

Saint Ambrose Church & the Immigrant Statue

By Abby Wojcik

Saint Ambrose Catholic Church has served as the spiritual and cultural heart of The Hill for over a century. When the first Saint Ambrose Church burned down in 1921, plans for a new chapel mobilized immediately. Architect Angelo Corrubia drew the sketch for a new brick parish the following month, drawing inspiration from the Basilica of Saint Ambrose in Milan, Italy.

Construction was completed in 1926 by the modest people of The Hill. Seating over 400, the new church was made possible by the devotion of the congregation who helped pay off remaining debt on the old church.

Reverend Julius Giovannini suggested there be as many bells as there were Italian towns represented on The Hill, so four bronze bells were donated by former hometowns in Italy, and the people of the parish donated the fifth bell. They're inscribed for the people of the Parish, as well as the faithful of Cuggiono, Inveruno, Marcallo and Casteltermini. Each bell also honors a specific patron saint.

In June 1926, a blessing of the bells took place, and the five bells rang for the first time as a tribute to the parish's faith and to the homelands that shaped The Hill.



continued on page 24

Hundreds of children received First Holy Communion, officiated by Rev. Giovannini, Rev. Tannrath, and Monsignor Spigardi.

Education has been equally central to The Hill. Saint Ambrose School, founded 1906 with only two classrooms, expanded through eighth grade to accommodate the rapidly growing population in the 1920s. Generations of students continue to benefit from its instruction, and graduating classes traditionally donate to a specific charity or cause related to The Hill.

In front of the church, the 1972 bronze statue The Italian Immigrants by St. Louisan Rudy Torrini captures the courage and hope of a young couple newly arriving in America. The mother holding her child tightly and the father leading confidently forward reflect the very people who built the church, occupied the school and shaped the neighborhood. Together, the church, school and statue stand not only as landmarks of faith and education but as symbols of The Hill’s Italian-American identity and community spirit.



SKYLINE
COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

CONTACT
Luke Grant
314-602-3008
Luke@skylinemore.com
Jason Riegelsberger
314-974-0698
Jason@skylinemore.com

OFFICE FOR LEASE
5257 Shaw Ave. St. Louis, MO 63110
2,398 - 5,380 SF available
Lease Rate: \$20/psf FS
Tenant pays janitorial



PROPERTY DETAILS

- Move-in ready space
- Creative and high-end finishes
- Iconic building located in the heart of The St. Louis Hill
- Free parking available on-site
- Solar powered
- Elevator replaced in 2025