



# *Saint Alphonsus*

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

## 2019-20 ANNUAL REPORT

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## ST. ALPHONSUS PARISH

*from the Pastor*

November 2020

*“A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away...”*

Thus began the slow crawl of the long-awaited Episode Nine of the Star Wars saga, released for movie fandom in December of 2019. Movie theaters were packed, myself among the crowds, watching the final galactic battle of the Jedi scions over the evil Empire. The calendar indicates it was a mere eleven months ago, yet it feels like it was a long time ago, a place far, far away.

Several months earlier, in July of 2019, the Bishop sent me to St. Alphonsus Parish to become the new Pastor. Knowing a little of the parish's history and legacy, I was as humbled as I was excited at the appointment. Before my arrival, though, the Archdiocese wanted to make me aware of what I was skywalking into: there would be both blessings and challenges.

Immediately after my arrival, I was impressed and touched by the devotion, faith, dedication, spirituality and loyalty of so many people to the St. Alphonsus Parish and AACA families. The blessings through my first year were easy to see (pages 4-5). I have delighted in getting to know you, and in pouring my heart into all I do here.

As the 2019-20 fiscal year unfolded, I began to ponder the challenges facing the parish. The church side of the parish was running a deficit (pages 8-9), and the school was also carrying a debt (pages 10-11). The church exterior and interior were exquisite in beauty, as were her liturgies, projecting the notion that parish operations were solid and stable. However, on a campus founded 138 years ago, building maintenance and repair work on parish structures are constant, and often costly. We've been tackling some of the most critical needs (page 6), but more capital repairs are needed (page 7) to preserve our buildings for another century and beyond.

Then, in the second week of March, the dark side of 2020 arrived in force, causing shut-downs of schools, churches, restaurants and businesses. AACA quickly pivoted to online learning, and soon a small television studio was set up inside the church to broadcast Sunday Mass. As difficult as these days, weeks, and months are for us, this is not the first global pandemic St. Alphonsus Parish has seen. Just over 100 years ago, the church and school carried people through the time of the Spanish Influenza. In fact, certain features of the school building were designed for ventilation to mitigate the spread of viruses (page 6).

Life today can seem daunting, especially when our perspective is focused on this time and this place. But in the broader context of faith, we remember that our Risen Lord works all things to good for those who love Him. Every day and age has seen its challenges – and each has its blessings. Our parish is a storied community filled with blessings, and when we focus on the grace of Jesus Christ, He shall give us hope, light, courage and even joy as we realize that the treasures of Heaven are not far away or a long time ago, but truly here present in the Sacraments and in our vibrant community of faith and love, creating a legacy for generations to come.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Steven Bauer

# Stewardship: *Sharing in Parish Ministry*

by *Brooks Robinson*

Conversations around stewardship can sometimes be unpleasant or uncomfortable—especially financial stewardship. But what if we thought about financial stewardship differently? Instead, what if we viewed financial stewardship as a way that we participate with the vision and mission Jesus calls his Church to? This way of thinking about stewardship is the understanding that was instilled – frequently – in my upbringing as an Evangelical Christian.

Some parishioners may be surprised to learn that I am a convert to the Catholic Church. I began seminary studies at an Evangelical Christian seminary, but gradually came to recognize the historical and theological truth present in Catholicism. I entered full communion with the Catholic Church nearly five years ago. At the time I was in my final year of Divinity School, working part-time as a Protestant chaplain at a major university, and thinking about the future of ministry, vocation, and my own contributions to Christ's Church. A year and a half after being received into the Church I started working here, at St. Alphonsus, as a lay minister. Almost immediately I was struck by the vibrancy of our community, its many ministries and the volunteers that make them possible. However, at the same time I noticed the small staff for a parish of our size, the aging buildings, and the shoe-string operating and ministry budget.

Growing up in the evangelical world, a vibrant church of our size could financially support dedicated and full-time ministers and staff for its various demographic needs (adult, young adult/college,

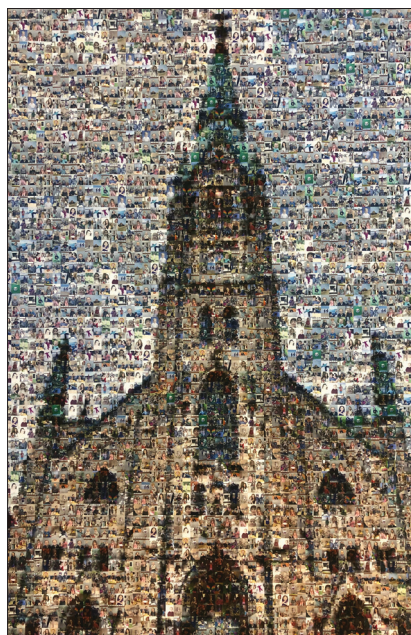
youth, and children), funds for building upgrades and repairs, and money dedicated for various ministries. Evangelical communities roughly our size have double, if not triple, what we bring in for our weekly offertory collections. This is not because Evangelicals are somehow more generous than Catholics. Instead, in many Evangelical communities there is an emphasis placed on offertory as a form of ministry, as a way to participate in Jesus' mission here on earth, and as a way to honor God's benevolence to us by offering back at least 10% of what God has provided us.

Some research suggests that of the 77% of people that contribute to evangelical churches, they contribute between 10-20% of their gross annual income. This research also indicates that Evangelicals tend to give a yearly average of \$1,705, while Catholics a yearly average of \$984. For our parish, that means that if every registered member (2,085 parishioners) gave, even at a minimum, \$20 a week, St. Alphonsus would close that denom-

inational gap. More importantly, it would mean that we would have the necessary finances to support an appropriately sized staff to minister to our community, the needed funding for building repairs/upgrades, and the finances to cover most ministry costs.

This comparison is not meant to be critical – rather, it is an invitation to join us in ministry. To join us in furthering the Kingdom of God in the Lakeview neighborhood, in Chicago, and in the world!

*Brooks is the Pastoral Associate for the parish, leading RCIA, and serving as a liaison with many parish groups.*



*This collage, comprised of pictures of school children, was an auction item at this spring's Art & Soul gala.*

# St. Alphonsus: Stats & Highlights

## Stats & Highlights

- approx. 2,100 registered families
- 70 marriages celebrated or prepped here.\* (*Fewer than normal because of Covid*).
- 110 children baptized, and 9 adults received into the Church.\* (*Lower because of Covid*).
- 53 children received 1st Communion
- 37 students received Confirmation
- Religious Education program has pivoted to a model of at-home instruction supplemented by online classes with catechists.
- one of the most active and dynamic Young Adult Ministry programs in the Archdiocese.
- All church-side ministry is being administered by a lean staff: 2 priests, 4 support staff, and 2 part time workers.
- St. Alphonsus housed 3 seminarians during the Covid shutdown.
- Our wedding ministry has been streamlined for a smoother experience for engaged couples.
- a Knights of Columbus council that is as active and vibrant in service of its parish as any in the state.
- An outstanding liturgical music and choral ministry that is known throughout the diocese. We also hosted a 2019 Christmas Concert, *Lully Lullay*, composed by Brian Bloye and performed by the Community Renewal Chorus (*below*).



*Founded in 1882, the new parish began building our beautiful church in 1889. When constructed, the steeple was the tallest structure outside of downtown. The Blue Angels even use it as a navigational landmark during the Chicago Air Show.*

## Alphonsus Academy & Center for the Arts

### Stats & Highlights from 2019-20

- received the prestigious recognition as a National Blue Ribbon School in 2019
- This year's enrollment: 494 students
- AACA features an arts-integrated curriculum
- educates children from pre-K through 8th grade
- nearly 70 teachers, learning specialists, counselors, teaching assistants, administrators, and other staff make AACA the wonderful school it is because of their dedication.
- AACA inspires and develops the whole child in an enriching environment combining academic excellence, an arts-integrated curriculum, and a supportive Catholic family to help students reach their full potential.



- creative educational spaces, such as the iStudio, learning center and the new Arts Garden helps our students grow in fun and stimulating environments.
- fosters growth in Catholic identity through service, prayer, weekly Mass attendance, and community.



# St. Alphonsus Parish: Highlights



*With rejoicing and gratitude we received news in June that the newly-ordained Fr. Pat Gorman would be assigned to St. Alphonsus Parish. Immediately welcomed into the community, his presence, ministry and service to the parish will be a great gift for a long time to come!*

## The New Admin Team at AACA

The new academic year brings a new administration team to our school. We are pleased to have **Gerit McAllister** as our new Principal. Beginning her career in education as a Catholic school teacher, she became an assistant principal in a Chicago charter school, and has returned to education in a Catholic context.



Moving into the role of Assistant Principal is **Matt Gunsaulus**, a familiar face on campus. He had been serving as one of the school counselors before moving into his new position.



We pray for blessings upon them in their leadership of the AACA family!

## Act of Spiritual Communion

— by St. Alphonsus Liguori

My Jesus,  
I believe that you are present  
in the Most Holy Sacrament.  
I love You above all things  
and I desire to receive You into my soul.  
Since I cannot at this moment  
receive You sacramentally,  
come at least spiritually into my heart.  
I embrace You as if You were already there,  
and unite myself wholly to You.  
Never permit me to be separated from You.  
Amen.



*During the Covid shutdown, when the Sacraments were not publicly accessible, our Music Director arranged the text of a prayer written by St. Alphonsus into a meditative song to make people feel closer to Jesus even though they could not receive the Eucharist. The Act of Spiritual Communion can be downloaded from all major music sites.*

*Oktoberfest, our biggest party and biggest fundraiser, became another casualty of Covid-19. Undaunted, an alternative was created: Biergarten In A Box, a to-go version featuring all the essentials for people to turn their backyard into a Biergarten.*



*Far from being a replacement, it nevertheless offered fun, German Gemütlichkeit, and equal measures of nostalgia for previous Fests and hope for future Fests.*



# Parish Capital Improvements: Church side

## Church-side Repair Work... Completed!

The parish rectory (*right*), which houses priest residences, meeting rooms, and offices for parish and school staff, is nearly a hundred-year-old structure. Many of the repairs needed were caused by erosion to brick and mortar and water leaking through decaying roofs. Below is a list of significant repairs that were done in or to the rectory in the past year. Items marked with an asterisk were labeled by assessors as urgent and critical.

1. Repair of parish center's water heater
2. Sanding & refinishing of select sections of wood floors in rectory residences
3. New 2<sup>nd</sup> floor rectory roof installed\*
4. Third floor flat roof completely redone\*
5. Windows, cornices and lintels on west and north faces of rectory tuckpointed and sealed (**Photo A**)\*
6. Roof parapet walls rebuilt\*
7. Rectory attic dormer windows resealed and tuckpointed\*
8. Tuckpointing and repair of windows facing Rectory courtyard (**Photo B**)\*

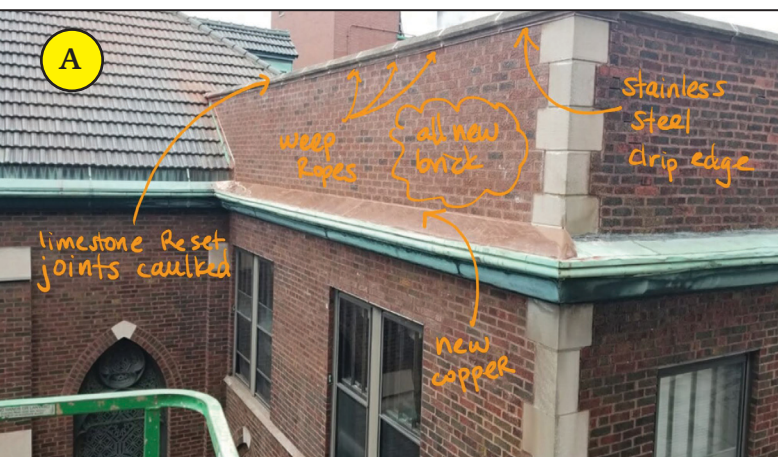


## Church-side Maintenance ...Still slated

While there has certainly been progress on addressing critical issues, there is always more work to be done. Hence the need for a stewardship mentality (see pg 3). Our parish exists, and thrives, only because those who have gone before us saw it as their pride and duty to invest in

the future of St. Alphonsus so the parish could serve generations to come. Significant infrastructure issues that still need to be addressed include the following (*an asterisk indicates a critical need*):

9. Church and rectory boiler upgrades\*
10. Church's south side gutter bent, leaking into the walls, causing interior plaster damage\*
11. Interior plaster restorations needed in rectory stairwell (**photo C**), priest residence (**photo D**), and third floor hallway, kitchen and dining room (**photo E**).
12. Parking lot resurfacing and restriping



# Parish Capital Improvements: School side

## School-side Maintenance Work: *Completed...*

**Windows:** Thanks to a \$100,000 grant received, we have been able to repair and replace windows (*photos F and G*). This has greatly improved ventilation and air circulation, necessary things for mitigating potential spread of the Covid virus.

## School-side Maintenance: *Ongoing...*

Once again we hear the refrain of hundred-year-old buildings. They are easily capable of lasting another hundred years... if everything is maintained properly. Due to previous budget shortfalls and other issues, we are seeing the consequence of deferred maintenance on campus. Thankfully though, we are attempting to address those issues as they come to light:

**Boilers and steam-heating systems:** It was recently discovered that the school boiler and steam-heating system has not been properly maintained over the years, causing rusting, internal corrosion (*photo H*) and inefficiency. At the guidance from the Archdiocese, the school switched to a new service provider to address issues of neglect and get our boilers and heating systems working better.



## School-side Maintenance Work: *To Be Slated...*

**The girls bathrooms:** In the school, the girls bathrooms on floors one, two and three are stacked on top of each other at the west end of each hallway. During initial construction, this saved money on plumbing. However, gradually over the years, water has been leaking into wall, literally causing it to sag, the effects of which can be perceived in the bathroom floors, which has a slope to it. Several years back, the wall at its base was reinforced with two steel beams to prevent further drooping. It was not intended to be permanent fix. The vertical plumbing wall needs to be gutted and rebuilt – at a cost in the ballpark of \$200,000.



## Honor the Memory of a Loved One

Even though our Catholic faith can offer us comfort and consolation, losing a loved one is never easy. Memorial bequests – or remembering St. Alphonsus Parish in your will – can be a very spiritually meaningful way to honor the life of a loved one who has gone to be with the Lord. To make a bequest, you may visit our parish's Give Central page at [www.givecentral.org/location/39/event/28307](http://www.givecentral.org/location/39/event/28307) or contact our parish Business Manager, Dorothy Spencer, via email at [dspencer@stalphonsuschicago.com](mailto:dspencer@stalphonsuschicago.com) or by calling 773-525-0709 ext. 2110.



# St. Alphonsus Parish: *the Church Side*

## Weathering the Storms, Past and Future

*by Tom Kelly*

What a difference a year makes! While no one could have expected all the changes this year brought, due to much progress over the last few years promoting consistent and online giving through GiveCentral, St. Alphonsus was able to weather the storm well from a financial perspective. In fact, the efforts of First Fruits and the giving tokens at Mass led to St. Alphonsus having the highest percentage of online giving in the Archdiocese of Chicago. Throughout this unprecedented time, St. Alphonsus has kept its pastoral staff employed and operations running effectively amidst the challenges. We certainly cannot wait for the Parish to be back buzzing with all the wonderful parishioners and ministries.

Your continued generosity has kept St. Alphonsus Parish afloat; however, additional charity and sacrifices are needed to keep St. Alphonsus thriving. The aged buildings and continued growth of the Parish require additional funding to keep

moving forward. For 2021, the finance council has set goals to increase average weekly collections from \$15,000 per week to \$20,000 per week, and increase regular contributions from 360 to 400.

To the extent possible, I invite you and your family to prayerfully consider either starting regular tithing to St. Alphonsus (a good place to start is your first hour of work each week), or if you are already giving, increasing your weekly/monthly contributions to the extent you are able... to give the equivalent of two hours of income per week to the church.

Of course, GiveCentral is the easiest and most effective way. As our patron St. Alphonsus said so appropriately, "The past is no longer yours; the future is not yet in your power. You have only the present wherein to do good." Let us take this present moment to do all we can to support St. Alphonsus Parish.

*Tom Kelly is a parishioner and serves as the chair of the Parish Finance Council.*

### Payroll Protection Program

Based on a directive from the Archdiocese of Chicago to all parishes and schools, St. Alphonsus applied for, and received, Payroll Protection Program (PPP) loans from the Small Business Administration in the amount of \$913,000. This amount was calculated with the SBA formula, which is based on salary and utilities costs over time.

Consistent with the intent of the program, we applied for these loans with a goal of retaining our teachers, school administrators, and parish staff members, and enabling them to maintain

uninterrupted levels of income during a period in which we faced unprecedented and tremendous uncertainty. We are proud of the manner in which everyone in the St. Alphonsus Parish family rose to the occasion to meet the needs of our students, our parishioners, and the broader community. We are currently in the process of applying for forgiveness of these loans, which we strictly used to pay payroll and utility costs, in accordance with the legislation from the federal governments Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.



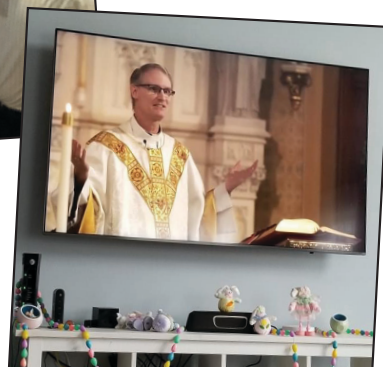
## Bullet Point Takeaways:

- Sunday collections are the largest source of revenue for the parish. Prior to the start of the pandemic in March the Sunday collections were on a steady increase, as shown by the slight increase from last year's annual report.
- Prior to the shutdown, average Sunday Mass attendance had increased over the previous year.
- Savings were seen in almost every category of ordinary expenses, as compared to the previous year.
- Changes made to parish staffing over time has proven to be our biggest cost savings.
- The \$52k spent on maintenance and building repairs does not begin to address the capital needs and the challenges of maintaining hundred-plus year old structures.
- The beauty of the church, and our music and liturgies give the impression that the parish is easily able to meet all its operating expenses.
- Fundraising: because of stormy weather during Oktoberfest 2019, the parish took in only half of the budgeted goal, yielding a big gap in the parish budget.
- COVID has taken its toll: the closure of parishes for Holy Week services caused a huge drop in the Easter collection. Similarly, this year's Christmas collection will likely be less than normal.
- Throughout her 138 year history, our parish has always exhibited great resiliency in bouncing back after great trials. The faith, love, and dedication of our parishioners will achieve the same result when this pandemic fades.

	2018 - 2019	2019 – 2020
<b>ORDINARY INCOME</b>		
Sunday and Holy Day Collections	783,780.69	<b>794,790.99</b>
Christmas Collection	77,528.18	57,978.37
Easter Collection	53,917.73	<b>36,076.97</b>
Other Collections	4,639.00	10,556.21
Tuition (for Religious Ed classes)	18,743.75	19,782.50
Fees	4,115.38	2,015.71
Lease & Rental Income	111,009.69	128,508.34
Fund Raising Net Income	116,375.13	<b>55,572.55</b>
Interest & Investment Income	62.37	2,058.48
Auxiliary Groups	-4,189.48	8,413.00
Miscellaneous Income	228,189.11	153,860.45
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$1,394,171.55</b>	<b>\$1,269,613.57</b>
<b>ORDINARY EXPENSES</b>		
Salaries	695,250.22	551,765.14
Employee Benefits	155,822.54	138,085.66
Books & Supplies, Non-Liturgical	19,424.21	12,147.16
Administrative Expenses	90,733.81	73,162.44
Food Service & Meals	25,577.02	11,647.58
Utilities	77,216.83	72,382.94
<b>Maintenance &amp; Building Repairs</b>	<b>53,193.08</b>	<b>52,560.20</b>
Interest Expense	323.23	582.41
Altar and Liturgical Supplies	40,150.82	31,728.59
Furniture & Equipment	0	1,528.84
Archdiocesan Assessment	134,510.00	133,332.00
PRMAA Assessment	41,268.00	45,324.00
Property/Casualty Ins	100,636.56	92,641.56
Auto Ins-Priest Owned Vehicle	3,450.00	2,450.00
Miscellaneous	11,047.78	10,239.42
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>1,448,604.10</b>	<b>\$1,229,577.94</b>
<b>Net Ordinary Income/Loss</b>	<b>-54,432.55</b>	<b>\$ 40,035.63</b>



*During the pandemic's shutdowns, with the help of parishioners in the film industry and our friends at the Athenaeum Theater, St. Alphonsus Parish set the standard for televised Masses.*



# St. Alphonsus Parish: *the School Side*

by Dan Rapacz

Despite the onslaught of Covid-19 in the latter half of the fiscal year, in the spring of this 2020 we were actually able to repay the debt owed to the Archdiocese from previous years. Because of the hard work of Dorothy Spencer, the Business Manager and the previous school principal, the school's finances were able to stop the practice of "borrowing from tomorrow to pay for today." Under the vision of our new pastor, a school board finance subcommittee was created, which worked with the Business Manager to track school operating expenses and bring them into the current fiscal year, instead of borrowing from the following fiscal year. After several years, the net result was not only a balanced school budget, but more stability and clarity in the financial state of the school. Because of pandemic and shift to remote learning, some planned expenditures did not happen, resulting in a budget surplus. This, combined with a more stable budget, resulted in our ability to pay back loans taken from the Archdiocese in previous fiscal years. We are thrilled to be able to say that AACA is debt free!

Unfortunately, this current

The greatest news from the previous academic year is that the AACA was awarded a Blue Ribbon for Excellence in Education in the autumn of 2019. Our parents, faculty, staff, students and families have always known that AACA is a very special place; nevertheless, it is an extraordinary blessing for the whole St. Alphonsus community that what has been implicitly known amongst us has now been explicitly and officially proclaimed. Congratulations to the whole AACA family as we continue to trumpet this great achievement!



2020-21 school year is not without its challenges. Covid-19 has changed many things including the need to spend more on cleaning supplies and safety-related items. Our focus on safety has forced us to cancel the Tots program and have fewer pre-school classes, resulting in lost revenue.

Thankfully though, our first fundraiser of the year, Rocket Run, broke all previous records for funds raised at that event. Although Rocket Run was a huge success, it appears we will be unable to hold our largest fundraiser, Art and Soul. We rely on the generosity of parishioners and school parents during Art and Soul to raise a significant amount of our fundraising. Much of this fundraising is directed towards specific projects, such as

the Artistic Studio, new lockers, or clean water fountains. Tuition alone does not cover the cost of a student's education, meaning fundraising efforts are paramount to maintain school operations.

At AACA, we are certainly grateful to be debt free, although there is still much to be done to make sure our school can continue to be an exemplary school in the Archdiocese of Chicago, which offers a rigorous education in academic excellence, Catholic faith, service, and an arts-integrated curriculum that inspires and enables our children to reach their full potential.

*Dan Rapacz is a member of the AACA Advisory Board, and the chair of the school board's finance subcommittee.*

## Bullet Point Takeaways:

- \*\* The budget surplus at the end of the 2020 fiscal year was used to pay off a three-year old debt owed to the Archdiocese for covering year-end unpaid bills. As you may recall from the 2017-18 Annual Report, the school suffered a deficit of just under \$311,000. This shortfall was in part due to 17 students unenrolling and a simultaneous increase in expenses and employee benefits.
- This year's increase in enrollment, the close tracking of school operating expenses, along with the unexpected savings experienced in some areas due to the shift from in-person learning to eLearning in the spring have all contributed to the 2019-20 budget surplus.
- Approximately 80% of our budget is spent on our amazing teachers and staff. Their talent and dedication was formally recognized in AACCA's reception of the national Blue Ribbon Award.
- Our current spending continues to be more challenging in some areas due to the continuing Covid-19 pandemic.
- It appears less money was spent on maintenance, but major expenses are looming for critical work needed on school boilers and the plumbing walls in the girls bathrooms.

	2018 - 2019	2019 – 2020
<b>ORDINARY INCOME</b>		
Tuition	3,836,235.24	4,127,769.99
Fees	499,223.4	358,924.09
Fund Raising Net Income	366,681.29	355,825.23
Interest & Investment Income	0	9.48
Auxiliary Groups	5,646.53	0
Miscellaneous Income	<u>2,100.00</u>	<u>234,922.10</u>
Total Income	4,709,886.46	<b>5,077,450.89</b>
<b>ORDINARY EXPENSES</b>		
Salaries	3,176,627.28	3,049,699.84
Benefits	893,789.84	896,228.79
Books & Supplies, Non-Liturgical	90,599.04	85,677.68
Administrative Expenses	194,083.07	141,408.39
Food Service & Meals	1,263.33	1,543.71
Utilities	70,251.70	85,429.78
<b>Maintenance &amp; Building Repairs</b>	<b>137,248.25</b>	<b>97,428.95</b>
Interest Expense	3,201.01	3,816.18
Furniture & Equipment	363.96	0
OCS Assessment	14,268.00	13,949.00
Property/Casualty Ins	90,107.88	82,596.28
Miscellaneous	<u>38,065.57</u>	<u>270,975.47</u>
Total Expense	4,709,868.93	<b>4,728,754.07</b>
<b>Net Ordinary Income</b>	<b>17.53</b>	<b>\$ 348,696.82**</b>



*Thanks to the success of Art & Soul and the Fund-In-Need fundraising efforts, new lockers were acquired for the school. Cranes were used to deliver them through the windows to the third floor.*

## The New & Improved Arts Garden at AACCA

The Arts Garden at AACCA has been developing and growing better each year. Thanks to two separate grants awarded last year, there have been many exciting changes to AACCA's Arts Garden. The students now have an outdoor space to learn and explore native habitats – and the arts! We closed our grant from the Illinois Clean Energy Foundation, which created the native prairie, sensory, and woodland gardens throughout the front of the school building. Already students have been learning in this space during their art, drama, science, and math classes. Additionally, we're in the process of finishing the outdoor arts classroom spaces provided for by our 2019 grant from the Sage Foundation, which has provided us with a stage, large outdoor chimes, and will include several designated instructional areas. We're so excited to learn in and through the natural world – without ever leaving our front yard!



# St. Alphonus: Christmas Season Schedule

One of the ironies of the song “The Twelve Days of Christmas” is that you won’t ever hear it on the radio beyond the first day of Christmas. By the second day, the song apparently goes into hibernation. The twelfth day of Christmas, January 6, is the Feast of the Epiphany, when the Church celebrates the arrival of the Magi – whose actual arrival is no longer heralded by the hymns written to memorialize the meaning of their journey.

The Catholic Church has a deeper understanding of the Solemnity of Christmas. It does not end on December 25th, nor is it a one-day celebration; it is an eight day liturgical moment, an “octave.” This year as a parish community, particularly because of the limitations imposed due to Covid, we are more intentionally aware that our liturgical celebrations of Christmas will stretch throughout the Octave of Christmas. With a reduced seating capacity in church, and in order to accommodate as many worshippers as possible, we are adding more Masses during the days of the Octave of Christmas. We desire to be responsible stewards of our time and talent, and not overtax our staff or volunteers in an attempt to squeeze everything into a two-day window on Christmas Eve and Day. Our Mass schedule will be as follows:

<b>Thursday, December 24th</b>	4 p.m., 6 p.m., and 11 p.m.
<b>Friday, December 25th</b>	7:30 a.m., 9 a.m., and 11 a.m.
<b>Saturday, December 26th</b>	9 a.m., 11 a.m., and 5 p.m.
<b>Sunday, December 27th</b>	9 a.m., 11 a.m., and 5 p.m.

Additionally, the parish will broadcast a Christmas Mass online for those unable to join us in person. A search on YouTube for St. Alphonus Chicago will bring you to the channel with our parish liturgies and videos.

Because the Christmas holy day draws extra people, *pre-registration for Mass is imperative* so that we can safely host worshippers with proper social distancing. We will not be able to accommodate unregistered walk-ins. A special registration form will be placed on our website in December, the link to which will be published in our bulletin and in our e-newsletter.

Amid the challenges wrought by the pandemic, it is our hope that we can take comfort in the richness of our tradition, which both opens up our understanding and expands our ability to celebrate this greatest of feasts on more than just one day.



**Above:** This stained glass window of the Nativity is located in the rectory’s chapel.

**Below:** The AACA choir sang Christmas carols last year during the tree-lighting ceremony on the veranda. The tree itself and its decorations were organized the Lakeview Chamber of Commerce.

