

2020

ANNUAL REPORT



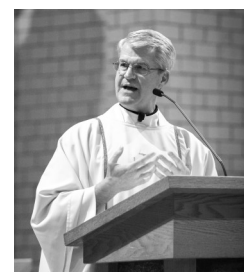
St. Stephen the Martyr
CATHOLIC CHURCH
Encounter, Know, Proclaim



“See, I am doing something new! Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? In the wilderness I make a way, in the wasteland, rivers.” –Isaiah 43:19

Dear Saint Stephen the Martyr Parishioners,

I’ve been praying with the above quote, in which God is speaking to the Israelites. They have found themselves in a very difficult and desolate place in their history, and God is promising, that even during great pain, insecurity, and loss, He is “doing something new.” With this renewed vision today, we see that in the midst of turmoil, uncertainty, and a worldwide pandemic, God is still present and active in our lives. Even in the wilderness, God is making a way for us!



God’s presence, and the love of Jesus Christ continue to be revealed and shared in our parish. In this brief summary, I hope that you are able to see that the mission of our parish to be a “community for all people to encounter Christ, know Christ, and proclaim Christ” is generously supported and extended by your desire to share the resources God has entrusted to you. To all of you who have found that we become richer by giving, I humbly offer you my gratitude and continued love and prayers.

With eyes of faith, may we see that God is “doing something new” in our midst!

In Christ,

Father David Belt

Father Dave Belt, Pastor

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KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Numbers at a Glance:

3,272 households
12,159 parishioners
870 Religious Education students
140 Religious Education catechists
670 School students
2 daily and 6 weekend Masses
140+ Live-streamed Masses
25 Funerals
22 Weddings
94 Baptisms
160 First Holy Communion
171 Confirmations
12 Adults joining the Church
40 Ministries
2,752 Facebook followers

In 2019, our pastoral planning embarked in a process to re-envision the future of the Parish. Through that process a new mission statement and seven dimensions of parish-life were created. Along with a reminder of these seven dimensions, we would like to highlight specific accomplishments from this past fiscal year (July 2019 – June 2020).

Community: *To be welcoming community of faith where all may grow as disciples of Christ who love and serve God and neighbor.*

- Launched Young Adults Ministry & weekly fellowship meetings.
- Implemented new communication tools including Flocknote, Wufoo registration, Vimeo, and social media.
- Celebrated our 30th Anniversary in the Fall of 2019 with an outdoor Mass followed by our Parish Festival.
- Continued expanding involvement opportunities with the Knights of Columbus, Sports Club, men's groups, Martyr Moms and youth groups, etc.

Worship: *Provide a consistent level of excellence in the liturgical experience that enables all to glorify God and grow in holiness.*

- Implemented live-streaming of our Liturgies and added weekly online prayer opportunities (Rosary, Zoom groups, Vespers, Adoration, Stations of the Cross and Seminarian perspectives).
- Expanded Eucharistic Adoration offerings and continued with 24-hour access to the Adoration Chapel.
- Structured Liturgies and Sacraments to ensure a safe environment at weddings, funerals, First Communion, Confirmation, Baptism and Reconciliation.

Formation: *To invite and equip all to become disciples through unified catechetical formation.*

- Held more than a dozen bible studies with our highest ever attendance. With the Covid-19 challenges, many groups continued to meet remotely and/or social-distanced.
- Hosted Welcome Weekend retreats to help parishioners grow in their faith and involvement.

- Engaged more than 870 students in our Religious Education programs and continued with virtual learning into the spring and summer months.
- Our Youth Ministry hosted multiple virtual youth nights in the Spring with more than 70 families participating.

School Highlights:

- Aligned curriculum with Archdiocesan benchmarks and implemented STARS testing.
- Formed an Ad Hoc committee to study enrollment trends and worked with the Finance Council to enhance the operational vitality of the school.
- Continued to work with the School Advisory Board to implement strategies and action steps that align with the school strategic plan that began last fall.
- Incorporated service-related field trips and class projects into curriculum and improved our STEM programming.
- Enhanced communication through consistent principal updates, social media, and the school website.
- Transitioned to remote learning on unexpected notice at the onset of Covid-19.
- Researched, planned and revised school policies and safety protocols to ensure the safety and health of our students and staff.
- Restructured Home and School Parent Association to align with the NCEA (National Certificate or Education Achievement) Pillars. This organization continues to be a primary source of funding and volunteer support for the school.
- Raised more than \$100,000 during Martyr Marathon to fund new instructional materials, teacher grants, technology, and professional development.
- Enhanced staff development plans that included Balanced Literacy, Gradual Release of Responsibility, Guided Instruction, and new this year, Theology of the Body curriculum in our Religious Education classes.
- Added an all-day Transitional-Kindergarten (TK) within our preschool offerings.
- Started Catechist of the Good Shepherd in our preschool and Exploratory Faith Formation classes for TK.

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In today's busy world, we are pulled in so many directions and have many responsibilities and demands that require our time. It is sometimes hard to know what to say "yes" to and where to devote our precious time. But leading a Christian life by example is truly the best form of witness to God's calling for our lives; whether it's acting with kindness and integrity in our daily life, showing compassion to our neighbors, or helping others embody the love of Christ through volunteering and ministry. We can truly be the Light of Christ by actively trying to live out our faith and make a lasting difference in the world around us. - Randy, parishioner

Statement of Revenue / Expenses

	Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2020	Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2019
Revenue:		
Parish:		
General Contributions (1)	\$2,878,965	\$2,684,727
Other Parish Revenue (2)	695,556	1,041,354
Subtotal	3,574,521	3,726,081
School:		
School tuition	1,724,246	1,898,053
Other school revenue	847,356	763,761
Subtotal	2,571,602	2,661,814
Religious Education:	148,458	151,199
Total Revenue	\$6,294,581	\$6,539,094
Expenses:		
Parish:		
Admin Services & supplies	\$979,625	\$1,047,201
Parish personnel	1,007,936	949,068
Other parish expenses	294,230	296,055
Archdiocesan Assessment	284,555	339,554
Capital Outlay	4,445	76,850
Subtotal:	2,570,791	2,708,728
School:		
School personnel	2,723,872	2,840,068
School operating expenses	352,856	479,228
Subtotal school and related activities	3,076,728	3,319,296
Religious Education	203,251	221,471
Total Expenses	\$5,850,770	\$6,249,493
Operating Income	\$443,811	\$289,599
Unrealized gain/loss on Endowments	-11,908	-9,136
Mortgage Payments (3)	-164,067	-237,917
Net Income	\$267,836	\$42,546

Footnotes:

- 1) This past spring the parish received \$778,100 in Cares Act funding to assist payroll and operating costs. This income is reflected on the parish balance sheet.
 2) Fiscal year 2019 included \$254,000 of designated year-end appeal for deferred maintenance
 3) The parish made our last building loan payment this past May. The parish is now operating debt-free.

Budget Highlights

With the help and hard-work from numerous volunteers and the generosity of our Parish family, we were able to supplement operations last fiscal year by more than \$325,000.

- Martyr Mission: \$ 181,133
- Martyr Marathon: \$ 111,209
- Parish Festival: \$ 23,152
- Trivia Night: \$ 9,740

When COVID-19 arrived in March we immediately took steps to reduce operational costs, moved to remote learning in the school and religious education departments, suspended several ministries and compassionately placed many employees on furlough.

With assistance from the recently passed "Cares Act" and the "Pandemic Unemployment Act," the parish was able to leverage State and Federal funds to help cover wages temporarily lost by our dedicated employees.

We paid off the building loan mortgage in May. This is a significant accomplishment and the first time in parish history that we are debt-free.

Despite Covid-19 restrictions our Martyr Mission fundraiser was able to launch a "virtual" auction online raising \$181,000 to assist with daily operating costs.

Due to Covid-19, in the spring of 2020 we experienced a drop in stewardship contributions, lost critical income from our Kidzone childcare program and other parish, School, and Religious Education programs.

More than 60% of our financial support comes through our online giving program. We are grateful for this continued commitment by our families, and for those households who have enrolled in the online giving program.

Near Term Facility Assessment

Stephen's was constructed in 1991 and while our buildings are structurally sound, at almost 30-years-old, many of our mechanical and HVAC systems are operating beyond their useful life-expectancy. According to a recent parish facility assessment near-term, deferred maintenance will be required as follows:

Site:	\$37,700 - \$49,400
Exterior:	\$52,640 - \$58,700
Interior:	\$150,650 - \$179,900
Electrical:	\$113,800 - \$148,000
Mechanical:	\$562,700 - \$671,500
Total:	\$980,490 - \$1,177,500

At this time, the parish has several projects in various stages of completion. In addition, an engineering assessment and request for proposal to replace our 30-year-old chiller will begin this fall with an anticipated spring 2021 completion date.

Parking lot repairs and striping:	\$35,000
Roof repairs:	\$13,000
School elevator life-safety upgrades:	\$62,000
Window replacements:	\$11,000
Miscellaneous projects:	\$50,000
Chiller reserve:	\$250,000
Rectory maintenance:	\$20,000
Total:	\$441,000

Special thanks to our current Finance Council Members:

Ed Woll, Chair; Kali Robertson, Amber Rinehart, Jim Spurgin, Joe Lad, Roger Myer, Tom Maddock and Fr. Dave Belt, Pastor.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS (CONTINUED)

Leadership: *To model Christ-centered leadership by developing disciples, establishing a culture of unity and collaboration, recognizing, and engaging the gifts of all, while providing clear direction.*

- Held a series of parishioner and ministry Leadership training sessions in collaboration with the Archdiocese of Omaha.
- Conducted Thresholds of Discipleship training for parishioners and staff.

Stewardship: *Create a culture that leads to an increased understanding and appreciation of the blessings that the Lord has bestowed and a greater desire to share those blessings.*

- Established a staff stewardship team to study stewardship and discipleship.
- Provided weekly stewardship reports and educational scripture studies.
- Began a program to recognize parish volunteers and welcome new parishioners.
- Started a video series to introduce staff to the parish.
- Promoted numerous volunteer opportunities in our many ministries including sports, Religious Education, buildings and grounds, School and support for weekend liturgies.

Social Justice: *To embrace Catholic teaching to support outreach ministries for all who are in need of love, compassion and the mercy of God.*

- Held over three-dozen youth service events including the Christmas Angel Tree project, preparing meals for the Rainbow House, serving dinner at the Stephen Center, and participating in the annual Brush-Up NE Paint-a-thon. In addition, our parish youth and their families prepared more than 3,000 sack lunches for the St. Vincent de Paul Society!

- Donated more than 2,500 pounds of food from our Food Pantry to Catholic Charities, St. Vincent DePaul, EPS and Rainbow House.
- Received over 150 phone requests for assistance to more than 300 families
- Distributed more than 10,000 bags of homemade cookies and other household goods to Catholic Charities Domestic Violence Services for Women and Children.
- Distributed more than 450 rosaries to Children's Hospital, Veteran's Hospital, Our Lady of Guadalupe and various other missions.
- Conducted more than more than 700 parishioner "check-in calls" during the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Provided counseling to individuals and families.

Evangelization: *Provide opportunities for all to encounter Christ so they are inspired to proclaim Him.*

- Covid-19 provided an opportunity to reach more through our online presence. We were able to leverage technology to extend our evangelization efforts beyond the parish.
- Began planning for New Evangelization and community outreach, which included "Show your SSM Spirit" neighborhood project.
- Continued *Martyr Jump Starter* with a focus on "What it means to be Catholic."
- Held a Parish Mission during Lent – inviting parishioners to clearly see the invitation to Encounter, Know and Proclaim Christ.

"SSM is the community we were looking for. Raising Catholic children can be challenging today, but it is a little bit easier knowing that we have a community of resources surrounding us."

- Brian & Susie, parishioners

"My favorite parts of volunteering are hearing the 'call' from God, following His will and way (which is not always easy with a big family and working) and the peace and satisfaction from seeing events and things come together, and possibly, changing and creating more joyful lives."

- Sara, parishioner

"The biggest gift I've received through volunteering is the friendships I've made - both with other SSM school parents and school/church staff. I love building relationships and learning more about our parish community through volunteerism."

- Amy, parishioner



"St. Stephen the Martyr is a very much like home to us. We did not grow up in Omaha and have felt very welcomed and "at home" here at St. Stephens. Our boys are growing up within this SSM community and we are very thankful for that. It truly does take a village to raise your children and we are very grateful that SSM is a significant part of our village." - Jen, parishioner

