

WINTER 2024



The Way

Saint Ambrose Catholic Community, Woodbury, Minnesota



**OUR GIFTEDNESS AT WORK
HOSPITALITY & STEWARDSHIP AT SAINT AMBROSE**

Our Gifts at Work

I remember becoming a pastor for the first time at 30 years old. My classmates and I were having dinner with Archbishop Harry Flynn, who ordained us. We were a little intimidated by our new responsibilities, and one of us asked, “Archbishop, what’s the most important thing for being a good pastor and a good leader in the Church?”

He made it sound so simple: “Surround yourself with good and faithful people.”

There is not a day that goes by that I don’t thank God for the wonderful people who surround me in ministry. Here at Saint Ambrose, we have committed, creative, and gifted staff members who give so much of themselves so that others can grow in Christ and be fully alive. They don’t do it to be recognized, but it’s important to me that they be lifted up. They are such a blessing to me in my role as your pastor and beautifully manifest the many parts of the body of Christ!

We are also blessed to have parishioners who give to support our mission. Year after year, we have more people giving to the church, and year after year, our regular donors increase their giving. In recognition of your generosity and sacrifice, you also deserve to be lifted up—and to see the impact of your contributions here at Saint Ambrose.

This year, we are reflecting and praying on the virtue of hospitality, specifically, how we can extend ourselves more in hospitality to God, through prayer, and to others, by building upon our culture of encounter, generosity, and mercy.

Extending hospitality to an omnipresent God can be difficult to understand, but as



Above: Deacon John Vomastek, Fr. Peter, and Fr. Sean Mulcare celebrate the first school Mass of the fall. On the cover: Saint Ambrose Catholic Community employs dozens of gifted, faithful staff members. On the facing page: Vincent Van Gogh’s painting of the Good Samaritan is a beautiful portrait of Christian love and hospitality.
Photos courtesy of Hilda Berdie Photography and Michael Hamerlind Photography respectively

Venerable Francis Xavier Nguyen Van Thuan says, “Communion is the struggle of every moment.”

Help me, Lord, to examine myself in this way: “Who is the center of my life: you or me?” If you are the center, then everyone will be gathered into unity. But if, instead, I see that people around me lose interest and disperse, that will be a sign that I have put myself at the center.

When God is central, we move and act in union with him, and hospitality becomes second nature because Christ is living through us. As Fr. Luigi Giussani explains it, “The ‘I’ becomes totally involved ... With the experience of genuine welcoming, it is as if no one needs to even explain who Jesus Christ is; you see Him clearly.”

These lessons aren’t reserved for clergy and staff. I believe the Saint Ambrose community has a charism of hospitality that God wants us to practice and strengthen every day in service to his kingdom. Each of us has a part to play in making Saint Ambrose a spiritual home and a place of genuine welcome for others.

The ‘I’ becomes totally involved ... With the experience of genuine welcoming, it is as if no one needs to even explain who Jesus Christ is; you see Him clearly.

– Fr. Luigi Giussani

Thankfully, the advice of Archbishop Flynn applies equally to you: “Surround yourself with good and faithful people.” If you are blessed to be at Saint Ambrose, you’ve already taken the first step!

Peace in Christ,
Fr. Peter Williams
Pastor



GENEROSITY IN ACTION

For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.”
– Matthew 6:21

This fall, all parish households received our annual stewardship mailing, inviting everyone to share more deeply in the mission of Saint Ambrose through prayer, service, and financial giving. We are grateful for the generous response to date, which enables us to be Christ’s heart and hands here in our local community.

Of course, we understand that stewardship is a two-way street. When our parishioners sacrifice to give to Saint Ambrose, they deserve to know how their gifts are used. That is why this issue of *The Way* includes, for the first time, our parish and school financials, as well as a staff photo on the cover and profiles of our two newest staff members, Joel Sanchez and Yaney Piña, who help maintain our facilities on a daily basis.

A Catholic parish is a people-intensive enterprise. We need clergy, and this past year we were blessed with a third priest in Fr. Sean. We need staff, including ministry leads, administrative professionals, musicians, and teachers. And we need volunteers to welcome new people into our community, serve those in need, and bring the liturgy and the sacraments to fruition on behalf of the people of God.

We are also facilities-intensive, with a church, early childhood center, school, and soon-to-be-completed rectory. All of our efforts and every success is rooted in the humble prayer of people like you—and nearly everything we do has a financial cost as well. In short, we cannot do this without you!

Please take some time to review the financials and articles that follow. Then, if you haven’t already, prayerfully consider completing your stewardship card and returning it to the church. Our goal is for every parish household to contribute in some way. No matter how large or small, your contribution matters, and not only to the parish. Generosity is good for the soul!

Tom Schisler
Director of Stewardship and Advancement
tschisler@saintambrosecatholic.org
651-768-3016

Saint Ambrose Catholic Community

Statement of Operations - Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2024

Income	2023	2024	2025
	Actual	Actual	Budgeted
Envelopes/Plate/Direct Contribution	2,526,630	2,558,639	2,644,967
Faith Formation	158,681	225,477	159,000
Fall Fest - Parish Festival	218,279	223,910	107,500
Other	59,401	81,274	40,000
Total Income	2,962,991	3,089,300	2,951,467
Expenses			
Administration and Pastoral Care	1,112,814	1,401,087	1,444,219
Maintenance	403,017	390,703	493,174
Music and Liturgy	183,271	191,275	212,890
Communications	12,660	33,254	17,500
Faith Formation and Youth Ministry	542,223	694,646	602,720
Fall Fest - Parish Festival	113,694	106,014	107,500
Capital Expenditures	482,095	65,653	-
Support to School Tuition Aid	75,000	75,000	80,000
Allocation to Reserves/(Withdrawal)	38,217	131,668	(6,536)
Total Expenses	2,962,991	3,089,300	2,951,467
Summary			
Income	2,962,991	3,089,300	2,951,467
Expenses	2,962,991	3,089,300	2,951,467
Surplus/Deficit	-	-	-

Summary of Capital Income and Debt Expenses

Campaign income during 2024 Fiscal Year

New Rectory Campaign	1,256,352
Legacy of Faith	48,829

Debt Payments

Capital Expenses for Loan Payments, Interest, Fees and Debt-related Expenses	499,544
Extraordinary Loan Payments Made on Debt Principal	-
Total	499,544

Debt Balances

Building Debt Balance as of June 30, 2024	5,383,880
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Summary of Reserve Balances

Maintenance Reserve

Balance as of June 30, 2024	100,771
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Maintenance Reserve = Dedicated funds reserved to address capital expenditures for facility repairs/updates.

Funds Invested for Debt Reduction

Balance as of June 30, 2024	2,934,261
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Funds Invested for Debt Reduction = Funds, including the Debt Reserve, that have been invested with the intention of eliminating our debt.

School

Income	June 30, 2022	June 30, 2023	June 30, 2024
Tuition	3,323,813	3,504,128	3,601,294
Registration Fees	88,908	69,995	86,820
Tuition Assistance	149,642	152,596	74,164
Other	3,971	456	26,875
Total Income	3,566,334	3,727,175	3,789,154

Expenses

Salary and Benefits	2,682,172	2,862,878	2,913,599
Program	171,921	238,641	265,610
Maintenance	451,957	553,099	541,798
Hot Lunch Program	-	5,363	-
Allocation to Reserves	260,284	67,194	68,147
Total Expenses	3,566,334	3,727,175	3,789,154

Summary

School Income	3,566,334	3,727,175	3,789,154
School Expenses	3,566,334	3,727,175	3,789,154
	-	-	-

Early Childhood Education Center

Income	June 30, 2022	June 30, 2023	June 30, 2024
Tuition	1,609,281	1,688,972	1,662,685
Grants Received	-	96,340	128,521
Registration Fees	17,908	11,170	19,630
Total Income	1,627,189	1,796,482	1,810,836

Expenses

ECEC Salary and Benefits	1,137,129	1,370,792	1,587,862
ECEC Program	75,331	160,120	223,193
ECEC Maintenance	171,311	206,778	182,106
Allocation to Reserves/(Withdrawal)	243,418	58,792	(182,325)
Total Expenses	1,627,189	1,796,482	1,810,835

Summary

Income	1,627,189	1,796,482	1,810,836
Expenses	1,627,189	1,796,482	1,810,835
	-	-	-

Extended Day Program

Income	June 30, 2022	June 30, 2023	June 30, 2024
Tuition	203,119	287,472	264,895
Registration Fees	4,535	5,040	7,680
Total Income	207,654	292,512	272,575

Expenses

Extended Day Salary and Benefits	90,493	113,658	133,576
Extended Day Program	30,725	41,991	49,063
Extended Day Maintenance	42,828	70,264	49,305
Allocation to Reserves	43,608	66,599	40,631
Total Expenses	207,654	292,512	272,575

Summary

Income	207,654	292,512	272,575
Expenses	207,654	292,512	272,575
	-	-	-

QUESTIONS? Contact Parish Business Administrator Matthew Lasure at 651-768-3010 or mlasure@saintambrosecatholic.org.

What is Hospitality?

Saint Ambrose Catholic School staff asked students what hospitality means to them. Here's how they answered.

Hospitality means sharing.

It means being kind to people no matter how they look or how they act.

It means not gossiping.

It means helping others.

It means being welcoming when someone is new.

It means the Saint Ambrose Way.



Three Saint Ambrose students display artwork defining hospitality. At a recent retreat, school staff defined it this way: "Hospitality is the generous welcoming of another, on their own terms, out of the love that comes from God."



Josh (above, left) and Erin Weinzettel helped start Extending the Table in early 2020 to connect young couples and families at Saint Ambrose. Photo courtesy of the Weinzettels

EXTENDING THE TABLE

For four years now, this ministry has welcomed countless young couples to Saint Ambrose

Like many new ministries, Extending the Table started with a question to a priest. Erin and Josh Weinzettel were new to Saint Ambrose and Woodbury and didn't know anyone, so Erin asked Fr. Ben Wittnebel how to meet people in the parish. He suggested they team up and invite young couples to a meal at the Weinzettels' home.

That was in early 2020. Three couples and Fr. Ben attended the first meal, and approximately once a month, Fr. Ben would invite more people to their home.

"He kept extending our table," Erin recalls. "When COVID hit, we moved into our garage so we could spread out and be as safe as possible. When we outgrew that, we moved to various other establishments—now we're large enough that we meet roughly every other month at Saint Ambrose."

"The group serves young married couples and young families, who make up a large and growing part of the demographics of the community," says Josh. "We're up to 75-plus couples and families now, and we share leadership responsibilities with



another couple, Jake and Christa Girtz."

Each Extending the Table event kicks off with prayer from one of the Saint Ambrose priests, followed by a meal, activities for the kids, and casual conversation among the adults, building community among all ages. The leaders provide the main course for the meals, and others provide side dishes and desserts. Children's activities range from games and coloring to movies like *A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving*.

Erin and Josh have two daughters, ages 4 and 1, and insist that children are not only welcome, but expected.

"We conducted a survey, and most couples said if they were going to need to get a babysitter, they would rather go on a date by themselves," says Erin. "Extending the Table is beyond casual. A lot of us are young families who are in the thick of it, just trying to get by. But if you get to know a few other families, you see those friendly faces and keep coming to church, getting to know



people, and getting connected to other organizations and ministries.”

Getting involved is simple: “Justin Korteum, in his outreach role on staff, and the parish website are the pipeline,” Josh says. “Justin can add you to our mailing list, so you know our schedule of events. Then, just show up with your family. We’re also at the new parishioner events twice a year, connecting with young couples and families.”

“We also ask one more thing: As you meet new people yourself, please help continue to extend the table—invite them to join us for a meal,” Erin says.

WANT TO GET INVOLVED? Learn more online at saintambrosecatholic.org/ministries/extending-the-table/, then contact Justin Korteum at jkorteum@saintambrosecatholic.org to be added to the email list.



Extending Community and Communion to Nursing Homes

Many Saint Ambrose parishioners are residents in local nursing homes and can no longer attend Mass, so we bring the grace of the sacraments directly to them. We cover six nursing homes in the area. A number of generous volunteers go to these nursing homes, visit with the residents, bring them Holy Communion, and sometimes even livestream daily Mass or pray a Rosary with the residents. About once every three months, one of the priests also provides Mass, Confession, and Anointing of the Sick to any Catholic who would like to receive these sacraments.

We try to make sure they know that God has not forgotten them even in their suffering. It is a privilege to serve them, and their gratitude is amazing! They are deeply grateful to the volunteers who visit. These visits are substantial reminders of God’s constant presence and love for his children, no matter their age or state of life. – Fr. Sean Mulcare

WELCOME HOME

Our two newest staff members help keep Saint Ambrose inviting for all who visit

Joel Sanchez and Yaney Piña first came to Saint Ambrose as contractors and became staff members in November. The two work tirelessly to maintain and enhance our facilities. Their efforts are essential to our ministries of hospitality and evangelization.

Joel moved to the United States in 1999 from the state of Morelos in Mexico. In his childhood, he was a bull-rider and had the broken bones to prove it. He and his wife have four children: two daughters, age 24 and 21, and two sons, age 18 and 9, as well as two dogs. His two daughters studied psychology and education respectively; his older son is studying music and plays guitar, drums, and piano, as well as singing. In his off time, Joel likes to explore Minnesota with his family.

Yaney is from the state of Chihuahua in Mexico. She and her husband and three sons moved to Minnesota from Phoenix, Arizona, 12 years ago. (The boys were



Joel Sanchez and Yaney Piña officially joined the Saint Ambrose team this fall. Photo courtesy of Michael Hamerlind Photography

amazed by all the trees!) Today, her sons are 17, 16, and 13. They attend Simley High School, where the oldest and youngest are divers, and the middle one is a swimmer and loves to play guitar. They also play lacrosse. In their free time, Yaney’s family enjoys camping and riding ATVs.

Both Joel and Yaney had family connections in Minnesota and moved here for work. Joel says he enjoys his job at Saint Ambrose and loves the community and the kindness of the people here.

Yaney agrees. “The people here are like a family—they always have a smile,” she says. “I like the diversity of my work, too... every day is something new and different!”

** Joel is pronounced “ho-EL” and Yaney is pronounced “yeh-NAY.”*

‘Entertaining Angels’ Series Emphasizes Hospitality at Mass

This fall, Fr. Peter invited all parishioners to a series titled, “Entertaining Angels: Creating a Hospitable Place for the Mass.”

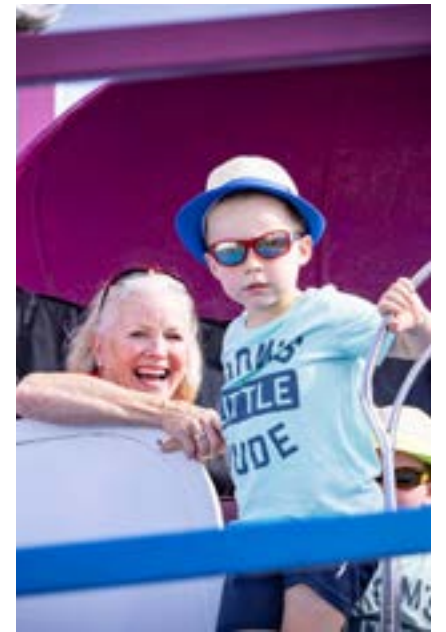
“I believe we had somewhere between 150-175 people attend, with some variation, the four different evenings: 1) The Miracle of Divine Hospitality; 2) The Supreme Gift of Jesus; 3) Full,

Conscious, and Active Participation; and 4) For the Life of the World: Becoming a Eucharistic Missionary,” says Fr. Peter. “The series was meant to be in harmony with the unfolding implementation of the synod in our Archdiocese and with our focus of hospitality for the year.”

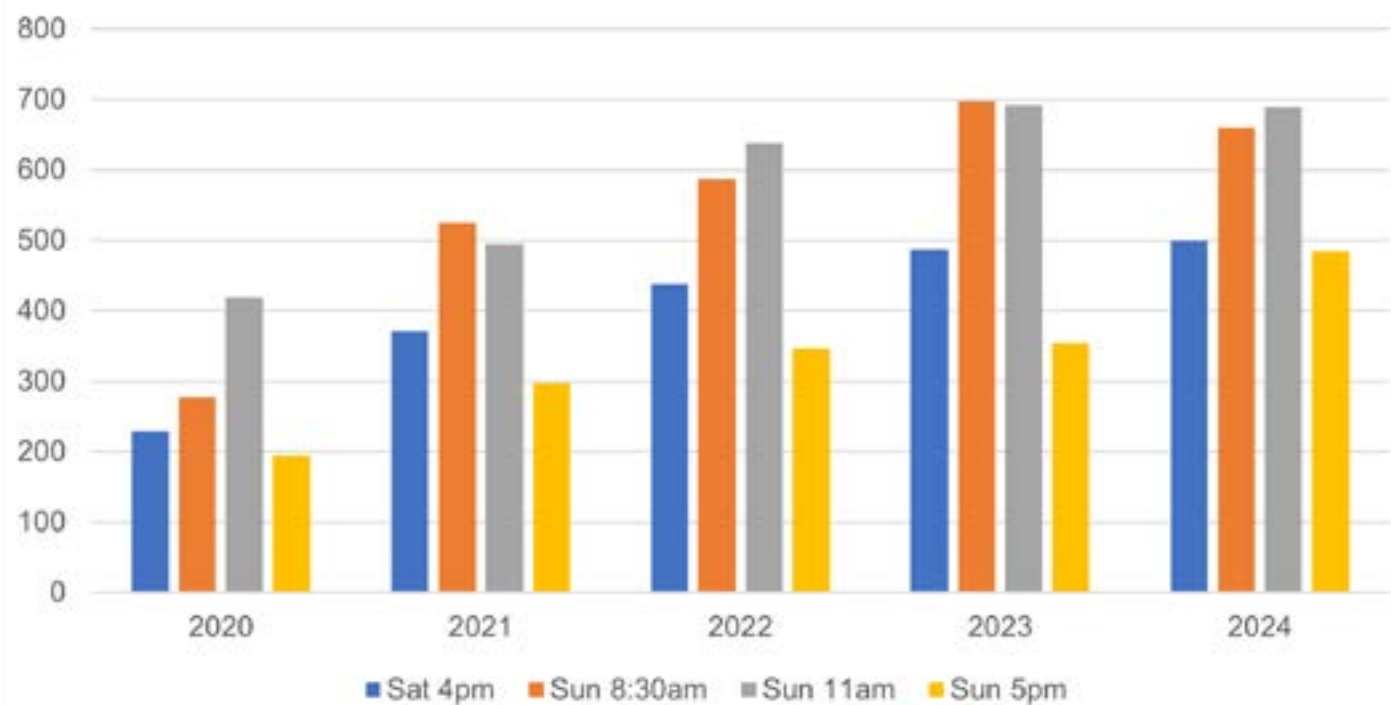
Each session included prayer, scripture verses and reflection, quotes from saints and the Church, and small-group discussion. The goal is to build on the charism of hospitality emerging at Saint Ambrose.

GREAT WORK, EVERYONE!

Thank you to everyone who made FALLFEST 2024 a wonderful event, showcasing what makes Saint Ambrose Catholic Community such a special place to live and worship. It takes prayer, patience, and an army of volunteers, and we are grateful to everyone for your support. **God bless you!**



Average Weekend Mass Attendance, 2020-Present



SAINT AMBROSE BY THE NUMBERS

As of November 1, Saint Ambrose Catholic Community comprises:

- 3,297 registered households
- 591 students enrolled at Saint Ambrose school (K-8)
- 403 children, preschool through 5th grade, enrolled in faith formation
- 224 children enrolled in Catechesis of the Good Shepherd
- 158 active high-school youth, 9th through 12th grade
- 155 children, age 6 weeks to 5 years, enrolled in the Early Childhood Education Center
- 152 active middle-school youth, 6th through 8th grade
- 140 students preparing for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist in our new family program
- 112 youth preparing for the sacrament of Confirmation

In the year 2023, Saint Ambrose has celebrated:

- 206 Confirmations
- 196 Anointings of the Sick
- 165 First Holy Communions
- 77 infant Baptisms
- 35 funerals
- 33 Easter Vigil Confirmations for adults and children over age 7
- 18 Easter Vigil Baptisms for adults and children over age 7
- 22 Baptisms for children ages 1-6
- 18 sacramental marriages between two Catholics



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saintambrosecatholic.org

651-768-3030

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SUNDAY MASS

Saturday Vigil 4:00 pm

Sunday 8:30 am (livestream), 11:00 am, 5:00 pm

WEEKDAY MASS

Monday-Friday 8:00 am (livestream)

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 5:00 pm

Saturday 8:00 am

RECONCILIATION

Monday-Friday 7:30-7:55 am

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 4:15-4:55 pm

Saturday 8:30-9:30 am, 2:30-3:30 pm

Sunday 4:00-4:45 pm

The Way newsletter, content, and photos are created by Saint Ambrose Catholic Community and Archangel Stomp, LLC, unless otherwise noted.

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ADVENT & CHRISTMAS AT SAINT AMBROSE

DAY OF MERCY

Wednesday, December 11th,
10:00 am-8:00 pm

CHRISTMAS EVE

Tuesday, December 24th,
3:00, 5:00, & 10:00 pm

CHRISTMAS DAY

Wednesday, December 25th, 10:00 am

MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

Tuesday, December 31st, 4:00 pm
Wednesday, January 1st, 10:00 am

For more information, please call the parish office at 651-768-3030 or visit our website at saintambrosecatholic.org. May God bless you abundantly this season and always!