

Brief History of St. John the Baptist Church, Biwabik, MN 1888-2016

The Catholic people of Merritt (later called Biwabik) were served by missionary priest Joseph Buh, starting in 1888. St. John's Church was established in 1893 and a church was built by 16 founding families. A bell (still in use today) was cast for the church in 1900 and placed in the steeple. The church burned on March 31, 1923 and a "basement" church was ready for Christmas that same year. The current structure was built on top of this basement and dedicated on June 10, 1956. A bell tower was built and two more bells were added to the existing bell in 1962.

Parishioners Jonathan [Ronald] Licari was ordained to the priesthood in 1976 and Herb Riley was ordained a permanent deacon in 1981. St. John's priests served the people in Aurora until 1930. Fr. Perkovich served St. John's from Gilbert from 1995-2004, and since 2004 priests have served from Holy Rosary, Aurora.

The town of Biwabik and the Catholic community currently number 1,000 (city) and 220 families/370 people (parish).

In February-September 2015 we merged with Holy Rosary, Aurora and Queen of Peace, Hoyt Lakes to form Our Lady of Hope Parish. We are all members now of the same parish, with one set of trustees, one Financial Council and one Pastoral Council.

Pastors (*and associate) who have served St. John's Church, Biwabik:

Joseph F. Buh	1893-1896	Francis G. Schweiger	1952-1953
Matthew Bilban	1896-1906	T. Gregory Manning	1953-1957
Francis Saloven	1906-1913	Frank Melovasich	1957-1963
Joseph Pollak	1913	Leo J. Hannon	1963-1969
Patrick J Lydon	1913-1914	Raymond Cossette	1969-1975
A. L. Pirnat	1914	Patrick Carey	1975-1977
Richard O'Gorman	1914-1917	John Sustarsic	1977
John Begley	1917-1918	James Hayden	1977-1989
Anton Leskovic	1918	Fredrick Method	1989-1993
A. L. Dufresne	1918-1919	Brian Schultz	1993-1995
Joseph Quillian	1919	Frank Perkovich	1995-2004
John Jershe	1919-1930	David Forsman	2004-2007
Timothy Culligan	1930-1931	Joseph Mulangattil *	2005-2006
Thaddeus McCarthy	1931-1934	Bill Skarich	2007-2008
Patrick S. Flynn	1934-1946	Rick Banker	2008-2009
Andrew Crawford	1946-1947	Keith Bertram	2009
Edmund Mockler	1947-1949	Steven Daigle	2010-present
David Taylor	1949-1952		