The first Poles came to Elizabeth in the 1870's. To hear the Word of God in Polish they attended nearby churches - - first St. Stanislaus in New York City, then as they were established, St. Stanislaus in Newark and St. Peter & Paul Lithuanian Church in Elizabeth.

In 1905 a delegation of area Poles asked the help of the Pastor of Newark's Saint Stanislaus, Rev. Witus J. Masnicki. They claimed to represent a group large enough to have their own parish. His suggestion to call a mass meeting had amazing results.

More than 1,000 people attended on May 21. Fr. Masnicki celebrated Mass for the assembly and then presided at the meeting. All were unanimous in wanting their own parish and assessed themselves $25 each to purchase land. They agreed to name the new parish after the Patron and Apostle of Poland, St. Adalbert, (Wojciech), and to incorporate according to the regulations of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Newark. This was done almost immediately since the Incorporation was recorded in Trenton on June 6.

By August 1 land on Third Street was bought from the City of Elizabeth. Plans for a combination Church/School were prepared, bids received and foundation work begun by October 25. Blessing of the cornerstone took place December 17, 1905, with work completed by June of 1906.

Fr. Masnicki was Pastor of the Newark and Elizabeth parishes commuting between them by trolley or bicycle. By 1908 both were growing so rapidly that he decided to resign the Newark pastorate and move to Elizabeth. A house on East Jersey Street was bought for a Rectory on July 2, 1909 and another on Fulton Street for a convent on August 3. St. Adalbert's School began to function in the fall of 1909.

Rapid growth of school enrollment soon made the combination building inadequate. A 12 classroom school building was begun on the corner of Third & Fulton Streets in March of 1911 and in September work was started on remodeling the church. The combination building was gutted and side aisles added converting it into the present St. Adalbert Church.

1911 also saw the purchase of 15 acres in Linden for the first and to this day the only Polish parish cemetery in the Archdiocese. Mount Calvary Cemetery was blessed and dedicated July 4, 1911.

Fr. Masnicki celebrated his 25th Anniversary as a priest in June of 1919. Grateful parishioners contributed funds for the Main Altar in honor of his Silver Jubilee.
To house the additional Felician Sisters needed in school, a large home was bought in 1919 between Franklin and Marshall on Third Street and converted into a Convent. Additional classrooms were provided in 1921 by purchasing a Protestant Church on Third & Marshall and building a second story within it. This added a hall and five classrooms to parish facilities.

Even this was not enough to accommodate children attending St. Adalbert School so in June 1925 another 12 classroom (the present Main) school building was begun adjacent to the first on Fulton Street. The third floor of the original school was then converted into a parish hall that served as a social center for the parish. School assemblies and graduations, parish dramatic productions, dances and bazaars had parishioners climbing to the third floor and packing the hall to overflowing.

September 25, 1929 saw the Investiture of Monsignor Masnicki by Archbishop Walsh as a Prelate of Pope Pius XI.

Major renovation of the church took place in 1935 with the installation of a copper roof, new wiring and electrical fixtures as well as interior redecoration. The paintings on the ceiling were done at this time by Henry Niemczynski of Brooklyn.

Need for a parish center was satisfied in 1941 with the construction of the present parish hall at the site of the school annex on Third & Marshall Streets.

Monsignor Masnicki’s celebration of his Golden Jubilee in the priesthood in June of 1946 was the occasion of his investiture by Archbishop Walsh as a Protonotary Apostolic of Pope Pius XII with the privilege of wearing the miter at church services.

Monsignor Masnicki died July 29, 1956 at the age of 86 after a pastorate of 51 years.

In September he was succeeded by Rev. Joseph A. Smolen, a priest son of St. Adalbert's, who celebrated his first Mass here in 1933. Fr. Smolen returned to St. Adalbert's after 24 years as Associate at Our Lady of Częstochowa, Jersey City.

Concerned with the deteriorating condition of the convent and rectory, Fr. Smolen bought property on Third Street, between E. Jersey and Livingston, in 1958. The present Sisters Convent was built in 1960 followed in 1961 by the present Rectory on the site of the old.

On November 10, 1962 Monsignor Smolen was named a Prelate of Pope John XXIII and invested by Archbishop Boland.

Replacement of the Sanctuary and upper nave windows of the church became necessary in 1966 and the church was air conditioned.

Monsignor Smolen retired June 30, 1972 as the first Pastor Emeritus of St. Adalbert's, continuing in residence and assisting as much as his health allowed. On June 10, 1973 the Parish honored Msgr. Smolen on his 40th Anniversary with a Mass of Thanksgiving and a Testimonial Dinner.

On July 1, 1972 Rev. Joseph A. Marjanczyk was installed as the Third Pastor of St. Adalbert's. Like his predecessor, a priest son of the parish, he celebrated his First Mass here in 1945. Fr. Marjanczyk returned to St. Adalbert's after 27 years as Associate, and for a time Administrator of St. Valentine's...
Bloomfield.

Desiring to give parishioners a share in responsibility for the parish in accord with Vatican Council II, Fr. Marjanczyk formed a Parish Council composed of presidents, secretaries and delegates of parish organizations on October 30, 1972. After a year of preparation the Council elected its Officers - - President Genevieve Zagurek, Vice-President Sophia Concavage, Secretary Angela Cop.

Parish Council Officers elected October 1974 were President Genevieve Zagurek, Vice President Angela Cop, Secretary Francis Lutak.

During the 1975 Holy Year a parish pilgrimage traveled with Fr. Marjanczyk and Fr. Szpiech on a combined Marian & Holy Year Pilgrimage to Częstochowa, Lourdes, Rome and Fatima.

On May 18, 1975 the parish organist Albert Wozniak was honored at a Testimonial Dinner on the 20th Anniversary of his service to the parish. On the same day Archbishop Gerety named Fr. Marjanczyk the first Dean of Union County East Deanery. One of the new administrative units of the archdiocese the Deanery includes 13 parishes in the Elizabethport & Linden areas.

In 1976 the Parish Council was expanded and reconstituted to include I) ex officio members, 2) Organization Presidents, 3) 8 men and 8 women elected at large by the parish, and 4) 8 appointed by the Pastor. The new Council was installed June 13 with officers - President Carl Krowicki, Vice President Joseph Lubas, Secretary Angela Cop, Worship Chairman Sophia Concavage, Activities Chairman Helen Kowalczyk, Education Chairman Stanley Angowski, Finance Chairman James Dmitzak, and Deanery Council Delegates: Thaddeus Gora, Genevieve Zagurek & Rose Marie Lutak.

The 41st International Eucharistic Congress was marked by large participation in Philadelphia at the Polish Mass August 7 and the closing Ceremonies on August 8; as well as in the Mass at Sacred Heart Cathedral, Newark, with the representative of the Polish Bishops at the Congress. St. Adalbert's had the honor of hosting Bishop Vincent Urban of Wroclaw, who as a memento of his visit gave us the copy of Our Lady of Czestochowa on our Lady Altar.

1977 saw the departure of a priest son, Fr. Raymond Gora, for mission work in Bolivia; the replacement of the church doors; the reconstruction of confessionals into Reconciliation Rooms providing the option of face to face or through the screen confession; beginning of the service of Special Eucharistic Ministers who bring the Lord to sick and shutins on Sundays; the celebration of Father Szpiech's Tenth Anniversary of Ordination with a Mass of Thanksgiving and Testimonial Dinner; renovation of the Main Parish Hall; painting of the convent interior; construction of Mt. Calvary Cemetery Office and modernization of records for quick reference. Mrs. Anna Wegryn retired June 30 as Cemetery Manager after 53 years of service and was succeeded by Mrs. Anna Nocek.

In 1978 the Third Parish Council was installed for a 2 year term with officers: President Joseph J. Lubas, Vice President Louis Fichner (Francis Lutak), Secretary Sophia Concavage, Worship Chairman Francis Wodzinski, Parish Life Chairman Angela Cop, Education Chairman Jules Maciorowski, Administration Chairman Edward Haber, Deanery Council Delegates: Jules Maciorowski, Ann Nocek, Mary Bitow. President Joseph Lubas was elected Parish Delegate to the Newark Archdiocesan Assembly.
During the year, the Main Parish Hall was paneled as was Hall B; church organ was repaired; Our weekend assistant Fr. Walter Pawlik, celebrated his 20th Anniversary with Mass and Open House and the parish took part in the Archdiocesan Renew Program with large and small group discussions.

Faced with a diminishing amount of available land for in ground burial, construction of the first building of Calvary Garden Mausoleum was begun at Mt. Calvary Cemetery. The completed mausoleum was dedicated by Bishop Marconi May 28, 1979, making above ground entombment available to our parishioners.

St. Adalbert's began its 75th Anniversary Year May 27, 1979 with a Mass by Bishop Marconi and an Open House for parishioners. Special events were scheduled for each month: we honored the Father's of the Parish with a Boutonniere on June 17; the founding Pastor with a Memorial Mass on July 29; the oldest living parishioners with a Latin Mass sung in Gregorian Chant on August 12; the Sisters and teachers, past & present with a Mass of Thanksgiving and an Open House on September 22; Pope John Paul II with a Polish Vesper Service on his first anniversary as Pope on October 14; deceased parishioners with Mass at the Cemetery on November 4 and deceased Veterans with a Mass on November 11; young people with a Christmas Carol Organ Program on December 16.

1979 saw the parish taking a very active part in the Archdiocesan celebration of the 900th Anniversary of St. Stanislaus' Martyrdom; organizing a St. Adalbert's Senior Citizens Club; and rejoicing in Pope John Paul II's U. S. visit in New York, October 2-3.

Monsignor Marjanczyk was named a Prelate of Honor to Pope John Paul II on May 29. Monsignor accompanied Archbishop Gerety as interpreter on his visit to Poland at the invitation of Cardinal Wyszynski and the Bishops of Poland for the Corpus Christi procession June 17 in Warsaw and tour of the country. He also was privileged to go to Rome with Archbishop Gerety for a private audience with Pope John Paul on June 26. Archbishop Gerety presided at the Archdiocesan celebration of the Papal Honors in the Cathedral on September 29.

The Anniversary Year celebration continued in 1980 with Byzantine Rite Mass on January 27; a Gala Mardi Gras Dinner - Dance February 9; Solemn Eucharistic Days March 23-25; Family Communion on Patronal Feast of St. Adalbert April 20; Mothers Day Flower Presentation on May 11.

In 1980 St. Adalbert's School received its full accreditation culminating a year of evaluation; the church sanctuary was renovated and church decorations renewed.

The 75th Anniversary Mass of Thanksgiving on June 1 with Archbishop Gerety as Principal Celebrant is the high point of our celebration. During the Mass the gift of Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski, Primate of Poland, an extremely rare relic - a piece from the bones of St. Adalbert was enshrined in a reliquary donated by Msgr. Marjanczyk. A Parish Family Dinner- Dance completes this memorable day.

After seventy-five years, St. Adalbert's Parish still fulfills it: original mission of providing a place where Polish heritage is cherished and Polish religious customs are preserved. Through the years its parishioners have scattered throughout Union County. They formed new Polish language parishes such as St. Hedwig's, Elizabeth, and St. Theresa's, Linden, or became active in the parishes attended by their children. Yet the link remains as they return for major celebrations or while visiting parents who remained in the city. Many still attend Mass regularly and are active parishioners of St. Adalbert's.
No longer as numerous as it once was, the parish still serves over 1,600 families many of whom are recent arrivals from Poland. A Saturday School provides youngsters with instructions in Polish language, history and tradition. A bilingual program teaches English to children recently arrived from Poland and attending the parochial school.

With God’s help, through the intercession of Our Lady of Częstochowa, Queen of Poland, and of our Patron, St. Adalbert, the Parish will continue to serve as the religious, social and cultural center for Poles of the area and a bridge by which they are enabled to enter more fully into the life of the community.