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Did you guess the steeple at St. Luke's, Veseleyville?

St. Luke's was the first Catholic Church constructed in Walsh County. The pioneers who came to Veseleyville from Czechoslovakia built the church in 1881.

In 1894, a two-storied school was established and placed alongside the church. The first floor was reserved for resident teachers and the second story was for classes. The school stayed in operation until 1910.

By 1898, the growing congregation needed a bigger building and they constructed a larger, more ornate church. The altar, candelabra, professional banners and lamps cost \$200. Five statues were also purchased. The largest, of St. Luke, was purchased by the parish. Statues of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, St. Ann and St. John the Baptist were paid for by donations from the parishioners.

In the summer of 1955, lightning struck the church and started a fire, which burned the entire building and all of its furnishings. A new church was erected in 1957 and is the building that still serves the congregation today. Since then, minor changes have been made to the interior of the church, including the addition of a fourth altar in the center of the sanctuary, framed by guardian angels.

In July 2006, parishioners celebrated the 50th anniversary of the present building and the 125th anniversary of the establishment of the church.

Father Gary Luiten is the pastor at St. Luke's. Father Luiten also serves St. Mary's Catholic Church in Park River.

History provided by the parish and compiled by Katie Bowar, diocesan communications assistant.

