



# ANNUAL STEWARDSHIP REPORT TO THE PARISH

JULY 2015 – JUNE 2016

*“A Christian steward is one who receives God’s gifts gratefully, cherishes and tends them in a responsible and accountable manner, shares them in justice and love with others, and returns them with increase to the Lord.”*

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## OUR PARISH MISSION STATEMENT

*The Church of St. Mary is a Catholic Community united in faith and Eucharist with the Diocese of Albany, New York, and the Church throughout the world.*

*As a Catholic Community, we believe in and model our lives on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We are committed to active worship and prayer, lifelong faith formation, and the physical and spiritual support of those in need. All are welcome into our community.*

*Because of our belief in God's abiding presence, and with the support of the Holy Spirit, we share a common commitment to Stewardship which invites disciples of Jesus Christ to acknowledge their gifts from God and to share those gifts of time, talent and treasure justly and charitably in the service of the parish community and the local and global community.*

# A MESSAGE FROM FR. DAVID LEFORT

## A Message from Fr. David LeFort



Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

Every so often, it's good to step back, remove oneself from the everyday routines of life, and take a broad, sweeping look at where we are, where we've been, and on what path we are as we go forward. As I began to reflect on the message I wanted to share with you as a way of introducing this annual stewardship report, I took some time to step back in order to see the full view of our parish life together. The result? Let's see...

### TREMENDOUS JOY & GRATITUDE

First, I must profess that I am greatly blessed. God has blessed me with each of you...you are His great gift to me. And I am filled with joy as I witness your faith. See as I see: faith, firstly, is God's work in you, to which, you respond. And respond indeed! Throughout this report, you will see why I am filled with such a tremendous joy: you have chosen to respond to the Lord's invitation to be guided by His holiness, to seek Him in the needs of others, and share with them the joy of the Gospel.

*"A Christian steward is one who receives God's gifts gratefully, cherishes and tends them in a responsible and accountable manner, shares them in justice and love with others, and returns them with increase to the Lord."*

### WE ARE COMMITTED DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST

Yes, foremost, we are recipients of God's manifold grace, a grace intimately shared with each of us in Baptism, and nourished by the Eucharist, the true Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Once fortified, we have committed ourselves to living out the demands of the Good News of Christ: sharing our time in daily prayer; offering our many and varied talents in ministries of service and outreach; offering the fruits of our treasures which first came from the Almighty and are now returned with increase from our labors. I laud your generosity and I am humbled by your trust: that the Lord will repay each one according to our deeds, in accord with God's great compassion and the gift of His mercy.

### FROM BEING BLESSED, WE OFFER THANKSGIVING

Finally, I hope that as you digest the information of this annual report, you, too, will see that we are indeed a blessed parish community. Please join with me in offering thanks to one another, and raising praise to God who has invited us to be His good stewards.

In Christ Jesus, with love,



Rev. David R. LeFort

# STEWARDS OF GOD'S MANY GIFTS

## Stewards of God's Many Gifts

### PRAYER: OUR SACRAMENTAL LIFE



### WORSHIP: OUR SPIRITUAL LIFE

Gathering in order to Worship God and be nourished by the Holy Eucharist is a dramatic highlight of our parish life. Each week, our community responds to the Lord's invitation to come together for prayer, true inspiration, full, active and conscious participation in the saving life, death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Our parish is truly blessed by the various liturgical ministries in which nearly 200 individual parishioners actively serve. From ministries at the Altar, the Ambo and in the choir loft...so many share their gifts of time in order to aide our communal worship. Throughout this past year, our **average weekly attendance** & rate of participation during our two Sunday morning liturgies was **584 worshipping members**, up from 506 during the previous year. Truly, this is living faith: "God's work in us, to which, we respond."

Incidentally, the Sunday evening liturgy, which is offered by and for all four of our area parishes served **118 worshippers**, on average, each week last year.



*The newly completed "Invitation to Holiness" stained glass window in our Chapel of St. Joseph  
(photo courtesy of Lori Malone)*

# STEWARDS OF GOD'S MANY GIFTS

## CATECHESIS: OUR FORMATIVE LIFE

To grow in the knowledge of God and thus attain happiness within His life has been a wonderful blessing that we have shared in here at the Church of St. Mary. Mrs. Maureen Billa, Pastoral Associate for Evangelization & Catechesis, has cultivated and grown our catechetical volunteers to nearly **50 individuals** during this last year. These generous parishioners began the catechetical year serving the faith needs of **285 children**, and by the Spring, our programs had blossomed to nearly **350 children and youth**. Our **Childcare** and **Children's Liturgy of the Word** at our 11am Sunday liturgies have been a blessing for many.

As well, our **Adult and Young Adult Faith Formation** experiences have witnessed dozens upon dozens of parishioners—lovely people who are seeking to draw closer to a life of deep, authentic faith—grow in the appropriation of faith in their daily lives. This will continue to be the goal of our many and varied programs.

## SERVICE: OUR MINISTERIAL & EVANGELICAL LIFE

Service is a significant element of the overall life of our vibrant parish. We note here just some of the many opportunities to serve the needs of others, most notably the poor, the marginalized, the suffering and those who are in any need.

Throughout each year, our **Reverence of Life Ministry** coordinates various opportunities for us to share our lives with those who are in need, especially those who benefit from being reminded that every human life has great value and dignity, and deserves our highest reverence. This past year saw successful drives for Community Maternity Services (with 736 items donated, as well as \$1,454), CoNSERNS-U (through our Thanksgiving Baskets and Giving Trees, which donated 147 bags of food and \$1,592...serving more than 500 needy families), and Circles of Mercy (57 Easter Baskets and 59 packages of diapers and wipes for "Baby Blessings"). This ministry also provides tangible witness to the reverence of all human lives by collecting used greeting cards to benefit St. Jude's Ranch for Children (2,500 cards collected), by sending birthday cards to senior residents at Evergreen Commons and Rosewood Gardens, and "Thinking of You" cards to all who have asked for our prayers. This is a ministry which truly blesses our community.

*"Beginning in conversion, change of mind and heart, this commitment to discipleship is expressed not in a single action, nor even in a number of actions over a period of time, but in an entire way of life. It means committing one's very self to the Lord."*

Only a couple of years since its inception, **Family Promise** – an interfaith ministry to care for homeless families – has been a grace-filled addition to our parish community. Currently, three dozen parishioners of all ages and abilities assist in our care for those whose families have found themselves without a home. Deacon Tim Kosto, with the assistance of two lay coordinators, continues to welcome volunteers in this wonderful work of mercy.

At the time of the death of a loved one, parishioners and visitors have found great comfort in the prayerful process of our Christian Rites of death and burial by the presence and care of our **Bereavement Ministry**. From helping the family at the initial stages of loss and grief, to liturgy planning; from the vigil and transfer of the body, to the Funeral Service and Rite of Committal, our Bereavement ministers have served in the corporal work of mercy that asks us to care for our sisters and brothers in death, with dignity, with faith in the Resurrection, and with grace.

# STEWARDS OF GOD'S MANY GIFTS

A high point in our service ministries are the **opportunities taken by our youth**, most especially summer service projects like our annual Midnight Run and our newly minted "Middle School Mission": a series of three days off-site when our youth visit senior centers in order to share their lives with the elderly, visit migrant workers and help prepare safe environments in which to work and live, and soup kitchens and food pantries, where our youth prepare and serve meals for those who are hungry. Last year, our young people prepared and served 200 lunches, as well as weeded and harvested garden crops for upcoming meal/events.

Last year we began a new parish-based **Vocation Ministry** in order to pray for vocations in everyone (thus our group is called "P.A.V.E."). Volunteer participants regularly write letters and send care packages and well-wishes to those in formation for diocesan priesthood. Currently, members are being encouraged to write letters of appreciation to our retired diocesan priests who continue to serve us with faithful generosity.

The fine women of our **Rosary Altar Society** continue to provide various services for our community. Of primary benefit to us is the prayer that is offered daily by its members. Their prayer takes various forms throughout the year: each Monday evening, Rosarians sponsor an hour of Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament in the Chapel of St. Joseph; each October they sponsor a Rosary Rally at the Marian Meditation Garden; throughout the year, Rosarians pray baptismal stoles into being for the little ones received into the Church. Additionally, Rosarians send over \$650 to both Circles of Mercy and a mission parish in Kentucky each year; they also raise funds through their pot luck supper in order to purchase food items for Joseph House. Finally, their humble care for our sanctuaries and altar linens show great honor to our Eucharistic life and the worship we offer to Almighty God.

## ADMINISTRATION: OUR MINISTRY OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Our parish staff saw significant changes throughout the past year, most notably with the retirement of our long-serving parish secretary, Patricia Rizzo. Along with the sharing of staff with the Parish of St. John the Evangelist & St. Joseph, we are now even better equipped to serve the needs of our people and community.

### PARISH STAFF – THE CHURCH OF ST. MARY

Fr. David R. LeFort	Pastor
Ms. Mary Martinez	Parish Lay Trustee, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Term
Mr. David Hans	Parish Lay Trustee, 1 <sup>st</sup> Term
Deacon Greg Mansfield	Pastoral Associate for Parish Life & Pastoral Care
Deacon Tim Kosto	Pastoral Associate
Mrs. Maureen Billa	Pastoral Associate for Evangelization & Catechesis
Mr. Carl Hackert	Associate for Liturgy & Music
Mr. Ben Patten	Parish Secretary
Mrs. Terry Kois	Faith Formation Secretary
Mrs. Joanne Cimma	Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) Coordinator
Mr. Peter Arnos	Facilities Manager

# STEWARDS OF GOD'S MANY GIFTS

Our **Parish Pastoral Council** is instrumental to the health and ministerial efforts of our parish. This year, our Council met several times in conjunction with the Council of the Parish of St. John the Evangelist & St. Joseph. We reason that our parishes have served together the wider community of Rensselaer City and Clinton Heights and have begun to see one another as 'relatives in faith' in the community of our two parishes. In fact, the vibrant life of each of our parishes relies heavily on one another. Our goal for this Fall is to enact new statutes for a singular "Parishes' Pastoral Council" and establish this new singular Council by the end of the calendar year. By January 2017, we anticipate announcing the membership of this Council to both of our parish communities.

The **Parish Finance Committee**, whose existence is required by Canon Law (the laws governing all of the Universal Church), has regularly and faithfully fulfilled its responsibility in preparing an annual budget which is both fiscally sound and reasonable in its provisions. A further responsibility is to oversee the quarterly financial activity of the parish as we seek to extend and further the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ in our community. Finally, the Committee issues the year-end financial report to the diocese which, in turn, requests that an overview of the report be shared with parishioners each year. A detailed accounting of our parish's financial activity can be reviewed in the subsequent pages of this Stewardship Report.

Throughout this past year, the Parish Finance Committees of our two parishes have begun meeting jointly, and we anticipate that this will become normative. In doing so, we recognize that the financial stability of our two parishes now depend on the continued viability of each parish. Moreover, we have found that the discussions of our meetings have been enhanced by the contributions of all of our various members.

We are grateful for the dedicated service of the members of our Parish Finance Committee: John Zimmerman (Chair), Joe Buttiglieri, Chris Desany, Augie Gosh, David Hans (Trustee, 1<sup>st</sup> term), Marleen Mahar, Deacon Greg Mansfield (*ex-officio*), Mike Markham (Comptroller), Mary Martinez (Trustee, 2<sup>nd</sup> term), Frank Tan, and Fr. David LeFort (Pastor). Please do not hesitate to contact any of these members, if you wish to discuss any parish financial issue.

The **Stewardship Committee** of our parish continues to work diligently, focusing much of their attention throughout the year on our annual Gala & Auction, when so many of our parishioners, friends and local businesses are invited to share their time and talents with our wider community. This year, they have been fortunate to receive talented assistance from some of the parishioners of St. John the Evangelist & St. Joseph.

Our **Buildings & Grounds Committee** continues to ensure that our facilities offer an inviting, welcome and comfortable place for all. Throughout the last year, this committee oversaw the replacement of one of our mowers, re-surfacing of a section of our parking lot, renewal of lighting in the church sanctuary and the Marian Meditation Garden, as well as several landscaping projects.

*"Stewardship is an expression of discipleship, with the power to change how we understand and live out our lives. Disciples who practice stewardship recognize God as the origin of life, the giver of freedom, the source of all they have and are and will be. They are deeply aware of the truth that "The Lord's are the earth and its fullness; the world and those who dwell in it" (Ps 24:1). They know themselves to be recipients and caretakers of God's many gifts. They are grateful for what they have received and eager to cultivate their gifts out of love for God and one another."*

# OUR PARISHIONERS SHARE

## Our Parishioners Share

### STATEMENT OF REVENUES & EXPENSES

From first glance, you will see that we have continued to keep our expenses below our income. This has been the goal each year when we attempt to build a reasonable and responsible budget: we budget conservatively and work the best we can to achieve our expectations. But this is nothing different than our individual families' budgets: we can never accept spending levels higher than income levels.

In the chart which follows, you will notice that our regular, weekly offertory was up almost 4% over last year. This is no small matter: week after week, our parishioners gave more of their financial treasure to our parish. Another area of significant growth were the registration fees that were received: the fees have remained the same over the years, but with more and more families taking advantage of our programs, more and more are sharing in the associated costs of such offerings.

Finally, you will notice that our total revenues were down 2% from last year, a reduction of almost \$11,000. There are several factors that fueled this figure, however, two stand out: first, in moving our annual golf classic last year to an earlier date, we actually saw revenue from two separate golf outings in the one year's report; second, we found that hosting a program here for children before and after school each day was proving taxing on our building, but more importantly, hampering our ability to provide other quality programs during the same time, thus we discontinued that agreement (at a loss of \$15,000 annually).

### YEAR-END STATEMENT OF REVENUES

REVENUES	12 MONTHS ENDING 6/30/16	PRIOR YEAR ENDING 6/30/15
Weekly Offertory (including E-giving)	\$385,501	\$370,025
Christmas, Easter & Holy Day Offerings	\$43,860	\$42,933
Unrestricted Donations & Bequests	\$3,086	\$10,832
Restricted Capital Improvement Donations	\$12,570	\$23,960
Baptism, Wedding & Funeral Offerings	\$3,625	\$5,280
Interest & Dividend Income	\$568	\$440
Faith Formation & Youth Ministry Receipts	\$10,223	\$7,773
Transfer from Mass Stipends	\$1,576	\$1,350
Fundraising Revenues	\$61,866	\$68,302
Capital Campaign Receipts	\$0	\$200
Donations for Use of Facilities	\$5,230	\$21,510
Other Income	\$18,963	\$5,254
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$547,068</b>	<b>\$557,859</b>

On the next page, you will see that we have been very successful at limiting our expenses again this year.

# OUR PARISHIONERS SHARE

## YEAR-END STATEMENT OF EXPENSES

EXPENSES	12 MONTHS ENDING 6/30/16	PRIOR YEAR ENDING 6/30/15
Staff Salaries & Benefits	\$241,520	\$244,235
Office, Liturgical & Household Supplies	\$48,260	\$54,430
Maintenance & Repairs	\$32,147	\$35,330
Campus Utilities	\$21,675	\$26,544
Campus Property Insurance & Workers' Comp	\$20,758	\$18,079
Charitable Gifts given from the Parish	\$8,881	\$9,639
Fundraising Expenses Incurred	\$30,614	\$40,581
Awards, Recognition & Appreciation	\$7,474	\$4,606
Other Support Services	\$36,916	\$28,445
Parish, Liturgical & Faith Formation Programs	\$8,383	\$6,196
Diocesan School Assessment	\$34,667	\$34,264
Equipment & Fixed Assets	\$24,797	\$9,995
Miscellaneous Expenses	\$231	\$2,439
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$516,323</b>	<b>\$514,783</b>

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL RESULTS

For several years, our parish was not in the position to bolster our savings, however, over the last three years, seeing positive results in our financial reports, one of the goals of the finance committee has been to shore up our financial standing and invest what we can. Over three years, we have nearly doubled our savings balance. We believe that such sound financial management—one based on stewardship and the accountability of stewards—gives our parish a solid footing going forward into the future, filled with hope.

NET INCOME/DEFICIT	12 MONTHS ENDING 6/30/16	PRIOR YEAR ENDING 6/30/15
Total Revenues	\$547,068	\$557,859
Total Expenses	\$516,323	\$514,783
<b>Excess - Revenues over Expenses</b>	<b>\$30,745</b>	<b>\$43,076</b>

## STATEMENT OF ASSETS, LIABILITIES & PARISH FUND BLANACE

- As of 6/30/16, the parish's **total assets** are confirmed at **\$195,364.64** (while at the same time in the previous year, our total assets were \$171,963.61).
- As of 6/30/16, the parish's **total liabilities** are confirmed at **\$46,017.47** (while at the same time in the previous year, our total liabilities were \$53,360.87).
- As of 6/30/2016, the **Parish Fund Balance** is confirmed to be **\$149,347.17** (while at the same time in the previous year, our parish fund balance was \$118,602.74). **As a result, the financial condition of our Parish Fund Balance saw a positive growth of \$30,744.43 over the last fiscal year.**

# OUR PARISH SHARES

## Our Parish Shares

### DIOCESAN COLLECTIONS

Several times throughout each year, we are invited to offer financial support to various missions and projects. While such collections are not reported in our parish's financial statement (see previous report), we wish to offer this information to continue to demonstrate our transparency and your generosity. This past year, you offered **\$14,819.57** in direct support for those in need who are outside of our own diocese.

### DIOCESAN & UNIVERSAL COLLECTIONS

DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
Peter's Pence	\$1,351.37
Catholic Home Missions	\$1,475.00
Catholic University of America	\$1,035.00
World Mission Sunday	\$1,440.00
Campaign for Human Development	\$1,231.00
Black, Native and Latin American Missions	\$1,132.35
Catholic Relief Services	\$1,326.00
Jerusalem: The Holy Land	\$400.00
Calamities Relief 2015-2016	\$475.00
The Church in Eastern Europe	\$966.00
Catholic Communication Campaign	\$1,047.00
H2O Project (Lenten Almsgiving)	\$806.85
Missionary Cooperative Plan	\$2,134.00
<b>TOTAL OF ALL DIOCESAN &amp; UNIVERSAL COLLECTIONS</b>	<b>\$14,819.57</b>

### CHARITABLE GIFTS FROM OUR PARISH

Although our parish itself is a charitable organization, we are still invited to share our fruitfulness with other charities in the spirit of good stewards. From local emergency response organizations and youth sporting activities or artistic performance groups, to St. Paul's Center, CoNSERNS-U, Circles of Mercy, Unity House, Gianna of Albany, Community Maternity Services, Holy Spirit School, and so many others. Indeed, your regular generosity to our weekly offertory, allowed our parish to send financial gifts to other charities this past year in the amount of **\$8,881**.

### ANNUAL BISHOP'S APPEALS

The 2015 Annual Bishop's Appeal, which ended in March 2016, was extremely successful in offering **\$80,057** to our diocesan Church and her many ministries. We exceeded our goal by more than \$18,000 (of which, \$11,000 was a direct bequest from a past parishioner). This year's 2016 Appeal has already reached **\$71,127**, exceeding our goal by over \$8,000. We trust, we will again fulfill our gifts in service to others.

# OUR PARISH LOOKS FORWARD

Overall goal: \$63,125.00  
 Received to Date: \$71,127, which is 112.68% of our goal.  
 Average Gift: \$334.00  
 Households Giving: Out of our 723 parish families, presently 213 or 29.46% of our parish households have shared gifts.



## Our Parish Looks Forward

### HOPES FOR OUR FUTURE

Two goals might reward us throughout the upcoming year: growth in our spiritual lives and a re-commitment to evangelical service.

### GROWTH IN SPIRITUALITY

With our hectic world, we would be well-served by giving new attention to our **interior lives**. Maybe each of us can take renewed advantage of opportunities for quiet, reflective prayer. Possibly pondering the lives of holy men and women who have gone before us and who show us the way to **greater union** with our loving God. Our new stained glass window in the chapel could help. Also, greater participation in **Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament** would bring great benefits of blessing. Finally, let's consider approaching the compassion and mercy of God more regularly in the **Sacrament of Reconciliation**. With these, we can surely grow closer to God.

### FAITHFUL SERVICE

**Renewal of evangelization and outreach** to our friends, neighbors, and co-workers, inviting them to "come and see", would allow others to experience what we've found: Christ's presence alive in our midst!

*The next day John was there again with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he said, "Behold, the Lamb of God." The two disciples heard what he said and followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following him and said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi, where are you staying?" He said to them, "Come and see." So they went and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day. It was about four in the afternoon. Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was one of the two who heard John and followed Jesus. He first found his own brother Simon and told him, "We have found the Messiah".*

*(John 1:35-41)*

# REJOICE & PROCLAIM

## Rejoice & Proclaim

In thanksgiving for our ability to be Good Stewards, and because we are a people who are professing faith, imparting hope, and bestowing love, please share this information with others, as well as an invitation to “come and see”, that they might join with us as we encounter Christ’s presence alive in our midst!

### THE EUCHARIST

On the **Lord’s Day, each Sunday, Masses are celebrated at 8:00am and 11:00am.** Additionally, we celebrate an evening Mass on **Sundays at 7:00pm** for our area faithful. Throughout the week, **Masses are celebrated on Tuesdays and Fridays at 7:00am** in our Chapel of St. Joseph (located in the Parish Center). On Holy Days of Obligation, Masses are generally celebrated on that day at 6:45am and 5:30pm.

**Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament** is offered for all on the first Friday of each month, from the conclusion of the morning Mass until 10:00am. Most often, Adoration is also offered on Mondays each week from 7:00pm to 8:00pm in our Chapel of St. Joseph (located in the Parish Center).

### THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

The gift of God’s mercy is celebrated individually **each non-holiday Monday, beginning at 6:30pm** in the church. Also, it can be celebrated outside of these scheduled times, simply by contacting the Parish Office.

### The Church of St. Mary at Clinton Heights

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