

Did You Know...

by Fr. Mark Pavlik
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As we celebrate another St. Olaf Day weekend, here are some fun facts about our parish. Did you know:

- In 1940 Archbishop John Gregory Murray decided to create a new parish in downtown Minneapolis believing it would be a perfect place for making converts.
- St. Olaf had its first wedding on June 14, 1941 and to date, we have witnessed 2,683 marriages.
- On Ash Wednesday, February 18, 1953, Fr. Michael McDonough heard a loud crash only to discover a gaping hole in the ceiling through which he could see the orange glow of fire. The priests were able to save the Blessed Sacrament and parish records as the 25 fire rigs and over 100 fire fighters were unable to get to the heart of the flames.
- Nine bells survived the fire, were salvaged and are housed in the church today.
- The first Mass in the new church building was Ash Wednesday, February 23, 1955.
- On October 2, 1960 John F. Kennedy visited the church during his Presidential Campaign.
- Jimmy Durante made a surprise social visit to the St. Olaf rectory in 1963.
- The first weekly St. Olaf parish bulletin was published on Easter Sunday, 1964.
- In 1968 the church was air conditioned.
- The stained glass in the large window at the rear of the church was installed in 1971 and the remaining windows were installed between the years 1977 and 1980.
- Mother Teresa of Calcutta spoke at St. Olaf in 1974.
- The first St. Olaf Mass was broadcast over the radio on KFMX-FM in 1975.
- An elevator was installed in 1975 at a cost of \$20,000 and former pastor, Monsignor Francis Fleming, got stuck in it for a number of hours when it was having some technical difficulties in 1980.
- The nine St. Olaf bells have names: Mary, Isaiah, John the Baptist, Gabriel, Luke, Jerome, Mary Magdalen, Elizabeth Ann Seton and Cecilia.
- St. Olaf began its television ministry in 1997.
- Three priests who have been assigned to St. Olaf have gone on to be ordained bishops: Former pastor, Bishop Leo Cowley and former associates, Bishops Peter Christensen and Paul Sirba.