



The History of
Saint Peter's Catholic Church
MENDOTA, MINNESOTA



1840-1990

DEDICATION

THIS BOOKLET IS DEDICATED
TO PEG COONAN
LIBRARIAN AND HISTORIAN
OF ST. PETER'S PARISH

Church of St. Peter



150th Anniversary 1840–1990



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THE FOUNDING OF ST. PETER'S PARISH

The Mendota area was originally inhabited by the Dakota (Sioux) Indians. Until around 1800, only a few fur traders, mostly French, traveled the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers. At that time, both the Minnesota River and the small settlement on the river bank were called St. Peter's. In 1852, the river was renamed the Minnesota River and the settlement became "Mendota," an Indian name meaning "meeting of the waters."

This territory became part of the United States by the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. Zebulon Pike was sent here in 1805 to negotiate with the Sioux for a large tract of land on which to build a fort. The building was begun in 1819 and completed in 1820. It was named for Colonel Josiah Snelling, the fort's first Commandant.

Jean Baptiste Faribault, a fur trader, became the first white settler in Dakota County. He built a log cabin for his family on Pike Island. About 1820, after being flooded out, he moved to the east bank of the river and built a permanent home. Near 1826, the American Fur Company established a trading post in Mendota, and in 1834 Henry Sibley was appointed agent for the company.

Three years later the Holy See established the Diocese of Dubuque, headed by Bishop Mathias Loras. The diocese was huge, covering not only Iowa, but the territories of Minnesota, the Dakotas and part of Wisconsin. On June 23, 1839, Bishop Loras left Dubuque to visit Fort Snelling and people in the area. Later he wrote of the trip:

"I left Dubuque...on board a large and magnificent steam vessel, and was accompanied by Abbe Pelamourgues and a young man who served as interpreter with the Sioux. After a successful voyage of some days along the superb Mississippi and beautiful Lake Pepin, we reached St. Peter's...our arrival was a cause of great joy to the Catholics who had never before seen a priest or bishop in those remote regions; they manifested a great desire to assist at divine worship and to approach the Sacraments of the Church... the Catholics of St. Peter's amounted to 185, 56 of whom, we baptized, administered Confirmation to eight, Communion to 33 adults, and gave the nuptial benediction to four couples."

When Bishop Loras left after a stay of two weeks, he promised to send a priest to care for the settlers and Indians of St. Peter's. On April 20, 1840, Father Lucien Galtier, newly ordained in Dubuque the previous January, boarded a steam boat for Fort Snelling. This was to be the beginning of the founding of the parish of St. Peter.

FATHER LUCIEN GALTIER, FIRST PASTOR

When Father Galtier eventually arrived at Fort Snelling, 29 years old and newly ordained, he was filled with enthusiasm but probably unaware of the hardships he would encounter. Shortly after his arrival, Father Galtier was welcomed into the home of Scott Campbell, a government interpreter at Fort Snelling. In the Campbell home, Father Galtier was given one room which he used as living quarters and chapel. In 1841 he supervised the building of a small log chapel at St. Paul's Landing to serve the growing number of settlers arriving there.

Later, John Baptiste Faribault gave him a small log house on the Mendota side of the river. He reserved one corner as a bedroom and used the rest as the chapel. The roof of this room which housed the chapel was constructed of bark and dirt. It was so heavy that it collapsed in the summer of 1842. Father Ravoux was in the building at the time but escaped before it collapsed.

Much of the materials for a new chapel were donated by the many Catholic men Father Galtier had visited in the logging camps on the Chippewa River. The chapel was completed and blessed on October 2, 1842. The altar from this chapel, reputedly built by Father Galtier, is now on display in the corridor off the Main Church. For some period of time, the altar was kept by the Lemay family and later given to the St. Paul Seminary. The Seminary gave it back to St. Peter's in 1977-78. The tabernacle, which had been separated from the altar, was found in the attic of the stone church at the time of the restoration.

Father Galtier specifically had been assigned to minister to the white settlers and Indians in Mendota. Many of the Indians were good singers so Father taught them to sing the canticles which had been translated into the Sioux language. Besides his pastorate at St. Peter's, Father Galtier also ministered to Chippewa Falls, Hudson, St. Croix Falls, the new settlement of St. Paul, and as far south as Lake Pepin. Visiting these scattered areas necessitated trips of several weeks on horseback.

According to Cathedral of St. Paul archives, Father Galtier baptized 137 people during his pastorate at St. Peter's. The first person baptized by Father Galtier was Marguerite Marie Pepin on May 3, 1840. The first marriage was between Charles Perray and Emile Brouse on January 19, 1841. History notes: "His flock was small, but dispersed as they were, themselves strangers to material comfort, it required no small degree of courage and self-denial in a clergyman to labor among them."

In 1842, Father Galtier became seriously ill and was in the military hospital at Fort Snelling for two months. The severe climate, hard work and settlers' occasional indifference to his efforts caused Father's health to fail. In May, 1844, Bishop Loras transferred him to Keokuk, Iowa. A year later he went to France where he gradually regained his health. He returned to Wisconsin in 1847, where he became pastor of St. Gabriel's Parish in Prairie du Chien. Father Galtier remained there until his death in 1866.

FATHER AUGUSTINE RAVOUX

Father Augustine Ravoux was another of the seven seminarians recruited in France by Bishop Loras. Like his good friend Lucien Galtier, Father Ravoux also was ordained in Dubuque In January, 1840. Father Ravoux was assigned at once to Prairie du Chien; but in September, 1841, Bishop Loras asked Father Ravoux to visit various outposts in the northern part of the diocese (the Minnesota and Dakota Territories) to see if a mission for the Indians might be established. Father Ravoux traveled extensively through the area, making his headquarters with Father Galtier at St. Peter's.

Father Ravoux quickly realized he would have little success in converting the Indians unless he could converse directly with them. Jean Baptiste Faribault and his sons, Oliver and David, spoke fluent English and Sioux, as well as French. They were most cordial to Father Ravoux, encouraging him in his efforts and persuading the Indians to listen to the priest. Oliver and David began teaching Father Ravoux the Sioux language and helped him translate into Sioux a short catechism, daily prayers, religious instructions and several French hymns and canticles. Father Ravoux later said he was amazed at how easily he mastered the Sioux language when he had so much difficulty earlier in the seminary with Latin and Greek.

It happened that Father Joseph Cretin operated a small printing press in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, and it was there that Father Ravoux had his translations printed into a little book called, The Path to the House of God. With Bishop Loras' approval, Father Ravoux built a small log chapel in Chaska. In early months of 1844, he baptized 23 Indians and those of mixed Indian-white descent.

When Father Galtier was transferred to Keokuk that same year, Father Ravoux was forced to abandon his mission in Chaska because Bishop Loras had no priest to replace Father Galtier.

Father Ravoux assumed the pastorate of St. Peter's in Mendota, St. Paul, and the outlying settlements. In 1850, the St. Paul Diocese was created and Father Cretin became its first bishop one year later. Father Ravoux had already purchased land in St. Paul on which to build the first cathedral. In 1855, Father Ravoux was appointed administrator and Vicar General of the diocese while continuing as pastor of St. Peter's. When Bishop Cretin needed to confer with Father Ravoux, the bishop would hang a flag from his window in St. Paul as a signal. Father Ravoux then would take the ferry across the river to meet the bishop.

Father Ravoux loved the Indians and admired their intelligence. They, in return, held him in high regard and trust. They called him "Black Gown" and some Indian women made him a cassock of deerskin, dyeing it black with berries. He later claimed It was as fine a cassock as he had ever owned, and he wore it until the color faded to purple. When Indians came to trade in Mendota, he allowed any who needed shelter to sleep in the church.

Following Bishop Cretin's death in 1857, Father Ravoux went to St. Paul where he directed the completion of the first cathedral and said the first Mass in it on June 13, 1858. At age 75, Father Ravoux was asked to write his memoirs by Bishop John Ireland. This book, The Labors of Monsignor W. Ravoux among the Sioux or Dakota Indians recounts in fascinating detail his early experiences in this area. Father Ravoux died in 1906 at the age of 91 and is buried in Calvary Cemetery in St. Paul.

FATHER JOSEPH GOIFFON—SERVED 1905–1908

Life for the priests and pioneers who established the churches in the 1800s included many struggles and difficulties. Perhaps one of the greatest personal hardships during that time was suffered by Father Joseph Goiffon, whose legs were frozen in an October blizzard. Prior to coming to St. Peter's, Father Goiffon, also newly arrived from France, was sent to minister to a community of French Canadians clustered around the settlements of Pembina and St. Joseph, which were part of the Diocese of St. Paul.

Life was hard! Father Goiffon lived in a small log hut with a dirt floor and parchment-covered windows. He slept on the floor, wrapped in buffalo hides for warmth. Each morning he arose early to pray with the men before they left camp to hunt. During the day he instructed the women and children. Letters by courier served as the only form of long-distance communication.

In August, 1860, he was requested to come to St. Paul to give an account of the progress of his mission. The hazardous trip required weeks of travel by a caravan of ox carts, following a path southeast along the Red River until the caravan reached the Grand Traverse, a 20-mile stretch of swamp and six-foot high grass. The caravan crossed more than 19 rivers and eventually reached St. Paul at the end of September. Father Goiffon planned to return to his settlements in ten days; however, official church business forced him to stay a day longer. The majority of the caravan started back and left only the Morneau brothers to wait for him.

As they began their journey on a warm October day, they fell behind in their schedule due to broken wheels and axles. Impatient to return to his mission, the inexperienced Father Goiffon rode ahead wearing only a summer cassock and taking four days' supply of food. On the second day, he awoke horrified when he realized that more than eight inches of crusty snow had fallen, leaving him without means of obtaining dry firewood or hay to feed his horse. A blizzard developed, and his supply of food was almost exhausted. Father Goiffon huddled next to his horse for warmth, but the following day his horse died. Meanwhile, Father began to suffer from severely frozen feet and legs. In an attempt to stay alive, he used a knife to cut open the dead animal to obtain food as well as warmth from the carcass.

He was exposed to the blizzard for five days until the Morneau brothers found him and took him back to camp. But after three weeks Father's frostbitten legs had become gangrenous. The only skilled medical help was in St. Boniface, Manitoba, a three-day trip by sled. At St. Boniface, they amputated one leg below the knee and the other at the ankle. Later, the wounds burst open and Father Goiffon nearly bled to death.

Anticipating Father's death, people of the mission made candles for his funeral out of buffalo grease. This procedure caused the mission at St. Boniface to catch fire. While the residents attempted to put out the flames, Father Goiffon was left out in the 25-degrees-below-zero cold after being evacuated from the burning building. The intense cold cauterized his wound and saved the priest's life. He was later fitted with a wooden leg and foot and continued to serve in Minnesota. The foot is now housed in the Archdiocesan archives.

Father Goiffon retired to St. Peter's and served from 1905 to 1908 along with Monsignor Anatole Oster and Father Francis A. Serpaggi. Martin Shields, a long-time parishioner of St. Peter's, served as altar boy for Father Goiffon. He remembers the noise that the wooden leg and foot made on the wooden floors and fearing that Father Goiffon would fall. Mr. Shields also remembers Father as a “wonderful man” with a heavy French accent, who was loved by his parishioners.

Father Goiffon died on May 6, 1910, and is buried in Calvary Cemetery in St. Paul.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CHURCH

In spite of his many and varied accomplishments, Father Ravoux undoubtedly will be remembered at St. Peter's for spearheading the construction of the stone church in 1853. Because the log cabin located on the grounds of the Sibley House became inadequate to meet the growing demands of the parish, Father Ravoux and the parishioners of St. Peter's began to construct a new church. According to the historic plans, dimensions of the new church measured 35 by 75 feet, with the building constructed of Minnesota limestone from a nearby quarry.

The entire cost of the new stone church, with its hand-split shingles for a roof, came to \$4,425.80. The principal donors to the Project are listed as: Alexander Faribault, Pierre Chouteau & Co., John Bpt. St. Aubin, Henry Hastings Sibley, the Catholic officers and soldiers at Fort Snelling, Gamel and Bishop Cretin.

It was not until almost 30 years later, in 1881, that a rectory was added. Previously, the priests lived in the sacristy area of the church, which included a ladder that provided access to the attic where they slept.

By the year 1900, names and photos of parishioners who became synonymous with the history of St. Peter's began to appear in the annals of the parish. The names included: Auge, Bernier, Burns, Callahan, Corrigan, Fee, Kennedy, Lebey, Perron, Rowan, St. Martin, Slater and Walsh. Descendants of many of these families remain as parish members today!

HISTORIC CHURCH—INTERIOR

Since its completion in 1853, changes to the exterior of the Historic Church were sometimes dictated by Mother Nature. Interior changes, on the other hand, reflected the taste of the current pastor.

Seating arrangements, for example, varied considerably. Side galleries resembling opera seats were installed when Father Payette was pastor in 1877 only to be removed ten years later when Father Duane was pastor. The center aisle was removed at the turn of the century leaving only the two side aisles. Also, the floor was elevated several feet at the entrance to provide a better view from the rear of the church. Seating capacity was increased at this same time (1902) by the addition of a choir loft. This arrangement occurred when Father Mahoney was pastor, and it remained that way until the church's restoration in 1977-78.

During the restoration, the floor was made level and the center aisle added to restore the seating arrangement to its 1890 appearance.

Wallboard was added in 1940 to provide additional insulation for the very cold church.

The first altar of the new church was built by a man named Mathieu around 1858. He also was responsible for the floor and the benches, At a later date, about the time Father Oster was pastor, the altar was replaced with one made by Isaac Auge. Meanwhile, the side altars and statues were added in 1909 when Father Pat O'Connor was pastor.

In 1906, a new organ was purchased. It now stands in the rear of the Historic Church. Due to the parish's difficulties in fundraising at the time, organist William F. Markoe was required to perform a concert at the Town Hall to raise money for the organ's purchase. The cost of the organ was \$300. The fundraiser brought in \$18.33.

BELL TOWER/STEEPLE

Although it doesn't extend hundreds of feet into the sky and glitter when the sun rises over the Minnesota arid Mississippi River valleys, the steeple on the Historic Church of St. Peter stands prominently, a symbol of Christianity for more than one and one-third centuries.

The original steeple, according to historical accounts, did not contain a bell. The steeple was a rather short tower with a wooden cross. This tower weathered many Minnesota storms but was eventually blown down in the late 1880s. Father Thomas Duane, who was pastor at the time, directed the construction of a tall steeple with a new bell. The cast bronze bell was shipped front St. Louis and remains in use today.

In July, 1951, the 65-year-old steeple and bell came crashing down during a tornado. For two years the stone church resembled the flat-top look while construction of a new shorter, gilded steeple was being completed. During this period, the bell was still used while mounted in a tree. In 1953, the new steeple was erected as part of the church's Centennial Celebration. When the glittering steeple was dedicated in 1954, Father William Harrington, pastor of St. Peter's, and Archbishop Murray presided at the event.

The church bell served many purposes over the years from beckoning parishioners to Sunday Mass to summoning firefighters. One early November morning in 1930, Father Mahoney was awakened by a fire in the rectory. He removed the records from the burning building and attempted to single-handedly put out the fire. When his efforts failed, he rang the bell to summon help. Eighty-year-old Father Mahoney suffered from shock and exposure due to his efforts. He never fully recovered and died the following January.

During the restoration in 1977-78, repairs to the silver-gilded bell tower were delayed to reduce expenses. However, an individual came to the rescue and donated a new, taller cupola and steeple, similar to the one erected in 1880, that was lifted by crane over the 90-year-old bell and fastened to the stone tower. The present steeple is the fourth one to adorn the top of St. Peter's church.

For 100 years the bell continued to function, whether in the actual bell tower or in a tree. But just before Christmas, 1988, the bell was declared inoperable because its supporting structure had broken. In early 1989, the Guardianship Board, the group that oversees the Historic Church, voted to have a new supporting structure manufactured for the old bell. Later that same year, what appeared to be a relatively simple task of remounting the old bell onto the new frame, turned out to be quite an ordeal. After workers made numerous trips up and down the bell tower, using two 18-foot extension ladders to adjust the bell's frame, the bell again became operational in August, 1989.

Unfortunately, this was not the end of problems with the bell. Because the bell operated so easily, energetic bell ringers would rotate the bell full circle, causing the rope to jump its turning wheel. Several additional trips up the bell tower finally solved the problem!

FROM OLD CHURCH TO HISTORIC CHURCH

As parishioners approached the Church of St. Peter in 1971, what they noticed was the simple beauty of the limestone walls, the squat steeple, and the rotting window frames. Upon entering the church, they stumbled slightly on the sloping wood floor and felt as if their heads would bump the low balcony that spanned across the back of the church. The wooden pews were gouged and scarred, the walls were depressingly dirty and the ceiling was water-stained from roof leaks. Yet, the altar was intact.

Three years passed and new parishioners arrived, requiring more space. The former parish school was remodeled into a larger area called the "Contemporary Church." The limestone building ultimately became the "Old Church."

In the early 1970s, the Parish Maintenance and Development Committee recommended that the Old Church be repaired. After all, it was the oldest church in continuous use in the state, the only remaining church built in the territory before Minnesota became a state. The church was declared a historic site by the U.S. Department of the Interior in 1935. A Restoration Committee was appointed in 1973 by Father Bauer to oversee the refurbishing work of the Historic Church.

The Committee decided that historical data should govern all restoration decisions. A year was spent searching church files, newspaper articles and records at the Minnesota Historical Society to gather information for the work. Finally, an architectural firm was retained and plans drawn for the work. Simultaneously, a Fundraising Committee became organized. Support came from the entire community—the parish, the Archdiocese, the Historical Society and other institutions. The restoration project had become a community effort.

On December 14, 1975, the church was closed because broken trusses were discovered in the roof. The following August, physical work began. The limestone was cleaned, joints tuck pointed, new window frames installed, the roof rebuilt, cracked floor joists replaced, the floor refinished, the interior refurbished, a new steeple was installed, and the stained glass windows were removed and completely renovated.

During construction, the Restoration Committee continued to meet, considering such issues as lighting, Stations of the Cross and carpeting. Work was completed in 1978 through the efforts of many people. The work cost \$284,000, a far cry from the original construction cost of \$4,425.80 in 1853.

On September 10, 1978, at the age of 125 years, the restored church was re-dedicated by Archbishop John Roach. A local newspaper reported that 1,500 people gathered for the celebration. The Fort Snelling Fife and Drum Corps entertained while the Jonathan Padelford carried participants from Fort Snelling to the Sibley House Landing. People strolling up the hill from the landing to the restored church were dressed in costumes of the historical past—Civil War uniforms, stove pipe hats and long-flowing gowns.

Before disbanding, the Restoration Committee recommended that a group be formed to maintain the Old Church. As a result, the Restoration Committee became the Guardianship Board and the “Old Church” became the “Historic Church.” The Guardianship Board functions today, protecting and preserving the Historic Church for all of us, and for the future.

ARTICLES IN THE HISTORIC CHURCH

The silver candlesticks on the main altar are made of German silver, which consists of many types of alloys, mostly nickel. They go back to the early days of the Historic Church. Shortly after the restoration a break-in took place when one of the lower panels of a stained glass window was broken and four of these old candlesticks were stolen. They have never been recovered.

There are two original 1890 prie-dieus (portable kneelers) which are used by the bride and groom. Also there is a special one which was used as a confessional and is located beside the main altar.

The black vestment cabinet in the sacristy dates to 1865. It was stored through the years by the Sisters of St. Joseph and returned to St. Peter's at the time of the restoration.

The organ located in the rear of the church dates from near the turn of the century. This is the first organ which was restored in 1982.

Lace on the main altar cloths is French re-run with gold thread. Lace on the side altar cloths is a duplicate of the original.

The communion rail is a duplicate of the one in the church during the 1890s.

The all-wool carpeting was woven in Pennsylvania from a design popular in the 1890s.

Hand-made of oak in 1903, the baptismal font was originally in St. Mathias Church in Hampton. It was donated to St. Peter's in 1956 when that parish acquired a new font.

The 1890 vintage Stations of the Cross and vigil light stand, presently in the church, had been discarded in 1950 by St. Columban's Church in Greenleaf, Minnesota, and rescued by a parishioner who stored them in his granary. During the years of storage, mice had eaten away the original oil paintings on the Stations of the Cross, but the walnut frames with hand-carved overlay were still intact. Acquired by St. Peter's parishioners at the time of the restoration, they were refinished and new prints installed.

The antique cane seat chairs were donated and re-caned by parishioners.

The hanging sanctuary light is from the old Visitation Convent and donated by the Sisters at the time of the restoration.

The current side altars were duplicated from an 1890 photograph of the church's interior and replaced the 1909 altars.

The Blessed Virgin statue is a copy of an Italian wooden statue formerly in the Convent of St. Peter's. The statues of the Sacred Heart, St. Peter and St. Joseph are originals.

The antique oil lamps which have been wired and connected to dimmer switches are similar to the original lamps in the Historic Church.

The stencil design on the walls is the original design and was discovered when the church was gutted and the wallboard removed at the time of the restoration.

Most of the hardware on the kneelers is original.

The stained glass window installed over the main door of the church is not original. The window opening had been covered by wallboard and the original glass was not intact.

CHRISTMAS IN ST. PETER'S LOG CHAPEL

MIDNIGHT MASS IN 1843...FATHER GALTIER

“As usual, I celebrated midnight Mass. A great crowd of People filled the church. Before the Holy Sacrifice began, all seats were taken, so that it was with difficulty that one could make his way through the midst of the crowd. Officers, soldiers, Protestant gentlemen of the neighborhood, as well as a great number of Catholic Canadians from St. Croix, Lake Pepin, St. Paul and St. Anthony Falls, assisted at the ceremony. Some musicians had come from St. Croix Falls, sixty miles from St. Peter, to add to the magnificence of the feast.

“The sanctuary was lighted by a great number of tapers which gave a brilliance of light quite lovely. This was set off by draperies which completed it in every way, and whose art was modestly accompanied by a wreath of green in the form of an arch, extending from the entrance of the sanctuary to the communion table. In the center hung a chandelier surmounted by twelve candles, representing the twelve apostles.

“In the first row on one side were the musicians with their instruments, on the other side were the children who were going to make their first communion, each holding a lighted candle and wearing a white veil. Everyone was attentive and devout.

“The singing began at half past eleven and did not stop. It ended with the Mass of Thanksgiving for graces, which M. Godfert said immediately after the first Mass, which was solemnly celebrated. He gave us a fine instruction. The number of communicants was indeed satisfactory. There were three who had come thirty miles to have the benefit of approaching the Holy Banquet. The feast was glorious and has made us forget many of the difficulties, setbacks and miseries which we have endured in other respects.”

MIDNIGHT MASS 1843...FATHER RAVOUX

“Christmas Day at Midnight Mass, the chapel of St. Peter, which is 20 by 40, was crowded; and (in addition) in a room from which the altar can be seen, there were about 20 persons. There were several good singers who sang hymns for an hour and a half before Mass. For four hours the chapel was filled. During the holiday season about 30 persons received the sacraments. Le Bon Noel almost made me rich in temporal goods. The Catholic soldiers gave me about \$75 and the several families of St. Peter also made me a subscription of forty dollars, though I had not asked anyone for anything.”

ST. PETER'S SCHOOL, CONVENT, RECTORY AND COMMUNITY HALL

St. Peter's has a long history in the field of education. School was taught in the log chapel after 1853 when the stone church was built. Mr. Deautinet was the teacher. In 1869, the log chapel was torn down to make way for the railroad. The Sibley house was purchased from Henry Sibley around 1868 and used as a school, it was called the Convent of the Immaculate Conception and was staffed by the Sisters of St. Joseph.

The first children were French, Irish, and Sioux. The girls were taught at the Convent, and the boys were taught in a brick school owned by the district. The sisters left in 1879 because of declining enrollment and financial difficulties. They were followed by the Sisters of Mercy who staffed an Industrial School for Girls, In 1883, the school was closed for lack of support. In 1910, St. Peter's School building and property was turned over to the Daughters of the American Revolution by Archbishop Ireland, to be preserved as a historical museum. The building again became known as the Sibley House.

In 1956–57, a new school was constructed at the cost of \$400,000. The Sisters of the Most Precious Blood staffed St. Peter's School. The school was dedicated to the memory of Father Thomas Edward Shields, a famous educator who was connected with the parish in the late 1800s. It opened with three sisters and 112 pupils. In the 1960s, the enrollment was well over 300 students. The building was used as a school until 1971–72. Two years later, it was converted into the present main church.

In 1960, a new convent, now occupied by the pastor, was built for the Sisters. They previously lived in the school building. The convent had accommodations for 11 sisters and was situated on the bluff above the Minnesota River where the sisters prayed, worked, rested, studied and dined.

In 1973, the rectory, formerly the convent, was converted to provide offices and residence for clergy.

A Community Hall, now called Heritage Hall, was built around 1936–38, giving St. Peter's parishioners a place to gather, socialize, and provide a center for community togetherness and tradition.

ST. PETER'S CEMETERY

St. Peter's Cemetery is located on a hill south of St. Peter's Church, near the northeast corner of Highways 110, 13 and 55, overlooking the Mendota Bridge.

The first recorded burial in St. Peter's Cemetery was that of Olivier Emile Faribault on October 10, 1840. It is believed that there were burials in the cemetery even prior to that date. Unfortunately, some markers were made of wood or soft stone and have eroded. Also, vandals may have removed or destroyed some stones. Many graves were never marked.

Buried in St. Peter's Cemetery are those who were here before the church was built in 1853. Many of the early settlers at Mendota who lie in the graveyard were connected with the American Fur Company or traded at the local outpost. They are part of St. Peter's Church history and that of our state. Many buried in the cemetery were parishioners who helped build the State of Minnesota and Dakota County. A number of those buried are of French descent, such as Legendre, Lemay and Tousignant. Also, there are many Irish names, such as Murphy, St. Martin and Shields. Soldiers from the Civil War, Spanish American War, World War I and World War II also are buried in St. Peter's Cemetery.

The cemetery remains in use today with families of the parish owning plots. A new altar was placed in the cemetery in 1990 and was dedicated at Easter that same year.

PASTORS OF ST. PETER'S

BISHOP JEAN MATTHIAS LORAS.....	1839
FATHER LUCIEN GALTIER.....	1840–1844
FATHER AUGUSTIN RAVOUX.....	1844–1857
FATHER ANATOLE OSTER.....	1857–1859
FATHER J. CLAUDE ROBERT.....	1859–1866
MONSIGNOR ANATOLE OSTER.....	1902–1907
FATHER CLAUDE GENIS.....	1866–1868
FATHER PATRICK F. GLENNON.....	1868–1877
FATHER JOSEPH ANTHIME PAYETTE.....	1877–1878
FATHER C. ARTHUR SICAZRD DE CARUFEL.....	1878–1881
FATHER WILLIAM P. MURRAY.....	1881
FATHER CONSTANTINE L. EGAN, O.P.....	1881–1883
FATHER LOUIS CORNELIS.....	1883–1886
FATHER THOMAS F. DUANE.....	1886–1891
FATHER JOHN GMEINER.....	1891–1894
FATHER MARTIN MAHONEY.....	1894–1902
FATHER JOSEPH GOIFFON.....	1905–1908
FATHER FRANCIS A. SERPAGGI.....	1907–1908
FATHER PATRICK J. O'CONNOR.....	1908–1913
FATHER MARTIN MAHONEY.....	1913–1931
FATHER STEPHEN J. CASSIDY.....	1929
FATHER THOMAS P. RYAN.....	1931
FATHER WILLIAM J. HARRINGTON.....	1931–1956
FATHER HARVEY F. EGAN.....	1957–1965
FATHER JOHN V. FLAHERTY.....	1965–1969
FATHER JAMES B. NAMIE.....	1969–1970
FATHER JOHN T. BAUER.....	1970–1975
FATHER PETER FLEMING.....	1970–1972
FATHER RAYMOND W. MARSCHALL.....	1975–1977
FATHER MICHAEL M. ARMS.....	1977–1989
FATHER KEVIN I. CLINTON.....	1989–2005
FATHER RICHARD A. BANKER.....	2006–2008
FATHER JOSEPH G. GALLATIN.....	2008–present

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