



## Archdiocese of Chicago Archives & Records Center

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Title	<b>Corpus Christi Parish and School (King Dr.)</b>
Classification	<b>History Records - Finding Aid</b>
Owner	<b>Corpus Christi Parish (King Dr.)</b>
Begin Date	<b>01/01/1904</b>
End Date	<b>06/30/2021</b>
Bulk Dates (YYYY-YYYY)	<b>1949-1977</b>
Processor	<b>Heinrich, Charles</b>
Accession Number	<b>202123101</b>
Date Created	<b>10/08/2021</b>
Number of Boxes	<b>16</b>
Security	<b>Staff Access, Archives</b>
Collection Language(s)	<b>English</b>

### Biographical/Administrative History

The Corpus Christi parish collection documents the life of a church steeped in the history of Black Catholicism in Chicago.

The parish was founded in 1901 by Bishop Patrick Feehan to serve the Irish Catholics in what was then a rich and affluent neighborhood. A suitably impressive church and school campus, sheathed in Italian Bedford stone, were designed by architect Joseph McCarthy. However, before the church was even completed, tensions rose as new residents began to fill into the neighborhood. African Americans had been steadily moving into Chicago during the Great Migration, and their presence alarmed the "natives" and caused many to move. Despite this, Black Catholics were not allowed to worship at Corpus Christi, and instead directed to attend the rapidly overcrowded St. Elizabeth and St. Anselm, the only designated churches for Black Catholics. As the neighborhood emptied of whites, the Archdiocese of Chicago eventually gave the parish to the Franciscan Order in 1929 to manage its dwindling resources. Despite this, it would not be until 1932 that the Archdiocese finally issued a decree to allow the Friars Minor to minister blacks in the neighborhood. From that point, the parish and school began to grow rapidly.

The church and school swelled with converts throughout the 1950s and a vibrant black community began to take shape. Sports teams, Catholic organizations, financial assistance programs, and prayer associations flourished and are particularly well documented during the pastorate of Fr. Maurice Amann, OFM (1946-1957). The parish maintained a healthy evangelization and conversion program, requiring non-Catholic parents to attend classes with their children. Sometimes hundreds of adults would be converted in a single year.

Corpus Christi faced many ups and downs throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Particularly difficult was the caving of the ceiling coffers during the 1970s which forced the closure of the church until repairs could be made. According to parish histories, little financial aid was forthcoming from John Cardinal Cody and the parish could only begin repairs if it promised to assume full financial responsibility. Until that time mass was celebrated in the school building's basement hall, dubbed "the underground church." Amidst this upheaval was the turbulence of the civil rights movement and the outspoken awareness of inequality. The (unfortunately) sparser records from this period carry more than a hint of this new awareness.

By the 1990s and 2000s, Corpus Christi faced many of the demographic and societal changes that had affected other parishes in the Archdiocese. Declining enrollment and numbers among the school and parish

put strain on both the Franciscans, the Sisters, and the parishioners. Still there were some continued pushes to be active in neighborhood ministries, particularly in the establishment of ministries for expectant mothers and the commissioning of an aspirational bronze statue of Our Lady of Africa for the neighborhood.

By 2006 the Franciscans, citing not enough members to properly administrate Corpus Christi, ceded their control over the parish back to the Archdiocese. After a few interim years, the Missionaries of Saint Paul (MSP), priests from Africa, took up residence and served the community. In 2021, the parish underwent the Renew My Church process and was subsequently merged with four other parishes in the Bronzeville area, leaving behind a strong legacy of vibrant black Catholicism and community engagement.

## Provenance

The material from this collection was acquired from Corpus Christi parish over two accessions in August 2021 (IDs: 202122401 and 202123101). The materials were owned and organized by the parish until its merger during the Renew My Church process. The result of this merger saw the site of Corpus Christi close; subsequently, the Archives and Records Center assumed custody of its historical records.

## Separations

4 folders of oversize class photographs are located in SCHL/C4550/415

## Scope and Content

This collection consists of 16 archival boxes and 4 oversize folders with a total volume of appx. 11.5 linear sq. feet.

The largest series within the collection is made up of parish bulletins, with the earliest years (1933-1940) represented with Parish Announcement books.

The remainder of the collection is made up of souvenir and program books, parish staff and pastoral council meeting minutes, parish newsletters (distinct from the bulletins), a variety of historical documents and photographs. The majority of the material covers the period through the 1950s through the 1970s.

Notable pieces in this collection include a comprehensive run of souvenir books for the Pastor's Tea annual fundraiser, materials and oral histories related to the parish's Living Stations of the Cross demonstrations throughout the 1950s, and a series of Uniform Contracts for the construction of the church edifice in 1904. Also of note are the pastoral council minutes which document the tumultuous period of activism and civil rights and coincide with the early implementation of pastoral councils within the Archdiocese.

## Series Description

Series 1: Parish Announcement Books and Bulletins (1933-2021), Boxes 1-7

Series 2: Program and Souvenir Booklets (1947-2017), Boxes 8-9

Series 3: Parish Staff and Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes (1968-1988), Boxes 10-11

Series 4: Parish and School Historical Materials (1904-2010), Boxes 11-13

Series 5: Parish Newsletters (1943-1980), Box 13

Series 6: Parish and School Photographs (1930-2011), Boxes 14-16  
plus 4 additional folders

## Contacts

Corpus Christi High School  
Corpus Christi Parish (King Dr.)  
Corpus Christi School (King Dr.)  
Moore, Denise

Our Lady of Africa Parish (Oakwood Blvd.)

**Box List**

<b>Box</b>	Record Number	<b>ADMN/M3300/1219</b>	Classification	<b>Administrative Records - Minutes</b>
Title (Free Text Part)	<b>Corpus Christi Parish (King Dr.), Parish Staff</b>			
Begin Date	<b>01/01/1969</b>	End Date	<b>12/31/1988</b>	DB Box Number <b>32732.06</b>
<b>Box</b>	Record Number	<b>ADMN/P7180/25</b>	Classification	<b>Administrative Records - Program Booklet</b>
Title (Free Text Part)	<b>Pastor's Tea Souvenir Books</b>			
Begin Date	<b>01/01/1947</b>	End Date	<b>12/31/1979</b>	DB Box Number <b>32732.04</b>
<b>Box</b>	Record Number	<b>ADMN/P7180/26</b>	Classification	<b>Administrative Records - Program Booklet</b>
Title (Free Text Part)	<b>Pastor's Tea and Other Souvenir Books</b>			
Begin Date	<b>01/01/1976</b>	End Date	<b>12/31/2017</b>	DB Box Number <b>32732.05</b>
<b>Box</b>	Record Number	<b>HIST/H3300/489</b>	Classification	<b>History Records - Historical Records</b>
Title (Free Text Part)	<b>Corpus Christi Parish (King Dr.)</b>			
Begin Date	<b>01/01/1967</b>	End Date	<b>12/31/2010</b>	DB Box Number <b>32732.07</b>
<b>Box</b>	Record Number	<b>HIST/H3300/490</b>	Classification	<b>History Records - Historical Records</b>
Title (Free Text Part)	<b>Corpus Christi Parish (King Dr.)</b>			
Begin Date	<b>01/01/1904</b>	End Date	<b>12/31/1980</b>	DB Box Number <b>32732.09</b>
<b>Box</b>	Record Number	<b>HIST/H3300/491</b>	Classification	<b>History Records - Historical Records</b>
Title (Free Text Part)	<b>Corpus Christi School (King Dr.)</b>			
Begin Date	<b>01/01/1905</b>	End Date	<b>12/31/1983</b>	DB Box Number <b>32732.08</b>
<b>Box</b>	Record Number	<b>HIST/P2900/859</b>	Classification	<b>History Records - Photographs</b>
Title (Free Text Part)	<b>Corpus Christi (King Dr.) - Parish/School Photographs</b>			
Begin Date	<b>01/01/1930</b>	End Date	<b>12/31/2011</b>	DB Box Number <b>32733.01</b>

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<b>Box</b>	Record Number	<b>PRSH/P0120/546</b>	Classification	<b>Parish Records - Bulletins</b>
Title (Free Text Part)	<b>Corpus Christi Parish (King Dr.)</b>			
Begin Date	<b>01/01/1933</b>	End Date	<b>12/31/1949</b>	DB Box Number <b>32731.06</b>

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<b>Box</b>	Record Number	<b>PRSH/P0120/547</b>	Classification	<b>Parish Records - Bulletins</b>
Title (Free Text Part)	<b>Corpus Christi Parish (King Dr.)</b>			
Begin Date	<b>01/01/1950</b>	End Date	<b>12/31/1959</b>	DB Box Number <b>32731.07</b>

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<b>Box</b>	Record Number	<b>PRSH/P0120/548</b>	Classification	<b>Parish Records - Bulletins</b>
Title (Free Text Part)	<b>Corpus Christi Parish (King Dr.)</b>			
Begin Date	<b>01/01/1994</b>	End Date	<b>12/31/2003</b>	DB Box Number <b>32732.02</b>

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<b>Box</b>	Record Number	<b>PRSH/P0120/549</b>	Classification	<b>Parish Records - Bulletins</b>
Title (Free Text Part)	<b>Corpus Christi Parish (King Dr.)</b>			
Begin Date	<b>01/01/1960</b>	End Date	<b>12/31/1971</b>	DB Box Number <b>32731.08</b>

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<b>Box</b>	Record Number	<b>PRSH/P0120/550</b>	Classification	<b>Parish Records - Bulletins</b>
Title (Free Text Part)	<b>Corpus Christi Parish (King Dr.)</b>			
Begin Date	<b>01/01/1972</b>	End Date	<b>12/31/1980</b>	DB Box Number <b>32731.09</b>

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<b>Box</b>	Record Number	<b>PRSH/P0120/551</b>	Classification	<b>Parish Records - Bulletins</b>
Title (Free Text Part)	<b>Corpus Christi Parish (King Dr.)</b>			
Begin Date	<b>01/01/1981</b>	End Date	<b>12/31/1993</b>	DB Box Number <b>32732.01</b>

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<b>Box</b>	Record Number	<b>PRSH/P0120/552</b>	Classification	<b>Parish Records - Bulletins</b>
Title (Free Text Part)	<b>Corpus Christi Parish (King Dr.)</b>			
Begin Date	<b>01/01/2004</b>	End Date	<b>06/30/2021</b>	DB Box Number <b>32732.03</b>

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<b>Box</b>	Record Number	<b>SCHL/C4550/448</b>	Classification	<b>School Records - Class Photographs</b>
Title (Free Text Part)	<b>Corpus Christi School (King Dr.)</b>			
Begin Date	<b>01/01/1936</b>	End Date	<b>12/31/1980</b>	DB Box Number <b>32733.02</b>

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<b>Box</b>	Record Number	<b>SCHL/S1150/271</b>	Classification	<b>School Records - School Yearbook</b>	
Title (Free Text Part)	<b>Corpus Christi High School</b>				
Begin Date	<b>01/01/1952</b>	End Date	<b>12/31/1985</b>	DB Box Number	<b>32732.10</b>