

St. Gabriel Parish had its earliest beginnings in the parish in the 1050s when Monsignor William G. Gallena, then pastor at St. Mary's Painesville, purchased approximately 15 acres of land on Button Road in Concord Township.

In the early 1960s because of the overcrowding of the school of St. Mary's, the first structure was built with the foresight for an eight grade elementary school.

In the middle of the 1962-1963 school year, the building was completed and the school was open with grades 1-4, with the concept of adding another grade each of the following years to complete the 8 grades. For five years, the school was staffed with Sisters of Holy Humility of Mary under the direction of Sister M. Benedicta. Daily they commuted from St. Mary's in Painesville.

Due to the growth of the then rural area of St. Mary's of Painesville and St. Mary's of the Assumption in Mentor, it was deemed necessary to develop a Mission Parish at the location of St. Gabriel's school,. In June of 1966, Reverend Bernard V. Brady, then serving at St. Michael Parish in Independence, Ohio, was appointed by the Diocese of Cleveland to be Assistant Pastor of the parish of St. Mary's in Painesville. This appointment included the specific assignment to develop St. Gabriel Mission. This appointment was to effective on Thursday, June 9, 1966, the feast of Corpus Christi. Officially St. Gabriel Parish was born on July 1, 1966... On July 3rd, 1966, Reverend Brady began with the first two Sunday Masses to be celebrated in the Chapel Auditorium, with a small altar and folding chairs for his new congregation. Here, Mass would be celebrated for the next five years. Father Englert, Father Brady's cousin, was to help out until June 1976. Parish boundaries, which encompassed 25 square miles, were established in 1966. Equal numbers of families from St. Mary's in Painesville and St. Mary of the Assumption in Mentor who to make up this new parish. With many mixed emotions from parishioners that had been generation after generation parishioners in the other parishes, the work and labor of love began for the people that were now under the spiritual guidance of Fr. Brady. With approximately 200 families now in the parish, all joining to build step by step what is the present St. Gabriel's parish in a short span of twenty five years. With Father Brady's arrive, he took up residency in an unoccupied classroom on the second floor of the school until 1969.

In the fall of 1967 the Dominican Sisters of Akron took over the role of educating the children of St. Gabriel. Sister Imelda Bisheimer was the first Dominican principal. The Sisters lived in the apartments next to the school, serving here until the fall of 1971.

In 1967, a stable was build and displayed in front of the school for the Christmas season with live animals from embers of the parish that had them on their farms. The stable was then moved to the back of the property and converted into the first Shrine of Our Lady, dedicated in 1968. A plaque was put up in the Shrine with the names of the service men from the parish and daily prayers were offered for them. All men that were listed on this plaque returned home safely from the Vietnam War. In 1981 a major renovation of the Shrine was executed by volunteers with all \$5,000 in labor and materials donated.

In 1969 a brick home was purchased across the street from the church/school for the rectory. The following year, with the addition of a fourth nun, Fr. Brady had the house remodeled and converted into the present convent. The house next to it was purchased and became the new rectory. In 1970, as the

parish grew, Chapel Hall was inadequate for the growth of the parish. A Fund drive was begun for the purpose of construction of a temporary church which could later be converted into a school gymnasium. The following year it was built with money borrowed at 7 ½%. With the completion of this addition, our new "church" was ready and it was necessary to furnish it. With contributions from Holy Family Parish on the west side and several other churches, the men of the parish began taking apart pews, renting trucks, hauling everything usable back to St. Gabriel. We then had a beautiful church with pews, altars, Stations of the Cross, all built from the labor of love, sacrifice and all the members participating and having a hand in the joy of sharing. This part of the addition that began in 1970 was the church until Christmas Eve 1984 at which time the first Mass was celebrated in the new church.

In 1971 under the direction of Sister M. Lisa Novak, the Sisters of Notre Dame began teaching at our school and dedicated themselves to this service for 20 years. Due to failing health, Father Brady retired in September 1977. The Reverend Robert E. Pahler was installed as pastor the following month. With the continuing growth of the parish, the need of an associate pastor was answered with the appointment of Reverend Thomas W. Johns directly after his ordination in June 1978. In early 1978, a planning group was formed to establish priorities and future needs of the parish. The expansion of the school was the number one priority, with the decision being made to increase the number of classrooms to sixteen (two for each grade level) and make other improvements to the facilities. A campaign was begun in the fall of 1979. It was successful and construction began in the spring of 1980 and completed in September with the addition of four classrooms. The year of 1982 marked the completion of an addition to the rectory of approximately 700 square feet of office and living area. Volunteer workers had it completed in time for Father Pahler's twenty-fifth jubilee. In August of 1982, the parish got its first permanent deacon, Reverend Mr. Andrew Novak.

The next priority for the parish would be the construction of a separate church. In 1983 following nearly three years of planning and a special building fund drive, the date was set for ground breaking ceremony on Palm Sunday, March 27, 1983. The year of 1984 began with full construction underway on the new church. On Christmas Eve 1984, the Midnight Mass was celebrated as the first Mass in the new church. The new church was officially dedicated on June 23, 1985 with the Most Reverend A. Edward Pevac as celebrant for the dedication mass. The same night the new gym was dedicated and the mortgage on the 1971 church debt was burned followed by a parish party. This was done in conjunction with the 20th anniversary.

By late 1984, plans began to convert the former church into the school gymnasium. Thus resulting in another building fund for the remodeling of what is now the Pahler Center. This was completed and ready for use on June 7, 1986. With an upsurge of new parishioners, the need for a new deacon brought us Reverend Norman Davis in September 1987. In the summer of 1988, Father Robert Stec replaced Father Lenny Zamborsky as associate pastor. In 1991, Father Pahler was assigned to Queen of Heaven in Greensburg and Father Fred Pausche became our new pastor.

St. Gabriel parish has been a young and active parish as can be seen by the continued growth and support of the congregation.

1963

Sisters of Holy Humility of Mary open St. Gabriel School (as a daughter school to St. Mary's Painesville) with grades one through four

1966

Reverend Bernard Brady, newly appointed pastor, celebrates the first Mass at the newly established St. Gabriel Parish - Mass was celebrated in what is now known as Brady Hall located in the dayschool

1967

Sisters of Holy Humility of Mary are replaced by Dominican Sisters from Our Lady of Elms in Akron

1968

Parishioners build Our Lady's shrine on the north side of the school

1968

The parish acquires a brick home across the street which becomes the rectory

1970

With the purchase of neighboring property, the parish moves the rectory and converts the current rectory into a convent

1971

The Sisters of Notre Dame begin teaching at the school

1971

St. Gabriel CYO Sports program begins

1972

St. Gabriel Boosters are formed and the CYO Sports teams compete

1973

A temporary church is built which later becomes the school gym

1977

Father Robert Pahler becomes the new pastor with the retirement of Father Brady

The Heavenly Dusters are organized

Carolyn Jablonski joins staff as Pastoral Associate

1978

Father Thomas Johns joins the pastoral staff as associate pastor

1979

The Parent Teacher Unit (PTU) is formed at St. Gabriel School

Ministry of the Eucharist begins

1980

With the completion of a new addition to the school, 16 classrooms now house two classes per grade one through eight

1981

The parish launches a program designed to strengthen the community called Christ Renews His Parish

1982

Deacon Andy Novak is named the first permanent deacon for St. Gabriel Parish

1983

Ceremonial groundbreaking for construction of the present church takes place on Palm Sunday

The first Pastoral Council is installed

Father Leonard Zamborsky becomes associate pastor, replacing Father Tom Johns, who is assigned to Borromeo Seminary

1984

The parish establishes its Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) to minister to adults seeking full membership in the church

Deacon Norm Davis is ordained

Christmas Eve Midnight Mass is the first Mass celebrated in the newly constructed church

1985

St. Gabriel Food Bank opens its doors to help the needy in the parish and others throughout our community

Bishop A. Edward Pevec officially dedicates the new church.

St. Gabriel 50 Plus Club is formed

1986

As the parish celebrates its 20th Anniversary, the old church is converted to the school gym (known as the Pahler Center)

The high school youth group, A Chance to Serve, ACTS, begins its ministry to the teens of the parish

St. Gabriel's St. Vincent de Paul Society is formed

1987

Sister Josephmarie begins her service to St. Gabriel School

Deacon Norm Davis is assigned to St. Gabriel

1988

Members of the parish form the St. Francis Xavier Mission Circle to support missions in the US and abroad

Father Robert Stec becomes the next associate pastor, replacing Father Zamborsky.

Parishioners receive their first issue of the Trumpet newsletter in the mail

1988 - 1989

Members of the parish plan and host the First Annual Summer Kickoff Festival

1989

Father Tom Tift becomes a weekend associate pastor

1990

The parish joins the local Habitat for Humanity program

Father Frederick Pausche is named the new pastor, replacing Father Pahler

1991

The parish celebrates its 25th anniversary with a commemorative book, special liturgy and dinner dance

1992

A new rectory is constructed on parish grounds. The old rectory becomes Gabriel's Wings, transitional housing for those in need

1993

Construction for a new Parish Life Center begins

Father Eric Orzech joins the parish as associate pastor, replacing Father Stec

1994

The new Parish Life Center is completed and now houses the parish staff, the Annunciation Chapel, a parish library, meeting rooms and administrative offices

1995

The gift certificate program is established to help defray the cost of religious education

Jack Spiek joins staff as Business Manager

1996

Parish Council unveils its five year plan and new mission statement

Father David Woost, chaplain at Lake Catholic High School, takes residence at the rectory and begins celebrating Masses on weekends

To Gather in Faith and Friendship (TGIF), is created to serve the faith formation and social needs of the mentally and physically challenged adults of the parish

1997

Following Sunday Mass, Bishop Edward Pevec leads a ceremonial groundbreaking for expansion of the school and educational facilities

Father Mike Guggenbiller joins the parish as associate pastor

1999

Father John Vrana joins the parish as associate pastor, replacing Father Eric Orzech

The parish preschool, The Learning Loft, begins classes

2000

Expansion and renovation of the St. Gabriel Center for Education (day school / PSR) is completed

Ron Adkins is ordained a permanent deacon

Sister Josephmarie celebrates her Golden Jubilee as a Notre Dame Sister

A new youth group for 7th and 8th graders, 78ers, is formed

The Elizabeth Ministry begins its mission of outreach to women in the special times of motherhood

2001

The parish celebrates its 35th anniversary

The parish formally adopts its new vision: Being Christ ~ Every Day ~ Everywhere

2002

Pam Lewis is hired as the newly established Parish Nurse

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd begins

Carolyn Jablonski and Dave Hazard co-chair the steering committee to begin St. Gabriel's implementation of Bishop Anthony Pilla's pastoral initiative, Vibrant Parish Life

Father Dave Woost is reassigned to St. Peter's Parish in Lorain

The St. Gabriel Music Ministry hosts a Choral Festival with several other churches in the area

2003

Father Fred Pausche celebrates his 25th anniversary of his ordination in the priesthood

The Parish Life Center expansion is completed providing five new offices and much needed basement storage.

Father Gary Malin joins St. Gabriel Parish as our second associate pastor

2004

Generations of Faith is initiated as a method for faith formation of all ages

2005

Father Curt Kondik joins our parish as associate pastor

Allison Capella joins the staff as Volunteer Coordinator (Alleluia!!)

The Learning Loft Preschool expansion is completed

2006

Sister Josephmarie retires as principal of the day school after 19 years of faithful service

Donna Lee Saladino joins the parish staff as principal of the dayschool

Daniel P. Clavin is ordained a permanent deacon

2007

Paul Kelly joins the parish staff as Pastoral Associate and Coordinator of Youth Faith Formation & Ministry

Father John Pfeifer joins St. Gabriel Parish as parochial vicar

The first Vacation Bible School begins

Bishop Lennon officially calls us to cluster with St. Mary Parish in Chardon as part of Vibrant Parish Life II

Total replacement of the parish playground

2008

Fr. Robert Kropac joins our parish as Parochial Vicar

Robert Grgic is ordained a permanent deacon

Kim Pohovey joins the parish staff as Marketing and Development Director

The Pahler Center (gym) is completely renovated

The new five-year parish Pastoral Plan is adopted incorporating the four pillars of Stewardship, Evangelization, Faith Formation and Collaboration

2009

The parish debuts its new newsletter format, Pillars

2010

The parish debuts its new website

Maureen Dowd joins the parish staff as Pastoral Associate

Susan Kuchenbecker joins the parish staff as Business Manager

Sprint and Community Day take place

Picnic Pavillion construction complete

2011

Fr. Christopher Zerucha joins our parish as Parochial Vicar

Alicia Henrikson joins the parish staff as Marketing Coordinator and Good Shepherd Coordinator

Dianna MacDonald joins the office team

Maggie Shero joins the school staff as Office Manager

2012

Fr. Edward Suszynski joins our parish as Parochial Vicar

Veronica Huber joins as our PSR Principal

Beth Jablonksi and Karen Orlando join as Special Needs Coordinators

2013

Parish celebrates 25th anniversary of our Parish Festival

Mary von Carlowitz joins parish team as Coordinator of Youth Ministry

Monica Dietz joins school faculty as Assistant Principal

Jeannine Turk takes leadership of Sacramental Preparation for Second Graders

Paula Haumesser joins PSR office team as Administrative Assistant

Community Day of Service established to replace Community Day as parish focuses on the call to service by Pope Francis.

2014

15th anniversary of Fish Fry

1st Health Fair