# St. mbrose Parish

FEBRUARY 20, 2022 BEEHIVE



A Pew study released in December found that 29 percent of Americans are not affiliated with any religion, up from 16 percent when Pew first asked the question in 2007. (The number of people in the United States who self-identify as Catholic has held steady at 21 percent.) But there is not merely a shift in how people express religion publicly. The outlook for personal spirituality is similarly bleak. According to Pew, almost a third of U.S. adults report that they pray rarely or not at all, up from 18 percent in 2007.

Young people in particular have distanced themselves from religion. Another survey, released by the Public Religion Research Institute last summer, found that an even higher share of 18- to 29-year-olds, 36 percent, do not associate with a particular religion. Younger Catholics have also told one research team that they are now less willing to attend Mass than before the pandemic began.

These statistics are no surprise; they confirm a longstanding pattern of secularization in the United States. Over the last half-century, academics from various disciplines have written at length (often in these pages) as they have attempted to explain this dramatic turn away from religion. Meanwhile, dismayed faith leaders and churchgoers alike have been left to ponder whether they are members of a dying species of those who look to God for an understanding of the world.

Depending on who is being asked, people have stopped going to church either because the liturgy is too stuffy and antiquated or because it is not as reverent as it used to be; the church has not done enough to listen to the faithful's concerns on L.G.B.T., contraception and abortion issues, or it is already too accommodating on these fronts; the hierarchy either does not place enough emphasis on pastoral ministries, or it does not pay enough heed to doctrine. Underlying all of this, revelations of widespread sexual abuse and its coverup by religious authorities have significantly dampened the religious practices of American Catholics.

But just as often as certain Catholics look to specific issues of the institutional church to account for increasing secularism, others tend to explain it away by blaming it on the morality of nonbelievers themselves. Some believe people do not go to church because they are lazy, while others believe it is because church teaching is antiquated. If it is laziness, there is no point in trying to welcome back wayward Catholics; there is no cure for sloth. If it is outdated church teaching, the temptation is to say the church simply needs to get with the times, and the lost shall be found. Neither way of thinking offers much inspiration for the church's evangelical mission.

But what if there is a different way to look at the decline of religious practice in the United States? Have the "nones" consciously rejected religion, or have religious institutions failed to involve them and respond to their needs? Do they lack belief in

#### Listening To Those Who Have Left

Continued from page 1

God, or do they no longer see the church as representing the God they believe in? Has a mixture of all of these factors gotten us to where we are today, with both society and the church sharing some responsibility?

The only way to find out is by asking, and the Catholic Church is attempting to do precisely that. Pope Francis announced that the meeting in 2023 of the Synod of Bishops — as the culmination of a three-year worldwide process — would focus on finding ways to make the church one that "walks together" instead of one that follows the lead of a select few. The pope is encouraging the church to envision itself more creatively as the body of Christ. The church should not be characterized by a hierarchy exerting its power over the laity, he has urged, but by charitable dialogue among all bishops, priests, deacons, laypeople and religious, as well as with the wider world.

Pope Francis has made it clear that the diocesan phase of this synod should not be limited only to people who show up to Mass every Sunday. Instead, the synod's preparatory document calls for listening not only within the visible structures of the church but also in encounters with "people who are distant from the faith" and with the "poor and excluded" (No. 29). Only by listening to those at the margins can the church truly be universal.

To that end, all diocesan leaders coordinating the first phase of preparation for the Synod of Bishops should make a concerted effort to reach out to those people who are disaffiliated with religion, especially lapsed or nonpracticing Christians. Many dioceses have already set forth detailed plans to include marginalized groups in the synod, but these efforts ought not to be limited to a handful of local churches.

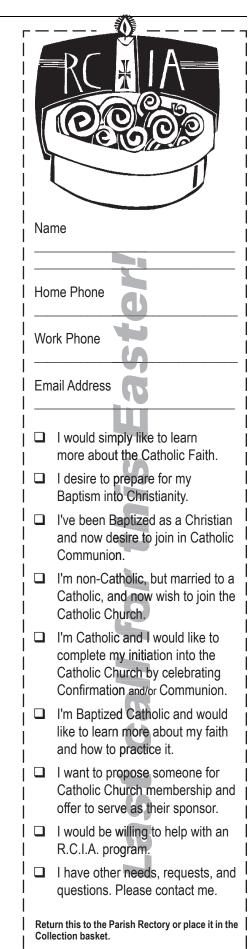
The voices of the nones are crucial for understanding where the church has lost people on both the local and global levels — for how can we bring people back into the church if we do not even know why they left in the first place? By listening to those who feel alienated from Christianity or even apathetic to it, the church will make great inroads in learning about those aspects of pastoral outreach that it needs to improve.

Just as the church has much to learn from these lost sheep, it also has much to offer them in return. Engaging nones in the synod offers a prime opportunity for evangelization — not through proselytizing but by demonstrating accompaniment and dialogue in practice, and by offering an example of how the church can live out its mission of helping the downtrodden and outcast.

In the months since America first reported how inconsistently U.S. dioceses were preparing for the synod, there has been some progress in solidifying plans for the listening phase. Going forward, U.S. dioceses must maintain this momentum. It is a massive and difficult undertaking, but the church in the United States must not succumb to the temptation to treat the synod as though it were merely another chore. Synodality should remain at the forefront of diocesan and parochial consciousness for years to come.

With a third of Americans estranged from organized religion, there is no time to lose. It is ultimately only God's grace that can bring people back to the faith. Even so, all members of the church have a responsibility to do as much as they can to bring God's people back to himself — and there is perhaps no better way to do this than through the current churchwide synodal process.

Editorial taken from America Magazine, January 13, 2022. For more please visit americamagazine.org



# Things Considered

The current church boiler was replaced in 1992, and in my mind, that was just yesterday. But in boiler-world, that is ancient history. When inspecting that unit following the flood of 2021, a crack was discovered, but since the unit passed its hydrolic test, it was determined that the insurance would not cover the cost of a new unit.

Repairs were made in the fall with the assurance that we could get through at least one or two more heating seasons in our worship space. You might remember that we nicknamed this boiler "Benny" and he replaced "Boris and Bernice Boiler" which were original to the 1926 church. Somehow they lasted 66 years and heated four buildings, while the new boiler lasted less than half that time, working to heat only one.

The plan to coddle the church boiler until we got on better financial footing fell apart last Sunday night as the boiler repairs made a few months ago came apart – taking out heat to the church during one of the coldest weeks of the season. That left us scrambling to find temporary heating to keep water pipes from freezing and to prevent damage to the pipe organ, whose delicate composition of wood, leather and metal can't go through a hard freeze without major damage.

The repair company worked a 24 hour shift to bring the boiler back into service by this weekend so that we would not have to cancel masses. So when you come to mass today, please appreciate the warmth of the space and the effort of a crew who gave up a night's sleep to get it that way for you.

#### XXX

In a related matter, repairs to the lower level of the rectory offices uncovered a steam pipe that was hidden under the stairs. After 75 years, it had sprung a leak. Fortunately it happened when the damage could be seen and easily repaired. It did however set back the office restoration project by a week. We were able to conduct weekday masses without any heat, and fortunately there were no weddings or funerals scheduled.

We did have an Infrastructure Meeting scheduled for last Tuesday in the church building and could not move it to either the rectory or ARK because those spaces are still under repair.

Nick Sizeland, the City Manager for Grosse Pointe Park was on the agenda for that night to discuss what was happening in GPP that impacts two of our four damaged properties. It seemed logical that the meeting be moved to his offices at City Hall, but that offer was rescinded when we found that Mr. Sizeland was not able to attend the meeting. This must be some sort of Church/State rule.

Rory Bolger, the committee chair rescheduled the meeting for this week. He passes on this update:

"Following the St. Ambrose Infrastructure Committee's very productive meeting of January 11th with the Great Lakes Water Authority and the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD), the group looked forward to having the Grosse Pointe Park city manager attend our third meeting. Unfortunately, at the last minute the city manager was unable to attend.

Coming out of the January 11th meeting, though, the parish has sent a follow-up request to DWSD. We had learned that the July 25-26th flooding prompted DWSD to have sewer lines throughout the Jefferson-Chalmers community cleaned and inspected. That effort, however, did not extend north of East Jefferson.

On February 15th, we sent a formal request to DWSD Deputy Director, Palencia Mobley, to have the sewers servicing Alter Road, north of East Jefferson, and Hampton Road, east of Alter Road, cleaned and after that made subject for subsequent video inspection of the sewers to see if there has been any internal damage to the system over the years.

We hope for an affirmative response from the department since sewer cleaning and inspection may help further protect the parish's significant assets from the next wet weather events.

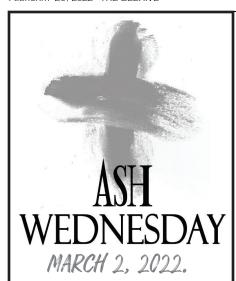
On Tuesday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Grosse Pointe Park city manager will attend the rescheduled Infrastructure Committee meeting at 5:30 p.m. in the church building. He will share information with the group and answer our questions. We are eager to learn more about extreme emergency relief valve permitting, Wayne County's Fox Creek enclosure, and measures that institutions and homeowners can take to help stay dry this year."

#### WWW.

Not having a meeting space makes a couple of Lenten projects difficult if not downright impossible. In the impossible category will be the Lenten Fish Dinners. The ARK kitchen is completely gutted and replacement equipment is not even being fabricated yet. But food service is secondary to our mission of education. With the ARK out of commission, there is only space for Adult Education in the church building itself.

St. Ambrose has perhaps the longest continuously running tradtion of Adult Education of any parish in this Archdiocese – one that predates my arrival here in 1986. I wanted to reengage that program this Lent. To that end, the Parish purchased the public showing rights to a PBS series called **Prophetic Voices** done by award-winning filmmaker Martin Doblmeier.

In theory we could run the films in between our Sunday morning masses in the church building – one per week. But the timing is tight and the set-up less than ideal. I'm investigating the possibility of using either the Okulski or Schaap Theatres at the Lavins Center. I hope to have that worked out by next week – unless I run into another Church/State problem. You can review the personages covered in this series in the ad on page 5 of this issue. Each of these modern day prophets has something very valuable to say to us today.



From our Archdiocesan Office for Sacred Worship regarding Ash Wednesday

The precautions for limiting contagion by Covid respiratory droplets remain in place. However, for Ash Wednesday, we propose three options that may be used based on sound pastoral judgment.

- Distribution of ashes to the forehead with your thumb saying "Repent and believe in the Gospel" or "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return"
- 2. Follow the guidance from 2021 provided by the Congregation of Divine Worship. The suggestion is to bless the ashes, say the prayer once "Repent and believe in the Gospel" or "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return," and then sprinkle the blessed ashes on the head of each person without saying anything.
- **5.** Pray the prayer once and distribute ashes to the forehead without saying anything. Please do not send blessed ashes home.

### **Faith Formation Station**

In this Sunday's Gospel Jesus teaches us how to treat people. The Gospel story contains the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do to you." Jesus also challenges us to love our enemies and pray for those who mistreat us. These are challenging words to put into action. Being Christian isn't always easy and it means being open to Jesus' words, not just the ones that make us comfortable.

**Reflect:** Reread the Gospel (Luke 6:27-38). Of all the teachings listed, which one is the hardest to do? Explain. Is Jesus asking us to be weak or to let people take advantage of us? What does it really mean to be compassionate and merciful?

**Respond:** Talk about what it means to live the Golden Rule. Think of one person you have trouble getting along with. Pray for that person today and each day this week. Create a plan for how you can change the way you relate to that person.

*Pray:* Lord Jesus, help me to be a true example and witness to others of your love for us. Help me to promise, but not forget. Answer, but don't argue. Speak, but don't accuse. Forgive, but don't punish. Listen, but don't interrupt. Give, but don't skimp. Trust, but don't dither. Share, but don't pretend. Enjoy, but don't complain. Pray, but don't cease. Amen.

**Program Updates:** Church Tours. All the religious education classes have been visiting church over the past four weeks for a tour of the building. We begin our tour talking about how the building is church (spelled with a lower-case c) and how we, the disciples of Jesus out in the world, the people of God, are the Church (spelled with an upper-case C). We start our walk through the church from the narthex: the porch of the church. There we light a candle for our class from the candlestand from the original 1916 building and then talk about the significance of blessing ourselves at the holy water font and genuflecting as we enter the nave: the main body of the church where the congregation gathers.

In the nave (derived from the Latin navis/ship) we again emphasize that we, the disciples of Jesus, the fishers of men, are all in the same ship together. We are the Church. Our tour of the nave highlights the Gothic arches that support the weight of the building, the baptismal font carved from one piece of Pentelikon marble that is the same marble found in the Parthenon, the stained glass windows created during WWII with lead that was supposed to be used for making bullets but was instead crafted into peaceful windows, the 8 icons of the saints, the 44 shields telling the history of both the parish and of Michigan, the stations of the cross, the confessionals, and the statue of St. Ambrose. The students could spend all day in the nave learning about the saints, about their parish history, and about art and architecture.

After taking some time to explore the nave on their own, the students gathered at the sanctuary: the holy space around the altar table. We reviewed the significance of the altar, the crucifix, processional cross, presider's chair, and ambo. We talked about the tabernacle: the "tent" where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved. A highlight of this section of the church included a visit to the sacristy: the room where sacred vessels, books, vestments are kept and where the priests and altar servers prepare for mass.

It was such a special treat to get the behind-the-scenes look at how the parish operates. I know our students and catechists have a newfound appreciation for the home we call St. Ambrose. I have already heard classes that are planning to return and parents who have said their children shared with them the highlights of their visit. We want to thank Sue Dropiewski for offering us her expertise – especially for showing us all the nooks and crannies and secret doors. We also thank Mr. DeMartin for inviting us up into the choir loft and sharing with us how the amazing pipe organ works. This was surely a highlight of our visit! Be sure to check out the parish website and Facebook page to see photos of our students on their tours.

#### PROGRAM REMINDERS:

8th Grade Confirmation Candidate & Parent Meeting: Wednesday, March 9, 2022 6:30 p.m. in Church. At this meeting we will review the sacramental program as well as all the requirements for the journey ahead. It is expected that all our students and at least one parent/guardian attend this important meeting.



**Prophetic Voices** is a special collection of five award-winning documentary films that have all aired nationally on Public Television to wide critical acclaim. Together they offer a rare portrait of some of the most remarkable and inspiring figures in the world of religion from the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It includes:

- Bonhoeffer 20th Anniversary Remaster
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- An American Conscience: The Reinhold Niebuhr Story
- Backs Against the Wall: The Howard Thurman Story

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## 9 0 CSA

# 2 1 Box Scores

Number of Families	800
Returns to date	150
Average Gift in '20	\$596.00
AoD Quota in '21	\$93,007
Property/Liability Insurance .	\$52,000
Adjusted parish target	\$145,007
Received as of 12/27/21	\$110,029

- Our CSA goal was higher this year than last, which explains why we struggled to get to our minimum.
- The insurance premiums listed roughly \$1,000 a week – are the fund that will underwrite a majority of our flood damages.
- Now that we have made our AoD quota, anything given to the CSA comes directly back to our parish without the usual 7% deduction making it a good time to donate.

# The Beehive

is the parish weekly bulletin of the St. Ambrose Catholic Community Detroit/Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan

Pastor: Rev. Timothy R. Pelc
Pastoral Minister: Charles Dropiewski
Religious Education: Kelly Anne Woolums
Minister of Music:
Office Manager: Peggy O'Connor
Secretary: Mary Urbanski

#### **Sacramental Celebrations**

Masses: On the Lord's Day – Saturday Vigil - 4:00 p.m. Sunday - 8:30 & 11:15 a.m.

Baptism: Arrangements for both adults and infants to be made by contacting the rectory.

Penance: As announced and by appointment.

Marriage: Couples should contact the rectory office a minimum of six months in advance of the proposed date to make arrangements.

Funeral: Normally celebrated within one week after the deceased's passing.

#### **Directory**

Parish Office: 15020 Hampton
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Religious Education: (313) 332-5633
Pastoral Ministry: (313) 332-5631
Ark Scheduling: (313) 822-2814
Parish Website: stambrosechurch.net

## **Liturgy Schedule**

Monday, February 21

St. Peter Damian, bishop & doctor

#### Tuesday, February 22

The Chair of St. Peter the Apostle 8:30 a.m. – Mass – John McKenna

#### Wednesday, February 23

St. Polycarp, bishop & martyr

#### Thursday, February 24

Weekday 7th week in Ordinary Time 7:00 p.m. – Stan & Bernice Phillips Matt & Fran Pius, Louisa Ference

#### Friday, February 25

*Weekday 7<sup>th</sup> week in Ordinary Time* 12:00 p.m. - Mass – Deborah DeRezze

#### Saturday, February 26

Weekday 7<sup>th</sup> week in Ordinary Time 4:00 p.m. – Mass – For All People

#### Sunday, February 27

Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time 8:30 – Mass – For All People 11:15 – Mass – For All People



# Scriptures for the 7<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time

February 21

Jas 3: 13-15 Ps 19: 8-10, 15 Mk 9: 14-29

#### February 22

1 Pt 5: 1-4

Ps 23: 1-6

Mk 16: 13-19

#### February 23

Jas 4: 13-17

Ps 49: 2-3, 6-11 Mk 9: 38-40

February 24

Jas 5: 1-6

Ps 49: 14-20

PS 49: 14-20

Mk 9: 41-50

#### February 25

Jas 5: 9-12

Ps 103: 1-4; 8-9, 11-12

Mk 10: 1-12

#### February 26

Jas 5: 13-20

Ps 141: 1-3, 8

Mk 10: 13-16

#### February 27

Sir 27: 4-7

Ps 92: 2-3, 13-16

1 Cor 15: 54-58

Lk 6: 39-45

# Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time February 26th - 27th

Saturday Mass at 4:00 p.m.

Sunday Masses are celebrated at 8:30 a.m. and 11:15 a.m.

There is no limit on seating capacity – but distancing is still required.

Wearing face masks at St. Ambrose is asked of the vaccinated and unvaccinated.

To participate electronically, go to: **facebook.com/stambroseparish** or better yet, to You Tube at **www.youtube.com/channel/UCbymBGIQxUF6UgPct5xFg** 

For specifics on the law of Sunday Obligation go to: aod.org/comehometohope-dispensation

# Your Envelope Speaks ... the Inside Story

in electronic donations .......\$3,488.87 for a total of ................\$10,134.87 **Over** budget for the week.........\$34.87 Number of envelopes mailed .........................627 Number of envelopes used .........................54



### **Our Sick**

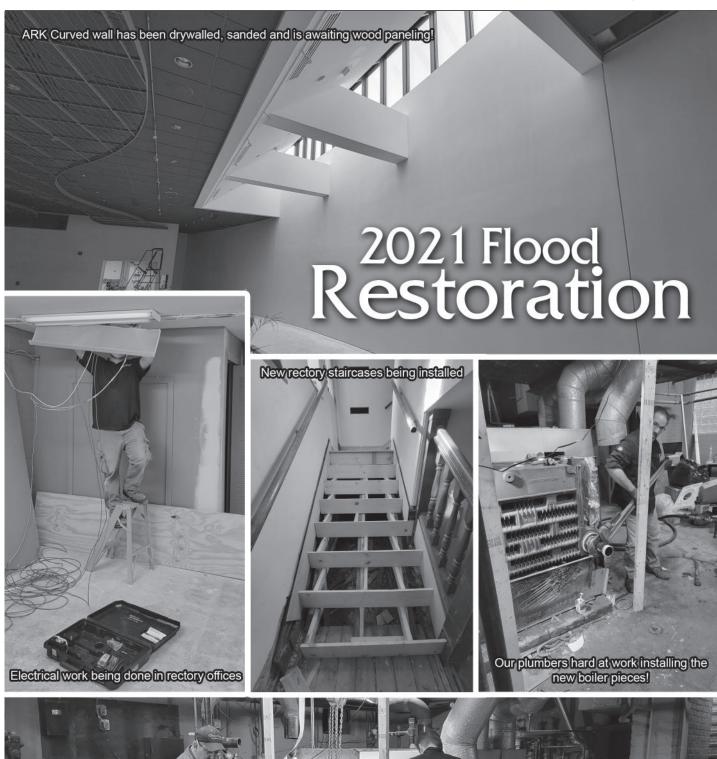
Please pray for those who are seriously ill or who are hospitalized: Pat Blake, Karen Culver, Donald Miriani, Bonnie McKenna, Jeanne Noto, David Schumacker, Matthew Elias, Mary Martin, George Bucec, Emilie Kasper, Darby O'Toole, Anna Noto Billings, Eileen O'Brien, Liz Linne, Donna Barnes, Alexandra Cullen, Charmaine Kaptur, Frank Gregory, Alex Billiu, Jerry Scopel, Jackie Walkowski, Kristen Kingzett, Maria Simcina, Brian Tague, Sharif Hannan, Shirley Whelan, Anne Purvis, Jerry Gutowski, Kevin O'Connor, Albina Checki, Judy Sivanov, Matthew Brown, Ernie Ament, Charlie Merz, Vince LoCicero, Lily Faith, Karen Jordan, Patty Freund and those suffering and hospitalized worldwide with COVID-19.

#### From The MCC

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer in her State of the State speech urged an increase to the state Earned Income Tax Credit, a policy Michigan Catholic Conference has supported since 2003 and for which the organization is offering its support this legislative session.

"While encouraging the hu man dignity that comes with work, the EITC is a pro-family, pro-children policy that provides a level of stability and assistance to help families get by and cover necessary expenses or emergencies," said Paul A. Long, Michigan Catholic Conference President and CEO. "We are calling on Democrats and Republicans in the legislature and the governor's office to collaborate on behalf of the working men and women in the state and their families who earn low wages and struggle to make ends meet."

During her State of the State speech, Gov. Whitmer encouraged the legislature to raise the state credit from six to 20 percent of the federal credit while Sen. Wayne Schmidt (R-Traverse City) has previously introduced legislation that phases in an increase to 30 percent of the federal credit. Michigan Catholic Conference is a long-time supporter of the tax credit and advocated for its creation in 2006, worked to preserve its existence at six percent of the federal credit in 2011 when the state tax code was re-written, and is now urging the use of state resources to increase the credit to assist working families in Michigan.







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