

The Transfiguration of Mack Avenue

On Mack between Connor and Cadieux, approximately 41 percent of the lots are vacant. While the majority of those vacant lots are between Connor and Alter, there are still many empty on the south side of Mack in Grosse Pointe Park.

The Eastside Community Network has stepped up to try to stymie disinvestment and redevelop the area. Formerly the Warren-Connor Development Coalition, the ECN changed its name about four years ago, said Donna Givens, president and CEO of ECN.

“Our focus is on developing people, places and plans for sustainable neighborhood growth on Detroit’s lower east side,” Givens said. “We do that by engaging in public-private partnerships and in resident-driven activities and planning and also in investing in the residents in the Detroit communities that we serve with the goal of helping connect them to opportunity and addressing some of the barriers that they face in living sustainable lives.” And the ECN has had success. Givens said ECN’s commercial focus has been on

Mack. It assembled the land for the Mack-Alter Square, the Mack-Ashland Apartments across the street and more housing developments in the area. It also has invested heavily in green infrastructure such as bioswales, solar arrays and transforming vacant land into green space. To further reinvest, ECN hired VENTRA Group and Hamilton Anderson Associates to develop a strategy to improve Mack Avenue from Connor to Cadieux.

By their estimates, there is a \$43.6 million retail gap along the corridor. Unmet spending potential lies in furniture and home furnishings stores, electronics and appliance stores, garden, equipment and supply stores, building material and supplies dealers, clothing and clothing accessories, general merchandise stores, department stores and florists.

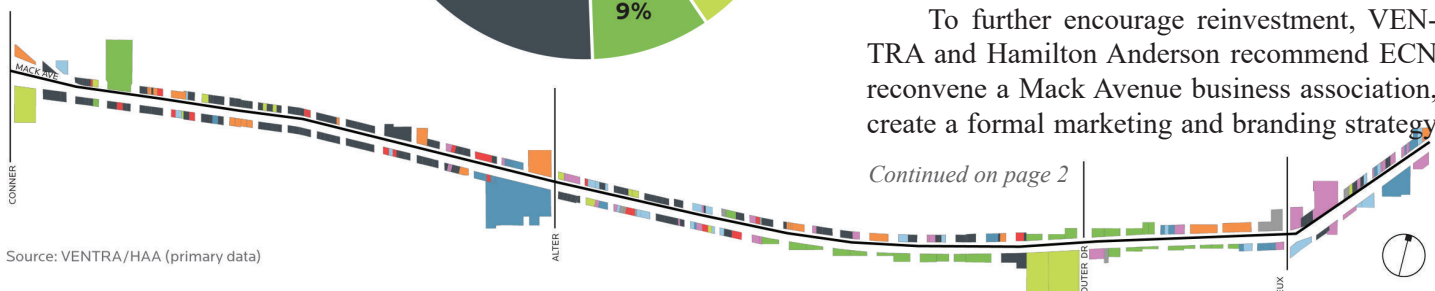
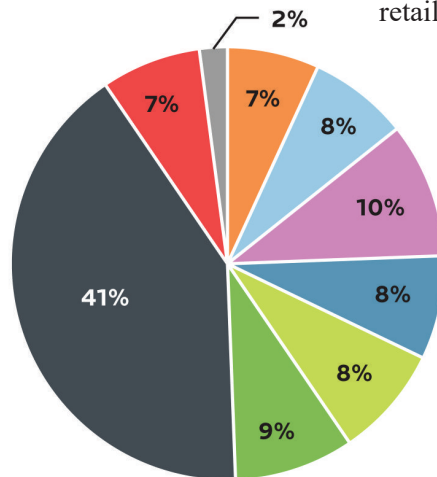
The plan recommends “that ECN raise and use additional funding that could be used for façade and storefront improvements and/or stabilization, technical assistance to help identify what needs to be done to make the storefronts retail ready, and establish a fund to help property owners and potential tenants pay legal, broker fees to complete real estate transactions that will bring tenants to the area or keep tenants in the area. Some of the funds raised for façade and storefront improvements could be targeted specifically to assist Mack Avenue property and business owners with preliminary technical support prior to being approved by the programs such as the Motor City Match/Motor City Restore and other programs with larger target areas and potentially longer waitlists.”

To further encourage reinvestment, VENTRA and Hamilton Anderson recommend ECN reconvene a Mack Avenue business association, create a formal marketing and branding strategy

Continued on page 2

LAND USE

- AUTO (23)
- FOOD/BEVERAGE (25)
- OFFICE/SERVICES (34)
- STORES (26)
- COMMUNITY/CULTURE (28)
- RESIDENTIAL (30)
- VACANT (138)
- PARKING (25)
- OTHER (7)



Source: VENTRA/HAA (primary data)

Approximately 41 percent of lots between Connor and Cadieux are vacant. The Eastside Community Network and Grosse Pointe Park are working to change that.

The Transfiguration of Mack Avenue

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and coordinate right-of-way improvements, among others. “The first phase of the plan,” Givens said, “is really for us to provide a lot of focus in the Grosse Pointe Park, Detroit divide between Alter and Somerset – that we work on creating an identity for that stretch of the border and attracting businesses to the corridor.”

The Grosse Pointe and Detroit relationship often has been one of contention, said Givens. But, Givens said, Grosse Pointe is “a sister community literally right next door to Detroit and it makes sense that there be some level of partnership between the communities that are to the south, to the north and that we leverage the resources and value and understand that it’s really just one Mack Avenue.”

Grosse Pointe Park Mayor Pro Tem Daniel Clark, who has been working with ECN, agrees. “Communities don’t exist in vacuums,” he said. For the last couple years, Grosse Pointe Park has been working on improving its streetscape along the corridor with the intention of extending those improvements across the street. “We recognized that something needed to be done on the other side of the street in order to attract business in our Mack Avenue business district,” Clark said. “So the city of Grosse Pointe Park, the administration, began its involvement in negotiating with the city of Detroit for electrical drops. And our thought is that what we’re going to do is we’re going to duplicate the lighting that we put in on Mack. Now lighting is interesting because it provides an aesthetic that in addition provides a kind of unifying effect because you have a similar design.”

The idea is to improve the aesthetic of the corridor to encourage investment. “The challenge is finding funding,” Clark said. “We do have philanthropy. A person in the Park was good enough to provide the trees, and that’s the first step. But what we’re hoping to find is a way to fund the lighting in similar fashion. And that’s of course far more expensive.”

The first phase of ECN’s plan also will focus on connecting people to support programs and opportunities to invest in properties and businesses between Alter and Somerset in the form of façade improvements and other physical improvements, as well as the cohesive branding strategy for the area.

“There’s vacancy on both sides of the street and it’s about equivalent on the Detroit and the Grosse Pointe side,” Givens said, “although the façades on the Grosse Pointe side are more attractive in a lot of instances and the vacancy on the Grosse Pointe Park side is less obvious to somebody driving through. This has been addressed through curtains and other mechanisms that maintain at least a positive visual. But, we believe that if we work with the city of Grosse Pointe Park, we can have a vibrant commercial corridor that will be a good place for residents in both Detroit and Grosse Pointe Park.”

ECN’s reach extends far beyond just Mack Avenue. Givens said ECN hosts eastside sustainability tours, which showcase the organization’s efforts and projects. The first tour of the year is scheduled for Saturday, April 20. To find out more about its programs, to sign up for a tour or to view the complete Mack Avenue Improvement plan, visit ecn-detroit.org. “There’s no reason why this area cannot be as hot as Corktown or as hot as some parts of midtown,” Givens said. “We have enough wealth in our community. It’s just a matter of us working intentionally to create something ... We could do great things if we work together, and we just have to be willing to leverage our mutual strength.”

Adapted from an article by Anthony Viola, staff writer for the Grosse Pointe News, February 21, 2019.

Lenten Observances



- Lent is the liturgical season which runs from Ash Wednesday until the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday.

- Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of *total* fast and abstinence from meat.

- All the Fridays of Lent are days of Abstinence from meat.

- The **Law of Abstinence** from meat binds persons from the completion of their 14th year — from the day after their 14th birthday, throughout life.

- The **Law of Abstinence** forbids the use of meat, but not eggs, milk or products or condiments made of animal fat. Permissible are soups flavored with meat, meat gravy and sauces.

- The **Law of Fasting** binds persons from the completion of their 18th year to the beginning of their 60th year, i.e., from the day after their 59th birthday.

- The **Law of Fasting** allows only one full meal a day, but does not prohibit taking some food in the morning and evening, observing as far as quantity and quality are concerned — approved local custom. The order of meals is optional; i.e. the full meal may be taken in the evening instead of at midday. Also: (1) the quantity of food taken at the two lighter meals should not exceed the quantity taken at the full meal. (2) the drinking of ordinary liquids does not break the fast.

- In keeping with the spirit and meaning of the Lenten fast, Catholics are encouraged to observe the Good Friday fast through Holy Saturday and until after the celebration of the Easter Vigil.

All Things Considered

Attendance was strong at this past week's Lenten Buffet – the first of the season. We served 231 dinners, which is right on target in terms of the average attendance last season. A later Lent, and some spring-like weather contributes to a better attendance. Last Friday, the public schools in the Grosse Pointes were all engaged in their own programs, which meant that we saw fewer families and teen volunteers. I expect an uptick in diners this week.

Volunteers, especially for bus- ing tables and cleaning up after the event, are a little light. So, if you can, sign up to work one or more of these Lenten Fridays.

The reviews of **Chef Reva Constantine** of the Great Lakes Culinary Center and her team were uniformly great. I can see why last year she was voted "Best Chef" in Hour Detroit's 2018 Best of Detroit Readers' Choice competition. But don't take my word for it. Come and sample the cuisine yourself. Lots of extras have been added to the menu, and the creativity that Chef Reva puts into our weekly special will keep you coming back.

Advance tickets make a great introduction to our St. Ambrose Community. Pick up a pair after mass this weekend. Be evangelical! Share a meal with those whom you can "softly" introduce to the faith and to our parish.

I grow weary of trying to defend the price to people who phone us and complain without ever having seen our buffet. If you simply want a piece of fried fish, fries and slaw, there are plenty of places that you can find with that simple menu and a reasonable cost.

But right from the start, some fifteen years ago, the chefs of the ARK set out to make our event a buffet with lots of choices and (so far) unlimited passes at the table. The reality is that with a higher cost of food, we make no profit on food sales from our Fish Dinners even at \$17.95. Like most restaurants, we depend on impulse purchases including desserts and beverages. We

also depend on a supply of free labor.

Right before we opened last week, we lost the use of our dishwasher. Repairs were almost as costly as replacement, so we pushed this week to install a new machine to the tune of \$13,500. That will effectively cut into any profits from the event for the whole season. So come and spend money. Our coffee maker, garbage disposal and hot water tank have given us notice that they are retiring from service soon!

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We are promoting three different missionary projects this Lent and ask that you might participate in the one that best suits your ability or interest.

1. Our students in our Religious Education Program will be asked to fill Lenten Folders with a sacrifice of a quarter a day. If you would like to join them in this, there are additional coin folders in the back of church. At the end of Lent, these contributions will go to the LaSante Medical Mission in Haiti supported by **Bishop Gumbleton**.
2. **Joe Looney**, an Attorney/Ambrosian who has spent decades working as a member of Maryknoll Missionaries' Lay Ministry Program, asks for hearing aids that could be refur-

bished and used for children with hearing losses in Peru. If you have an unused one of these medical devices, this is an excellent chance to repurpose it. Ask around, because I think there might be a lot of these pricey, older instruments languishing out there in drawers and medical offices. Drop off these hearing aids at the parish rectory. I've got one from my dad I've been holding onto which I'll donate to start the process. Could we assemble ten or more of these before Easter? This could be a life-changer for ten kids.

3. **Deacon Anthony Kote-Wita** asks that families whose children have outgrown books consider sending them to children in his native Nigeria. It's there that such items are still considered luxuries. Deacon Anthony has established a means of shipping these books to Africa, so all we need to do is for parents, schools and libraries to sort through those books that have outlived their shelf-life and put them in the hands of youngsters who will consider even a used book a treasure. You'll find a donation basket for these books in the back of church. Ask the Deacon about his no cost shipping scheme for these books. It's truly clever!

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ST. AMBROSE LENTEN BUFFET

Join us in the ARK at St. Ambrose for dinner every Friday in Lent, March 8th through April 19th, from 4 to 8 pm.

The menu includes a salad bar, soup du jour, fried or baked cod, tater tots, macaroni with cheese, a weekly special entrée, along with rolls, vegetable, coffee and tea. Desserts and drinks are available.

\$17.95 per adult
\$10 for children aged 6 to 10
Children 5 and under eat free.
Carry-out service available

(313) 423-6284.



Discernment Weekend

Discernment Weekends are a unique experience for anyone sensing a call to the priesthood. Spending four days living at the seminary provides you with a first-hand opportunity to see what it's like from the inside.

Attending a Discernment Weekend is perfect for anyone from the Archdiocese of Detroit (Single men, high school senior to 55 years old) who is discerning a vocation to the priesthood. These weekends provide you with more tools for proper discernment. The next discernment weekend is on March 21-25. Register at detroitpriest.com/programs/discernment-weekend.

Tax Strategies

Parishioners of St. Ambrose may soon be sitting down to calculate their Federal taxes for 2018. It may do you some good to consider these two ways to lower your tax bill.

The first is through a gift of **Appreciated Securities**. This would include a tax deduction and avoidance of tax on capital gains if the donor sells highly appreciated securities. Through a gift of appreciated securities to St. Ambrose Parish, donors may receive an income tax deduction up to the full market value of the securities and can also avoid capital gains tax. You save twice – on income tax and capital gains tax.

The second is through an **IRA Rollover – Qualified Charitable Distribution**. A QCD provides a way for donors 70½ and older to receive a tax benefit because the QCD will not be included in adjusted gross income and is therefore not subject to tax. This is now more beneficial in view of the increased standard deduction under the new tax law. A donor can make a QCD of up to \$100,000 annually to a charity, and as an added benefit, the QCD satisfies the donor's required minimum distribution. Consult with your tax preparer or an accountant for details of making such arrangements. We can help direct you to qualified and reputable individuals should you need such direction.

The Buzz

This second weekend of Lent is traditionally focused on the Gospel account of the Transfiguration. Two weeks ago I recommended preparing for Lent by prayerfully envisioning what we would want our lives to look like in communion with Jesus. Then, a week and a half ago we entered this holy season with a dramatic moment (Ash Wednesday) of facing exactly who and what we are right now. Last Sunday we had a chance to identify the temptations to be something other than what God has created us to be. Today we return – with Peter, James and John – to a vision of our goal – to where we are going in this life and Lenten journey through, with, and in the risen, glorified Lord.

Jesus' metamorphosis in front of Peter, James and John focuses our attention not only on the change that took place in Christ's appearance, but also on the response of the three apostles. Seeing the Master appear in dazzling light along with Moses and Elijah gave them a glimpse of the fulfillment of all that they (and all the chosen people) had hoped for – the summation of the Law and the Prophets in the Messiah of God, Jesus.

This was a vision that excited them. But their first response was too limited. So the heavenly voice reiterates what was thundered at Jesus' baptism: "This is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased . . ." Then a new direction is added: ". . . listen to him."

They would soon see Jesus transformed again – in agony and death. But this preliminary vision would help get them through that terrible time. On the other side of Easter, Ascension and Pentecost, they would come to an even deeper understanding of the Transfiguration: that it also was a vision about themselves, for they too were God's beloved children in whom God was well pleased. They stood between the reassuring stability of law, and the dangerous but animating excitement of a prophetic future. They, as Jesus did, were to have a mediating conversation between the two. And people should listen to them as well as they were told to listen to Jesus.

Have you ever had a glimpse of God or the Kingdom, just knowing that "this" is the way God wants things to be for you? If so, does it excite you and empower you in daily living?

If you haven't had such a divine "vision" in your life, or if the heavenly call is only a fading memory, then maybe this Lent can make a difference. Prayer, fasting and works of love strip away the thick protective insulation around the inner perceptive senses of our souls. Take advantage of this season – dare to see new things. You just might experience a transfiguration of your own. And if such a thing happens to you, tell me all about it. I would be very willing to "listen"!

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The Sundays of Lent take precedence over calendar feast days that happen to fall on them. So, with regret I say that although today is March 17th, there *technically* will be no St. Patrick's Day this year. (LOL!)

This Tuesday the 19th however, *is* the feast day of St. Joseph. The following day, Wednesday the 20th, the March/vernal equinox (Spring!) arrives at 5:58 p.m. And at sundown on Thursday the 21st, our Jewish brothers and sisters begin, arguably, the happiest celebration of their religious calendar with what is known as Purim. The biblical story from the Book of Esther is as delightfully wild and complex as any opera. Read the Book and give someone you know a happy food gift, then give a gift to the hungry. You'll be doing the *mitzvot* "our older brothers and sisters in faith" are called to do on Purim. Nothing out of line with Catholic Lenten practices there!

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Monday the 25th will arrive before the next appearance of this column, and that is the celebration of the Annunciation — nine months before December 25th. Therefore, let me be the first to wish you a Merry Christmas 2019!

Chuck Dropiewski

Journey of Hope

Among other important aspects to be considered on our journey of hope during this Lenten Season is dialogue. Dialogue, beyond the frontier of Christianity, discloses the essential path of reconciliation and peaceable union in society. The core truth of dialogue not only focuses on the distinctiveness of any one religion, but on the good deeds and rewards, conveyed in each religion, that initiate strong relationships based on peace and justice. Though this aspect often appears challenging, there is no better time to enter the dialogue of reconciliation than during Lent because it plunges us into enduring relationship.

Christianity is a progressive force for peaceful justice within this dialogue. We can attest to this because of the value of our inter/multicultural nature of the Church. However, dialogue also opens us up to new challenges as it offers us a pathway toward further transformation. St. John Paul II put it well in his Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Missio* (1990): "Dialogue does not originate from tactical concerns or self-interest, but [it] is an activity with its own guiding principles, requirements and dignity." Therefore, our Lenten journey of hope invites us to restoration of our dignity.

It is understandable that the Church uses dialogue to reveal the genuineness of the Good News and to unveil authentic truths that edify each believer. This reality has been cultivated within individuals as well as diverse religious traditions around the world. It enables multi-religious and multicultural societies to have transformative encounters. These experiences resolve many issues, all in the name of God. If all religions bear the name and image of God, they encourage a process in which resolution, solidarity and peace become elements of restoration within each family, neighborhood and society.

The document *Dei Verbum* from Vatican II teaches: "In His gracious goodness, God has seen to it that what He had revealed for the salvation of all nations would abide perpetually in its full integrity and be handed on to all generations". Thus, dialogue becomes a transformation that builds up each other's communities while respecting diversity.

Dialogue ignites and enriches tangible relationships among Christians, Jews, Muslims, and anyone who welcomes our unity. Dialogue preserves and encourages a transformative unity of human dignity that benefits everyone and promotes social justice, moral welfare, peace and freedom. I believe a peaceable dialogue can grow effectively when we allow God's light to shine in our hearts. The transparency of dialogue reactivates God's peaceable goodness and engenders loving understanding. Out of the infinite goodness of God's love, God chose to reveal Himself in order to share His hidden plans for humanity. To this end, dialogue opens us to the tangible acceptance of togetherness. This act of harmony brings God and humanity together in spite of our religious differences. For this reason, dialogue, without any doubt, spawns reconciliation.

Dn. Anthony Kote-Witah, OFM Cap.

Riverview Wellness Center

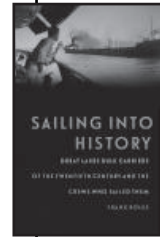
Ascension Health Care sponsors a weekly offering of activities in their Riverview Wellness Center Medical Pavilion located at 7633 E. Jefferson. Visit healthcare.ascension.org/events or register by calling 313-499-4035

Tai Chi for Seniors takes place every Monday for an hour beginning at 2:30.

Hustle For Your Health takes place on Wednesday's from 11:30 until 12:30. Here you'll learn dance moves to improve posture, coordination, agility and flexibility.

Gentle Flow Yoga also takes place on Wednesdays. It starts at 1:00 and goes for 55 minutes. These sessions focus on breath, balance/flexibility, strength/toning, revitalization, core strength and stress relief.

Marcellina's Book Club



The Great Lakes create a vast transportation network that supports a massive shipping industry. In *Sailing into History: Great Lakes Bulk Carriers of the Twentieth Century and the Crews Who Sailed Them*, Frank Boles

relates seamanship, cargo, competition, cooperation, technology, engineering, business, unions, government decisions, and international agreements in a story of unrivaled interest.

We are in the process of connecting with the author to see when he can pay our book club a visit. That date will be announced here. In the meantime, pick up a copy of the book and get a headstart in reading this important work which was one of this year's twenty Notable Book Honorees by the State Library of Michigan.

The Beehive

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

Pastor: Rev. Timothy R. Pelc

Assistant: Dn. Anthony Kote-Witah, OFM, Cap

Pastoral Minister: Charles Dropiewski

Religious Education: Kelly Anne Woolums

Minister of Music: Dr. Norah Duncan IV

Office Manager: Peggy O'Connor

Sacramental Celebrations

Masses: On the Lord's Day –

Saturday Vigil - 4:00 p.m.

Sunday - 8:30 and 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 for the Coming Week

Monday, March 18

8:30 a.m. - Morning prayer

Tuesday, March 19

St. Joseph, spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary

8:30 a.m. - Mass - Felix Checki; Joe Majer;
Those seeking employment

Wednesday, March 20

8:30 a.m. - Morning prayer

Thursday, March 21

6:00 p.m. - Confessions

7:00 p.m. - Mass - Gunnar Birkerts

Friday, March 22

8:30 a.m. - Mass - Jean Lapham
Barb and Frank Marzlof

7:00 p.m. - Stations of the Cross

Saturday, March 23

3:00 p.m. - Confessions

4:00 p.m. - For All People

Sunday, March 24

Third Sunday in Lent

8:30 a.m. - For All People

11:15 a.m. - For All People



Scriptures for the Third Sunday of Lent

Monday, March 18

- Dn 9: 4b-10
- Ps 79: 8-9, 11, 13
- Lk 6: 36-38

Tuesday, March 19

- 2 Sm 7: 4-5a, 12-14a, 16
- Rom 4: 13, 16-18, 22
- Mt 1: 16-21, 24a or Lk 2: 41-51a

Wednesday, March 20

- Jer 18: 18-20
- Ps 31: 5-6, 14-16
- Lk Mt 20: 17-28

Thursday, March 21

- Jer 17: 5-10
- Ps 1: 1-4, 6
- Lk 16: 19-31

Friday, March 22

- Gn 37: 3-4, 12-13a
- Ps 105: 16-21
- Mt 21: 33-43, 45-46

Saturday, March 23

- Mi 7: 14-15, 18-20
- Ps 103: 1-4, 9-12
- Lk 15: 1-3, 11-32

Sunday, March 24

- Ex 3: 1-8a, 13-15
- 1 Cor 10: 1-6, 10-12
- Lk 13: 1-9

The Third Sunday of Lent March 23rd and March 24th

4:00 p.m. - **Celebrant:** Bp Gumbleton **Lector:** Mary Urbanski

Eucharistic Ministers: Della Cimini, Karen McShane, Elizabeth Puleo-Tague

Altar Servers: Jack Hern, Eleanor Bernas

8:30 a.m. - **Sunday - Celebrant:** Fr. Bede **Lector:** Bob Gatzke

Eucharistic Ministers: Colleen Drummond, Colleen Gatzke, Christopher Harrison,
Joan Jackson, Maggie Jackson, Bob Jogan, Joellyn Valgoi

Altar Servers: Erica, Corey, & Carrigan McGraw

11:15 a.m. - **Celebrant:** Fr. Pelc **Lector:** Kurt Vatalaro

Eucharistic Ministers: Michele Hodges, Joe Hugh, Pat & Michael Mocerri,
Janis Ramsey, Cristina Swiatkowski

Altar Servers: Shea Vatalaro, Malvina Lubanski

Your Envelope Speaks ... the Inside Story

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

On Sunday, March 10, 2019

in envelopes we received \$5,375.00

in the loose collection \$565.00

in other donations..... \$1,390.00

Ash Wednesday..... \$1,833.00

for a total of..... **\$9,165.99**

Under budget for the week..... **\$935.00**

Number of envelopes mailed 900

Number of envelopes used..... 129

"I am the Lord who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land as a possession." (Genesis 15:7)

Just as the Lord gave Abraham, Moses and the Israelites a land to possess, he has also given us a home. Whether your home is grand or humble, it is a gift from God. Abraham prepared a great sacrifice to the Lord in gratitude for the home God gave him. How do you show your gratitude to God for the home he has given you? Do you make a sacrifice of any kind? Do you return any of your finances to God, investing equally in your eternal home just as you invest in your earthly home?

Our Sick

Please pray for those who are seriously ill or who are hospitalized: Pat Blake, Karen Culver, Ann Sullivan Kay, Donald Miriani, Bonnie McKenna, Jeanne Noto, David Schumacker, Matthew Elias, George Buccer, Emilie Kasper, Anna Noto Billings, Vilma Rivers, Vilma Marone, Eileen O'Brien, Martha Luna, Dina Engels, Liz Linne, Donna Barnes, Betty Greenia, Alexandra Cullen, Charmaine Kaptur, Frank Gregory, Alex Billiu, Gladys Bogos, Wayne Wallrich and Lupe Davila.

Tap into Life

Join us today (Sunday), and every 3rd Sunday of the month for the Solanus Casey Center's Young Adult (Age 18-35) Ministry event – Tap into Life – a Franciscan Approach to Theology on Tap.

Fellowship begins at 6 p.m. and the evening's talk and discussions begin at 7 p.m. Please spread the word and bring a friend! To RSVP, email TapIntoLife@thecapuchins.org. Tonight's Tap Into Life on St. Patrick's Day, Sunday, March 17th will take place at the Solanus Casey Center, located at 1780 Mt. Elliott in Detroit.

Pancakes

Widowed men and women are invited to meet new and old friends for brunch at the Pancake Factory (NE Corner of 23 Mile Rd & Schoenherr) in Shelby Twp. on St. Joseph's Day, this Tuesday, March 19th at 10 a.m. If you need to know more, contact Ellen at 586-781-5781 for information.

Christian Financial

St. Ambrose Parish, through Christian Financial Credit Union, is equipped to make electronic transfers from your checking account or credit card on our website. Your checking account or credit card may be used to make a single donation; or you may set up automatic weekly, monthly or quarterly contributions on a schedule. Go to stambrosechurch.net for information on electronic giving.

Put St. Patrick Back In St. Patrick's Day!

I can write this because I'm Irish. Or, more precisely, half-Irish. (My dad's family hails from County Wexford, if you're curious.) Anyway, here goes: Put St. Patrick back in St. Patrick's Day.

Now, I'm not saying that you shouldn't fish around in your closet for your favorite Irish sweater on March 17th; or that you shouldn't wear that shamrock tie you use only once a year; or that you shouldn't march in the big parade downtown; or that you shouldn't tuck into corned beef and cabbage with gusto; or that you shouldn't hoist a few green beers with your pals at a local Irish pub; or that you shouldn't scarf down green cupcakes, green milkshakes, or green anything, for that matter. Nor am I telling New York to cancel its parade (or Boston or Philadelphia). Nor am I pleading with Chicago to stop dyeing its river green (which, when you see it in person, is pretty amazing). You don't have to stop any of that. But do this: remember why we celebrate St. Patrick's Day. It's because of, well — St. Patrick.

Some of the forgetfulness surrounding the feast of Ireland's patron saint reminds me of the secularization of Christmas. You know: all those ads where people run around in red and green sweaters and decorate trees without daring to breathe the word Christmas. Macy's recently had a memorable Christmas slogan: "A million reasons to believe!" Oh yeah? In what?

With St. Patrick's Day the stakes are decidedly lower: the Son of God versus a guy who supposedly drove the snakes out of Ireland. (And he didn't even do that, scholars say. There weren't any to begin with.) But what is lost in both holidays is the same: the astonishing story that gave rise to the religious feast in the first place. Because St. Patrick was, in short, an amazing guy. He offers Christians important lessons about forgiveness and love. And he offers everyone else some lessons, too.

Patrick was born to high-society parents in Roman-occupied Britain sometime during the late fourth century (probably 387). Around the age of 16, Patrick was captured by Irish bandits and sent to Ireland, where he was sold into slavery. For six years he worked as a shepherd, tending flocks for his owner, a local chieftain and high priest of the Druids. There he learned the Celtic tongue — perfectly, it is said. And in those difficult conditions, the exiled young man turned inward and discovered God. In his *Confessions*, Patrick wrote that he "prayed in the woods and on the mountain, even before dawn."

At 20, he made a dramatic escape, traveling some 200 miles to the coast and, with the help of some sailors, made his way back to Britain, where he reunited with his family. After his return, Patrick, now a deeply religious man, decided to study for the priesthood, and spent some many years in a monastery in France, in preparation for his new work. In 432, according to most sources, he was sent to Ireland to serve a local bishop. Upon landing he was met, according to legend, by one of the Irish chieftains, who threatened to kill him. Patrick won him over, and the man became a Christian. When the bishop died, Patrick was appointed successor. He would now serve the flock in a different way.

In his 40 years in Ireland he attracted numerous followers, baptized thousands, and built churches — for the people who had previously enslaved him. "I never had any reason," he wrote, "except the Gospel and his promises, ever to have returned to that nation from which I had previously escaped with difficulty." He died in 461 — in Ireland, of course.

Certainly a man worthy knowing about. For the Christian, Patrick poses an important question: would you be willing to serve a place where you had known heartache? And how much is the Gospel worth to you? For everyone, he offers a challenge: can you forgive the people who have wronged you? Could you even love them? Think about that over your green beer. And happy Feast of St. Patrick!

By James Martin, S.J. is the author of My Life with the Saints and The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything.

Vincentian Reflection

Lent is a call not just to "give up something" it is also an opportunity to give something to those living in poverty. Wherever you live in our parish, there are families in need within walking distance from your home. When in need, they sometimes ring the rectory door bell or more often call the rectory office. They are in effect ringing your doorbell or calling *your* phone.

Your gifts to St. Vincent de Paul help us to respond to the families in need in our parish. You can and do make a difference.

Check us out on Facebook at facebook.com/SVdPStAmbrose.

Lenten Prayer at St. Ambrose

On the Thursdays of Lent, our morning Mass shifts to a 7 p.m. time slot in order to give more people an opportunity to attend the liturgy during the weekdays of Lent — leading up to Holy Thursday.

Preceding Thursday night Masses (at 6 p.m.), as well as preceding Saturday afternoon Masses (at 3 p.m.), confessions will be heard.

This year Lent once again includes Friday night Stations of the Cross at 7:00 p.m. and our popular Fish Dinners which run from 4 to 8 p.m. Try this at least once this Lent: come for an early dinner and stay for Stations of the Cross. Or, come to Stations of the Cross and then enjoy a later dinner.

Good food and grace abounds! Sample a serving of both.