

SSJ FUN FACTS AND DID YOU KNOW?

1960's

1. SSJ was founded on May 22, 1961 with 360 families and Rev. Joseph Cavanaugh as our first Pastor
2. SSJ was the first new parish established by Archbishop John Krol
3. The first official celebration of Mass was held at the Goshen Fire House on June 11, 1961
4. CCD began in September 1961
5. Groundbreaking for the Church, Convent and Parish School was held on November 19, 1961
6. The first Mass was held in the newly completed church on September 2, 1962
7. SSJ Parish School opened on September 4, 1962 with 260 students
8. In 1963, weekend Masses were held on Sundays at 8:00, 10:00 and 12 noon. In September 1965 the schedule changed to 7:30, 9:00, 10:30 and 12 noon
9. Rev. James McDermott was the first parishioner from SSJ to be ordained. He celebrated his first Mass here on May 19, 1963
10. A memorial for a pew for the new church in 1963 was \$100
11. On May 28, 1965 Archbishop Krol dedicated parish buildings
12. The gym was erected in April 1969 and dedicated to Fr. Cavanaugh in 1980

1970's

13. SSJ Martyr's Varsity Basketball Team won the Western Division Championship on February 13, 1970 by beating St. Agnes on OT, 45-42
14. The first annual Parish Christmas Bazaar was held in December 1972
15. In 1972, SSJ had 885 registered parishioners, 509 students enrolled in school and 756 students enrolled in CCD
16. Charismatic Prayer Group founded 1976
17. The Church interior was remodeled in 1978

1980's

18. Rev. Joseph Monihan was appointed our second pastor on April 15, 1983
19. In 1985 SSJ printed and sold a Parish Cookbook compiled from parishioners' favorite recipes. The cost was \$5.
20. On May 25, 1986, Fr. Monihan presided over our Silver Jubilee celebration which included Mass and a parish reception

21. A special "Jubilee Choir", formed and directed by Marge Campbell, sang at the 25th Anniversary Mass on May 25, 1986.
22. Silver Jubilee Commemorative Pewter Plates were sold for \$20.00 in 1986.
23. The formal RCIA program that we follow today was implemented in all parishes in the Fall 1987
24. Rev. Francis Meehan was appointed our third pastor on September 16, 1989
25. In the 1980's, Parish Visitation Neighborhood Masses were held on Sundays at 4:00 pm at a home of a parishioner. Parishioners from that designated neighborhood were invited to attend.

1990's

26. The Parish Center and School Wing opened in 1991
27. St. Veronica's Sister Parish Program was established in 1991
28. In 1991, SSJ had 2200 registered families, 550 students enrolled in the school and 500 students enrolled in CCD
29. In Fall 1991 the first edition of the SSJ News Reel (parish newsletter) hit the presses. The name was changed to The Messenger for the second edition in February/March 1992.
30. Cardinal Anthony Bevilacqua made his initial Pastoral visit to SSJ in March 1995
31. The intention basket which is located in the vestibule and brought to the altar during the offertory was instituted on July 17, 1994
32. The first group of female altar servers were installed in November 1994
33. Knights of Columbus Council 1564 was established in April 1995
34. www.simonandjude.org went online in September 1995
35. SSJ's Time and Talent Sunday was held on September 24, 1995 after the 9:00, 10:30 and 12 noon Masses.
36. The annual Food and Faith Night began in 1996. The program format included a potluck dinner and speaker
37. Sunday Children Liturgy of the Word and Small Church Communities were established in 1997

2000's

38. Building for the Body of Christ Campaign Phase I began in September 2002;
39. Archbishop Justin Rigali made his initial Pastoral Visit to SSJ on October 30, 2003
40. Groundbreaking for the New Church and Renovation of Existing Church was held on May 30, 2004
41. Dedication of the New Church was held on November 30, 2005
42. Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration was established in the Sacred Heart Chapel in March 2006
43. Dedication of Monihan Hall was held on June 11, 2006

44. SSJ became a Tithing Parish in March 2007
45. Msgr. Francis Meehan celebrated his retirement on June 10, 2007 after serving as Pastor for 18 years
46. Msgr. Francis Beach was appointed the fourth Pastor in June 2007
47. SSJ had 3600 registered families in 2010 which equates to 10,903 individuals
48. SSJ Celebrates 50th Anniversary May 22, 2011

2010's

49. Fr. Michael Gerlach was appointed the fifth Pastor on June 20, 2011
50. The Francis X. Meehan Parish Center, or The Meehan Center, in lower level of the church, opened.
51. Vacation Bible Camp was introduced in 2011
52. Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, OFM Cap made his initial Pastoral Visit to SSJ on
53. Additional Stained Glass windows installed above Blessed Mother and St. Joseph Statues 2013
54. World Meeting of Families was held in Philadelphia in 2015
55. School was awarded the National Blue Ribbon of Excellence in 2017
56. March 2020 - Covid-Pandemic. Obligation to attend Mass temporarily suspended. Church remained open for worship, and live stream system installed. School began teaching virtually.
September 2020 - School returned to in-person learning with Covid-19 protocols in place.
PREP began classes using the Church, Chapel, and Meehan Center.
57. Church Sound System upgraded 2021
58. Archbishop Nelson J. Perez made his initial visit to SSJ on April 17, 2021 for Confirmation
59. 45th Anniversary of the Charismatic Prayer Group celebrated in 2021
60. May 22, 2021 SSJ Celebrates 60th Anniversary of it's founding at the Pentecost Vigil Liturgy.
61. A special 60th Anniversary "Celebration Under the Tent" will be held September 12, 2021

The five pillars of our Parish Mission Statement are Education, Community, Worship, Evangelization and Service