

SAINT FRANCIS XAVIER PARISH



ANNUAL REPORT 2024



— BELONG • BELIEVE • BE LOVE —

OCTOBER 13, 2024

Pastor's Letter



Disciples on a Mission

St. Francis Xavier Parish has been exploring what it means to be *missionary disciples* of Jesus and how this shapes our life as a community of faith. An Archdiocesan survey affirmed that we are a parish of welcome, vibrant liturgy, and active outreach to those in need. More young families continue to join us on Sundays and bring their joyful “toddler choir.” Last autumn, parish leadership invited us all to submit three words that best describe this parish. Parish staff and leadership were then guided through a process to refine the many words submitted into a few words. **BELONG, BELIEVE, BE LOVE.** This is now our statement of how we see ourselves and who we strive to become in Christ.

I have long known the desire of this parish to be a community in which *all* could feel that they **belong**. Name Tag Sundays, new parishioner welcome evenings, and our Parish Block Party have provided opportunities for us to become better acquainted. Alpha evenings, That Man Is You (TMIY), and the faith witness of parishioners to enhance our Sunday homilies have nourished a deeper grounding in what we **believe** and our mission to invite others to learn more about Jesus. The expansion of Service Day to a series of *Service Days*, our outreach to local households requiring food assistance, and our assistance to recent immigrants establishing homes are just some of the ways that testify to our belief that faith must lead us to **be love** toward others in our actions and attitudes.

The following report is one way parish leadership remains accountable to all who invest in our parish mission. This report highlights *some* of the ways we practiced the good stewardship of time, talent, and treasure, including some basic statistics and the financial facts and figures. *Thank you for your ongoing stewardship of treasure* to fuel our mission.

Our parish gardens continue to expand through the labors of our restored Edythe Garden ministry. Discussions of the importance of women holding leadership roles in the Church entered the conversation at the October Synod in Rome. We completed the search for a new principal for the parish elementary school, increased our enrollment, and provided teacher bonuses after some very successful fundraising. In short, we have continued to allow the Holy Spirit to inspire our growth and outreach *with your support and involvement*.

A major goal this year is to balance the parish operating budget. This requires both increasing the number of regularly contributing households and increasing the annual contribution of all who are able. I invite you to reflect on the value of our parish mission to your household and this community. Prayerfully consider what you can give to fund our mission and ministries *this year*. Options for automated giving, including a QR Code, can be found on the parish website and later in this report.

Thank you for setting aside time to review this Annual Report. I thank our Director of Operations, Peter Brown, our Director of Stewardship and Development, Jennifer Zeisloft, our Finance Manager, Jane Bandyk, and the parishioners who serve on our parish Finance Council for their dedication and counsel this past year. We are blessed to have such wise and prudent stewards of our resources.

God bless you all. Your faithful stewardship of Saint Francis Xavier continues to make us a vibrant community of faith in which *all are invited* to **belong, believe** and **be love** for others as *missionary disciples of Christ*.

Peace,

Fr. Bill

Finance Council Letter

Dear Fellow Parishioners,

In last year's financial report, we described the financial challenges we faced during the year, noting the depletion in our savings resulting from an operating deficit of just over \$100,000 and the cost of the roof/window project undertaken in the 2022-23 fiscal year. We also emphasized that the Finance Council's primary focus is "achieving financial balance in our operations, where revenues match expenses."

For the 2023-24 fiscal year, we achieved a slight reduction in our operating deficit (in line with our projections), and our cash position increased by approximately \$132,000.

These "bottom line" numbers do not tell the whole story. As in prior years, following the end of the 2022-23 school year, we lost a number of elementary school faculty members to higher-paying jobs at other schools. To combat this trend, a concerted effort was undertaken by the School Advisory Board to raise funds in excess of the school's budgeted fundraising amount and use that excess to fund bonuses for the school's faculty and staff. As a result of those efforts and the generous donations of talent and treasure by parents and parishioners, the school was able to (i) pay unbudgeted bonuses of approximately \$214,000 to school faculty and staff and (ii) set aside just over \$82,000 to fund future bonuses without negatively impacting the bottom line relative to our projections. We believe these bonuses contributed heavily to the increased retention of our faculty this year.

Turning to the current fiscal year, our final budget achieves the balance aspired to in last year's report. A key to achieving this balanced budget is a projected 6% increase in the offertory. Last year, the offertory increased by 3.4%. Therefore, to achieve this goal, we once again humbly request that parishioners who regularly contribute consider increasing the amount of their offertory contributions and ask those parishioners who do not regularly contribute to consider doing so. Various methods of giving can be found on the final page of this report.

We believe the Parish and elementary school have strong tailwinds behind them as we enter this fiscal year. Jimmy Bajner joined the elementary school as Principal on July 1, and enrollment has continued to trend positively. Our Director of Stewardship and Development, Jennifer Zeisloft, is in her second year in the role. Her efforts have provided the Parish and elementary school with access to previously untapped resources. Finally, the contributions of time, talent, and treasure of all parishioners continue to demonstrate how blessed we are to be members of St. Francis Xavier Parish.

It is our honor and privilege to serve the Parish as stewards of its financial resources. We extend our deepest gratitude to all who have generously contributed their time, talents, and treasure. Your past contributions have been instrumental in our achievements, and we humbly request your continued generosity so that our staff and volunteers can continue their wonderful work in service of the parish's mission.

With gratitude,

Cathy Bier, Carolyn Broughton, Jennifer Driscoll, Tom Kostal, Jim Owen (Chair), Meredith Ritchie, John Schaff

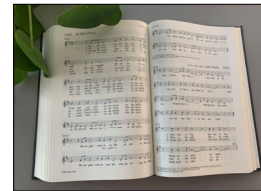
Stewardship

Belong. Believe. Be Love. With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, our parish community embraces this identity statement in many ways, including through stewardship (time, talent, treasure).

Devoting Time in Prayer

Our 500 new *Gather* hymnals are central in our liturgies as we devote time in prayer to God. One of my absolute favorite hymns is *In This Place* (#1041, lyrics by Victoria Thomson):

*We are gathered at table as one in the Lord.
We are gathered as people who are living the Word.
Our hearts and our spirits are nurtured by grace.
It is Jesus who fills us. He is here in this place.*



Allen Sterwalt, our Music Director, shares: “The sung prayer we share by opening our hymnals and singing with one another is a wonderful gift of God’s love and grace given to all, whether you are active in a leadership role with one of our many music ministries, or you continue to be present in the pews. Our newest hymnal offers a message of inclusivity and hospitality for ALL who walk through our doors. No matter if you are a more traditional worshiper, or looking ahead to a new way to pray, this newest hymnal brings prayer through song to our liturgies which reflect the Church’s need to connect to our modern world, while at the same time, allowing our rich and beautiful music traditions to shine through as an important foundation of our Christian faith. St. Francis Xavier continues to be open to progress through our music and liturgy. My mission and challenge as Director of Music at SFX is to continue offering opportunities for a more meaningful spiritual connection for every person entering our beautiful church. I pray that we will always remain open to a renewal of heart and mind, through sung prayer - old and new.”

Sharing Talent

We celebrated the stewardship of sharing our talents with a significant anniversary in June. According to Mary Freeman, our Director of Community Outreach, we planned the first All Parish Service Day in 2015 as part of our 125th Anniversary celebration. Using a line from Patrick Windmoeller, SFX School alum, our parishioners said YES to “Doing God’s Work in the World.” In June 2024, we celebrated our **10th Annual Service Days** with 262 volunteers participating. While our parish responds daily to the needs of our community through many outreach ministries, our All Parish Service Days have given hundreds of parishioners the opportunity to serve with 44 partners in our community and Chicagoland. We developed relationships with many of these partners through our parishioners’ involvement with their missions.



Stewardship

The dedication of our volunteers was also in full force as our parish community gathered at the first annual Ignite Benefit, celebrating the ministry of our elementary school. Our **Ignite 2024** chairs and School Advisory Board members conceptualized and brought to fruition the school's largest event fundraiser ever, enabling the establishment of faculty and staff bonuses as part of the school's annual budget. Many of us know that Catholic educators' salaries and benefits are significantly lower than those in public schools; the success of Ignite 2024 raised over \$350,000 in support of Catholic elementary school education. In addition, the school honored Joe and Bea Nelligan for their decades of stewardship in the parish, especially the school. Finally, we wished principal Sharon Garcia a happy retirement, and welcomed Jimmy Bajner as our new principal. The school has another fabulous team in the planning stages for Ignite 2025, which is on the parish calendar for April 26, 2025 – hope to see you there!



Giving Treasure

Before I came to work at St. Francis Xavier, I thought of pastoral care as a vocation for our priests alone. Now I see that, in addition to two wonderful priests, our parish is blessed with other pastoral staff members who are vital shepherds here. One of these members is our Pastoral Associate, Maggie McMahon, MDiv. Maggie is passionate about bringing Christ into our community in many ways, including helping others learn about our Catholic faith and grow along their own faith journey.

Building a relationship with Jesus is a lifelong undertaking. Our “grade school understanding” of God likely cannot stand up to our questions as we pass through the challenges of each decade of life. However, if we continuously explore our relationship with Jesus, our growing understanding reveals the graces present to each of us. While some explore and nurture this relationship on their own, blessings abound from having a trained, professional minister to guide us. The multiplication factor cannot be underestimated in faith formation programs such as Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (formerly RCIA) or Alpha. Maggie McMahon shares: “St. Francis is an incredible community of welcome and **Belong-ing**. But oftentimes we aren’t sure how to take our next step to keep growing in our **Believe-ing**, and that’s the great joy of my job! I love walking with others as the Holy Spirit invites them deeper. And I love equipping people to turn around and confidently welcome the next person, walk in the Spirit with them, and support them in their mission to **Be Love**.”

The outpouring of time, talent and treasure here at SFX truly shows that “*We are gathered as people who are living the Word.*” God bless you!

In gratitude for your stewardship,
Jennifer Zeisloft
Director of Stewardship & Development

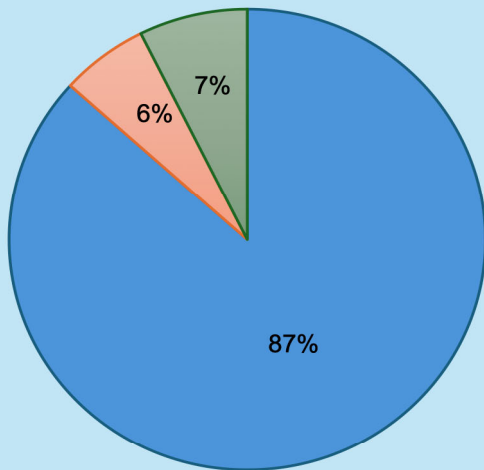
Finance Report

During budget preparation, the Finance Council, Director of Operations, and Principal strive to present the Pastor with a balanced budget. For the 2024-2025 budget, the Finance Council recommends a 6% offertory increase. This increase will help eliminate the budget deficit.

Church and Religious Education

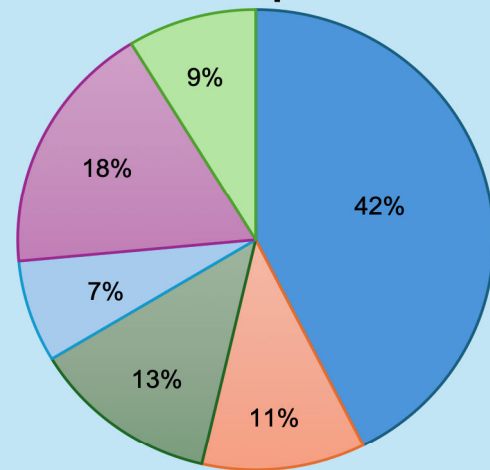
	Actual 6/30/23	Actual 6/30/24	Budget 6/30/25
Operating Church & Religious Education Revenue			
Sunday, Holy Days, Christmas & Easter	1,761,074	1,820,622	1,965,000
Other Operating Income and Interest Income	87,014	125,016	62,000
Religious Education Tuition, Fees, and Fundraising	134,059	154,920	153,550
Total Church & Religious Education Revenue	\$1,982,147	\$2,100,558	\$2,180,550
Operating Church & Religious Education Expenses			
Salaries, FICA, Health, Retirement, Professional Dev.	924,385	930,462	975,421
Archdiocesan Admin., Priest Retirement	232,164	243,036	245,743
Building and Grounds	214,193	278,686	229,473
Liturgical and Administrative	134,272	156,395	149,601
School Subsidy (see next page)	394,540	387,696	351,738
Religious Education Expenses	184,155	191,503	228,574
Total Church & Religious Education Expenses	\$2,083,709	\$2,187,778	\$2,180,550
Net Church & RE Operating Surplus (Deficit)	(\$101,562)	(\$87,220)	\$0

Church & RE Revenue FY24



- Sunday, Holy Days, Christmas & Easter
- Other Operating Income and Interest Income
- Religious Education Tuition, Fees, and Fundraising

Church & RE Expenses FY24



- Salaries, FICA, Health, Retirement, Professional Dev.
- Archdiocesan Admin., Priest Retirement
- Building and Grounds
- Liturgical and Administrative
- School Subsidy (see next page)
- Religious Education Expenses

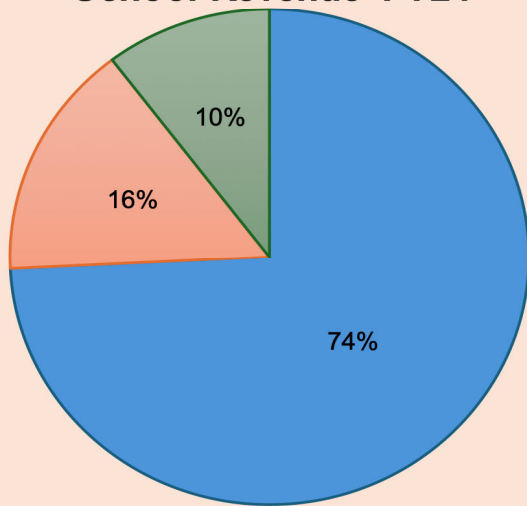
Finance Report

School

	Actual 6/30/23	Actual 6/30/24	Budget 6/30/25
School Revenue			
School Tuition, Fees, and Misc. Operating Revenue	2,427,682	2,774,887	2,896,192
Fundraising	262,900	575,780	563,000
Subsidy from Parish	394,540	387,696	351,738
Total School Revenue	\$3,085,122	\$3,738,363	\$3,810,930
School Expenses			
Salaries, FICA, Health, Retirement, Prof. Development	2,522,984	2,714,249	2,895,103
Faculty/Staff Bonuses (including FICA)	0	213,954	214,000
Faculty/Staff Bonus Reserve*	0	82,734	0
Building and Grounds	295,099	331,541	281,294
Instructional, Technology, and Other Operating Expenses	267,039	395,885	420,533
Total School Expenses	\$3,085,122	\$3,738,363	\$3,810,930

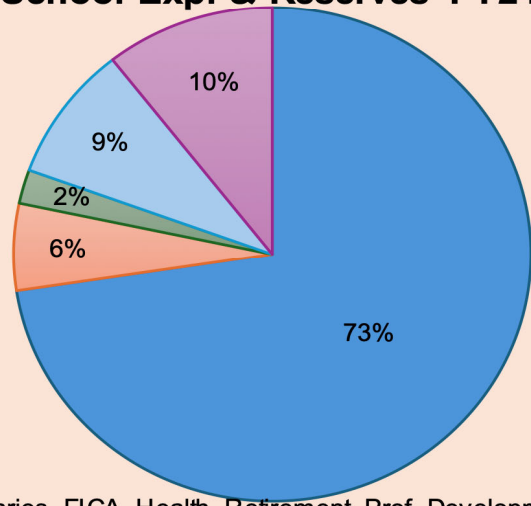
* The faculty/staff bonus reserve is maintained to absorb fluctuations in fundraising, ensuring a consistent bonus fund for school faculty and staff each year.

School Revenue FY24



- School Tuition, Fees, and Misc. Operating Revenue
- Fundraising
- Subsidy from Parish

School Exp. & Reserves FY24



- Salaries, FICA, Health, Retirement, Prof. Development
- Faculty/Staff Bonuses (including FICA)
- Faculty/Staff Bonus Reserve*
- Building and Grounds
- Instructional, Technology, and Other Operating Expenses

Non-Operating Sources of Parish Income

	Actual 6/30/23	Actual 6/30/24
Building/Capital Fund	\$138,820	\$143,174
Bequests	20,000	60,000
Memorials	8,553	2,350
Educational Endowment Draw	0	40,000

Other Financial Information

Statement of Cash Position

	6/30/22	6/30/23	6/30/24	
Unrestricted Funds				
Cash and Savings on Deposit	1,462,994	1,430,263	1,787,858	
Current Cash Liabilities	545,359	535,406	761,078	
Net Cash Position	\$ 917,635	\$ 894,858	\$ 1,026,779	
 Restricted Funds for Long Term Initiatives				
Building Fund	805,779	608,597	121,323	Note 1
Bonus Reserve Fund	-	-	101,826	Note 2
Parish Endowment Fund	267,155	384,164	424,927	
Educational Endowment Fund	976,425	932,227	1,016,084	Note 3
Restricted Funds on Deposit	\$ 2,049,359	\$ 1,924,988	\$ 1,664,160	

Note 1: The final payment for the school's roof replacement was completed in July 2023. The remaining balance of the Building Fund was primarily allocated towards the replacement of air conditioning units and sewage pumps during the summer of 2024. The final expenditures related to these projects are expected to be completed and paid by the end of fiscal year 2025.

Note 2: The Bonus Reserve Fund was established to mitigate fluctuations in annual fundraising efforts. Its purpose is to ensure the consistent provision of bonus payments to faculty and staff across fiscal years, stabilizing bonus distributions despite variances in fundraising income.

Note 3: The Educational Endowment Fund surpassed the \$1 million milestone during the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024. The first significant distribution of earnings, amounting to \$40,000, was used to provide bonuses for faculty and staff. The growth of the fund was supported in part by a bequest from Eleanor, Irene, and Father Jim O'Connor, which contributed to reaching the \$1 million threshold.

Other Giving

SFX received directed donations for the following outreach ministries:

Annual Catholic Appeal 2024	120,331
SFX Food Pantry	69,274
St. Simon of Cyrene (formerly St. Agatha Parish)	20,688
St. Vincent de Paul Society	17,388
Fuller Center for Housing	7,193
Other Charitable Organizations (for a complete list, visit our website)	63,446
Total	\$298,320

Giving Treasure—Frequently Asked Questions

Considering which method of giving is right for you? Check out the FAQ below.

What method of giving is most cost-effective for the parish?

- Online monthly donations from your bank checking or savings account.
- The processing fees for these are about 0.5%, as compared to credit card fees of 3.5%.

If I want to give using my credit card, can I cover the higher transaction fee?

- Yes – you can! This is relatively new to Give Central, our online giving processor.
- Log into your Give Central account and select “I would like to cover the processing fee” when you make or change your contribution.

I prefer using offertory envelopes – is that ok?

- Absolutely. Please continue to do so.
- We have identified ways to reduce the cost of printing and mailing, and there were some changes made in January 2024 to the number of envelopes and frequency of mailing.

How important is my Christmas or Easter donation?

- Very important! These two special donations totaled 13% (\$241,489) of our funding last year.
- While all parishioners receive the envelopes with Fr. Bill’s Christmas and Easter reflections, you can set up online giving right now using the QR code above.

Are there any other methods to give to offertory?

- Yes. Donations of appreciated stock, IRA distributions, and donor advised funds are tax-efficient methods, which many donors prefer.
- Contact Jennifer Zeisloft, Director of Stewardship and Development, at 708-352-0168 or jzeisloft@sfxlq.org to learn more and if you have questions about these giving methods.

Set up regular donations with this QR code. Thank you for your support to SFX Parish!



Enrollment Statistics

Elementary School Enrollment

October 2023: 449
October 2024: 462

Religious Education Enrollment

October 2023: 609
October 2024: 625

Parish Statistics

Baptisms

2022-2023 175
2023-2024 164

Confirmations

2022-2023 126
2023-2024 96

Funerals/Burials

2022-2023 64
2023-2024 59

First Communion

2022-2023 117
2023-2024 132

Marriages

2022-2023 25
2023-2024 34

Newly Registered Families

2022-2023 104
2023-2024 145