The parochial records of St. Patrick's congregation show that as early as 1860 there were some families of Polish extraction in Ripon. Some of these included Francis Rozek, Rose Jarzynski, Magdalene Wolski, John Wasztok, and the families of Mantaj and Fleming. To these were added in 1864 Andrew Ustruk, Joseph Ryszewski, John Wrzeszynski, John Splitt, and the Woknitz, Zaborowski, and Suwalski families.

"Polish immigrants in increasing numbers were coming to Ripon and were desirous of having a priest who was conversant with their own language. In 1894, to satisfy their requests, the Archbishop sent a German priest, Father Francis Fabian, who spoke Polish and French as well as German." He became an assistant to the Rev. Fr. Goebel at St. Patrick's. Two years later, in March 1896, about 50 Polish families formed a congregation of their own, together with about 20 German families. According to "A History of Ripon, Wisconsin," compiled and written by George H. Miller, "The new parish consisted of sixty-five families, forty-five of whom were Polish, and the rest German and Irish."

The Rev. Wenceslaus Kruszka of Milwaukee was appointed by Archbishop Frederick X. Katzer to organize the new congregation of March 7, 1896. The first meeting presided over by the Rev. Wenceslaus Kruszka, was held in old Lyle Hall on March 12, and the second was held in St. Patrick's Church on March 29. A house on Washington street was rented for Father Kruszka, and he said Mass for the new congregation every Sunday in St. Patrick's.

On April 7 of the same year the new St. Wenceslaus congregation was duly incorporated under the laws of the State of Wisconsin. Two days later a lot was purchased for $900.00, but was sold a month later to T. D. Stone for $1,050.00. Another location, one and one-third acres, was purchased from Ripon College by the Jelleff Agency for $1,050.00. According to "A History of Ripon, Wisconsin" by the above mentioned author: "A site for the new church was purchased on East Fondu Lac Street adjacent to the college athletic field."

In the meantime, plans for the new church building were drawn by B. Kolpacki, a Milwaukee architect. Excavation of earth for the foundation was begun by the congregation on June 12, and shortly thereafter Gus Tobolt of Ripon built the 12 foot high stone basement. The cornerstone, donated by Mr. Baldwin, was laid and dedicated July 2 by the Very Rev. H. Gulski of
Milwaukee. The Rev. J. Gratza preached the sermon in Polish and the Rev. Fr. Vaughn in English. The contract for the whole church building was made with Mr. Radway of Ripon, the contract sum being $6,000.00.

After the completion of the church building, it was solemnly dedicated December 15; 1896, by the Most Rev. Archbishop Frederick X. Katzer. The Rev. Fr. Jachimiak of Stevens Point preached the sermon and the Rev. A. Nowicki of Chicago celebrated High Mass.

The congregation started to build a parish house in September, 1897. Mr. Suwalski was the contractor. On January 15, 1898, the parish priest, Father Kruszka, moved into the new home.

The general financial statement of the new parish on January 1, 1897, showed the following: Value of church with all fixtures and decorations - $8,500; House, garage and land - $3,500; Debt - $5,000

Members of early boards of directors for the church, according to early records, were the following: from 1896 to 1898: Nicholas Grusczynski, secretary; Jacob Lukaszewski, treasurer; trustee, Andrew Wahoski and Casimir Wegner.

From 1898 to 1900: Anthony Rohs, secretary and Jacob Lukaszewski, treasurer; and trustees, Joseph Sterlinski, J. Wrzeszynski, and Andrew Wahoski.

In addition to funds collected in Ripon, the following amounts were received from other churches: in Ripon - $300; St. Stanislaus Church, Milwaukee - $600; Holy Trinity Church, Chicago - $20.50; Immaculate Conception, Chicago - $14.59; St. Michael's, Chicago - $71.68; St. Francis Church, Detroit, Mich. - $62.45; Assumption Church, Buffalo, N.Y. - $29.12; Berlin, Wis. - $66; and Princeton, Wis. - $71.

The church burned to its foundations at 5 P.M., Wednesday, July 11, 1906. During the period of reconstruction, services were held by the congregation in St. Patrick's Church.

A description of the destruction of the church follows as found in the:

THE RIPON SEMI-WEEKLY PRESS, Friday, July 13, 1906
"A DISASTROUS FIRE"

"Gus. Kohl's Lumber Yard and the Polish Church the Sufferers."

"About 5 o'clock Wednesday evening the dreary rumble of the fire whistle peeled forth accompanied by all its unwelcome scratching. The fire was at once located in Kohl's lumber yard, and it is thought caught from a spark from the engine. The fire department was on hand very promptly, but from some unknown cause the water would not go across the street for a considerable time, and the fire had a fierce grasp before the company could get water sufficient to do any good, but finally it came and the fire ladies done themselves proud by their persistent efforts.

"Sparks, or rather cinders, blew into the Polish Catholic Church cupola, and before the firemen
had more than got started at the lumber yard this fine church was enveloped in flames and soon went to the ground in ashes, though by extra-ordinary effort the brave firemen fought hard and by mere chance saved the parsonage nearby, though the building is badly damaged.

"The church is a total loss, estimated value $10,000.00; insurance, $8,000.00. There was a debt on the church of $2,000.00, leaving $6,000.00 for the congregation to go to work on. The church will be rebuilt.

"It was indeed a sorry day for the Messrs. Kohl & Son, and also our Polish friends, upon whom the loss will fall heavily."

The church was rebuilt, and on March 17, 1907, the first services were held. The Rev. January Czarnowski of Berlin dedicated the new edifice June 9, 1907.

An account of the Dedication of the New Church follows as found in the:

THE RIPON COMMONWEALTH, Friday, June 14, 1907
CHURCH DEDICATED

"Sunday morning the new St. Wenceslaus Church was formally dedicated. Rev. A. Pradzynski of Milwaukee, the Rev. J. Czarnowski of Berlin, Rev. J. Daskowski of Owatonna, Minn., and Rev. W. Polacysk of Casimir, officiated at the ceremonies. The new church is a fine edifice, second to none in the city, and the congregation has just cause for great pride in their new home.

"The building is of handsome brick with slate roof, and as nearly fire proof as possible. Although the new church is a more costly structure than the one it replaces, no additional indebtedness has been incurred.

"In the afternoon of the same day the corner stone of the new Polish school which will be erected near the church, was laid. This building is also to be of brick and its estimated cost is about $4,000.00. Father Kruszka who is an earnest advocate of education, has been tireless in his efforts and to him is largely due the credit for the progress made by the parishioners of St. Wenceslaus Church."

The foundations for the church school were begun May 29, 1907, and the cornerstone was laid and blessed by Rev. Fr. Czarnowski on June 9 of that year. The Catholic Sisterhood of St. Joseph's convent of Stevens Point took over the school August 29, 1907.

In the church building a new heating plant was installed in 1928, and a new organ was purchased in 1932.

A son of the parish, Father Nicodemus Nowicki, son of Michael Nowicki and Constance Binkowski, was ordained May 31, 1952, for the Lincoln, Nebraska, Diocese.

Two new entrances to the church and hall were added to the building, one at the Northwest side, the other at the Southwest side in 1960, by Schmitt Construction of Ripon at the cost of $6,874.00.
The interior and exterior of the church has been renovated in 1969 at the cost of $30,860.54; the work done by the following: Eugene Potente Studios of Kenosha, Wisconsin; Schmitt Construction of Ripon; Petrie Electric Company of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin; Merle A. Patnode Co., Ltd. of Franklin, Wisconsin; Voysey Sheet Metal; Smith Painting & Sandblasting both of Ripon; Goodrich Home Furnishings, of Berlin, Wisconsin.

In the same year a new rectory was built at $46,651.06, by Schmitt Construction of Ripon. All furnishings for the rectory, plus Landscaping and Black-Topping at the sum of $13,359.99. The Excavating, Filling, Grading, and Black-Topping done by: Bud Hoch & Sons of Ripon, Brightman Excavating, and Kopplin & Kinas Co., both of Green Lake, Wisconsin. Furnishings by: Steinhafels; Gimbel-Schusters of Milwaukee; Scharpf's, Inc., of Oshkosh; Goodrich Home Furnishings, Inc., of Berlin; Kohl's Hardware, Berg Electric, Bryden Plumbing & Heating, all of Ripon.

The Parish Hall Kitchen was renovated and the work was done by: Harry Wrzinske of Green Lake, Wis., Albert Wahoske, Hintz Plumbing, Joe Kahl Construction, Berg Bros., Atomic Plumbing, all of Ripon, and Curless Construction of Berlin, Wisconsin.

The Altar and Rosary Society donated $2,348.36 for the following: regilding of the candelabra, new Nativity Scene, casement curtains for the rectory and curtains for the hall, and towards the remodeling of the Parish Hall Kitchen.

The Parish Hall has been remodeled, and a separate new heating system, as well as a new lighting system, for the hall was installed in 1971 for the sum of $16,343.41. Work done by Schmitt Construction, Bryden Plumbing & Heating, and Berg’s Electric Company, Heine Sina, all of Ripon.

Three new cabinets: two in the Boys Sacristy, and one in the Priest’s Sacristy, donated by: Gertrude Maslowski, Marie Zitzelsberger, Clara and Lucille Jezeske. Work done by: Harry Wrzinske of Green Lake and Heine Sina of Ripon, Wisconsin.

According to available Records on hand, the first person to be baptised was Maryanna Dorsz, daughter of John Dorsz and Maryanna Nowicki, born on March 26, 1896, baptised on March 29, 1896; the first marriage united Joseph Ogonowski and Josephine Giedlinski on February 2, 1898; the first funeral Mass was for Catherine Kaminski, October 15, 1896. To Date: (September 6, 1971) there have been 1,465 Baptisms, 514 Marriages, and 555 Deaths.

Eight priests have served the parish in the 75 years history:

Father Wenceslaus Kruszka from April, 1896 to September, 1909.
Father Frank Cytronowski, from 1909 to 1911 and from 1912 to 1914.
Father W. Mcisz, from 1911 to 1912.
Father M. Lipinski, from November, 1914 to December, 1915.
Father Frank Landowski, from December, 1915 to July, 1916.
Father Joseph Platta, from July 15. 1916 to April 14, 1968.
Father Joseph L. Baran, from June 18, 1968 to September 2, 1970.
Father John A. Mikolajczyk, from September 2, 1970 to the present.