

# The history of Holy Angels Catholic Church

7-21, 2018 - By CAITLIN NEARHOOD, Sandusky Register

SANDUSKY



Holy Angels' roots go back almost 200 years.

During the 1830s, French missionary Rev. Joseph P. Machebeuf was assigned to Tiffin to serve as a missionary to Catholics in northern Ohio, including Irish and German immigrants who just settled in the area. Irish immigrants came due to the potato famine, while the Germans came during the political chaos in their homeland. Before their immigration, converts from Wyandot, Huron and Iroquois tribes had mass in private homes, Holy Angels' website states.

Soon, Sandusky became a popular place for immigrants to travel to and had become a stop on the Underground Railroad to free slaves to Canada.

Machebeuf was assigned to Sandusky in 1840 and had mass in a large hall loaned by W.H. Mills. The church had 50 to 60 families, most of them Irish immigrants with some German immigrants, all of whom were poor.

The congregation would soon have a building in which to worship.

Later, W. H. Mills offered the present location which consists of five lots, according to the church's website. He also gave \$530, all the stone and all the timber for the building. The parishioners began hauling stone from nearby quarries and preparing timber. The cornerstone was laid on October 13, 1841. However, walls to the church, laid by hand were not completed until June 6, 1842. The church still had no roof. Father Machebeuf returned to his native France where he was successful in securing financial aid from his fellow countrymen.

In 1845, construction on the church finished and the building was dedicated to the Triune God and His Holy Angels. A bell in the church's tower came from Toledo the year after.

In the coming years, St. Mary's Mother of Sorrows Church was built as more Germans settled in the area 10 years after Holy Angels' completion and Saints Peter and Paul Church was built to accommodate Sandusky's growing population. From 1871 to 1875, Holy Angels was a mission church to Saints Peter and Paul. After that, Holy Angels was reopened with its own pastor.

With Pastor Thomas Smyth's arrival came building upgrades in 1875. He built the present two-story brick school building at about a cost of \$3,500, the church website states. It was staffed by lay teachers until 1889 when Sacred Heart Sisters become the teachers; then by Ursuline Sisters of Tiffin; and in 1894, by Sisters of Humility of Mary, who remained until 1922 when the boundary lines of Erie, Huron and Richland Counties changed from the Cleveland Diocese to the Toledo Diocese. Thereafter, the Sisters of Mercy took over and remained at Holy Angels until 1994. 1996 began a new era with the Sisters of Notre Dame.

Other highlights from Holy Angels' history:

- Under Father Thomas P. Lamb's tenure (1893-1902), a new rectory, half stone, half frame with cupola and slate roof was built. He also extended the church 35 feet toward Tiffin Avenue and installed a new lighting system. Father Lamb added a square tower at the northeast corner, supplanting the earlier spire which was destroyed by lightning.

- The bell was transferred to this tower and beside it a new and larger bell was installed in memory of Reverend Lamb's father and mother.
- In the 1970s, the church was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- In 2008, a successful fund drive was held to replace the nativity window at the church. Pieces of glass were damaged or cracked and needed to be replaced. Reinforcement bars that support the weight of the window were separated from the window, causing sagging and bowing. Enamels used in the artwork were failing and continued to degrade. The window leading had deteriorated to the point that it was completely missing in some places due to its age.

Get to know First Presbyterian Church

Address: 428 Tiffin Ave.

Phone: 419-625-3698

Website: [holyangels sandusky.org](http://holyangels sandusky.org)

Facebook page: Holy Angels Catholic Church ([@holyangelssandusky](https://www.facebook.com/holyangelssandusky))