



The following is the finding aid for the St. Helen Congregation collection located at the Archdiocese of Milwaukee Archives. A finding aid is a catalog tool used in archives that briefly describes the material found in a collection. These records are not available digitally unless otherwise noted.

[Researchers must make an appointment with an archivist to view the material.](#)

**St. Helen Congregation (Milwaukee, Wis.)
Records, 1925-1976
MC 42**

Volume

.6 cubic feet

Historical Note

St. Helen's Roman Catholic Church, one of the second generation of Polish parishes in Milwaukee, was organized at a meeting April 19, 1925 called by the first pastor, Fr. Constantine F. Wasniewski. Early financial support came from the parish of St. John Kanty, as well as other Polish churches, and in September 1926 the parish school was opened. Construction on a church building began in 1925, and the structure was dedicated on March 6, 1927. In 1951 a convent was built for the Felician sisters who taught in the parish school. A major renovation of the church and school was completed in 1967. Fr. (later Monsignor) Wasniewski remained at St. Helen's until he was succeeded by Fr. John Brzonkala (1951-1961), Monsignor John A. Wieszorek (1961-1974), and Rev. Albin F. Sowinski (1974-).

Scope and Content *a brief description of the types of materials in the collection.*

The records of St. Helen's Church consist of parish records and records of several parish societies, primarily of the Holy Name Society. Files regarding the Church include annual financial reports ("sprawozdania"), listing individual donations and names of contributors, often with a financial summary for the year; fragmentary correspondence, including a copy of the 1912 letter to the priests from Archbishop Sebastian G. Messmer, discussing among other topics the ban on the Kuryer Polski and on the Federation of Catholic Polish Laymen; and several jubilee albums. Among the albums are a 1927 dedication album, 10th anniversary jubilee book (1937), 1976 golden jubilee album, and albums commemorating the jubilees of parish societies and of parish priests. Of interest are two handwritten notebooks kept by Fr. Wasniewski following his assignment to the new parish in 1925. The notebooks, in Polish and English, show that the initiative for the new parish came from the Archbishop rather than the people, and document Fr. Wasniewski's visits to other Polish parishes to raise funds, and record donations of individuals to the building and parish school fund.

The records of St. Helen's parish societies include a folder of miscellaneous programs and papers, and minutes of meetings and programs from productions of St. Helen's Dramatic Circle. Records of the Holy Name Society, which closed in 1973 for lack of a president, consist of an attendance roster (1928-1939), an undated membership list, correspondence and miscellany, a handbook for officers, minutes of meetings and breakfasts, and scattered periodic financial summaries and receipts.

Box and Folder List This is a list of folders names within the collection. The folders have been arranged alphabetically. “B” is an abbreviation for box and “F” is an abbreviation for folder. This list will help the researcher narrow down exactly what folder they want to look at.

Box	Folder	Folder Title
<i>St. Helen Parish Records</i>		
B 1	F 1-4	Annual Reports, 1928-1956
B 1	F 5	Correspondence, 1912, 1935-1941
B 1	F 6	Jubilee Albums, 1927-1976
B 1	F 7	Miscellany
B 1	F 8	Notebooks of Fr. C. F. Wasniewski, c. 1925
<i>St. Helen’s Holy Name Society Records</i>		
B 1	F 9	Volume 1, Attendance Roster, 1928-1939
B 1	F 10	Correspondence and Miscellany, 1953, n.d.
B 1	F 11	Financial Records – Correspondence and Receipts from Society Functions, 1957-1958, 1965-1973
B 1	F 12	Handbook for Officers, 1951
B 2	F 1	Membership List
B 2	F 2	Volume 2, Minute Book, 1931-1945; Including Society History
B 2	F 3	Minutes, 1967-1973
<i>Other Society Records</i>		
B 2	F 4	Parish Societies – Miscellany
B 2	F 5	St. Helen’s Dramatic Circle – Minutes of Meetings, 1932-1933; Program, 1930-1936