



St. Francis Church Brainerd

404 N. 9th Street
Brainerd, MN 56401
218-822-4040
www.brainerdcatholic.org

OPEN HOURS

Everyday 7 am - 5 pm

POINT OF INTEREST

Fr. Francis X. Pierz Chapel Site

- The point where the first Catholic church north of St. Paul was built and where Fr. Joseph Buh started his missionary work under his teacher and mentor, Fr. Pierz (Pirz, Pirc)
- The site where the first larger chapel built by Fr. Francis Pierz in 1867 stood (the first log chapel was built in 1852)
- The site through which Catholicism was spread throughout central and northern Minnesota

Located within Crow Wing State Park, 9 miles south of Brainerd on US Hwy 371.

Fr. Joseph Buh had arrived in St. Paul in 1864 from Slovenia and was serving and assisting Fr. Francis Pierz in much of the central and northern Minnesota Catholic mission territory. So it makes sense that he came north from Old Crow Wing to the new railroad community in October 1871 to offer the first Mass in what is now the city of Brainerd. Buh found quite a settlement of Catholics here, so in 1872 he built the first church on South Fifth Street, calling it St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of peace and brotherly love; it was fittingly named because of the purported peace between the Native American population and immigrant population in the area. He continued to serve the Brainerd mission as pastor until 1880, celebrating many occasions and sacraments throughout those early years of establishment.

**"No small credit must be given to Fr. Buh, and to those pioneer missionaries who spread the doctrines of Catholicity in Brainerd under the most adverse conditions embodied in the old wooden church on South Fifth Street."
(The History of St. Francis 1871-1947)**