

ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025



CHURCH OF THE GESU

A CATHOLIC, JESUIT PARISH

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Dear Members of the Gesu community,

This year, we witnessed Christ at work in every dimension of parish ministry. His presence has been especially visible in our outreach to the neighborhood and the wider city. Our St. Vincent de Paul ministry continues to be one of the most active in the Archdiocese, offering consistent support to those in need. Gesu launched a new Sunday morning coffee program for friends and neighbors seeking community and connection, and we are finalizing plans for a "Blessing Box" to provide free toiletries and essentials. Our Human Concerns Committee remains attentive to the needs of our neighborhood and continues shaping compassionate, faith-filled responses.

Christ is also present in our adult sacramental formation. At Easter, we baptized several new adult Catholics and welcomed many more into full communion with the Church. Remarkably, nearly two dozen individuals have already expressed interest in next year's sacramental formation (without any advertising) demonstrating the growing spiritual vitality of our parish.

Even while worshipping in the Lower Church during renovation, our Sunday Mass attendance increased slightly, even though we were told to expect a decrease. Our music ministry adapted creatively to the temporary space, and we remain deeply grateful to the Jesuits at Marquette University who preside and hear confessions throughout the week.

Christ's presence is especially visible in the life of our community. Our young adult ministry continues to grow, and the Ash Wednesday Fish Fry brought together parishioners of all ages. The parish pilgrimage to Our Lady of Champion was a prayerful and grace-filled experience, and we look forward to our summer parish picnic. Our ongoing twinning relationship with SS. Simon and Jude in Haiti continues to enrich both communities and remains a source of deep spiritual insight and mutual support.

Yours,

Fr. Michael R. Simone, S.J.

Michael R. Simone, S.J.



WORKS OF MERCY

Serving Those in Need

HUMAN CONCERNS

Gesu's Human Concerns ministry serves those in need through direct service, parish health outreach, Respect Life initiatives, twinning partnerships, justice education, and social action. This work is carried out in collaboration with downtown and central-city parishes, the Archdiocese, Marquette University, Jesuit ministries, and interfaith partners such as Central City Churches, MICAHA, and Common Ground. Together, these efforts advance the Gospel call to compassion, justice, and care for the vulnerable.

A M D G

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY

The St. Vincent de Paul Society at Gesu helps individuals and families in poverty meet their basic human needs. Gesu's SVdP conference serves residents in the neighborhood bounded by 11th Street (east), 35th Street (west), Vliet Street (north), and St. Paul Avenue (south). Last fiscal year, the conference assisted **284** households of friends and neighbors in need. They also raised and distributed over **\$50,000** in goods and services. In addition to serving others, our Vincentians meet twice a month for spiritual reflection. If you would like to learn more, make a donation, or become involved with the Gesu SVdP conference, please use the contact St. Vincent De Paul Central Office at (414)462-7837.

WORKS OF SALVATION

Passing Along the Faith

CHILD, FAMILY, & YOUTH FORMATION

Christian Formation Enrollment 2024-2025

- **30** children in K3-8th Grade
- **14** teens in 9th-12th Grade
- **29** families served
- **5** students preparing for First Reconciliation and First Communion
- **8** Confirmation candidates
- **15** catechists and volunteers supporting formation



2025 First Communicants



2025 Newly Confirmed Young Adults

OCIA

Adults who wish to join the Catholic Church, be baptized, make their First Communion, or receive the Sacrament of Confirmation may do so through Gesu's Order of Christian Initiation of Adults.

11 adults received the sacraments of initiation at the Easter Vigil 2025.

32 adults have inquired about celebrating the sacraments of initiation during Easter 2026, a hopeful sign of continued growth in adult formation at Gesu.

Easter
Initiations
11

WORKS OF SANTIFICATION Strengthening the Faith

YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

The Gesu Young Adult community continues to grow as a vibrant hub of faith, friendship, and service. Open to all individuals ages 23 to 39, the group gathers at least once each month for a wide range of activities that support spiritual growth, meaningful connection, and service to others. This past year they hosted their first annual Fish Fry with a food truck, bringing people together in a fun and welcoming way while strengthening community ties. Whether through prayer, shared meals, or service projects, the Gesu Young Adult group offers a welcoming place to build relationships and deepen faith.



JUST FAITH GROUP

The parish Just Faith group recently completed an 8-session program of study and reflection on race in America and the challenge of racial reconciliation. The Just Faith group has been inspired by the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr.'s call to action in "the fierce urgency of now." The Just Faith group will be leading efforts to make Gesu a center for racial reconciliation in the Milwaukee area.

IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY

This past spring, a group of 6 parishioners and friends completed the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius at Gesu under the guidance of a team of experienced Ignatian directors. Several from this group joined the ongoing After the Exercises faith-sharing group that now includes more than 12 Gesu parishioners and friends. This past fall, parishioners and friends formed a new Spiritual Exercises group, exploring together who they are and what God is calling them to do with their lives.



LITURGY

The Eucharist is the center of life at the Church of the Gesu, and this year our parish gathered in meaningful and grace-filled ways to worship, celebrate the Sacraments, and grow as a community of faith.

A Year of Celebration and Transition

This liturgical year included the joyful arrival of Fr. Michael Simone, S.J., who was officially installed as Pastor by Bishop Jeffrey Haines in November. A delay in construction allowed us to begin Advent in the Upper Church before moving to the Lower Church on December 8 for the duration of the renovation project.

Sacraments and Parish Milestones

Gesu celebrated:

- OCIA rites and Lenten Scrutinies
- The Easter Vigil, where adults received the Sacraments of Initiation
- First Holy Communion for parish children
- Confirmation for youth and adults at the Cathedral

These moments reflect a parish growing in faith, welcoming our new members with joy.

Liturgical Ministries

Gesu's worship is supported by:

- **12** Altar Servers
- **51** Eucharistic Ministers
- **42** Lectors

Ministry volunteers needed to serve each weekend: **47**

Ministry volunteers needed to server annually: **2,444**



The Worship Commission enhanced hospitality efforts and updated ministry guidelines in preparation for returning to the renovated Upper Church. We welcome and thank all who serve and we invite interested parishioners to contact the parish about liturgical ministries.

LOOKING FORWARD

As we celebrate a year of grace, we look ahead with hope to renewed worship in our restored church and invite parishioners to share their gifts as we continue building a welcoming, vibrant liturgical community.

MUSIC MINISTRY

With the Upper Church undergoing renovation, Music Ministry spent nearly the entire liturgical year in the Lower Church. This required significant adaptation: relocating equipment, reconfiguring choir space, and establishing an independent sound system. All newly acquired equipment will remain part of Gesu's permanent music resources.

The move brought an unexpected blessing, greater visibility, as the choir sang from the Lower Church near the congregation rather than the loft—which helped the choir welcome five new members and a returning instrumentalist. The parish choir, supported by dedicated professional section leaders, continues to grow in musical excellence and expand its repertoire.

The choir sings weekly at the 10:30 a.m. Mass in addition, the choir also supports major liturgies during Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter. Parishioners expressed particular gratitude for the choir at Thanksgiving Morning Mass.

Looking ahead, the choir will play a central role in the grand re-opening mass, Jesuit ordinations, and other major liturgies planned for 2026. The John Weissrock Concert Series—paused during renovation—will resume in February 2026.



WEDDINGS & BAPTISMS

A Legacy of Faith Across Generations

For more than 130 years, the Church of the Gesu has been a sacred place where families come to celebrate life's most meaningful moments. Each year, couples choose Gesu for their wedding not only because of the beauty of the church, but because of the deep personal and family connections that stretch back through generations of Marquette alumni, parishioners, and Milwaukee families.

During the renovation of the Upper Church, Gesu experienced a noticeable decline in weddings, which resulted in a loss of important wedding related income that typically supports parish operations. As the parish reopens the beautifully restored Upper Church, we look forward to welcoming couples back to this sacred space and recovering this significant source of parish support.

Baptisms at Gesu carry that same sense of heritage and hope. Many children baptized here are second, third, or even fourth generation members of families who have long called Gesu their spiritual home. These celebrations remind us that the grace of the Sacraments continues to shape lives and link our past, present, and future.

Through weddings and baptisms, Gesu remains a place where faith is passed on, families are formed, and the story of our parish continues with each new generation.

2024-2025



LOOKING FORWARD

As we return to our newly renovated church, we look forward with hope to welcoming many new members to our community through this sacramental ministry.

WORKS OF STEWARDSHIP

Strengthening the Parish Community

THE HAITI TWINNING COMMISSION

The Haiti Twinning Commission raised over \$40,000 to support the clinic and school at SS. Simon and Jude in Haiti.

PARISHIONER ENGAGEMENT

This year, Gesu continued to strengthen community life by offering meaningful opportunities for parishioners and visitors to gather, pray, learn, and celebrate together. From welcoming new families to deepening long-standing traditions, these moments reflect a vibrant and engaged parish community.

Gesu opened its doors for tours during Marquette student orientation and MU Family Weekend, offering thousands of students and families a warm introduction to their new parish. A highlight of the year was the installation of our new pastor, Fr. Michael Simone, S.J., on November 17, 2024, a joyful milestone shared by parishioners, Jesuits, and the wider Marquette community. He is the ninth pastor of Gesu Parish since its founding in 1893.

New traditions also emerged, including our first St. Nick Breakfast, which brought families together for celebration and fellowship. The parish also revived the beloved St. Joseph Table, honoring the feast of St. Joseph with food, prayer, and community. In addition, a parish pilgrimage to the National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion offered a profound spiritual experience for those who attended.

Together, these events reflect Gesu's commitment to building a welcoming, connected, and spiritually enriched parish community.



**First annual St. Nick breakfast was held in the Lower Church,
hosted by Parish Engagement.**

MINISTRY OF CARE

Our Ministry of Care equips parishioners to take the Holy Eucharist to members of our parish who are either in the hospital or unable to leave their homes. Please email Paul Trzebiatowski to find out more about becoming a Minister of Care or if you know someone who would like a visit.

paul.trzebiatowski@marquette.edu

MARQUETTE CONNECTION

Gesu is an Archdiocesan parish at the heart of Marquette's campus and a spiritual home for thousands of students each year. Throughout the year, we hosted key university liturgies and ceremonies, including the Mass of the Holy Spirit, Family Weekend Mass, and professional milestone celebrations. In partnership with Campus Ministry, we also celebrated the Sunday 6:00 pm Mass, reflecting our shared Jesuit mission and joint commitment to serving Marquette's students, faculty, staff, and families.



BUILDING & GROUNDS

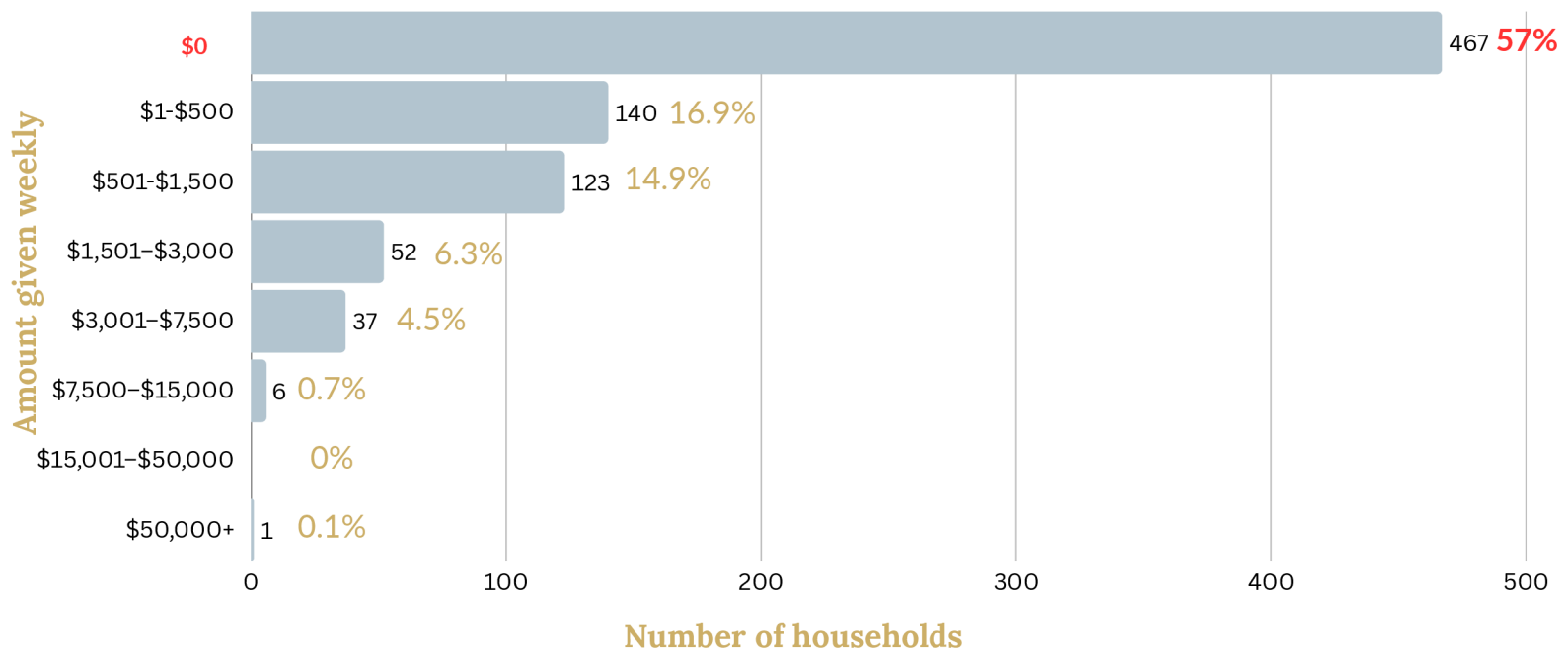
This year, the Buildings and Grounds Commission focused on maintaining and improving Gesu's facilities while supporting major efforts of the Upper Church renovation. Safety upgrades including new fire alarm system and security cameras, alongside significant improvements made to electrical systems, lighting, flooring, and decorative elements throughout the church. The committee also updated preventive maintenance plans, installed new wayfinding signage, and began planning future projects such as Lower Church improvements and HVAC upgrades. Parish cleanup days brought volunteers together to beautify and care for our grounds.

The committee remains dedicated to ensuring that Gesu's buildings are safe, welcoming, and well maintained for all who enter.



OUR 2025 FISCAL YEAR ENDED IN A DEFICIT...

Gesu Parish Stewardship Giving by Household

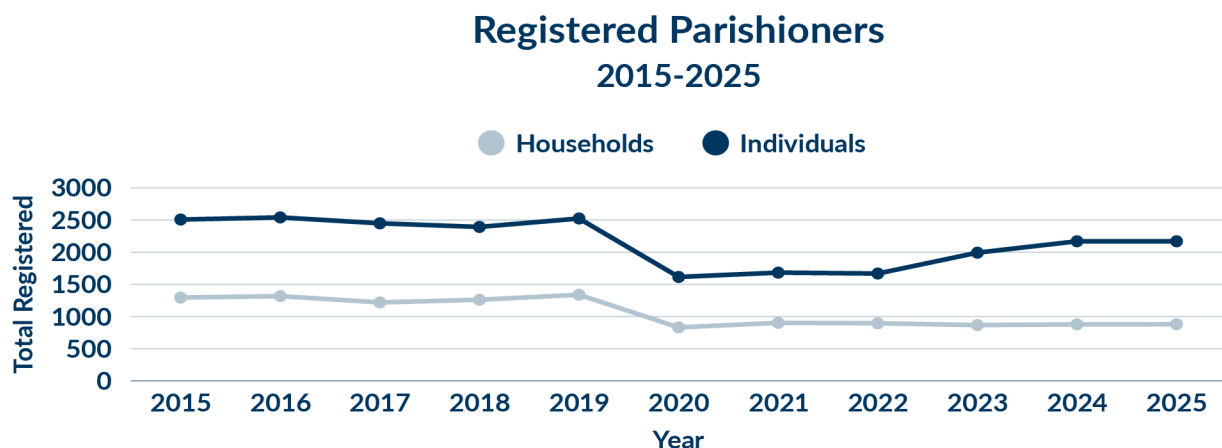


A weekly donation of **\$30** per registered parish household would allow Gesu to operate with a balanced budget and responsibly support the life and mission of our parish.

Currently, **57%** of parish households do not financially contribute to Gesu. As we look to the year ahead, increasing participation in stewardship will be essential to sustaining our ministries, worship, and community life.

We are deeply grateful to the **43%** of parish households whose generosity contributes to Gesu's total stewardship income. Your faithful support sustains our worship, ministries, and parish life.

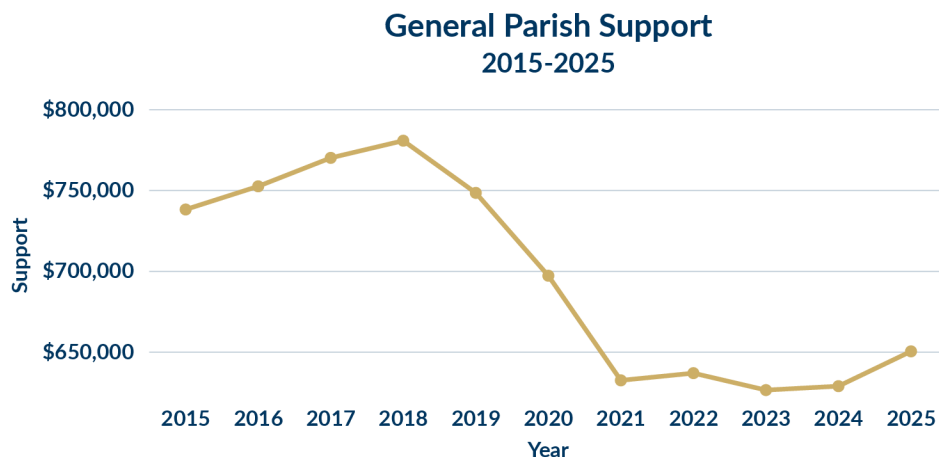
FY26 FINANCIAL OUTLOOK: CURRENT GIVING LEVELS CREATE A BUDGET **SHORTFALL**



GESU'S GAIN & LOSS STATEMENT

Expenses	FY 22-23	FY 23-24	FY 24-25
Salary & Benefits	\$749,000	\$885,000	\$875,000
Supplies & Services	\$112,000	\$138,000	\$139,000
Building & Grounds	\$224,000	\$228,000	\$271,000
Misc. Expenses	\$162,000	\$91,000	\$244,000
Total Expenses	\$1,246,000	\$1,343,000	\$1,530,000
Total Income	\$774,000	\$769,000	\$763,000
Net Gain/Loss	-\$472,000	-\$574,000	-\$767,000

To the right, this graph shows general parish support over the past ten years. Despite the disruption of the COVID pandemic and rising inflation, giving is slowly increasing, reflecting renewed generosity and hope for the future of Gesu.



In July 2023, Gesu Parish launched the Encounter Jesus campaign to address urgent needs of the church building by starting to plan for the restoration of the Upper Church, focusing on stabilizing critical infrastructure, supporting essential ministries, and laying the groundwork for what would become a once-in-a-generation renewal of our sacred space. From July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025, the campaign raised \$738,000 toward our ten million goal. This allowed Gesu to move forward with confidence at a pivotal moment and ensuring that immediate needs were met while thoughtful planning and design work could take place. Since the beginning of the campaign through the end of fiscal year 2025, Gesu has raised a total of \$1,674,773, reflecting the continued faith, generosity, and trust of our community as this vision has taken shape.

As restoration planning progressed, it became clear that the scope of need extended well beyond the initial assessment. In addition to the physical restoration of the church, the parish discerned the need to strengthen ministries, improve accessibility, and ensure the long-term sustainability of parish life.

Gesu expanded its original campaign into Together for Gesu, a ten million capital initiative that unites the parish around restoring the historic church and strengthening the ministries that serve parishioners, students, and the wider community. Building on the success of the Encounter Jesus Campaign, Together for Gesu carries forward its spirit of faith, generosity, and shared responsibility, inviting the entire community to help sustain Gesu for generations to come.

ENCOUNTER JESUS

PRESERVING HERITAGE – BUILDING COMMUNITY

CHURCH OF THE GESU

GOAL:

\$10M

Donate now!

\$10 M

\$9 M

\$8 M

\$7 M

\$6 M

\$5 M

\$4 M

\$3 M

\$2 M

\$1 M

\$0

Total Collected Oct. 2023-June 2025

\$1,674,773

Total Collected FY 2024-2025

\$738,000



**Scan here to
donate now!**



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