St. Joseph Catholic Church

2130 Rectory Street (at River Road), Paulina

The name of this town reflects the importance of the Catholic Church here, as the citizens of the town renamed it (from Longview) to honor the Mother Superior of the Perpetual Adoration Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, Mary Paulina Effinger. Sister Paulina led the French nuns who founded and ran a day and boarding school for both white and African-American girls from 1866 until 1888.

The story of St. Josephs Church has long been tied to that of its neighbor in Convent, St. Michael the Archangel Church, which established St. Josephs as a mission church in 1849. In 1900 St. Josephs became a separate parish, and in 1919 it in turn created a mission church, Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, in Gramercy. Although this too is now an independent parish, all three parishes have been clustered as The Catholic Church in East St. James Parish, sharing a pastor and an associate pastor.

Like most churches, St. Josephs first celebrated services in a small building. In 1877 the congregationalong with the church bell, the Stations of the Cross, and religious ornamentsmoved into a larger structure. This, however, was destroyed by fire in 1920. Todays striking white landmark was dedicated the next year, but much was rebuilt in the 1940s to repair damage from termites and another fire.

Little is known about the stained glass windows, though they presumably were installed around 1921. American-made opalescent glass, which was popular in the U.S. in the late nineteenth and early 20th centuries, surrounds the central images. The balanced and coherent arrangement of the window subjects argues for their installation as a set.

**Windows**

Enthroning the Sacred Heart of Jesus Immaculate Heart of Mary

Paschal Lamb Knights of Columbus

St. Matthew St. John

Ave Maria Good Shepherd

St. Mark St. Luke

*Visited October 22, 2016*

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