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Collection 609
St. Francis of Assisium Collection

By Susan Sancinito
January 2024

History

Founded in 1851, St. Francis' Church was created as a separate parish for the German Catholics of Trenton, officially known as St. Francis of Assisi. The first pastor was the Rev. John Gmeiner. In 1856 a school was erected on land behind the church, which was located at Lamberton and Market Streets. In 1865 the parish purchased the former Methodist Church at 31 West Front Street for \$11,000.

The Rev. Francis Gerber in 1867 built the priests' house adjoining the church, located behind the Masonic Lodge. It is now the Greater Word to the World Corporate Office. He also made improvements to the church, including a set of towers. A school was also opened.

The building is now occupied by the World Alive Center, a non-denominational religious body not based on any particular religion.

Scope and Content Notes

This collection consists of church bulletins, which give Mass times, church news, and Christian advice and inspiration. They cover the years 1986-2005. There is also a folder regarding church history, primarily compiled by the Rev. Edward U. Kmiec. A folder of ephemera includes a Certificate of War Necessity, a blank card to keep a record of weekly contributions for the maintenance of the priests, and a Societa Felese card written in Italian. Also included are several ledgers and one binder cover for Rosary Altar Society Meeting Minutes, Jan. 1960-June 1969; Cemetery Records, 1891-1895; Funeral Services, Graves, 1901-1915; Trustee Bylaws, Resolutions and Elections, 1898-1945; Expenses, 1903-1925; Resolutions, 1885; and a 1909 German-English Reader for Catholic Schools from St. Francis School.

Series Description

Series I. Church Bulletins

The first series consists of church bulletins, which cover the weekly life of the church, from meetings, Mass and Confession schedules, community activities, and names of those members of the parish to be remembered in prayers for the sick. These bulletins cover the years 1986-2005, inclusive.

Series II. History of the Church Documents

The second series includes a January 1981 history of the church written by Rev. Msgr. Edward U. Kmiec and Anne M. Hills (2 copies); a May 1981 parish history written by Anne M. Hills; "Thoughts Expressed at Call to Parish Meeting, March 29, 1981"; a photocopy entitled "Century of Catholicity in Trenton, N.J., 1799-1809"; 2 pages from a Catholic calendar, primarily illustrating ethnic parish churches of Trenton; a "To-Do" list; photocopy of pages from *History of Trenton* (pp. 134-150 and 169-173) regarding Trenton churches; and a calligraphy name card for Msgr. Edward Kmiec.

Series III. Ephemera

The third series includes a Certificate of War Necessity, a blank card to keep a record of weekly contributions for the maintenance of the priests, and a Societa Felese card written in Italian

Series IV. Ledgers and Binder

This series includes Resolutions, 1885, a hardcover ledger manufactured by Brearley & Stoll. Only 7 pages have writing on them. There are also a German-English Reader for Catholic Schools, 1909; *Zweites Lesebuch* Rosary Altar Society Meeting Minutes, Jan. 1960-June 1969, in a binder, mainly typed; Cemetery Records, 1891-1895 (handwritten ledger); Funeral Services, Graves, 1901-1915 (handwritten ledger); Trustee Bylaws, Resolutions and Elections, 1898-1945 (handwritten with inserted ephemera: inventory of vestments, linens, cassocks, surplices, etc. and "History Briefs of the Church of St. Francis of Assisium"); Expenses, 1903-1925 (handwritten ledger with pocket for Bank Book, which is missing.

Container List

Box/Folder/Title

Series I. Church Bulletins

- 1 / 1 / Church Bulletins, 1986
- 1 / 2 / Church Bulletins, 1987
- 1 / 3 / Church Bulletins, 1988
- 1 / 4 / Church Bulletins, 1989

Box/Folder/Title

Series I. Church Bulletins (cont.)

- 1 / 5 / Church Bulletins, 1990
- 1 / 6 / Church Bulletins, 1991
- 1 / 7 / Church Bulletins, 1992
- 1 / 8 / Church Bulletins, 1993
- 1 / 9 / Church Bulletins, 1994
- 1 / 10 / Church Bulletins, 1995
- 1 / 11 / Church Bulletins, 1996
- 1 / 12 / Church Bulletins, 1997
- 1 / 13 / Church Bulletins, 1998
- 2 / 1 / Church Bulletins, 1999
- 2 / 2 / Church Bulletins, 2000
- 2 / 3 / Church Bulletins, 2001
- 2 / 4 / Church Bulletins, 2002
- 2 / 5 / Church Bulletins, 2003
- 2 / 6 / Church Bulletins, 2004
- 2 / 7 / Church Bulletins, 2005

Series II. History of the Church Documents

- 2 / 8 / All documents described above for Series II

Series III. Ephemera

- 2 / 9 / All items described above for Series III

Series IV. Ledgers and Binder

- 2 / 10 / German-English Reader for Catholic Schools, 1909
- 2 / 11 / Book of Resolutions, 1885
- 3 / 1 / Rosary Altar Society Meeting Minutes, Jan. 1960-June 1969
- 3 / 2 / Cemetery Records, 1891-1895
- 3 / 3 / Funeral Services, Graves, 1901-1915
- 3 / 4 / Trustee Bylaws, Resolutions and Elections, 1898-1945
- 3 / 5 / Expense Ledger, 1903-1925

Provenance: Some of this material was donated by the Diocese of Trenton, 2007