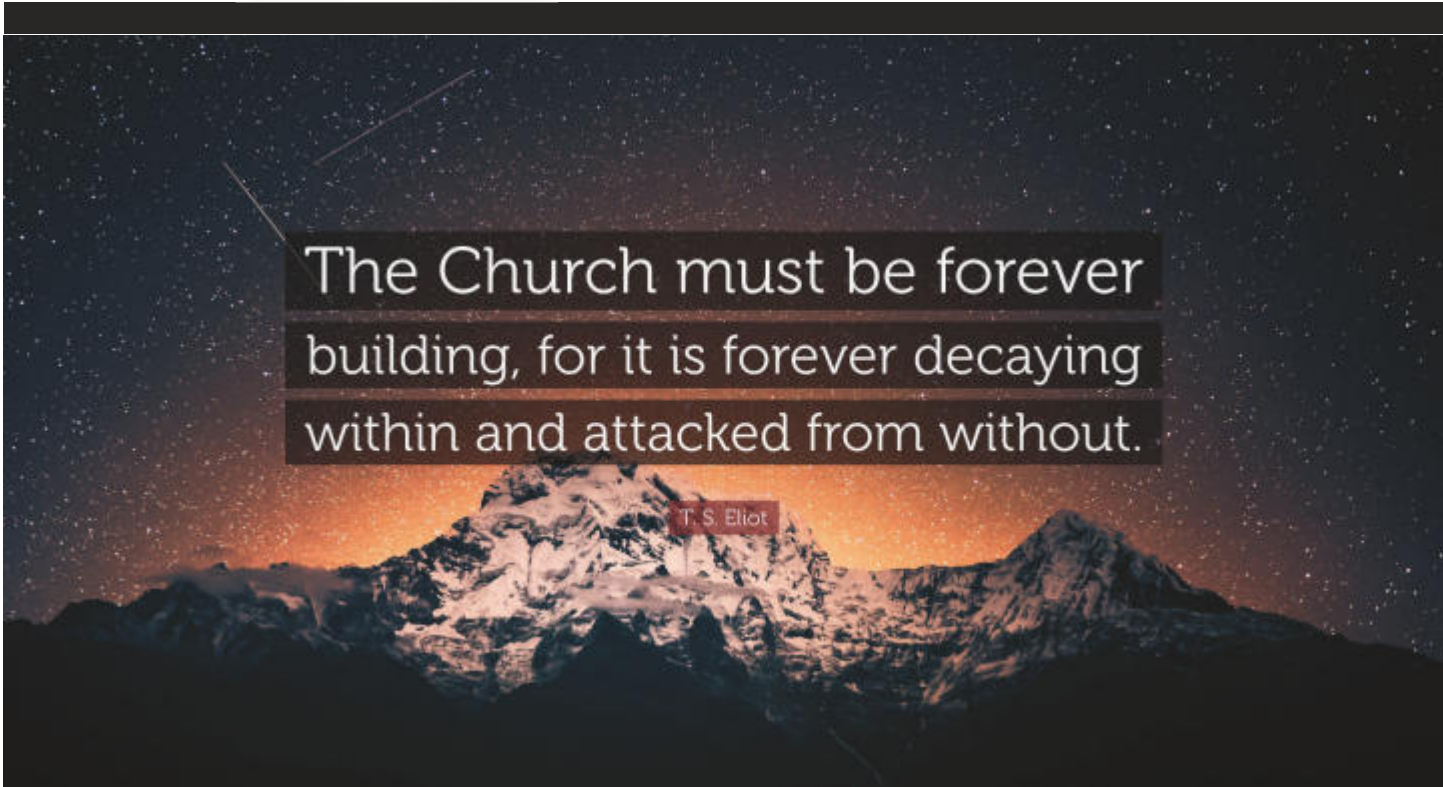


# St. Ambrose Parish

JANUARY 2, 2022  
OUR 105<sup>TH</sup> YEAR  
BEEHIVE



The Church must be forever building, for it is forever decaying within and attacked from without.

T. S. Eliot

This is a season for taking stock of who we are, how we live, and what we are building. It is the best season, perhaps, to ask ourselves the question of poet T. S. Eliot's choruses from *The Rock*: "Have you built well?"

In 1934, Eliot penned the poem "The Rock" to fundraise for 45 church buildings near London. Appropriately, his frequent theme was building—not only churches but also the Church as a thick community, an institution, a people seeking knowledge of God, a sanctuary from alienation and futility.

***"The Church must be forever building, for it is forever decaying within and attacked from without,"*** Eliot wrote. So, how are we building?

When we think of the Church community and institutions the Church has founded, our workmanship is mixed at best. In society at large, distraction, alienation, and futility seem to have only escalated since Eliot's day, while the Church in the West shows many signs of decay. Religious disaffiliation is rising rapidly, and even we who remain in the faith often can't escape the inattentive, disintegrating tendencies of modern life.

We too live amid the breakdown of the local relationships, businesses, and civil society analyzed by Alexis de

Tocqueville in *Democracy in America* and eulogized by Robert Putnam in "Bowling Alone." With us, as Eliot saw in his society, a sense of community can be too weak, with people "settled nowhere,"

***And no man knows or cares who is his neighbour  
Unless his neighbour makes too much disturbance.***

In this state of communal disrepair, Eliot advised, "The good man is the builder, if he build what is good." His words echo James 2's contention that faith without works is dead (v. 26), that it's possible to have right beliefs without acting in service to God and others. Eliot warns us against relying on the work of past generations and doing nothing to shore it up.

Eliot says we can learn to build well from "things that are now being done, / And some of the things that were long ago done," and from "the work of the humble."

For building ideas now being done, we might look to parts of the Church both near and far. For example, I'm fascinated by the Bruderhof, a network of Anabaptist communities in which members live and work together, keeping a common purse. As the Bruderhof website notes, this exact model of daily—and even financial—involvement in each

*Continued on page 2...*

**T.S. Eliot's Advise for 2022**

*Continued from page 1*

other's lives isn't necessary to faithfully follow Jesus. But it's a striking witness and a healthy challenge to my own faith and assumptions about what Christian community should look like, what it can ask of me, and how much of my life it should shape.

As for things "long ago done," Church history is a wealth of wisdom and warning. One hopeful evangelical trend is renewed interest in the liturgical calendar. None of the six evangelical Churches I attended before college observed Lent—or anything beyond Christmas and Easter. Now it's not unusual for evangelicals to use the calendar to break through the din of ordinary life with a reminder of the kingdom, a prompt to reorient ourselves toward God through a chapter of God's story of salvation.

Other things built long ago that would aid our building: formalized catechism, memorization of Scripture, and habits of Sabbath. With so many other claims on our attention, we can't expect to "be made new in the attitude of [our] minds" by social osmosis (Eph. 4:23). We need to dust off these tools of deliberate discipleship for new use.

The warnings in our history bring me to "the work of the humble." We cannot "build what is good" if we build to increase our own power, wealth, or glory. Our task is to prefigure the coming kingdom in love and service of God and neighbor, to give ourselves "fully to the work of the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58). It is not to serve ourselves.

Without humility in building, we risk the sin of Babel. But with it, and with God's grace, this year we may build what is good. And we must, for there is "much to build, much to restore," as Eliot charged. "Let the work not delay, time and the arm not waste."

*By Bonnie Kristian, the deputy editor at "The Week" and the author of A Flexible Faith: Rethinking What It Means to Follow Jesus Today.*



**Welcome to St. Ambrose!**

*St. Ambrose Parish continues to grow, not only in spirit, but also in numbers.*

*On behalf of our parish community, now beginning its 105<sup>th</sup> year of existence, we warmly welcome all those who have registered with us this past year.*

**Mr. & Mrs. Rodney Almeria** on Lochmoor in Harper Woods

**Ms. Elizabeth Lenhard** on S. Minerva in Royal Oak

**Mr. & Mrs. Zakary Belisle** on Lakeland in Grosse Pointe City

**Mr. & Mrs. Brian Laurencelle** on Ellair Place in Grosse Pointe Park

**Ms. Natalie Grysko** on Washington in Grosse Pointe City

**Drs. Mathew and Victoria Garrity** on Harcourt in Grosse Pointe Park

**Ms. Patricia Ellis** on Woodland Place in Grosse Pointe City

**Ms. Elizabeth Luxem** on Neff in Grosse Pointe City

**Mrs. Kelsey Nordquist** on Pemberton in Grosse Pointe Park

**Ms. Cynthia Rockwell** on Neff in Grosse Pointe City

**Mrs. Shannon McCarver** on Roland Court in Grosse Pointe Farms

**Ms. Linette Popoff-Parks** on Ann Street in Plymouth, MI

**Mr. & Mrs. Chad Nordstrom** on Berkshire in the Park

**Ms. Elaine Corrado** on Neff in Grosse Pointe City

**Mrs. Celeste Zogas** on Barrington in the Park

**Mr. & Mrs. Matthew Burzynski** on Balfour in the Park

**Mr. & Mrs. James Saros** on Balfour in the Park

*The Covid Pandemic has resulted in the lowest number of new registrants in three decades. We anticipate that those who have delayed joining the parish will do so in the new year. Even if you are just a member of our on-line worshipping community, you can become a member of St. Ambrose Parish by registering your household. Call 313-822-2814 or email [stambrose@comcast.net](mailto:stambrose@comcast.net).*

# All Things Considered

Prior to the time of Cardinal John Dearden (who died in 1988) parish registration was rigidly defined by geography. In Canon Law, each Catholic parish had boundaries established at the time of their founding and all Catholics within those boundaries were required to stay within those boundaries for things like sacraments, schools and Catholic Youth League teams. (St. Ambrose was a pioneer in finding a way around parish boundaries when it came to recruiting for our sports teams.) Cardinal Dearden understood that a mobile society could not be contained – as well as a Catholic’s preference for worshiping in one location over another – so while not eliminating boundaries – he allowed Catholics in this Archdiocese to register in any parish of their choosing. The important thing was for the faithful to commit to a specific community. In the wake of the changes following the Second Vatican Council and the ways that parishes were or were not implementing those changes, Dearden said, “Everyone has the right to have their spiritual needs fed.”

That relaxation of the boundary rule has served us well. Today, any parish is grateful for parishioner allegiance, let alone trying to restrict that to where you live. Not every person knows the history of parish registration, nor does everyone appreciate the importance of being a registered parishioner. If you have been attending the same parish for a time and don’t see yourself moving or attending elsewhere, you should absolutely register at your parish. Here’s why:

**Connectedness.** Once you register, you feel more at home in church. You become part of your church family in a tangible way. It gives you a sense of belonging and allows the parish staff to get to know you as well.

**Accountability.** We are all responsible for helping the greater Church grow in strength and numbers. As a registered parishioner, it adds weight to that role. As an “official” member of the parish, open to the voice of the Holy Spirit, you will feel led to contribute to the needs of the church.

**Commitment.** Becoming a member of your parish is a promise to be active in your faith.

**Access to parish information.** This gives your parish the ability to reach out to you and let you know about events, prayer and study opportunities and ways you can give back.

**A Metric of Parish Outreach.** Parishes that show increasing enrollment are doing something right. You demonstrate your support of that by casting your vote to join them.

**Bottom line** – register in the parish. Declare your commitment to your faith proudly and officially join your church family! It’s easy. Call, or register online. Easier still, fill out the registration form found in the front of the hymnal.

Know that you can be a long-distance member of the parish. We have several parishioners from out of state. Nor are you limited to registration in only one faith community. No doubt, the Family of Parishes model will test and stretch the idea of membership in the parochial model in which we all grew up.



Pretty much every scrap of Christmas decor you see this year has been scraped together, or a repurchase from insurance funds following last Summer’s flood. Virtually everything we used for seasonal decorations was stored in the church or rectory basements and unless it was hanging from the ceiling, those items were discarded because they were contaminated by sewage.

Some of this stuff we’ll never miss, but there was a large stock of religious items that have been amassed over the decades that we will miss. One item that I feel sad in losing were pieces of the original gesso-painted wood-

en altar from the original 1917 church. The DaPrado Nativity set which came to us from St. Philip’s Parish may also be beyond repair. We had several oriental rugs for different liturgical seasons. The expensive ones were a loss, but the cheap ones survived. Multiple sets of candlesticks were damaged and will need to be refinished. Wooden furnishings were trashed and supplies of candles had to be discarded. Vesture which we had moved to the rectory basement because we thought it safer, were likewise inundated.

I write about these things not to garner sympathy – may people lost way more – but to let you know that the extent of our parish losses from the flood is mammoth. We do carry full replacement value on our buildings and contents, but I am learning that “full replacement” is subject to interpretation. It’s difficult to argue about decorations when big-ticket items like boilers, elevators, electrical systems and air-conditioning units all need replacement or rebuilding. (The church boiler is operating on some make-shift welds and the rectory still does not have a working boiler.) When you come to worship here and it looks as if everything is copasetic, let me assure you it is not. Our staff and contractors have done a great job in glossing over the damages and “making things work.” If you need some sense of the extent of the damages, wander down to look at the ARK.



In an effort to mitigate or avoid catastrophic losses like the ones we are dealing with now, I’ve formed an ad-hoc committee to deal with infrastructure issues for our parish properties and the surrounding neighborhood. I am convinced that a repeat of a flood of that magnitude will eradicate us as a parish. We can’t expect our insurance carrier to shell out millions of dollars every time it rains heavy. And to be honest, whenever it rains heavy these days, our property takes on water in a way that it never has before. Review the report from the Infrastructure Committee on page 5 of today’s bulletin.

## A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER for the New Year

Good and gracious God,  
a new year of grace is upon us,  
giving us impressions  
of crisp beginnings  
new goals, a fresh sense of hope.

Though we cling to  
our own expectations  
for the year ahead,  
we know you alone  
are the sovereign of our future,  
Lord of our lives, and the source  
of whatever good we may do.

We thank you, O Lord,  
for the gift of the days and weeks  
you have entrusted to us.

Teach us to be good stewards  
of our time ahead,  
that we go about our days  
keeping you  
at the center of our lives.  
In the midst of our daily pursuits  
and activities,  
focus our eyes  
on the needs of others;  
help us respond  
with compassion to the poor;  
and open our hearts  
to a suffering world.

We ask for a year of peace,  
a year that brings an end  
to hatred and strife,  
and a year where we find  
a deeper joy  
that can only be found in you.

We ask this  
through Christ your Son  
who lives and reigns with you  
and the Holy Spirit,  
One God, forever and ever.  
Amen.

## Faith Formation Station

*“We pray tonight, O God, for confidence in ourselves,  
Our powers and purposes in this beginning of a New Year.  
Ward us from all lack of faith and hesitancy  
and inspire in us not only the determination to do a year’s work well,  
but the unfaltering belief that what we wish to do, we will do.”  
- W.E.B. Du Bois*

Happy and Holy New Year! The beginning of a new year is a time for prayerful gratitude. I am especially grateful for our amazing team of dedicated, creative, and faith-filled catechists. I am also grateful for the caring and compassionate faith community that includes the catechists, students, families, and greater St. Ambrose parish.

Families can begin this New Year by blessing their homes. One way to do this is to pick up an Epiphany Blessing Box in Church and follow the directions for blessing your home with chalk, holy water, and incense. You can continue the blessing in your home by placing a small item from each room in your house on the table where you share most of your meals. Place a candle in the center of the table with all the items arranged around it. Light the candle. Have members of your family form a circle around the table and hold up their hands, palms up, as in a posture of receiving. Thank God for the warmth and security of your home and ask God to bless your home and every person who resides in your home with peace of his Son, Jesus. Pray for the special items and what they represent – a book might represent bedtime stories; a cross might represent your faith; pillows comfort, spoons meals shared. Invite everyone to say “Amen” together at the end of the blessing.

The Christmas Season ends with the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. This year the Baptism of the Lord is Sunday January 9. St. Ambrose always celebrates Confirmation as close to the Baptism of the Lord each year to mark the connection between Baptism and Confirmation. In between Christmas, New Years, and the Baptism of the Lord this year falls the Epiphany of the Lord on Sunday January 2. The Epiphany marks the end of the 12 Days of Christmas.

There is a famous quote that says, “All who wander are not lost.” I always think of this on the feast of the Epiphany, when the Wise Men took a journey with only a star to follow. They did not know what they would find at the end of their travels, only the promise of something new and wonderful. For many of us by the time of the Epiphany, the tinsel on our tree is beginning to wilt, our decorations may have come down, and the post-Christmas blues might be setting in. Why not plan an adventure on Epiphany weekend to see if there is something wonderful to be discovered?

- Set out on a car trip where the destination is less important than the journey.
- Go hiking at a nearby metro or state park; we have many amazing parks here in Michigan. See what the Lord God has made all around us in nature.
- On Epiphany Sunday, take a new way home after Mass; you never know what you might find. Before dinner, read the story of the Magi visiting Jesus in Matthew’s Gospel (2:1-12). At dark, take one last walk through the neighborhood to look at the Christmas lights to talk about how Jesus is the light of the world!

### REMINDERS:

- Classes resume January 9, 2022. Please note that we **do** have class over the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday this year. We have done our best to schedule faith formation classes around the GPPSS calendar; however, we also aim to get our required number of classes in by early May. The program calendar can be found on the parish website and class reminders and updates are emailed out every week in our Friday Family Flocknotes.
- Confirmation is Saturday January 8 at 1:30 p.m. Please pray for the 15 candidates, their sponsors, and families who will be celebrating at this special liturgy. Thank you to their catechists, Victoria Hugh, Brendan O’Byrne, and Elizabeth Puleo-Tague, who have faithfully prepared them for the sacrament. Confirmation Practice is Friday, January 7, 2022 6:30 p.m. in Church – All candidates + a sponsor or parent must attend.

- Kelly Woolums



Left to Right: Grant Ruttinger, Bob Klacza, Lorri White, Dan Clark, Rory Bolger, John Mogk

## Flooding...wet weather...infrastructure....

The inaugural meeting of St. Ambrose's Infrastructure Committee was held in the church on Thursday, December 9<sup>th</sup> to get a handle on some serious matters:

- To identify the wet weather resources—sewer pipes, pumps, interceptors, retention/detention basins, etc.—that are already in place.
- To understand what went wrong last June when not only the parish property but so much of Grosse Pointe Park and Detroit's Jefferson-Chalmers neighborhood were flooded.
- To learn what steps are being taken to handle the next big wet weather event.

Members of this Committee include parishioners from both the Detroit and Grosse Pointe sections of the parish. In addition to myself, Rory Boly Bolger, members of the group include Robert Klacza, John Mogk, Dan Clark, Lorri White, Lauri Read, Dale Krajniak, M.L. Elrick and ex officio our pastor and parish council chairman Grant Ruttinger.

At our first session, Committee members pooled their professional and personal knowledge and experience in a broad discussion of these and related issues. The role of three different jurisdictions was reviewed—the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD), which owns the pipes and pumps and plants that handle sewage as part of its combined sewer system; the Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA), which operates the facilities that move and treat the sewage; and the city of Grosse Pointe Park, which maintains a separated (stormwater and sanitary) sewer system and relies on facilities downstream in Detroit during wet weather events.

After the meeting's discussions had wrapped up, the staggering amount of damage suffered by the church became evident as committee members toured the work-in-progress in the ARK.

The Committee will meet again in the new year on Tuesday, January 11, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. We will be inviting representatives from the GLWA and DWSD to share their information, hear our story, and answer our questions. Parishioners and interested members of the public are free to attend the meetings of the committee.

Rory Bolger

## Pray Every Day



Could you be searching for a fresh new way to pray every day of the year? Daily Prayer 2022 is your guide to prayer that includes scripture, psalmody, a brief reflection, general intercessions, and a closing prayer. It is ideal for personal and family reflection upon the word of God. This also makes an excellent gift for a senior, newlyweds or for a student away at college.

These prayerbooks are \$10 each — which is a modest investment in someone's spiritual formation. To pick up a copy of this year's Daily Prayer 2022, call the rectory office at 822-2814.

<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>CSA</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Box Scores</b>
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		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our CSA goal was higher this year than last, which explains why we are struggled to get to our minimum.</li> <li>• The insurance premiums listed – roughly \$1,000 a week – are the fund that will underwrite a majority of our flood damages.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>		

## 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 Drowiewski  
**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  
 Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan 48230  
**Tel:** (313) 822-2814 **Fax:** (313) 822-9838  
**Email address:** stambrose@comcast.net  
**Religious Education:** (313) 332-5633  
**Pastoral Ministry:** (313) 332-5631  
**Ark Scheduling:** (313) 822-2814  
**Parish Website:** stambrosechurch.net

## Liturgy Schedule

### Monday, January 3

*The Most Holy Name of Jesus*

### Tuesday, January 4

*St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, religious*

8:30 a.m. – Mass – Joan Convery

### Wednesday, January 5

*St. John Neumann, bishop*

### Thursday, January 6

*St. Andre Bessette, religious*

7:00 – Mass – Robert Rownd

### Friday, January 7

*St. Raymond Pennyfort, priest*

12:00 – Mass – Adeline Urbanski,

Julia Kotula, Walter Wilczynski

### Saturday, January 8

*Christmas Weekday*

1:30 p.m. – Confirmation Liturgy

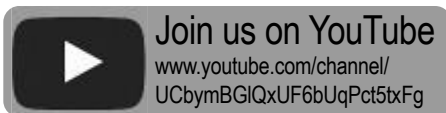
4:00 p.m. – Mass - For All People

### Sunday, January 9

*The Baptism of the Lord*

8:30 – Mass – For All People

11:15 – Mass – For All People



## Scriptures for the Week of Christmas

### JANUARY 3

1 JN 3: 22-4: 6

PS 2: 7BC-8, 10-12A

MT 4: 12-17, 23-25

### JANUARY 4

1 JN 4: 7-10

PS 72: 1-4, 7-8

MK 6: 34-44

### JANUARY 5

1 JN 4: 11-18

PS 72: 1-2, 10, 12-13

MK 6: 45-52

### JANUARY 6

1 JN 4: 19-5: 4

PS 72: 1-2, 14, 15B, 17

LK 4: 14-22A

### JANUARY 7

1 JN 5: 5-13

PS 147: 12-15, 19-20

LK 12-16

### JANUARY 8

1 JN 5: 14-21

PS 149: 1-6A, 9B

JN 3: 22-30

### JANUARY 9

IS 42: 1-4, 6-7

PS 29: 1-4, 9-10

ACTS 10: 34-38

LK 3: 15-16

## Feast of the Baptism of the Lord January 8<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup>

Mass of Confirmation with Bishop Hanchon at 1:30 on Saturday, January 8<sup>th</sup>  
(This mass to be livestreamed and available on line anytime after that.)

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](https://facebook.com/stambroseparish) or better yet, to  
You Tube at [www.youtube.com/channel/UCbymBGIQxUF6UqPct5xFg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbymBGIQxUF6UqPct5xFg)

## Your Envelope Speaks ... the Inside Story

To operate, each week our parish requires a *minimum* of..... \$10,100.00

**On Sunday, December 19, 2021**

in envelopes we received ..... \$5,788.00

in the loose collection ..... \$10,497.00

in electronic donations ..... \$3,655.49

for a total of ..... \$19,940.49

**Over budget for the week..... \$9,840.49**

Number of envelopes mailed ..... 627

Number of envelopes used .....60



## 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, and those suffering and hospitalized worldwide with COVID-19.

## From the AoD

With the recent increase in covid cases in Michigan, and the approaching winter season, we wish to remind clergy and parishes of the Archdiocese of Detroit's current guidelines for liturgies:

The Archdiocese of Detroit encourages Mass-goers, regardless of vaccination status, to wear face-coverings and to practice social distancing to reduce exposure to COVID-19

- The Archdiocese of Detroit strongly recommends the following protocols:
- Establish an area where social distancing is observed
- Strongly encourage masking and social distancing for all Mass-goers
- Require all who distribute Holy Communion to wear face-coverings and use hand sanitizer
- Hang signage indicating masking and social distancing are strongly encouraged
- Ensure that hand sanitizer is readily available at church entrances and near the sanctuary
- Evaluate space for the choir, and strongly recommend that those who are unvaccinated do not participate in the choir at this time
- The faithful are reminded that particular dispensations from the obligation to participate in Holy Mass remain in effect for people who are ill or who find themselves in other specific circumstances.

More information is available at [aod.org/emergencyresponse](https://aod.org/emergencyresponse)



## The Epiphany of the Lord

Who were those wanderers who, unimpressed by King Herod, did homage to a newborn babe and allowed an angel to change their travel plans? Our creche sets, carols and myths tell us they numbered three — an idea deduced from the gifts Matthew mentions — but there’s no reason to think that there were not more of them: more people and more gifts. By tradition, they are called kings. If so, probably no more than ourselves who are baptized as priests, prophets and kings. (Not many areas of the world had three monarchs anxious to travel together to discover and revere yet another king.) Better we call them the Magi, a title that hints at mystery, magic and miracles.

Historians say it’s unlikely that their story reflects any verifiable event. For us, more important than historical fact is the reason Matthew made this part of his Gospel. In that realm, he left us lots of hints. First of all, Matthew borrowed key details for his story from Isaiah’s prophecies. Isaiah assures the people who have been in darkness that the light of God’s glory will shine on them and that their faith will attract people from afar who will come bearing gifts. With that, we have the background for the star, the travelers, the camels and the gifts: all signs of the advent of God’s salvation.

Matthew is commenting on Isaiah and portraying Jesus as the fulfillment of ancient hopes. Continuing his commentary, Matthew describes how the Magi questioned King Herod about prophecies that referred to a king to come. Herod called in theologians who, foreshadowing future officials’ attitudes about Jesus, quoted prophecies but exhibited no curiosity to see how they might be fulfilled in their own lifetimes. Matthew thus begins his Gospel with Jesus, Emmanuel, endangered among his own people and revered by representatives of the Gentile world. Matthew’s Gospel ends with Christ’s command to make disciples of all the nations and the promise that as our Emmanuel, he will remain with us until the end.

What does this narrative mean for us today as we begin this new year? Perhaps in these uncertain times (will Covid ever end?), the Magi, those people willing to walk together like participants in a synod, can be our guides. More than the time and money required for their journey, they possessed a key combination of self-confidence and desire for more meaning in life. These attitudes urged them to read the signs of the times and to venture into the unknown. They

humbly believed there was more wisdom in the world than they had yet discovered. These travelers, unafraid to seek knowledge from afar, were moved — literally — by a holy disquiet, the restlessness St. Augustine says “niggles” at us until we rest in God. Thus, they set off in a caravan that became the first Christian pilgrimage.

Today, we see signs of a similar holy disquiet. As a result of Covid people are reevaluating their lives. Researchers have reported that between January and October 2021, one in four people in the U.S. quit their jobs. Additionally, Covid has made it impossible to ignore both the continuing political divisions among us and the wealth and wellness gaps that isolate us from one another, leaving multitudes of our brothers and sisters unconscionably vulnerable. At the same time, while some of our sick and their families suffered an isolation that magnified and even overshadowed the physical effects of illness, others discovered Zoom and other ways to be in direct, visual contact with their loved ones hundreds or even thousands of miles away.

In his book, “Let Us Dream: The Path to a Better Future”, Pope Francis shares ideas highly applicable to today’s feast. He describes our time as a change of epoch, not simply a time of change. He says that this change, “accelerated by the coronavirus, is a propitious moment for reading the signs of the times.” Avoiding the trap of easy answers, Francis says, “A gap has opened up between the realities and challenges we face and the recipes and solutions available to us. That gap becomes a space in which to reflect, question, and dialogue.”

Let us look to the Magi as models. Inspired by the gap between their knowledge and their hopes, they set out to seek meaning that their lives had not yet given them. They reflected together on the signs of their times and sought wisdom from foreigners, confident that truth from another quarter would only add to the truth they already understood.

As a synodal people, let us be on the move, discerning the signs of our times while refusing to be awestruck by self-important leaders. Let us share the Magi’s humble curiosity. Let us appropriate a share of their courage and confidence to that we too can seek, find and follow Christ in our world.

*By: Mary M. McGlone December 6, 2021  
For more scriptural reflections by Sr. McGlone,  
please visit [NCROnline.org](http://NCROnline.org)*

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