

The background features a large, stylized cross in the center, composed of overlapping translucent shapes in shades of orange and yellow. Radiating from the top of the cross are several beams of light, creating a sunburst effect. The overall color palette is warm, dominated by oranges, yellows, and browns.

SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS PARISH ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Good News

At the bottom of the page, there is a stylized illustration of an open book. The pages are white with some faint, illegible text, and the book is bound in a dark brown cover.

A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

Want some Good News?

Our world and our country are so divided. Our national and global leaders continue to struggle to bring an end to wars and starvation, while immigrants continue to search for security and dignity in what appears to be a hostile world. Daily news seems to focus on shootings, protests and natural disasters. Is there any good news? YES!!!



This past year, we stopped to recognize the impact Pope Francis had on our Church and the world, especially his efforts to extend the love of Jesus Christ to everyone, while acknowledging the importance of listening to each other, especially the marginalized. Shortly after Pope Francis' death, the world came together again and celebrated the election of Pope Leo XIV, who, I believe, has the intellect of Pope Benedict and the heart of Pope Francis. His first words expressed his faith in Jesus Christ, and his prayer for peace and a united humanity. Pope Leo's election brought good news and hope for the Church and the world. At the same time, our archdiocese was blessed with the appointment of Archbishop Richard Henning, a man who exemplifies deep faith and pastoral vision. We were honored when he visited our parish in December.

As this Annual Report demonstrates, there's good news for our parish as well. For the past year, and continuing this year, we embraced the Gospel mandate and our parish's mission statement to evangelize; to strengthen faith through worship, education, service and community building in order to share the Gospel message. In a world filled with suffering, alienation, secularism, and the darkness of sin, our parish was, and continues to be, a light shining in the darkness, giving hope, strength and the assurance of God's love for all.

Our good news is demonstrated in many different ways. Not only have the number of our ministries increased, but we have developed lay leaders for every ministry. Our youth programs continue to develop as we focus on education and service, both locally and in poorer communities. Our ministry to BSU students has grown significantly under the direction of Fr. Rodrigo and with the support of the FOCUS Missionaries. This year's Vacation Bible Camp maxed out with 80 campers and 40 volunteers!! Our adult Bible study groups enhance the understanding of our faith while strengthening community. Hundreds of our parishioners and those from neighboring towns attended a standing room only Lenten Parish Retreat by Fr. Larry Richards. The good news continues with the number of parish volunteers who are involved in outreach programs at the Bridgewater Correctional Complex, State Hospital, My Brother's Keeper and Fr. Bill's/Mainspring House.

There is also good news regarding our parish facilities. This past year, we made major improvements to our facilities in order to upgrade aging systems and structures, while ensuring the safety and durability of our buildings. We were able to complete projects that had been deferred for a number of years.

All this good news would not have been possible if it were not for the GENEROSITY of time, talent and treasure of our parishioners and friends. THANK YOU! The word "Gospel" means "Good News." I believe that the Good News that Jesus Christ has given us to share is being reflected in the lives, actions, and prayer of our parish community. Again, thank you for your continued support and generosity!

- Fr. Devine



One of our First Communion classes, May 2025



Mission Trip students and chaperones during a week-long Mission Trip in Niagara, NY



A NOTE FROM FR. RODRIGO

Good News: He is Risen! To proclaim the truth of faith that Our Lord has risen from the dead is primarily that for which the Church exists; Saint Paul is very clear with the Corinthian community when he tells them: *“If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile”* (1st Cor. 15:17).

This proclamation, then, is the most important proclamation we are to make, for it is the one that gives meaning to our Christian life. If it is the most important, then it needs to be proclaimed with great joy!

No one could’ve ever said it better than John Paul II: **“We are Easter people, and Alleluia is our song,”** – that Our Lord Jesus rose from the dead on that quiet and serene Sunday morning is why we exist; and so we cannot be anything else but people of the Good News!

The Good News, that is, the Gospel, is why Saint Thomas Aquinas Parish exists. It is why we do what we do: every ministry, every celebration, every fundraiser, and every mission trip finds meaning and fulfillment in the truth that Our Lord, our Vindicator, lives! For if not, futile would be our efforts.

It is because *We Believe* that, as a parish, we can’t stop, and so we need to continue to do what we do: care for the faith and formation of our youth through various programs and exciting new initiatives; marrying, baptizing, confirming, visiting the sick and the imprisoned, and bringing comfort to the dying - and much, much more. Thank you for everything that you do to make our parish what it is.

May God continue to bless you in your faith as you continue to spread joyfully the Good News of our salvation in the risen Lord.

- Fr. Rodrigo



Step-Up Post-Confirmation Program



Our Second Annual Eucharistic Procession



SPREADING GOOD NEWS THROUGH MUSIC

Through the joyful work of our music ministry, we proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ, lifting hearts and minds to God through song. Whether it's large collaborative efforts for Christmas Eve and the Holy Week Triduum or a volunteer musician for the Christmas Pageant, the participation of all involved, both large and small, is a testimony of God's love, inviting all to encounter His saving grace.

A special highlight this past year was singing at the Mass celebrated by our new Archbishop, Archbishop Richard G. Henning. Despite an ill-timed snowstorm, the adult choir joined forces with members of our youth choir and the 5 pm contemporary band to support and enhance the solemnity of the occasion.

I'm eternally grateful for our talented cantors, volunteer musicians and singers, and our contemporary worship band, under the direction of Mr. Mat Baillargeon, who continue to provide exceptional, uplifting music at all our liturgies.

- Paul Hoffman, Music Director



Adult Choir



Children's Choir



Christmas Pageant Musicians

GO MAKE DISCIPLES!

Our Faith Formation Program continues to communicate the truth and beauty of our faith by using the Finding God curriculum for Grades 1-8. Finding God helps families grow in faith while guiding their children in core concepts to create a solid foundation.



This foundation is the first step in a life of discipleship. Finding God strongly promotes a regular prayer life within the family. Prayer is central in the life of a disciple of Jesus Christ. The sacrament years of Grades 2, 9 & 10 offered retreats where students had the opportunity to not only strengthen their faith, but to also experience their faith with a community of believers. For their bi-weekly classes, our Confirmation students had the chance to hear speakers teach and speak about how the Catholic faith has formed them. When asked what their favorite part of the year was, a few Confirmation students mentioned Confession. Your support of this evangelical ministry makes it possible for us to obtain outside priests (we needed 10!) to bring the Sacrament of Confession to our students. Our parish volunteers continue to impress me with the creative and meaningful ways they express their love of God and His Church. Go make disciples! - Debbie Hill, Faith Formation Director



Confirmation, May 2025



GOOD NEWS IS ALL AROUND US...

Good news comes in all forms. It is found in the smile of a parishioner, in the laughter of a baby whose parents come in to schedule a baptism, in the generosity of a volunteer who gives his or her time to make a difference in one of our many ministries, and most importantly, the “Good News” that is our Lord Jesus Christ. It is our duty as disciples to spread the “Good News” and guide others to our Lord.

To accomplish this, we must live according to God’s will...loving one another and showing each other grace, empathy, compassion, and kindness. Helping a stranger in need, lending an ear to someone who just needs you to listen, or nourishing those who have hunger or thirst, whether they are hungry or thirsty for food and drink or for understanding and love. To truly live God’s will, we must worship our Lord with reverence through participation in the sacraments, intentional living, humility, and obedience, stemming from a heart filled with love for Him and for our brothers and sisters.

Working in the parish office offers me many opportunities to live God’s will through my actions. It is my honor to interact with all of you and help you through whatever need you may have. I try to approach every situation I face with the understanding that God is working through me and I am a mere instrument of His love. Please know my door is always open and I am here to help with whatever you need.

I am grateful to be part of such a wonderful parish community that recognizes and demonstrates God’s will through their actions and words in such beautiful ways. Thank you for all being true disciples.

- Tina Larson, Administrative Assistant



Christmas Bazaar Volunteers, November 2024



Baccalaureate Mass, June 2025



**Thanks to the Church Decorating Committee
for our beautiful Christmas altars!**

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS PARISH	FY24 (LY)	FY25 (TY)	FY25 (TY)	FY25 (TY)	FY25 (TY)	VARIANCE OVER \$10,000	FY26
	ACTUAL	ACTUAL	BUDGET (\$)	VS. BUD. (\$)	VS. BUD. %	COMMENTS	BUDGET (\$)
OPERATING INCOME							
OFFERTORY	\$493,929	\$526,393	\$485,000	\$41,393	7.86%	Increased Offertory FY25	\$510,000
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT	\$48,758	\$65,368	\$50,000	\$15,368	23.51%	Increased Capital Improvement FY25	\$55,000
GRAND ANNUAL	\$174,331	\$210,700	\$165,000	\$45,700	21.69%	Strong Grand Annual Giving FY25	\$190,000
SACRAMENTAL/FLOWERS	\$47,091	\$40,935	\$46,750	(\$5,815)	-14.21%		\$43,600
GIFTS/BEQUESTS/DONATIONS	\$30,904	\$12,562	\$32,000	(\$19,438)	-154.74%	More Donations tagged for the Grand Annual	\$12,000
CATHOLIC APPEAL REBATE	\$7,215	\$13,342	\$5,000	\$8,342	62.52%		\$0
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	\$44,828	\$54,810	\$50,000	\$4,810	8.78%		\$50,000
MINISTRY FUNDRAISING/OTHER	\$147,644	\$96,250	\$78,250	\$18,000	18.70%	Golf Tourney/Bazaar/Lenlen Speaker	\$90,960
INCOME TOTAL	\$994,700	\$1,020,360	\$912,000	\$108,360	10.62%		\$951,560
OPERATING EXPENSES							
SALARIES/BENEFITS	\$530,695	\$549,655	\$538,060	\$11,595	2.15%	Staff Increases/Maintenance Salaries	\$531,132
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION EXP.	\$90,425	\$102,156	\$99,685	\$2,471	2.48%		\$102,450
PASTORAL/LITURGICAL	\$59,684	\$52,894	\$62,000	(\$9,106)	-14.69%		\$64,200
OFFICE/ADMIN/HOUSEHOLD	\$42,954	\$44,750	\$53,750	(\$9,000)	-16.74%		\$53,200
UTILITIES/HEAT/ELEC/W&S	\$75,038	\$82,758	\$72,300	\$10,458	14.46%	Higher Utility Costs FY25	\$93,100
PROPERTY/LIABILITY INSURANCE	\$54,619	\$56,020	\$55,200	\$820	1.49%		\$56,500
MAINTENANCE	\$43,153	\$41,623	\$37,900	\$3,723	9.82%		\$44,900
MINISTRY CENTRAL TITHE	\$64,165	\$65,426	\$68,000	(\$2,574)	-3.79%		\$68,000
OTHER	\$48,150	\$49,153	\$42,300	\$6,853	16.20%		\$57,100
EXPENSES TOTAL	\$1,008,883	\$1,044,435	\$1,029,195	\$15,240	1.48%		\$1,087,082
NET OPERATING INCOME (LOSS)	(\$14,183)	(\$24,075)	(\$117,195)	\$93,120	-79.46%		(\$135,522)
NON-OPERATING INCOME & EXPENSES							
NON-OPERATING INCOME	\$75,737	\$120,611	\$45,000	\$75,611	168.02%	Transfer from Cemetery Operating for Major Projects	\$48,000
NON-OPERATING EXPENSE	\$84,789	\$139,631	\$170,000	(\$30,369)	-17.86%	Incurred some savings on Budgeted Major Projects	\$50,000
NET NON-OPERATING INCOME (LOSS)	(\$9,052)	(\$19,020)	(\$125,000)	\$105,980	-84.78%	Transfer from Cemetery Operating affected FY25 Income/(Loss)	(\$2,000)
NET INCOME (LOSS)	(\$23,235)	(\$43,095)	(\$242,195)	\$199,100	-82.21%		(\$137,522)
Parish Operating Balance as of 6/30/2025: \$131,337							
Chapel Operating Balance as of 6/30/2025: \$34,283							
ST. THOMAS AQUINAS CEMETERY	FY24 (LY)	FY25 (TY)	FY25 (TY)	FY25 (TY)	FY25 (TY)	VARIANCE OVER \$10,000	FY26
	ACTUAL	ACTUAL	BUDGET (\$)	VS. BUD. (\$)	VS. BUD. %	COMMENTS	BUDGET (\$)
INCOME							
INCOME TOTAL	\$171,025	\$134,019	\$153,500	(\$19,481)	11.42%	More cremations vs. Full burials	\$139,000
EXPENSES							
EXPENSES TOTAL	\$113,668	\$114,024	\$107,771	\$6,253	5.47%		\$124,600
NET OPERATING INCOME/ (LOSS)	\$57,357	\$19,995	\$45,729	(\$25,734)	25.43%	Driven by Maintenance Payroll and increased supply costs	\$14,400
NON-OPERATING INCOME & EXPENSES							
NON-OPERATING INCOME	\$35,252	\$17,894	\$0	\$17,894		No Market Performance Budgeted	\$0
NON-OPERATING EXPENSE	\$25,993	\$60,000	\$0	\$60,000	N/A	Transfer to Parish Operating for Major Projects	\$0
RECEIPTS FOR PERPETUAL CARE	\$10,875	\$6,930	\$10,000	(\$3,070)	8.75%	More Cremation Burial Rights vs. Full Burial Rights	\$7,000
NON-OPERATING INCOME/ (LOSS)	\$9,259	(\$42,106)	\$0	(\$42,106)		Driven by Transfer to Parish Operating	\$0
NET INCOME (LOSS)	\$77,491	(\$15,181)	\$55,729	(\$70,910)	39.05%		\$21,400
Operating Balance as of 6/30/2025: \$208,174							



FROM THE FINANCE COUNCIL

For FY2025, St. Thomas Parish ended the year ahead of plan, reporting a net loss of \$43K versus a budgeted loss of \$242K (which included \$170K in planned capital improvements).

This improvement was driven by a successful Grand Annual Appeal, increased weekly offertory, and strong capital improvement contributions, which together offset a shortfall in budgeted gifts and bequests. This would not have been possible without the continued generosity of our parishioners.

Operating expenses were slightly higher due to rising utility costs, unexpected maintenance (including a hot water heater), and a more expensive, but worthwhile, Lenten mission program endorsed by Fr. Bill and the parish.

A focus on conservative fiscal management led to the delay of some capital projects and the postponement of \$18K in planned spending. This cost-avoidance strategy, along with temporary financial support from the cemetery, helped offset rising expenses and allowed for prioritized capital improvements. As your Finance Council, we are encouraged by the parish's commitment to financial stability. While challenges remain, we are confident that ongoing conservative budgeting and the continued generosity of parishioners will yield year-over-year improvements.

- Sheila Whitaker (Chair), Michael Berolini, James Gale, Bryan Hynes, Marc Papasodoro, and Scott Smith



THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY !

It has been a busy year. At the beginning of this past Fiscal Year, Fr. Bill, with the guidance and recommendations of both the Parish Finance and Maintenance Councils, created and approved a list of much-needed improvements and upgrades for the parish that have been in a holding pattern for some time while we have worked to build the funds to complete them.

Through your generosity, we were able to complete a large amount of maintenance and repairs that were desperately needed to keep our parish safe and welcoming for everyone. These included:

- The complete renovation and repairs of the church front stairs and walkways
- Addition and improvement of parking lot lighting and new parish center exterior lighting
- 54 new energy efficient rectory windows
- Waterproofing the rectory basement which was a constant flooding issue
- Repairing and refinishing the rectory entranceway and columns
- Refinishing the sanctuary floor in the upper church
- New church thermostats and repairs to the church boilers
- Upgrades to the rectory HVAC to improve the heating & cooling in the rear areas
- Repairing and replacing all of the parish center gym lighting

I hope you see how vital your generosity is, and how much we strive to be the best stewards of that generosity. Our parish continues to thrive and grow, and we need to maintain and improve it so we all can continue God's work...with hope.

- Peter Vitagliano, Finance and Operations Officer



Parking Lot Lighting



Replacement of Church Lintel



Basement Waterproofing

THE YEAR IN REVIEW



St. Valentine's Dance, February 2025



Volunteer Social, March 2025



Faith and Fellowship with Seminarian Sean, June 2025



Trunk or Treat, October 2024



Senior Citizen Thanksgiving Dinner, November 2024



Rummage Sale Volunteers, October 2024



First Annual Public Safety Mass, June 2025



Vacation Bible Camp, August 2025