

Our Lady of the Prairie School History

The Saints Peter & Paul Catholic Church of Belle Plaine, Minnesota, now Our Lady of the Prairie, first opened its doors in 1874. Prior to this time, informal Catholic education took place in a room of the Belle Plaine Hotel and the Hanft House. As the parish grew, more room was needed, and additions were built in 1895 and 1907.

Throughout the early years of the school, remodeling and safety codes were met throughout updates, new roofing, and the addition of stairways. Nuns taught all the children in the early years. First the Franciscans and then later the Benedictine Order served Belle Plaine. In 1950, the nuns left, and the school sat empty until 1958. From 1951-1952, the local public-school rented space from Saints Peter and Paul Catholic School while they built a new school building.

In 1958, Father Omer brought the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ to Belle Plaine to lead their Catholic school. The sisters remained in Belle Plaine for over 30 years and slowly they were replaced with lay teachers.

The parish of Saints Peter & Paul was consolidated with Sacred Heart in 1972 when the new name for the parish and school was adopted- Our Lady of the Prairie Catholic Church and School.

Today, the school is housed in the Our Lady of the Prairie Parish Life Center which was completed in December of 2013. Enrollment for the 2018-19 school year was 47 students in Preschool through Sixth grade. Seven lay staff along with a paraprofessional guide the instruction at Our Lady of the Prairie Catholic School,