

WELCOME

to

St James Catholic Church

5149 Dowling

Montague , Michigan

July 16, 2017

We are delighted and honored to help celebrate Montague's 150th
birthday by participating in the
"Special Sesquicentennial Summer Sunday Service Series".

Welcome

Hymn: **Bring Forth the Kingdom** GA 658

Church History (1) **Tantum Ergo** GA 888

Church History (2)

Psalm 34: **"Taste and see the goodness of the Lord."**

Church History (3) **Blest Be the Lord** GA 617

St. James History

St. James Choir: **A Blessing of Assurance**

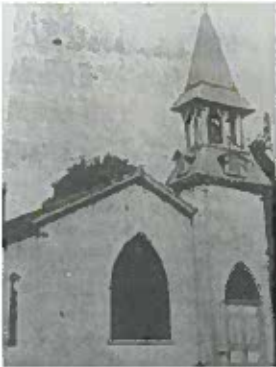
Closing remarks

Hymn: **Praise God from Whom all Blessing Flow** GA 747

Refreshments in the church hall. Please join us.

All are Welcome!!

The Catholic faith at St. James Parish has deeply imbedded roots in the Montague area. In a document prepared in 1951 by Bishop Francis Haas for deposit in the cornerstone to the addition to St James church, he stated the "the Grace of the Holy Spirit has hovered over these shores since the days of the Indian." "It appears the Fr. James Marquette was here and that the saintly priest, Frederick Baraga, too, in the 1830's raised the missionary's cross above the first native Americans who dwelt here. The document continues, "So that when Fr. Charles DeCunnick came from the parish center at Grand Rapids to Whitehall in 1875 to build the first church, it was not as a stranger, for the seed of Faith has long since been planted here and nourished by pioneers who brought with them the Grace of the Waters of Baptism."



St James Parish began as the dream of a handful of pioneers almost 142 years ago in July of 1875. The early immigrants built their church on the corner of Slocum and Baldwin Streets in Whitehall at a cost of \$3000. The building was completed and dedicated in October, 1876. The church's finishing touches were barely completed when it was discovered that many of the original parishioners had moved to the Montague area and that many of the newly located families in Montague were Catholic. It was agreed that the building would be moved and the people of Montague would donate the land on which to locate the church and build a home for the priest.



During the winter of 1876, skids were placed under the church building and teams of draft horses pulled it across the frozen White Lake and up the steep banks of the lake's west shore. The horse's shoes had to be especially caulked so they could travel on the slippery ice and an exploring crew preceded the caravan of movers checking for air holes and thin ice.

Once across the lake, the church was skidded up the big hill to a location in a triangle bounded by Sheridan, Williams and Hancock streets where it served the parish for the next 82 years. The parish consisted of about 30 families at that time and Fr. Louis Baroux served as both priest and janitor.



In 1958, the cornerstone of the present church was laid and the parish built a new church and school complex on its current site, a 26-acre campus on Dowling Street. Construction of the church and school was completed in 1960. Fr. Julius Ammon had the care of the parish during this time.

For a short time, the school was rented to the Montague Public School system, but in September of 1962, school officially opened to parish children in grades 1 through 6. The school was staffed by Franciscan Sisters of Our Lady of Perpetual Help from St. Louis, MO until 1987. Dedicated lay staff and generous volunteers continued the school's operation until its closing in 2007.

When the school opened, the building also housed living quarters for the nuns. In 1970, a new convent was completed and the rooms in the school were renovated into the school/parish office, the school principal's office and the school library. In 1989, the convent was converted to the priest's rectory with a parish meeting room in the basement. The offices of the Religious Education and the parish video/book library moved into the old rectory.

With the emergence of the twenty first century, St James has completed several major upgrades. A new parish hall, narthex and church internal renovations was completed in the spring of 2006. A final wide scale renovation of the original convent building was completed in the spring of 2009 and now serves full-time as the parish rectory. Finally, completed in 2015 were the Administration / Faith Formation building additions added to the west side of the Church building.





St. James has truly been a “mother parish” since its beginnings in 1875. At one time, as many as seven mission churches were served by the priests at St. James. Presently, St James is home to over 500 families and is clustered now with Our Lady of the Assumption Parish, Rothbury and St. John the Baptist Mission, Claybanks.

St. James continues to provide a stable Catholic presence on both sides of White Lake as it has done for the past 142 years. With new families being lured by the area’s natural resources and the rejuvenation of industry in the twin cities of Whitehall and Montague, the parish is excited about the opportunities for continued growth and outreach for the church.



In this prayer to Saint James the Apostle, the faithful ask for the strength to fight the good fight, as James did, in order to be worthy followers of Christ.

O glorious Apostle, St. James, who by reason of thy fervent and generous heart wast chosen by Jesus to be a witness of His glory on Mount Tabor, and of His agony in Gethsemane; Thou, whose very name is a symbol of warfare and victory: obtain for us strength and consolation in the unending warfare of this life, that, having constantly and generously followed Jesus, we may be victors in the strife and deserve to receive the victor's crown in heaven. Amen.