

## Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church

The history of Marshfield's youngest Catholic Parish began on a Spring day in 1946, when 20 acres of West side land was purchased from John Schmidt by the Most Rev. A.J. McGavick, Bishop of La-Crosse for the site of Our



*Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church  
Photo from Our Lady of Peace Website*

Lady of Peace. By April of 1947, Rev. Water Dillenburg was assigned to be its first pastor, and that first year was filled with activities that build communities: planning the physical building of the Church/school/rectory complex to be located on the corner of Columbus and 5th Street. Energy was also spent organizing the men (Holy Name Society) and women (Rosary Altar Society) and looking ahead to the needs of a growing parish.

On June 12, 1949, just eight years after his ordination, Fr. Dillenburg dedicated the new

Church/School, in a celebration that included an address by Bishop Fulton J. Sheen.

The School opened on September 7, 1949, with an enrollment of 176 children from grades 1-8. The faculty was made up of five School Sisters of Notre Dame.

By the Spring of 1951, work was begun on the rectory, for Fr. Dillenburg had been living in temporary quarters since 1947: the Umhoefer



*Our Lady of Peace Elementary School  
Photo from Our Lady of Peace Website*

home as well as the school building. This was also the year that Columbus High School was constructed in a joint project among all three Marshfield Parishes. By 1954, the nuns had a per-

manent address in the convent next to the school. (See the story of Columbus High School.)

A fire in the Church's Christmas Creche (January 5, 1960) forced Mass to be moved to the Columbus High auditorium for two months, until the Church was redecorated.

At the Parish meeting on January 26, 1963, two important events occurred. The mortgage for the church/school was paid off, and the decision was made to build a new Church. On June 12, 1966, the new structure was dedicated.

With a seating capacity of 850, the buildings design and structure met the worship needs of its families, as well as offering facilities for fellowship on the basement. Fr. Walter Dillenburg served the parishioners at Our Lady of Peace until his death on January 12, 1980.

Rev. Francis Wavra was assigned to be the Parish's second pastor, taking the position in March 1980. He guided the Parish through the school addition, and was an inspirational leader until his death on March 12, 1993.

Rev. James Logan had been an associate pastor at OLP from 1967 to 1970 and the parishioners celebrated his return as Pastor in June 1993 to the present. Currently, there are 1,085 families in the parish. The school runs classes for pre-kindergarten through grade 6. The Parish also supports Holy Family Middle School (grades 7&8) and Columbus High School (grades 9-12).

Story submitted by Mary Pat Swamy, for the Marshfield History Project, "The Marshfield Story, 1872-1997: Piecing Together Our Past", pg. 123.