



*The following is the finding aid for the St. Wenceslaus Parish, Milwaukee collection located at the Archdiocese of Milwaukee Archives. A finding aid is a catalog tool used in archives that briefly describes the material found in a collection. These records are not available digitally unless otherwise noted. [Genealogists should consult our genealogical resources guide.](#) [Researchers must make an appointment with an archivist to view the material.](#)*

## **St. Wenceslaus Congregation (Milwaukee, Wis.)**

**Records, 1878-1997**

**MC 131**

### **Volume**

13.6 cubic feet

### **Access**

Open/unrestricted except for certain financial files and marriage files.

### **Historial Note**

St. Wenceslaus was founded in 1883 as Milwaukee's second Bohemian parish. In 1883 members of the fraternal Bohemian organization, Cternasky Spolek, petitioned the pastor of St. John de Nepomuc, Fr. Leo Suchy, to start their own parish on the South Side. Fr. Suchy agreed there were enough parishioners on the South Side to merit their own parish. From 1883 to 1886 Fr. Suchy was pastor of both St. John de Nepomuc and St. Wenceslaus until he became full-time pastor of St. Wenceslaus in 1886. The first church was a combination church/school on the corner of 14<sup>th</sup> and Scott Ave. The basement housed the boiler room and living quarters for the three sisters, the first floor was made up of two classrooms and the church was on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. The parish was dedicated in December of 1883 by Msgr. Batz.

A new church was built in 1914 and the old church was turned into a meeting hall. During the 1918 Influenza epidemic the pastor, Fr. Jan Tausl, contracted and died from the disease while caring for a parishioner. In 1929 the first American-born pastor was assigned to the parish. Fr. James W. Kozak served for 49 years, 1929-1978. Building and renovations on the parish continued into the 1950s. In 1961 a fire broke out when a 13 year old was playing with matches in the old part of the school and as a result the building had to be renovated. New ministries were created as a result of Vatican II and the parish was again renovated. New social activities included dances, smokers, festivals, the weekly Altar/Rosary Society card party, and the Happy People's Day (a day set aside to celebrate the fact that Christians are happy people because they are Christians).

The parish school began with 95 children, but by the end of the first year there were 120 students. The school was founded, like many other Catholic schools of the era, not only to educate the children and teach the Catholic faith, but also so that their language would be preserved. The School Sisters of Notre Dame taught at the school from 1883 until the school closed in 1972. The following year the Walker Point Community School was opened as a joint venture between St. Wenceslaus and St. Patrick, however the school closed by the end of the 1970s.

When Fr. Braun announced that he was leaving in 1980, parishioners met to discuss what qualities they wanted in a new pastor. They decided they wanted someone who could care for the increasing number of Hispanic immigrants in the neighborhood and as a result Rev. Robert Rodriguez was appointed in 1980. In 1999 Fr. Michael Michalski was appointed as administrator while also pastor of Holy Trinity-Our Lady of Guadalupe. He found nearly \$50,000 in debts, low parishioner participation, and a weekly Mass attendance of 230. The main source of income was rent from the School Sisters of Notre Dame, and the parishioners were about 75% Hispanic. As Holy Trinity-Our Lady of Guadalupe was in better financial shape and had over 400 families it was decided to merge the two parishes under the name Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Bishop Fabian Bruskewitz was a priest-son of the parish and in 2003, at his request, the bells of the former parish were sent to St. Gregory the Great Seminary in Lincoln, NE.

**Box and Folder List** *This is a list of folders names within the collection. The folders are listed alphabetically. "B" is an abbreviation for box and "F" is an abbreviation for folder. This list will help the researcher narrow down exactly what folder they want to look at.*

Box	Folder	Folder Title
B 1		Announcement Book, 1916-1917
B 1		Announcement Book, 1917-1918
B 1		Announcement Book, 1929-1930
B 1		Announcement Book, 1931-1933
B 2		Announcement Book, 1933-1935
B 2		Announcement Book, 1935-1936
B 2		Announcement Book, 1936-1938
B 2		Announcement Book, 1938-1940
B 3		Announcement Book, 1940-1942
B 3		Announcement Book, 1942-1944
B 3		Announcement Book, 1944-1946
B 4		Announcement Book, 1947-1952
B 4		Announcement Book, 1952-1955
B 4		Announcement Book, 1955-1959
B 4		Announcement Book, 1959-1963
B 4		Announcement Book, 1963-1967
B 3		Announcement Book; 1946-1946; financial pledges/pmts 1915-1940
B 5		Apostleship of Prayer rosters, 1948-1962
B 5		Ball club minutes 1925; board of directors 1951-1972
B 5		Blessed Agnes Society, 1923-1934
B 5		Board of Directors, 1929-1950
B 14		Bohemian Song Book, n.d.
B 6	F 1	Bulletins, assorted loose, 1960-1980
B 5		Bulletins, bound volume, 1957-1958
B 5		Bulletins, bound volume, 1958-1959
B 5		Bulletins, bound volume, 1959-1960
B 5		Bulletins, bound volume, 1960-1961
B 6		Bulletins, bound volume, 1961-1962
B 6		Bulletins, bound volume, 1962-1963
B 6		Bulletins, bound volume, 1963-1964
B 6		Bulletins, bound volume, 1964-1965
B 6		Bulletins, bound volume, 1965-1966

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Folder Title</b>
B 6		Bulletins, bound volume, 1966-1967
B 6	F 2	Bulletins, loose, 1972
B 6	F 3	Bulletins, loose-some missing, 1978
B 14		Cash book, 1891-1910
B 14		Cash book, 1909-1934
B 14		Cash book, 1913-1916
		Cash book (oversized and unboxed), 1935-1969
B 6	F 4	Christian Mothers; Conf of Christian Doc; Conf of Rosary, 1944-1946
B 7	F 1	Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, 1946-1949
B 21	F 7	Continuing education bills, 1994-1996
B 12		Contribution ledger, 1878-1903
B 12		Contribution ledger, 1886-1903
B 12		Contribution ledger, 1887-1891
B 12		Contribution ledger, 1892-1902
B 13		Contribution ledger, 1903-1910
B 13		Contribution ledger, 1909-1925
B 13		Contribution ledger, 1910-1917
B 13		Contribution ledger, 1916-1918
B 13		Contribution ledger, 1919-1940
B 7	F 2	Director of Religious Education, 1975-1980
B 7	F 3	Estates, 1966-1967
B 7	F 4	Finance Committee, 1975
B 7	F 7	Financial reports, 1960-1971 (restricted)
B 7	F 8	Financial reports to Archdiocese, 1916-1949 (restricted)
B 7	F 9	Financial reports to Archdiocese, 1950-1969 (restricted)
B 7	F 6	Financial reports, intermittent, 1929-1953 (restricted)
B 7	F 10	Financial statements to Archdiocese (missing 1993, 1994, 1996), 1970-1999 (restricted)
B 7	F 5	Financial, church renovations & repairs, 1967
B 7	F 11	Harlequin Parish Drama Club, 1933
B 7	F 12	Holy Name Society membership, 1974-1980
B 8	F 1	Holy Name Society minutes, 1958-1966; 1974-1981
B 8	F 2	Holy Name Society minutes, 1966-1973
B 14		Income & expense book, 1930-1938
B 8	F 3	Insurance, intermittent, 1971-1981
B 8	F 4	Inventories, intermittent, 1914-1975
B 8	F 5	Lay Ministers of Communion, 1973
B 13		Ledger, 1883-1890
B 15		Ledger, 1884-1902
B 15		Ledger, 1884-1915
B 13		Ledger, 1886-1913
B 15		Ledger, 1903-1910
B 14		Ledger, 1941-1969
B 21	F 9	Liturgy receipts, 1994-1998
B 21	F 2	Maintenance bills, 1994-1997
B 8	F 6	Messengers, intermittent, 1910-1928
B 8	F 7	Miraculous Medal Association, 1946
B 8	F 8	Monthly Newsletters, various, 1971-1974
B 8	F 9	Mortgages, Appraisal, various, 1972-1979
B 21	F 10	MPS rent receipts, 1993-1995

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Folder Title</b>
B 8	F 10	Newspaper clippings, 1929-1991
B 8	F 11	Officers Meeting minutes, 1929-1933
B 9	F 1	Parish Annual Meetings, 1899-1958
B 9	F 3	Parish Council 1 <sup>st</sup> election, meetings, 1974
B 10	F 7	Parish Council agenda material, 1994
B 9	F 4-12	Parish Council agendas & mins, 1977-1987
B 10	F 1-6	Parish Council agendas & mins, 1988-1993
B 9	F 2	Parish Council constitution, nomination forms, installation, establishment, 1972
B 8	F 13	Parish History, 25 <sup>th</sup> anniversary, 1908
B 8	F 14	Parish History, 50 <sup>th</sup> anniversary, 1933
B 8	F 15	Parish History, 75 <sup>th</sup> anniv, 1960
B 8	F 16	Parish History, 100 <sup>th</sup> anniv, 1983
B 8	F 12	Parish Miscellaneous, 1933-1992
B 10	F 8	Parishioner lists, 1968-1971
B 10	F 9	Parishioner lists, 1972-1975
B 13		Pastor's account book, 1951-1955
B 13		Pastor's account book, 1956-1960
B 10	F 15	Photographs, building of school, n.d.
B 10	F 12	Photographs, First Communion, n.d.
B 10	F 10	Photographs, graduates, 1929-1949
B 10	F 11	Photographs, graduates, 1950-1963
B 10	F 14	Photographs, Harlequin Drama Club, n.d.
B 11	F 1	Photographs, miscellaneous, n.d.
B 10	F 13	Photographs, school classes, 1944-1956
B 11	F 2	Photographs, St Wenceslaus & Walker Point graduates
B 14		Pismo Svate [scripture book], n.d.
B 11	F 3	Real estate papers, 1880-1972
B 14		Receipt ledger, 1925-1941
B 21	F 1	Rectory repairs, 1993-1998
B 11	F 4	Rosary Society minutes-various, 1949-1980
B 11	F 5	School information, 1927-1968
B 11	F 6	School lists, 1966-1969
B 11	F 7	Sisters at St. Wenceslaus, 1903-1971
B 11	F 8	Status Animarum (parish annual report) (2 missing), 1944-1971
B 11	F 9	Status Animarum (parish annual report), 1972-1992
B 11	F 10	Tax Exempt papers, 1972-1978
B 21	F 5	Telephone bills, 1995
B 21	F 6	Telephone bills, 1996-1997
B 14		Unidentified journal, 1914-1943
B 21	F 3	Utility bills, 1994
B 21	F 4	Utility bills, 1995-1997
B 11	F 11	Walkers Point School, 1969-1973
B 21	F 8	WPS Health Insurance bills, 1994-1997