St. Joseph’s History
1887-Today
St. Joseph’s RC Church

Founded and Funded by Catholic Polish Immigrants
Bonded by Religion, Language, Culture and Tradition
St. Joseph’s in 1887

- First Mass 21 August
- First Baptism Thomas Stochowiak 11 September
- First Marriage – Michael Baran and Elizabeth Behrin 12 September
- Parish officially established 15 September to serve immigrant Polish families
- First Priest Fr. Alexander Szmigiel
First Church 1887

- A 20’ by 40’ structure originally known as Major Knapp’s Episcopalian Chapel
- Also served as St. John the Baptist until 1882 when St. John’s bought property in Scottdale
- In one year it grew from 87 families to 100.
- The original church was converted into a school and a new wooden church was built
First Priest
Fr. Alexander W. Szmigiel

- Educated in Poland, Rome and Lovain Belgium
- Ordained at St. Vincent’s seminary in Beatty (now Latrobe)
- Started as an assistant at St. John’s
- Served at St. Joseph’s until his death at the age of 39
St. Joseph’s 1892

- Built in 1892 at a cost of $8000
- Cornerstone laid by Bishop Phelan of Pittsburg in 1892
- Built in the Gothic style in the shape of a cross 112’ long and 44’ wide
- Steeple reached 156’ but was damaged by lightning. Reduced to it’s present 115’
St. Joseph’s School

- First church was converted to a four classroom school in 1888
- Staffed by lay teachers until 1898
- Run by the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth 1898-1920
- In 1924 a new school was built
- From 1920 until it’s closure in 1990 the school was run by the Sisters of the Holy Ghost
St. Joseph’s School Last Class 1987

Faculty - Sr. Edward, C. Muchow, Sr. DeChantal, R. Rinier, Sr. Madalyn, D. Wojciechowski

1986-87 St. Joseph Basketball Team and Cheerleaders

Mary Sefcich, Secretary
St. Joseph’s Pastors

St. Joseph’s Pastors

Fr Szmigiel 1887-1901
Fr Miskiewicz 1901-04
Fr Orzechowski 1904-12
Fr Jaworski 1912
Fr Lipski 1912-19
Fr Ostaszewski 1919
Fr Wojciechowski 1930-45
Fr Przybylski 1919-30
Fr Filip 1944-46
Fr Politowski 1945-66
Fr Pleban 1966-73
Fr Borkowski 1973-86
Fr Cindric 1986-89
Fr Sredzinski 1989-99
Fr Bogusz 1999-2000
Fr Washko 2000-2008
Fr Sedlak 2009-2013
Fr Kawecki 2013-today
A Few of the Nuns Who Served St. Joseph’s

Religious Teachers: Sisters of the Holy Ghost


Sisters M. Loretta Shelby, Cecilia Fabiszewski, M. Imelda Stankiewicz, Madalyn Chlebowski, Eileen Chlebowski, M. DeChantal Serwinski, M. Stephanie Lazor
St. Joseph’s has provided 12 priests and 23 nuns
St. Joseph’s Convent and Rectory

- Convent built for the sisters in 1897
- First rectory built in 1889. It was damaged by fire 17 May 1927 and rebuilt the same year
Notable Parish Vocation
Fr. Justin (Michael) Figas

- Being considered for Sainthood
- Born in McClure 24th June 1866 died 1959
- Survived polio, father attributed to Our Lady of Czestochowa at St. Joseph's
- Became a Franciscan priest 17 July 1910
- Started Rosary Hour in 1931
St. Joseph’s Celebrated its 125th Anniversary on the 9th of September 2012

A Concelebrated Mass of Thanksgiving was led by Bishop Lawrence E. Brandt who delivered the homily.

The concelebrant was Benedictine Archabbot Douglas R. Nowicki of St. Vincent Archabbey. He was a parishioner of St. Joseph’s and a student in its parochial school.
Our Lady of Czestochowa
“The Black Madonna”
St Joseph’s Historical Interior
St Joseph’s Sanctuary
A Few Catholic Polish Traditions

- Gorzkie Źale - Bitter Lamentations – Weekly Lenten Service. First celebrated in 1704 Holy Cross Church Warsaw Poland. The devotion is primarily a sung reflection and meditation on the Passion of Christ and the sorrows of His Blessed Mother.

- Wiglia – Traditional Polish Christmas Eve vigil

- SmingusDingus (Wet Monday) – Easter Monday. Commemorates Poland’s conversion to Christianity and the baptism of Prince Mieszko in 966 A.D.
St. Joseph’s and St. John the Baptist were Partnered by the Diocese of Greensburg on the 23rd of June 2013
St. Joseph’s held its 40th Annual Summer Festival in July 2014
Today