St. Matthew
Catholic Church

August 8, 2026

St. Matthew Parishioners,

Today, we - the St. Matthew Finance Council along with the Parish Family Advisory Council - urgently write you to provide an update regarding the ongoing financial crisis facing our parish and to share our recommendation for how to address this issue.

As we learned in our recent listening session, one of the core gifts that St. Matthew parish identifies with is "community". And while St. Matthew's community is always vibrant, in the last decade, Mass attendance, activities, and stewardship have been declining, and we have struggled to maintain both programs and staff. Historically, school families played a vital role in parish life and support. The decline in student enrollment, which ultimately led to the school's consolidation with St. Mark School, is further evidence of the parish's overall decline.

These factors have led the parish to realize operating losses, fueled by flat revenues and increasing costs, resulting in negative cash income. Over the years this trend has depleted our cash reserves.

Our deficit

As we began our new fiscal year in July 2026, the '26-'27 budget recommendations were prepared reflecting a $350,000 cash deficit, which greatly exceeds the original estimate. As we shared earlier this year, we anticipated a deficit for both the '25-'26 & '26-'27 budgets, which led to our need to secure a line of credit of up to $628,620. The line of credit was backed by the projected sale of the property across the street from the parish office.

Because we continue to operate using borrowed money, we are facing a worsening cash deficit. At the same time, given all the factors, we anticipate continued (or increased) losses in future fiscal years, which will likely exhaust the line of credit before the sale of the property. This reality raises serious concerns about the stewardship of St. Matthew's resources.

In addition, the Lisieux House (convent) has experienced an increase in security incidents. This has prompted the ministry to seek to move to another location in the archdiocese no later than June 30, 2027. This upcoming property vacancy worsens our finances, since the rent from Lisieux House offset the operating and mortgage costs of the building.

Discerning options

As mentioned in our earlier communication, parish staff, St. Matthew Finance Council and the Parish Family Advisory Council have been evaluating options to mitigate increasing costs and increase revenue to reduce the deficit. One of the most viable options is leasing the St. Matthew school and church to one or more appropriate tenant(s) to offset the fixed cost of the property. Professional and Chancery advisors suggest that the best leasing opportunities for the current market would be to lease the whole property at St. Matthew including the school, offices, Lisieux House, community center and the church.

Our recommendation

Given our tenuous cash position and the strong preference in the market for leasing the entire campus, St. Matthew Finance Council and the Parish Family Advisory Council recommend leasing the entire property at St. Matthew. Ideally, we would lease to Catholic organizations to further the mission of the Church, as aligned with the Archdiocesan Catholic Real Estate Initiative.

By leasing the property, we would be able to uphold our financial stewardship responsibilities. And, given the unique situation we are in through Partners in the Gospel, the St. Matthew community would not be lost. Instead, the community would bring its spiritual gifts and talents to the St. Mark campus. Through this, the St. Matthew community would remain a valued part of our parish family, continuing to contribute its unique history, traditions, and strengths to our shared mission and ministry.

Ultimately, this means that we are recommending discontinuing regular Sunday Mass at St. Matthew church starting in the first half of 2027. However, this recommendation and shift in Mass schedule does not mean that the church is closed. It will be used periodically for Mass and other liturgical celebrations at the discretion of the pastor and in partnership with any future tenants.

This is a tremendously difficult recommendation to make for us – and for you. We want to acknowledge the emotion and grief it will bring. Know that we grieve with you and yet at the same time, recognize that this recommendation reflects a responsible approach to stewarding St. Matthew parish resources as it provides time for a prayerful transition, while minimizing the dependence on the line of credit to support operating costs. This recommendation also retains ownership of our campus to further God's plan and grow access to Sacraments, Pastoral Care, and ministries. We anticipate Fr. Ross finalizing a decision over the next few months.

Timing

If Fr. Ross accepts the recommendation, the timing for moving all Masses to St. Mark will be coordinated with the Parish Family Advisory Council's work on the One Parish Plan. This process will continue to engage parishioners through community consultations, developing a shared vision for the future of our parish family, while building on our gifts and addressing our challenges. The plan will honor the legacy of both parishes, and in particular, the community aspect of St. Matthew. The One Parish Plan will also look ahead to the needs of our larger community and the next generation of Catholics, while discerning God's will for our parish family.

Although this transition may lead us to worship together in a different place, we hope it will also strengthen what has always made St. Matthew special: its people. Buildings provide shelter for worship, but it is the faithful who create a parish community. Together, we will continue to grow as one parish family. Please keep all St. Matthew parishioners, past and present, in your prayers. Please pray especially for Fr. Ross and Fr. Davis, along with the parish staff and parish family leadership, during these challenging times. If you have questions, you can email Sara Lane or Tom Martin.

St Matthew - Pray for us.

St. Matthew Finance Council
John Hickman
Diane Reeves
Carolyn Foster
George Daher
Pam Dressel

Parish Family Advisory Council
Sara Lane – Co-chair (sarapfac@stmps.org)
Tom Martin – Co-chair (tompfac@stmps.org)
Mariella Fletcher
Tom Grabowski
Leo Van Hollebeke
Hope Marozwa
David Reed