



# A Year in Review

## A Letter from the Editor

**A**s 2021 draws to a close, we at *Commonweal* are toasting a year that brought more than its fair share of good news. True, the pandemic put a crimp in some of our plans. Only a few of us have been able to resume working together in the office. And we were disappointed to again have to postpone the Commonweal Catholic in the Public Square Award dinner. Still, we can't help but feel pretty positive overall—not least for what it means for the years to come.

First, our print circulation continues to rise, hitting levels not seen since the last Italian pope and long before the Internet came into existence. And though web traffic didn't equal its all-time high of last year, we're still pretty pleased about the size and engagement of our online readership. We saw growth in audiences for our podcast and our virtual events. Nor could we possibly complain about financial support from all of you, our Commonweal Associates, whose giving reached record numbers, both in total dollars and in individual gifts. As for projects and initiatives, our farflung staff put together a great special issue of the magazine in November, examining the varieties of religious community in the United States today (so great that we achieved another new record, this in the number of copies ordered by readers on college campuses). We're also excited to be expanding our outreach to new readers and writers in 2022, as we develop the next generation of Commonweal Catholics.

Ah, yes, 2022—when we hope to be fully on the other side of the pandemic. As office work has changed in the past couple of years, we'll be thinking about how best to adjust now that we've become so accustomed to the flexibility that Zoom meetings and Slack can offer. We'll also be just two years from our 2024 centennial, which means we'll be hard at work on anniversary-related planning, envisioning what *Commonweal's* second century will bring to American Catholicism.

Did I mention the record support that you all provided? It's worth repeating. And we can't thank you enough: without your help, it's impossible to do the things we do. I'm hopeful you'll remain as thoughtful and generous in the years ahead, as *Commonweal* continues to lead important conversations on religion, politics, and culture. ☺

DOMINIC PREZIOSI, *Editor*



## HIGHLIGHTS OF 2021

- Circulation hits historic level
- Record-breaking Associate support and membership
- Expanded outreach to new readers & writers
- Adjustment to the future of office work
- Development of strategic plan for *Commonweal's* centennial



### THE BASICS

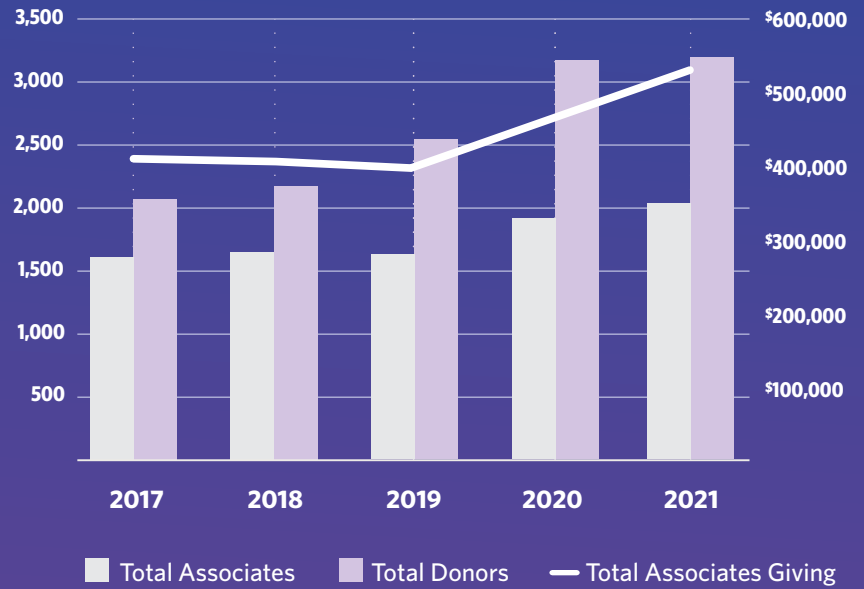
**FOUNDED:** 1924  
**STAFF:** 12 full time

**ANNUAL BUDGET:** \$2.3 Million

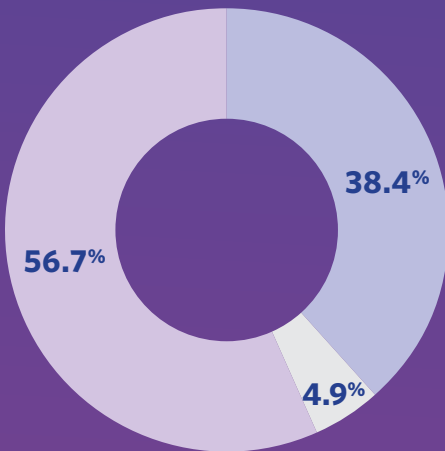
- Editor
- Senior Editor
- Associate Editor
- Managing Editor
- Assistant Editors (2)
- Assistant Managing Editor

- VP of Advancement
- Marketing and Audience Development Director
- Mission and Partnerships Director
- Business Manager
- Publisher

### TOTAL ASSOCIATES GIVING



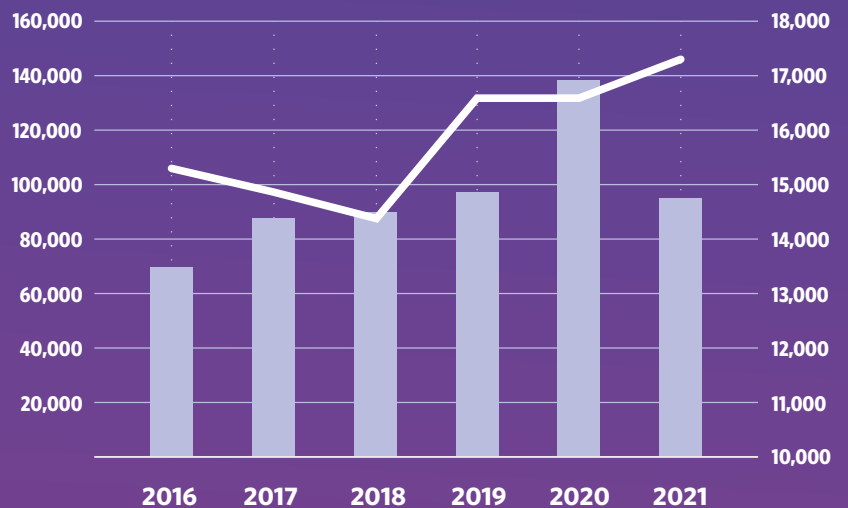
### 2021 REVENUE SOURCES



- Subscriptions & Publishing
- Advertising
- Raised Income

To keep our \$2.2 million budget balanced, and to invest in important new projects that support our mission, we depend on increasing our support from Commonwealth Associates, gifts targeted in support of specific editorial and outreach projects, successful fundraising events, and foundation support. Raised income now provides significantly more than half of *Commonweal's* revenues.

### READERSHIP AND CIRCULATION



- Monthly Web Readers
- Print Circulation

After receding from a dramatic surge in 2020 due to election-related traffic, *Commonweal's* web audience is still more than four times its print circulation.

With the print magazine's redesign in 2019, print circulation increased for the first time in many years.



# Introducing *Commonweal's* strategic plan



**A**s we approach *Commonweal's* centennial in 2024, we recently finished an initiative to create a strategic plan that will guide our decisions, and, we hope, help supporters understand our goals. The project was a collaborative one and included input from board members, the editorial staff, and the leadership team. The process involved an extensive evaluation of our current capabilities, the future needs of the organization, and the needs of the broader *Commonweal* community.

As the strategic plan took shape, we updated *Commonweal's* mission statement. It's surprisingly hard to put what *Commonweal* does into words, but for now, here is our best attempt:

*Through its work in multiple media and conversation-oriented events, Commonweal fosters rigorous and reflective discussions about faith, public affairs, and the arts, centered on belief in the common good. Independent and lay-led, Commonweal is a bridge between the intellectual and active lives of lay Catholics who seek meaning and justice, inspiring people in their hopes for a more inclusive future for our church, politics, and culture.*

The strategic plan defines *Commonweal's* five key priorities—**greater editorial capacity, enhanced new media functionality, expanded**

**partnerships (especially with colleges and universities), outreach to new readers and writers, and a strengthened financial base**—and describes the actions required to get there. The plan also identifies seven significant issues and subject areas where we think major, in-depth *Commonweal* publishing projects can make a real contribution: **the institutional church**, of course, but also **social justice, arts and culture, the environment, political life, science and technology, and the shifting cultural landscape of the U.S. Church and society today.**

What the plan communicates above all is that there is still an urgent need for a voice like *Commonweal's*—and in fact, that our work may be more important than ever. As the strategic plan notes:

*There remains, especially among the young, a hunger for meaning and community shaped by Catholicism, but encountered in a context of justice, charity, and critical intelligence.*

As we begin to translate this plan into action, Associates will be critical to our success. It is your support and enthusiasm for what we do that gives us the optimism to move forward. If you have questions about our plan or want to hear more, please contact us at [associates@commonwealmagazine.org](mailto:associates@commonwealmagazine.org).

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**THOMAS BAKER**  
Publisher, *Commonweal*

**PETER CATANZARO**  
Pediatrician

**MARK S. DALTON, Chair**  
Retired Publishing Executive

**ROSANNE HAGGERTY**  
President, Community Solutions

**THOMAS J. HIGGINS**  
Chair of the Board, Prosetta Biosciences

**NATALIA IMPERATORI-LEE**  
Professor of Religious Studies, Manhattan College

**CATHLEEN KAVENY**  
Darald and Juliet Libby Professor, Boston College

**ELLEN B. KONECK**  
Head Writer & Editor, Springtide Research Institute

**JOHN J. KUSTER, ESQ.**  
Partner, Sidley Austin LLP

**CHRIS LOWNEY**  
Board Vice Chair, CommonSpirit Health

**ALICE MCDERMOTT**  
Author

**JOHN T. MCGREEVY, Chair**  
Francis A. McAnaney Professor of History,  
University of Notre Dame

**JAMES T. MORLEY JR.**  
Retired Radio Broadcasting Executive

**DANIEL R. MURRAY**  
Of Counsel, Jenner & Block

**DANIEL M. MURTAUGH**  
Professor of English, Florida Atlantic University

**BRIEN O'BRIEN**  
Chairman and CEO, Port Capital LLC

**DENNIS O'BRIEN, Chair Emeritus**  
President Emeritus, University of Rochester

**JANE B. O'CONNELL**  
Chair of the Board of Trustees, The Altman Foundation

**MICHAEL PEPPARD**  
Associate Professor of Theology, Fordham University

**DOMINIC PREZIOSI**  
Editor, *Commonweal*

**BARBARA MULLIN ROSIELLO, Chair**  
Community Volunteer

**VINCENT D. ROUGEAU**  
President, College of the Holy Cross

**PAUL SAUNDERS, Chair Emeritus**  
Of Counsel, Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP

**PETER STEINFELS**  
Co-Founder, Fordham Center on Religion and Culture

**MARC VANDERHEYDEN**  
President Emeritus, St. Michael's College

**TIM WELSH**  
Vice Chairman, U.S. Bank



# Thank You

## From *Commonweal's* VP of Advancement

**A**s we find ourselves approaching the time of the year traditionally reserved for giving thanks, we at *Commonweal* would like to express our gratitude to you, our Associates, for all that you individually and collectively do to partner with us in furthering *Commonweal's* mission, both as a magazine and as a broader community.

We are grateful for and humbled by your generous support, input, and guidance. *Commonweal* Associates constitute the majority of our supporters, and your generosity enables us to continue enhancing our programs and to launch new and forward-looking initiatives.

Thanks to you, we have been able to publish this month's special issue of the magazine, whose depth of reporting and coverage required months of planning, travel by staff members, professional photography, and complementary content through the podcast and events. It is through your support that we have continued forging new relationships with academic and other like-minded organizations. These partnerships have resulted in the continued growth of both print and online readership, the inclusion of new and more diverse writers in our pages, and the planting of seeds of collaboration and creativity that will bear fruit far into the future.

Some of you have asked how else you can partner with us, and we invite you to consider joining three initiatives that ensure our legacy. The first, our **sustaining member program**, enables us to maintain a predictable and steady stream of support, and allows you to spread your giving over the year by contributing monthly. The second, membership in our **Edward Skillin Society**, allows you to create a legacy both for yourself and for *Commonweal*. Members of the Skillin Society receive an annual gift of a book specially selected by *Commonweal's* editors. This year's book is Massimo Faggioli's latest, *Joe Biden and Catholicism in the United States*. And finally, many of our supporters choose to contribute to our **College Subscription Program**, which provides free subscriptions to college students who may not have otherwise had access to the magazine.



For additional information about any of these three programs, please contact me at [amelnyk@commonwealmagazine.org](mailto:amelnyk@commonwealmagazine.org). We look forward to your continued friendship and support!

**ADRIANNA MELNYK**  
*Vice President of Advancement*

Commonweal Foundation  
475 Riverside Drive, Room 405  
New York, NY 10115

