



Saint Mark  
Catholic Church

C. Wetzel

# Preserving the History of St. Mark's Church

3500 Montgomery Road, Evanston, Cincinnati, Ohio

St. Mark's Church was constructed in 1916 by architect Henry J. Schlacks, at a cost of \$150,00 (over \$3.5 million today). This light-colored, painted brick ecclesiastical building held services for the local Catholic parish and has been vacant since 2010. There is even a school building at its rear and a cemetery across the street that used to be affiliated. The building's most distinguishing feature is the 130-foot tall bell tower that is visible from almost anywhere in the neighborhood, including Interstate 71, which cut through Evanston in 1972.

St. Mark's sanctuary had a capacity of 850 persons. The school burned down in 1922 and was replaced in 1923. A large pipe organ, built by Kilgen, was installed in 1933. A bowling alley and youth club were added to the church in the 1940s. In that year, the Mission House for the Previous Blood Fathers, designed by A. M. Strauss of Fort Wayne, Indiana, replaced the original frame church. At St. Mark's height in the mid-1950s, over 1,200 families worshiped regularly. While not originally constructed for an African-American congregation, it has held significance to Black families since the mid-century.

Although the building has sat vacant for over two decades, in December 2021, the Cincinnati City Council approved the Local Landmark application that was written by Cincinnati Preservation Association's Margo Warminski. Today the Evanston community is working hard to secure plans and funds to physically preserve the church.

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Illustrated by: Cathy Higgins Wetzel

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