



## St. Stephen the Martyr CATHOLIC CHURCH

*Encounter, Know, Proclaim*

November 8, 2020

### Pray & Worship

#### Mass Schedule

Daily: Monday-Friday at 6:30 AM & 8:15 AM\*;  
Saturday at 8:15 AM\*

Weekend: Saturday at 5:00 PM\*; Sunday at 7:30 AM, 9:30 AM\* & 11:30 AM

\*These Masses will be live-streamed on our Facebook page and website.

- Our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/StStephensCatholicChurchOmaha/>
- Our website page: [stephen.org/live-stream](http://stephen.org/live-stream)

#### Private Prayer

Daily Mass Chapel and Worship Space are open from 9 AM to 9 PM Monday-Friday and from 10:00 AM to 6 PM on Saturday-Sunday. The Adoration Chapel is open 24/7; door access code: 9675\*

#### Eucharistic Adoration Holy Hours

- ⇒ Sundays with Solemn Vespers from 4 to 5 PM
- ⇒ First Friday of the Month from 9 AM to Noon
- ⇒ First Monday of the Month at 7 PM (please note: there is no First Monday Adoration in November because of All Souls / Memorial Cross Mass)

No sign up required. Come as you are to spend time with Jesus. In the Worship Space or Facebook Live.

### Contact Us

#### Parish Office:

Phone: 402-896-9675  
Emergency: 402-896-9675 ext 2  
Office Hours: 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM, M-F

**Pastor:** Fr. David Belt

**Associate Pastor:** Fr. Padraic Stack

#### Deacons:

Dcn. Ernie Abbott, (402) 506-2239  
Dcn. Chuck Botdorf, (402) 681-4701  
Dcn. Denny Dethlefs, (402) 861-4538  
Dcn. Jerry Kozney, (402) 659-9219  
Dcn. Marty Warwick, (402) 926-1253

**Staff Contact Info:** [stephen.org/staff](http://stephen.org/staff)

#### Bulletin Deadline:

Submit requests to [a.hartwig@stephen.org](mailto:a.hartwig@stephen.org).

### Not yet a Parishioner?

Register as a Parishioner on our website [stephen.org](http://stephen.org). Click on "Become a Parishioner" in the footer or call the Parish office for more information. We're here to accompany you on your faith journey! We offer many opportunities to help you and your family to learn, grow and form your faith. Learn more! Contact Adam Ybarra, Director of Evangelization and Catechesis at 402-861-4507 or [a.ybarra@stephen.org](mailto:a.ybarra@stephen.org).

**32nd SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

"Afterwards the other virgins came and said, 'Lord, Lord, open the door for us!' But he said in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, I do not know you.'" - Mt 25:11-12

Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass ©2001, 1998, 1970 CCD.

#### *"My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God."*

In this response from the Psalm at this weekend's Mass, we proclaim how desperate we are to have God's presence in our lives. In the Catechism of the Catholic Church, we hear that, "The desire for God is written in every human heart, because man is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to Himself. Only in God will he ever find the truth and happiness he never stops searching for. (CCC #27)" The problem is that we try to fill the void with the things of this world. When we do that, when we turn to alcohol, food, technology, shopping, drugs, or anything else besides God, the hunger never subsides. It is only through God that we will find the empty places of our hearts filled with His never-ending love.



For another image, we turn to the Gospel, where we hear the story of the 10 bridesmaids, waiting for the groom to return with his bride. The wait takes them late into the night, and 5 of the bridesmaids didn't bring any oil for their lamps. They weren't prepared to welcome the groom with his bride, and they miss their arrival. Because their lamps were empty, they missed what they were waiting for.

Like the bridesmaids, we are all waiting for Jesus the Groom to come back to earth to bring us into the eternal wedding feast of Heaven. The "oil" in the lamps of our lives is God's love and grace. When we close our hearts to God, we cannot be filled with His presence. And many times, we try to fill this void with the things of this world. I encourage you to recognize how much you thirst for the presence of God in your life. Open your heart to His love. Even if you feel that you are too sinful or aren't worthy of His love, turn to Him for help and strength. And trust that He is there for you.

*"In the desert we rediscover the value of what is essential for living; thus in today's world there are innumerable signs, often expressed implicitly or negatively, of the thirst for God, for the ultimate meaning of life. And in the desert people of faith are needed who, by the example of their own lives, point out the way to the Promised Land and keep hope alive."*

-Pope Benedict XVI

God bless you!  
Father Dave Belt

### Congratulations Newly Baptized!

Stevie Ann Knox, daughter of William and Samantha Ethan Gregory Daniell, son of Anthony and Kiley

### Welcome New Parishioners!

Brandon Bruggeman  
Peter Hunt  
Chad & Kendall Magill  
Mike & Micaela Sharp  
Kristin Swolley



16701 "S" Street, Omaha, NE 68135 | (402) 896-9675 | [stephen.org](http://stephen.org)

*St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic Church is a community for all people to encounter Christ, know Christ, and proclaim Christ.*

## Sacraments

### Reconciliation

Tuesday: 5:30-6:30 PM & Saturday: 3:30-4:45 PM

### Baptism

Baptisms are celebrated on Sundays. Parents are required to attend a preparation class. Contact the parish office for information or visit: [stephen.org/baptism-class](http://stephen.org/baptism-class).

### Matrimony

Preparation for Marriage begins at least 6 months prior to the desired wedding date. Contact parish office for more information.

### Anointing of the Sick

Contact Deacon Denny at (402) 861-4538 or [d.dethlefs@stephen.org](mailto:d.dethlefs@stephen.org).

### Homebound Eucharist

Contact the parish office to make arrangements.

Parish office phone number: (402) 896-9675

## Stay in Communication with Us!

Our primary communication tool is email using Flocknote. If you are not receiving our emails please follow the steps at [stephen.org/flocknote](http://stephen.org/flocknote) or call the parish office to give us your email.

We  love  
having you as part of our flock

## Financial Stewardship

10/27/2020—11/2/2020

Offertory & Online Giving:	\$39,003
Fiscal* Year-to-Date (FYTD) Actual:	\$784,656
Budget:	\$759,113
FY Total Budget:	\$2,240,000
FYTD to Total Budget Percentage:	35%

\*SSM Parish operates on a Fiscal Year from July 1 - June 30.

**Thank you for continuing to support us through your Sunday Offerings and Financial Stewardship. Conveniently give through OSV Online Giving or envelopes may be mailed to our office: 16701 S Street, Omaha NE 68135.**

Give online at [stephen.org/give](http://stephen.org/give)

## Stewardship is a Way of Life

**"Therefore, stay awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour." - Matthew 25:13**

Many of us have put off doing something because we think we are too busy. We've all said, "I'll do it later when I have time." Unfortunately, too many of us apply this attitude to our Faith. Jesus' call is urgent, in the here and now, in your current circumstances. Don't delay. How is God calling you to use your gifts today? None of us is guaranteed tomorrow.

## School News

**United in Christ to ignite the joy of faith, community, and learning.**

- ⇒ We are pleased to share First Quarter Honor Roll of our sixth, seventh & eighth graders—find the names at [school.stephen.org](http://school.stephen.org)
- ⇒ Thinking ahead for Kindergarten and Early Childhood? Come tour and check us out! Give Dr. Greco a call 402-896-0754 or email at [j.greco@stephen.org](mailto:j.greco@stephen.org).

## Religious Education News

- ⇒ Thank you to all our families who ordered cookie dough through our fundraiser! The cookie dough will be ready to be brought home this week at your child's usual class time.
- ⇒ An email went out to our second-grade families about First Communion Mass assignments for April 25th and May 2nd. Please make sure you received it and saved that spot in your calendar!
- ⇒ We've been finalizing our backup plans in case we ever need to go remote. Parents, please fill out the form we emailed to you so that your child will be able to join us if the need to switch to remote learning arises in the coming months. Thank you so much!

## Youth Ministry News

- ⇒ **Life Teen (High School)** — Nov. 08: 6-8 PM, GPC — Happy Saints Day! Ever wonder what happens when we take our last breath? Join us for a Life Night to die for, as we unravel Death and Judgment!
- ⇒ **Edge (Middle School)** — Nov. 10: 6:30-8 PM, Dining Room— Ever wonder if God really cares about you? Let's find out this week at Edge! (Spoiler Alert: He totally does.)
- ⇒ **Hearts Open Wide: Youth Service Squad** — Come be the hands and feet of Christ! We have a wide variety of family-friendly opportunities coming up, which can be done from the comfort of your own home or out in our community in a safe, socially distanced way. These events may also be great options for our high schoolers or Confirmation candidates in need of service hours. Be sure to check our Hearts Open Wide page often for new opportunities as we continue to add sign-ups and additional information! [www.stephen.org/youth-service](http://www.stephen.org/youth-service)

**There is no cost to attend our weekly gatherings. Dinner is included. Come when and as often as you can! Annual parent waiver is required. Complete today at: [www.smartwaiver.com/v/ssmym2020](http://www.smartwaiver.com/v/ssmym2020).**

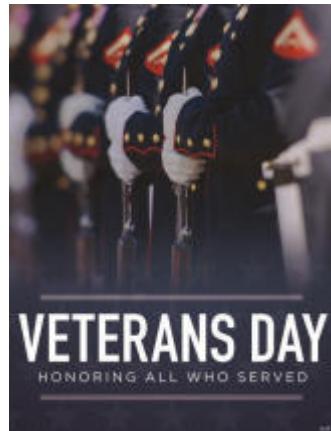
For more information contact Laura Bogue, Youth Ministry Director, at [l.bogue@stephen.org](mailto:l.bogue@stephen.org) or (402) 861-4509.

## Veterans Day

**Message from Knights of Columbus 4th Degree Assembly #3860**

Veterans Day (originally known as Armistice Day) is a federal holiday in the United States observed annually on November 11, for honoring military veterans, that is, persons who have served in the United States Armed Forces (and were discharged under conditions other than dishonorable). The original date was the signing of the Armistice to end World War I. It is commonly recognized by businesses providing free meals, discounts or haircuts to those who served in any branch of the military.

*Father, bless our veterans and all who serve our nation defending our freedom. For those who bravely gave their lives, grant them eternal rest. For those who are serving, give them courage. For those who served, we offer our gratitude. We ask this through Christ Our Lord. Amen*



# Responding to the Call

An important piece of our mission is our people: our people who we serve and our people who help us to serve! We cannot do the work without volunteers who give so generously of their time, talent and treasure to our operations, liturgy, school and ministries.

Rob Meraz gives generously of his time to St. Stephen the Martyr as a catechist in our Religious Education program. He has also volunteered as PAL volleyball coordinator and volleyball coach. Rob enjoys being able to share his faith with the students but never anticipated the learning and enjoyment he would receive back; it's a large part of why he continues to volunteer. Rob and his wife Lynnelle have been parishioners since 2012. They have four daughters: MaKenna (15), twins Ayla and Käydney (13), and Kinley (8); and two pug rescues who they love so much. We thank Rob for letting us share his story!



## How did you get started volunteering at St. Stephen the Martyr?

My girls were enrolled in RE classes and the parish was looking for catechists at the time. After inquiring about what was involved in volunteering, I felt like this was a great way to give back to our community.

## What do you enjoy most about volunteering?

Seeing the faith in our students provides great hope in me. It brightens my day. The faith and hope they have provides a bright light as to what our world can be and the importance of helping our students grow in their faith. The curriculum today is so different than when I was their age. I feel like I can help evangelize and not just sacramentalize our young people.

## What does St. Stephen the Martyr mean to you?

St. Stephens feels like home to me. It is encouraging to gather and celebrate mass with such a large community. I've encountered such great grace and mercy from all of our priests and deacons and volunteers that I know this is where I belong. I feel like the community as a whole is constantly working towards the mission Jesus Christ gave us.

**Do you have any advice to other parishioners?** Don't worry about what you think you have or don't have to offer. Jesus always finds a way and will handle the rest. All you have to do is say "yes, I will serve!" Let Him work through you, and you will be amazed at what He does for you and those you are helping. Start anywhere you can. The people here are so good to be around and will support and help you. Before you know it, you'll be producing good fruit and have deep roots in our parish community.



## Stewards of St. Stephen the Martyr Annual Appeal

Thank you for your generosity and faithful commitment to our Annual Stewardship Appeal. Your gifts and support play a critical role in sustaining our operations. With your help, we are able to provide a Catholic education to more than 650 students in our K-8 school and more than 700 students in our Religious Education Programs, and cover expenses for our many ministries and daily operations.

## A Convenient Way to Give

Many parishioners elect to present their stewardship gifts by using traditional offertory envelopes. If using these envelopes is no longer convenient, we encourage you to utilize our Online Giving program that allows you to make financial gifts without writing checks, worrying about cash, or delivering your weekly support envelope. Our Online Giving program allows you to set up automatic contributions and change the timing or the amount of your gift at any time. Whether it is your desire to make a regular pledged gift or a one-time donation, Online Giving presents many convenient options, all under your full control.

To learn more, please visit [stephen.org/give](http://stephen.org/give) or call (402) 861.4543.

## Mass Intentions

### Saturday, November 7

8:15 am † Cecilia Heimann (DB)  
5:00 pm † James & JoAnn Stachura (PS)

### Sunday, November 8

7:30 am SI Jeanette Hauptman (PS)  
9:30 am Our Parishioners (DB)  
11:30am † Randy Vanderwal (DB)

### Monday, November 9

6:30 am SI Stephanie & Mike Magaha (PS)  
8:15 pm † Marcel Matgen (PS)

### Tuesday, November 10

6:30 am SI Susan & Matt Price (PS)  
8:15 am † Carlos Stimson (DB)

### Wednesday, November 11

6:30 am † James Geiger (PS)  
8:15 am † Jack Circo (DB)

### Thursday, November 12

6:30 am SI Prolife & end to all abortions (DB)  
8:15 am † Charles & Isabel Feld (DB)

### Friday, November 13

6:30 am SI Caleb Stearns (PS)  
8:15 am SI Cash Minx (DB)

### Saturday, November 14

8:15 am SI Shane & Jamie Martin (PS)  
5:00 pm † Ben, Mark & Bob Mannino (DB)

### Sunday, November 15

7:30 am SI Our Parishioners (DB)  
9:30 am † Lewis Storm (PS)  
11:30am † Juanita Mutuc (PS)

SI = Special Intention    † = Repose of the Soul  
DB = Fr. Dave Belt; PS = Fr. Padraig Stack;

Note: Priest schedule subject to changes



## Parishioners who are sick/injured/healing:

**Ellen Schoenborn-Ruloffs**, sister of Jeane Harbert  
**Jan Anderson**  
**Marilee Waggoner**  
**Elmer Jerome Promes**, Father of Janice Pick, Joyce Bernard, Joanie Fuchtman  
**Patricia Schicker**

## Deceased souls of our parish-family: Lucilla "Lu" (Caniglia) Orr

## How Can We Pray for YOU?

You are not alone! St. Stephen the Martyr has prayer warriors who are ready to pray for YOUR intention! God has given us this incredible gift to intercede on behalf of others through prayer and thanksgiving! Submit your prayer request to be shared with our Prayer Line Ministry and/or with our Parish Family at: [stephen.org/prayer-line](http://stephen.org/prayer-line) or call Beth Wetgen at (402) 669-4793.

## Christmas Giving Projects

It's hard to believe we are already talking about Christmas! But, several ministry leaders have been busy planning for our two annual Christmas giving opportunities:

ST. STEPHEN THE MARTYR  
Family CHRISTmas Project

"Clothe the Naked"

**St. Stephen the Martyr Family CHRISTmas Project: October 31 - December 13**

We are adopting "Closet Door" at Holy Family Ministries (now run by Society of St. Vincent de Paul) for our Family CHRISTmas Project. The "Closet Door" provides clothing to homeless people. Other programs at Holy Family are the Sack Lunch program and Street Ministries. You may recall that we have provided gift cards & backpacks in the past. This opportunity focuses on "Clothing the Naked" - one of the Seven Corporal Works of Mercy and it models how we should treat others, as if they are Christ in disguise.

You and your family can participate by donating new items:

- socks (adult sizes)
- men's briefs (M, L, XL)
- men's jeans/khakis (32-34) new or gently used
- Sweat pants or fleece pants (L, XL, XXL)
- Hoodies (any size, especially XL and XXL)

Please place your unwrapped donation(s) in the baskets in the gathering space or the GPC by December 13. Note - they have adequate supplies of clothing for women.

Questions: Contact Teresa Ziska 402-960-8618, Linda Hendricks 402-699-1911 or Loni Burger 402-896-4446

## Angel Tree Project

### What is the Angel Tree Project?

From November 7th-December 6th, we will again be collecting donated items for several area organizations. Each organization will have a designated tree in the Gathering Space adorned with ornaments of items requested. Once purchased, donated items can be placed underneath its tree. Over the years our parish has been overwhelmingly generous with this project, and for that we thank you! If you are interested in helping to sort, pack, and/or deliver donations to the various locations, please visit [www.stephen.org/youth-service](http://www.stephen.org/youth-service) to sign-up.

Questions? Contact: Laura Bogue, Youth Ministry Director at 402-861-4509 or [l.bogue@stephen.org](mailto:l.bogue@stephen.org)

*"The bridegroom  
came and those who  
were ready went into  
the wedding feast  
with him. Then the  
door was locked.  
Afterwards the other  
virgins came and  
said, 'Lord, Lord,  
open the door for us!'  
But he said in reply,  
'Amen, I say to you, I  
do not know you.'*

- Mt 25:10b-12

Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass  
©2001, 1998, 1970 CCD.

## Adult Volleyball

All parishioners & friends (18 and older) are invited to play Volleyball, Saturday's from 6:30 PM until 9:30 PM in the gym. This time is for community fun and a chance to meet new people. Skill levels vary from brand new to many years of experience. Come anytime. Contact Adam at [a.ybarra@stephen.org](mailto:a.ybarra@stephen.org) or 402.861.4507 with questions or for more info.



Stay up-to-date with Martyr Moms on our Facebook Group  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/161991407828766>

# 2020

## ANNUAL REPORT



St. Stephen the Martyr  
CATHOLIC CHURCH  
*Encounter, Know, Proclaim*



*"See, I am doing something new! Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? In the wilderness I make a way, in the wasteland, rivers." —Isaiah 43:19*

Dear Saint Stephen the Martyr Parishioners,

I've been praying with the above quote, in which God is speaking to the Israelites. They have found themselves in a very difficult and desolate place in their history, and God is promising, that even during great pain, insecurity, and loss, He is "doing something new." With this renewed vision today, we see that in the midst of turmoil, uncertainty, and a worldwide pandemic, God is still present and active in our lives. Even in the wilderness, God is making a way for us!



God's presence, and the love of Jesus Christ continue to be revealed and shared in our parish. In this brief summary, I hope that you are able to see that the mission of our parish to be a "community for all people to encounter Christ, know Christ, and proclaim Christ" is generously supported and extended by your desire to share the resources God has entrusted to you. To all of you who have found that we become richer by giving, I humbly offer you my gratitude and continued love and prayers.

With eyes of faith, may we see that God is "doing something new" in our midst!

In Christ,

*Father Dave Belt*

Father Dave Belt, Pastor

16701 "S" Street  
Omaha, NE 68135  
(402) 896-9675  
stephen.org



# KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS



## Numbers at a Glance:

3,272 households
12,159 parishioners
870 Religious Education students
140 Religious Education catechists
670 School students
2 daily and 6 weekend Masses
140+ Live-streamed Masses
25 Funerals
22 Weddings
94 Baptisms
160 First Holy Communion
171 Confirmations
12 Adults joining the Church
40 Ministries
2,752 Facebook followers



In 2019, our pastoral planning embarked in a process to re-envision the future of the Parish. Through that process a new mission statement and seven dimensions of parish-life were created. Along with a reminder of these seven dimensions, we would like to highlight specific accomplishments from this past fiscal year (July 2019 – June 2020).

**Community:** *To be welcoming community of faith where all may grow as disciples of Christ who love and serve God and neighbor.*

- Launched Young Adults Ministry & weekly fellowship meetings.
- Implemented new communication tools including Flocknote, Wufuu registration, Vimeo, and social media.
- Celebrated our 30th Anniversary in the Fall of 2019 with an outdoor Mass followed by our Parish Festival.
- Continued expanding involvement opportunities with the Knights of Columbus, Sports Club, men's groups, Martyr Moms and youth groups, etc.

**Worship:** *Provide a consistent level of excellence in the liturgical experience that enables all to glorify God and grow in holiness.*

- Implemented live-streaming of our Liturgies and added weekly online prayer opportunities (Rosary, Zoom groups, Vespers, Adoration, Stations of the Cross and Seminarian perspectives).
- Expanded Eucharistic Adoration offerings and continued with 24-hour access to the Adoration Chapel.
- Structured Liturgies and Sacraments to ensure a safe environment at weddings, funerals, First Communion, Confirmation, Baptism and Reconciliation.

**Formation:** *To invite and equip all to become disciples through unified catechetical formation.*

- Held more than a dozen bible studies with our highest ever attendance. With the Covid-19 challenges, many groups continued to meet remotely and/or social-distanced.
- Hosted Welcome Weekend retreats to help parishioners grow in their faith and involvement.

- Engaged more than 870 students in our Religious Education programs and continued with virtual learning into the spring and summer months.
- Our Youth Ministry hosted multiple virtual youth nights in the Spring with more than 70 families participating.

### School Highlights:

- Aligned curriculum with Archdiocesan benchmarks and implemented STARS testing.
- Formed an Ad Hoc committee to study enrollment trends and worked with the Finance Council to enhance the operational vitality of the school.
- Continued to work with the School Advisory Board to implement strategies and action steps that align with the school strategic plan that began last fall.
- Incorporated service-related field trips and class projects into curriculum and improved our STEM programing.
- Enhanced communication through consistent principal updates, social media, and the school website.
- Transitioned to remote learning on unexpected notice at the onset of Covid-19.
- Researched, planned and revised school policies and safety protocols to ensure the safety and health of our students and staff.
- Restructured Home and School Parent Association to align with the NCEA (National Certificate of Education Achievement) Pillars. This organization continues to be a primary source of funding and volunteer support for the school.
- Raised more than \$100,000 during Martyr Marathon to fund new instructional materials, teacher grants, technology, and professional development.
- Enhanced staff development plans that included Balanced Literacy, Gradual Release of Responsibility, Guided Instruction, and new this year, Theology of the Body curriculum in our Religious Education classes.
- Added an all-day Transitional-Kindergarten (TK) within our preschool offerings.
- Started Catechist of the Good Shepherd in our preschool and Exploratory Faith Formation classes for TK.

(continued on Page 4)

*In today's busy world, we are pulled in so many directions and have many responsibilities and demands that require our time. It is sometimes hard to know what to say "yes" to and where to devote our precious time. But leading a Christian life by example is truly the best form of witness to God's calling for our lives; whether it's acting with kindness and integrity in our daily life, showing compassion to our neighbors, or helping others embody the love of Christ through volunteering and ministry. We can truly be the Light of Christ by actively trying to live out our faith and make a lasting difference in the world around us. - Randy, parishioner*

## Statement of Revenue / Expenses

**Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2020      Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2019**

**Revenue:**

## Parish:

	Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2020	Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2019
General Contributions (1)	\$2,878,965	\$2,684,727
Other Parish Revenue (2)	695,556	1,041,354
Subtotal	3,574,521	3,726,081
School:		
School tuition	1,724,246	1,898,053
Other school revenue	847,356	763,761
Subtotal	2,571,602	2,661,814
Religious Education:	148,458	151,199
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$6,294,581</b>	<b>\$6,539,094</b>

**Expenses:**

## Parish:

Admin Services & supplies	\$979,625	\$1,047,201
Parish personnel	1,007,936	949,068
Other parish expenses	294,230	296,055
Archdiocesan Assessment	284,555	339,554
Capital Outlay	4,445	76,850
Subtotal:	2,570,791	2,708,728
School:		
School personnel	2,723,872	2,840,068
School operating expenses	352,856	479,228
Subtotal school and related activities	3,076,728	3,319,296
Religious Education	203,251	221,471
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$5,850,770</b>	<b>\$6,249,493</b>

**Operating Income**

Unrealized gain/loss on Endowments	\$443,811	\$289,599
Mortgage Payments (3)	-11,908	-9,136
	-164,067	-237,917

**Net Income**

<b>\$267,836</b>	<b>\$42,546</b>
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**Footnotes:**

1) This past spring the parish received \$778,100 in Cares Act funding to assist payroll and operating costs. This income is reflected on the parish balance sheet.

2) Fiscal year 2019 included \$254,000 of designated year-end appeal for deferred maintenance

3) The parish made our last building loan payment this past May. The parish is now operating debt-free.

## Near Term Facility Assessment

Stephen's was constructed in 1991 and while our buildings are structurally sound, at almost 30-years-old, many of our mechanical and HVAC systems are operating beyond their useful life-expectancy. According to a recent parish facility assessment near-term, deferred maintenance will be required as follows:

Site:	\$37,700 - \$49,400
Exterior:	\$52,640 - \$58,700
Interior:	\$150,650 - \$179,900
Electrical:	\$113,800 - \$148,000
Mechanical:	\$562,700 - \$671,500
Total:	\$980,490 - \$1,177,50

At this time, the parish has several projects in various stages of completion. In addition, an engineering assessment and request for proposal to replace our 30-year-old chiller will begin this fall with an anticipated spring 2021 completion date.

Parking lot repairs and striping:	\$35,000
Roof repairs:	\$13,000
School elevator life-safety upgrades:	\$62,000
Window replacements:	\$11,000
Miscellaneous projects:	\$50,000
Chiller reserve:	\$250,000
Rectory maintenance:	\$20,000
Total:	\$441,000

Special thanks to our current Finance Council Members:

Ed Woll, Chair; Kali Robertson, Amber Rinehart, Jim Spurgin, Joe Lad, Roger Myer, Tom Maddock and Fr. Dave Belt, Pastor.

## Budget Highlights

With the help and hard-work from numerous volunteers and the generosity of our Parish family, we were able to supplement operations last fiscal year by more than \$325,000.

- Martyr Mission: \$ 181,133
- Martyr Marathon: \$ 111,209
- Parish Festival: \$ 23,152
- Trivia Night: \$ 9,740

When COVID-19 arrived in March we immediately took steps to reduce operational costs, moved to remote learning in the school and religious education departments, suspended several ministries and compassionately placed many employees on furlough.

With assistance from the recently passed "Cares Act" and the "Pandemic Unemployment Act," the parish was able to leverage State and Federal funds to help cover wages temporarily lost by our dedicated employees.

We paid off the building loan mortgage in May. This is a significant accomplishment and the first time in parish history that we are debt-free.

Despite Covid-19 restrictions our Martyr Mission fundraiser was able to launch a "virtual" auction online raising \$181,000 to assist with daily operating costs.

Due to Covid-19, in the spring of 2020 we experienced a drop in stewardship contributions, lost critical income from our Kidzone childcare program and other parish, School, and Religious Education programs.

More than 60% of our financial support comes through our online giving program. We are grateful for this continued commitment by our families, and for those households who have enrolled in the online giving program.

# KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS (CONTINUED)

**Leadership:** To model Christ-centered leadership by developing disciples, establishing a culture of unity and collaboration, recognizing, and engaging the gifts of all, while providing clear direction.

- Held a series of parishioner and ministry Leadership training sessions in collaboration with the Archdiocese of Omaha.
- Conducted Thresholds of Discipleship training for parishioners and staff.

**Stewardship:** Create a culture that leads to an increased understanding and appreciation of the blessings that the Lord has bestowed and a greater desire to share those blessings.

- Established a staff stewardship team to study stewardship and discipleship.
- Provided weekly stewardship reports and educational scripture studies.
- Began a program to recognize parish volunteers and welcome new parishioners.
- Started a video series to introduce staff to the parish.
- Promoted numerous volunteer opportunities in our many ministries including sports, Religious Education, buildings and grounds, School and support for weekend liturgies.

**Social Justice:** To embrace Catholic teaching to support outreach ministries for all who are in need of love, compassion and the mercy of God.

- Held over three-dozen youth service events including the Christmas Angel Tree project, preparing meals for the Rainbow House, serving dinner at the Stephen Center, and participating in the annual Brush-Up NE Paint-a-thon. In addition, our parish youth and their families prepared more than 3,000 sack lunches for the St. Vincent de Paul Society!

- Donated more than 2,500 pounds of food from our Food Pantry to Catholic Charities, St. Vincent DePaul, EPS and Rainbow House.
- Received over 150 phone requests for assistance to more than 300 families
- Distributed more than 10,000 bags of homemade cookies and other household goods to Catholic Charities Domestic Violence Services for Women and Children.
- Distributed more than 450 rosaries to Children's Hospital, Veteran's Hospital, Our Lady of Guadalupe and various other missions.
- Conducted more than 700 parishioner "check-in calls" during the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Provided counseling to individuals and families.

**Evangelization:** Provide opportunities for all to encounter Christ so they are inspired to proclaim Him.

- Covid-19 provided an opportunity to reach more through our online presence. We were able to leverage technology to extend our evangelization efforts beyond the parish.
- Began planning for New Evangelization and community outreach, which included "Show your SSM Spirit" neighborhood project.
- Continued *Martyr Jump Starter* with a focus on "What it means to be Catholic."
- Held a Parish Mission during Lent – inviting parishioners to clearly see the invitation to Encounter, Know and Proclaim Christ.

"SSM is the community we were looking for. Raising Catholic children can be challenging today, but it is a little bit easier knowing that we have a community of resources surrounding us."  
- Brian & Susie, parishioners

"My favorite parts of volunteering are hearing the 'call' from God, following His will and way (which is not always easy with a big family and working) and the peace and satisfaction from seeing events and things come together, and possibly, changing and creating more joyful lives."  
- Sara, parishioner



"The biggest gift I've received through volunteering is the friendships I've made - both with other SSM school parents and school/church staff. I love building relationships and learning more about our parish community through volunteerism."  
- Amy, parishioner

"St. Stephen the Martyr is a very much like home to us. We did not grow up in Omaha and have felt very welcomed and "at home" here at St. Stephens. Our boys are growing up within this SSM community and we are very thankful for that. It truly does take a village to raise your children and we are very grateful that SSM is a significant part of our village." - Jen, parishioner



# WEEKLY PRAYER

## READINGS FOR THE WEEK OF NOVEMBER 8, 2020

- SUN 11/8** Wis 6:12-16/Ps 63:2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8 [2b]/1 Thes 4:13-18 or 4:13-14/Mt 25:1-13
- MON 11/9** Ez 47:1-2, 8-9, 12/Ps 46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9 [5]/1 Cor 3:9c-11, 16-17/Jn 2:13-22
- TUE 11/10** Ti 2:1-8, 11-14/Ps 37:3-4, 18 and 23, 27 and 29 [39a]/Lk 17:7-10
- WED 11/11** Ti 3:1-7/Ps 23:1b-3a, 3bc-4, 5, 6 [1]/Lk 17:11-19
- THR 11/12** Phlm 7-20/Ps 146:7, 8-9a, 9bc-10 [5a]/Lk 17:20-25
- FRI 11/13** 2 Jn 4-9/Ps 119:1, 2, 10, 11, 17, 18 [1b]/Lk 17:26-37
- SAT 11/14** 3 Jn 5-8/Ps 112:1-2, 3-4, 5-6/Lk 18:1-8
- SUN 11/15** Prv 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31/Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5 [cf. 1a]/1 Thes 5:1-6/Mt 25:14-30 or 25:14-15, 19-21

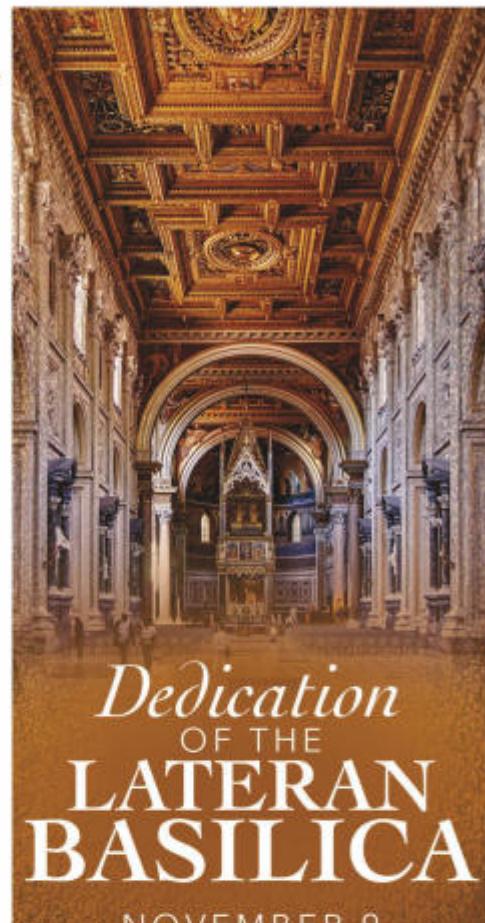
## OBSERVANCES FOR THE WEEK OF NOVEMBER 8, 2020

- Sunday:** 32<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time
- Monday:** The Dedication of the Lateran Basilica
- Tuesday:** St. Leo the Great, Pope and Doctor of the Church
- Wednesday:** St. Martin of Tours, Bishop; Veterans Day
- Thursday:** St. Josaphat, Bishop and Martyr
- Friday:** St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, Virgin
- Next Sunday:** 33<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

## LIVE THE LITURGY

### Inspiration for the week

Do you consider yourself spiritually mature and awake? We can become a little presumptuous in the Christian life and even put a little too much stock in God's mercy. We foolishly believe that in the end, God is going to give everyone a passing grade and all will be well. Therefore, until that time comes, I can remain mediocre in my faith disciplines and put aside the effort needed to go from okay to excellent. We can be accomplished procrastinators! The meeting of God face-to-face either when we die or when Christ comes again, whichever comes first, is not going to be as casual as we may think. There is no earthly meeting in our experience that can even compare to what it will be like to meet God. To say that we are going to be caught up in awe is an understatement. But, there is something even more significant than that to consider: If we haven't learned how to be attentive, recognize, and long for the holy of holies in this life, what make us think we are going to recognize and desire it in the next? Pray for the wisdom to act prudently.



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*My soul  
is thirsting  
for you.*

## News from the Greater Community:

A flyer for the November Lunch Meeting of the Catholic Business Group Omaha. It features a logo with a cross and the letters CBG, followed by the group's name and tagline "LEADING WITH FAITH". The event details are listed in red and black text, including the date (Thurs., November 19, 2020), time (11:30am), location (Champions Club, 17000 Farnam Street Drive, Omaha, NE 68104-4000), cost (\$20.00 - FOR MEMBERS, \$25.00 - NON-MEMBERS), and a call to action to RSVP online. A photo of Tony Esteve, the featured speaker, is shown. The speaker's name and title are also listed. The flyer ends with a "MISSION" statement and an "ATTEND" section.



## **WHY DO WE DO THAT?**

### Catholic Life Explained:

**Question:**

#### What does the Church say about suicide?

**Answer:**

Unfortunately, despite the Church's clear teachings in resources like the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*, there are still many people who are confused about what the Church teaches regarding the tragic reality of suicide.

While we hold that all life is sacred, we are also all-too aware that psychological, emotional and even physical illness — as well as extreme anxiety, fear, and abuse — can lead individuals to take their own lives. Speaking to this, the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* reflects, "Although suicide is always objectively sinful, one should not despair of the eternal salvation of persons who have taken their own lives. By ways known to him alone, God can provide the opportunity for salutary repentance. The Church prays for persons who have taken their own lives" (pg. 294). The text also states the reality of illness or other extreme influences can "diminish the responsibility of one committing suicide" (pg. 293).

Parishes and grief support groups should show special care and concern for those families that have lost a loved one to suicide. And, communities should always try to be mindful of those who might be at risk of suicide or self-harm.

If someone is contemplating suicide, please know that help is available, including the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255).

## Vocations Corner

"For we are God's co-workers...." How are you being called to build the kingdom of God as His co-worker? Consider the generous service of priesthood or consecrated life. Contact the Vocation Office at (402) 558-3100 or email: [vocations@archomaha.org](mailto:vocations@archomaha.org).



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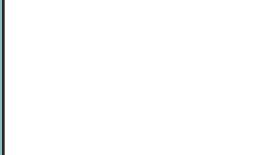


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