A Century of the St. Joseph Bells

Paulette Aronson

Father Christopher Goelz was pastor of St. Joseph's from 1894 to 1908. The church at that time was a wood frame building. Father Goelz's mother lived with him in the rectory. While Father Goelz was in residence, planning for the construction of a new brick church began. Father Goelz's mother offered to pay for the bells in the new church.

At the turn of the century church bells and factory whistles helped people orient to the time of day. In addition to the rhythm of daily life, school, work and community alerts, church bells also served a liturgical purpose. They rang at the times assigned for the Liturgy of the Hours (the Divine Office). The bells rang to remind the community of God's presence in their daily lives, as well as to call them to worship An enduring tradition involves the bells being rung morning, noon and evening for the praying of the Angelus.

In 2013 a roof leak in the bell tower made it necessary to do some renovation work. The bell *housing structure, ropes and bells were made by the Verdin Bell Company. The bells and structure were judged to be in safe condition. In 2018 and 2019, the paneling and plaster were removed and the brick wall was sealed. A mural of angels and clouds on the East wall could not be saved.*

Father Christopher Goelz

Priests of the past

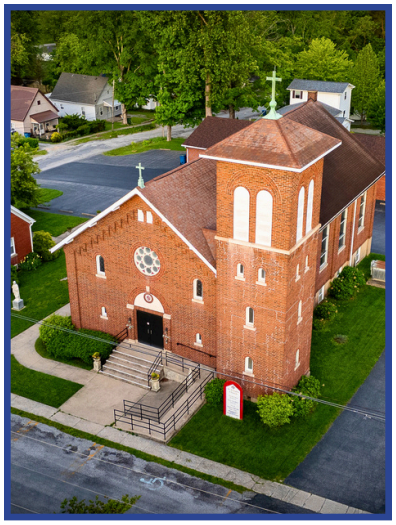
Rev. Patrick Peter 1981-82

Father Pat Peter served St. Joseph Catholic Church for a short period from 1981 to 82.

Father Patrick celebrated 50 years of priesthood in 2025. Congratulations! And thank you for serving God and His Church!

Rev Patrick Peter

The Holy Family



Left: The bell tower is a prominent part of St. Joseph Church.
Top: One of the bells in the tower.

Father's corner: The Angelus

Fr. Uriel Salamanca

As we continue our preparations for the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the construction of our temple, it is good to remember one of the most emblematic signs within a church, and that is the bells. First, it's worth remembering that our bells are also a hundred years old. They were donated by the mother of the priest at the time.

And behind this symbol we remember the reason for the bells in the church.

The bell is meant to remind us of God's voice, the voice that calls us to His presence; that is why, traditionally, bells have always been rung to summon us to the celebration of the Eucharist. And in more recent times, bells have been rung throughout the day to remind us of various activities and prayers we should offer to the Lord. For example, at the beginning of the day, the bell was rung to remind us to lift our hearts to the Lord and offer our lives, at the Angelus; it was rung again to remind us of the angel's greeting, the mystery of the Lord's Incarnation, God's entry into history, and so, throughout the day, the bells reminded us of our need to lift our hearts to the Lord, to offer Him each of our hours, each moment of our lives.

(Continued on back.)

Angelus Prayer

℣. The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary,
℟. And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary...

℣. Behold the handmaid of the Lord.
℟. Be it done unto me according to thy word.

Hail Mary...

℣. And the Word was made flesh.
℟. And dwelt among us.

Hail Mary...

℣. Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God.
℟. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray,
Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts; that, we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ, Thy Son, was made known by the message of an angel, may by His Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of His Resurrection. Through the same Christ our Lord.

St. Joseph's Bells *(CONTINUED)*

According to Verdin, there are three bells in the tower. The largest weighs 1,300 pounds. The two smaller bells weigh 900 and 400 pounds. These bronze bells were cast by the Stuckstede Foundry in St. Louis in 1926. The weight, casting date, foundry name and a dedication to Elizabeth Goelz are located on the bells.
Currently our bells ring before Mass, for funerals, for community events on request and at the Gloria during the Easter Vigil service. These 100-year-old bells are still able to remind us of God's presence in our lives and to call us to prayer and worship.
(Thank you to Paulette Aronson for this article.)

Father's corner *(CONTINUED)*

Today, many of our churches still have bells in their towers, joyfully reminding us that God awaits us for the Eucharistic banquet, the celebration of Mass. And within the Eucharistic celebration itself, the small bells rung during the consecration and the elevation of the Body and Blood of Christ joyfully remind us that God is present and that we must adore Him and show special reverence for our Jesus, who makes Himself present in Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity.
I want to highlight the moment of the Gloria during the Easter Vigil, when the bells are rung. It is a special moment because it reminds us of the instant when Christ conquered death and gave us eternal life through his resurrection.
The meaning of the Angelus: "Angelus" is the name of a Marian and Christological prayer of the Catholic Church in honor of the Virgin Mary. This prayer "invites us to meditate on the mystery of the Incarnation, encouraging Christians to take Mary as a point of reference at various moments of their day in order to imitate her in her willingness to carry out the divine plan of salvation." This contemplation of the life of Christ is complemented by the purpose of greeting the Virgin Mary and invoking her merciful intercession.
It is a liturgical composition that, with its simple structure and biblical character, leads us to commemorate the Incarnation of the Son of God and in which we ask to be led by his passion and cross to the glory of the resurrection. The Angelus prayer, or "angelic greeting," consists of the recitation of three verses interspersed with three "Hail Mary's."

The bells inside the bell tower of St. Joseph Church.