

# *Breaking Bread in the Holyland*

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*The Churches and Supper Clubs  
in Wisconsin's Holyland*



# ***Breaking Bread in the Holyland***

## ***A Visitors Guide to the Holyland***

Created by TravelCalumet.com, a division of the Calumet County  
Resource Management Department, in cooperation with the  
Fond du Lac Area Convention and Visitors Bureau.

2013

Second Edition



## MENU

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## What and Where is the Holyland

The ‘Holyland’ is a region in southern Calumet and northern Fond du Lac Counties that was settled by Catholic Germans in the mid-1800’s. The landscape boasts several small rural communities, each with a grand Catholic Church rich in history.

When German immigrants arrived in America, they settled in homogenous clusters; that tradition is clearly evident in the eastern part of Wisconsin known as the Holyland.

The area is approximately 100 square miles in size and is home to ten churches, in ten communities. Typically, the community was named after the church that was established in the specific area—St. Peter, etc. Many times the church was built first, and the community developed around it.

In addition to the churches, there are some small grottos, and one church even expanded to include a monastery and a seminary.

Settlers came from small villages and hamlets in the German Eifel region of Rhenish Prussia. Due to poor crop yields in 1838, the farmers decided it was time to leave Prussia. The first settlers to arrive in what is now called the Holyland established themselves in 1841. With fertile soils and gently sloping hillsides, the area was quite appealing to the immigrants. It wasn’t long before the word spread and more German settlers arrived.

The settlers were also drawn to the region as an area where they could practice their religion freely. The first church in the Holyland was St. John the Baptist Church in Johnsburg. Between 1841 and 1870 eleven parishes had been built (at the time two had been built in Johnsburg). The Holyland also housed three more churches (Dotyville, Armstrong, and Eden) but they were eventually demolished.

As time passed other churches were built and the original Holyland boundaries were expanded to the north and as far south as Holy Hill, where a Blessed Mother Shrine exists. The expanded area has not been included in this guide; however, one church, St. Martin’s, has been included so the traveler can observe how the uses of the historic, religious monuments have changed over time.

Although some churches have been remodeled, and the use of some converted from places of worship, the spiritual impact of the entire Holyland remains strong. A *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* story captured the lasting impact of Catholicism in the original Holyland best:

*“The three bells of the Angelus ring from high atop Mount Calvary at dawn, noon and evening every day, reminding faithful Roman Catholics to pray.*

*The Angelus is a devotion that dates to medieval times, but here in Wisconsin’s Holy Land [sic], farmers picking rocks in the fields below are still likely to heed its call.”*

## Breaking Bread

The history of ‘breaking bread’ dates back to Biblical times and has Christian significance, but it also means to ‘eat or dine together’. As such, many times an invitation to go to dinner is accompanied by the phrase ‘come, break bread with me’. The expression has also been used amongst friends, ‘it’s hard to remain enemies when you’ve broken bread together’. Due to the Catholic settlement in Wisconsin’s Holyland, the slogan is as much of a religious connotation as it is a dinner invitation.

When in Wisconsin’s Holyland the ideal place to break bread together is in a supper club—that traditional dining establishment that also functions, or has had a history of functioning, as a social club. In the 1930’s and 40’s these clubs were considered ‘high class’ yet affordable. They allowed a couple or group of friends to go to the establishment for cocktails, dinner and entertainment. By today’s standards they’re viewed as ‘a lot of good food and fun for a few hours work’, even if most no longer provide entertainment.

Supper clubs are unique to the rural areas in the Upper Midwestern part of the United States, and most common in Wisconsin. Typical menus include relish trays, breads, soups, salads, and a hearty meal, accompanied by a Wisconsin favorite drink, the Old Fashioned, with olives or cherries of course!

Due to the Catholic season of Lent, when meat could not be consumed on Friday, the tradition of a ‘fish fry’ became popular. Again, unique to Wisconsin, this meal was served at the supper clubs. Battered or breaded fried fish, served with French fries, creamy coleslaw, rye bread and beer soon became popular, even amongst the non-Catholics.

It is not uncommon to find a supper club adjacent to or near a Catholic church. After Sunday Mass many adults would flock to the supper clubs for brunch, drinks and a challenging game of cards. Some clubs even doubled as the banquet hall the churches so often lacked. In later years going to Mass on a Saturday night, and then to the supper club, was the norm for hard working rural Calumet and Fond du Lac County couples.

One of the joys of the club was the chance to sit and visit with friends and neighbors. Conversation lasted for hours and ended in unforgettable stories and laughter. In today’s fast paced world, the art of conversation is disappearing as meals are rushed through with minimal time for true dialogue.

In an effort to save rural Wisconsin tradition, you are invited to tour the ornate, grand churches of the Holyland, and, stop in and enjoy some friendly banter and amusement while dining on one of the best steaks or fish fries you’ve ever had.

Please, gather your family, your neighbors, and come to Wisconsin’s Holyland to break bread together. Invite your enemies too, and leave as friends!



**St. John the Baptist Catholic Church**  
**(locally known as 'St. John')**  
**Originally 'Old St. Johannes'**  
**N9288 County Highway W**  
**Johnsburg, WI 54935**  
**Ph. (920) 795-4316**

Settlers began to reside in the Johnsburg area during the 1830's and 1840's. With settlement came the demand for a church. By the early 1840's there were enough people residing in the area that two priests saw fit to start a parish. Land was donated, and in 1842, the first church between Milwaukee and Green Bay was constructed of logs. It may therefore be stated that Johnsburg is where the Holyland was born. The St. Johannes congregation was therefore founded in 1842. The first church would suit the needs of the parish for about eight years.

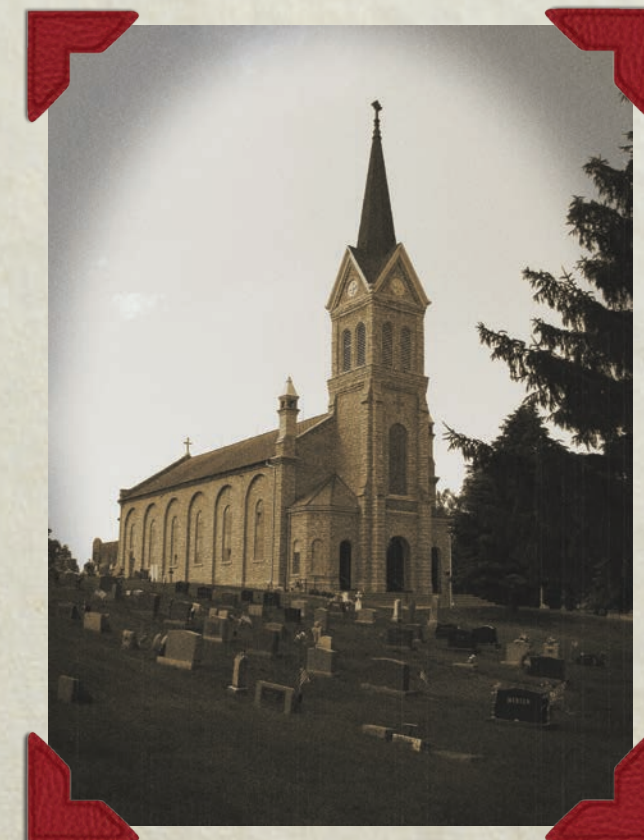
In 1850 the parishioners needed to decide whether to enlarge their current log church or construct a new building. Two sites were possible, and the congregation failed to agree on either. The issue soon split the parish, and Father Caspar Rehrl and Father Bermadinger left for Mt. Calvary and Marytown. More priests came and went due to the debates. The Bishop finally decided in favor of building a church on the new site. Parishioners went against his wishes and built at the old site. The church was not approved; therefore, the parishioners never used it.



*St. John Community - Turn of the Century*



*St. John the Baptist Church  
Post 1894*



*Present Day St. John Church*

In 1854, a new priest, Father Deisenrieder, arrived in the Johnsburg area. He started to collect limestone for construction purposes. The Bishop laid the cornerstone in 1855 south of the old church, and construction on St. John Church lasted two years. Though construction took longer for St. John's than most churches in the Holyland, it included the "church, rectory, sister house, and school," according to information on the parish. Thus the church and all other parish buildings were built at once. This contrasts with most of the other Holyland parishes, where the current churches were often built before the current parsonages, schools, and other buildings.

In the 1800's, the first school was torn down and a new school was built. Major architectural additions to the church came in 1894, when the tower and steeple were added. The current rectory was built after the turn of the century, in 1905. In 1923, a third school replaced the second schoolhouse. Over the years the school was enlarged. The Consolidated Parochial Elementary School (CPES) is located in Johnsburg.

St. John's Church, of Romanesque architecture, is still used today for regular Masses. A visit to the site will find two historic markers repeating the history of the parish as well as information about Father Caspar Rehrl.

**Blanck's Supper Club, Inc.**  
**W2655 County Highway Q**  
**Malone, WI 53049**  
**Ph. (920) 795-4484**  
**[www.blanckssupperclub.com](http://www.blanckssupperclub.com)**

Classic to the Holyland, a multi-generational gem!

Back in 1952, Bob and Hazel Blanck bought a tavern building that housed their living quarters, the tavern and the town barber shop. Eventually the barber retired so the Blancks knocked out the wall and



expanded the bar. The business flourished, with much of it being weddings and funeral dinners since the nearby St. John Church had no basement in which to serve food. Eventually they expanded their menu with a fish fry. They changed the name from Bob and Hazel's Tavern to Blanck's Supper Club. Business was wonderful!

Sadly, like many of the original churches in the Holyland, the supper club burned (1962). The fire started in either the attic or the basement, but its origin could not be determined for sure. It spread through the walls first. When it reached the dining room it got out of control as guests were quickly rushed to safety, but not before they grabbed their meals. They ate their dinner outside while the front dining room, the living quarters above, and part of the bar burned. In two months the popular supper club was rebuilt and Bob and Hazel continued to serve the community with their vast menu of steaks, 'double steaks', seafood, chicken, and fish. The business has been passed down through the generations.

The Blanck's have always believed in providing an honest meal at an affordable price. Their motto is 'Where Friends Meet Friends'. Come meet some new friends!



*Original Blanck's Tavern*

**Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Catholic Church  
(locally known as 'St. Mary')  
N10232 County Highway G  
Marytown, WI 53061-9405  
(New Holstein postal address)  
Ph. (920) 898-4040**

St. Mary's Parish was founded in 1849, and a log church was built that year. Masses were held in this church until 1880, when the log church was significantly damaged by fire. That year a stone church was constructed to replace the first log building. The decade between 1907 and 1917 was significant, because in those years, the second church was also partially destroyed by fire. The third (current) church was then built of stone.

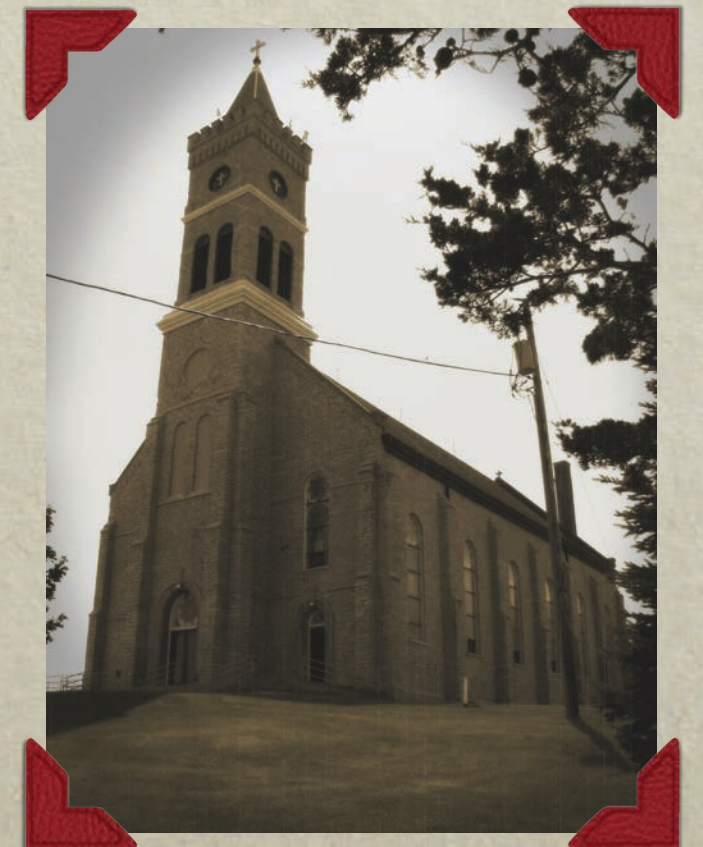
The battlements near the top of the church tower are a feature unique to St. Mary's Church. They are characteristic of the building's Romanesque architectural style. Starting in 1923, heating and electricity were installed in the parish buildings. The installation of electricity in the church occurred at around the same time as a number of other Holyland churches, including St. Charles in Charlesburg and Holy Trinity in Jericho.

The grotto was constructed between 1923 and 1928; a feature only a handful of Holyland churches possess. St. Mary's grotto is a classic stone structure with a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

In 1917 the current school was constructed. The school operated successfully for decades; however, the 1960's saw increasing difficulties for the area Catholic schools to operate independently. Therefore, in 1969 St. Mary's school merged with those of St. John (Johnsburg), St. Anna (St. Anna), St. Cloud (St. Cloud), and Holy Cross (Mt. Calvary). St. Mary's Church was one of the founding parishes of the Consolidated



*Fire Damage to Second Church*



*Current Church Today*





*St. Mary Church - Early 1900's*

Parochial Elementary School (CPES) which provides Catholic education in the area.

Over the next thirty years, improvements on the parish grounds continued. Some of these were relatively small, such as a replacement cross for the steeple in 1973. Others were larger projects, such as the two-year window restoration beginning in 1991. The late 1990's saw a new roof for the church building.

St. Mary Church continues to offer regular Masses today. A visit at night will reveal a beautifully lit example of a traditional Roman Catholic Church.



*St. Mary Grotto*

**Big Al Capone's of Pipe**  
**N10302 State Highway 151**  
**Malone, WI 53049 ('Village' of Pipe)**  
**Ph. (920) 795-4140**  
**[www.bigalcapones.com](http://www.bigalcapones.com)**

St. Mary Church is one of the few churches in the Holyland that does not have a supper club nearby; however, it is in the vicinity of the lakeshore area's finest dining establishments. Big Al Capone's is west of the church along the state highway in the small community of Pipe, a short distance from the picturesque shores of Lake Winnebago.

Capone's, supposedly haunted, is located in the former Fuhrman Hotel built in 1846. It was a stagecoach



stop that housed a dining room and kitchen, with a bar for the men, and an ice cream parlor for the women. The second and third floor of the hotel had 22 rooms and was known to frequently board the famous gangster, Al Capone, when visiting his brother, a local brothel, and distillery located a few miles away.

Capone's is best known for their pizza. They also specialize in classic supper club dishes, like a Friday night fish fry. Seafood is served daily. The menu also has a variety of sandwiches and homemade soups, and Wisconsin famous breaded cheese curds.

Visitors enjoy the great American food but also the outside patio, historic photos, and hearing tales of the ghosts that roam the building. Check out their website for stories!

(If staying at the nearby Columbia Park Campground Big Al Capone's offers limousine service from the campground to and from the restaurant.)



*Big Al Capone's of Pipe*

**Jim & Linda's Lakeview Supper Club**  
**W3496 County Highway W**  
**Malone, WI 53049 (Pipe area)**  
**Ph. (920) 795-4116**  
**[www.jimandlindas.net](http://www.jimandlindas.net)**

Located in Calumet Harbor, Pipe, literally on the eastern shore of the state's largest inland lake, Lake Winnebago, Jim and Linda's Lakeview Supper Club offers fantastic four course meals and heavenly views.

They are well known for their food and relaxing atmosphere and have been in business for over 30 years—a testament to the quality and service. The facility has expanded over the years from a small building with just 11 bar stools and 28 dining room chairs to a bar, tiki bar, and 100 seat dining area. They have over 100 menu choices and offer nightly specials ranging from T-bone steaks to bacon wrapped pork tenderloins. They are famous for their lobster, prime rib and char-broiled steaks. They also have music and even bus trips for their patrons, and resemble the supper clubs of days gone by that served not just a great meal and cocktails, but provided entertainment as well. They are undoubtedly a true Wisconsin supper club!

Jim and Linda's is adjacent to Columbia Park and is near Calumet Harbor Marina. Whether arriving by boat, or staying in the Columbia Park Campground, or just passing through, Jim and Linda's will make your lakeshore visit in the Holyland a divine experience!



*Jim & Linda's Lakeview Supper Club*



**Holy Trinity Catholic Church**  
**N2266 County Highway C**  
**Jericho, WI**  
**(Private Property)**

The group of people that would form the Holy Trinity Parish first came together in 1870. This group was primarily of German descent, and its members decided to form a parish on January 27, 1871. The parish did not have a priest until Reverend Guillaume arrived to serve it in 1872. According to the parish history, "at once a small frame church measuring 22 x 34 feet by 12 feet high was erected and the name Jericho chosen for the little settlement."

The first church served until 1881 when the increasing size of the congregation required that a larger church be built. Construction on a second wood frame church building began in 1881 and lasted two years. According to the *Souvenir Centennial* it is stated of the construction, "the church was constructed with the arrangement that bricks would be added as soon as possible to strengthen it."



*The Original Church (Far Left) and Second Church, Both Now Replaced*

Further improvements including interior decorations were done over the next fifteen years. Interior renovations and heating were installed during the first decade of the twentieth century. The second church was used until 1914 when a fire which started an eighth of a mile away blew sparks to the church roof. The fire soon took hold and the church burned down.

The parishioners worked hard to prepare the site for the construction of a third church. In 1915 construction began on the current church with the placing of the cornerstone. According to the parish history the new church was built of brick in the "Tudor-Gothic style of architecture." By 1918 the growth of the parish was evident as there were 95 families in the congregation. The year 1923 marked another milestone when electric lights were installed in the church.



*Fire Damage to the Second Church*





Current Holy Trinity Church

**Cedar Lodge Supper Club**  
**N10872 State Highway 151**  
**Malone, WI 53049-1224 ('Calumetville')**  
**Ph. (920) 795-4574**  
**[www.thecedarlodge.com](http://www.thecedarlodge.com)**

This family-owned and operated popular supper club specializes in 'fritters'—a mainstay of past generations. Also on the menu are homemade breads and soups, steaks, slow roasted prime rib and plenty of shellfish. Don't forget the Catholic favorite, the Friday night fish fry! Full five course meals and huge portions.

Cedar Lodge opened its doors in 1988, and although not as old as some of the other Holyland supper clubs, it is just as rich in traditional food and Holyland hospitality!

Sometime after the original church was built, a rectory was constructed for the priest. In 1899, the old rectory was moved to a different property and used as a residence. That same year a new rectory was built. The replacement rectory still exists on the site today.

School was originally held in a room that was dedicated for this purpose in the first church. When the second church was built in 1882, the first church became the school. In 1895, a larger school was constructed. The first church was sold and moved to an area resident's property. The 1895 school was torn down in 1930 and replaced with the current school. A major remodeling of the interior was done in 1969. The Catholic school was maintained until 1979.

In 1979, Holy Trinity merged with five other parishes. These parishes worked together as the Catholic Interparish Ministry. In 2005, all but one of the parishes of the Catholic Interparish Ministry, including Holy Trinity, closed due to a lack of priests. The church is currently privately owned.



Cedar Lodge - Current View

Read what guests say about Cedar Lodge:

*"What this place lacks in size more than makes up in the food. I have had a number of dishes here including steaks and my favorite being the ahi tuna which is perfectly cooked every time which is not easy to do. Bring your appetite as the meal starts out with a warm fritter, salad, soup, veggies and main course." ~ Dennis*

*"The fritter was warm and a great way to start dinner, the cold strawberry soup was a delight, the salad was a standard salad and the dressing selection was good. I had the bacon wrapped blue cheese tenderloin. Out of this world. My wife had the tenderloin tips and could not finish because there was so much food." ~ John*

**St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church**  
**(locally known as 'St. Charles')**  
**W2744 St. Charles Road**  
**Chilton, WI 53014 ('Charlesburg')**  
**(Private Property)**

Much like other Holyland parishes, St. Charles began as a small log church. The first church was built in 1866, and was used for about six years until it was too small to accommodate the growing parish. Though the church was little more than an ordinary log cabin, parishioners were grateful they no longer had to travel all the way to Marytown for church services.

A stone church replaced the log structure in 1873 and was used for over thirty years. However, there were problems with this church, namely the ability for water to enter through the walls of the building. In 1904, the church was cleared away to allow for the construction of a third church.

Construction on the church that now exists began in the spring of 1905 and was completed within the year. One could see the Gothic architectural elements in this new church such as the ribbed arches on the interior. Much modernization followed shortly after (1910-1920s) with the installation of a steam heating system, pews, flooring and stained glass windows.

During the Second World War, improvements to the building were slow. However, in 1961, the steeple was repaired after the parishioners decided to keep it rather than replace it with a lower pitched roof. In 1964 the interior underwent its first major upkeep since 1941 and minor renovations followed thereafter until 1994.

In 1978, St. Charles became part of the Catholic Interparish Ministry along with five other area parishes. Finally in 2005, as was common in many smaller Catholic communities, the 100 year old church closed due to a lack of priests.

As was often the case in many Holyland communities, a Catholic school was soon in demand after the erection of the church. The first schoolteacher, Sister Anna, arrived in Charlesburg in 1867. The school building was constructed in 1883, and was used up until 1969. During the 1950's improvements were made to the school building. A religious education program later replaced the grade school program. Some



time after the religious education program began St. Charles and St. Martin (Charlestown) established a joint program. Children through sixth grade went to St. Martin, and students in seventh grade and beyond went to St. Charles.

In 1979, the parish members decided to raze the school building since it was no longer being used. All that remains at the site today is the church and cemetery. The property is in private ownership.



*St. Charles Church*

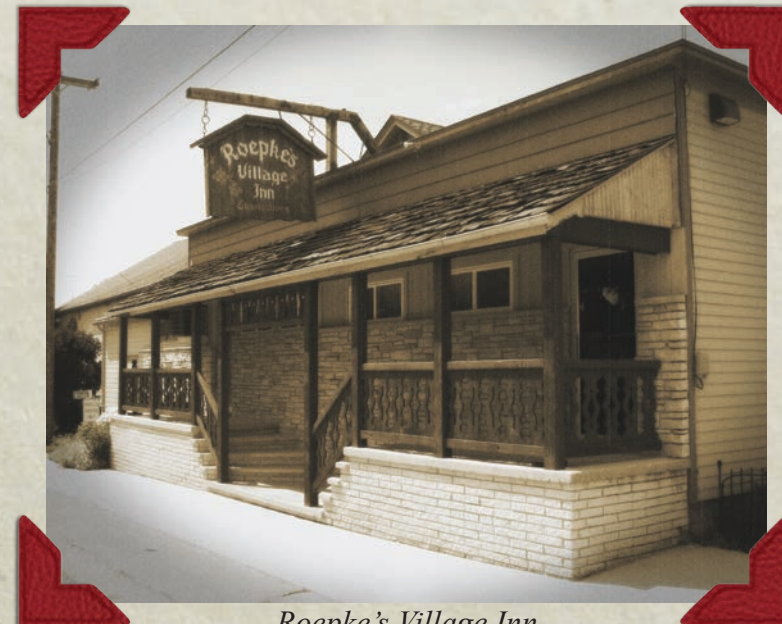
**Roepke's Village Inn**  
**W2686 St. Charles Road**  
**Chilton, WI 53014 ('Charlesburg')**  
**Ph. (920) 849-4000**  
**[www.roepkesvillageinn.com](http://www.roepkesvillageinn.com)**

Tucked away in the hilly countryside of western Calumet County lies a classic Wisconsin supper club with a great view of St. Charles Church. Roepke's Village Inn is famous for its heirloom dishes—it has been family owned for over 40 years!

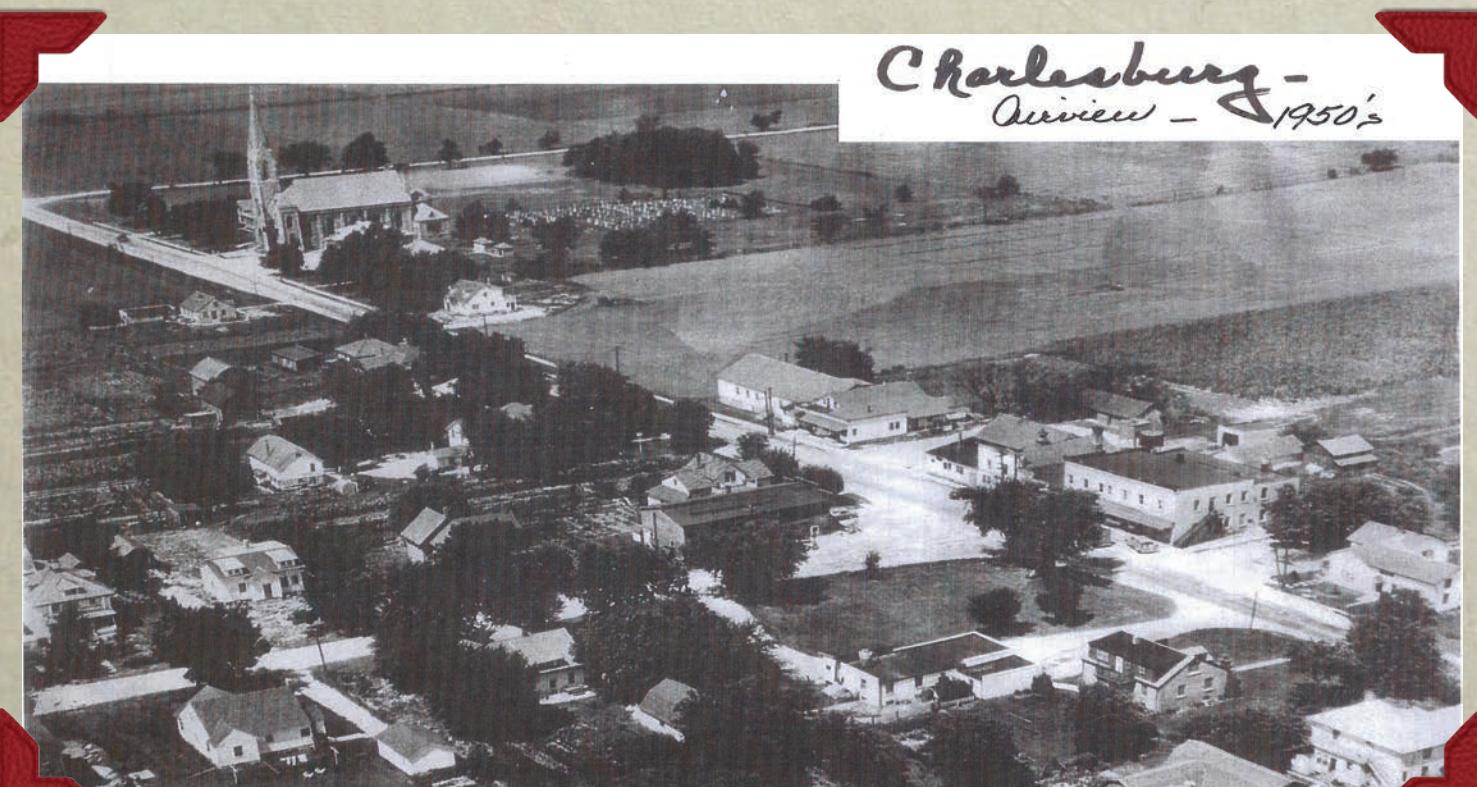
The supper club traces its roots back to the 19th century, when it was a tavern, hotel, store, and barbershop. The building has undergone many changes, but the attention to detail remains the same.

The supper club has built its reputation on hand-cut, flavorful steaks, a range of fish and seafood selections, and a wide variety of specialty items.

A few of the famous dishes reflect the rich German heritage of the area. Aside from big steaks and a German Schnitzel entree, there is also a traditional Friday night fish fry as well as other flavorful dishes. Don't forget the Wisconsin owned Old Fashioned!



*Roepke's Village Inn*



*Aerial of Charlesburg - 1950's*



**St. Anna Catholic Church**  
**(locally known as 'St. Ann')**  
**N188 School Street**  
**New Holstein, WI 53061 ('St. Anna')**  
**Ph. (920) 894-3147**  
**[www.stannwi.org](http://www.stannwi.org)**

The St. Anna parish was formed in 1851, by Father Casper Rehrl, who had recently founded Holy Cross in Mt. Calvary. Land was donated for the parish, and a log building was used as the church for the first years of the parish. The congregation was still rather small when a new larger wooden church replaced the original log building. From 1872 to 1886 the parish membership grew rapidly. The wooden church was enlarged to meet the growing congregation's needs.



*German Banner on Display in the Church*

Substantial improvements to the parish grounds came during the period between 1886 and 1894, when a new brick parsonage was constructed. According to a newspaper article, perhaps the most important construction project on the site was, "a handsome solid brick church, 50 x 130 feet, furnished throughout with all modern conveniences and appliances and heated by steam." The church has undergone relatively few changes since it was built in the late 1890's.



*St. Anna Today*

The St. Anna School operated independently until it merged with St. John (Johnsburg), St.

Mary (Marytown), St. Cloud (St. Cloud), and Holy Cross (Mt. Calvary). According to the parish history, this occurred when, "the Holy Family Order could no longer supply sisters to their school." The lack of teachers caused the merging in St. Anna's case. In recent years the school building was used as an antique store and residence, but today it is used solely as a home.

St. Anna still has its own congregation and the church continues to be maintained as a place of Catholic worship in the Holyland. It is still in use every Sunday for Masses. St. Anna Parish joined with Holy Rosary (New Holstein) and Ss. Peter and Paul (Kiel) in recent years. The three parishes continue to operate autonomously under a single director.



*St. Anna Building Complex - Early 1900's*



**Schwarz's Supper Club**  
**W1688 Sheboygan Road**  
**New Holstein, WI 53061**  
**Ph. (920) 894-3598**  
**[www.schwarzsupperclub.com](http://www.schwarzsupperclub.com)**

Schwarz's Supper Club is one of the best-known supper clubs in the Holyland, and has had that honor since it was established in 1957. What started as a small tavern has grown to accommodate large crowds and a large menu.

Schwarz's is best known for their variety of steaks and good Old Fashioneds, but people also crave the thick-cut, lightly breaded onion rings and home-style breadsticks and rolls. They serve the classic supper club relish tray and offer a variety of salad dressings and fish options as well.

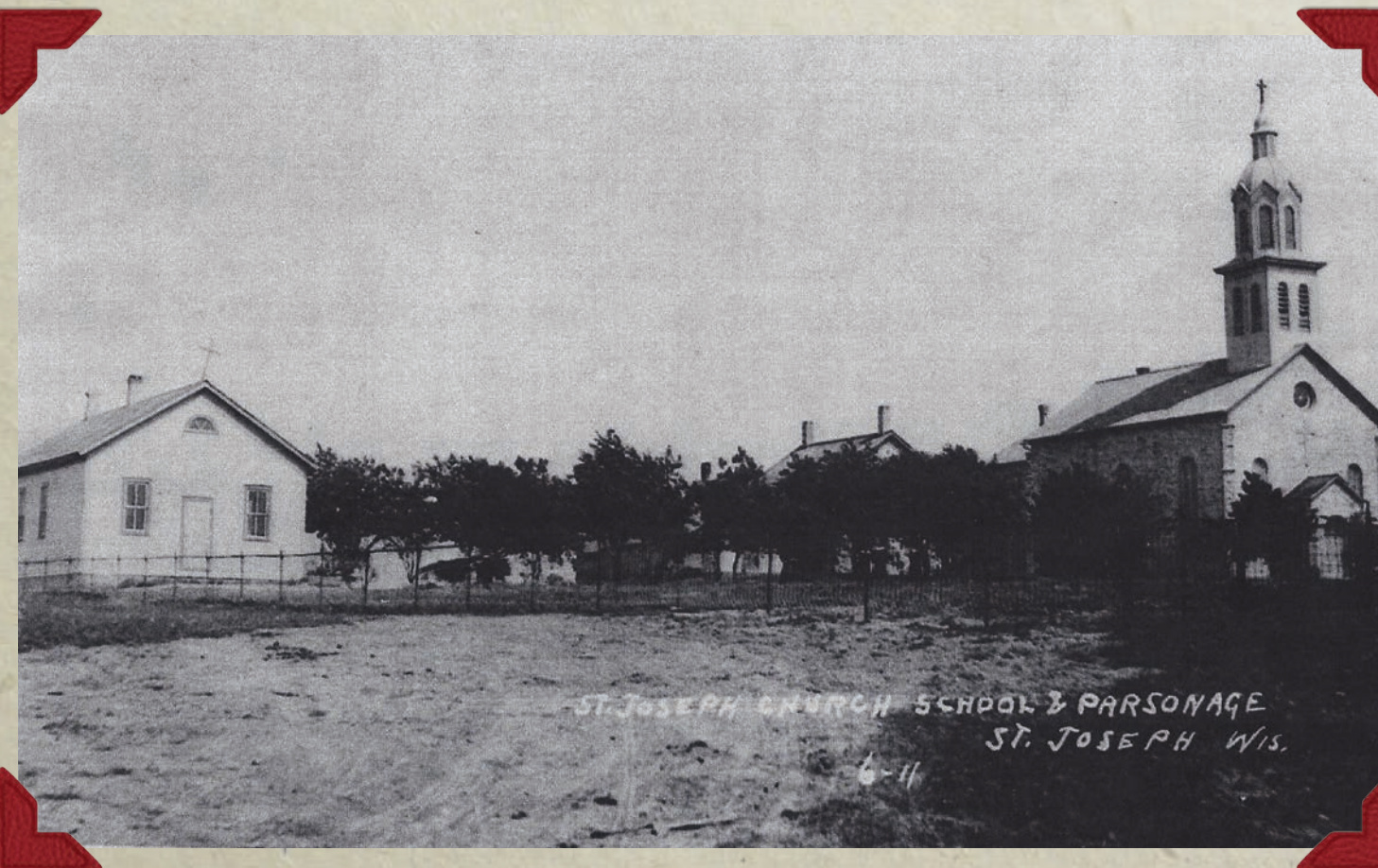
Your meal is not prepared in advance, rather each plate is crafted after the order is received in the Schwarz's kitchen. This special flare, along with the great food, has resulted in Schwarz's being featured on several television shows and in magazines.



*Schwarz's Supper Club*

**St. Joseph Catholic Church**  
**(locally known as 'St. Joe')**  
**W620 County Highway G**  
**St. Cloud, WI 53079-0138 ('St. Joe')**  
**Ph. (920) 999-3131**  
**[www.saintisidoreparish-wi.org](http://www.saintisidoreparish-wi.org)**

The first residents of the St. Joe area were farmers who settled around Wolf Lake. These farmers determined their land lots and became situated. Soon after, they as a group decided that a church was needed in the area. The residents donated land for the church and according to a historian, the foundation was, "10 feet wide and 30 feet long." The small, makeshift nature of the church building is apparent. Indeed, the first church would be used for seven years until the parish members decided that a new, larger church was needed due to the growth of the parish.



*St. Joseph Building Complex - Early 1900's*

St. Joe had a school for as long as the parish had a church. In the beginning, the school was integrated into the church rather than being a separate building. Around 1867, the decision was made to construct a new stone church to replace the first building. According to the parish, the new building "would be 100 feet long and 36 feet wide and have an interior height of 30 feet."

In 1870, after a three-year construction process, the new stone building was complete. After the present stone church's completion, parish members continued to donate for building and interior improvements. Typical of the era, in 1920, electric lighting was installed in the church. During the same general time



period, the steeple was removed from the center of the church roof, and, in 1926 was added to the side of the church. Thus, St. Joe Church is unique in the difference between the current placement of its tower and the initial location of the steeple.

In 1985, the church underwent a renovation. Except for the current bell tower, the outside of the church is unchanged since its original construction. The church, with its massive stone walls, repeating bays, and piers, is characteristic of a Romanesque building.

The parish continued to operate completely independently until 2010, when a shortage of priests caused it to merge with Holy Cross Church in Mount Calvary and St. Cloud Church in St. Cloud. It still offers regular weekend Masses.

The present school was completed in 1914. It was built to include rooms so that the Sisters could reside there. In 1967, St. Joe School closed because of a lack of available Sisters for teaching positions. The school is still located on the site.



*St. Joseph Church Interior  
Around 1914*



*St. Joseph Church Interior  
Pre-1980*



*St. Joseph Church Interior  
Post 1980*



*St. Joseph  
Post 1926*

**Cabaret Supper Club**  
**1401 Main Street**  
**St. Cloud, WI 53079**  
**Ph. (920) 999-3251**

St. Cloud has two Catholic Churches, but also has two supper clubs abundant in as much history as they are tradition!

In 1916 Ed Enders opened an Opera House on this site. Business directories from 1917 to 1922 indicate Ed was in the moving picture business. The hall was the largest and best equipped in the area and was a show place for the small village. It had a balcony all around the inside of the Opera House. On the opening day of the picture hall a special passenger train brought a trainload of Fond du Lac residents to enjoy an evening in a modern dance hall. After the dance they returned to Fond du Lac via the same train. In addition to dances, movies were also shown, featuring cowboy legends such as Tom Mix and Buffalo Bill. For decades to follow the small Opera House was a regional favorite.

Enders retired in 1950 and sold the Opera House to the American Legion. They operated it for several years until it was sold and renamed The Golden Key. It is presently operated as the Cabaret Supper Club. Due to the size of the facility, it is a popular place for banquets; it seats 500. The original cabaret curtain from the original Opera House is still intact and can be seen at the Malone Area Heritage Museum.



*Cabaret Supper Club*



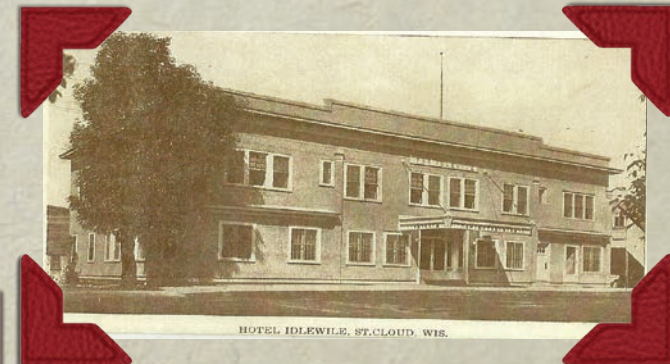
**Idlewile Inn**  
**1306 Main Street**  
**St. Cloud, WI 53079**  
**Ph. (920) 999-4404**

Although the supper club isn't quite as old as nearby St. Joe Church, it still holds a bit of historic charm. Typical of the settlers that built the community, the Idlewile serves authentic German food. They are best known for this ethnic fare, but also renowned for their ribs. What makes the ribs at the Idlewile so amazing? Rumor has it they've been blessed by St. Joe himself!

The man that built the Opera House in St. Cloud also owned the Idlewile Hotel across the road from the Opera House. His wife was well known for her chicken dinners, and on dance nights Mrs. Enders would serve those dinners at the Idlewile Hotel (now the Idlewile Inn). Like the current owners, the chicken dinners drew a good crowd. Although the delicious poultry entrees were served in a separate building, together the dance and dinner represented an early version of a Wisconsin 'supper club'.



*Idlewile Lobby - Early 1900's*



*Front Facade of the Idlewile*



DINING ROOM, HOTEL IDLEWILE, ST. CLOUD, WIS.

*Idlewile Dining Area  
(Left)*

**St. Claudius Catholic Church**  
**(locally known as 'St. Cloud')**  
**924 Main Street**  
**St. Cloud, WI 53079**  
**Ph. (920) 753-3311 (Accepts calls for St. Cloud)**  
**[www.saintisidoreparish-wi.org](http://www.saintisidoreparish-wi.org)**

Originally there was no church in St. Cloud, so residents had to travel to Mount Calvary to attend Mass. The difficulties involved in traveling between St. Cloud and Mount Calvary became apparent in the days before paved streets and the automobile. To avoid having to travel from St. Cloud to Mount Calvary and

back again, area residents opted to form their own parish in St. Cloud. They did so in 1869, and land was donated for the construction of a church. A small wooden church was erected.

According to a St. Cloud historian, "the church was 60 feet x 36 feet x 22 feet high and cost \$2,500. The roof was supported by eight pillars of butternut. It had a tower 75 feet high with a bell in it which could be heard for miles." Though the building was completed, the Milwaukee Archbishop was abroad and had not approved the parish. Almost a year after the parish was formed, the Bishop endorsed it. The St. Cloud parish was temporarily served by priests from Johnsburg and St. Anna.

The school was constructed in 1871, according to the historian's information. The Sisters of St. Agnes did not take over the school until four years after it was constructed. The nun and housekeeper then operated the school as the only two employees. In 1968 the school became part of the Consolidated Parochial Elementary School (CPES) which also consists of the Mount Calvary, Marytown, Johnsburg, and St. Anna schools.



*St. Cloud Under Construction*



*Church Interior Soon  
After Completion*



In 1905 a new church was built, this time of a cream-colored brick. According to a historian, this church was, “45 feet x 105 feet with a high altar.” In 1911 the original wood schoolhouse was replaced with a brick school building just to the north of the church.

Ten years after the new school was erected, a convent for the Sisters was built. In 1923 a new rectory was built. A grotto was started in 1924 and completed in 1930. Land was purchased for the cemetery soon after.

The grotto in front of the church is a feature unique to a few of the Holyland churches. For religious purposes a ‘grotto’ is often times a man-made cave-like structure located outdoors. It is typically of field stone and is a small shrine in which one may pray. They are quiet locations and may contain altars, candles, statues of various religious figures, among other pieces. The grotto serves to house and shelter these pieces. Grottos may be small or large, depending on the location. The St. Cloud and Marytown grottos are similar in the fact they are small arched stone structures. Many other grottos exist around the world.



*St. Cloud Grotto*



*The Church Today*



*St. Cloud Rectory*



*St. Claudius Building Complex - 1924  
(See Previous Page for Information)*

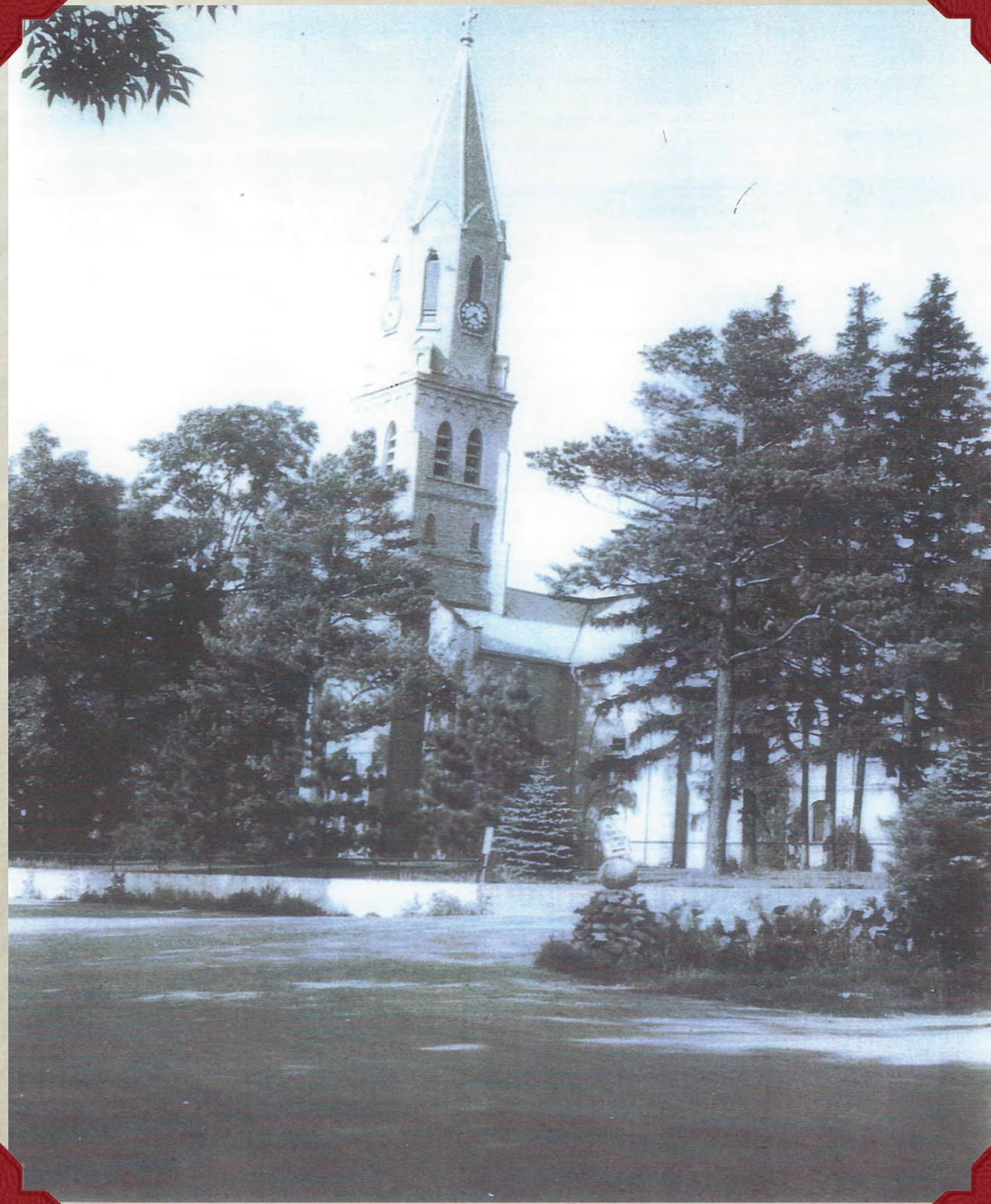
**Holy Cross Catholic Church**  
**308 South County Road W**  
**Mount Calvary, WI 53057-0176**  
**Ph. (920) 753-3311**  
**[www.saintisidoreparish-wi.org](http://www.saintisidoreparish-wi.org)**

Holy Cross Church had its beginnings in 1846, when Father Casper Rehrl, after resigning from the parish in Johnsbury, visited the Mt. Calvary region. Upon his exploration he selected the highest point in the area, which would eventually be used for a church. In 1849, conversations about the construction of a church began. Within a few months, the first log church in what would become Mt. Calvary had been built.

In 1858, a larger church was under construction. Over the next few years, the church was expanded to include northern and southern additions. Two years later, the first of many buildings for the St. Lawrence Seminary was constructed near the church. Unfortunately though, in 1868, fire destroyed many of the newly constructed buildings.

It didn't take long for the parishioners to decide to build another church. By 1870, the church and adjacent building were rebuilt. Throughout the 1870's, existing buildings were enlarged and new buildings were constructed. The seminary continued to grow as the years went by. The church also underwent decoration to make the interior beautiful and ornate.





*Early Holy Cross Church*

The Capuchin Monastery was linked with Holy Cross Church, and was a feature unique to the parish. Holy Cross was also unique in that it was the only church in the Holyland to be part of a monastery. After St. Nicholas Church (later to be named Holy Cross) was founded, Father Gregory Haas and Father John Frey visited Mt. Calvary. They determined that the hill where Holy Cross was located would be a



*Holy Cross Aerial View  
(Note the Buildings Identification on the Photo)*

good location for a monastery. The monastery grew over the next several years. As mentioned earlier, in 1868, the monastery burned. This required that a new one be built the following year. This building stood until 1968, when it was demolished.

St. Lawrence Seminary had its beginning in 1861. Lawrence of Bordeaux was the Patron Saint. In 1864 the first building was constructed. The seminary continued to grow. Further buildings for students were constructed, including residences. The Laurentianum was built in 1881, and served as the primary building of the campus. Further improvements to the campus were completed over the years. St. Lawrence Seminary continues to operate today.

Further improvements to the church came in the 1900's. These included roof alterations from pitched to flat, installation of electric lights, and interior renovations. By 1920, these improvements had been completed. Holy Cross



*Holy Cross Interior Pre-Demolition*



Church was located at the St. Lawrence Seminary site until 1968, when the decision was made to demolish it. In 1969, after approximately 100 years of service to Mt. Calvary, the old Holy Cross church, monastery, and tower were demolished.

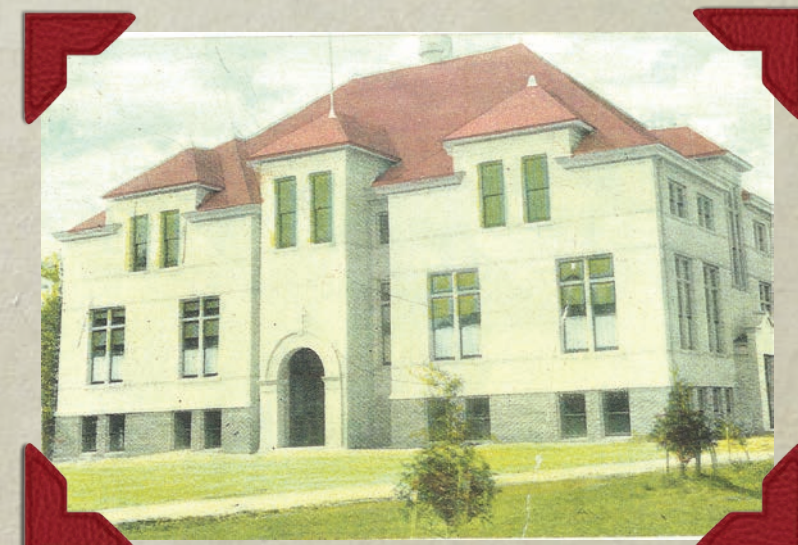
In 1970, the cornerstone was laid for a new, modern church. The church was built west and across the road from the former location of St. Lawrence Seminary. This church was renovated on the interior in 2006, and merged with St. Cloud Church (St. Cloud) and St. Joseph Parish (St. Joe) in 2010. St. Isidore the Farmer Parish was created out of the merger. This church continues to hold regular Masses today.

In 1908, the Holy Cross school was built to accommodate the children of the parish. According to an article, the Holy Cross School was housed, "in a red brick building which was part of the convent of the Sisters of Notre Dame." This school would operate for a century until 2009, when it was demolished. Students from Holy Cross now attend St. John's School in Johnsburg, where the Consolidated Parochial Elementary School (CPES) is based.

As a final point of interest, the early Capuchin Friars used to confine themselves to 'hermitages' - those small secluded places of worship where one in a monastery could be alone to contemplate and pray. One such hermitage existed at Holy Cross (picture to the right). Although some hermitages have individual cells, and can accommodate several friars, the hermitage at Holy Cross was a one room hermitage peacefully nestled on the grounds.



*Present Day Holy Cross Church*



*Holy Cross School*



*Hermitage*

**Altona Supper Club**  
**2306 Calumet Drive (State Highway 32/57)**  
**New Holstein, WI 53061**  
**Ph. (920) 898-5255**  
**[www.altonasupperclub.com](http://www.altonasupperclub.com)**

*The original Holyland was eventually expanded as more settlers came to the area. As an example of how the churches were built, and the types of supper clubs and menus that accommodated the parishioners in the new region, we have provided information about the Holyland territory that expanded to the northeast (the New Holstein area).*

In 1851 the small community of Altona was platted out and shortly after a small commercial district developed along what is now known as Calumet Street. Altona was separated from the village of New Holstein by a highway (now Wisconsin Avenue). During the 1850s many Germans moved to the area and soon a butcher shop, general store and other services opened their doors for business in the twin communities. In 1871 voters contributed to the railroad and it was constructed in the village of New Holstein the following year. The railroad brought more visitors and businesses, and ultimately in 1901 voters elected to combine the two hamlets into the 'new' village of New Holstein. As the new village grew, it eventually became the city of New Holstein (1926). Soon, the history of Altona as one's home town, and a community unto itself, was forgotten.

What wasn't forgotten was the traditional food and hospitality of the small burg and eventually the Altona Supper Club was established. Since 1937 the Altona has offered hand cut steaks, homemade soup, salad, and a full bar. The current owners have enriched the traditional menu by adding a BBQ rib & chicken buffet, seafood and crab leg buffet, prime rib meat lovers buffet, and the 'Super Sunday Brunch Buffet'.

The Altona offers everyday lunch specials and Early Bird Senior Citizens Specials that are good for all ages.



*Altona Supper Club Today*



**Holy Family - St. Peter Catholic Church**  
**(locally known as 'St. Peter')**  
**N8079 Church Road**  
**Malone, WI 53049**  
**Ph. (920) 921-0580**  
**[www.hffidl.org](http://www.hffidl.org)**

St. Peter's congregation was founded in 1864 by the residents from the town of Taycheedah; the same year land was donated for a church and a cemetery. Construction of the church began in 1866 and the following year the church was dedicated. The next year a school was built. The original church and school were utilized until 1914 and 1882 respectively.

By 1911 the congregation realized the existing church was not large enough for its needs and hinted at replacing the first church. In 1914 the parish collected money from its members towards constructing a new brick church. The collection failed to bring in sufficient support so the following year additional funds were raised to cover the cost of the building and furnishing the interior. Within five months of raising adequate funds the church was built and dedicated. The new church was of Romanesque architecture as evidenced by the lower ceiling vaults and arches.

The interior of the church was decorated in 1932 with a lavish altar. Over thirty years later, in 1966, a



*Early St. Peter Church*

major renovation of the church was completed. Eventually the original altar was removed.

In 1928 a parsonage and new school were erected. A home for the Sisters was built in 1929. The school closed in 1968 due to low enrollment.

St. Peter holds regular masses today, and became part of the Holy Family Parish along with Sacred Heart, Holy Family, and St. Mary, all in the city of Fond du Lac. Together the four parishes share resources.



*St. Peter Today*



*Prayer Garden*



*1932 Altar*



**St. Martin Catholic Church**  
**N3298 County Highway T**  
**New Holstein, WI 53061 (Charlestown)**  
**Ph. (920) 849-9592**  
**www.stmartinheritagepark.org**  
**(Private Property/Open by Appointment)**

*St. Martin is not located within the area known as the 'Original Holyland', but it is worth noting due to its location. It is considered to be part of the 'Expanded Holyland'— an area comprising Catholic settlements north and south of the Original Holyland.*

A small number of Prussian families arrived in the Charlestown area of Calumet County in the 1850's. A historian states, "In the midst of building a life for their families, the pioneers made God an integral part of their everyday life." They therefore decided they needed their own parish and church. The Milwaukee Archdiocese purchased the land, and the two-year construction of a log church began in 1864.

Over the next few years the parish expanded financially. A curious fact is that the early part of the parish's history men, women, boys, and girls were all separated into their own seating areas. The *History of St. Martin's Parish* explains why, "it has been suggested that the practice of separation was intended to keep the minds, hearts, and eyes of the churchgoers on the altar and nowhere else."



*St. Martin Today*

The parish soon recognized the need for a larger church and in 1876 construction began on a limestone church. Construction of this church lasted slightly more than a year. A quote from the *Chilton Times* describes the architecture, "It is built of solid stone in the Rhine Gothic style, and is 110 feet long, 41 feet wide and 30 feet high." St. Martin is much like churches in the Holyland whereby it started as a log church and the parish decided to build a stone church some time after.

The end of St. Martin's time as a wholly independent parish came in 1978, when it joined the Catholic Interparish Ministry with five other parishes. The other parishes of the Catholic Interparish Ministry included St. Mary of Chilton, St. Augustine of Chilton, Holy Trinity of Jericho, St. Charles of Charlesburg, and St. Elizabeth of Kloten.

In 1872, a Catholic school was built southeast of St. Martin. St. Martin Parish decided to construct their own school and did so in 1877. This school was built of the logs from the first church building. The parochial school was gradually improved and enlarged over the next several decades. It continued to operate until low enrollment caused it to close in 1967.

In 2000, hail damaged the church windows, roof, and steeple. Unfortunately, the storm damaged the old school building so much the parish members decided to tear it down. In 2005, St. Martin Parish closed due to a lack of priests.

The next chapter of life for this historic building began with the founding of the St. Martin Heritage Park, which occurred in 2006. The church building, hall, and grounds are maintained by a local non-profit group dedicated to keeping the historic site as an integral part of their community. Improvements such as landscaping and a gazebo were added after the park was founded. Today many events are hosted there; the facilities, including the church building, are open to the public for a nominal fee.

Tours of the church are available upon request (buses welcome).



*St. Martin Aerial View - 1965*



Map Of The Holyland



**The Malone Area Heritage Museum**  
**N8791 County Highway W**  
**Malone, WI 53049**  
**Ph. (920) 579-2738**

**www.fdl.com (click 'To-Do's', then search 'Malone')**

A must see for anyone wanting more information about the unique German Catholic settlement known as the Holyland!

On a curvy stretch of rural highway, south of Johnsburg, in the Malone area, lies an old repair shop. To the newcomer, the former Co-op repair shop looks simple and plain, but a step through the door amazes! Inside the museum walls lie photo after photo, story upon story, relic upon relic, of the Holyland. The volunteers are more than eager to share with the visitor everything they know about the Holyland. Syl will give you a tour and introduce you to the characters; Betty, a true researcher and collector can relay the details; and Elmer, the story teller, can entertain you with the tales of the Cabaret curtain, train depot and more. This museum is one-of-a-kind — a true Holyland experience.

Hours of Operation:  
Thursdays from 2:00-4:00 p.m.  
Second Sunday of every month from 11:00-4:00 p.m.



Cabaret Curtain



## **Niagara Escarpment**

**[www.escarpmentnetwork.org](http://www.escarpmentnetwork.org)**

One of the most beautiful aspects of the Holyland is the fact that the churches sit high above the rural countryside and their steeples can be seen for miles. Hailed for their elevation and being closer to heaven, the churches sit on top a unique geological feature known as the 'Niagara Escarpment'. The Escarpment arcs around the Great Lakes and stretches through eastern Wisconsin, the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, into Canada, and south to the popular Niagara Falls, New York.

To experience the view from a bell tower climb the 60' wooden tower at Ledge View Nature Center (a county park near Chilton). The view from the tower spans across farmland and resembles what one can only assume is the view from a church steeple. To experience the view of Lake Winnebago, visible from the western church steeples, climb the 70' tower at Columbia Park (a county park in the Pipe area).

For more information about Ledge View Nature Center (W2348 Short Road, Chilton), the tower, and the caves of the Escarpment, visit [www.travelcalumet.com](http://www.travelcalumet.com), and click on 'Ledge View'. For information about the Columbia Park tower (N10340 Calumet Harbor Road, Malone), and the amenities in that park, visit [www.fdl.com](http://www.fdl.com) and search 'Columbia Park'.

Early Native Americans saw the value the Escarpment played in their religious ceremonies as well. To learn more about the Native American Effigy Mounds on top the Escarpment, visit the mound systems at Calumet County Park and High Cliff State Park, both located along the eastern Lake Winnebago Shoreline in northwestern Calumet County ([www.travelcalumet.com](http://www.travelcalumet.com)).

Although you may find a restful guesthouse at the supper club in St. Anna (Schwarz's), there are no hotels in the Holyland. There are however several beautiful campgrounds on the Escarpment or along the lakeshore at the base of the Escarpment. Calumet County Park ([www.travelcalumet.com](http://www.travelcalumet.com)) and Columbia Park ([www.fdl.com](http://www.fdl.com)) both have well maintained campgrounds tucked between the Escarpment and Lake Winnebago, the state's largest inland lake and the most notable western boundary of the Holyland. For those demanding modern conveniences and hotel luxuries, you'll need to venture just a few miles north to Chilton or New Holstein, or south to the larger city of Fond du Lac, conveniently located along Lake Winnebago.

*For more to see and do in the Holyland, and where to stay, visit:  
[www.travelcalumet.com](http://www.travelcalumet.com) or [www.fdl.com](http://www.fdl.com)*

## **Acknowledgements**

There have been several people who stepped forward to provide information to make this brochure possible, but there are a few who deserve a special 'thank you' for their contributions:

Betty Dziadek and all the other passionate folks at the Malone Area Heritage Museum  
Dan Dreifuerst, Holyland Historian  
Steven Wiley, Student Intern

## **Other Resources**

Susan Lampert Smith, On Wisconsin, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 1995  
M. Beth Schlemper, The Borders of the Holyland of East-Central Wisconsin

## **Disclaimer**

This guide is for tourism purposes. Any errors or omissions were not intentional.

Please respect private property and do not trespass.



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