

St. Ambrose Capital Campaign FAQs

PROJECTS & TIMELINE

What is the fundraising target for the Restore, Renew, Rejoice Capital Campaign, and what types of projects will the funds be used for?

- *Our goal is to raise \$2.5 million over the next three years for St. Ambrose to address major facilities and operations concerns, safety & security challenges, and technology upgrades. We must also replenish our reserve funds to respond to unforeseen circumstances in the future and to be in a better position to invest in ourselves for years to come. **We are excited to share that early pledges currently total about \$670,000. That means we have approximately \$1.83 million left to raise.***

What specific projects are budgeted for in our Restore, Renew, Rejoice Campaign, and what are some of the practical benefits each of the projects will provide St. Ambrose Parish?

- *The **church roof** was at the end of its life and had significant issues with leaking. The early completion of our roof project eliminated numerous leaks throughout the church. The existing **steeple** had deteriorated significantly and had to be replaced. Our new steeple was fabricated out of aluminum and matches the dimensions of the old steeple. **This project is completed, with final leaks being addressed under warranty by our contractor.** (\$673,083)*
- *We have alleviated the standing water that collects in the lower parking lot, and we will repave and restripe all **parking areas** for improved campus safety, access, and parking. The parking lots are deteriorating in several areas and need to be resurfaced. If possible, more spots on the upper lots will be identified for the disabled. The parking blocks will be reinstalled. **This project is scheduled for the summer of 2027.** (\$330,700)*
- *A new **HVAC** (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) system in the church will regulate temperature, humidity, and air quality, ensuring comfort and safety. We will also achieve savings on our utility costs. The existing system is over 20 years old and is considered inefficient by today's standards. The advanced age of the system means we are spending money for maintenance and are vulnerable to system failure that could leave us with reduced capacity to cool and heat the church. For example, the fresh air controls that reduce operating costs and support building health have all been disabled due to inability to regulate both temperature and humidity levels. **This project will be scheduled for early 2027.** (\$275,000)*
- *We are increasing safety and security through the addition of **new cameras, windows, and doors** designed to strengthen the church's perimeter and overall environment, promoting a safer community. Plans include upgrading and expanding video surveillance coverage across the church property to monitor activity and deter potential threats. Installing new, hardened exterior entrance doors at the two primary church office entry points will also provide stronger control. **This project is partially complete.** (\$60,000)*
- *We will install an **electronic marquee** in the same location as the current marquee using the existing brickwork. The new marquee will be more visible and would allow scrolling for more current messaging, including fundraisers and church & school activities. The size of the marquee and the content shared will not be overbearing or cause safety concerns or interfere*

with the observation of traffic lights. **The timeline for this project has not been determined.** (\$50,000)

- We will enhance the **safety of the school playground** by transforming the ground surface to help absorb and soften impact and upgrade the existing playground equipment. **The timeline for this project has not been determined.** (\$150,000)
- We will **enlarge our gathering space** (also known as the vestibule/lobby/narthex) on the south side of the church (the main entrance). The current area is small and does not allow an area for gathering of congregants, especially for special liturgies, such as weddings, funerals or processions. Our enlarged area would also provide space for socializing after Sunday Mass. The vestibule will be expanded to the south under the current canopy. Our plan will add more than 500 square feet, nearly tripling the existing space. The current stained glass of the Luminous Mysteries will be relocated to the exterior windows. The clear glass panels will be moved to the edge of the brick walls by the sacristy/restroom, enclosing the gathering space. For increased safety and security, the main entry doors and clear glass windows will be replaced with solid doors and windows with safety glass. **The timeline for this project has not been determined.** (\$300,000)
- We will **remove trees** from the perimeter of the property that are dead, dying, severely damaged, or structurally weak. **This project will take place over time, as needed.** (\$10,000)
- We will **replenish savings/reserves** that have been drawn down as we began our early projects, such as completion of the roof restoration and strengthening our school against hostile acts. We seek to restore prior balances to be good stewards for all our parishioners and to be prepared with adequate reserves in the event of unexpected increases in expenses or decreases in future contributions. (\$325,000)
- Our **Diocesan contribution** from this campaign is assessed at \$146,160 to support Springfield's Centennial Campaign. Every parish in the Diocese is participating in this mission work to support deferred maintenance at Diocesan properties.
- **Campaign administrative expenses** are estimated to total \$130,000 over three years to cover our consultant costs during the feasibility study, campaign management, and follow-up coaching, as well as miscellaneous expenses such as printing costs and food for events.
- We have included \$50,057 in **contingency costs** for unknown financial circumstances. Examples include bids that surpass the estimate and efforts that exceed the planned scope of work.

What are the spiritual benefits of our planned projects?

- Our parish buildings must be refurbished and improved, and in some instances enlarged to support impactful ministry activities. It is essential that our campus is welcoming, safe, secure, comfortable, right-sized, up-to-date, and of the highest quality. St. Ambrose is an important place where we encounter God, and this space needs to be worthy and viable to sustain our parishioners and school families.
- As good stewards and to honor and respect those who have come before us, we intend to leave St. Ambrose as good or better than we found it. Generations past have sacrificed greatly so that we have the benefit of our beautiful church and school facilities today. God calls us to protect, preserve, and grow His Church as we serve our current families and plan for the future.

- *Safeguarding the security of our church and school for all parishioners and school students is paramount to our call to protect the vulnerable. No one should feel unsafe when they come to St. Ambrose to encounter our Lord.*
- *An enlarged gathering space will support our liturgical ministries, including funerals and weddings, to allow for more space for welcoming, gathering, and processing.*

Can this project list be changed or amended?

- *After much deliberation about facility needs and project priorities, it is unlikely this list of projects will change significantly; however, if circumstances arise that cause us to amend our priorities, we will do so as necessary.*
- *For example, if a new, more critical need is identified at some point in near the future, we will adjust our campaign projects accordingly.*
- *In addition, if we do not meet our full campaign fundraising target, we will prioritize our projects and apply funds in accordance with the priority list. As a result, some projects may need to be delayed or canceled.*

Is there a certain order or priority of the designated projects?

- *The order of the projects will depend on many factors, including the timing and amount of donations we receive. For example, the parking lot and HVAC improvements are planned to occur before the enlargement of the vestibule. See timelines listed below.*

What is the anticipated timeline of our various projects?

- *After the completion of our roof project in 2025, we installed the steeple in June 2026.*
- *The drainage project in the lower parking lot was completed in the summer of 2026. The remaining parking lot work will occur in the summer of 2027.*
- *Increased safety and security measures are ongoing, including new cameras, windows with safety glass, solid doors, and removal of dead or dying trees.*
- *Some early pledges have been earmarked for the digital marquee and that project will occur soon.*
- *The HVAC project will be scheduled for early 2027 based on design and equipment delivery.*
- *The timeline is still being determined for enhancing safety on the school playground and enlarging the church vestibule.*

DECISION PROCESS

Who has guided these facility decisions?

- *Our Buildings & Grounds Committee and our Safety & Security Committee have been analyzing, identifying, and prioritizing parish projects in anticipation of this Capital Campaign. Our list includes some deferred maintenance items and some mission projects necessary for St. Ambrose Parish to grow and thrive—now and for generations to come.*

- *For the past year, we have been seeking and receiving input from the entire parish through open communication, conversations, and our online survey as part of our campaign feasibility study.*
- *Capital projects and plans were approved by parish leadership, including Fr. Steve, Finance Council, Parish Pastoral Council, School Advisory Council, and St. Ambrose (School) Parents Association.*
- *The Diocese has reviewed and approved our identified campaign goals pertaining to facilities and operations concerns, safety & security challenges, technology upgrades, and reserve replenishment.*

Who is running the Restore, Renew, Rejoice Campaign?

- *Fr. Steve is advised by parish leadership regarding all campaign decisions. Specifically, there is a Campaign Management Team made up of parish volunteers who meet weekly. That team includes Lisa Hayes (Chair), Susan Piazza, Sarah St. John, Bob Baird, and Mark Kratschmer.*
- *In addition, the campaign has an Advisory Team that meets three times to help guide campaign execution.*
- *The true foundation of the Restore, Renew, Rejoice Campaign is the more than 100 volunteers who are donating their time and talents for the benefit of St. Ambrose. These amazing stewards manage all aspects of the campaign including prayer, gratitude, communication, and outreach.*

What is the goal for replenishing our savings?

- *We plan to replenish savings spent on the early projects of this Campaign. Our goal during the Restore, Renew, Rejoice Capital Campaign is to add \$325,000 to our reserve funds. This will replenish our savings to a pre-campaign level.*
- *Maintaining adequate savings will sustain the financial viability of St. Ambrose as continued parish maintenance and necessary capital projects arise in the future.*

What is our parish contribution to the Diocesan Centennial Campaign, how was that contribution determined, and how does it relate to our parish Capital Campaign?

- *St. Ambrose is participating in a unique project that engages all parishes in the Diocese to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the dedication of our Cathedral Church in Springfield. This Diocesan Centennial Campaign recognizes and seeks to honor the generosity and hard work of those who have come before us, while engaging the faithful today in planning and funding initiatives to support us now and into the future. All parishes in the Diocese have been asked to revitalize our mission through campus refurbishment and resource renewal.*
- *Our parish contribution to the Centennial Campaign is assessed at \$146,160. This amount was calculated by the Diocese in the following manner: taking the average of our offertory (unrestricted giving) received in FY2022 and FY2023, multiplying that number by 1.5 (an average, achievable capital campaign goal), and then assessing a 10 percent tithe.*
- *Our required contribution is fixed; it will not be less than or more than this amount, regardless of how much money we raise through our Restore, Renew, Rejoice Capital Campaign.*
- *The Diocesan Centennial Campaign mission priorities include work needed for our Diocesan campus renovation. For example, our contribution, when combined with the contributions of all parishes in the Diocese, will help fund exterior brick restoration at our Cathedral of the*

Immaculate Conception; renovation of the Catholic Pastoral Center, home to Catholic Charities; and campus improvements at the Villa Maria Retreat Center.

- *Our support is an opportunity to show our gratitude for our mother Church and the ministry of the larger Church.*

What happens if we raise more than \$2.5 million? And what happens if we raise less than \$2.5 million

- *If we exceed our campaign goal, we will be blessed with additional reserve funds to ensure that St. Ambrose Parish thrives well into the future, able to cover any necessary expenses that arise as we maintain our facilities and advance our mission as a vibrant faith community.*
- *If we do not meet our campaign goal, we will prioritize the needed projects and we will not be able at this time to accomplish all of the critical work that has been deemed necessary.*

Who is Church Development and how are they helping in this campaign?

- *Church Development is a capital campaign consulting firm that specializes in helping churches raise money for capital projects. They have conducted more than 300 successful church campaigns over the past 33 years.*
- *St. Ambrose hired Church Development at a cost of \$14,000 in early 2026 to conduct a feasibility study to determine if a capital campaign would be successful for us right now. The results of that feasibility study were very positive.*
- *We then contracted with Church Development to provide comprehensive support to us during our capital campaign and for three years of ongoing stewardship consultation. Their flat fee is \$95,000 to manage the campaign and the three-year follow-up period. This rate is similar to other capital campaign consulting firms. We selected Church Development based on their focus on community building and prayer.*
- *Church Development utilizes a stewardship approach to raising funds and engages numerous parish volunteers throughout the process. We currently have six teams working with the support of Church Development to inspire understanding, discernment, and gifts toward our campaign goal.*
- *Church Development is a partner with the International Catholic Stewardship Council, which is a big plus that will help us fulfill our vision.*
- *In addition to the contractual fees paid to Church Development identified above, the other costs represented in our Campaign Administrative Costs budget (\$130,000) include consultant travel reimbursements and miscellaneous expenses such as printing costs and food for events.*

What level of campaign participation is expected based on the results of our campaign feasibility study?

- *Early in 2026 we hired Church Development to conduct a feasibility study for a capital campaign. A broad cross-section of 222 households (243 individuals), [approximately one fourth of our parish family] provided feedback through interviews and online surveys. Here are a few highlights from the study:*
 - *97% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that St. Ambrose Catholic Church effectively meets their Spiritual needs.*

- **93%** of the respondents have a high level of confidence in and trust in parish leadership to make wise decisions about the future of the church.
- **89%** of respondents rate the proposed St. Ambrose facility projects as important or very important.
- **89%** of the respondents would financially support the three-year capital campaign at some level.
- **89%** of the respondents indicated they would financially support a campaign, and those who shared a number expressed an interest in giving a total of more than \$1 million.
- **Based on the positive results of the overall study, St. Ambrose Parish decided to move forward with a \$2.5 million capital campaign (of which \$1.83 million still needs to be raised.) This financial forecast is based on a professionally run, three-year capital campaign that includes parishioner engagement, clear communication, stewardship education, and prayerful discernment.**

PLEDGES AND GIFTS

What is the difference between my annual gift(s) and campaign gift(s)?

- *Your annual offertory gifts support the ongoing operational needs of the parish, such as day-to-day maintenance and upkeep, payroll, insurance, utilities, school operations, business office expenses, etc.*
- *Your campaign gift will support only the planned capital projects as outlined above. These projects are critical to our parish's sustainability and are not possible to achieve through our annual budget alone.*
- *Your capital campaign commitment is intended to be an additional gift, above and beyond your regular support of St. Ambrose through offertory giving and other fundraising efforts. Ongoing offertory and fundraising contributions are essential to sustaining the parish's daily ministries, programs, and operational needs. As you prayerfully discern your participation in our capital campaign, we ask that you maintain your current level of annual giving and not redirect existing gifts toward your campaign commitment.*
- *Your continued support of both the parish's ongoing mission and this special campaign will help ensure a strong future for our community. Please support both endeavors as you are able.*

Why does the campaign ask for gift pledges over three-years?

- *Three years/36 months is a highly successful capital campaign duration that provides parishioners the opportunity for impactful participation to personally be able to plan a gift that helps meet the intended campaign goal.*
- ***The most common gift to a campaign of this type is a pledge of 3% of annual income in each of the next three years, or a one-time gift of 3% of assets.***
- *We recognize that some people do not have the ability to make a 3% gift over multiple years, while others will have the capacity to share more. **We ask that all parish families pray about how God is calling them to share their blessings with St. Ambrose to support facility projects that will enhance the vibrancy of our parish for decades to come.***

- *There are additional ways you could consider making a gift. **For example, we accept gifts of non-cash assets, such as stocks or Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs) from certain retirement accounts, potentially utilizing a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD). Company match programs are another option.** If you are interested in making a gift of this type, please let us know so we can give you the proper account information. Always contact your tax advisor and financial professional before considering such a gift.*
- ***Gifts of all sizes are welcome and needed and are tax deductible to the extent permitted by the IRS.***

Can campaign gifts be made online?

- *Yes, you can securely contribute your one-time or recurring gifts online by visiting saintambroseparish.org/capital-campaign. The portal you will find there allows families of St. Ambrose Parish to easily set up, track, and manage their stewardship commitments for the Restore, Renew, Rejoice Capital Campaign from any smartphone, tablet, or computer. Give securely using your preferred credit card or debit card and receive an immediate electronic receipt for your personal tax and financial records.*
- *If you plan to donate online, please still turn in a pledge card for our planning purposes.*

Can I donate non-cash assets such as stocks or real estate?

- *Yes, the donation of stocks and other appreciated assets can often be a meaningful and tax-efficient way to support St. Ambrose. Please speak to your tax advisor before initiating a gift of this type. We do not provide tax advice.*
- *When making a gift of stock, contact Michelle in the business office for proper transfer instructions. Sharing your gift details in advance also allows us to properly acknowledge your generosity.*
- *Because gifts of real estate and other substantial assets often involve legal, tax, and valuation considerations, we encourage you to consult your financial advisor, tax professional, and/or estate planning attorney to determine the best approach for your circumstances. Always contact the parish office in advance of such a gift, as there may be certain assets we cannot accept.*
- *If you plan to donate gifts of non-cash assets, please still turn in a pledge card for our planning purposes.*

Can I donate to the campaign through my retirement account?

- *Yes, making a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) through certain retirement accounts is an excellent way to participate in our Restore, Renew, Rejoice Campaign. To achieve this potential tax benefit, you need to initiate your donation directly through the financial institution that holds your retirement account, with the distribution payable to St. Ambrose. Funds distributed to you personally do not qualify as a QCD.*
- *A QCD can be an effective way to support the parish while potentially reducing taxable income and, for eligible individuals, satisfying all or part of their Required Minimum Distribution (RMD).*
- *Consult your tax advisor or financial professional to determine how a QCD may benefit your specific tax situation.*

- *Always contact Michelle in the business office prior to making a gift of this type to ensure you have the proper account information and to allow us to properly acknowledge your generosity.*
- *If you plan to donate through your retirement account, please still turn in a pledge card for our planning purposes.*

Can gifts be designated to certain projects?

- *The short answer is yes. The long answer is please speak with Fr. Steve or one of our campaign Management Team members if you'd like to discuss options for gift designation. We will likely not be able to honor designations that are significantly beyond the scope of our current project plan.*

When will we receive our pledge cards and when will we be asked to start making gifts?

- *Every church and school family will receive their campaign packet in mid-October, including a campaign brochure, a prayer & discernment guide, and a pledge card.*
- *You are asked to return your pledge card at Mass during **Commitment Weekend, November 7–8, 2026**. Between now and then, please pray about how God is calling you to participate in our Restore, Renew, Rejoice Campaign.*
- *You are asked to consider a three-year commitment; however, the actual timing of your gifts is up to your discretion. A one-time gift, annual gifts, or monthly gifts are all welcome.*
- *Some people have already pledged and/or donated to our campaign. Early pledges currently total more than \$670,000.*
- *Many people will choose to make donations toward their pledge commitment immediately, especially if there is a tax advantage for you to give this year. It is also acceptable to budget to begin fulfilling your pledge in early 2027. Please fill out your pledge card with as much specificity as possible regarding the timing of your gift(s), so we can plan our projects accordingly.*

Who is entrusted with the campaign donation money while the campaign is going on?

- *All donations designated to our Restore, Renew, Rejoice Campaign run through our local business office. Confidentiality of every pledge and every dollar donated is of utmost importance, as it is with all financial matters at St. Ambrose.*

Are there other sources of funding available beyond parish families?

- *Yes, our campaign team will explore all funding options, including public and private grants and donations from the broader community.*
- *The majority of our funds will come from parishioner pledges.*
- *We have consistently secured grants for the school and church campus from local, national, state, and federal agencies. We will continue to do so in the future as long as we are able to maintain our Catholic identity.*

Will there be special recognition for donors to this campaign?

- *Yes, in gratitude for your generosity, all participants will be recognized with a plaque or other permanent feature incorporated into our architectural design. We look forward to sharing more details about this recognition as our plans develop.*

MISCELLANEOUS

Are there other diocesan obligations we owe the diocese each year?

- *Since 2021 when the Annual Catholic Service appeal transitioned to a diocesan tithe, 10% of our general revenue is sent to the Springfield Diocese for ongoing regular diocesan operations. We send \$8,000 to \$10,000 a month to the diocese and will continue to do so, based on offertory revenue.*
- *Our capital campaign revenue is treated differently. Our campaign contributions are not included in this tithe calculation—rather, our diocesan contribution for capital projects is set and capped at \$146,100, no matter how much our capital campaign raises. This is our contribution toward the diocese's \$7.7 million Centennial Capital Campaign which supports the entire diocese.*

Is there a link on the St. Ambrose website to view information on the Restore, Renew, Rejoice Campaign?

- Yes. Visit saintambroseparish.org/capital-campaign to learn more.

Who can I contact if I have questions?

- *Please feel free to speak with any member of the Management Team if you have questions. If you need contact information, please call the parish office. The Management Team includes Fr. Steve, Lisa Hayes (Chair), Susan Piazza, Sarah St. John, Bob Baird, and Mark Kratschmer.*