

***1870***

***St. Joseph Parish***

***1970***

## DEDICATION

*This edition is a history. The history of people. The people who were responsible for the growth of Saint Joseph Parish of Kellnersville, Wisconsin. It is the history of those gallant and fearless settlers who came to this northwest section of Manitowoc County to begin a new life. These people, with a deep faith in God, came and cleared this one-time wooded terrain and by their relentless enthusiasm and efforts created a flourishing farming area which today gives glory to God by its pasture lands and spotted woodlands. But more important, this is a history of their relations with God, and their dedicated efforts in establishing places of worship. It is their story of faith in God and trust in His infinite love.*

*We of the present dedicate this work to those of the past. We only hope that we learn from those dedicated early settlers and the early missionaries and pastors that guided them, that man's first calling is to acknowledge God, both in worship and in work.*

# ***Beginnings - Green Street -***

## ***St. Wenceslaus - 1860***

Beginnings are always difficult. But beginnings in a strange land create even greater difficulties. The first settlers in the tiny community of Greenstreet found a variety of difficulties and problems which soon seemed to be the order of the day. Father Adalbert Cipin, Pastor of St. Wenceslaus at the turn of the century gives us much of the early history. He mentions that it was a "period filled with sorrow, distress and suffering with only a few periods of happiness."

The first settlers arrived in 1853 and 1854. They were Wenzel Zeman, Simon Zaruba, Kasper Birger and a gentleman whose surname was Trestnik. All came from the community of Kremezske in Bohemia. The desperate misery and hunger of the country were the main reasons why these people migrated to America. Many who came to the state of Wisconsin stopped in Chicago but quickly moved north because of a severe cholera epidemic.

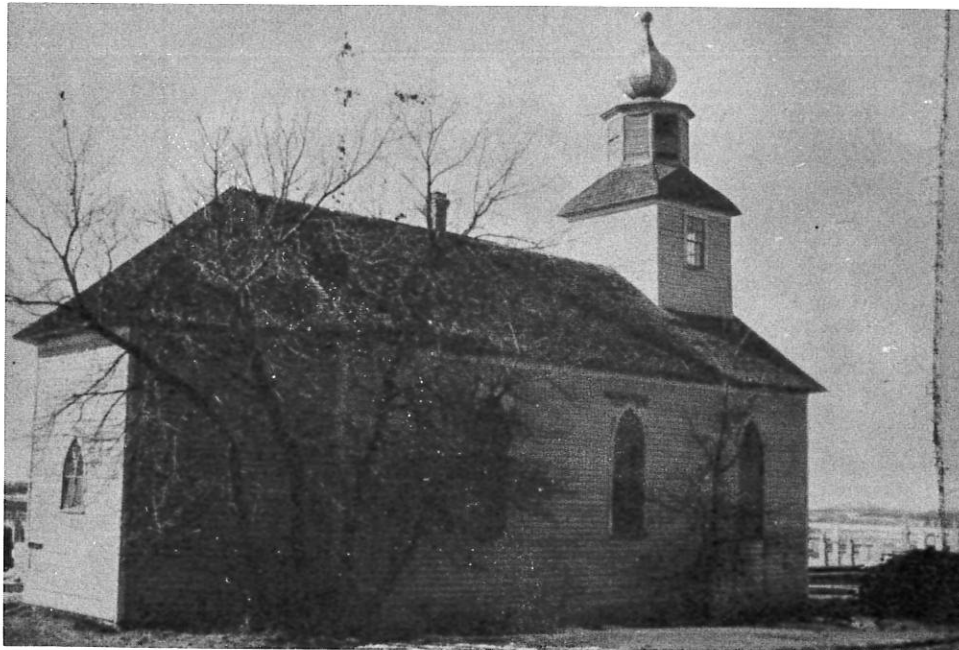
*... they toiled from  
dawn to dusk.*

Having arrived, the immigrants lived in huts with some of the pioneers who had preceded them. Some worked on farms, in grist and saw mills to obtain sufficient funds to purchase land and build homes for themselves. At first, they constructed log shanties for protection against the inclement weather and wolves. Soon they began clearing the forest and with the timber built more suitable homes and barns. Slowly, fine farms dotted the rolling landscape. The work was hard and they toiled from dawn to dusk. But they had trust in God and did not easily tire from the difficult task they faced. Neither did they forget that man is on earth to serve and worship God. Very shortly after they began clearing the land they met and laid plans for the building of a House of God where they could gather each Sunday to worship and where the missionary fathers could offer the Holy Sacrifice and administer the Sacraments and care for their spiritual needs. Before a church was constructed, the God-fearing immigrants came together in a local schoolhouse for prayer on Sunday. One of the first missionaries to visit the area was Father Maly. He at first offered Mass in the home of Frank Simbersky. Here he also baptized the children, performed marriages and

preached the Word of God.

As early as 1854, the settlers began gathering materials to build the church. A plot of land upon which to erect the church was donated by Simon Zaruba. This acre of land was joined by another acre given by Frank Simbersky to be used as a parish cemetery. The progress of building was slow. John Tiecher, a carpenter, directed the building of the church. The project took two years to complete, including the tower. A bell was purchased and an altar constructed by a Mr. Valek, also a carpenter. John Braun, a clockmaker, later paid for improvements to the altar. A charcoaled picture of Saint Wenceslaus was enclosed in a gold frame. This work was done by a seminarian, Joseph Koudelky. This student later became the first Bohemian Bishop of Cleveland, Ohio. His picture adorned the altar until 1895, when it was replaced by an oil painting on canvas and enclosed in a gilded frame. The new parish was a small one. Among the earliest members listed, we find the following: Frank Vanis, Wenzel Doubek, Frank Skvor, Kapinas Albrecht, John Fajt, Joseph Hynek and a Mr. Hruska, Sustr, Kriz and Ziegler. Names also included are those already mentioned: Frank Simersky, Simon Zaruba, John Tiecher, John Braun and Mr. Valek. The first parish councilors were Wenzel Zeman and Karl Pinger.

*. . . building was slow*



*ST. WENCESLAUS, GREENSTREET*

Now that the community had a new church, it still was without a resident Pastor. The first missionary to visit the community was Father Joseph Maly. In the year 1860, the new church was blessed and dedicated to Saint Wenceslaus and Father Maly was appointed its Pastor.

*Legal matters  
brought problems . . .*

Soon legal matters brought problems to the infant parish. Bishop Henni, residing in Milwaukee, requested that the deed of the property and the church be turned over to the diocese. These simple people, lacking knowledge of legal matters, in force rejected this appeal of the Bishop. They felt that they had prepared this land, paid for and built the church and therefore had sole right to ownership. They were completely unaware of corporation laws and procedures.

The growth of the parish is seen from records which were kept from the year 1862. Previous to this records were kept in the parishes of French Creek (Francis Creek) and at Cooperstown. During these years more immigrants arrived in the area and the Faith grew in the area. In 1865, Father Lang succeeded Father Maly. During this period parishes were established at Mishicot, Stangelville, and Carlton (now Norman). Father Lang, besides caring for the spiritual needs of the souls at Saint Wenceslaus, travelled to these parishes. Father Maly returned again in 1868 to work among the people of this region.

*Bishop consents  
to Kellnersville  
parish . . .*

In 1868, the northeastern section of Wisconsin was established as a diocese. The first Bishop was the Very Reverend Joseph Melchior. Shortly after the Bishop arrived in the new diocese he requested that the deed for the property and the church be turned over to the diocese. Again the congregation refused to respond to his request. It was at this time that the Bishop consented to establish the parish at Kellnersville. Saint Joseph Parish was blessed and dedicated in 1870 and Father George Brunner named the first Pastor. With the move, Saint Wenceslaus was declared a mission of Saint Joseph Parish and the Pastor ordered to reside at Kellnersville. This drastic move brought additional problems to the budding Parish at Greenstreet. This could truly be said to have been the beginning of the end for the Greenstreet church.

On October 1, 1871, Father Brunner was appointed Pastor of the Parish at Kewanee. This appointment brought Father J. Gedeon Mazanek to

Kellnersville. The next few years were dark, trying years to the Greenstreet Parish. They were years of great spiritual damage and even defections from the Faith. From the beginning Father Mazanek sided with the people at Saint Wenceslaus concerning the deed to the property. Adding to the difficulty, he also refused to live at Kellnersville and moved to Greenstreet. Because of his disobedience, the Bishop suspended Father Mazanek and ordered Saint Wenceslaus closed because the congregation sided with the Pastor. According to the records, Father Mazanek was active in the Parish of Saint Joseph from September of 1871 to March of 1872. He did continue his active ministry at Greenstreet until the time of his death on April 16, 1873. On Easter Sunday of that year, he traveled to Denmark to offer Mass. While there he became seriously ill and Father Leo Gauche from Cooperstown was called to give assistance. Hoping to recover, Father Mazanek issued a writ promising reconciliation with the Bishop. He never did recover and died within a few days. He lies buried in the Greenstreet cemetery. This unfortunate occurrence not only left Saint Wenceslaus Parish closed, but now without a Pastor.

*St. Wenceslaus  
closed . . .*

These hard working and aggressive people, realizing their plight, a flock without a shepherd, took matters into their own hands. The congregation advertised in the national Bohemian newspaper "Slovie" for a Bohemian priest who would not be affiliated with a Bishop. Most unfortunately for the people of the parish, their appeal for a priest was answered. But not in the way and with the effects that the people ever dreamed or hoped for. A fallen away priest, Ladimir Klacel, responded to the call. He arrived in Greenstreet in September of 1873. His coming brought great spiritual harm to most of the parish. The faith they had so dearly clung to, was gradually weakened. This unfortunate man had become an absolute non-believer who had gone so far as to doubt the existence of God and the soul in man. And yet he was here to teach Catholic doctrine in a Catholic community. As could be expected, the religious instruction of the children was filled with error and great harm was done to these absorbent minds. Gradually fallen aways increased and many became almost non-practicing. Finally, a number of the strong of faith became discouraged as matters

*Great spiritual  
harm done . . .*



became worse. God's ever-watchfulness and continued love is seen in what followed. A very intelligent, dedicated, and religious priest, Father Adalbert Cipin, was at the time Pastor of the Parish at Carlton. The people chose Wenzel Zeman and Frank Skvor to approach Father Cipin for his help. They begged him to speak to the Bishop for them. They were prepared to hand over the deed of the church, dismiss the fallen away priest and submit in obedience to the Bishop. They also requested that the Bishop send a priest to care for their spiritual needs. Bishop



*Father Adalbert Cipin*

*Father Cipin returns  
to Greenstreet . . .*

Krautbauer accepted their petitions through Father Cipin and ordered him to return to Greenstreet immediately and begin religious instruction and serve the people. By the end of 1877, the peace of God once again touched the souls of the people. Shortly, Father Maly, Pastor of the Kellnersville Parish again began to care for the contrite parishoners of Saint Wenceslaus. Between the years 1878 and 1894 numerous priests from the area visited Saint Wenceslaus and guided the people. The faith and devotion of the troubled community strengthened and again flourished. Even greater spiritual growth was evident with the appointment of Father Cipin to Saint Joseph's on the 7th of August in 1894. He took great interest in the Parish at Greenstreet. He worked endlessly in developing a meaningful liturgy, he trained a choir, and gave organ lessons to a number of the young girls of the parish. He guided in the work of beautifying the church. Real spiritual growth and deepening devotion to the Sacrifice of the Mass and the Sacraments was visibly evident. During the following years the mission thrived under the guidance of the Pastors from Kellnersville. By 1905, the

parish had increased to ninety families. Again in that year Father Cipin returned for the third time as Pastor of Saint Joseph's. On the feast of Saint Wenceslaus in 1908 a branch of the Bohemian Roman Catholic Central Union of Wisconsin (B.R.C.C.U.W.) was organized. The chief organizers under Father Cipin's guidance were Joseph Siebold and John Hamernik with Father Frank Kolar as chaplin. Officers were John Paulu and Frank Stangel of Tisch Mills.

One occasion which brought great joy and a sense of fulfillment to the aging parish, both to Pastor and people, occurred on October 12, 1910. On this day, they celebrated the Golden Jubilee of Saint Wenceslaus Parish. The day was one of great rejoicing and festivity. In memory of the celebration, a new cemetery cross of stone, purchased from Mike Kettenhofen of Manitowoc, was erected. This beautiful cross still stands in the Greenstreet cemetery. People attended the celebration from Reedsville, Manitowoc and the surrounding communities. That morning a Mass was offered by Father Cipin for all deceased members of the parish. He was assisted by Father Frank Kolar of Reedsville as Deacon; Father Jan Vorlicek of Antigo as Sub-Deacon; and Father William Braun of Francis Creek as Master of Ceremonies. Twenty-three persons, all descendents of the original founders, were present. These wore special badges and were given places of honor in the church for the Mass. That afternoon all parishoners gathered in the cemetery for the blessing of the new cemetery cross.

In 1914, Father William Braun became Pastor of Saint Joseph and Saint Wenceslaus Parishes. He continued to guide and inspire the mission parish. One aim continued to be foremost in the minds of the people: their fond wish to be an independent parish with a resident pastor. On January 23, 1916, it was proposed at the annual meeting that a new church be built. A discussion followed regarding the cost and where the church should be built, at Greenstreet or at Maribel. No decision was reached and the following year a postponement was taken because of the war (World War I).

In 1920, Father John Rous was the new pastor and the decision regarding a new church was still unsettled. Interest in a new church seemed to be diminishing. Parish officers for that year were: Wencel Doubek, Secretary; Frank Novak, Treasurer; Frank Spevacek, Louis Zeman and

*Golden Jubilee  
celebrated . . .*

*New church remained  
under discussion . . .*



Joseph Remiker, Consultors; Frank Zeman, Gravedigger; and Wencel Krejcarek, Janitor.

*St. Wenceslaus  
formed . . .*

Again in 1928, a committee was appointed to further investigate the possibility of building a new church and where. Committee members were: Joseph Ramiker, Anton Forst, Frank Froelich, Frank Kellner and Mike Yindra. In June of the same year a meeting was held and the committee had made some progress. A motion was made by Mike J. Yindra and seconded by John Sladky, to incorporate the congregation under the legal title "Saint Wenceslaus Congregation of Maribel." There were twenty-nine votes in favor and five opposed. At the same meeting John Wanek was chosen to act as Building Funds Secretary of the new parish and Mike J. Yindra to be Treasurer. Frank Freimuth and Frank Kellner were selected as Consultors. Members of the parish were asked to sign notes or deposit money for the new building in the Maribel State Bank. A special meeting was announced and held on August 12, 1928 and it was voted to drop the question of building a new church. The decision was made upon the advice of the Bishop who asked that the parish be discontinued and the members join parishes in the adjoining area. No final plans were made and it was agreed to carry this over to the annual meeting.

*Final action  
taken . . .*

On December 30, 1928, the annual meeting was held and the question of continuance was brought to the floor. A motion to continue was made by John Sladky. On January 12, 1930, the final action was taken. The members voted by ballot and it was decided to discontinue. It was decided to keep all church furnishings for a time, including the vestments. Likewise all parish money was to be kept on deposit at the bank.

The following is the minutes of the final meeting of Saint Wenceslaus Parish of Greenstreet:

*July 13th - 1930*

*Members notified of parish special meeting by Postal Card during the week. Anson Forst was secretary of the meeting. The notes of the last meeting were read and accepted. New note of Mr. Wen Chvala endorsed by A. Flick was accepted till Jan. 9th - 1931. Then the money will be turned and deposited in Maribel State Bank with the instructions that the note can be cashed only if signed by the pastor, Frank Wanish, Jr. and Wen Chvala. Mr. Frank Sleger, Matt Sladkey and John Sladkey will visit each member of the parish, if they get from 45-50 signers they will go to Rt. Rev. Bishop to request him for priest that the parish may continue as mission to some parish. Motion made and c. to adjourn.*

The end had finally come. Members now sought out a new parish to call home. Many joined Saint Joseph Parish at Kellnersville, while others moved to Saint James Parish of Cooperstown. There still remained at Greenstreet the memory of the past: the old church and the cemetery.

The final chapter was written in our human memory during the year 1947. On February 26, 1947, the Manitowoc Herald Times featured a special news article on "Greenstreet Catholic Church". The church had been an historical reminder for the past seventeen years of the hardships, toils, conflicts and joys of those who had ventured from Europe so many years ago. On March 5, 1947, even this reminder began to disappear. Mr. Jess Lambert of Mishicot, who purchased the landmark for \$678.00, began to erase the last visible bridge with the past from view.

*Final chapter  
written . . .*



All that now remains are the marked graves of the heroes of the past and the large stone cross as the last memento of the days gone by.

## *Only Memories Remain*



*ST. WENCESLAUS CEMETERY – GREENSTREET – 1970*



*Reigning Pontiff*  
*In Our Centennial Year*



*HIS HOLINESS POPE PAUL VI*