Saint Alphonsus

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

2024-25 Annual Report



Founded in 1882, St. Alphonsus Parish was built by German immigrants, many of whom had arrived to help rebuild the city following the great Chicago fire eleven years earlier. Both city and parish grew rapidly, with construction of the church beginning in 1889, soon followed by the opening of the school building in 1906, and the Athenaeum Theater in 1911. The parish quickly became a cultural and religious hub for immigrant families and north side Catholics.

For 135 years, the church's steeple and iconic veranda serve not only as a hallmark of the Lakeview neighborhood, but stand as a pillar of faith, hope and love, having welcomed successive generations into the community. Enriched with this legacy of faith, filled with history, and inspired by beauty, countless families and parishioners down through the ages claim St. Alphonsus as their spiritual home. And we here today are just as proud to call this parish our spiritual home, too!

from the Pastor

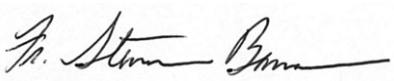
'Tis the Season



One of the oddities about being a pastor in the Catholic Church is that there are four separate calendars that order my days, weeks, months and seasons. First and foremost is the standard twelve-month Gregorian calendar we all know and use, the one that has ordered most of the world's days since 1582 (trivia tidbit: introduced by Pope Gregory XIII, his calendar was a reform of the previous Julian calendar to more accurately account for leap years). A second important calendar so many of us adhere to is an academic calendar. And for Catholics, there is the liturgical calendar, the beginning of which is the First Sunday of Advent. And lastly, there is the calendar of the fiscal year, running from July 1st through June 30th of the following year.

According to this fourth type of calendar, this is the season in the fiscal year when parishes and other non-profit organizations commonly publish an Annual Report to share information about their finances with their members and constituencies. In addition to providing relevant financial data for the fiscal year 2024-2025, the annual report also offers an overview of Sunday collection data, parish statistics, community events, fundraisers, the capital campaign, and major maintenance or construction projects. And so, because 'tis the season for annual reports, here we go!

But first a disclaimer: With an annual report, though, the point to remember is that the report covers the previous fiscal year – that is, the one that ended on June 30, 2025 – even though we're now well into the next fiscal year. The apparent lag is because it takes time to close the books on the previous fiscal year and account for all invoices and receipts. All the "fun" accounting stuff, none of which I entered into the priesthood for, but nevertheless requires attention and care in order to fulfill the mission and ministry of St. Alphonsus Parish.



Stewardship Down through the Ages



Once upon a time there was a priest traveling on a ship that started to sink. The passengers began to panic, and the captain finds the priest and runs up to him saying, "quick Father, do something Catholic!" And so the priest takes up a collection.

Catholic parishes in the United States exist only because of the support of their people. When we pause and look at the beauty of St. Alphonsus Church, it boggles the mind to think that the original parishioners from 1882 began working, saving, and donating to begin constructing in 1889 what would soon stand as one of the most iconic churches in Chicago. Indeed, upon completion of the steeple, it stood as the tallest structure in the city.

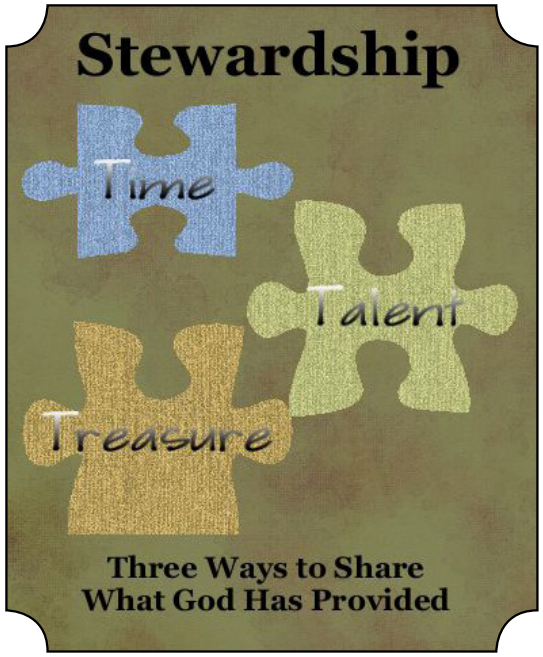
Despite a massive fire in 1950 that consumed the roof and nearly rendered the building a total loss, parishioners unilaterally committed to rebuild, embarking on a massive campaign to collect the funds, including donating significant portions of their own livelihood. Years later, in 2008, a new generation of parishioners committed large amounts of their income to renovate the church to restore her beauty. We are blessed beyond measure to inherit such a treasure and celebrate the Sacraments in one of the most beautiful churches in the diocese.

Additionally, we are blessed with a large campus that provides buildings and spaces for our ministries, parish gatherings, amazing school community, programs and mission. All of these elements make St. Alphonsus a genuine spiritual home for

many thousands of parishioners, families and children, past and present.

As blessed as we are in these regards, preserving the staff and structure of the church and school communities is only possible because of the generous support and contributions from so many people who recognize our Catholic faith calls us to actively participate and be responsibly invested in the health and success of our mission and ministries. This is the principle of stewardship.

Stewardship is customarily viewed in a tri-partite dynamic of time, talent, and treasure. The easiest of the three aspects to recognize is the stewardship of treasure – that is, sharing from one's own financial resources to help the parish community function. (In biblical terms it is called tithing, and is seen as obligatory.) The collection taken up at every Sunday Mass is the most visible form of this. But in an increasingly technological world, more people prefer the convenience of credit card transactions rather than using cash. Indeed, some people admit to almost never carrying cash anymore. Yet the lack of paper currency in our billfolds does not negate the obligation of the faithful to support the work of the church. For those who never carry cash, the music bulletins every Sunday offer options to contribute via Zelle or Venmo, but the preferred option is for parishioners to utilize GiveCentral. In addition to convenience and consistency, this platform is used for a variety of other parish events, sales, and offerings, and parishioners who use it will automatically receive an annual donation statement for tax-reporting purposes.



One more note on the Sunday contributions to church: I have long said that if every parishioner contributed the equivalent of one hour's worth of their wage, the parish would easily balance our budget. If every parishioners donated the equivalent of two hours worth of wages, I would never have to ask for money from you again. Now keep in mind, that it would still only be half of the biblical standard tithe, which is 10%. If everyone contributed to the church according to the biblical standard, we could air condition the church!

As much as people keep an eye on how and where they spend their money, often the greater gift of stewardship is the offering of time and talent. When our lives are over-programmed and we feel overextended, time becomes the most important of commodities, and the one we are least likely to give away, even for a good cause. However, one should neither overlook nor understate the Gospel call to service. We all share the baptismal identity as sons and daughters of God and as disciples of Christ, and so we all share the obligation of offering the gift of our time and talents to the church. Not all people have the charisms needed to be a catechist in our religious education program, but so many of us have the ability to assist at the Sunday liturgy as lectors, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, or simply as greeters, or even be a part of a soon-to-be-formed ministry of hospitality to make new parishioners feel welcome and plugged into the parish. If we are formed only to the cultural trends in the world, we risk becoming spiritual consumers, treating God as a vending machine or a mechanic, instead of approaching Him as the loving Father that He is. When our minds and hearts are formed by faith, we recognize the relationship we have with God also moves us into service of our neighbor and of our parish.

Looking around the parish, at the structures and the people, we see countless blessings that we have received from generations before us, and from those around us who so willingly share their heart and faith. It's what makes St. Alphonsus such special place. And for ourselves, working to cultivate a culture of tripartite stewardship that is intentional and consistent is what will ensure that our parish is a spiritual home for ourselves and others. Because the gift of love that is at work in and through us will be made manifest and multiplied. Or to borrow a metaphor from Jesus, it's like SALT which seasons everything and makes the world a better place.

Introducing the SALT Team

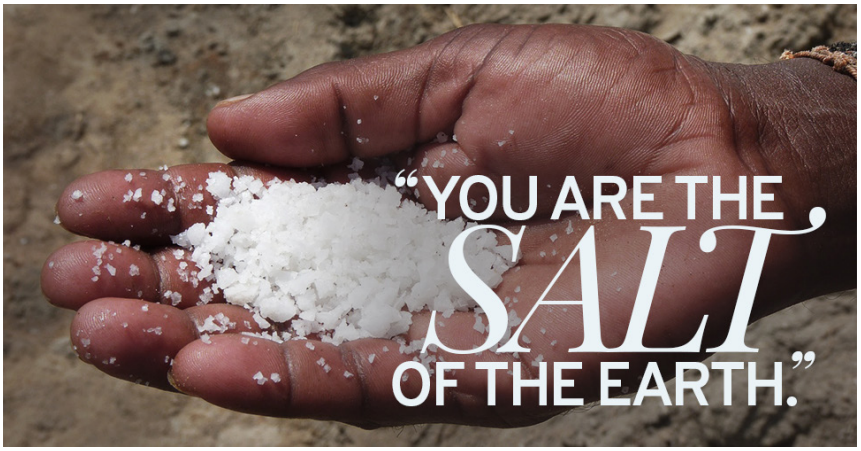
During the previous fiscal year, members of the parish pastoral staff began meeting with several parishioners discuss where the parish is at and start discerning the future. This new group has been dubbed the **Saint Alphonsus Leadership Team**, a.k.a., **the SALT Team.** Our initial conversations were to recast a parish mission statement and to discuss what that might look like as it shapes our ministries and outreach looking ahead for the next several years, i.e., a vision statement. The SALT Team is excited to promulgate the new mission statement:

St. Alphonsus strives to be a parish that sees, knows and loves the goodness, truth and beauty of Christ, the Church, and our neighbor.

A traditional parish council might serve as more of representative or governing body, whereas the SALT Team has an approach to mission and ministry that is more outward-facing, recognizing the need for growth and emphasizing evangelization, welcome, and hospitality to strengthen relationships within the parish body, as well as connect new people to existing groups and activity.

The SALT Team is comprised of the pastoral staff of the parish (the priests and pastoral associate) and a key group of several parishioners. The members share a common understanding of, and a recognition that, our Catholic life is built on layers of dynamic relationships that connect us first and foremost to Christ, and to each other as brothers and sisters working together, to fellow parishioners, and even to our neighbors – especially to our neighbor. This is the Mystical Body of Christ, comprised of many parts. The members of the SALT Team have a faith animated by a love of Jesus that inspires them to share that love with others with a warm and welcoming spirit.

If you are curious to learn more about the SALT Team and its mission and vision, or if you are feeling nudged by the Lord to help make this mission statement visibly manifest in our parish, please feel free to contact our pastoral Associate, Brooks Robinson at the rectory or via email at brobinson@stalphonsuschicago.church.



Parish Stats — on the Church Side

The "Status Animarum"

This phrase in Latin means "the State of Souls." Every year the Archdiocese has the parishes to report this data so parishes and the diocese as a whole can have data to track growth or changing trends in parochial ministry as received in the Sacraments. Here are the raw numbers for the 2024-25 fiscal year.

MEMBERSHIP

Registered Families	2235
Registered Persons	5558
Not Registered Families (estimate)	423
Church Staff & Employees	9
Average Sunday Mass Attendance	750
Students in Religious Education	92

PEOPLE ENTERING INTO THE CHURCH

Baptisms of Children	118
Baptisms of Adults into the Catholic Church	3
Reception of Baptized Christians into the Catholic Church	15

SACRAMENTS CELEBRATED

First Communions	60
Confirmations	50
Marriages	51
Funerals	24



FORMED is the premier Catholic streaming service, bringing beautiful and faithful Catholic content to parishes, families, and individuals around the world. You can now access award-winning studies and parish programs, inspiring audio content, movies, ebooks, and family-friendly kids' programming.

FORMED brings you the Catholic faith – on demand. All parishioners are able to sign up for free:

1. Visit signup.formed.org
2. Enter St. Alphonsus Catholic Church *(be sure to select the one in Chicago)*
3. Start browsing and enjoy!



The Young Adult Ministry (YAM) is one of St. Alphonsus' most active parish groups! YAM is led by a volunteer board and is guided by a Pastoral Associate. Stated simply, the ministry's mission is to help one another participate in Christ's mission, that we, as young adult Catholics, may be effective disciples, evangelists, and agents of charity in all that we do. YAM provides many social, intellectual, service, and spiritual opportunities for growth. Members range in age from 21-39 years old.

Be disciples. Make disciples.

Financial Info & Stats on the Church



The primary source of income for a church is always the Sunday offertory. It is not only the opportunity for parishioners to support their church, but also the obligation. One of the tenets of the Catholic Church is for the faithful to support the parish. Ideally this is done out of love, not out of obligation, because Scripture says that God loves a cheerful giver (2Cor 9:7). Fundraising, especially our Oktoberfest celebration, supplements the Sunday collection, but in no way equals or supplants it.

Out of the parish expenses, the biggest one is payroll and related costs of employees. While Jesus says that the laborer deserves his wage, it is unfortunate that church employees often receive less than fair market rate wages. In a perfectly just society, there would be little to no difference in annual salaries. As it is, this is a well known fact regarding teacher salaries, but the same reality is at play for most other church employees, making it quite difficult for lay employees to earn wages sufficient to support a family.

Ironically, at St. Alphonsus one of our biggest weaknesses in the Sunday collection is our beauty. While everyone – parishioners and visitors – loves to admire the architectural and aesthetic beauty of our church, it is easy to assume all maintenance is well in hand and any repair issues are promptly covered. With a church edifice that is 136 years old and a rectory that is 99 years old, infrastructure repairs abound. Keeping up with routine maintenance and repair is one of the larger line items in the annual budget, easily averaging around $100,000 over the past several years.

As regards our annual budget, calculated from our basic operating expenses throughout the 2024-25 fiscal year, the budget plans for an average Sunday collection of $15,192 to cover those costs. Unfortunately, the number of weeks we fall below the budgeted amount is more than the number of weeks we exceed it. This deficit puts added pressure on our fundraising activities and other smaller sources of revenue, such as interest or investment income.

In all areas, the parish and pastor exercises a great deal of prudence, working with a very active Finance Council to make sure that we always exercise prudent stewardship of all of our resources, assets, and blessings. Every dollar and every resource is understood to be a sacrificial gift entrusted to the parish because of an individual's or family's love of Christ and His church. Therefore all expenditures, both ordinary and extraordinary, are carefully accounted for. Every meeting of the Parish Finance Council begins and ends with an expression of gratitude for the beauty, assets, people, and resources we've been entrusted with, as well as an invocation for the Holy Spirit's gift of wisdom to guide us to be wise stewards of the resources entrusted to our care so that we may faithfully carry on the mission and ministry of St. Alphonsus Church.



St. Alphonsus Church in 1913

Financial Info & Stats on the Church



The Fiscal Year's Bullet Point Takeaways:

1 – The Church showed a healthy surplus in FY2025 of $28,191 as significantly increased Income outpaced increased expenses.

2 – Total Income increased 11% or about $143,000, which was approximately 7% higher than the Budget.

3 – Easter Collection income increased about $3,500 or more than 14%..

4 – The 26% increase ($38,421) in Rental Income was due to an unplanned $22,000 parking lot rental from The Daily Show using the Athenaeum building in August 2024, regular lease increases for Convent use and cellular rooftop use, and a few other one-time rentals.

5 – Over 200% improvement in Fundraising Income ($60,407) versus FY2024 was due to Oktoberfest's strong bounce back from the previous disappointing year. The 13% increase versus Budget was caused by recovered admission receipts, stronger sales, and increased fest sponsorships..

6 – Higher short-term CD rates were used to significantly increase Interest Income.

7 – Total expenses were up less than 1% versus Budget, which was about 6.5% higher than FY2024.

8 – Personnel costs increased 8% due to insurance/cost of living increases and extra part-time staffing.

	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25
ORDINARY INCOME		
Sunday and Holy Day Collections	$ 793,539	$ 811,336
Christmas Collection	$ 60,773	$ 61,282
Easter Collection	$ 31,304	$ 35,802 [3]
Other Collections	$ 12,038	$ 9,607
Tuition (for Religious Education)	$ 21,238	$ 23,063
Fees	$ 1,985	$ 5,990
Lease & Rental Income	$ 147,511	$ 185,932 [4]
Fund Raising Net Income	$ 55,704	$ 116,111 [5]
Interest & Investment Income	$ 34,497	$ 49,782 [6]
Auxiliary Groups	$ 6,697	$ 10,430
Miscellaneous Income	$ 144,445	$ 143,702
Total Income	**$ 1,309,731**	**$ 1,453,037** [2]
ORDINARY EXPENSES		
Salaries	$ 579,939	$ 624,750 [8]
Employee Benefits	$ 159,169	$ 172,261
Books & Supplies,Non-Liturgical	$ 17,634	$ 26,779 [9]
Administrative Expenses	$ 55,636	$ 64,387 [9]
Transportation	$ 0	$ 107
Food Service & Meals	$ 19,395	$ 19,734
Utilities	$ 63,445	$ 75,288 [9]
Maintenance & Building Repairs	$ 107,106	$ 88,358 [9]
Altar and Liturgical Supplies	$ 23,652	$ 25,328
Furniture & Equipment	$ 1,337	$ 1,185
Archdiocesan Assessment	$ 127,152	$ 128,484
PRMAA Assessment	$ 40,020	$ 40,377
Property & Casualty Insurance	$ 113,774	$ 127,759 [9]
Auto Ins-Priest Owned Vehicle	$ 4,926	$ 3,520
Miscellaneous	$ 24,708	$ 26,530
Total Expense	**$ 1,337,893**	**$ 1,424,846** [7]
NET Ordinary Income/(Loss)	**($ 28,162)**	**$ 28,191** [1]

9 – The $44,000 total of increases in Insurance (12%), Utilities (19%), Books (52%), and Administrative (16%) was partly offset by the Maintenance Expense decreasing 17.5% or $18,748 versus FY2024. This decreased amount was actually $31,642 or 26% under the FY2025 Maintenance Budget..

Parish Stats — on the School



At Alphonsus Academy and Center for the Arts, we offer an incredibly unique educational experience for students seeking academic rigor and a supportive Catholic community with exposure to the arts.

Our early education program is play-based to foster self-confidence and independence as learners. We offer both full and half day preschool programs, and we ensure kindergarten readiness for our graduates. Our elementary program focuses on emergent and foundational math and reading skills. Through small class sizes and carefully differentiated curriculum, each student receives the love and support needed. Two full time guidance counselors and three focused learning specialists make up our Student Support Team. This group pushes in and pulls out of classrooms for increased 1:1 support and encouragement. Our departmental middle school program prepares students for the rigors of a college preparatory high school. Students learn in tiered classes that are best tailored to their learning progress and are consistently supported by our High School Counselor with eyes on what is next.

Student Enrollment for 2024-25	*494*
Number of Faculty and Staff	*65*
Staff with Masters Degree	*50%*
Average Tenure of Faculty & Staff	*7 years*
Technology Ratio	*1:1*
Students in Pre-K	*78*
Students in grades K - 8	*412*
Graduates	*49*
Graduates accepted into their High School of first choice	*100%*

The classroom makes up the majority of our student experience but our community rounds it out. Involvement in athletics, the school musical, and enrichment opportunities is highly encouraged. Parents are regularly volunteering and gathering in support of the school and its students. Involvement on the school board, Mothers' and Fathers' Clubs, and even on the playground is present across the community, and newcomers are always welcome.

At AACA, the philosophy is that art enhances everything. The arts program includes visual arts, drama, music, and advanced "pathways" that explore specialty paths within the fields with a focus on STEM education. Courses include 3D printing, digital storytelling, paper maché, advanced band, and dance through generations. We also offer a comprehensive arts-integrated curriculum which infuses arts (visual, music, theater, media) to better reach students and challenge them creatively.

And of course, faith is at the heart of everything we do. Our Catholic foundation anchors us in practice and service. Daily prayer, weekly Mass, and ongoing service projects remind our students of our place in this world and responsibility to others.

Teacher retention and satisfaction is one of the best indicators of school success. At Alphonsus, we are incredibly fortunate to attract and retain faculty for an average of 7+ years (including both our first year teachers and our veterans).

Our nearly 500 students from the two year old Tots Program, Preschool, and Kindergarten through Eighth Grade are consistently challenged to be their best selves while serving others. Our high expectations yield high results which is evident in our students' command of the material, performance on iReady standardized tests, and ultimate high school matriculation. A full 100% of the Class of 2025 was admitted to their first choice Catholic high school.

Financial Info & Stats on the School



The Fiscal Year's Bullet Point Takeaways:

1 – Total Income increased 5.8% or $328,650 due to significant Tuition and Fee Income increases.

2 – Tuition income increased 8.1% or $377,696, and Fees 13% or $42,954 as Enrollment increased 21 students.

3 – Outside Funding disappeared, when the State of Illinois canceled its Tax Credit Scholarship Program.

4 – The School returned to its practice in earlier years of carrying over any surplus in its Athletic Department account to the following fiscal year (in this case to FY2026).

5 – Overall Expenses increased 6.5% or $362,563 due primarily to increased Personnel Expenses and significantly increased Instructional Material costs versus FY2024..

6 – Personnel Expenses increased 6.6% or $297,879.

7 – AACA Instructional Materials increased 71% or $57,672 almost exclusively due to the one-time purchase of classroom smartboards and similar teaching enhancements investments.

8 – Maintenance expenditures overall decreased 6.7% or $27,671. This category includes regular maintenance and extraordinary expenses (typically for deferred maintenance items). Even as extraordinary maintenance investments increased $35,520, regular maintenance expenditures were decreased 2% or $63,191.

	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25
ORDINARY INCOME		
Tuition	$ 4,663,487	$ 5,041,183 [2]
Fees	$ 328,860	$ 371,814 [2]
Outside Funding Sources	$ 44,105	$ 0 [3]
Fund Raising Net Income	$ 542,516	$ 544,597
Interest & Investment Income	$ 12,057	$ 14,184
Auxiliary Groups	$ 43,081	0 [4]
Miscellaneous Income	$ 16,062	$ 7,040
Total Income	**$ 5,650,168**	**$ 5,978,817** [1]
ORDINARY EXPENSES		
Salaries	$ 3,446,248	$ 3,682,275 [6]
Employee Benefits	$ 1,094,377	$ 1,156,230 [6]
Books & Supplies	$ 81,206	$ 138,877 [7]
Administrative Expenses	$ 203,411	$ 220,771
Transportation	$ 5,909	$ 9,861
Food Service & Meals	$ 3,015	$ 5,905
Utilities	$ 99,211	$ 107,449
Maintenance & Building Repairs	$ 413,119	$ 385,448 [8]
Furniture & Equipment	$ 4,455	$ 2,257
OCS Assessment	$ 27,914	$ 31,059
Property & Casualty Insurance	$ 120,780	$ 135,770
Miscellaneous	$ 83,811	$ 70,119
Total Expenses	**$ 5,583,457**	**$ 5,946,020** [5]
NET Ordinary Income/(Loss)	**$66,711**	**$ 32,797**

AACA ALPHONSUS ROCKETS

Summary of Oktoberfest



Our annual Oktoberfest is obviously our biggest parish event and largest fundraiser. An event of that magnitude takes a lot of planning, preparation and work from a very dedicated team of Fest directors who work with myself and other key members of our parish staff. I cannot adequately express my gratitude to them all – and to all the volunteers – for the way everyone rallies together (despite a few inevitable bumps in the road), resulting in the warm feelings of fun and friendship summed up in the German word Gemütlichkeit.



One of the awkward things in talking about Oktoberfest in the Annual Report is that the report covers the Fest from the previous fiscal year, not the one we just celebrated several weeks ago. So we look back more than a year to the last weekend of September, 2024. The good news, though, is that both last year's and this year's Oktoberfests were successful. To very briefly summarize the reason why 2025's was a success: the weather was warm, the beer was cold, the people came, and the brats sold out.

The regular Fest attendees may recall that in the previous fiscal year, Oktoberfest 2024, the festival grounds were reconfigured. The two gates were moved into the gangway between the church and Athenaeum, and on the driveway between rectory and school. Also last year the St. Al's food tent was strategically positioned close to the entrances for maximum visibility. Kinderfest in 2024 also experienced upgrades, the most fun of which was opening ceremonies led the AACA school band.





We are very blessed by the many things that contribute to successful Oktoberfest, and each year we hope to improve. The team of directors is always open to ideas for improvements, so if you have any suggestions to share or would like to join the committee of Fest Directors, please contact Fr. Bauer at the rectory.

Generation to Generation: Capital Campaign Update



Every parish in the Archdiocese of Chicago has or soon will be participating in a diocesan-wide capital campaign called Generation to Generation: Answer the Call. This campaign is an opportunity to strengthen our local parish and support the broader Chicago Catholic community by spiritually renewing our parishes, supporting our priests, and assisting parish communities in need.

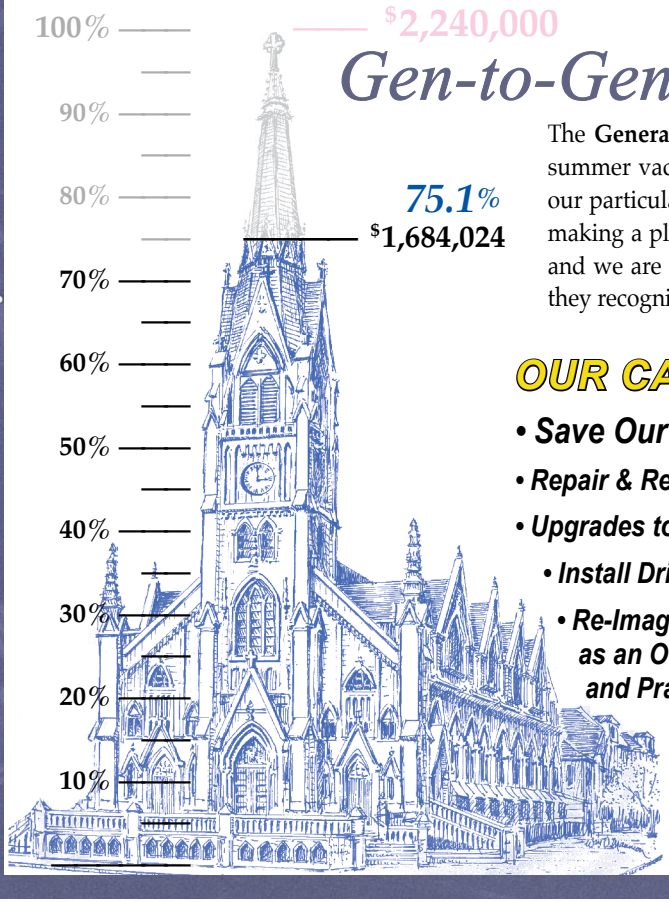
The Gen-to-Gen Campaign is a five-year campaign, rolled out across the Archdiocese with parishes grouped in a series of waves. Because of some of the particular needs we have, we elected to participate in the first wave – the spring of 2025 – to take full advantage of the campaign support offered by the Archdiocese, which will enable us to address our greatest needs, as well as undertake some exciting campus upgrades and beautification projects.

As with any campaign, we are collecting pledges from parishioners over a five year period. Because of the scope of our specific capital needs, we are pursuing a stretch goal of $2,240,000.

Two things are required for even the stretch goal to become easily achievable: first, the backing and support of everyone in our parish family; and secondly, prayer. St. Alphonsus Parish has been the spiritual home for many thousands of families for six generations, and the vibrancy and life of our parish flows from our sense of faith, love of Christ, prayer, and our beautiful celebration of the sacraments. A successful campaign will make St. Alphonsus a beautiful spiritual home for generations to come.

To learn more, visit our parish website at www.stalphonsuschicago.org/generation-to-generation

To make a pledge, a one-time gift, or a recurring donation, please visit www.givecentral.org/customizable-online-giving/39/event/35738



as of 11/11/2025

Gen-to-Gen Capital Campaign Progress

The **Generation-to-Generation** capital campaign started in early 2025, but was paused for summer vacation and Oktoberfest. Our campaign committee explained to us the goals and our particular needs, and invited groups of parishioners and school families to support it by making a pledge. We currently stand at 74.1% of our stretch goal – *which is simply amazing* – and we are so thankful to all the parishioners & families who have made a pledge because they recognize our needs for the restoration and improvement projects.

OUR CAMPAIGN GOALS:

- ***Save Our Iconic Veranda***
- ***Repair & Restore the Organ***
- ***Upgrades to parish Common Rooms***
- ***Install Drinking Fountains in the Church***
- ***Re-Imagine the Rectory Side Courtyard as an Outdoor Classroom and Prayer Garden***
- ***Sharing with the Arch for Spiritual Renewal Programs, Scholarships, and Priest Retirement & Health Care***

LEARN MORE AND
MAKE YOUR PLEDGE

or visit the parish website at www.stalphonsuschicago.org

or pledge via GiveCentral.org and in the St. Alphonsus-Chicago page, search for ***Pillars & Pipes***