

# CONNECTING GENERATIONS *through cookies*

## Receiving a Big Order

When 8-year-old Girl Scout, Ellie Sticha, daughter of Maureen and Russ Sticha, received a two-case order of Girl Scout Cookies from her uncle with instructions to keep the cookies, she was faced with a big decision. She could keep them, share them with friends and neighbors, or she could make a bigger impact with giving. Ellie and her parents discussed how she could make a difference with the gift of Girl Scout Cookies.

## Planning a Visit of Giving

Ellie and her parents contacted St. Mary's Parish Nurse, Kathy Fischer, and offered the cookies to the elderly whom Kathy visits. On a weekly basis, Kathy visits, checks in on and offers the Eucharist to a large number of older people who might not make it to Mass by themselves. She knew Ellie and a box of cookies would be a welcomed day brightener to many of her elderly clients. So, at Kathy's suggestion, a plan was made for Ellie to accompany Kathy for a day of visits and handing out cookies.

## Skippping School

Last May, as a St. Mary's School 3rd grader, Ellie was allowed to miss part of her school day and headed out with Kathy to meet many of the elderly of our community. Together they knocked on doors and Ellie was greeted with smiles and hugs. All were delighted to receive a box of cookies; a simple gesture, but heartfelt and meaningful. Most enjoyable for all was the visiting, chatting and learning about each other. Ellie saw pictures of their grandkids and realized that she knew some of them. Ellie shared with them her love of dance and reading. The visits weren't lengthy, but they were powerful. There was a connection made between generations which was a gift for all. Ellie enjoyed it so much, she's asked if she can do it again.



## 6 CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EVERYDAY STEWARD

- 01 MINDFUL**  
Lives in the present, without the baggage of the past, and without fear of the future.
- 02 PRAYERFUL**  
Sees every day as an opportunity to be in the presence of God.
- 03 GRATEFUL**  
Gives thanks for all God's blessings, especially the little everyday ones.
- 04 GRACIOUS**  
Receives all of God's creation in a welcoming and hospitable manner.
- 05 COMMITTED**  
Perseveres daily in a way of life acknowledging everything belongs to God.
- 06 ACCOUNTABLE**  
Understands the value of parish community and the role it plays.

### PARISH LEADERSHIP

Father Steve Binsfeld, Pastor  
 Jim Boyle, Parish Business Administrator (retired)  
 Todd Wentworth, Parish Business Administrator  
 Francie Peterson/Elmer Kobbermann, Trustees  
 Steve Russell, Parish Pastoral Council Chair  
 Mike Dolan, Finance Committee Chair

### PASTORAL STAFF

Laurie Youngers, Director of Music and Liturgy  
 Kathy Fischer, Parish Nurse  
 Troy Sladek, Principal  
 Laurie Bienias, Logistics Coordinator  
 Gina Pohlen, Coordinator of Youth Ministries  
 Kathy Ballou, Communications and Ministry Coordinator

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 Alexandria, MN 56308



The Church of  
**St. Mary**

# Stewardship REPORT

2016-2017



## A Letter FROM OUR PASTOR

Dear Fellow Parishioners of St. Mary's Church,  
 Everyone in our parish is connected to the other by Baptism. Born into the world as children of God, Baptism made us members of Christ's Living Body and brothers and sisters to one another. Baptism, in the Church's theology, made us members of Christ's priestly, prophetic and royal people. To carry on Christ's work of making and forming disciples, stewardship of our time, talent and financial treasure is necessary. We cannot do anything without both Christ---and each another.  
 We are again approaching our annual Stewardship Renewal this year. There are so many who minister in many ways within our parish and outside of our parish within the larger community. Every year we are called to examine how we use our time to serve others, how we use the God-given talents with which we have been blest, and how we give of our financial treasure to support the many ministries at St. Mary's.  
 Every year, you and I are invited to go deeper...to take another step to make our gifts available to build up the Body of Christ in our community. Please consider the challenges that we will hear in these weeks ahead. Respond generously to God's gracious invitation. God's generosity will not be outdone.  
 God bless you all!  
 Fr. Steve

*Fr. Steven M. Binsfeld*

- IN THIS ISSUE**
- The Faith of High Schoolers
  - Reflections From The Parish Business Administrator
  - 2016-2017 Highlights
  - Financial Statements
  - Feeding the Kids
  - Making a Difference, The Caring and Sharing Room
  - The 2016-2017 Numbers
  - Connecting Generations Through Cookies

### TAKE THE STEP - GET INVOLVED!

Our ministry handbook offers a description of each of the many active ministries in our parish. You can find it online or hard copies are available at the hospitality desk and the parish office. Check it out to find just the right ministry in which to offer your gifts of service.  
[stmaryalexandria.org/Handbook.pdf](http://stmaryalexandria.org/Handbook.pdf)

# THE FAITH of High Schoolers

The Holy Spirit is alive and well in a group of recently graduated high school seniors who met regularly on Wednesday nights at St. Mary's during the school year. After confirmation in 11th grade, St. Mary's offers an optional faith formation program to 12th graders. It is not a requirement, but many in the Class of 2017 chose to come. In fact, they looked forward to their small group meetings with leaders Michaela Niblett and Sonya Skinner.

This is a story about the many blessings of relational ministry. Michaela and Sonya were small group leaders starting in 7th grade with some of these kids, and the relationships that were built and strengthened over the years have created an environment of trust. The teens say they can ask difficult questions in a comfortable environment and there's safety in knowing others share the same questions. The students and the adult leaders alike enjoy time spent talking about their faith together.

Relational ministry for the middle school and high school students was put into place at St. Mary's several years ago. Relational ministry isn't necessarily a strategy to keep our youth engaged, as much as it is a genuine care for young people. It is built on love; love for God and love for our youth. The small group leaders benefit as well, as they enjoy the relationships that are formed, make lasting connections and deepen their own faith. Strengthened faith and a sense of community and belonging in our teens and small group leaders are a byproduct of these relationships.

As these young people go out into the world after graduation, they will be living out their faith built on a strong foundation. They will know they are loved at St. Mary's.

## REASONS WHY THEY COME WHEN IT'S NOT REQUIRED:

"When I go home after a Wednesday night, it's fun to discuss the topic of conversation with my parents."

"We start on a topic and often go down a different path, and that's ok."

"It's a comfortable environment to discuss difficult questions."

"Food!"

"I look forward to it all week."

"Sonya and Michaela!"  
(The small group leaders)

"We're learning to defend our faith with love."

"It's nice to meet with my peers and realize that they have some of the same questions as me."



## STEWARDSHIP GIVING

### Planned

We spend time in thought and prayer when deciding what to give.

### Grateful

Our offering is a grateful response to the immense love God has for us.

### Proportionate

Our giving is proportionate to what God has given us.

### Sacrificial

We give back to God from our substance rather than from our abundance.

### A Gift

What we give is a gift, given without reservation or condition.

# FEEDING THE Kids



When the St. Mary's School cook, Lynn Lesnau, was out for 3 weeks for hip surgery and recovery, the school needed someone who could jump in and cook the school lunches. Fausto Lopez and Karen Sladek answered the call.

Fausto and Karen teamed up prepping, cooking and serving. They both refused payment, and donated their time to help out.

Karen explained that she knew the school was in a bind and she was glad to help. She enjoys the kids and added, "Everyone is happy

here!" A bonus was seeing her grandsons who attend the school and her son, Troy Sladek, who is the principal.

Fausto has 3 children currently attending St. Mary's School and 1 son who is an alumnus. He's a big fan of the school community and it was an easy decision to step in and cook. He said he's happy to help and, anytime the school needs him, he'll be there to help.

## LEAVE YOUR LEGACY

Making gifts through wills and bequests is a very popular and feasible way to leave a lasting legacy to St. Mary's. In addition to the satisfaction of making a gift, donors can avail themselves of an estate tax charitable deduction.

Consult with your attorney or tax advisor – it is ALWAYS important to have professional counsel in matters such as these. Please contact Todd Wentworth at the parish office for further information or see the Planned Giving brochure on our website.

[stmaryalexandria.org/Stewardship/PlannedGiving.pdf](http://stmaryalexandria.org/Stewardship/PlannedGiving.pdf)

## THE 2016 - 2017 NUMBERS FOR THE CHURCH OF ST. MARY

**2,132**  
REGISTERED HOUSEHOLDS

**50** YOUNG  
ADULTS  
CONFIRMED

**5,490**  
BAPTIZED CATHOLICS

**150** JOINED  
A NEW  
MINISTRY

**5** RCIA CANDIDATES

**56** FIRST  
COMMUNIONS

**50** INFANT  
BAPTISMS

**2,100** AVERAGE WEEKLY  
MASS ATTENDANCE

**700** STUDENTS  
ENROLLED  
IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

**208**  
SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

**16** MARRIAGES

RELIGIOUS **10** PASTORAL  
EDUCATION STAFF STAFF

**452** MASSES  
CELEBRATED

**90** WEEKEND  
LITURGICAL MINISTERS

**48**  
DEATHS

**300+** HOLY WEEK  
LITURGICAL  
MINISTERS

**7,100** HOMEBOUND  
VISITS

**58** MINISTRIES  
AND  
COMMITTEES

**27** SCHOOL  
FACULTY AND STAFF

**\$36,848** DONATED  
FOR  
EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE THE CARING AND SHARING ROOM

The Caring and Sharing Room of St. Mary's recently received a voice mail message as follows:

*"I just have to tell you how thankful I am. You delivered a houseful of blessings last week. I have never, ever been helped like I've been helped by all of you. I'm so happy and I thank you, and God bless every one of you. Thanks so much."*

When the team delivered items to this woman, she presented the volunteers with a small ceramic angel that she insisted they accept as a small token of her appreciation. Having experienced some difficulties, she had very little in her apartment, and she was overwhelmed by the generosity of the Caring and Sharing Room. Likewise, the volunteer team was moved by her generosity, offering her "widows' mite" to them in thanksgiving.

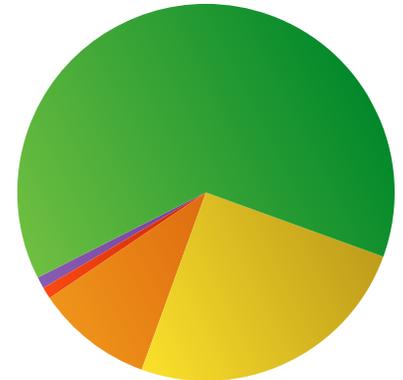
The angel is kept in the Caring & Sharing Room as a reminder that the ministry is making a difference in people's lives.



# WE GIVE OUR *First Fruits*

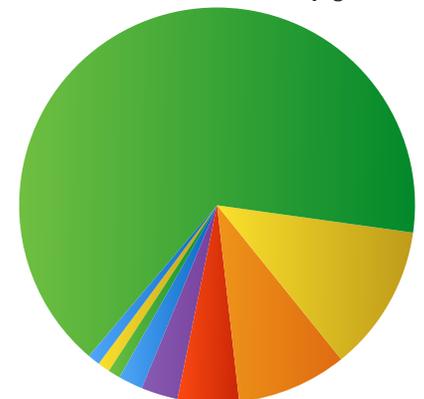
## FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Where does the money come from?



- Sunday Offerings..... 63%
- School Income..... 25%
- General..... 10%
- Diocesan Collections..... 1%
- Religious Education Income..... 1%

Where does the money go?



- Salaries & Benefits .....66%
- Debt Retirement.....12%
- Maintenance Operations .....9%
- Diocesan Collections & Assessments.....5%
- Administration.....3%
- Raffle/Festival.....2%
- Religious Education.....1%
- Liturgy.....1%
- School Instructional.....1%

### BALANCE SHEET - JUNE 30, 2017

#### ASSETS

Checkbook ending balance including dedicated funds (such as: School, Youth Ministry, Cemetery, Benevolent Fund)		\$517,112.36
Cemetery/Mausoleum (money market)	\$72,572.48	
School (money market)	100,597.99	
Cash Reserve (money market)	<u>229,825.12</u>	
Total Money Market		<u>402,995.59</u>
<b>Total Liquid Assets</b>		<b><u>\$920,107.95</u></b>
<b>Total Dedicated Assets</b>	<b>(514,397.77)</b>	
<b>Total Available Liquid Assets</b>	<b>405,710.18</b>	
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>		
Buildings and Land	16,384,835.43	
Furniture and Equipment	<u>1,252,928.10</u>	
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>		<b><u>\$17,637,763.53</u></b>
<b>Total Assets</b>		<b><u>\$18,557,871.48</u></b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		
Bremer Bank (Bond)		\$2,328,081.44
<b>Net Worth</b> (Total assets - total liabilities)		<b><u>\$16,229,790.04</u></b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Worth</b>		<b><u>\$18,557,871.48</u></b>

### CONDENSED STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES

For the Fiscal Years Ending, June 30, 2017 and 2016

	<u>2016-2017</u>	<u>2015-2016</u>
<b>OPERATING INCOME</b>		
Offerings (all collections)	\$1,816,713.68	\$1,749,558.18
General	300,950.81	281,073.31
Diocesan Collections	23,202.19	26,953.36
Religious Education Tuition	42,738.56	42,275.87
School Income	<u>715,923.95</u>	<u>718,788.22</u>
<b>Total Operating Income</b>	<b><u>\$2,899,529.19</u></b>	<b><u>\$2,818,648.94</u></b>
<b>OPERATING EXPENSES</b>		
Salaries & Benefits	\$1,916,430.75	\$1,759,270.21
Maintenance, Operating, Utilities & General	246,092.68	326,293.94
Raffle/Festival	43,910.00	39,598.17
Administration	101,208.04	101,639.86
Liturgical	31,763.07	34,839.62
Religious Education	18,954.25	19,987.51
St. Mary's School Instructional	25,612.85	36,930.99
Debt Retirement	370,567.48	300,567.48
Diocesan Collections and Assessments	<u>137,710.19</u>	<u>130,332.36</u>
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b><u>\$2,892,249.31</u></b>	<b><u>\$2,749,460.14</u></b>
<b>Increase in Net Worth</b>	<b><u>\$7,279.88</u></b>	<b><u>\$69,188.80</u></b>
<b>Net Dedicated Acct. Increase/(Decrease)</b>	<b><u>\$59,636.22</u></b>	<b><u>\$68,667.70</u></b>

# Reflections FROM THE PARISH BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR



Jim Boyle  
Parish Business  
Administrator  
2000-2017

The past 17 years have flown by, but much has been accomplished here at St. Mary's. I am so grateful for the support of parishioners, parish leadership and staff that have collaborated to make the dream of a vibrant, faith filled, financially solvent, Catholic community a reality in Alexandria.

So many good things have happened over the years, but five major accomplishments come to mind, and they are listed below.

Having retired at the end of this fiscal year, I am blessed to have had the opportunity to serve in this leadership role and will treasure all the relationships I have had along the way. I thank you all for your support and encourage you to continue to be great stewards of all God has blessed you with. I am confident in handing the leadership baton to our new Parish Business Administrator, Todd Wentworth, and ask for your support for him as well. Let's continue to find better ways to serve God's people!

## STEWARDSHIP

From 2000 to 2017, the offertory collections have increased 220%. This is phenomenal and is evidence of so many folks having embraced the concept of stewardship as a way of life. In addition, many have offered their gifts of service to the needs of the parish in over 40 different ministries.



## STAFF

Another major accomplishment is that of hiring additional staff members over the years and the commitment and ability to pay them a just wage that includes health insurance. This has also helped maintain continuity as we strive to serve the needs of the faithful.



## BALANCED BUDGET

In 2000 we were deficit spending by nearly \$75,000 but have not done so since. With the cooperation of the staff, and the generosity of parishioners, we have achieved a balanced budget for the past 16 years. Outstanding!



## FACILITIES

The *Facilities Master Plan* that was developed in 1995 is now complete with all campus facilities up to date and it includes ownership of adjoining properties that allow for future space needs. The Phase III educational and administrative space is constantly used by multiple parish and community groups in addition to the original purposes for which it was built.



## DEBT REDUCTION

We embarked on a \$7.2 million building project in 2004 and have been meeting the regular mortgage payments over the years thru Sunday giving. This year we paid an additional \$70,000 on the principal, which leaves us with a debt of \$2.3 million. Fantastic!



Dear Parishioners,

On behalf of the Finance Committee, we thank you for your generous monetary contributions to the Parish of St. Mary's over the last fiscal year. As you know, our goal has been to have regular weekly contributions provide sufficient funds to meet our normal expenses. Over the last fiscal year, regular contributions increased by 3%, allowing us to meet our budget for normal expenses. The parish received some extraordinary gifts, which were used to fund the St. Mary's Foundation and to pay an additional \$70,000 on principal, thereby reducing our long-term debt. We thank you for your financial support to St. Mary's and look forward to your continued generosity.

- Michael J. Dolan,  
Finance Committee Chair

## HIGHLIGHTS 2016-2017

- Environmentally friendly **LED lighting** is **90%** complete in the church complex
- **St. Mary's Catholic Foundation** was formed
- Commons Area improvements include **new furniture** and **digital signs**
- **Benevolent Fund** shared **\$23,000** with those in need
- **Major improvements** to St. Mary's Cemetery include new fencing and sealcoating of pavement