

St. Columba Church Lewisport

Like many rural Catholic communities, the families of Lewisport met in each other's homes for services until 1850, when the first church was built. The land was donated by Miley Johnson located just outside Lewisport. Adjacent to the log church was a cemetery in which several of the earliest faithful are buried. This is still known as the "Old Catholic Cemetery." A majority of the parishioners were of Scots-Irish descent and had migrated from St. Mary's County in Maryland and from Ireland. This may explain why St. Columba, an Irish Saint, was chosen as patron of the church. Fr. Rock, who traveled from St. Lawrence Parish, served the church.

In August 1867, Bishop Spaulding of Louisville purchased a lot in Lewisport to relocate the church to town. It was then served by priests from the St. Rose Parish in Cloverport.

In 1925, because of the scarcity of priests in the diocese, and the small number of Catholics in the community, the church was closed. Fr. Joseph Rives, who served Immaculate Conception in Hawesville, and St. Augustine in Reed, reopened the church in 1928.

In 1936, Fr. D. Thomas became pastor, traveling from St. Anthony's Parish in Browns Valley. It was his task to rebuild the church after the 1937 flood. The third church was a small brick building served by priests from the Cathedral of St. Stephen from 1937 to 1940. Fr. Anthony Higdon then became pastor for both St. Columba and Immaculate Conception in Hawesville.

In 1949 Fr. Anthony Thompkins was appointed pastor and was instrumental in building the fourth church from land purchased from Earl Simmons. The cornerstone was laid on June 29, 1959. This church served the community until August 9, 1989 when it was destroyed by an electrical fire. The community then met in the Parish Hall that had been built in 1968 and fortunately had not been burned.

On August 9, 1992 the new church was dedicated. The pastor at the time was Fr. William Allard.

In 2000, religious education classrooms were added to the church by Fr. Tony Bickett to serve the growing community.

We are proud of our heritage, and grateful for the faith passed on to us. Together we walk forward to spread the Kingdom of God.

