



DIVINE MERCY PARISH

SACRED HEART CHURCH · ST. PHILIP THE APOSTLE CHURCH

STEWARDSHIP REPORT

Divine Mercy Parish is a welcoming community that inspires disciples of Jesus to share God's love and transform the world.

Dear Divine Mercy Parish and Sacred Heart School Families,

I am pleased to present you with our annual stewardship report for this last fiscal year, running from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025. Inside, you will of course find a summary of the overall financial picture of the parish. I am so grateful for all of the generosity and giving in our community, and I and the parish staff want to make sure that we are responsible and transparent with all the donations that you entrust to our care.

The financial numbers alone, however, don't tell the full story of our parish. There are many wonderful ways in which our parishioners share their time and talent, and that makes up the real treasure of Divine Mercy Parish. In this report, you will read stories of exciting new ministries like our Young Family Ministry and our Environmental Ministry. You will read about the great things that are taking place in our Sacred Heart School and in our Divine Mercy Children's Ministry. You will read about the great legacy that has been passed down to us by Deacon Mike McNulty.

This isn't an exhaustive report – if we tried to share every good work that our parishioners are engaged in, our printing costs would skyrocket! But it should make you proud to be a

member of Divine Mercy Parish. I am grateful to have begun as your new pastor here on July 1, 2025, and I look forward to continuing on this journey with you as we continue to be a welcoming community that inspires disciples of Jesus to share God's love and transform our world.

-Fr. Dan Folwaczny



THANK YOU FATHER STEVE LANZA

On June 8, 2025, we celebrated a farewell Mass to recognize Fr. Steve Lanza for his 11 years of service at the former Sacred Heart Parish and now, Divine Mercy Parish. As the founding pastor of Divine Mercy, we are grateful for his leadership and for all that Fr. Steve accomplished during his time here. We hope that he is able to eventually enjoy his "retirement!"



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PARISH LEADERSHIP

Thank you to the parishioners and staff members who, by being active participants in our parish councils and boards, lead our parish towards the future. The pastor consults with the Senior Leadership Team to develop tactics, the Parish Council to develop high-level objectives and measurements that help achieve our vision, and the Finance Council to determine funding strategies and spending priorities.

FY 25 Senior Leadership Team

Fr. Steven Lanza, Pastor (Fr. Dan Folwaczny as of 7/1/25)
Kathleen Clarke
Liz McGowen, Director of Pastoral Care, Outreach & Events
Judy Pyke, Director of Communications
Patty Sanfilippo, Director of Evangelization & Lifelong Form.
Cathy Stegich
Michelle Wasielewski, Director of Operations

FY 25 Parish Council

Fr. Steve Lanza, Pastor (Fr. Dan Folwaczny as of 7/1/25)
Susan Seeberg, Chair
Lydia Barrett
Terry Brennan
Kevin Carlson
Peter Eck
Sam Fifer
Judy Pyke, Director of Communications
Michelle Wasielewski, Director of Operations

Chris Hartman
Siobhan Hill
Erika Hutz
Michael Koberda
John Lombardo
Dobson Schofield
Hunter Williams

FY 25 Finance Council

Fr. Steve Lanza, Pastor (Fr. Dan Folwaczny as of 7/1/25)
Gerry Schroeder, Chair
Terry Brennan
Tim Castellini
Cindy Atsaves, Director of Finance
Michelle Wasielewski, Director of Operations

In addition, the following boards are essential to ensuring that lay leadership in the parish is fully engaged and serving an effective role in supporting our efforts:

- Sacred Heart School Board
- Children's Ministry Board
- Evangelization Board
- Outreach Board
- Liturgy Board
- School Endowment Board

NOTABLE FY 2024-2025 EVENTS

STRATEGIC PLAN

We continue to refine the goals of our five-year Strategic Plan as we embarked on year 4, devoted to **Ministry**. As you may recall, the years are focused on evangelization, community, discipleship, ministry and worship. We are proud to see Divine Mercy moving forward!

EVANGELIZATION

While **Alpha** was not the primary focus of the Strategic Plan during this fiscal year, we continue to see the fruits of this program. Not only was there strong participation in the Fall and Spring Alpha courses, as well as the annual reunion on June 5th, but we also welcomed four individuals into the Catholic faith!

In the fall of 2024, a group of very enthusiastic moms, headed by Erika Hutz Warner, inaugurated our **Young Family Ministry**. It started with a monthly "Mass & Mingle" event following the 10am Sunday Mass, where parents and young children gathered at the new Sacred Heart playground meeting and interacting with old and new friends. Since then, we've created a page on the parish website with many additional events. Check it out!



Post-Alpha activity continues to grow. A new course, **Metanoia**, is being piloted this fall. *Metanoia* means 'to think beyond' or 'to change one's mind.' *Metanoia* in a spiritual sense means introspection, or an evaluation of one's values and actions, which often leads to a shift in one's behavior. With success, we hope to offer the course again in the Spring. We will once again be gathering to view and discuss new episodes of *The Chosen*. Bible Study with Fr. John Kartje and small faith sharing groups for Advent and Lent continue to be offered.

Divine Mercy continues to partner in offering events with the other two parishes from our Renew My Church grouping: Ss. Faith Hope and Charity and Ss. Joseph and Francis Xavier. We refer to this as our Tri-Parish group. Our Tri-Parish committee has developed a wonderful agenda of programming for 2025-2026, **around the theme of Hope** – acknowledging the Year of Jubilee, Pilgrims of Hope. Ss. Faith Hope and Charity recently

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hosted a presentation from Bruno Abate of Tocco Restaurant and **Recipe for Change** where he spoke about his work teaching the art of cooking to some 4,000 inmates in Cook County Jail over the past 14 years. This was followed by a presentation at Ss. Joseph and Francis Xavier where our pastors: Fr. Wayne Watts (Ss. Joseph and Francis Xavier) Fr. Brian Welter (Ss. Faith Hope & Charity), and Fr. Dan Folwaczny (Divine Mercy), reflected on their call to serve and the role of hope in their lives and ministries. The final presentation will be at Divine Mercy in January of 2026 from Fr. Enzo Del Brocco, C.P., President of Catholic Theological Union on the topic of **Pope Leo and The Future of our Church**.

We know that feeling welcomed is important for building community. In keeping with that spirit, we continue to focus on creating a welcoming environment for Masses, Funerals, Weddings and special events. Parishioners continue to enjoy our 2nd Sunday Hospitality Events after the 8:00am Mass at St. Philip the Apostle and 10:00am Mass at Sacred Heart.

OUTREACH: NEW & NOTABLE

This year we formalized our first **Environmental Ministry**. Although this is an idea that had been around for a while, an invitation to participate in a local interfaith workshop on climate resilience provided the final impetus to create the ministry. This workshop, *Protecting God's Creation*, was held in collaboration with Go Green Northfield, Northfield Community Church, and St. James the Less in April 2025. We hosted Josh Richardson and Meghan Reha to talk about how faith organizations can leverage their buildings, grounds, people and community networks to protect our land and people from the impacts of climate change. We are continuing the dialogue across congregations in Northfield to support each other as we improve our capacity to respond to climate change needs.

Since that initial workshop, we have helped organize several events and activities that encourage us to think more about the environment and our practices around it. This is an evolving effort, and we are welcome to new members and new ideas.

We are excited to have revived the **Bill Doll Garden** at the St. Philip campus. The late Bill Doll started this garden and shared the produce with our homebound and sick parishioners. In Fall 2024, the **Teen Council** cleared the garden plot, and we accepted donations of plants and seeds in Spring 2025. Led by Chris Kaiser, parishioners took weekly shifts watering the garden, and every Tuesday they got together to weed and harvest. We produced tomatoes, cucumbers, zucchini, and jalapeno peppers which we shared with homebound and sick parishioners as well as with the

Northfield Township Food Pantry.

As part of our Environmental Ministry, Divine Mercy is also making an effort to reduce waste production. This initiative includes trying to use reusable plates, silverware, and glasses for events where we serve food, as well as incorporating composting into our toolkit.

During Lent, we provided weekly suggestions for practices that encourage behavior change and increased thoughtfulness around the environment and sustainability. In addition to our more typical practices of fasting from certain behaviors, Lent provides a wonderful opportunity for us to think about how we can improve or add behaviors. Caring for God's creation is central to many parts of the scripture so incorporating these ideas into our daily lives during Lent can help us grow in our faith.

Our **Interfaith Knitting Group** continues to forge bonds and build friendships through their meetings while knitting items for those in need. Here is a list of donations made from their efforts in the last year.

- 2 blankets to Glencoe AME church
- 3 blankets to Glencoe Union Church
- 5 blankets to Sacred Heart/Divine Mercy (including a transplant recipient, and 2 young boys going for medical treatment in Arkansas)
- 3 blankets to Am Shalom
- 5 hats and 1 blanket to Venezuelan family - Divine Mercy/World Exodus
- 4 hats and 1 blanket to Peruvian family - Divine Mercy/World Exodus
- 1 blanket to NSUMC parishioner
- 9 custom scarves in high school colors to C24/7 middle school graduates
- 1 blanket to group family member with stage 4 cancer
- 1 blanket to a chronically-ill group family member
- 3 blankets to Family Promise families — Am Yisrael
- 1 blanket to group elderly family member hospitalized and now in skilled nursing



Many thanks to all the knitters for their commitment to those in need.

ONGOING EFFORTS

As part of our Outreach efforts, we launched a small faith group "Faith & Poverty: A Biblical Response Through Catholic Social Teaching," part of the Just Faith curriculum. Eight people took part in the group, each of them actively participating in readings

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and discussions. The outcome has been a deeper understanding of Catholic social teaching and closer partnerships with local organizations such as the New Trier Township and Northfield food pantries.

We continue to look for ways to build relationships with our community partners and sharing parishes. Fr. Matt of St. Moses the Black was our celebrant at all Masses the weekend of November 8-9, 2025. That weekend parishioners and staff from St. Moses joined us for the 10 a.m. Sunday Mass and stayed for brunch, resulting in lots of good discussion and many new friendships. We continue several annual traditions— holding a School Supply Drive, helping at the St. Moses food pantry at Thanksgiving, gathering donations for Christmas Sharing, and our tutors make twice-weekly visits to Tolton Academy during the school year. As part of our South Side Sundays effort to attend Mass once a month at our Sharing Parishes, our 8th grade confirmation candidates and their families experienced a shared worship experience when they recently attended Mass at St. Moses.

SUMMER FUN

Divine Mercy is pleased to have once again welcomed two different camps to our utilize our campuses this past summer.

Since 2016, we have welcomed Camp Galileo to make use of our Sacred Heart School facility. Camp Galileo is an experiential-based summer camp designed to teach kids to think and create like innovators. The program fosters a visionary mindset to create confidence, resilience and creativity.

During a six week period from June - July, Galileo reports 454 students attending camp at the Sacred Heart location!

For the second year in a row, we welcomed Camp Sophia to the John Paul II Room at SPA. Sophia McGowan, a young woman who grew up in our parish, saw a need for and developed a community-based, life skills *camp* for teenagers and young adults with special needs. We couldn't agree more that the world needs more Sophias!

NEW FACES IN OUR MIDST

Divine Mercy continues to welcome new parishioners. Since July 1, 2024, we have welcomed 27 new families, totaling 94 individuals, as registered parishioners. A number of these new parishioners are young families, whom we joyfully welcome.

We attribute this new life to the Spirit that drives all that we do here at Divine Mercy. As a parish, we strive to model all that Cardinal Cupich envisioned for Renew My Church in the Archdiocese of Chicago. Our five-year strategic plan is our roadmap in those efforts and as we are in the early months of

year four, with a focus on Ministry, we celebrate the newest members of our faith family and commit ourselves to helping them grow as disciples of Jesus.

SACRAMENTS BY THE NUMBERS

During fiscal 2025, we celebrated the following sacraments across both church sites, in addition to our regular Masses.

- 46 Infant baptisms
- 53 First Communion
- 44 Confirmations
- 10 Weddings
- 25 Funerals
- 2 Adult Baptisms
- 6 Adults Received into Full Communion



THE "NEW" MCNULTY HALL

On May 6, 2025, Deacon Mike McNulty, our beloved deacon of 46 years, was born to eternal life. Mike filled many roles during his time in our parish. He served as the Director of Religious Education, Business Manager, and counselor, journeying with many people as they experienced the challenges and joys of life. As we often say, he was a living, breathing encyclopedia of all things having to do with the former Sacred Heart Parish. His stories about the parish, community, and people were legendary, as was his huge heart. We miss him dearly.

On October 4, 2025, we gathered to welcome and celebrate the life of Deacon Mike, along with his family, parishioners, and several concelebrant priests who worked with him. The Mass was a joyful celebration and a reminder to "be like Mike," a truly faithful servant of the Lord.

We have rededicated McNulty Hall, formerly known as the Parish Center, as a way of honoring Mike's many contributions to this parish, and we are in the process of installing a plaque that commemorates his years of service.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

This past year has been a journey of growth, deep learning, and profound grace for our youngest disciples, marked by deep faith formation and a commitment to both corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Currently, we have 263 children enrolled in both Sunday morning and Family Faith Connection. We are blessed to have 24 Catechists and 27 teen aides.

Our Children's Ministry Masses have continued to fill the church. We have now connected grade level Masses to a church tour, giving the children a deeper understanding of Catholic traditions and rituals, along with a behind the scenes

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look at vestments, vessels and more.

In addition to our annual Thanksgiving Turkey and canned food drive for St. Moses the Black Food Pantry, and our Christmas pageant, the following endeavors and service projects were introduced in the last year:

- Visited the Shrine of All Saints (8th grade)
- Went Christmas caroling at North Shore Place
- Exodus World Service – Refugee Journey Simulation
- Adopted a Refugee Family
- Participated in Silver Service Children’s Foundation Drive
- Participated in Stations of the Cross (All Grades)
- Children’s Liturgy of the Word grew exponentially
- Hosted a Catechist Retreat – New Years’ Resolution

This year, we will continue with all the experiences that worked well last year and plan to offer more service and liturgical experiences for the children, as well as Resources and Lenten Retreat days for our catechists, including:

- Participation in Uncle Pete’s Ministry, now organized by grade
- Silver Service Children’s Foundation Presentation & Drive
- Confirmation yr. 2 visiting St. Moses, and attending Mass
- Christmas Project – North Shore Place, Kolbe House & Tree Prayer Chain
- Seder Meal



SACRED HEART SCHOOL

This year, Sacred Heart School continued to thrive under the leadership of Principal, Jodi Reuter, marking a year defined by growth - in spirit, numbers, and connection.

Rising Enrollment and Engagement

After several years of declining enrollment, Sacred Heart is celebrating a notable and sustained increase in enrollment over the past two years, across all grade levels and at the charge of our **new Director of Admission, Mindi Craddock**. To meet the growing demand this year, Sacred Heart also introduced a third Junior Kindergarten room as well as a full-day preschool option.

Families are drawn to the school’s warm, inclusive environment, exceptional academics, balanced approach toward personal technology and visible community spirit. Parent participation, volunteerism, and event attendance have all surged, from the parish Mass & Mingle gatherings to Coffee with the Board sessions, reflecting the deep bonds that make Sacred Heart a true community school.

This year also marked the introduction of the **Core Values Scholarship**, honoring students who embody the heart of Sacred Heart through the values of Love, Serve, Engage, Discover, and Persevere. The first award was presented for Service during the Sunday Mass of Catholic Schools Week this past January, followed by a second award for Perseverance at the close of summer. Going forward, the Core Values Scholarships will continue to be awarded each year during the

Catholic Schools Week Sunday Mass in January.

In addition, our **Heart & Sole 5K Run / 1 Mile walk** fundraising event for this year was dedicated entirely to building up the Core Values Scholarship Fund, with tremendous participation and enthusiasm from families and parishioners alike. To date, we have raised over \$20,000 in support of this initiative, ensuring these scholarships will continue to uplift students who exemplify the Sacred Heart spirit for years to come.

Sacred Heart students continue to perform well above local and national academic averages, with 94% of K–8 students testing at or above grade level in reading and 87% in math. Through individualized instruction, small-group learning, and skills-based reading and math groups, every student is supported and challenged at their level. Partnerships with Loyola Academy and New Trier High School allow advanced students to pursue unique math placement opportunities in Junior High while giving them a glimpse into high school.

For the second consecutive year, a Sacred Heart eighth grader earned the Bellarmine Scholarship to Loyola Academy - one of the region’s most competitive academic awards. Sacred Heart graduates continue to excel at our local top high schools.

Sacred Heart’s **campus** continues to evolve. This past summer brought a major renovation of the school gymnasium, featuring new flooring, protective wall pads, and a full repainting. Outside, thanks to the generosity of the Class of 2024, a large

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Sacred Heart logo was painted at midfield on the school's turf.

Faith formation remains the heartbeat of Sacred Heart. Students engage through student-led Masses, sacramental preparation, and outreach to our sharing parishes, St. Moses the Black and St. Benedict the African. Participation in Divine Mercy's monthly service projects such as Uncle Pete's Ministry and A Just Harvest help students to further live out the Gospel through action.

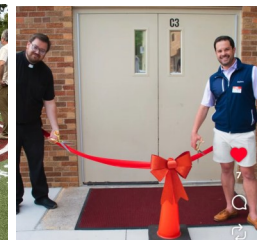
The school's **Viking Fit 3.0** program returned this year, blending strength training, agility, endurance, and motivation for students in grades 3–8 and to an all-time high student enrollment. Led by Miss Sierra Gray, Rob Levoy, Billy Small and Athletic Director, Mr. Drew Swanson, the program partners with Illinois Bone & Joint to provide professional athletic training, and parent-supported post-workout breakfasts, to reinforce that physical and mental wellness are community efforts.

Our beloved **therapy dog, Bernie**, continues to bring calm and connection throughout the week, serving as a gentle reminder that compassion and care are at the center of every Sacred Heart day.

This year, we've also launched the **Rush Behavioral Health Executive Functioning**

(EF) curriculum specifically for our Junior High students. Executive functioning includes skills like organization, time management, self-control, and flexible thinking. Through monthly lessons, students will practice strategies to strengthen six key EF skills: organization, time management, working memory, self-control, flexible thinking, and task initiation, helping our students to feel more confident and capable both in and out of school while setting them up for success in high school.

This year, Sacred Heart witnessed an extraordinary outpouring of unity through the journey of the Small family — longtime parishioners whose sons, Noah and Hunter, both live with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy. When insurance denied life-changing gene therapy for Hunter just months after approving it for brother Noah, the Sacred Heart and Divine Mercy communities came together in prayer, advocacy, and love. Students wrote letters, parents organized, parishioners prayed the Rosary, and after months of perseverance, the decision was overturned. Their journey stands as a living testament to Sacred Heart's mission and the vision of Divine Mercy Parish.



BUILDING PROJECTS

The generosity of two parishioners, both of whom wish to remain anonymous, has enabled us to upgrade the sound system at Sacred Heart Church, including the installation of acoustic panels, to improve our worship experience. The acoustics in the church have been a longstanding issue and we are happy to report that we have heard favorable reviews of these changes. In addition, we are now able to provide parishioners with access to several hearing assist devices - another positive addition! We extend our sincere gratitude for the generosity that made all of this possible.

During the summer months, we were able to make some much-needed tuckpointing and stone repairs to the exterior of Sacred Heart Church, including the entry bluestone and steps, as well as to the stone wall running from the east side of the convent building down Tower Road.

As is always the case, our aging buildings require vigilant monitoring. We thank our maintenance team, Bobby Teubert, Eamon Marks and Tony Sarch for all they do!

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FISCAL 2025 INCOME STATEMENT 7/1/2024-6/30/2025

	FY 2025				FY 2024
	CHURCH	CHILDREN'S MINISTRY	SCHOOL	TOTAL	TOTAL
OPERATING REVENUE					
Sunday, Christmas & Easter Collections	\$ 1,361,746	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,361,746	\$ 1,296,074
Tuition ¹	\$ -	\$ 72,622	\$ 1,215,932	\$ 1,288,554	\$ 1,156,082
Fees	\$ -	\$ 8,614	\$ 120,562	\$ 129,176	\$ 138,173
Fundraising	\$ 5,068	\$ -	\$ 436,662	\$ 441,730	\$ 370,861
Rental Income	\$ 325,446	\$ -	\$ 15,000	\$ 340,446	\$ 325,250
Miscellaneous ²	\$ 383,195	\$ 3,675	\$ 54,403	\$ 441,273	\$ 482,975
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 2,075,455	\$ 84,911	\$ 1,842,559	\$ 4,002,925	\$ 3,769,415
OPERATING EXPENSE					
Salaries & Benefits	\$ 1,048,728	\$ 102,162	\$ 1,925,172	\$ 3,076,062	\$ 3,071,406
Admin, Books, Supplies, Technology	\$ 116,596	\$ 13,051	\$ 82,223	\$ 211,870	\$ 209,627
Utilities	\$ 169,643	\$ -	\$ 75,076	\$ 244,719	\$ 233,480
Maintenance	\$ 202,909	\$ -	\$ 202,582	\$ 405,491	\$ 373,750
Liturgical Supplies & Miscellaneous	\$ 86,560	\$ 2,597	\$ 65,345	\$ 154,502	\$ 125,672
Insurance	\$ 162,832	\$ -	\$ 54,277	\$ 217,109	\$ 194,978
Archdiocesan Assessment	\$ 185,319	\$ -	\$ 9,450	\$ 194,769	\$ 192,744
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 1,972,587	\$ 117,810	\$ 2,414,125	\$ 4,504,522	\$ 4,401,657
NET OPERATING RESULTS	\$ 102,868	(\$32,899)	(\$571,566)	(\$501,597)	(\$632,242)
Endowment Withdrawal—Prior Years	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 111,000
Endowment Withdrawal—FY 2025	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 195,118	\$ 195,118	\$ 218,207
Parish Support of Education - Operations	(\$102,868)	\$ 32,899	\$ 69,969	\$ 0	\$ 0
Parish Support of Education - Savings	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 306,479	\$ 306,479	\$ 49,035
Reserves From PPP Years	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 254,000
FINAL OPERATING RESULTS ³	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0

Footnotes

1 Increase reflects improved enrollment discussed in the Sacred Heart School section of this report.

2 Miscellaneous income includes the parish rebate from the Annual Catholic Appeal (\$116K in FY 2025 and \$96K in FY 2024).

3 Consistent with our planned financial strategy to grow school enrollment, our projections for FY 2026 reflect a significant reduction in the need to parish subsidy of school operations.



