

Dear Parish Family,

As we look back on another Jubilee Year as *Pilgrims of Hope* at St. Joseph Parish and School, I am reminded of Bishop Edward Malesic's call for us to become a "*Flourishing Apostolic Church*" — a community that not only gathers for worship, but also goes forth joyfully to share the love of Christ with others. In his pastoral letter, Bishop Malesic reminds us that flourishing parishes are rooted in discipleship, animated by the Holy Spirit, and committed to mission. This vision resonates deeply with who we are and what we strive to become here in Avon Lake.

In these pages, you'll see how this call takes shape in our life together: through our worship and service, our strong stewardship and careful planning, our school's vibrant growth, and the generosity of our many ministries. You'll read about the faithful leadership of our finance and facilities teams, the incredible impact of our *Angel Scholarship* program, and the ways our youth and outreach ministries continue to bring others closer to Christ.

Every statistic, every renovation, every dollar given and wisely used, reflects a living faith, our collective effort to make disciples and build God's kingdom right here, in our homes, classrooms, and neighborhoods.

*Take a LOOK at What's Inside —
We are a Flourishing Apostolic Parish!*

Our thanks go out to David Aslaksen as he begins his retirement!



David Aslaksen and St. Joseph Parish and School have been inextricably joined for his entire lifetime! Born and raised here by Dave and Arlene, along with his 6 siblings, Dave graduated from our school and went on to Avon Lake High School, graduating in 1981. Thirty years ago, Fr. Tim O'Connor, our then pastor, invited him to take the position of *Director of Maintenance*, and from then until this past summer, you could barely find a day that you wouldn't see Dave in the truck, on the tractor, or, in later years, in the golf cart, walking or driving the grounds. For many years, he handled all the yard work by himself. He was the friendly face in the school who could banish mice, change light fixtures, move furniture, or meet whatever needs a teacher or staff member had, usually with a joke. Snowy days found Dave plowing for hours, often from 4:00 a.m. throughout the day and evening hours.

Summertime found Dave teaching and supervising high school and college students — and even seminarians — in the fine art of stripping and waxing classroom and hallway floors or in cleaning the church, school, and restrooms. Before each Easter Vigil, Dave lit the holy fire that would light the Paschal flame to begin the Easter celebrations, and no matter what might happen in church or school, the constant refrain from staff and parishioners alike was, "Call Dave. He'll take care of it." And he did! He served on the parish pastoral council and was a driving force in all of our construction projects in this 21st century.

All Dave has done springs from his faith, and he lived that as he raised his and Laura's daughter and then began bringing their granddaughter, Grace, to Mass each week, with Dave usually in a suit coat and tie. His reverence was always evident, and his dedication to seeing that Grace would know and love her faith has been exemplary from day one.

We are so grateful for all the work Dave did for so many years until his body grew tired from years of physical labor. He left his mark on each of us, and we pray for his health and happiness in his retirement years.



Scan the QR to read Bishop Malesic's Pastoral Letter —

ONE FAMILY IN CHRIST *Anchored in the Lord*

Parish Leadership Team

As One Family in Christ, anchored in the Lord, we strive to form God's people with the Heart and Habit of Missionary Discipleship and to grow in faith, justice, love, and service to others.

Ordained Ministers

Fr. Ron Wearsch – *Pastor*

+Keith Jenkins – *Permanent Deacon*

Parish Staff

Tamara Burge

Communication & Marketing

Kathy Colman

Evangelization,

Middle School Youth Ministry, Confirmation

Lorene Coughlin

Caring Ministry, Worship, Reach More

Angela Gibbons

Office Manager & Volunteer Coordinator

Phil Lewandowski

Pastoral Assistant, Calendaring, Reach More

❖Crew Spence

Evangelization

OCIA, High School Youth Ministry

*Rozann Swanson

PSR, Vacation Bible School, Sacramental Prep

Reception, Ministry & Office Support Team

*Judy Krueger – *Parish Office*

+Kathy Novotny – *Ministry Groups*

Liturgy & Music Team

+Carolyn Chatlos – *Sacristan*

*Chris Molnar – *Choir*

+Steve Brent – *Contemporary Choir*

Business & Accounting Management

Jim Adamowicz – *Business Manager*

* Cheryl Monschein – *Contributions & Payables*

* John Stipek – *School Scholarship Administrator*

+Bob Swanson – *Financial Analysis & Budgets*

* Part-Time + Volunteer ❖ Shared with Holy Spirit

Dear Parish Family,

We have seen continued growth in our parish and school communities and activities since our inception in 1949. We are blessed that people find us to be a beacon of *faith, hope and love.*



Our Parish Leadership Team is a very faith-filled and talented group of people who work hard every day to be good stewards of the financial resources that you provide. We understand that our mission is that of Jesus Christ — to *sanc-tify, teach and evangelize.* Our leadership team consists of a combination of full-time, part-time and volunteer ministers, which allows us to operate the many ministries of our parish.

Rooted in Bishop Malesic's vision of a "*Flourishing Apostolic Church,*" our financial stewardship reflects more than numbers — it reflects trust, transparency and mission. Through careful management and your ongoing generosity, St. Joseph Parish continues to grow in financial health, ensuring that our ministries, worship, and school remain vibrant signs of Christ's presence in our community.

True stewardship is an act of faith — a response to God's generosity that sustains the Church's mission. Our 2025 financial report reflects that shared commitment to growth, transparency and prudent planning. Together, parish and school operations remain strong, supported by the generosity of our parishioners and the wise oversight of our Finance Council.

We are here to serve, so please let us know how we might help!

May you know God's Blessing and how much I love being your pastor.

Fr. Ron Wearsch



FINANCIAL REPORT *Your Generosity Changes Lives*

Dear Parishioners,

The Finance Council would like to start by thanking you for your generosity during the past year. We had another excellent financial year in FY2025, once again generating a small surplus. Here is a brief recap of our financial highlights for the year:

- Our offertory collections were up 9.4% (compared to FY2024) vs our 5.0% budget assumption. This result was driven by your outstanding response to our increased offertory program during the year. We appreciate your ongoing commitment to financially support the programs that make our parish so vibrant.
- We fully paid off our parish mortgage, keeping with our commitments made during the *75th Anniversary* and the *Heart of a Shepherd* campaigns. We are now debt free.
- Our school families continue to benefit from the *Angel Scholarship Fund*. Our contributions have been increasing gradually over the past few years, and FY2026 will include a focus on significantly increasing these contributions. Please see John Stipek's update on *page 7* of this newsletter.
- Our school continues to flourish as we increased our day school enrollment from 273 to 319 in FY2025, a 17% increase. Thanks to *EdChoice*, the *Angel Scholarship Fund* and other scholarships (a total of \$1,249,625), our school family's contribution toward their children's education decreased to 43.2% of tuition, versus the historical contribution of 90%.
- Once again, our parish school operated at a small surplus while we continue to invest in our teachers and our facilities. Our ongoing target is to operate the school at break-even, and our 2026 budget was set at this break-even point.

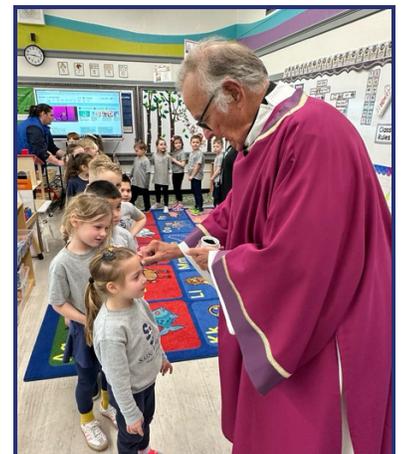
The parish and school staffs continue their outstanding performance. They continue to manage resources effectively while delivering strong educational outcomes and high-quality ministries. We are very fortunate to have a truly vibrant parish!

Our budget for FY2026 is set at an operational break-even. Your Finance Council, along with the parish and school staff, take very seriously our responsibility to be good stewards of your generosity.

Thank you for your ongoing trust and support.

Respectfully,

Brad Coffey, Darrell Deerberg, Kevin Felder, Peter Gibbons, Geoffrey Goodfellow, Steve Hopp, Jim McGrath, Joe McAleese, Adam Santo & Amy Solmos Wayne



SAINT JOSEPH PARISH & SCHOOL *Fiscal 2025*

Stewarding Our Resources for a Flourishing Church

- We are pleased to report that our annual financial report has been reviewed by the Diocese of Cleveland Finance Office, and we have received their letter of acceptance to publish our Fiscal Year 2025 results.
- Our *Balance Sheet* continues to reflect the prudent management of our financial resources. Operating cash has increased. Also, in accordance with Diocesan policy, we accrued for the remaining school library and bathroom renovation expenses and the related receivables for the funding of those expenses.
- As a result of the continued generosity of our parishioners and the careful management of our operating expenses, the parish results of operations improved in excess of \$90,000.
- In the school operations, the Ohio *EdChoice* and *Angel Scholarship* programs have enabled us to raise our school tuition to an amount more closely aligned with the actual cost of education. In Fiscal 2025, our cost of education per student was \$7,200 and our tuition rate per student was \$6,166.
- The increase in school tuition was made possible by need-based scholarships to our school families from Ohio *EdChoice*, the *Angel Scholarship Fund*, Diocesan Tuition Assistance, and our St. Joseph Tuition Assistance fund. The total amount of scholarships distributed this past school year was approximately \$1,249,625.
- Our *Fund Balance* improvement reflects the positive results of operations in both the parish and the school during the Fiscal Year.

STATEMENT OF ASSETS, LIABILITIES & FUND BALANCE

	<i>As of June 30,</i>	
	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>
ASSETS		
¹ <i>Operating Cash Balance</i>	\$568,178	\$424,813
² <i>Restricted Cash Balance</i>	\$316,383	\$400,371
³ <i>Accounts Receivable</i>	\$121,761	\$39,908
⁴ <i>Other Assets</i>	\$22,370	\$32,332
⁵ TOTAL ASSETS	\$1,028,692	\$897,424
LIABILITIES		
⁶ <i>Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses</i>	\$547,353	\$268,400
⁷ <i>Deferred Income and Restricted Support</i>	\$515,433	\$634,207
⁸ <i>Loans and Mortgage Payable</i>	---	\$147,212
⁹ TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$1,062,786	\$1,049,819
FUND BALANCE		
¹⁰ <i>Fund Balance Beginning of Fiscal Year</i>	\$(152,395)	\$(177,091)
¹¹ <i>Net Surplus (Deficit) for Fiscal Year</i>	\$118,301	\$24,696
¹² FUND BALANCE END OF FISCAL YEAR	\$(34,094)	\$(152,395)
¹³ TOTAL LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE	\$1,028,692	\$897,424

SAINT JOSEPH PARISH & SCHOOL *Fiscal 2025*

STATEMENT OF REVENUE & EXPENSES

St. Joseph Parish

	<i>For the Year Ended June 30,</i>			<i>Budget</i>
	<u>2025</u>	<u>% of TOTAL</u>	<u>2024</u>	<i>For the Year</i> <i>Ending June 30,</i> <u>2026</u>
PARISH REVENUE				
²¹ <i>Offertory and Other Collections</i>	\$1,580,198	81%	\$1,444,087	\$1,637,000
²² <i>Fundraising and Parish Programs</i>	\$187,799	10%	\$300,274	\$301,200
²³ <i>Mortgage Contributions</i>	\$9,743	0%	\$81,613	- - -
²⁴ <i>Other Revenue</i>	\$55,787	3%	\$38,245	\$22,200
²⁵ <i>Capital Campaign / Heart of a Shepherd Campaign</i>	\$115,384	6%	\$29,946	- - -
²⁶ TOTAL PARISH REVENUE	\$1,948,911	100%	\$1,894,165	\$1,960,400
PARISH EXPENSES				
²⁷ <i>Salaries, Benefits and Taxes</i>	\$816,696	45%	\$741,272	\$1,017,663
²⁸ <i>Administration</i>	\$243,601	13%	\$233,352	\$248,650
²⁹ <i>Sanctuary and Liturgical</i>	\$112,889	6%	\$94,607	\$116,500
³⁰ <i>Parish Programs</i>	\$131,866	7%	\$117,067	\$130,250
³¹ <i>Building Maintenance</i>	\$186,608	10%	\$132,412	\$89,400
³² <i>Utilities</i>	\$67,507	4%	\$65,181	\$68,500
³³ <i>Capital Expenditures</i>	\$124,374	7%	\$479,680	\$100,000
³⁴ <i>Interest Expense</i>	\$1,687	0%	\$8,172	\$5,000
³⁵ <i>Diocesan Assessments</i>	\$163,548	9%	\$158,418	\$184,437
³⁶ <i>Support of Parish School</i>	\$(18,166)	-1%	\$(160,692)	\$(18,668)
³⁷ TOTAL PARISH EXPENSES	\$1,830,610	100%	\$1,869,469	\$1,941,732
³⁸ NET PARISH SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	\$118,301		\$24,696	\$18,668

STATEMENT OF REVENUE & EXPENSES

St. Joseph Parish School

	<i>For the Year Ended June 30,</i>			<i>Budget</i>
	<u>2025</u>	<u>% of TOTAL</u>	<u>2024</u>	<i>For the Year</i> <i>Ending June 30,</i> <u>2026</u>
SCHOOL REVENUE				
⁴⁰ <i>Tuition and Fees</i>	\$1,748,965	73%	\$1,646,205	\$2,223,300
⁴¹ <i>Government Assistance</i>	\$110,486	5%	\$101,996	\$115,000
⁴² <i>Fundraising and Other</i>	\$545,016	23%	\$311,706	\$246,150
⁴³ <i>Parish Support of School</i>	\$(18,166)	-1%	\$(160,692)	\$(18,668)
⁴⁴ TOTAL SCHOOL REVENUE	\$2,386,302	100%	\$1,899,216	\$2,565,782
SCHOOL EXPENSES				
⁴⁵ <i>Salaries, Benefits and Taxes</i>	\$1,653,093	69%	\$1,346,497	\$1,837,826
⁴⁶ <i>Administration and Instructional</i>	\$114,845	5%	\$149,593	\$225,456
⁴⁷ <i>Building Maintenance</i>	\$125,930	5%	\$120,255	\$302,000
⁴⁸ <i>Utilities</i>	\$94,391	4%	\$77,014	\$100,500
⁴⁹ <i>Capital Expenditures</i>	\$398,043	17%	\$205,858	\$100,000
⁵⁰ TOTAL SCHOOL EXPENSES	\$2,386,302	100%	\$1,899,216	\$2,565,782
⁵¹ NET SCHOOL SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	\$ - - -		\$ - - -	\$ - - -

GROWTH IN OUR PARISH SCHOOL *To the Heights*



Dear St. Joseph Parish and School Families,

This year, as our school community embraces the Diocese of Cleveland, Office of Education's theme, "To the Heights" (Verso l'Alto), inspired by Saint Pier Giorgio Frassati, we are invited to look upward — to grow closer to God and to one another. Pier Giorgio's life reminds us that holiness is found in everyday moments: in friendship, service, study, and joy. As we guide our children together, we too, are called to climb higher encouraging them to see faith as an adventure and love as the path that leads us to the heights. Thank you for the many ways you share your time, talent, and treasure to help our school live this mission each day.

There's a vibrant buzz throughout the halls of St. Joseph Parish School this year — a joyful sense of growth, excitement, and renewed community spirit. As I begin my second year as principal, I am filled with gratitude for the many blessings that continue to shape our school. With several wonderful additions to our staff, the 2025–2026 school year is off to an inspiring start!

One of the most exciting signs of this growth is our remarkable increase in enrollment. This year, we welcomed 60 new students, bringing fresh energy, laughter, and enthusiasm to our classrooms. Our kindergarten program alone has reached a record high, with 54 students across three classes — the largest kindergarten enrollment in our school's history! With enrollment up by an impressive 60 students, and our Preschool Program at capacity with a waiting list, the joy of our youngest learners fills our hallways each morning and sets a cheerful tone for our entire community. To support this growth, we have also welcomed four new teachers and a teacher's aide to our dedicated staff. Their creativity, faith, and passion for education have enriched our classrooms and strengthened our mission. With these new educators and the many bright young faces joining us, St. Joseph Parish School feels more alive than ever full of curiosity, collaboration, and joy.

Our students are also enjoying the beautifully renovated primary wing bathrooms and the newly remodeled computer and library spaces. These updates have created bright, welcoming environments that reflect the pride we take in providing a safe, engaging, and faith-filled learning environment.

This year, our parish is blessed with the addition of a new Youth Minister, Mrs. Colman, who plays a vital role in deepening the faith life of our students and parish families. In addition to leading youth ministry, she is teaching 8th grade religion to our day school students, helping our oldest students grow in faith as they prepare for Confirmation.

We are proud to be part of the Diocese of Cleveland Catholic Schools, which continue to lead the way in academic excellence. During the 2024–2025 school year, Catholic elementary schools in our diocese outperformed Ohio's public schools in every grade level, including 12 of the 14 tested subjects and grades reported on the Ohio School Report Cards. This success speaks to the strength of Catholic education and the dedication of teachers who lead with both skill and heart.

As we look ahead, there is a shared sense of excitement and gratitude among our students, families, and staff. The growth we are experiencing reflects the trust our families place in St. Joseph Parish School — a place where faith, learning, and community come together to form the hands, the voice, and the heart of Christ.

With faith and gratitude,

Mrs. Maureen Goodwin
Principal, St. Joseph Parish School



ANGEL SCHOLARSHIP *A Year of Generosity & Growth*

Dear Friends of Saint Joseph Parish School,

We are deeply grateful for the continued blessings of the State of Ohio's scholarship programs — *EdChoice* and the *Angel Scholarship Fund*. These initiatives have played a vital role in making Catholic education accessible to all families, regardless of financial circumstances.

The *EdChoice Scholarship*, in particular, has opened doors for many, allowing children to attend Saint Joseph Parish School and become cherished members of our school family. For some, this support made the difference between possibility and reality.

Beyond helping individual families, this funding has empowered our parish to invest in meaningful improvements to both our school and church community. These enhancements reflect our shared commitment to nurturing faith, learning and fellowship. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the State of Ohio and to all who advocate for these programs. Your support strengthens our mission and enriches the lives of every student who walks through our doors.

The *Angel Scholarship Fund* continues to be a tremendous blessing for our St. Joseph community. Donations made to the fund directly support tuition assistance for our families — and as an added benefit, donors receive a dollar-for-dollar tax credit against their Ohio state income tax.

Angel Scholarship Fund Update

Thanks to your incredible support, the *Angel Scholarship Fund* received over \$179,000 in contributions during the past fiscal year, which directly helped families offset the cost of tuition. Because of your generosity:

- 259 students received tuition assistance
- 161 families were supported
- Countless lives were touched through access to Catholic education

Your commitment to our mission is fueling the strong growth of our school. These children are thriving in a faith-based learning environment that might otherwise have been out of reach. You are truly a cornerstone of our success.

Looking Ahead - FY25–26 Goal: we are setting our sights even higher this year with a goal of \$250,000 to be applied toward tuition assistance for the 2026–2027 school year. With your continued partnership, we can make Catholic education accessible to even more families. If you have questions about the *Angel Scholarship Fund* or would like to participate, please contact us at the Parish Office. Your support makes a lasting difference — thank you for being part of this journey!

To all who have generously supported our students and their families through the *Angel Scholarship Fund* — THANK YOU. Your kindness has sparked a ripple effect of hope and opportunity that reaches far beyond the classroom.

With heartfelt gratitude,

Mr. John Stipek
School Scholarship Administrator, St. Joseph Parish School

School Leadership Team

As an integral part of the mission of the Parish, we form and empower compassionate young people to become missionary disciples who are the hands, heart, and voice of Christ.

Parish School Staff

Maureen Goodwin

Principal

John Nunney

Dean of Students

Lori Foutz

Preschool Director

Sharon Scrivens

Admissions & Communication

Kim LaCour

Office Support

24 Teachers, 7 Aides,

3 Lunch, Playground & After School Staff

Angie Ferber & Sara Manternach

Lunch Program

Lauren Chmielecki

Vikings Club After-School Program

FACILITY OPERATIONS *Supporting our Mission*

A flourishing church is built not only of bricks and mortar, but of people — faithful stewards who serve with dedication, humility, and care. This year, we give heartfelt thanks for Dave Aslaksen, who retires after nearly 30 years of faithful service to St. Joseph Parish and School. His quiet diligence and devotion have helped shape the welcoming spaces we enjoy today. We are also blessed to see his legacy continue through Breen Coughlin, who trained alongside Dave for several years and now assumes the role of *Director of School Operations*. Joining him in our renewed facilities and operations team are Tony Smith, our *Multi-Campus Facilities Director* (shared with Holy Spirit Parish), and Daniel Houdek, *Director of Parish Operations*. Together, they carry forward a spirit of stewardship that ensures our parish and school buildings remain vibrant places of worship, learning, and community for years to come.



Tony Smith – *Multi-Campus Facilities Director at St. Joseph & Holy Spirit Parishes*

Tony grew up in Avon Lake, and is proud to be from the community. He attended Holy Trinity School for 8 years and went on to graduate from St. Ignatius High School in 2008. He then attended the University of Akron and graduated in 2012. He is married with three incredible children.

“I am very confident in the maintenance team we have developed. We have large goals to not only have a clean and reliable campus, but also have a strong safety presence. Our new maintenance team’s diverse background, experience, and depth of knowledge will ensure timely repairs and cost savings. I could not be more thrilled to be a part of the St. Joseph family, and I look forward to our future!”



Breen Coughlin – *Director of School Operations*

Being born into this parish family in 1986, he has been blessed with a deeply rooted Catholic faith and strong feelings of responsibility to care for these grounds that have been the backdrop for his life. He graduated from SJS in 2000, worked and volunteered here throughout high school, and began full-time with the maintenance department in 2023. He was privileged to work under David Aslaksen for several years before his retirement this past summer, and he will be forever grateful for the lessons he learned from Dave.

“With my new role as Director of Operations for St. Joseph Parish School, I have been tasked with the honor and responsibility of caring for the facilities that provide a top-notch learning space for the children of our school, not to mention shelter and security from the world outside these walls. I cannot adequately express my gratitude to Father Ron and the parish for entrusting me with this responsibility. I thrive on my daily interactions with our students, staff, parents, and parishioners and find meaning and purpose for my life within this property. Thank you for continuing to place your trust in me; I am eternally grateful to be here.”



Daniel Houdek – *Director of Parish Operations*

Daniel is a new parishioner who recently moved to Ohio from North Carolina. He transitioned out of active-duty military service as an *Aviation Maintenance Officer* in the United States Marine Corps and continues to serve in the reserves. He is married with two children who attend our school.

“I am active in the community and help Crew Spence with our new men’s group, Carpenter’s Call. My wife and I look forward to raising our family in the parish and hope to support current and new ways to help serve our community.”

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS *Updating for Next Generations*

During Fiscal Year 2025, we were able to make some significant improvements to our parish and school campus using your generous donations to our Maintenance Fund, proceeds from our school auction event and parishioner donations to multiple capital improvement projects.

Over the last two years we have been saving money to improve the original areas of our school building which were built in the early 1950's. We finally had enough funding to begin four projects which were completed during this fiscal year. These projects include:

- Updating the school library and computer lab into a state-of-the-art media center.
- Renovating two of the original restrooms in the center of the building to make them ADA accessible along with replacing all the fixtures and partitions.
- Installation of an air conditioning system in the original 1950's school building.
- Adding a ventilation system to bring fresh air into the original school wing.

All of the above projects were completed prior to the start of the school year. We are so grateful to all of the parishioners who made this significant improvement to our school possible.

Other items that were accomplished with parish dollars and private donations include:

- New landscaping around both the north & south entrances to the church
- Parking Lot sealing & re-stripping
- New Boiler for the Parish Office Building
- New Outdoor Benches
- Parish Office Furniture & Computers
- Awning for Parish Office Entrance
- Kitchen Equipment used for Parish Events



Items made possible by school capital improvement fees and fundraising:

- Playground Area Security Cameras
- New Gym Doors and School Windows
- Classroom Carpeting
- Completion of School Courtyard Improvements
- School Furniture & Computers



Heart of a Shepherd Campaign:

- Parish Center Projector
- School and Social Hall Roof Repairs



New Library: In Loving Memory of Patricia Vaccaro

Patricia Vaccaro devoted her life to Saint Joseph Parish School. Beginning as a student in 1955, she went on to become a teacher and eventually served as principal for 26 years. She was known for her selflessness, kindness, and active involvement in parish life. Her leadership and deep care for students left a lasting impact on generations of children and families.

Her legacy continues through her family: Pat's children, Mike and Katie, are alumni, and her granddaughters, Sarah and Hannah, attend SJS today. Mike, his wife, Julie, and their girls continue to serve our parish through their active involvement.

OUR PARISH AND SCHOOL *Flourishing & Apostolic*

DAY SCHOOL STUDENTS	Past Year	Current Year
K - 8	273	319
Preschool	51	56

SUNDAY SCHOOL STUDENTS	Past Year	Current Year
PSR	352	353
Vacation Bible School	87	96

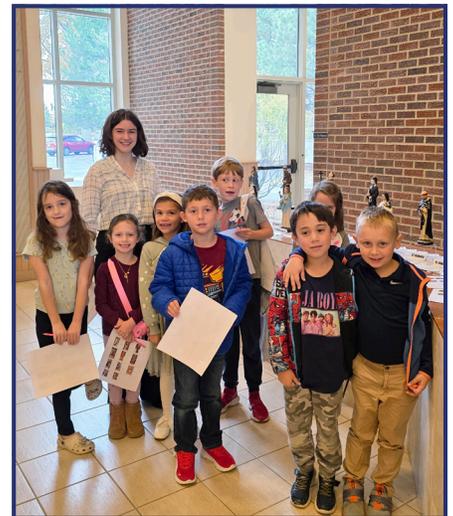


Behind every number is a story of faith. Each baptism, sacrament, and ministry reflects the life of a parish that is flourishing in the Spirit. From growing school enrollment to active small groups and outreach ministries, these numbers tell the story of a people answering Bishop Malesic’s call — to be missionary disciples who bring Christ into the world

From baptisms to confirmations, the sacramental life of St. Joseph Parish continues to reflect a community growing in faith and commitment. Over the past year, we celebrated 62 baptisms, 94 First Communions, and 76 Confirmations — each one a milestone in the journey of discipleship. These moments represent families bringing children to the font of life, students encountering Jesus in the Eucharist, and young people choosing to live as witnesses to the Gospel. With 15 marriages and five *OCIA* candidates welcomed into the Church, our parish continues to be a home where faith begins, matures, and bears fruit across every stage of life.

Parish programs thrive for our children as well as adults. Our *PSR* program continues to grow as we seek to engage children in learning and help them grow in a relationship with Jesus. Twenty-five volunteer catechists and twenty-five volunteer aides, ranging from high school to senior members, staff our program. Our weekly classes include activities, craft classes, Reconciliation, meeting with our youth minister, and our monthly *Children at Mass*. We work to meet families where they are and offer various options that accommodate family circumstances. Parents like the weekly emails from their child’s teacher with a summary of each class and suggestions for extended learning. Our program is intentionally planned to be interesting and foster both the love of and practice of our faith.

Our *Vacation Bible School (VBS)* is a yearly program that takes place for one week every June. We are staffed by approximately 15 volunteer adults and 45 junior high and high school students. *VBS* strives to create a fun-filled environment where the children encounter Jesus each day. The program delivers a unique, multi-sensory experience and offers interactive lessons featuring Bible stories, music, crafts, prayer, and games. Children explore what it means to be rooted in a relationship with God, their creator, a safe place in life’s storms.



GROWTH FUELED BY *Noticeable Hospitality*

SACRAMENTS & STATISTICS	2025	2024
Baptisms	62	49
First Communion	94	73
Confirmations	76	47
Marriages	15	14
OCIA Participants	5	5
Average Weekend Mass Attendance	1,325	1,300
Weekly Homebound Communion Visits	135	120
New Parishioner Households	106	93
Trained Reach More Participants	70	67



Our parish family now includes over 6,000 members across 2,115 households, with growth especially visible among young families with children — signs of a flourishing and hopeful future. This vitality is mirrored in our school and faith formation programs, where enrollment has steadily increased. Our day school now serves 319 students in grades K-8 and 57 in our Preschool program with a waiting list. We projected our school to grow even more next year. Our *PSR* and youth programs continue at full capacity, engaging more than 350 students in religious education.

Ministries like *REACH MORE*, which now includes 70 trained small-group leaders, and our *Vacation Bible School*, serving nearly 100 children, reveal a parish alive in mission — forming disciples who pray, learn, and serve together.

These numbers tell a simple but powerful story: St. Joseph Parish and School are not just growing — they are flourishing as a living expression of Christ's Church in Avon Lake.

New Parishioners Share their Reasons for Joining St. Joseph Parish

- *Looking for a Pastor who is a shepherd — who leads the parish with joy and creates a vibrant and prayerful spiritual home.*
- *Many new parishioners are looking for a community of varied ages — young families, established families who have neighbors in the parish and have children who are the same ages, seniors want to feel comfortable and find help if needed.*
- *New members are looking for spiritual guidance, groups, retreats, and faith resources.*
- *Hospitality: families are aware of social events at the parish, and St. Joseph Parish provides events that fulfill age-appropriate social needs. This is especially important to people new to the area.*
- *Some parishioners come to St. Joseph's because they are not happy with their current parish — they do not feel "fed" or welcome. They hear about St. Joseph Parish from friends, neighbors, family members. They attend Mass here and feel welcome and comfortable.*
- *Volunteer opportunities: many people want to be active and are looking for a way to feel helpful and important. Sharing time and talent!*
- *We have young families join the parish when they schedule the baptism for their newborns. Young couples come to St. Joseph's to prepare for marriage and plan weddings, then they join the parish as adults.*
- *PSR is another reason for families to come to St. Joseph Parish. Our program has a good reputation and is flexible for families who need accommodation because of children's activities, shared custody, and parents' work schedules.*

EVANGELIZING *Growing in Our Friendship with Jesus*

Meet our two new evangelization youth and adults ministers, Crew Spence & Kathy Colman!



Crew Spence – Evangelization, OCIA, High School Youth Ministry

My name is Crew Spence. I am our *High School Youth Minister*, and I oversee *OCIA* and Evangelization. I first joined St. Joseph Parish as a child, attending the school from first through eighth grade and graduating in 1997. It's a joy to now serve the same community that helped form my own faith. I began working at St. Joseph in December 2024 after spending ten years as an executive at a software engineering career school for adults. That experience — mentoring students and leading large teams — shaped how I approach ministry today: with a heart for relationship, clarity, and shared mission.

My wife, Hannah, and I are parishioners here, along with our sons, John Michael and Henry, and we look forward to welcoming our daughter in January 2026. I'm currently in my second year of the Lay Ecclesial Ministry formation program at the Center for Pastoral Leadership. Through this program, I'm being equipped in pastoral theology and spiritual formation so I can better serve those journeying through the *Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA)* and our high school youth.

My goal is to build environments where others are empowered to serve. That's why I've formed teams of catechists and mentors for both *OCIA* and youth ministry – ordinary parishioners sharing extraordinary faith. If you've ever felt drawn to help, please reach out; no experience is necessary, only a willing heart.

I also launched *Carpenter's Call*, a group for men seeking to deepen their faith, camaraderie, and service through active, hands-on experiences. When I'm not at church, you'll probably find me restoring our 118-year-old home in Elyria.



Kathy Colman – Evangelization, Confirmation, Middle School Youth Ministry

My name is Kathy Colman. I am our *Middle School Youth Minister*, and I oversee Confirmation and Evangelization. It is with great joy that I have been blessed to join the St. Joseph staff, effective August 1, 2025. I have a graduate degree from the University of Notre Dame in Theology and bring a wealth of experience in a variety of ministerial roles working at the parish level, in schools, and even a Catholic summer camp. I have taught theology, developed, coordinated, and directed numerous retreats, spoken at several conferences and retreats put on by others, and led various religious education programs and youth groups.

My focus when working with young people is to build relationships with them and walk with them in their lives. As that grows, I start to delve deeper into the truths of our Catholic faith and encourage them towards a stronger relationship with Christ and His Church. The end goal is always to lead them to become a true disciple of Christ. All of this is done through teaching in the school, forming small groups, continuing to lead *sALt Lite* nights, coordinating retreats and service projects, promoting and making possible diocesan youth events, and making myself present at various events that the youth are involved in.

For any of these to be fruitful, it will take a team effort. My greatest hope in this is to build a core team of adult volunteers who will regularly assist in the planning and implementing of events, small groups, and *sALt Lite* nights, supporting these efforts through preparing meals and providing snacks, donating resources to provide materials for all events, and finally having an army of prayer warriors who are regularly interceding for the youth and those working them. Please contact me if you are able to help out in any of these ways. God bless you all! Let's do great things for God.

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS *Forming Missionary Disciples*

A Flourishing Church is Alive with Young Faith!

Our parish forms young disciples in many ways — on the field, in prayer, in community. Whether gathered in small groups, serving others, encountering Christ at *Vacation Bible School*, learning in the classroom, or sharing life with one another in faith-filled friendship, our children and teens are discovering who they are in Christ and how they are called to live as His followers. Each ministry, moment, mentor, and experience plays a part in helping them grow not only in knowledge of the faith, but in confidence, purpose, and joy.

Parish Vision for Our Young Church

Youth Ministry at our parish exists to accompany young people — meeting them where they are and walking with them as they grow in both life and faith. We recognize that the teenage years are a time of profound searching and discovery, and we believe this is precisely where Christ desires to meet them, just as He meets each of us in every season of life. Through community, prayer, and authentic witness, we strive to create an environment where every young person can encounter the living person of Jesus Christ and come to know his unshakable love.

Our gatherings, retreats, service projects, and conversations are not ends in themselves; they are moments of grace meant to help our youth hear God's voice, experience belonging in the Church, and discern how the Holy Spirit is at work in their daily lives. We aim to root all that we do in the richness of Catholic theology — forming hearts and minds that understand not just what the Church teaches, but why she teaches it.

Ultimately, our mission is to form true disciples of Christ: young people who know him personally, love him deeply, and desire to serve him wholeheartedly. In walking this path together, we pray that our teens become witnesses of faith, hope, and charity in the world — reminding the Church that youth are not only the future of our faith, but its vibrant and essential present.

Learn more at
stjosephavonlake.org/youthministry



Thank You to Our CYO Community

We are grateful for our CYO coaches, athletes, and families, who help our young people grow not only in skill and teamwork, but in character, faith, and Christian joy. CYO athletics teaches our youth to compete with integrity, support one another, and recognize Christ in both victory and challenge. Thank you for helping form young disciples who play with purpose and lead with love.



Listening for God's Call

Over the years, we have been blessed to host many seminarians. Most recently, we had the privilege of accompanying *Father Christopher Cotone* through his transitional diaconate to his priestly ordination. It is my prayer that the presence and witness of these men within our parish community will continue to inspire others to listen for the Lord's call to serve in a religious vocation. Please invite your children to consider priesthood and religious life. Thanks for all you do to support our seminarians and priests.



SERVICE *Caring for Those in Need*

Carpenter's Call — Strength, Brotherhood & Service

This past June, our parish launched the inaugural *Carpenter's Call* — a high-energy, faith-driven challenge event designed to strengthen fraternity and brotherhood among the men of St. Joseph Parish. Held at T3 Performance in Avon, twelve teams of three took on a rigorous course that included relay runs, pull-ups, push-ups, fireman carries, and other strength and endurance tests. But while the competition was intense, the heart of the event was not athletic victory — it was mission.

The men competed to raise support for the St. Elizabeth Center's emergency men's shelter in Lorain, helping neighbors experiencing hardship find stability, dignity, and hope. Through the generosity of participants, family supporters, and donors, the event raised \$3,210 for the shelter. Representatives from Catholic Charities and several shelter residents joined us that morning, reminding everyone that our strength is meant to be given, not kept.

Carpenter's Call continues this fall with *Carpenter's Call II: The Ruck* — an overnight endurance challenge held November 7-8 in solidarity with homeless veterans. Participants will carry weighted packs through a night ruck, reflecting on perseverance, sacrifice, and the call to serve those who have served our country. This year's effort supports The Valor Home in Lorain, which provides transitional housing and compassionate support for veterans working to rebuild their lives. Through physical challenge, shared brotherhood, and acts of tangible service, *Carpenter's Call* is becoming more than an event — it is a growing movement of men striving to live their faith with courage, generosity, and purpose.

View more at stjosephavonlake.org/carpenterscall

Race for a Blessing — Running to Lift Up Our Neighbors

After a one-year hiatus, we were joyfully able to bring back our *Race for a Blessing* event this August — a family-friendly 5K and 1-mile run/walk that brings parishioners, neighbors, and friends together for a good cause. The race supported Blessing House in Elyria, a safe and loving crisis care home for children whose families are facing overwhelming challenges.

Through race registrations, sponsorships, and day-of donations, our parish raised \$4,745 for the children and families who turn to Blessing House for care, stability, and hope. The morning was filled with laughter, hand-drawn signs of encouragement, cheering, strollers, grandparents, first-time runners, and veteran racers — a beautiful expression of community joy and shared purpose.

The return of *Race for a Blessing* reminds us that outreach is not only service — it is relationship. When we run, give, encourage, and show up together, we become a tangible sign of the mercy and love of Christ for those who need it most.

Photos and results available at stjosephavonlake.org/race



CHARITABLE EFFORTS *Helping People Near & Far*

Charity in Love

Every week, our *Charity in Love* ministry moves quietly, faithfully, and consistently to meet the needs of our neighbors — one meal, one conversation, one act of kindness at a time. With the support of the *Charity in Love* fund, volunteers prepare and serve meals at the St. Elizabeth Center in Lorain several times each week, as well as provide 65 weekly to-go meals for residents at Bridge Pointe Commons in Elyria.



But *Charity in Love* is more than meal service — it is presence. It is learning names. It is showing up when life is heavy. It is choosing to see Christ in each person we meet.

This past year, our parish helped serve over 1,000 Thanksgiving meals across Lorain County, including at St. Frances Xavier Cabrini Church, and assisted with dozens more right here in Avon Lake. The hands that cook, carry, stir, and serve are the hands of Christ — and every volunteer is a reminder that love, when lived, always multiplies.

St. Vincent De Paul Society

The *St. Vincent de Paul Society* extends the compassion of Christ through one-on-one care. Members accompany individuals and families facing financial hardship, walking with them through challenges such as food insecurity, rent and utility needs, car repairs, transportation support, and periods of crisis.



Like Jesus, our ministers begin not with answers, but with relationship. They listen first. They honor dignity. They help lift burdens without judgment.

Through your generosity, our *SVdP* chapter has been able to serve neighbors throughout Avon Lake and the surrounding community — often in collaboration with Community Resource Services (CRS) — ensuring that those who are hurting are not left to struggle alone. Their work is quiet, steady, and deeply transformative — the kind of love that does not seek attention, only to restore hope.



Thank You!

CATHOLIC CHARITIES

Donations to Date

\$138,211.55

Through the year, our parish also supports the mission of the broader Church through diocesan and global special collections, extending Christ's love far beyond our local community.

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Eastern Europe	\$ 331
Black and Indian Mission	\$ 881
Holy Land	\$ 2,163
Holy Father	\$ 584
Catechetical Services	\$ 415
Catholic University	\$ 251
Communications Collection	\$ 224
World Mission Sunday Collection	\$ 1,189
Campaign for Human Development	\$ 1,446
Retirement Fund for Religious	\$ 4,066
Latin America	\$ 510
Mission Cooperative	\$ 7,114
Catholic Home Mission	\$ 416
Catholic Education	\$ 354
Calamities Relief	\$ 300
Rice Bowl Collections	\$ 999
Catholic Relief Services	\$1,349
Welcome Circle	\$ 2,281
TOTAL	\$ 24,873





SAINT JOSEPH

PARISH and SCHOOL

32929 Lake Road

Avon Lake, OH 44012

Help a Student - Keep your Tax Dollars Local!

The *Angel Scholarship Fund (ASF)* allows Ohio taxpayers to support Catholic education right here at St. Joseph Parish School — at no extra cost. By making a charitable contribution to the *Angel Scholarship Fund*, you can receive a dollar-for-dollar credit on your Ohio state income tax — up to \$750 for individuals or \$1,500 if married and filing jointly. Your donation directly supports tuition assistance for students at St. Joseph Parish School, helping families in need while keeping your tax dollars working within our parish community.

The *ASF* is a true win-win: it uplifts our children, strengthens our parish, and invests in a brighter future. If you haven't yet joined this mission, we warmly invite you to consider making a gift. Your donation helps more children receive the priceless gift of a Catholic education and ensures our parish thrives for generations to come. Together, we are changing lives.

For assistance, please call John Stipek, School Scholarship Administrator.



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ANGEL

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CALL: 216-902-1312 **ONLINE:** CatholicCommunity.org/angel-contribution