

2020–2021

Gratitude Report



Place God first in all things.
Proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
Grow in holiness through prayer, sacraments, and service.





What a year...

My dear sisters and brothers in Jesus Christ,

God's blessings and peace be with you and your families. It is with a humble and grateful heart that I once again have this opportunity to share with you a few reflections on this last pastoral year, July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021.

As you may have noticed on the front cover, we are not calling this our annual report. Rather, and from now on, we will be offering a "Gratitude Report."

If one pauses and thinks about it for a moment, gratitude might not be the first thing that comes to mind when reflecting upon COVID lockdowns, mask mandates, in-person school closures, online registration for Mass attendance, etc. Keenly aware of all the stressors, anxieties and uncertainties that swirled in our nation and our world from July of last year to June of this year, I invite us to also be aware of God's many blessings and care for us as a parish community.

In this Gratitude Report, you will read stories from fellow parishioners, see their pictures and hear how God has blessed us in so many ways. Rather than focusing on what we were not able to do, we want to focus on what we were able to accomplish, how we were able to gather, how we navigated difficult times, and how we continue to face the challenges before us not with fear, but with faith.

Emerging from total lockdown was not an easy process. Yet, with creativity and by working together, we were able to return to full sacramental life of the Church. According to the COVID protocols of the time, we were able to social distance in the church, provide contact tracing if necessary, sanitize between Masses, provide for infant baptisms, reopen the St. Joseph Chapel for 24/7 prayer and adoration and provide ongoing celebration of the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick at home and in the hospital.

Christmas and Easter were especially challenging in how to anticipate and prepare for those who might join us. With extra planning, together with staff and volunteer help, we were ready for many who unfortunately did not show up. Was this discouraging? Yes. Yet, it did not deter us from being creative in reaching out and inviting through other means.

Throughout this time, I have been deeply touched by how many of you came up to me and told me that this was the very first time that you have been back to Mass in person since March 2020. Others told me how much they appreciated the work we had done in providing Mass online every Sunday at 9:30AM and on weekdays.

I am extremely grateful to our parish and school staffs who worked so diligently to keep ministries not only going, but flourishing. Their tireless efforts, often behind the scenes, are a testament to their depth of faith and their love of you and the mission of Saint Michael Parish. I cannot thank them enough for their perseverance, flexibility, creativity and willingness to go the extra mile. Please join me in thanking them and praying for them.

Our school faculty and staff prepared for in-person and online learning during the summer of 2020. Hopes were high that students would return in September, yet that did not happen. Opening the school virtually was a disappointment, yet a great grace. When students were able to return in early October, there was great excitement and the switch to hybrid learning was well in place. After Thanksgiving when we had to return to virtual learning, again the staff, students and parents were ready. Learning continued. Growth in faith continued. Quality Catholic education didn't miss a beat. The number of students increased and we were able to welcome new families into our "family of families" at St. Michael Catholic School. Unlike June 2020, graduation in June 2021 was in the church. Much to be thankful for.

Similarly, our faith formation programs pivoted. We developed faith coaches, online Zoom opportunities and materials to help parents navigate the shift. Middle school and high school programs were scaled back, providing opportunities for much needed socialization and gathering in small groups. Confirmation preparation was also hybrid and we had the great grace of having Fr. Lou confirm all of our candidates between February and May.

Another very special blessing was that Fr. Lou was able to be with us for another year. Father Lou continued to celebrate sacraments, work closely with our young adults, provide guidance to many and administer the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick in the hospital as well as in the home. As my limitations increased, he was able to take up the slack, for which I personally was deeply grateful.

In an anticipated downturn in financial stewardship, the Finance Council established an austere budget. We froze salaries, cut back expenses and aligned our financial allocations with our mission to "Place God first in all things, proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ and grow in holiness through prayer, sacraments and service." As you will see in the financials in this Gratitude Report, our sacrificial giving held strong throughout the pastoral year. In spite of all the difficulties that we faced, our financial giving did not waver. Many switched to our online giving platform, others brought

...of blessings.



their Sunday envelopes to the office and still others mailed their gifts to the parish. I am so very grateful for your faithful generosity.

Because of the generosity of our parish community, we were able to give a year-end gift to our parish and school staffs to help offset the pay freeze in recognition of their extraordinary service in ministry during this time.

Beginning in Lent, we focused on the first part of our parish mission to "Place God first in all things." We were encouraged to reflect on our relationship with God and with one another. During the Easter season we were invited into "three conversations," centering on prayer with and for one another; witnessing to one another by sharing our faith stories, (God at work in our lives); and how our lives continue the mission of Jesus Christ. These three conversations—prayer, witness and mission—invited us into a culture of discipleship, following Jesus Christ more closely and trusting in his presence and guidance for all the challenges and opportunities we faced.

I am writing this on the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, October 7, 2021. This feast commemorates the victory of the battle of Lepanto that defeated the Ottoman Turks in 1571 and most likely saved Christianity in Western Europe. There are many enemies to our Catholic faith today. Hyper-individualism, abortion and euthanasia and the disregard for the sanctity of human life, relativism, secularism, materialism, disobedience to the Magisterium and disregard for the moral teaching of our Catholic faith, apathy in practicing the sacraments (especially Sunday Mass), to name just a few.

In the face of these challenges, let us commit ourselves anew to be true disciples of Jesus Christ, stewards of the gifts that God has given to us—our time, talents and treasure. Let us be grateful for the gift of our faith and of our faith community. Let us share generously in our stewardship renewal this November 6/7, 2021. Let us not be afraid to take a step and make a commitment of our time in prayer, our talents in service and ministry and of our treasure, increasing our giving for the life of our parish and beyond.

We have so much to be grateful for. The saints so often tell us that staying close to Jesus and Mary in our sufferings, difficulties and challenges bears fruit in abundance beyond our wildest imaginings. I pray that we may be a people of increased gratitude and thanksgiving. I pray that we will be a community known for its generosity in prayer, service and financial stewardship. I pray that we will be a light to the wider community of Thurston County. I pray that we will be a beacon of hope, joy and peace in the year ahead.

Let us hold one another in prayer. Let us trust ever more fully in the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Let us not be a people of fear but rather a people of faith, a sign of hope for our world today. Let us follow Jesus. Let us be His disciples. Let us journey together.

With deep gratitude, in Christ Jesus,

Fr. Jim Lee

Thank you, *Lord*

Formation

For Vacation Bible School:

We were able to hold VBS for more than 90 kids this summer! The theme this year was *Treasured*. The children learned that they are precious to God and treasured by Him above everything.

For Life Teen Leadership Conference:

This year we were able to send eight teens to the Life Teen Leadership Conference in Kansas. During the week, our teens learned practical leadership skills, listened to powerful speakers, spent time in adoration and grew as disciples.

For Catholic Youth Ministry Conference:

Five Core Team members journeyed to Arizona in June for the CYMC. For one week, the team attended sessions on everything from dealing with crisis to reconnecting with teens after COVID and handing over the keys of youth ministry to the next generation.

For Evangelical Catholic:

This ministry trained 42 parishioners in evangelization and small group facilitation this last year.

For Small Groups:

More than 400 people participated in small groups last year—praying together, sharing their faith and growing in discipleship.

Exodus 90:

35 men travelled together on a 90-day journey of prayer, asceticism, and fraternity that provided them freedom from worldly distractions and the ability to focus more on prayer, discipleship and their families.

For Saint Michael Parish School:

Our children at the school were able to attend in person classes for most of the year. Last year our school welcomed 34 new families and celebrated the graduation of 31 eighth graders.

Liturgical Ministries & Sacraments

For Masses in Person:

We continued to hold Mass in person, growing our capacity as the year progressed. We celebrated Christmas, Ash Wednesday and the Holy Triduum in person, and live streamed more than 330 Masses last year.

For Sacraments Celebrated:

Last year we baptized 61 people, 122 received their first reconciliation and Eucharist, and 92 people were confirmed. Our priests heard more than 200 confessions a month and anointed more than 120 parishioners throughout the year.

For Funeral Ministry:

Our funeral ministry provide support and prayer for 78 families grieving the loss of a loved one.

For Marriages:

Our marriage ministry shepherded 22 couples through marriage preparation and the celebration of the Sacrament of Matrimony.

“I will praise you,
LORD,
with all my heart;
I will declare all
your wondrous
deeds.”

– Ps 9:2

for all the blessings.

Engagement & Social Media

For New Families:

We welcomed more than 100 new families into our parish and provided our first online newcomer events in February.

For Online Presence:

We hired a Steward for Social Media and Engagement and continued to build our social media presence on YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and Tiktok. More than 1100 people engaged with us online each week.

Pastoral Care & Community Outreach

For Grief and Cancer Support:

This ministry supported 24 people in times of great need last year.

For Helping Hands:

More than 30 people received support during the year with house-related projects and other needs. It was a joy to see people able to remain in their homes. There were many smiles.

For Pregnancy Aid:

Volunteers served and supported more than 275 families.

For the Interfaith Works Shelter:

Parishioners provided 1280 meals last year.

For the SMP Men's Shelter:

Volunteers served more than 7,000 hours providing shelter, food and other services to more than 25 men four days per week.

For Shoulder to Shoulder:

This ministry served more than 16 families in difficult situations with financial support and prayer. In total, \$39,936 were donated in the effort to help parishioners last year.

*“In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.”
– 1 Thess 5:18*

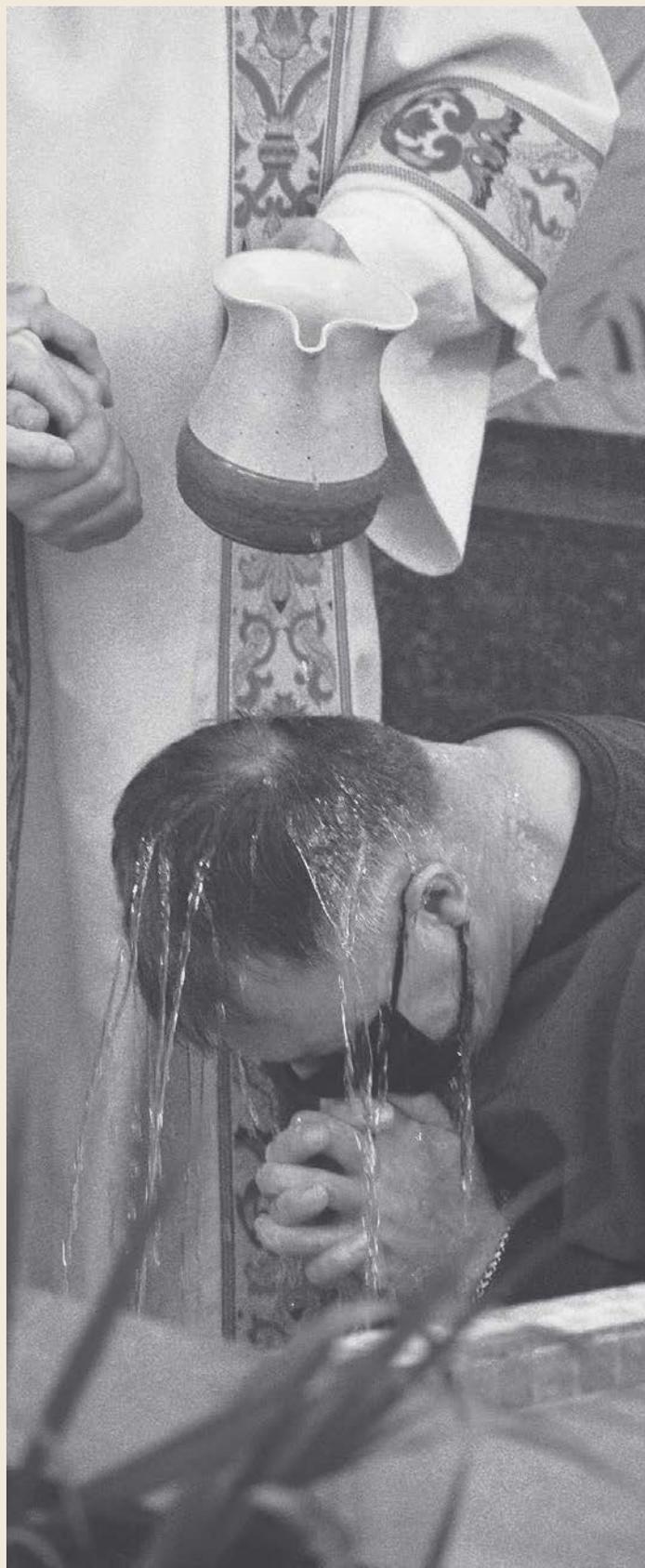


A people of prayer.

*“With all prayer and supplication, pray at every opportunity in the Spirit.”
– Eph 6:18*

PRAYER is at the heart of stewardship and being a disciple of Jesus Christ. As we recognize God’s immense blessings and love for us, we respond by prayerfully opening our hearts and lives to an intimate relationship with Him. This life of personal prayer and time with Jesus invites us to deepen our love and care for each other. This care for one another involves prayer and accompaniment. To deepen this culture in our parish last year, we established prayer partners and encouraged the practice of daily intercessory prayer among our staff. We invited 100 parishioners to participate in small group prayer experiences. In November, we introduced personal intercessory prayer to our councils and commissions and eventually in all our ministries. Parishioners were sharing their needs and praying for one another. The feedback we heard was positive, and parishioners appreciated the time of prayer. We invited all parishioners to place God first by praying with their families, friends, and co-workers. The parish is developing a new prayer ministry that will support anyone who needs in-person intercessory prayer after all our Sunday Masses. As we move forward, we want to continue deepening this culture of prayer and be a community that prays for and accompanies one another.

*Lord Jesus, deepen our desire to “pray
at every opportunity in the Spirit.”*



A people of witness.

“Come and listen, all you who fear God, and I will tell you what he did for me.” – Ps 66:16



AS DISCIPLES of Jesus Christ, God calls us to witness His love and work in our lives. There is something powerful and inspiring about hearing how God is working in other parishioners' lives. Sharing what God has done for us not only reminds us how blessed we are but can also be the instrument God uses to bring about conversion, transformation, and a renewal of hope in others. Our witness deepens our trust and relationships with one another, and it builds community and deepens our familial bonds. Last year we provided many opportunities for parishioners to share their faith journey. It became part of our meetings, small groups, retreats, ministries, and more. These opportunities brought people closer together and deepened their sense of belonging to our community. As we continue to deepen this culture of witness, let us give glory and praise to Jesus for all He has done for us.

Lord Jesus, give us the courage to witness to your love and use this witness to draw people closer to you.



A people of mission.

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.”— 1Pet 4:10



WE ARE a people called to mission. Our mission at Saint Michael Parish is to “Place God first in all things. To proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to grow in holiness through prayer, sacraments, and service.” Christ’s mission is our mission, and it is a blessing to participate in this work. As Jesus’ disciples, how do we participate in this mission? How do our lives, choices, talents, and generosity move Christ’s mission forward? These are the questions we invited parishioners to reflect on last year. We are so grateful for all of you that share your gifts, week in and week out, to bring people closer to Christ. Let us never forget that God uniquely created each of us and blessed us with gifts to build the Kingdom of God.

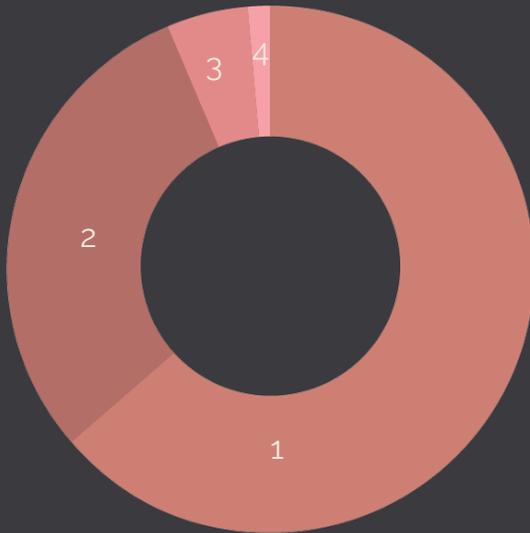
Lord, continue to deepen our desire to serve others, to love one another as you loved us.



Parish & School Financials

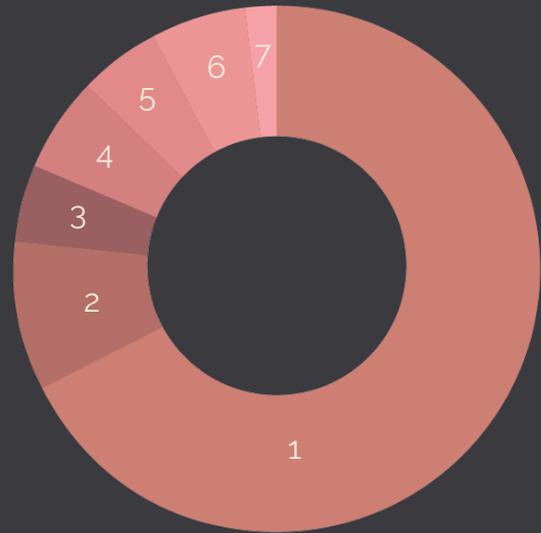
July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021

Income



1. Collections:	\$3,233,369
2. School Tuition:	\$1,532,799
3. Gifts & Other Resources:	\$247,785
4. Annual Cath. Appeal Rebate:	\$64,004
Total:	\$5,077,957

Expenses



1. Salaries & Benefits:	\$3,090,544
2. Supplies & Programs:	\$422,541
3. Operations & Maintenance:	\$211,921
4. Contracted Services:	\$257,942
5. Business & Utilities:	\$239,525
6. Assessment:	\$263,515
7. Donations to Others:	\$79,757
Total:	\$4,565,745

Net Income

Transfer to Savings (Building Maintenance Fund):	\$448,208
Annual Catholic Appeal Rebate:	\$64,004

At the request of the Finance Council, we established a fund to address anticipated long term needs for all of our parish buildings. This fund will ensure our buildings are well maintained. Our Annual Catholic Rebate was applied to new evangelization initiatives and school projects.

Highlights

Parish Grant to the School:	\$360,988
Shoulder to Shoulder:	\$39,936
Parish Grants to Other Organizations:	\$31,273
Financial Aid to JPPII High School:	\$15,000

Strategic Initiatives

invite | engage & connect | grow stewardship | form missionary disciples

Invite people to belong to Saint Michael Parish by personally witnessing Jesus and the Joy of the Gospel to Thurston County and beyond.

Reach out to parishioners post-COVID inviting them to reengage fully in the practice of their faith.

Reach out to non-parishioners and invite them to come to Saint Michael Parish to hear the Good News and encounter Jesus Christ.

Strengthen Saint Paul Street Evangelization efforts.

Develop a plan for more outreach efforts.

Communicate the truth, goodness, and beauty of our Catholic faith and Catholic social teaching to the broader community through social media, community events, and the "3 Conversations."

Send small groups into the community to partner with other organizations by living out the Corporal Works of Mercy.

Engage & Connect by providing opportunities for parishioners to explore faith, deepen their sense of belonging, and engage in the life of Saint Michael Parish.

Create a welcoming environment in our parish and school that permeates all our ministries and recognize that every encounter is an opportunity to be invitational and hospitable, acknowledging everyone as Christ.

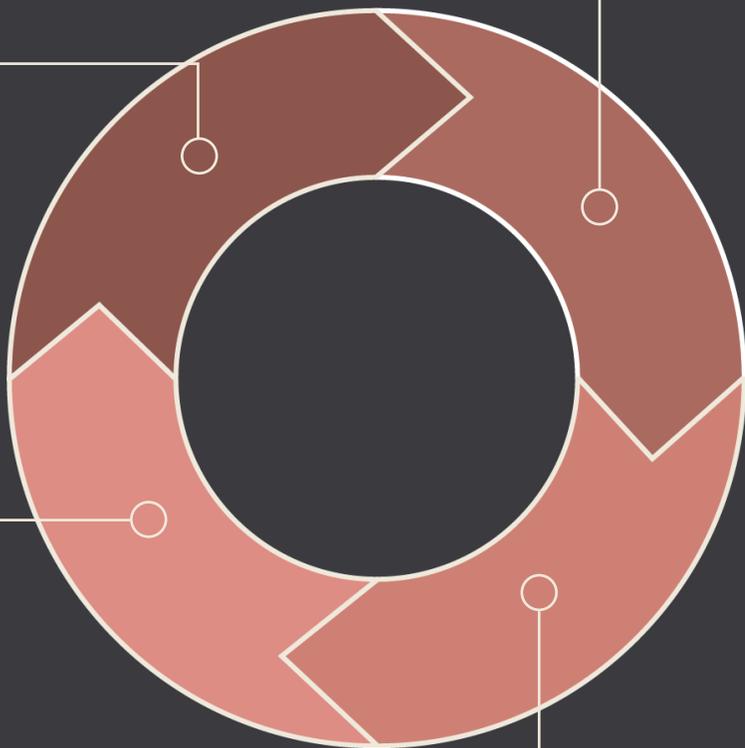
Develop follow-up processes for individuals who encounter the parish in times of transition and other life events (e.g. baptism, funeral, wedding, concerts, illness, grief, etc.)

Identify and develop new ways in which each ministry team (e.g. school, SVDP, faith formation, etc.) can engage and connect seekers (on-ramps).

Connect parishioners outside weekly Sunday Mass by forming groups based on common interests (e.g. Frassati Hiking Group).

Educate and encourage all parishioners to utilize SMP Connect to link to one another, to ministries, and to other resources.





Grow Stewardship: A Disciple's Response

All we have (time, talent and financial resources) are free gifts from God and He calls us to become a blessing by taking new steps in sharing 10% for the ministries of the Church.

TIME (Pray):

Promote personal, communal, and family prayer as a key component to spiritual growth, intimacy with Christ, and discipleship.

Encourage and provide opportunities for people to experience and practice the "3 Conversations."

TALENT (Serve):

Develop year-round processes that will engage people who are not serving by connecting them to ministry opportunities.

TREASURE (Give):

Develop new strategies and measurable action plans to grow parish-wide family participation in financial stewardship with the goal to reach 100% of participation by 2026, enabling us to provide accessibility to Catholic education.

Form Missionary Disciples by providing inspiration, opportunities, tools and support to grow as disciples who believe in the Gospel and form others to be disciples.

Emphasize the role families play in evangelizing their children and other families, and provide parents with tools for forming disciples as domestic church.

Develop and provide tools around "**3 Conversations**" for families and children.

Implement a comprehensive family/school Catholic sexual formation curriculum.

Develop a school parent covenant.

Increase the number of households engaged in small faith sharing groups rooted in scripture and focused on understanding our Catholic faith.

Move small groups from seasonal to year round.

Plant new groups.

Develop a plan for year-round invitation.

Provide more opportunities for parishioners to experience *The Evangelical Catholic* journey.

Provide evangelization training for at least 50 different parishioners each year.

Develop a spiritual mentor program through *The Evangelical Catholic* that helps those trained to become mentors.

Share personal stories of faith with the whole parish as a means of inspiring parishioners and encouraging them on their faith journey.

Provide spiritual assessment and development tools to help individuals deepen their spiritual life (e.g. Exodus 90, Magnify 90, StrengthFinder, etc.).

Develop a plan for vocational discernment groups focused on priesthood and religious life.

PY2022 Budget

July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022

Income

Sunday Offertory: \$3,281,469
Tuition: \$1,592,997
Lunch Program: \$14,280
Extended Care: \$25,500
Gift Revenue: \$21,000
School Fundraising: \$70,000
Cemetery: \$28,371
Other: \$51,326
From Savings: \$145,547

Total: \$5,230,470

Expenses

Salaries: \$2,473,359
Benefits: \$833,126
Lunch Program: \$23,772
Extended Care: \$24,002
Supplies: \$264,678
Program Expenses: \$195,850
Operations & Maintenance: \$257,500
Contracted Services: \$393,214

Business: \$147,720
Fundraising Cost: \$245,532
Combined Utilities: \$245,532
Travel & Vehicle Expenses: \$24,470
Appreciation/Thank You: \$37,757
Archdiocese Assessment: \$264,490

Total - 5,230,470



In this year's budget we decided to use some of our parish savings to move a number of initiatives forward around stewardship development, social media and technology infrastructure. We contracted with Catholic Stewardship Consultants to support our stewardship efforts, hired a full time Steward for Social Media and contracted with a local IT company to update our technology infrastructure.

Providing Access to Catholic Education

St. Michael Parish School is a ministry of Saint Michael Parish and is the only remaining ministry yet to be fully funded. Our parish strategic plan, in a spirit of gratitude for all God has given us, includes the goal of "full funding for Catholic school education for all parish families" by the year 2026.

Over the past three years, a task force of parishioners has worked to implement the transition from a tuition-based model to a fully funded parish ministry for our school. The goal is to aid every parish family in raising their children as disciples of our faith through Catholic education without tuition as a barrier. Our school froze tuition rates for the current school year. By generously taking a step in your sacrificial giving in our upcoming stewardship renewal, you enable this ministry to continue decreasing tuition until reaching our goal.