



Exterior

In response to the rapid growth of the Catholic population in Lakewood, The Cleveland Catholic Diocese announced formation of a new parish, St. Clement, on April 27, 1922, and the appointment of Rev. Joseph J. Schmit as its pastor. With the support of St. Rose of Lima and St. James parishes, a committee was formed to raise money to purchase land for the new church and form a building fund for the new structure.

A goal of \$4,000 was promised, aided by a gift of \$2,500 from St. Rose parish and assistance from St. Rose and St. James parishioners who would form the nucleus of the St. Clement congregation. On June 30, 1922, the group purchased land at the corner of Madison Ave. and Lincoln Ave. for the new church, a school, and a rectory for \$40,000. The purchase included a six-room brick residence on Lincoln Ave., which was renovated and expanded, enabling Fr. Schmit and his associate, Rev. Joseph Krispinsky, to move from a rented home on Elmwood Ave. to a permanent rectory.

Architect William Koehl was engaged. His works included the churches of St. Dominic, St. Charles Borromeo, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Our Lady of Angels, and St. Vincent de Paul and St. Luke Schools. The Schrader Construction Co. was awarded the contract for the church, exclusive of electrical, plumbing, and heating systems, for \$68,000.

Ground was broken for the new church on August 17, 1922. One month later, Rt. Rev. Joseph Schrembs, Bishop of Cleveland, three monsignors, 50 priests, and members of the new congregation laid the cornerstone.

Attentive both to the budget and the spiritual focus of the parish, Koehl modeled the new church on St. Clement Church in Rome, an Italian Romanesque design distinguished by its simplicity of form, red tile roof, brick walls, stone and wood trims, arched windows, square towers, and divisions of narthex (vestibule and baptistry), auditorium (seating), and sanctuary. Romanesque Basilican style dictates that the auditorium area is divided into three aisles of seating marked by clerestory walls and octagonal columns separating the pews from the nave. Both nave and auditorium feature decorative perforated wooden trusses.

The stone arch over the main entrance to the church depicts the Sacred Heart of Jesus welcoming the faithful. The arch is flanked by pillars featuring carved capitals.

The first Mass was celebrated in the basement of the new church on Christmas Day, 1922; a triumphal procession on Easter Sunday, April 1, 1923, welcomed the congregation into the completed upper church.

From the establishment of the new church, parishioners were asked to donate two percent of their weekly income and another two percent of their monthly income to construct a school. A campaign to fund construction of the school was begun in early 1924; by mid-March, the campaign committee had raised \$28,000 in subscriptions to construct an eight-room school, free to students and their families.

The \$95,000 contract was let to the Forest Steel and Iron Company, and work began immediately, with completion set for September 8, 1924: the first day of school.

By January 1927, however, attendance had grown to the point that St. Clement awarded an \$80,000 contract to Super-Built Construction Company for eight additional rooms and a gymnasium. In addition, the rectory was expanded and renovated to add an office and to house two additional assistants. A junior high section for grades 7 and 8 was added in 1958.

Until 1947, the Sisters of St. Joseph were bused from the motherhouse to St. Clement School, and it became apparent that construction of a convent was in order. Designed to be attached to the school, the residence for 18 nuns was begun by the C. T. Regan Construction Company for a cost of \$90,000.

That was not the end of parish development. Increased automobile ownership necessitated that parish parking spaces be expanded and improved (1965), and by 1982, plans were being drawn for upgrades to the church hall, kitchen, and the entrances to the church. That same year, the Adoration Chapel was established in an area between the rectory and the adjoining garages, and by 1996, plans were under way for repairs to the church.

Following demolition of the school and convent in 2020 and sale of the land bordering Marlowe Ave. to a private developer in 2021, the Lourdes shrine was relocated from Madison Ave. to the church's western side in April 2021.



Bill & Janet Trentel's Story

It's hard to believe our family has been members of the St. Clement parish family for more than half of the parish's 100 years. So many highlights of our family's history and spiritual lives have been shared together with our St. Clement family.

We moved into the parish in 1969. The Belle Avenue neighborhood, like most in Lakewood at the time, was full of large families filling the large homes, on our block – most of them being parish members. So the parish played a big role, whether it was the school, CYO sports or religious celebrations. Being a family of six, we were only a medium-size group; others were twice our size. Summers were filled with games and activities from 9:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. throughout the block with only a brief break for dinner when the moms would call us home from their front porches.

So many of our family highlights and memories include our parish. Baptisms, First Holy Communion, Confirmations, marriages and burials. In addition, there were CYO sports and CCD (PSR) and other social activities.

One special memory is serving as an altar server. Those were busy times at St. Clement, with many Masses (including multiple daily Masses) and a lot of weddings and funerals to cover. I remember an annual outing for the servers. We all piled into a tour bus and spent the day at Geauga Lake. I don't remember much adult supervision besides Fr. Fallon. Once we got to the park we were free to roam and experience the rides at the park on our own. It was quite a time for a 12 – 13 year old!

Another memory is of CYO sports. I was never much of a sports kid, but my brothers and sisters were, and being on teams with the other kids in the neighborhood just added to the experience. Mr. Nortz, from across the street, seemed to run all the teams. I particularly remember the track and cross country teams and at going least once to the cinder track at Lakewood High School to set up the track for a meet. Those experiences encouraged me to have my family participate in those activities many years later and, to this day, and have enriched our family experience with our parish and faith.

One last memory was the baptism of my children, and one special summer. In 1997, my son arrived, and my brother and sister each had a baby. We all returned to St. Clement to have them baptized together at one wonderful celebration officiated by Fr. Winters, who had married both my sister and me. It was quite crowded around the baptismal font with six parents, and six godparents, and, of course, three babies. Following the Mass we all gathered in the church hall to celebrate with our family and our St. Clement family. What a glorious day!

These experiences, and so many more tying family, faith and our St. Clement family together over so many years and aspects of my life, really make St. Clement a special place for me.

Karen Hruska's Memory

Learning a Lesson

In 7th and 8th grades at St. Clement School, I was taught by Sr. Ellen Marie. When she had to leave the classroom for a few moments, she told us to start working on our homework. I discovered that by using those minutes wisely, it took much less time to finish my homework at night. Gradually, I began to use my spare minutes at lunchtime. In those days we went home for lunch. On a good day, I had minimal homework to complete in the evening. Sometimes none!

Learning to use time wisely was a wonderful lesson!

Memory Shared by Kathleen Linsenmeyer

The cornerstone for St. Clement Church was laid in 1922. This was a symbolic cornerstone for Jim and Jane Higgins, whose parents joined the parish that year. Jim was five years old, but remembered when fund-raising was a “smoker” with beer, hot dogs and boxing in the church basement.

After graduating St. Clement school in 1931, in the depths of the Depression, the idea of attending Cathedral Latin High School was an impossible dream. That is, until Father Schmit promised to pay the tuition for any boy who would strive hard and bring a good report card to him for approval.

In later years, Jim and Jane joined the social program, the Clementine Club, where Jim met his future bride, Therese Dussault.

Jim and Therese raised two daughters and seven sons; they were lifelong active parishioners at St. Clement. Therese was known to exclaim: “What a life! What a wonderful life!”

Memory From Louise and Bud Gorman

One of my special memories at St. Clement was volunteering for the Senior Clementine and Friends. The ministry consisted of older adults from the five Lakewood parishes (and a Lutheran couple). The parishes were closing and it was a sad time for all, but especially for the older folks. The ministry was established by Sister Kathy Thomas to give people a place to meet former friends and to have fun. The 12 volunteers, who were in their seventies and eighties, were the most dedicated group I have met.

The programs consisted of: a presentation by a parishioner who, as a young soldier, helped release prisoners from a concentration camp after World War II, Lakewood police regarding senior safety, a Peruvian volunteer gave a wonderful presentation of her homeland. A memorable program was Christmas songs sung by the LCA children’s choir (Santa and an elf also appeared!) and there was lots of music and a little dancing (jitterbug when the Lakewood High Jazz band came. Conga line, anyone?).

The last day of the program was sad but they ALL had great memories.

We appreciate Mike Kotansky and his alternate Brian Andrews for bringing holy communion to our house for the past several years. (Except during Covid lockdown) Also, thank you to Father Workman for administrating the anointing of the sick.

Sheila Becker’s Memory

I have so many memories of St. Clement Parish. I was baptized and received First Holy Communion here. My husband, Jerry, and I were married here, as were three of my children.

I attended all eight years at St. Clement School and sent my children to school here. I remember marching out to piano music every day. The nuns were many, and no-nonsense. We feared the ruler on our own knuckles. Miss Seedlock, the third grade teacher, was a favorite of many of us. We had four priests who would play ball with us in the school yard. My husband coached eighth grade basketball for many years.

My mother would help Dennis Fisher clean the church on Saturday, and then would attend a Holy Hour.

It was wonderful growing up in St. Clement Parish. I’ve always been grateful to be a member.