

A GLANCE AT STS. PETER AND PAUL CATHOLIC CHURCH'S ROOTS

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SANDUSKY

Sandusky's growing Catholic population needed one more church within city limits. With Holy Angels Catholic Church built in 1845 followed by St. Mary's Catholic Church in 1853, the cornerstone for Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church was laid July 22, 1866. "Built on two lots on the southeast corner of Columbus Avenue, the foundation began in the spring of 1866," according to the church's website.



"The building is 145 feet long and 71 feet wide. The original tower was 135 feet high. The material used was native blue stone, ornamented with native sandstone. The cost of the lots was \$2,400 and the construction cost of the church was \$75,000."

After about five years of construction, the church was ready for parishioners. "The first mass was celebrated in the newly built Sts. Peter & Paul Church on April 9, 1871," the church's

website states. "The first pastor, Father R. A. Sidley was the pastor of Holy Angels Parish when he began construction of the new church of Sts. Peter & Paul. After completion, Holy Angels became a 'Chapel of Ease' from 1871 to 1875, with their former parishioners now being served by their new Parish of Sts. Peter & Paul. Fr. Sidley is also credited with the beginning of Catholic School education for students of Sts. Peter & Paul Parish."

Years later, a noteworthy wedding would occur on the parish's property. Knute Rockne, who's believed to have helped develop modern football's forward pass, married Bonnie Skiles in the church's rectory in July 1914. Because Rockne wasn't Catholic at the time of his marriage ceremony, the ceremony did not occur in the church sanctuary. A historical plaque outside the church explains the event.

The church's architect, Patrick Charles Keeley, created interesting designs within the building's interior. "The interior ceiling is composed of several large arches and entirely unsupported by columns," according to the website. "The absence of pillars gives an unimpeded view of the altar and a closer sense of participation in the liturgy."

The year Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church opened, a residence where the pastor could live was constructed on church property. "A pastoral residence was built south of the church on adjoining property at a cost of \$5,000," the church website states. "The residence is now used as the parish office for Sts. Peter & Paul Parish and the pastoral office for the three Sandusky Catholic churches."

More improvements to the church would come later, but the most significant change occurred in 1981-1982. "At that time, plaster was removed from the stone walls, communion rails removed with portions being used in other areas of the church and the altar was brought forward. The Mary and Joseph shrines were moved, a new organ installed, lighting improvements, tuck-pointing of the stone walls and the installation of ramp for the south entrance. This renovation addressed liturgical as well as maintenance concerns."

In 2016, Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church celebrated its 150th anniversary, which included a visit from Bishop Daniel Thomas of the Toledo Diocese.

The church has an historic marker honoring its history.

Get to know Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church

Address: 510 Columbus Ave. Sandusky Phone: 419-625-6655

Website: peterpaulsandusky.org

Facebook page: Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church (@ stspeterandpaulsandusky)