found near the orphanage cemetery. The bricks were fired, and the cornerstone of the church was subsequently laid.

In **1892**, a two-story parish school was established on church property, serving as the parish school for a period of 37 years.

Between **1949** and **1953**, Pastor Rev. Lawrence Leinheuser saw the need to expand the parish school, due to the development of "Vet Village" (Crestview). An additional structure was built, encompassing classrooms and an auditorium/gymnasium. By 1953, more classrooms were added, which also included living quarters for the Sisters of Notre Dame, along with a chapel to alleviate overcrowding in the parish church.

Between **1957** and **1961**, the Diocese sanctioned the construction of a new church to address the limitations of the old one, which had become too small and outdated. In 1959, Rev. Leinheuser guided the development of the new church, which featured four classrooms, Kelley Hall, and a rectory. The first Mass took place on December 21, 1960, and the official dedication of the church occurred on April 9, 1961.

In **1963**, the Geiman Brothers built the Bell Tower, which houses three bells named "Joseph," "Mary," and "Gabriel." The statue of St. Joseph located at the base of the tower was relocated from the Old St. Joseph Orphanage, and the tower was officially dedicated on December 19th.

In **1969**, Rev. Charles Hoffer assumed the position of pastor, and under his leadership, St. Joseph Church celebrated its 100th anniversary.

Between **1987** and **1991**, a new school expansion was finalized, featuring classrooms, a computer room, a library, and an office. Rev. Clarence J. Heitzman supervised the creation of "Memorial Hall" along with additional classrooms. On July 1, Rev. Leroy Smith assumed the role of pastor.

From **1993** to **2007**, Rev. Robert Henderson led as pastor and played a key role in organizing the 125th Anniversary of St. Joseph Parish. By 1995, it had grown to be the largest Catholic Church in Campbell County and the most substantial school within the Diocese of Covington, Kentucky.

From **2007** to **2023**, Rev. Gerald L. Reinersman served as pastor, with a mission to carry out the Parish Revitalization Plan initiated during Fr. Henderson's time. A capital campaign was organized to meet four specific objectives: installing air conditioning in school classrooms, renovating restrooms, refurbishing the church, and establishing an endowment for Catholic education. Enough funds had been gathered to accomplish the first two goals, resulting in church renovations, while Sunday Mass was temporarily held in Memorial Hall for a duration of five months.

From **2018** to **2019**, fundraising initiatives resulted in the installation of an elevator connecting the lower parking lot to the church. Finished by the summer of 2019, this construction enhanced accessibility for individuals with disabilities, enabling them to engage more fully in parish activities and worship.

The parish celebrated its 150th Anniversary Jubilee in **2020**, embracing the theme: "Grateful for the past – Faithful in the present – Hopeful for the future."

In **October 2022**, the church organ underwent restoration, thanks to the generous funding from parishioners and community partners.

In **2023**, Father Andrew Young was appointed Pastor of St. Joseph Parish.

