



METRO GRAPHICS

Smart Living

## Come Clean On Washing Machine Mistakes

BY KALEY BELAKOVICH  
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Unless you possess a never-ending supply of money and never wear the same outfit twice, laundry is an essential part of life. While the sudsy concept may seem simple enough, some of us make small mistakes that may hurt the washing machine over time. Prevent premature calls to appliance repair technicians by avoiding these user errors.

### NOT EMPTYING YOUR POCKETS

Think that destroyed \$20 bill is the only reason it's a bad idea not to empty your pockets before doing laundry? Think again. Non-clothing objects in the washer can clog the water drain. Accidentally leave a piece of gum or tissue behind, and you'll have twice the mess to clean, not to mention the damage it can do to the inner workings of the washer.

### OVERLOADING WASHER

While you may think jamming just one more pair of jeans in with that full load won't hurt anything, overstuffing your washer makes the machine work too hard.

Overloading the washer puts unnecessary wear on it and eats up energy. In top-loading machines, the central agitator needs room to do its job. Plus, if you pack too many clothes into the machine, some detergent residue could be left behind — which will attract more dirt next time you wear the clothes.

### FORGETTING TO CLEAN OUT DISPENSERS

When you're finished washing a load of laundry, wipe down the detergent and fabric softener dispensers. If you don't, the build-up could cause a clog.

### USING TOO MUCH DETERGENT

More is not always better. Not only will using excess soap leave your clothes sudsy and stiff, it will also wear on your machine. Plus, using too much soap leads to more suds, which could cause your washer to overflow. Have a high efficiency washer? They require even less soap to wash clothing properly, so be sure to skimp on the detergent and only use soaps marked safe for HE washers.

### NOT TAKING CLOTHES OUT RIGHT AWAY

Forgetting your clothes in the washing machine overnight or waiting a while to transfer them to the dryer or line may seem harmless, but lingering moisture provides the ideal environment for mold and mildew to grow and will lead to a foul-smelling machine and laundry. It's also a good idea to leave the washer lid open after you unload it, so the inside can dry out.

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PHIL VELASQUEZ/ CHICAGO TRIBUNE/TNS

Exterior of Francisco Buera and Ana Babus' condo building at 1043 W. School St. in Chicago. The building was an old church converted into condos.

# Preaching To The Converted

## A Chicago Couple Discovers That Life In Converted Church Is Divine

BY ELANA DURE  
© 2015, Chicago Tribune

CHICAGO — Francisco Buera may consider himself a religious man, but that doesn't mean he ever expected to live with his family in a church.

The 40-year-old research economist and his wife, Ana Babus, 35, had a short list of requirements for a home when they began house hunting in February 2014, and "sacred ground" was not one of them. The couple wanted a three-bedroom space with a fireplace, outdoor area and lots of natural light. They also preferred to be close to public transit.

So when the two stumbled across their current address in the multiple listing service, they didn't think much of its large pointed tower or unusual roof. The condo fit their expectations perfectly with its rooftop deck, multiple windows and five-minute walking distance to a transit station. Plus there was something about the space that provided an additional charm, which Buera and Babus appreciated. "We actually saw a lot of places, and many of them looked like replicas of one another," said Babus, who is also a research economist. "This one had more personality, more character."

The truth about their building's religious past only reached the couple during the open house. By that time, Buera and Babus were already attracted to the space. Its unique background just added to the appeal.

"When we found out it was a church, we were very interested to know what has happened to it or what was the history of it," Babus said.

The structure, built in 1904, served as the Lakeview Covenant Church, Christian Life College and Full Gospel Korean Church of Chicago during its history as a religious space. The building was ultimately sold to LR Development Co. and converted into a condominium in 1994. After the transformation, the 14-unit structure served its new purpose as a multifamily building.

The popular trend of church-to-condo conversions began in the 1980s, said Carrie Georgitsis, the Redfin real estate agent who worked with Buera and Babus on their house hunt. Over time, the appeal became more popular.

"The trend will go wherever there is a need for housing and the land is at a shortage," Georgitsis said. This is one of the main reasons the fad is apparent in the metro area, but not as common in Chicago's surrounding suburbs.

Church-to-home conversions mirror the ever-changing needs of the community. Very often, a congregation will sell its church building because the congregation dwindled, forcing remaining members to consolidate into a smaller space since they can no longer maintain the large structure, Georgitsis said.

Chicago's increase in church conversions over the years reflects the religious direction



PHIL VELASQUEZ/ CHICAGO TRIBUNE/TNS

Francisco Buera and Ana Babus pose for a portrait with their baby Juana in their recently purchased condo in Chicago. The building was an old church converted into condos.

of the United States in general. According to a 2014 Pew Research survey, the percentage of adults who described themselves as Christians dropped nearly 8 points from 78.4 percent to 70.6 percent in just seven years. Over the same period, the percentage of Americans who identified as religiously unaffiliated (describing themselves as agnostic, atheist or "nothing in particular") jumped more than 6 points from 16.1 percent in 2007 to 22.8 percent in 2014.

"Studies show that the long-term church attendance in America is on the decline," said Bill Skubik, president of Religious Real Estate, a Waterford, Mich.-based real estate agency that specializes in religious properties. "I tell pastors all the time, 'You may be able to afford to buy the building, but who is going to pay the utility bills? You've got maintenance and utilities that are expensive.'" The decline of churchgoers reflects the changing needs of communities, Skubik said. And, as a result, church buildings are left abandoned or sold.

In Chicago, churches in residential areas can be converted into homes without any zoning ramifications. "Generally, many older churches were zoned for residential use, so it's a relatively seamless process," said Peter Strazzabosco, a deputy commissioner for Chicago's Department of Planning and Development. Developers only

need to worry about zoning codes in terms of the number of units and parking lots they plan to build, he said.

During the conversion process, many developers and architects try to keep some internal elements of the original church design, such as the stained glass windows or exposed beams, to provide a distinctive and inviting look. "It's a church, and people like that vibe of it," Georgitsis said. "It kind of brings a smile to their faces. The buildings and the units are very unique. ... It's always a surprise when you see one. You don't know what the layout is going to be."

Other developers choose to modernize the interior space but keep the exterior design intact. This was the case with Buera and Babus' condo. The couple's duplex-up penthouse was once a rectory. Now it's a contemporary space with high ceilings, hardwood floors and a loft-like feel.

"Mostly we have the feeling it is a church, not when we are inside, but when we come home from work and then we see the building with the tower," Babus said.

And what does Buera, a practicing Catholic, think of living in a former religious building?

"To the extent that the family is, so to speak, the domestic church, it is natural that a church building, which is no longer used for public worship, be used for families to live in," he said.

### GARDENS OF THE MONTH

Yankton Town & Country Garden Club has selected the gardens of the month for September. We enjoy driving around looking at all the yards, gardens, and sculptors during the season. We think we have selected a varied and interesting group of yards and gardens this summer. Thanks to all our gracious participants, thanks to our yard seekers and peekers, and thanks to all of you who have enjoyed viewing our picks!

#### AL AND CLAUDIA SCHUMACHER

708 Burgess Street

This lovely home stops traffic with lush hanging Pink Mandevilla's all along the porch! The eye travels to a central garden area filled with the pinks and purples of Agastache, Cone flowers, Foxtail Clover, Spirea, Red Yarrow, Cherry Tart Sumac,

Beardtongue, Lavender and Catmint, all set off nicely with contrasting yellow colors brought in by Ozark Sundrops, Threadleaf Coreopsis and Day lilies. The driveway invites, with varietal annuals and large pots of King Tut Papyrus and Coreopsis, small wooden wheelbarrow overflows with color. Right front of the house features white rose bushes, low growing shrubs and trees. You'll enjoy the visit.

#### KAREN AND MATT MICHELS

1213 Walnut Street

This southern style porch grabs my attention every time I drive past. The Michels have lived here since 1989 and the porch was added on in 1995. The owners enjoy all the charm and ambiance a porch offers. There are two water features near the front

door enhancing their front porch experience. Karen and Matt collect rocks, shells and driftwood while boating on Lewis and Clark Lake. Karen says she enjoys looking for natural décor items while on the lake and has fun using those finds in her yard space and gardens. Karen said she plants hollyhocks (hollies) every year because her grandma had them. She likes to use double impatiens in the shade as they remind her of baby roses. The orange cannas are striking!! Karen uses mushroom compost and likes to weed as she enjoys "digging in the dirt." There are shrub roses in the back yard. Come on and enjoy the view!!

#### JULIE HEMPHILL

917 Walnut Street

Julie has lived in this corner home for

more than 20 years! She has a tall fence in the back to give her a backdrop for yard art, bird houses, and dragon flies! She plants hosta because she loves them! Her love has created a plethora of varieties — large, small, blue, green, lime — with thousands of hosta available one never has them all! Julie also likes ornamental grasses and uses many throughout her yard to enhance other plantings. She has a lovely ornamental fence separating her side yard which "houses" many birds and some not-so loved bunnies. To lessen her weeding she uses several ground covers and some commercial products to prevent the seeds from germinating! Take a stroll up or down Walnut Street.... enjoy the bicycle and wagon adorned with vegetation!