

Service Years

Priests/Pastors

Picture

Last updated 12/2022

1840's

Fr. Morrissy

1843 -First Missionary to visit Waterford and have a Mass at Edward Bennett's farm

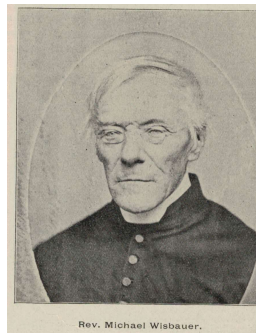
1840's

Fr. Kendeler

1846 - First Mass said in the Village of Waterford at the Klunkefort Cooper Shop on the corner of SE corner of 1st and Main Sts. He was Pastor at St. Mary's B'ton.

1840's

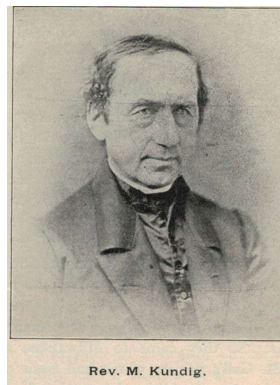
Fr. M. Wisbauer



1847 - Pastor at St. Mary's - Burlington came occasionally to conduct services.

1840's

Fr. M. Kundig



1848 - Stationed at St. Martins, presided over Mass 1/month at the cooper shop or private homes. He urged the parishioners to build a church. He did not return to Waterford after construction started in 1849. Fr. Kundig returned to Waterford in 1850 and assumed the duty to complete the church in the Spring of 1851. First Mass said on Corpus Christie Sunday. In the Fall of the year, he started the first school classes. He is responsible for building at least 17 churches in southeast Wisconsin.

1840's Fr. H. Fusseder



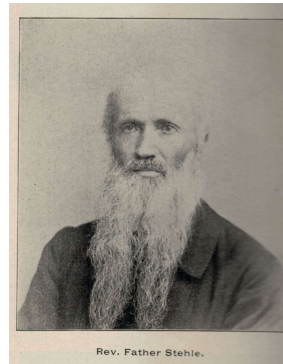
1849- Came from Burlington to Waterford every two weeks to continue to push the church to completion and place it under the patronage of St. Thomas Aquinas.

1852-55 Fr. M. Gernbauer

1855 Fr. H. Seif

1852 - First resident pastor of St. Thomas. He also erected the first school building as an addition to the church and later moved it to a new location. He consecrated the St. Thomas Cemetery on Sept. 8, 1853. Served St. Thomas for only two months

1855-56 Fr. H. M. Stehle



Served St. Thomas for only a few months

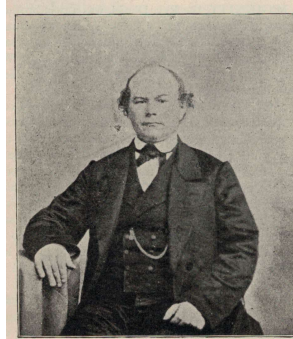
Oct. 1856 Fr. C. Schraudenbach

1847 - regular visitor to Waterford. Served as interim pastor from Jan. to Oct. 1856.

Nov 1856-Oct. 1860 Fr. S. Sanner

Had the first rectory started in 1857 and completed in 1858. It was a two story stone building located just behind and to the south on the 1851 church. It would later be used by the School Sisters of Notre Dame.

1860-Apr. 1861 Fr. J. Minderer



Rev. Joseph Minderer.

Could not speak English, while a large part of St. Thomas was Irish, and only served St. Thomas for a few months.

Oct. 1861-May 1864 Fr. G. M. Heiss



Rev. Michael Heiss.

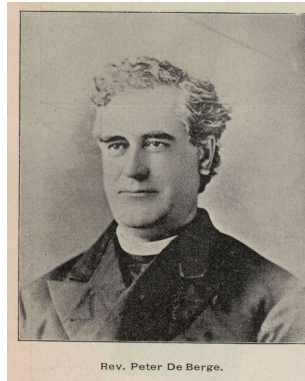
Primarily devoted his time to the spiritual nature of the parish. He had another addition built onto the school. Latin docs from Arch plus handwritten daily journal of prayers from 1863 in archives

May 1864-1866 Fr. L. Conrad



In September, 1864, three School Sisters of Notre Dame were brought in to replace the lay teachers. During the years of 1864-65, the large stone school was built and remained in service until 1941 when the new school was built. He also planted many fruit trees on the church property.

1866-1867 Fr. P. DeBerge



Due to friction between the school sisters and some parishioners, the sisters resigned and returned to Milwaukee. He became discouraged and left after eight months of service.

1867 Fr. C. Exel

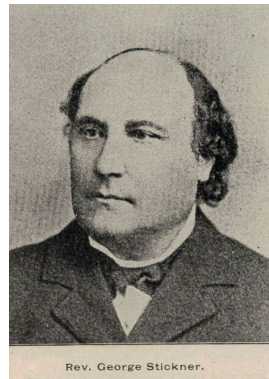
With the parish in disarray because of a few disgruntled members, the Irish families living on the east end of Waterford Township, organized a new parish in Dover (St. Mary's). This weakened the parish considerably and he was unable to restore peace and union within the community, he decided to leave.

1868-Nov. 1872 Fr. J. M. Joerger



He was a young and energetic priest and accepted the challenge of restoring order out of the chaos. He brought back the school sisters and re-opened the school on September 7, 1868 and remained there. He bought a small organ (Melodeon) for \$425.00. After five years of service at St. Thomas, he had earned his Doctor of Divinity degree and was a prolific writer of poems. He was loved dearly by his parishioners.

1872-73 Fr. G. Strickner

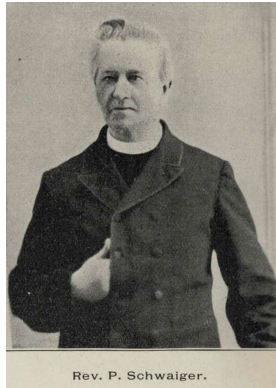


Fr. Strickner did not like Waterford and left after nine months.

1873-1874 Fr. H. Uhlenmeyer

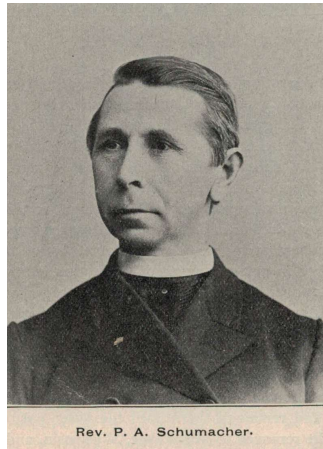
With a reputation as a medical doctor, he too only gave one year of service. He built a small addition to the school to gain more comfort for the nuns.

Dec. 1874-Apr. 1877 Fr. P. Schwaiger



A small pipe organ was installed in the church and the cemetery was fenced in in 1874. Due to imprudent discretion about listening to gossip, he found considerable opposition within the parish and his stay was unpleasant and practically fruitless until he left on April 10, 1877.

May 1877-Aug. 1888 Fr. P. A. Schumacher



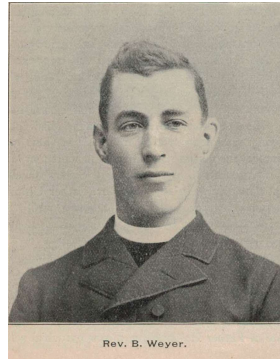
With the unenviable reputation of short term pastors at St. Thomas, Fr. Schwaiger came here against his will and under the pressure of the bishop. The parish was in great disorder again but they showed a good will and the few "professional knockers" gradually weakened and gave up. By this time, the 1851 church was deteriorating and he lead the 80 member parish to build a new church, which started in the spring of 1880 and completed in 1881, debt free! The total cost was about \$20,000. He left in August, 1888 to organize a new parish in Bay View.

Aug. 1888-Jan. 1898 Fr. Sebastian Schwinn



With the parish now in prospering condition, he continued the good work of his predecessor and added a two story frame structure to the rectory.

1898-1904 Fr. B. Weyer



During his six years of service, he had a small basement dug out and a furnace installed to heat the church. At his urging a new rectory was built in 1901 at a cost of \$3,300. The old rectory was remodeled and became the Convent for the school sisters. Due to internal opposition, he only got to occupy the new rectory for three years and left.

1904-12

Fr. A. Albers



Under pressure from Archbishop Katzer, he reluctantly took the position as pastor and had to work at gaining acceptance in the parish. The church roof was re-shingled and electric lights were installed in the church and in the rectory. Lightning rods were installed on the church and school after a person was struck and killed by lightning just before mass on July 22, 1907. In 1908, cement sidewalks were installed about the church and school. In 1909, the church was re-decorated for \$1,150. 1910 saw electric lights installed in the sister's house. The cemetery was re-graded, surveyed and platted for future expansion. In 1912, as he undertook the project of building a sidewalk from the cemetery to the church, he died suddenly before its completion. He was loved and respected by all. \$800 was donated to erect a chapel monument in honor of him by a grateful parish.

July 1912-33 Fr. J. P. Pierron



1914 saw the need for repairs and improvements to the church and the sister's home. The old windows were replaced with new art-glass windows, now in use in the 2007 church. The donated windows cost \$1,700. A new heating plant was installed at a cost of \$1296. In 1915, a new entrance to the cemetery was built for \$400. In 1919, the St. Thomas School Society was founded for the purpose of maintaining a free school in connection with the church. An endowment fund was started to perpetuate funding. In 1919, a chimney fire spread to the church and caused considerable damage. Fortunately, insurance covered the cost of repairs. Fr. Pierron was very ill during this episode. In March, 1922, a new pipe organ costing \$2750 was built and installed by Schafer Organ Co. and is still in the 1880 church. The funds were raised by the Married Ladies Society. He died in 1945 and is buried in St. Thomas Cemetery.

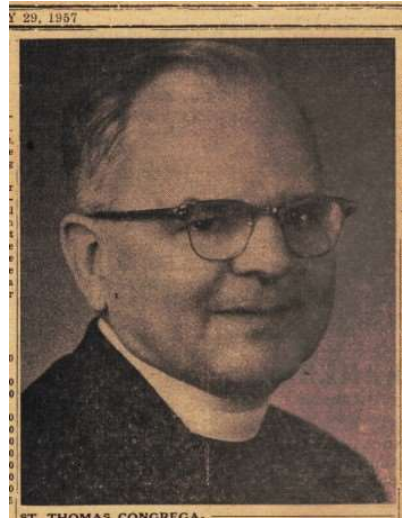
1933 Fr. George Knackert

Interim pastor while Fr. Pierron was sick for over a year. He retires after one year due to illness.

1934-35 Fr. Bach

Interim pastor.

1935-63 Fr. E. Hertel



Longest service pastor of St. Thomas with service for 28 years. He lead the drive to build a new school in 1941 at a cost of \$50,000. Mother of Perpetual Help Devotions were started on Tuesday nights. During 1949, the inside of the church was renovated in preparation for the 100th anniversary celebration to be held in 1951. The old rectory was sold and moved across the back of the property to Second and Superior Streets. In 1954, a larger, and current rectory was built. This provided accommodations for visiting priests as well as the pastor's residence and the parish office. in 1959, a major addition was made to the school of 397 students. In 1962, enrollment grows to 423 students. His sudden death in 1963 ended a vey dedicated life of service.

1946- 7/49 Fr. Wagner



First full-time assistant priest. Picture may not be correct.

1953

Fr. Fetherston



Assistant priest ca. 1953-58

1958

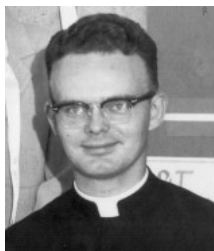
Fr. John Rausch



Assistant priest - 1958

1959- 2/61

Fr. Nichols



Assistant priest-1959-61

1962 - Feb - Mar

Fr. Walter

Assistant priest after Fr. Nichols transfer

1962 Mar - Apr Fr. George Zwadzich



Assistant replaced Fr. Walter - picture from STA Class of 1962

1962-67 Fr. Vern Schaefer



Assistant priest - remembered for his work with the youth of the parish community and his fund drive to get the tower clock re-furbished.

1964-10-29 - 67 Fr. Leo Skalitzky



Replaced Fr. Hertel after his death. Second Vatican Council allows the introduction of saying the Mass in the native vernacular. His charge was to successfully integrate the parish to the new rules from the Vatican. He passed away after a long illness on April 23, 1967.

1967 Fr. Gerald McAdams



Interim Priest

1968-1988 Fr. C. Uhen



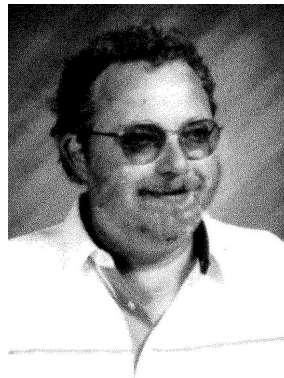
Under Father Uhen's leadership, the Parish Activity Center, also call the gym, and now called the Uhen Center, was constructed in 1980. He lead St. Thomas parish for 20 years until his retirement in 1988.

1968 Fr. Frieber



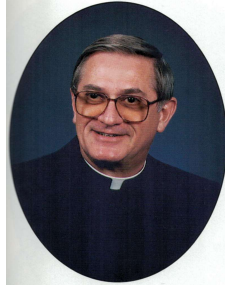
Assistant priest

June 1987-June 1990 Fr. Tom Tearney



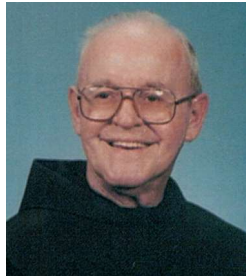
His passion was the celebration of the liturgy and his charge was to get St. Thomas back on track per the Vatican Guidelines. He left after three years and died shortly thereafter.

July 1990-Aug. 1999 Fr. Dennis Van Beek



Fr. Van Beek was best know for his short but dynamic and thought provoking sermons. He spent a lot of time in the school settings with the children. During his term, he was made Dean of District Three (aka. Monsignor) and lead two local men through the Deaconate process.

1997 Fr. R. Maslinski

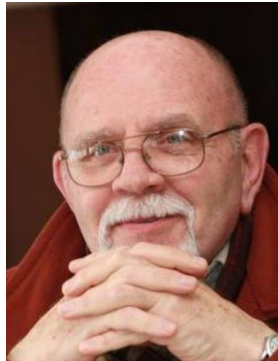


Assistant priest

Franciscan Friars

Assistant priests as needed

Fr. Bob Konkol



Assistant priest

Fr. Erv Mogilka



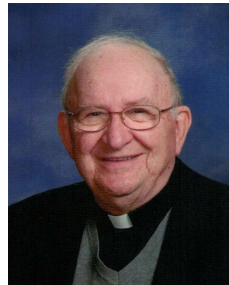
Assistant priest - Retired - 1954 picture

Jul. 1999-June 2005 Fr. Ed Kornath



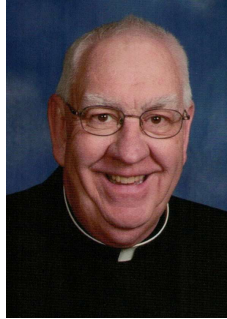
Under Fr. Ed's leadership, early planning was started to investigate the financial impact, structure size and location for a new church. The 1880 church was too small and had inadequate facilities for our growing community. He left after his six year term was up. Another Deacon was ordained during his tenure.

2014 - 2018 Fr. Joe Debski



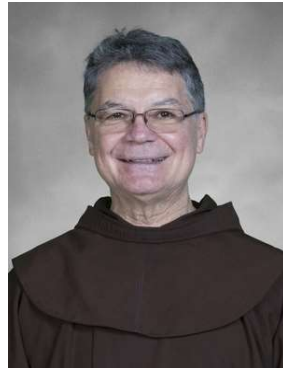
Assistant priest - Retired. Helped out during Fr. Gene's tenure.

June 2005-6/17/2018 Fr. Gene Doda



Fr. Gene joined the St. Thomas parish in June, 2005. He immediately took charge of the planning function. In less than a year ground breaking occurred and the first Mass was celebrated on Holy Saturday, April 2007. The formal dedication was presided over by Archbishop Timothy Dolan on June 17, 2007. Fr. Gene was a well loved and respected priest that filled the new church with his interesting and thoughtful homilies. He retired in June 2018.

June 2018 - Nov. 2023 Fr. Ed Tlucek



Fr. Ed's major undertaking was the merger of two worship sites under one banner "Wind & Water". While the two parishes operate independently in their day-to day operations, a collaborative effort was undertaken to share a priest and the sacramental elements for both churches. In the Fall of 2023, Fr. Ed was called to a high administrative position within his National Franciscan Order.

Sources: 1923 Waterford Post Article by Fr. Pierron, School Class Pictures and the various parish Directories, The Catholic Church In Wisconsin-1898, Fiind-Grave.com, Archmil.org,