

St Clement the heart of “Centre Line” since 1850 See main article page 259.

It may be that no other institution has had as much influence on the early residents as this one. Its range was from 14 Mile road to Detroit and from Woodward to Lake St Clare. Devout early residents did make the long trip to St Mary’s or Assumption. Peter Rotarius donated 2 acres, Johann Weingartz 1 acre, Mathias and Joseph Miller 2 acres then this and perhaps others was sold and 6 acres purchased of the Cramer-Clemens farm on the East side of the “Centre Line” The first wooden church was built in 1854 and perhaps a priest residence. In 1857 a one room school was erected. Visiting priests did services until 1858 when Henry Meuffels became the first resident priest. Father William Hendricks became the pastor in 1868. He spoke several languages. By 1870 the first wooden church had become too crowded and was enlarged. A New pipe organ was also installed. On May 10 1871 the cemetery was relaid out. During Fr Hendricks's time (1871) the school building was enlarged and Housing dwellings for the teachers and organist were built. The red brick church was built in 1880 demolished in 1966? building was 136 feet long and 54 feet wide at a cost of \$18,000. It had 15 beautiful stained glass windows and a number of paintings, chaste frescoes. It was one of the most beautiful churches in the area. At the time it was the highest structure in Warren. According to a Macomb Daily article dated April 1, 1967 George Freidhoff an immigrant from Bavaria and his uncle John Freidhoff helped to construct the church. A Mrs. Freidhoff reported that Lambert Peters, his brother Antoine Peters, and son-in-law Peter Guion worked as plasterers and bricklayers on the church. Lambert Peters also did the beautiful frescos, cove ceilings and arches. Some of the organists were Miss Cecelia Wirth, Miss Catherine Miller, and Mrs. Frank Kaltz. Sextons were Ben and Joseph Grobble and Adam Burkhesier. Mrs. Freidhoff stated that people drove their buggies for miles to visit the beautiful church and that some of the early church members were the families of: Antonie and Henry Peters, Alex and Noah Groesbeck, William Henry Halmich, Alfred Peters, John, and George Friedhoff, Anthony Wolf, Peter Kaltz, Peter Burg, Mathias Miller, George Springer, Andrew Rinke, John Grobbel, Michael Kuchey, Bernard Hoste, John Campbell, George Baumgardner, Robert Dalton, Joseph Metter, Simon Leonard, Henry Vaer Hoven, John and Willian DeGrandchamp, George Gill, John Elliot, Joseph Rivard, John Hafferley, Louis Schoenherr, William Jackson, Frank Rivard, August VeLyne, Daniel Jackson, Reinhold Hessel, John Buechel, Joseph Altermatt, August LaMael, Robert Rasch, Chris Ruhlman, William Theut, John Theut and Heronomus Engleman. Later the frame church was removed in order to build a new brick school with two classrooms and an auditorium. In 1890 the new Pastor Father Kramer convinced three sisters of Providence of St Mary’s of the Woods, Vigo County Indiana to come here to teach. Nuns served as teachers and were not paid. On several occasions they asked the pastor for help as they did not have food or the means to buy clothes. They were not very happy about the answers they got from him. Of course the church was fairly poor. They were replaced in 1892 by the Sisters of St. Dominic from Racine, Wisconsin. In 1896 an upper story was added to the small schoolhouse and was quickly turned into a hall where school children put on plays and held recitals. The Official St Clement’s history states that picnics were held across from the church in Engleman grove and that a platform was built for dancing and a German Band played music. By the year 1916, 182 students were enrolled at St. Clement School. That number rose to 600 students by 1920. The pressing need for a new and larger school led to the construction of a two-story, 16 room brick and concrete school. It had a high school and auditorium with a 1,000 seat capacity. The first high school graduating class, in 1926, consisted of one person Ester Delia Schnoblen (Smith). In 1952 Father Timothy Murray became pastor of St. Clement and ground was broken for a new school to accommodate 1,300 students. In 1960 work was begun on the present modern church with 65 foot high vaulted ceiling, gables forming a cross, hundreds of panes of stained glass and seating capacity for 1,600. It also had a 130 foot electronic bell tower. This church served the community for many years for funerals, weddings, baptisms and services. However the congregation numbers declined as fewer people were having children and fewer children attended. For financial reasons this parish was combined with St Dorothy’s and became St. Mary Our Lady Queen of Families. School attendance diminished until it was no longer possible to support a staff and the St Clement School was closed. This church is still a vibrant part of the community.