

## **Our Lady of the Lakes Church History**

Prior to the construction of Our Lady of the Lakes Church, Salem, Oakdale and Bozrah were mission territories of our Diocese. During winter months, parishioners attended Masses at Saint John the Evangelist Church, Uncasville, Saint Andrew Church, Colchester and Saint John's Chapel in Bozrah. In the forties and fifties, Masses were held in the Gardner Lake Dance Hall in Salem. In 1958, Edward Doyle purchased and renovated a Protestant church on Route 82 donating it to the Diocese in memory of his father. The Saint Edward Chapel was used for several summers.

Early in 1961, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Dabroski donated fourteen acres of land on Route 82, Oakdale. Ground was broken in June for our church situated between Gardner Lake and Oxoboxo Lake, "Our Lady of the Lakes." Bishop Vincent J. Hines established Our Lady of the Lakes Parish, September 1, 1966.

On October 3, Father John White was welcomed as Pastor. The church was divided with a drapery; one side a Hall-the other a Chapel. In November the church basement was renovated into a Hall. In June 1967 ground was broken for the Rectory. Father Richard Archambault was priest in residence. In June 1971 Father White was transferred; Father Daniel Byrne became our second Pastor.

Father Archambault was transferred December 1972 to Saint Patrick Church, Mystic. Father Byrne retired February 1975; Father Henry Archambault served as interim Pastor until Father Robert B. Lynch's appointment as third Pastor. Bishop Daniel A. Reilly's first official visit was May 29, 1976. During this time Father William Schneider was in residence.

A concelebrated Mass on October 3, 1976 marked the Tenth Anniversary of Our Lady of the Lakes Church. In August 1979, Sister Theresita Donach, CSFN, became Pastoral Associate succeeded in 1984 by Sister Jude Carroll, CSFN. Albert A. Ciccone was ordained December 3, 1982 by Bishop Reilly a Permanent Deacon in the Diocese assigned to our parish. Father Lynch was transferred May 1985. Fathers Schneider and O'Keefe served as Administrators. Father Michael J. Gill was appointed pastor July 1985. Father John Wilmot served as assistant April 1987 thru August 1990.

A major Church renovation was held beginning January 1991. Upon completion a Rededication Mass was celebrated by Bishop Reilly on August 26, 1993. In May 1995 Bishop Hart made his first official visit to our parish. On November 1, 1998 Father Gill was transferred to Saint John the Apostle Church. We acknowledge the Franciscan Capuchin Fathers who assisted in our Parish from 1960-1999.

Father Mark Masnicki was our fifth pastor on February 23, 1999 by Bishop Hart. Effective June 18, 2003 Bishop Cote appointed Father Mark pastor of Our Lady of Czestochowa Church. Father Anthony Gruber was Administrator from June 19, 2003 to October 1, 2003. Reverend Walter Nagle became Administrator. In September 2006 a Parking Lot Expansion increased parking spaces from 88 to 144. Father Nagle was appointed Pastor of St. Patrick Church, East Hampton October 15, 2009. Father Tadeusz Zadorosny was appointed Parish Administrator. On June 9, 2007 William T. Herrmann was ordained Permanent Deacon by Bishop Cote and was assigned to serve in our Parish.

June 19, 2011 began the transition of The Divine Mercy Faith Community of three parishes: Saint John the Evangelist, Our Lady of the Lakes and Our Lady of Perpetual Help Churches. Reverend Joseph Whittel, Pastor; Reverend Richard Breton, Reverend Tadeusz Zadorosny, Parochial Vicars; William Herrmann, Ronald Kitlinski, Deacons. Reverend Robert Buongiorno was appointed Administrator. Father Zadorosny was transferred to Saint Joseph Church, Norwich in January 2012.

Bishop Cote appointed Father Robert F. Buongiorno Pastor of The Divine Mercy Faith Community, April 24, 2014. The Divine Mercy Faith Community shares a collaborative ministry and welcomes all parishioners to participate in any parish within the Community. Reverend James J. Sucholet was appointed Parochial Vicar to serve Our Divine Mercy Faith Community on April 24, 2014.

It is this spirit and stewardship that reflects The Body of Christ in Our Lady of the Lakes Parish Family. Our Parish Family is a community of committed parishioners who are active, vibrant, and filled with a deep faith in Our Lord and Our Lady.