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professional portfolio: Author / Columnist / Feature Writer

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(FLYER - OPEN LETTER)

WANTED: Parishioners and Families.

(No experience necessary)

St. Patrick Catholic Church

(behind Orchestra Hall, in the Cass Corridor)

Is in Danger of Closing!

St. Patrick Catholic Church has been a beacon of hope and fellowship in downtown Detroit since 1862 — hope for local residents and families in need and fellowship for the parishioners who help to meet those needs, year in and year out. But the church's membership has fallen over the years to about 70 families. What does this mean? Sunday collections have dropped well below the break-even point. Church financial reserves are dangerously low. Operating funds from the Archdiocese of Detroit have been *eliminated* — the church received their last Parish Improvement Fund Grant in December 2010.

Without new people and families, St. Patrick Catholic Church will close.

Yes, St. Patrick's has some Irish blood, and they're proud of it. But you don't have to be Irish, and you don't have to live in the neighborhood. Families come from all over the metro area. Church membership is a heavenly mix of teachers, doctors, autoworkers, lawyers, carpenters, moms, dads, and their kids, you name it. The St. Pat's community transcends the boundaries of economics, race, age, lifestyle, and geography. With this mix, you might imagine some interesting discussions after Father Tod's Sunday Mass. But, in his words, *"As members of the church, we are bound together. When we say 'Amen' to the Body and Blood of Christ, we recognize the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, and we acknowledge our unity."*

Here is what St. Patrick Catholic Church delivers, every year — WHAT CASS CORRIDOR WILL LOSE — if St. Pat's does not gain enough new members and families to stay open.

- 100 Thanksgiving and 100 Christmas turkeys, with all the fixin's, to area families
- 200 wrapped Christmas gifts for neighborhood children
- 7000 bags of groceries annually (each bag, a week's supply) to residents in need
- Halloween party for neighborhood children
- School supplies for neighborhood children

Of course, the church is more than its outreach programs, as important as those are. It's more than a 149-year-old historic icon, though it certainly is that, too. St. Patrick's is in the heart of Detroit, and it *represents* the heart of Detroit to its parishioners and its neighborhood residents. It's a spiritual mission that offers unity in the worship of God and a hand up to its neighbors in need. It is a great thing.

Please help to keep the doors open. Come to a Sunday service. Consider joining St. Patrick's to help them continue their mission. If you're already established in your own faith community, investigate the Archdiocese of Detroit's "Changing Lives Together" campaign, which organizes efforts by outlying churches to support the work of the Church in Detroit proper. Once again, **Father Tod: "I cannot state it any more clearly: Unless the churches in the city receive help from our brothers and sisters in the suburbs and beyond, we will disappear."**

The current membership is passionate about their church and its work: **"It's up to us to make certain that St. Pat's does not close on our watch. Find out how you can help by calling the St. Patrick's Hotline at (313) 833-0857 | 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. | March 14 through March 26, 2011."**

St. Patrick Catholic Church | Fr. Tod Laverty OFM – Pastor | 58 Parsons Street | Detroit, MI 48201
(313) 833-0857 | www.stpatrickchurchdet.com | Sunday Mass at 9:30 a.m.
(Right behind Orchestra Hall, Northwest of Woodward and Mack Avenue, in the Cass Corridor)