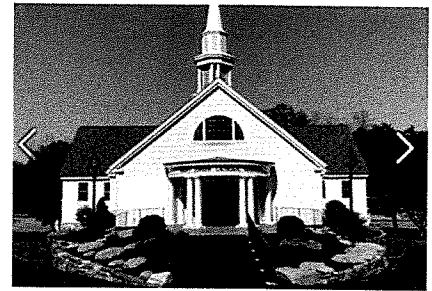




Saint Joseph Parish Belmont, New Hampshire



February 19, 1949 – February 19, 2024

We, the Parish community of Saint Joseph, celebrate 75 years of abundant blessings. Let us ponder our “new beginnings.”

NOTE: Five years ago when we celebrated our 70th anniversary as a parish, I submitted a parish history. At this time, I would like to revisit some of that history for us to ponder and give thanks for all those who paved the way for us as a vibrant parish. During this period of growth and change, let us call on the Holy Spirit to guide us as we continue to welcome the stranger and celebrate our unity.

I would like to quote from a Parish record book: *“Saint Joseph Church in Belmont, New Hampshire, formerly a mission of Tilton, New Hampshire, becomes as of this day, February 19, 1949, by decision of His Excellency Matthew F. Brady, Bishop of Manchester, New Hampshire, a newly formed Parish. Its territory includes the entire Township of Belmont, New Hampshire, and the summer mission at Winnisquam. The founding Pastor is the Reverend Arthur L. Massicotte.”*

The time must have been exciting! It must have been good news, too – a new challenge, the beginnings of NEW LIFE as “church”, as a growing Parish community. At first, the Parish activities were basically Sacramental evolving into a religious community within a community, rich in history and embracing an opportunity to move into the future proclaiming the Good News of the Gospel and bringing Our Lord into the lives of their families, their descendants, and now, the present generation of believers.

Part 1

In order to appreciate where we are today, we need to go back-way back!

1895: June 23 – The site of the old church was acquired from the Mill owner on the plot between Church Street and North Main Street. The first Catholic services in Belmont were held in the old grammar school building on Mill Street (the late Calvin and Arilda Brown’s house). Later, services were held in the Community Hall (Town Hall) with a priest from Tilton officiating.

1904: September – Belmont is named Mission of Saint Mary of the Assumption Parish in Tilton.

1905: Oral history has it that Belmont Parishioners helped build the church. Some people gave their time in building while other members donated such items as rocks and lumber. It was noted that Joseph Parent (Great Great Grandfather of Robert Lord of our parish) had horses and his contribution was to go around picking up the lumber and rocks and to deliver them to the church. The cellar was dug by hand.

July 5-The foundation was laid.

October 4- The very elaborate Catholic Church, which has been in the course of construction for the past few months is now being plastered.

November 5 – Windows have arrived and carpenters are now busy once more.

December 1- The windows have been installed in the Catholic Church, which adds much to the attractive appearance of the edifice.

1906: January 4- The first service was conducted after Christmas. The new Roman Catholic Church of Belmont was occupied for the first time last week. The edifice will not be dedicated until the spring.

April 27- A High Mass was celebrated at the Catholic Church last Sunday for the first time by Reverend J. Desmond, assisted by the Tilton choir.

June 8- The new pews have arrived and are being installed.

1907: June 22- The Church is dedicated by Bishop George A. Guertin who was consecrated in March following the death of Bishop John B Delaney.

History to be continued.....

Submitted by Janet Leroux