Barrier preview: "The Parish Community of St. Ambrose Church"

**Palm Sunday**

**Praise God aloud with joy**

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**Parish Staff**

Rev. Dr. Anthony M. Barratt, Pastor
Helmut Neurohr, Permanent Deacon
Frank Garceau, Permanent Deacon
Ann McCauley, Business Manager
Erin Muir, P.A. for Liturgy & Pastoral Life
Tom Acemoglu, P.A. for Evangelization & Catechesis
Justina Treventi, Faith Formation Admin. Asst.
Mark Trudeau, Life Teen for High School and Jr. High
Tracey Penk-Masucci, Youth Ministry Asst.
Joan Welch, Parish Secretary
Thomas Green, Parish Music Director
Nancy Acemoglu, RN, Parish Nurse
David Dobkowski, PhD-Counselor, 859-4015
Jim LaBombard, Athletic Director
371-1996 • email stambrosecyo@gmail.com

**Parish Trustees**

Catherine Halayko / Joseph Sinisgalli

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**St. Ambrose School**

518-785-6453
Website: www.stambroselatham.org
E-Mail: principal@stambroselatham.com
Terri McGraw, Principal
Kelly Sano, Secretary

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**Mass Schedule**

Saturday Vigil: 4:30pm
Sunday: 7:30, 9:00, 11:30am & 5:30pm-Life Teen
Daily: Monday & Wednesday 6:30am
Tuesday & Thursday 9:00am
Communion Service: Friday 6:30am
Holydays and Holidays subject to change
(see bulletin)

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**Church of St. Ambrose**

347 Old Loudon Road, Latham, NY 12110
518-785-1351

Website: www.stambroselatham.com
E-Mail: parishsecretary@stambroselatham.com

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**Office Hours**

Monday–Thursday 9:00am–6:00pm
Friday 9:00am–4:00pm
Saturday & Sunday CLOSED
THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON:
PART THREE: THE OLDER SON

In the last of our three reflections on the parable of the prodigal son and Rembrandt’s magnificent and powerful painting of the parable, let us focus our attention on the older son. Many of us may find him the most puzzling character in the parable and perhaps identify most readily with him in our own family or other situation. After all, he has been the dutiful son and stayed home to do what was expected of him. He even seems unappreciated in a way, as we hear in his words: “...look, all these years I have served you and not once did I disobey your orders; yet you never gave me even a young goat to feast on with my friends”. Yet, he seems to be the bad guy in the story: the fall guy as compared to the warmth of the father’s love and mercy, or the younger son’s appealing repentance and new life.

The older son certainly has a strong sense of duty and commitment and seems to do all the right things. He also still has his freedom and status as the older son and he will indeed inherit everything: “my son, you are here with me always; everything I have is yours.” Yet something has gone sadly wrong. Perhaps something has died within him, within his very heart and soul and there is a nagging sense or even irony that this older son also has journeyed or drifted away from his father and indeed from his true humanity. He seems to be a son in terms of biology or the laws of inheritance, but not a son in fact or in love. He will indeed have everything that materially belongs to the father, but he does not seem to inherit his father’s love, compassion and mercy. Like the younger son, we might say that he has lost his true status and has taken an inner journey away from his father.

Rembrandt indicates much of this by the way that the older son seems to stand aloof from the scene. It is almost as though we could split the picture in half: the father and the younger son on one side and then the older son on the other and between them is a large dark space or gulf. Notice too how the older son is so tall. In fact, he is standing on a platform; perhaps, we might think, looking down from the moral high ground on the scene below him. He stands tall, stiff, aloof; even the stick that Rembrandt puts clasped rigidly in his hands symbolizes this attitude. Indeed, we can notice too how his hands are tightly closed and firmly holding the stick: they are not open like the father’s. Bodily language is so important here! The younger son kneels and buries his head in the father’s lap, the father stoops down and embraces, but the older son stands tall and proud (and alone).

We might also say that the older son has lost his freedom, peace and joy, just like the younger son, though in a different and perhaps darker way. Rembrandt shows this in that the older son receives some of that warm light from the father and yet he is also disappearing into the shadows and darkness. He seems to be imprisoned in anger, jealousy and bitterness. It all explodes as he refuses to come in and celebrate with the family. As the Gospel narrates, he pours out a litany of anger and recrimination that may have been building up for many years, maybe even before the younger son left and squandered his inheritance.

In this tirade, the older son also disrespects and hurts his father and does so also by forcing the father to leave the celebration (and, we might also say, leave his dignity) to come out to plead with his older son to join the celebration. The younger son, as we have seen, insulted and hurt his father by asking for his inheritance now (a way of saying “I wish you were dead” so that I can get my hands on my money right now!), but the older son also is guilty of the same offence. He goes even further, by also refusing to acknowledge the father’s other son, his younger brother. He cannot bring himself to say “my brother”, but rather “your son.”

Of course, the parable is there to challenge us and to get us to reflect on our own situation. We too can become prisoners to attitudes that can lead us on a journey to a faraway place, far away from the image and likeness of God that is our human nature: attitudes such as anger, bitterness, envy, jealousy, and we too can lose our joy or peace. We too can offend the father by our words and actions. We too can easily forget, as St. Augustine reminds us, that serving and obeying God is a tremendous honor and gift, not some grudging obligation. We too can find our faith or our relationship with the Lord becoming locked in the permafrost of cold duty or as a distant obligation. We too can be offended by the very presence of others and not even acknowledge them as members of God’s family, thinking, for example, “what is that person doing in church?” As St. Ambrose wisely concludes, “let us not envy those who return from a distant country, seeing that we ourselves also were afar off.”

We do not know how the story in the parable ends: perhaps our Lord leaves this open deliberately. Rembrandt too seems to freeze the story at one particular moment, inviting us to think what might happen next. I am sure that we hope that the older son, like the younger son, also “comes to his senses”, realizing that a diet of anger, resentment or bitterness is a poor diet indeed for the soul. Let us also hope that he journeys back from his distant country to the father (and his brother), letting the words of his father unfreeze his heart and call him back home. Perhaps the older son will relax that frigid and upright posture, come down off his high platform and move into the light, embracing both his father and his younger brother. Then all can rejoice that he too was lost, but is found, was dead but has come to life again.

Fr. Anthony
Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord

Stations of the Cross

Please join us for the Stations of the Cross each Friday at 7 PM in the Church. This week the stations will be led by Life Teen.

Holy Week Parish Closings
- Parish & School Offices will be closed on Holy Thursday & Good Friday.
- There will be NO Eucharistic Adoration on Good Friday, 3/25.

Easter Flowers and the St. Vincent de Paul Society
The St. Vincent de Paul Society will be purchasing flowers to decorate the altar for Easter. If you wish to help with this endeavor, your donation, in memory of a loved one or in your family’s name, will be used to purchase Easter plants. Surplus donations will be used to continue the work of the St. Vincent de Paul Society in assisting the underprivileged of our parish family. More information can be found on the lavender sheets found at the entrances of church. Thank you for your continued support.

Martha Ministry
With Easter coming soon, Martha Ministry is in need of volunteers to help with the Holy Thursday Dessert Sharing, Good Friday Soup Supper and Holy Saturday RCIA Reception.

We will also need help with First Holy Communion on Saturday, May 7 at 9 AM and the Confirmation on Sunday, May 22nd after 5:30 PM Mass. If you would like to help us, please come to our meeting on Monday, March 7th at 7 PM in Meeting Room #1. If you can’t make the meeting or if you have any questions please call Donna Sabatino at 782-1470. Please call Rose Ann Szwoed at 469-5367 to help with the Soup Supper.

Pantry Volunteers Needed
Can you volunteer a 4 hour period one day a month? Volunteers are needed to fill requests for food. If interested, please call Pauline 785-1351.

Easter Egg Hunt Committee would appreciate your help in donating small individually wrapped candy that will fit inside plastic Easter eggs. There will be a basket available for the candy at the main entrance of the Church through March 20th. THANK YOU!

Diocese Special Collection
Once a year, on Good Friday, our parish is called on to support Christians in the Holy Land. Many Christians in the Holy Land depend on this Special Pontifical Collection. It offers a direct link for people of our diocese to be witnesses for peace, supporting parishes and schools, outreach to the poor, welcome to pilgrims, maintenance of the shrines, and conducting pastoral ministry in the land of Our Lord.

Please help by giving to the collection on Good Friday.
Are you an adult who has not made the Sacrament of Confirmation?

We can help you today!

Contact “faithformationAA@stambroselatham.com” and we’d be happy to help!

We Now Offer E-Giving

An Alternative Way of Making Your Contribution

- Accessible by Smart Phone and Computer
- Industry-Standard Security
- Check, Debit, or Credit Card
- Set up for a one-time or weekly contribution

Visit www.stambroselatham.com

Spring Enrichment will be held this year at The College of Saint Rose in Albany, May 18–20 and - new this year - at five other sites across the Albany Diocese May 21, is a series of courses, workshops and keynote addresses on various aspects of faith.

Spring Enrichment is targeted to catechists, youth ministers, teachers and anyone in parish ministries and other aspects of Church life. This year’s theme is, “God always knocks on the doors of our hearts,” a line from Pope Francis’ remarks last September at the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia.

Learn more at www.rcda.org/springenrichment or by calling the diocesan Catholic Schools Office, (518) 453-6602.
Save-the-Date March 19th

Dinner in the Parish Center for all Conformandi and their Sponsors. It will be a great evening of faith sharing and community bonding while we break bread and break open the Word of God. Please be sure to come and contact the Lifeteen Office to RSVP.

Save-the-Date March 31st

There will be a thank you Dinner for all those who supported the Lifeteen Mission Trip either by prayer or in any other manner, to the Dominican Republic during winter break, 2016. It was an amazing experience with God holding us all in the palm of His hand. Please come and join us for a meal and a moment of celebration for the participation God had in this awesome effort of mercy and love. You made it possible for us to grow in the love of Jesus Christ and now we want to show you how your efforts will make a difference to our community and to the future of our Teenage family. Please contact the Lifeteen office if you are able to attend and we will be sure to have enough food for everyone.

The 11th Annual St. Isaac Jogues Youth Conference—will be held here on the campus of St. Ambrose Parish. It is the premier upstate youth conference and this year is going to be the best yet. Please reserve these dates and plan to have your teenage son or daughter attend. Registration begins April 1st. If you are an Adult and want to volunteer to help make this event the best for our diocesan teens go to the web site: joguesyouthconference.com and register or inquire about what you can do to help.

March 25th Save-the-Date

July 15-17 Save-the-Date
What a week of fun in learning!

Last Saturday our Odyssey of the Mind team consisting of 6 third graders and 1 fifth grader competed among hundreds of other students from around the Capital Region. Placing 5th our first time competing was a tremendous accomplishment. I couldn’t be prouder!

Tuesday, students traveled around the world learning about the culture, climate, habitats, animals and famous people from the 7 continents. I was so impressed with the various projects and costumes! Everyone learned a great deal about everything from penguins to politics, the Aborigines to Chinese New Year.

Saturday evening we will relax and have fun with our family and friends at the annual Family Gala. There will be good food, great music and loads of fun raffle prizes to win!

Next Thursday morning, St. Patrick’s Day, students will have the opportunity to “follow the rainbow to the next grade.” Each class will spend about an hour at the next level. This is an opportunity for the students to see what next year will bring academically and socially. Hopefully this will give students something to look forward to and also an opportunity to allay any fears or anxiety.

Our 4th and 5th graders have shown great concern for those in our region, country and around the world who do not have clean drinking water. To that end, they have requested a dress down day on March 18th to raise funds to help provide clean water for those in need.

Mr. Virgiglio, Associate Superintendent of Schools asks Alexa all about her African country, Morocco.

Pre K students show off their Passports as they travel from class to class.

The Love of St. Joseph
March 19th

Saint Joseph is one of the most beloved Saints. He represents workers and is the protector of the family.

According to the legend, there was a famine in Sicily many centuries ago. The villagers prayed to St. Joseph, and asked his intercession before the throne of God. Their prayers were answered. With the ending of the dreadful famine a special feast of thanksgiving was held in commemoration of Saint Joseph. This became a tradition in Italy and beyond. Families prepared huge buffets. They then invited the less fortunate people of the village, especially the homeless or sick.

The celebration begins with a religious table. The villagers portray an elderly man, a lovely woman, and a little child. They are seated at the head table. The village Priest blesses the food. Those attending may eat what they choose. When they leave they go with thankful hearts and leave with the blessing. The steps are decorated especially with white linens, lights of green, brown and deep yellow, representing St. Joseph’s attire. The food dishes represent the harvest, the created beauties of the world. Breads are baked in shapes of a staff and cross.

Wouldn’t it be grand to start this tradition at our beloved St. Ambrose?
MISSION STATEMENT

We, the members of St. Ambrose Parish, Latham, New York believe that, through our faith and baptism, we have been called to give witness to the values of Jesus as expressed in the gospel and teachings of our Church. As individuals and as a Parish Family we strive to:

- Develop our spiritual life, Spread the Gospel message,
- Respect the human dignity and rights of all persons
- Support family life: the role of married couples, singles, youth and children
- Share our time, energy, talent and resources

Strengthened by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to make choices and decisions that will reflect and give evidence of what we say we believe and value as a Catholic Christian Faith Community.

Sacraments

RECONCILIATION
Saturday, 3:00 PM or any time by appointment.

MARRIAGE
Congratulations! So that proper preparation may be made, please make an appointment with Fr. Anthony at least six months before the desired date. Either the bride or groom should be a registered parishioner of St. Ambrose parish.

BAPTISM
Congratulations! If you wish to arrange preparation for baptism, please call the Parish Office. Parents should be registered members of St. Ambrose parish.

RCIA
(Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults)
For those inquiring about the Catholic Faith. Welcome! Please contact the Parish Office for program details.

VOCATION
If you are considering a vocation to the priesthood, diaconate or religious life, please contact Fr. Anthony.

PARISHIONER REGISTRATION/UPDATE REQUEST

Name: __________________________
Street: __________________________
City: __________________________
Zip: __________________________
Phone No: __________________________

Please Check
- New Registration
- Change of Address
- Moving out of Parish
- Want Envelopes
- Name Change (Please contact Parish Secretary)

Please cut out and drop it in the Collection Basket or mail to the Parish Office.

THE EVANGELIST Subscription

Name: __________________________
Address: __________________________
City: __________________________ State: ______________
Zip: __________________________
Phone No: __________________________

Please check:
- Continue my subscription to the Evangelist, here is my $18.00/yr.
- Add my name to the subscription list, here is my $18.00/yr.

Please cut out, make check payable to St. Ambrose Church, drop it in the Collection Box or mail to the Parish Office.

PARISHES OF OUR LOCAL CATHOLIC COMMUNITIES

COLONIE
St. Clare’s 456-3112
Sat: 4:00pm/Sun: 8:30 / 10:30am

LATHAM
Our Lady of the Assumption 785-0234
Sat: 4:30pm
Sun: 7:30am, 9:00am St. Joseph Prov. House 10:30am

LOUDONVILLE
Christ Our Light 459-6635
Sat: 4:00pm/Sun: 9:00 / 11:15am
St. Pius X 462-1336
Sat: 5pm/Sun: 8, 10 & 12 noon

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March 13, 2016 $14,995.00
March 15, 2015 $13,930.64

Renewed thanks for your generosity and
many thanks to everyone for the generous
response to the Increased Offertory Campaign.

Are you struggling with your emotions,
a loss, an addiction, a relationship or family issues?
COUNSELING is available in the evenings
at St. Ambrose.
A $25 donation is appreciated.
Contact Dave Dobkowski, Ph.D.
at 859-4015 to make an appointment.

SACRISTAN MINISTRY
Like altar serving, being a Sacristan is a very beneficial way to help out your church community, and an
active way to participate in Mass. Sacristans perform the following duties:

- Setting up the church. Typically, sacristans arrive at church half hour before anyone else. They light
  the candles, arrange the books, ready the linens and basically perform a little organizing before Mass
  begins.
- Prepare the Holy Eucharist for the celebration of the Mass. This includes readying the wine, water
  and bread and putting them in place for the start of Mass.
- Coordinate all Mass participants making sure Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers and Altar Servers are
  ready.
- Cleaning the holy materials after Mass in the sacristy.
- Before the sacristan leaves the church everything is set back in its place and secured.

Decide if this is something you think you can do. Setting the table of the Lord is a ministry that is
essential for the Mass. We are in need of sacristans for all Masses, our schedules are flexible so after training
you can let us know what Mass works for you and our schedule is posted ahead several months at a time for your
convenience. Please contact the Sacristan Coordinator Pat Rayball 708-9615 for more information.
Come and Know God’s Mercy—Personally
24-HOUR CONFESSIONS with our local priests and Bishop Scharfenberger at Mater Christi Parish
Monday, March 21—Tuesday, March 22

Been putting off confession for a while? Months? Years? Decades? God’s mercy is waiting for you! Beginning at 7 PM Monday with the Communal Penance Service at Mater Christi Church, 40 Hopewell St, Albany and throughout the night and day until 6 PM Tuesday (at Mater Christi) - then concluding with a Communal Penance at the Cathedral at 7 PM Tuesday, confessions will be heard non-stop by the Most Rev. Edward Scharfenberger, Bishop of Albany, and local priests of our Beverwyck Vicariate (Albany County). Bishop Scharfenberger will be present to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation on Tuesday from 3 PM—6 PM. No appointment necessary.
Our History ....... Our Stories

St. Ambrose Church

We Need You! We are hoping to collect the history of the parish and we would love for your stories to be something accessible to the rest of the Parish. We hope to have these stories saved for generations, to remember times passed and to inspire those in the future. By including your story, please know that we may use it online, in print, in video, or through the media ministry here at the parish. More than anything else, you will be giving us here a way to better understand you and to better understand who we are as the people of St. Ambrose parish.

Please use this space to tell us your story. Include dates, parish or school events, ministries you may have served, sacraments you may have received here, etc. Use extra pages if needed.

We are also looking for old pictures (we will return them). Please drop them off to the office or email them to evangelizationandcatechesis@stambrosealam.com. Would you like to tell us your story in person? If so, please call 785-1351, extension 307 to make an appointment.