The Catholic Community of
Saint Christopher
Stewardship Report
2012-2013
ST. CHRISTOPHER PARISH
VISION AND MISSION

Vision

We, the Catholic Community of Saint Christopher, are a family of faith following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. Central to our journey is the celebration of sacrament and word. Guiding us on our journey is a lifelong faith formation, a vibrant laity and staff inclusive of all people, and a quality liturgy that encourages the participation of all.

We envision our parish as a growing faith community that will:

extend hospitality and service to meet the needs of those within and outside our traditional boundaries;
encourage leadership and involvement of lay members with ever increasing diversity;
provide and support a dedicated staff;
foster the growth of small faith communities;
promote continuation of lifelong faith formation.

We will strive to be a model Catholic Christian parish in the Speedway community and beyond.

Mission

The mission of Saint Christopher Parish is to participate in Christ's mission of evangelization by witnessing and sharing in the mission of Jesus who calls us to love God with our whole heart and to love neighbor, even as God loves us.

Saint Christopher's participation in this mission is expressed:

through our communal celebration of the sacraments and formation by the Word of God;
through Many ministries, especially through the authenticity of our daily living;
through seeking the challenge of new ministries whenever and wherever greater needs emerge;
through inviting all to share their gifts in reaching out and working lovingly among people;
through witnessing the truth that God is with us as we serve at the parish, deanery and Archdiocesan level.

We attempt to carry out our mission through the five areas of ministry in the parish: Christian Service, Faith Formation, Liturgical, Parish Life, and Resources and Development.
ST. CHRISTOPHER PASTORAL TEAM AND COUNCIL FOR
THE STEWARDSHIP OF PASTORAL ACTIVITIES
2012-2013

PASTORAL TEAM

Mr. Fred Benedetto
Maintenance

Mrs. Mary Blake
Business Manager

Mrs. Janice Burger
Minister to the Sick

Mrs. Beth Crouch
Parish Secretary

Sr. Mary Ann DeFazio, S.P.
Director of Faith Formation

Mrs. Debra Guenin
School Secretary

Mrs. Janice Johnson
Accounting Assistant

Fr. David Lawler
Associate Pastor

Mrs. Nancy Links
Director of Music

Mrs. Holly McClara
Accounting Assistant

Sr. Kathleen Morrissey, O.P.
Pastoral Associate

Mr. Steve Quinnette
Maintenance Manager

Mr. Vincent Schurger
School Principal

Ms. Sharon Spencer
Administrative Assistant

Mr. Tom Steiner
Youth Ministry Director

Mr. William Szolek-Van Valkenburgh
Pastoral Associate

Mrs. Marcia Tenner
Accounting Assistant

Fr. Michael Welch
Pastor

COUNCIL FOR STEWARDSHIP OF PASTORAL ACTIVITIES

Katie Patterson
Chair

Cheryl Bilsland
Vice-Chair

Sandy Whitaker
Secretary

MEMBERS:

Jack Joswick

Jim McMechan,
Finance Chair*

Helen Morlock

Tom Nash

George Pontones

Tim Ramion

Neil Schaefer

Anita Thompson

Bill Szolek-Van Valkenburgh,
Staff Representative*

Father Mike Welch

*Denotes ex-officio members

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The Catholic Community of Saint Christopher Stewardship Report 2012-2013
A Letter from Fr. Mike

June, 2013

Dear Parishioners:

It is a pleasure to write this letter this year. Obviously the biggest highlight of the past year was celebrating the Eucharist once again in our church. Last November, after many setbacks, we were back in our sanctuary. Another highlight was finishing all of the refurbishing during Lent and being able to say that all the work was finished. Finally, the next highlight will be the blessing of the church in September, 2013, with our new Archbishop, Archbishop Tobin.

Thanks to your faithfulness the parish finances did not decrease. We had been warned that being out of the church for such a length of time would result in a drop in registered parishioners and a downturn in the Sunday collections. The former did happen as Sunday Mass attendance has dropped. However, due to your faithfulness, the Sunday collections did better than we had expected. Thank you.

I would like to point out the demographics of the parish. As we look to the future, I think it is important to know and understand how we are changing. The total number of parishioners decreased by 54 to 6,311; the number of households decreased to 2,528. Our largest age groups are in the following ranges: 46-50, 51-55, 71+. This was also reflected in our sacraments as only 39 infants were baptized, down from 47 the previous year. Our funeral liturgies increased from the previous year. Forty-four parishioners passed to the Lord, 20 more than last year. The median age of the parish is now 41. The total number of households in the parish is 2,528. Forty-eight percent of the households have children; 10% of these households with children are single parents. Our demographics seem to mirror what is happening in society.

The Archdiocese, recognizing the movement of parishioners and the declining number of priests, began the Connected in the Spirit Program this past March. As you will read in this report, there is the need to study how best to minister in our parishes with the resources, parishioners, staff, and finances that are available to us. The result of this study throughout the Archdiocese will no doubt challenge us to look at our parish in new ways.

Thank you for sharing the gift of yourself in this community. I invite you in the pages that follow to read of the ministries that we attempt to accomplish at St. Christopher’s. Better yet, invite others to become part of us to share in the work of the Lord. To all of you, again, I wish to say thank you, most sincerely, for your support, prayers, and financial generosity to our community.

In His peace,

Reverend Michael Welch
Pastor
Parish Demographics Charts

Age Group
2012-2013

TOTAL MEMBERS

The Catholic Community of Saint Christopher Stewardship Report 2012-2013
The **COUNCIL FOR THE STEWARDSHIP OF PASTORAL ACTIVITIES** is the central consultative body for the parish. It is comprised of a representative group of ten parishioners, along with two ex-officio members, which include a parish staff representative and the Finance Chairman. The Council serves in an advisory capacity to assist the pastor in discerning parish priorities and overseeing parish goals. The Council is also responsible for reviewing the annual parish budget.

The following parishioners served on the 2012-2013 Parish Council:

- **Chair**: Katie Patterson
- **Vice-Chair**: Cheryl Bilsland
- **Secretary**: Sandy Whitaker

Members:

- Jack Joswick**
- Helen Morlock
- Jim McMechan*
- Tom Nash
- George Pontones

- Tim Ramion**
- Neil Schaefer
- Anita Thompson
- Bill Szolek-Van Valkenburgh*
- Fr. Mike Welch*

*Denotes Ex-Officio members
**Denotes new members discerned in May 2012

The St. Christopher Parish Council meeting agenda is set by the Executive Council, which consists of the Pastor, Staff Representative, Council Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary. With the exceptions of July and December, the Council meets on the third Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. Prayer and faith sharing are part of every meeting.

Pope Benedict XVI proclaimed October 11, 2012, through November 24, 2013, as the time to celebrate the **Year of Faith**. As this coincided with the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council and the 20th anniversary of the promulgation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the Archdiocese of Indianapolis suggested reading a key document issued by the Second Vatican Council titled, *Lumen Gentium* (“Light of the Nations”). Assisted by Sr. Mary Ann DeFazio, SP, Pastoral Associate of Faith Formation, members studied *Lumen Gentium*, and gleaned many fresh perspectives.

During this past year, the Council also provided support for the new Archdiocesan **Connected in the Spirit** initiative, which will be ongoing into 2014. Quantitative and qualitative data gleaned from the **Holy Conversations** strategic planning process conducted by our parish in 2007-08 provided important background information.

In recognition of our parish’s 75th Anniversary in 2012, Council members continued to collaborate with 75th Anniversary Committee Chair, Vicki Murphy. Plans for that celebration were carried over into 2013 due to the extensive renovation of our church resulting from the June 2012 fire. The 75th Anniversary celebration scheduled in early September 2013 will include a gala dinner dance at the Dallara Indy Car Factory in Speedway, a special Mass with Archbishop Tobin, and a new pictorial directory with an updated parish history.

Members of the St. Christopher Council understand that their work is foundationally about relationships. In the coming year, Council members will continue to thoughtfully and prayerfully engage in conversations around who we are as a parish, listening attentively for the voice of the Holy Spirit in seeking to be one with Christ.

**CONNECTED IN THE SPIRIT**

**Connected in the Spirit** is a parish planning initiative for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. All parishes in the four Indianapolis Deaneries are participating in this cycle of the project that began in March 2013.

**Connected in the Spirit** seeks to discover ways parishes can be stronger and more effective by working together in new configurations.

The expectation is that each parish will find neighboring parishes with whom to plan in order to:

1. Share more resources with each other and with parishes in need;
2. Avoid unneeded duplication of services; and
3. Fill in the gaps where service and ministry have not been available.

A Core Team was appointed to lead the parish through the planning and parish evaluation process.
This team will also guide our participation in the planning process with our neighboring West Deanery parishes and in the implementation of Archbishop Tobin's decision regarding restructuring. In addition to Fr. Mike, the Core Team consists of the following parishioners: Council Chair Katie Patterson, Ed Holloran, John Kistner, Dan Krodel, Tim Ramion, and Anne Wilmes.

The first step in the process was to conduct an initial parish assessment to evaluate our strengths and identify our concerns. The evaluation of parish ministries was divided into four categories: Sacramental Life of the Parish; Evangelization, Catechesis and Catholic Schools; Stewardship and Justice; and Effective Administration.

In June 2013, we began working with two neighboring parishes in the West Deanery (Holy Trinity and St. Anthony) to explore how we can work together by jointly addressing our combined strengths and weaknesses to serve the Catholic Community.

**Connected in the Spirit** will continue through 2014 when Archbishop Tobin announces his decisions regarding parish ministry and restructuring in January. Implementation plans will be developed as the next phase in the process.

Archbishop Tobin is calling on us to create a faith-filled plan through this process to be structured in a way in which we as Church can be strong and sustainable into the future.

**CHRISTIAN SERVICE**

**Bus Drivers**

Each weekend, volunteer drivers bring parishioners to the Sunday 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. liturgies. The eleven dedicated volunteers provide many of St. Christopher's elderly parishioners an opportunity to attend Sunday Eucharist.

**St. Vincent dePaul**

The Distribution Center, located at 1201 E. Maryland St., collects and distributes to the needy in the Archdiocese appliances, household items, furniture, bedding, and clothing free of charge. Volunteers donate their time and talents — some an hour or two a week, others almost full-time. Others donate their extra furniture and appliances. If you have an interest in working at the Distribution Center, volunteers are needed for these jobs.

St. Vincent de Paul also operates its **Client Choice Food Pantry** located at 3001 E. 30th Street between Keystone and Sherman. Food is distributed at no charge to 3,000 families weekly. Shoppers can shop on one of four days during the week or on Saturday, but we need help on all days. Our need for volunteers at the Food Pantry is dire.

Reflect for a moment on these facts regarding the local Society of St. Vincent de Paul and St. Christopher Parish. During the past year:

- The Beggars for the Poor Group provided food, toiletry items and clothing to about 1,000 homeless people in Indianapolis.
- During the past 12 months, the SVdp Help Line took 250 calls from families in need living within the St. Christopher Parish boundaries. Since the Society serves those in need regardless of creed, ethnic or social background, health, gender or political opinions, we don’t know if they were members of the parish or not because we didn’t ask. The point is, they were helped in their need. They received furniture, appliances, houseware items, and clothing. We now collect about 100 beds per year from St. Christopher parishioners and deliver them to people and deliver them directly to those who sleep on the floor.
- During the same period, members of St. Christopher Parish volunteered 2,000+ hours of their time for the SVdp Food Pantry, Beggars for the Poor, the Distribution Center or Indianapolis Food Pantry. This includes the hours spent making home visits to verify the need for appliances, furniture or bedding.
To those who have volunteered, our sincerest thanks.
We could use more of you.

- Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets were supplied to 75 families.

**St. Christopher Food Pantry**

The **St. Christopher's Food Pantry** receives a weekly order from **Gleaners Food Bank**. In addition to **Gleaners**, the pantry receives a monthly allotment plus makes numerous visits to pick up food from **Midwest Food Bank** during the month. Volunteers from St. Christopher go to **Midwest Food Bank** one day a month and help with work there. In addition, the parishioners have been wonderful in donating much food to the pantry. Patrons are allowed to use the pantry twice a month. Many patrons are served every month with delicious and nutritious food, some of it fresh from the gardens.

**Funeral Meals**

Dedicated women and men coordinate, prepare, and serve a lunch for members of the deceased parishioner’s family. St. Christopher has over 150 members coordinating, preparing, and serving these meals.

**Ministry to the Sick and Shut-Ins**

Saint Christopher’s **Eucharistic Ministers** visit five nursing/retirement facilities and many homebound individuals. A Communion Service or Mass is held weekly at the Harrison, Westside Garden Plaza, Roland’s Summit Place, and Eagle Valley. A Eucharistic Minister visits the homebound once a month.

Appropriate cards are sent to the ill, shut-ins, and those who have lost a loved one. Follow-up phone calls are made to parishioners recently released from hospitals. During Christmas and Easter small gifts of remembrance are delivered to those in nursing/retirement homes and to homebound parishioners. Our Youth Ministry often contributes craft items.
The Parent-Teacher-Partnership of our parish school delivers an early Christmas dinner to all those we serve in this ministry.

**Giving Tree**

*Giving Tree* is a parish response in providing for the needs of families with children at Christmas. We had 41 families with 87 children, Catholic Charities Christmas Store, along with three Indiana Manor group homes for developmentally disabled adults, who received the benefits of this ministry in 2012. The *Giving Tree* is also a liaison for private donors to aid St. Christopher parishioners in need. We help people within our parish boundaries and Holy Angels Parish. Many parishioners assist with financial donations, gifts of clothing and toys, as well as shopping and wrapping the gifts.

**Shawl Knitting Ministry**

Women gather to create shawls and lap blankets for people in need of prayers or support. Many of these shawls and blankets are given to parishioners as well as relatives, friends and nursing home patients who may also be in need of our prayerful support. Baptismal blankets are also knitted and crocheted and are given at the time of baptism.

In addition to the shawls and blankets, many winter hats were knitted and given out for the adults and/or children who came to our food pantry. As a supportive and prayerful experience, there has been an annual Evening of Prayer and Reflection for all those involved in this ministry — providing an opportunity for all shawl ministers to come together to pray, faith share, and socialize.

**Substance Addiction Ministry (SAM)**

The *SAM* team provides a safe, confidential place for parishioners to call for help and referral for individuals.
or families that are afflicted with addiction. Their ministry is to increase awareness of addiction through education to various ministries and groups of people in the parish and in the community. This group also sponsors evenings of education for the parish and the Westside community.

FAITH FORMATION COMMISSION

RCIA

Our RCIA process began in early September and lasted until the first week of May, running a total of seven months. On Saturday evening, March 30, 2013, at the Easter Vigil, four Catechumens (non-baptized adults) were baptized and one Candidate (baptized Christians of another faith) made a Profession of Faith.

The **Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults** provides the practical and theological background that a person needs to become a member of the Catholic community. The program affords participants the opportunity to ask many of the practical questions they have always asked themselves. The process emphasizes the role of the Sacraments and how they serve as the source and summit of the Church’s life as well as the meaning and the history of the Liturgy. The RCIA process also introduces the members to different prayer styles, the experience of participating in retreats, and a strong awareness of what it is to be a part of the St. Christopher community.

Additionally, this year the RCIC joined the RCIA during the Rites of Acceptance, the Scrutinies and Election. Ultimately two members of the RCIC were baptized at the Easter Vigil as well as seven members received their First Communion.

Explorations in Faith

This is the book discussion group that gathers once a month to talk about a particular book. The women all come with a perspective on the faith and values shared in the month’s selection.

School

St. Christopher School has an enrollment of 217 students in Pre-K through grade 6 which is up by almost 12 students. They are served by 14 teachers and three support staff. The school offers physical education, music, art, library, and computer instruction for students. Aftercare, a program offered after-school hours, is available to assist parents in their busy schedules. We also offer a number of after-school enrichment activities which include pottery, Mad Science, and guitar and piano lessons. St. Christopher will continue with band for grades 5 and 6 directed by Cardinal Ritter’s Mr. Roger Dutcher. This year we will begin Spanish classes as an after-school enrichment program as well.

Students are tested several times a year (DIBELS for Kindergarten and First Grade students; NWEA Map test for students in grades two through six), so that faculty can continue to monitor improvement. RTI, which stands for Response to Intervention, is an initiative being used by all schools to address the needs of students who struggle in a particular area. St. Christopher School students benefit by this program by having frequent, small group interventions.

The State of Indiana uses a growth model that charts student performance in one of four quadrants: lower growth/lower achievement, higher growth/lower achievement, lower growth/higher achievement, and higher growth/higher achievement. St. Christopher School students’ scores placed them in the higher
growth/higher achievement category with more than 90% of the students scoring well above the proficiency level. St. Christopher School continues to maintain its accreditation status. As an Archdiocesan school, the school is Freeway Accredited. Under this program St. Christopher will continue to maintain a 90% or higher ISTEP pass rating.

As part of the School Improvement Plan for Accreditation, the school also has a goal of having all students demonstrate reverence while actively participating at Mass and other church activities. Additionally, students at St. Christopher School will work to improve reading. The focus of this goal will be on reading fluency, vocabulary, phonics, phonemic awareness, and comprehension.

The 2009-2010 St. Christopher School began a four year plan to work with a consulting group called Catholic School Management (CSM). This group consults with St. Christopher School and 14 other Archdiocesan schools chosen for this project. The primary focus of the group is growth and development. During the last three years the staff and school families focused on creating a strategic plan and improving enrollment and school communications. We will continue these efforts along with other improvements.

The Third Source Income Group continues to bring in revenue for the school. All monies raised by this group join the parish subsidy and the parent tuition payment to help keep the cost of Catholic school at an affordable rate. This group, which is primarily operated by parent volunteers, includes Scrip and the Auction. The 2012 Auction, a Celebration on Main, was held at the Dallara facility in Speedway, IN, on November 10.

The Parent Teacher Partnership (PTP) also provides much in terms of other St. Christopher needs. The group helps provide many hours of service in terms of volunteering, tutoring, and fundraising. The fundraising efforts pay the transportation fees for student field trips. These include the Challenger Center, the Symphony, and J.A. Biztown. The PTP also sponsors family and parish-attended events such as Breakfast with Santa, 55 and Over Christmas Luncheon, school pep rallies, and some of the Catholic Schools Week events. St. Christopher School continues to be blessed as a school of strong faith, high academic standards, and strong community.
Jr. High Youth Ministry

This was a year of transition for our Jr. High youth group. We had a new leader come on board. Natalie Predan is excited to be our new Jr. High Youth Minister. To kick-off our year we first went to Monster Mini Golf. Mini golf under black lights is always fun. In October we went to the West Deanery Bonfire at St. Gabriel’s. A lot of our youth raved about the laser tag. The West Deanery retreat hosted at St. Michael’s this year is always something many of our youth enjoy. In our second semester they got a sneak peak of what to expect when they move on to high school
youth ministry when we had a couple of combined meetings. Our year closed with some awesome summer youth ministry programs. These included a trip to an Indians game and an overnight lock-in right here at St. Christopher. Any youth in grades 6 through 8 are welcome to join us for any of our ministry activities even if you can only attend a few meetings a year.

**Confirmation**

Twenty-eight young men and women made up last year’s class. The candidates completed 30 hours of instruction and another 40 hours of community service over the course of the program. This year’s Confirmation class was responsive in class and willing to try new things. Many of the service projects happened in our own parish by serving the 55 and Over dinner and the Gift Sorting project at Christmas time. In March, the candidates and sponsors made a day-long retreat here at St. Christopher. The day was very relaxing and offered a nice opportunity for growth, reflection, fun, and bonding. The group was confirmed on April 10, 2013. Please keep our candidates in your prayers that they will continue this wonderful commitment to their Catholic faith.

**High School Youth Ministry**

Our last year was excellent for the high school youth ministry program. In addition to our regular meetings on Sunday evenings in the PAR, we had several other fun events. In October we went to Eagle Creek Park for a bonfire and hayride with others from the West Deanery. Our group was on the verge of victory in the campfire song competition but was disqualified due to cell phone use, an important lesson for us all. S’mores helped ease the pain of defeat. In January we took a group of 5 youths and 3 adults on the West Deanery Pilgrimage for Life trip. The students that attended were amazed at the size of the crowd and the support that was shown for the Pro-Life cause. The day after the March we did a monument prayer walk. During this time we walked the National Mall and stopped at each of the monuments to talk about a different Pro-Life issue and then pray for its resolution. To kick-off our summer schedule we joined together with our Jr. High group to have a lock-in and attended an Indians game. Any youth in grades 9 through 12 are welcome to join us for any of our ministry activities even if you can only attend a few meetings a year.
Continuing Catholic Development (CCD)

This is the program of religious education for St. Christopher’s children who attend public schools. Enrollment is open to children from three years of age to sixth grade and is held on Sunday mornings through the academic year. Our CCD program has been blessed with an all-volunteer staff of dedicated catechists and assistants, many of whom have been teaching for several years. The catechists use materials and textbooks from Benziger’s Faith First religious education program. Prayer and other activities are included to enhance the lessons.

The Parent Advisory Team (PAT) meets monthly while the students are in class. This group of parents offers advice, input and support to the Pastoral Associate for Religious Formation. They also coordinated and directed a program of CCD for Parents.

First Reconciliation and First Eucharist

These sacraments are ordinarily received by children in the second grade. All preparations are directed by the Pastoral Associate for Faith Formation, assisted by the school teachers and CCD catechists. Since the process is focused on the family, each family receives sets of sacramental preparation books to be used at home. This year the children made small felt figures representing themselves. These figures were then placed on a special banner made to celebrate their reception of the sacrament of Reconciliation. As part of their preparation for Eucharist, the families participated in a workshop during which they decorated a ceramic blessing cup.
Rite of Christian Initiation for Children (RCIC)

RCIC was begun last year to accommodate the needs of families with older children of at least six years of age who have yet to receive the sacraments of Baptism and/or Eucharist. The program is taught by a volunteer catechist aided by a member of our parish youth ministry program. Sessions are held on Sunday mornings during the regular CCD class time. For our inaugural year we had all young men as students and they seemed to enjoy the program very much.

Children’s Baptism

A preparation program is held during the year for families wishing to have toddlers or preschoolers baptized. These meetings are ordinarily held in late fall and spring, and are for families with children from one to five years of age. Registration for Children’s Baptism may be made by contacting the Pastoral Associate for Religious Formation.

Vacation Bible School

During a week in June, 35 children and approximately 30 adult and teen volunteers participated in the Everywhere Fun Fair: Where God’s World Comes Together vacation Bible school. Each day lasted from 9:00 until noon and included learning songs, doing crafts, playing games outside, enjoying a snack, and learning a new Bible story. Since the children had such a great time working in the kitchen last year they again prepared their own snacks. Fr. Mike came on Friday to hear the children sing and told them the story. The wonderful volunteers were treated to a pizza lunch on the last day of VBS.
Kids’ Night Out

Once again we held a special event for children right before Christmas: Kids’ Night Out. Boys and girls came to the cafeteria after the Saturday evening liturgy and were treated to a pizza supper and time for lots of games and crafts. This was a chance for children in both the parish school and CCD programs to get together and make new friends…and it gave the parents an evening to go to dinner or take care of their Christmas shopping. This year the children decorated gingerbread people and enjoyed eating them before their parents arrived to take them home. Kids’ Night Out has quickly become an annual parish tradition!

Adult Faith Corner

This program for adult faith formation ordinarily meets every Sunday morning from 9:30 until 10:20 in the Damascus Room. Videos, books (such as the new catechism) and pamphlets (such as “Catholic Updates”) are used to generate conversation on a variety of topics related to Catholic spirituality and theology. Fr. Dave Lawler also made several informative presentations to the group.

Men’s Saturday Scripture Study

The Men’s Saturday Scripture Study offered lectionary-based prayer and reflection meetings on Saturday mornings. The group meets on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of the month (except for July when they meet on the 2nd and 4th Saturday).

Scripture Study

Scripture Study at St. Christopher met once a week during the majority of the school year in 2012-2013. The Year 3 class concentrated on the Prophets and the Book of Psalms. Participants found that in reading and studying the biblical texts that they received insights that nourished their personal prayer as well as enriched their understandings of Liturgy and Sacramental life. In addition, participants learned interpretive skills (exegesis) as outlined in Dei Verbum and the Catechism of the Catholic Church to assist them in a lifelong study and love of Scripture. And, perhaps, most significantly of all, participants developed connections with the other individuals in the class.

The fall sessions involved 27 individuals, including persons from other parishes as well as persons from various denominations. In the spring, the number was 24 participants. The 2013-2014 sessions will focus on the Wisdom literature of the Old Testament, the catholic letters, Hebrews, and the Gospel of Matthew in the New Testament.

Centering Prayer

Centering Prayer group meets weekly for prayer and spiritual discussion. Centering Prayer is a method of prayer designed to facilitate the development of contemplative prayer. This method enables one to open their heart to the presence and action of God within. Once a month the group participates in Lectio Divina. This is Latin for “spiritual reading” of the Scriptures and is a traditional Christian practice of prayer. In this practice of praying with the Scriptures,
one is called to listen, reflect and pray over God’s Word and its personal meaning for the individual.

**Christ Renews His Parish (“CRHP”)**

This was the third year for these spiritual renewal weekends. This retreat was for women, held in the Fall on Saturday and Sunday on our parish grounds. The weekend was designed to help individuals continue to grow spiritually with their relationship with God as well as others in their faith community. The retreat fosters discipleship, bearing God’s Word, love, and service to others. Team #1, being composed of St. Christopher’s parishioners and our Pastoral Associate, facilitated the woman’s retreat. The 25+ participants then were encouraged to discern to be the next team that will be the acting retreat team for the following autumn weekend at St. Christopher’s.

**Bridges**

**Bridges to contemplative living** provides ongoing spiritual growth for women who had been in spiritual formation while on a CRHP retreat team. Each booklet in the series, composed of eight sessions, offers an introduction into Thomas Merton and contemplative living through prayers, readings from Merton and other spiritual masters, along with reflective questions for small group dialogue. Presently there are two different women’s groups who participate in this continued spiritual formation.

**Lenten Retreat**

These annual **Lenten Retreats**, open to men and women, began in 2012. The Theme Retreat in 2013 was centered on the Scriptures of the Prodigal Son. Facilitated by our Pastoral Associate, Sr. Kathy, the 38 participants not only received input on the Scriptures but also had time for communal prayer, silent meditation, and faith sharing. As the time together was brought to a close, participants left with a vigor, power, and new enthusiasm at the beginning of their Lenten experience.

**Lenten Video Program “Catholicism”**

This program was offered during the evening to parishioners during the season of Lent, 2013. This series had thematic presentations of what Catholics believe and why. Each session, facilitated by different Staff members, included viewing of the DVD followed by discussion. The series was also offered during the day time during August and early September, 2013, for those who may have been unable to attend the evening sessions.

**Marriage Preparation**

The Marriage Preparation program consisted of meeting with the pastoral staff for an interview and selection of a wedding date. After the meeting, the engaged couples meet with one of the volunteer sponsor couples to take a marriage inventory survey and discuss the results. The engaged couples participated in a **Tobit Retreat** sponsored by the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. A total of 12 couples were prepared for marriage at St. Christopher. Of these couples, eight celebrated their wedding liturgies at St. Christopher while another four couple’s weddings were at other churches.

**LITURGICAL COMMISSION**

**Choir and Instrumentalists**

Members of the St. Christopher Music Ministry seek to live the Gospel and carry out the vision of the parish
through involvement in a variety of musical ministries during the Sunday Eucharist and beyond. Many choir members, cantors, keyboard players, and handbell players prepare for Sundays, feasts, and seasons through weekly rehearsals, group prayer, and involvement in local and national associations. The volunteer group strives as volunteers to achieve and maintain a high level of musical quality while continually working to improve their effectiveness when praying with the Sunday assembly.

Environment
Members of the St. Christopher Community experienced in flower arranging, live plant care, space design, sewing, and construction share their talents as they beautify our worship space. They do this by creating the environment for the celebration of Eucharist. Discussion, planning, creating materials, and decorating occur throughout the liturgical year. As a result of the Church fire this year, Mass has been celebrated in the parish gym. The dedicated crew who normally assist for the Church environment, transformed the parish gym into a reflective and prayerful atmosphere for the weekly Eucharist celebrations while the main Church was under reconstruction.

Lectors
St. Christopher currently has 35 lectors in the Ministry of the Word. Twelve lectors read every weekend at the six Masses. It is the lectors’ responsibility to proclaim the Word of God during Sunday and special liturgies. Their task is to draw the assembly into Scripture and to bring out its meaning through interpretation and intonation. In order to accomplish this, lectors spend time in careful preparation, developing a warm and living love for Scripture.

Hospitality
Hospitality/Greeter Ministers welcome parishioners and visitors in Emmaus Way as the community gathers for Sunday Eucharist. They provide a welcoming spirit for parishioners as well as visitors. This spirit is a reflection of the spirit of the St. Christopher community. Though we had some greeters at one of the Masses in the past few years, a revitalization of this ministry enabled more volunteers to participate in this ministry.

Eucharistic Ministers
We increased our Eucharistic Ministers by ten in the spring of 2013, bringing the total number to approximately 125 who serve in this ministry. Several of them take the Eucharist to more than 100 of our parishioners who are homebound or in care facilities.

Opportunities are provided for Eucharistic Ministers to continue their faith development. Those who take Communion to the sick are given Scripture reflection booklets to assist them in sharing Scripture with the shut-ins.

Sacristy Linens
Seven parishioners take responsibility for washing the linens that are used at Sunday and weekday liturgies. Approximately 50 pieces are washed and ironed weekly. Another group of parishioners make the baptismal garments given to infants at their baptisms. There were 42 infants baptized this past year.

Servers
Young people in grades five and older serve Mass on Sundays, weekdays, at funerals and weddings. Because of their efforts our liturgies are more meaningful and prayerful. We have a fine group of servers in this ministry and we appreciate them.

Ushers
A group of men and women of the parish serve as ushers at the weekend and Holy Day liturgies to make parishioners and visitors feel welcome. Ushers provide seating when required, take up the collection, and distribute bulletins after Mass. Ushers also ensure the well being of all in attendance at Mass.

Coffee and Doughnuts
Coffee and Doughnuts was hosted during the months from October to June. These events occurred on the first Sunday of the month after the 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. liturgies. Each group not only provided the refreshments but was also available to talk about their particular ministry and greet potential members.

New Parishoner Registration
Starting in the month of October and running through the month of June, new parishioner registrations were held in the Emmaus Way on the first Sunday of each month. The volunteers of this ministry registered new parishioners after each Mass. Each new registrant received a Directory of Ministry Booklet.
and was given information on how to become involved in the community of St. Christopher.

**Athletics**

Our students participate in organized sports primarily through the Catholic Youth Organization ("CYO") program. This gives our student athletes an opportunity to participate against other parish teams in the Archdiocese. More than 100 St. Christopher students and students enrolled in our CCD program participated in sports programs during the 2012-2013 school year. Our grade school girls played both fall and spring kickball. There were also two girls’ basketball teams during the fall and winter months and three volleyball teams in the late winter months. Our boys in grades four, five and six were organized into four winter basketball teams. Boys in the fifth and sixth grade were also registered in the new Boys’ Volleyball Leagues. Their volleyball skills developed dramatically as the season progressed. The teams became very competitive despite not having any previous league experience.

Co-ed youth opportunities included teams participating in soccer, cross-country, track, and chess. Our grade school boys in Grades 3 through 6 played football and participated in wrestling in association with boys from St. Michael’s parish.

St. Christopher annually hosts a boys’ pre-season basketball tournament which includes teams from several archdiocesan schools. This past year, we also sponsored two boys’ high school basketball teams participating at freshman-sophomore and junior-senior grade levels. The open gym hours in the Parish Activity Center offer children and adults the time for recreation, the ability to develop their skills, and a chance to interact with others. Our facility has been in operation for eleven years.

**The Communicator**

One issue of *The Communicator*, the parish newsletter, was published to help inform the community of various events and offerings, ministry news, and liturgy schedules. It is also the communication vehicle for the Council for the Stewardship of Pastoral Activities. The calendar is to help all parishioners remember significant dates and days of the liturgical year.

**Parish Website**

Please check our Parish Website for upcoming events, ministry schedules and a variety of information. Parishioners can also access the records of their contributions as well as update any changes in address, telephone number, email, etc. To visit our website please go to: [www.saintchristopherparish.org](http://www.saintchristopherparish.org).

**Christopher Tours**

These tours run annually in the Fall and the trips are an all-day adventure. In October of 2012 the day trip was to Louisville and Covington, KY. In Louisville the group enjoyed a scenic 2-hour luncheon cruise on the Ohio River aboard the Spirit of Jefferson. After the cruise they traveled to Covington, KY, for a tour of Saint Mary’s Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption. At the end of the day the group happily returned with wonderful memories of their day-filled excursion.

**55 and Over**

Every third Thursday of the month from September to May, the 55 and Over group meet for lunch in the cafeteria. The cafeteria staff graciously prepares a delicious meal for those who attend. In addition to the meal there is a program and/or a speaker that provides information and/or entertainment for 40-55 women and men following lunch.
Reception Committee

The Reception Committee provides a reception after the Easter Vigil for everyone in attendance to welcome those who are received into the Church. This group of volunteers prepares and serves the food as well as creates a festive atmosphere for this annual celebration. Besides hosting a reception for the Easter Vigil, this committee also prepares for celebrations that mark specific milestones in our parish community.

Social and Support

This group meets every fourth Wednesday of the month during the year for a luncheon at a nearby restaurant. Though this group was originally initiated for supporting women who may be widows, it also includes a social time inclusive of someone who is single or divorced.

RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT

Volunteer Project Committee

The Volunteer Project Committee completed its fifth year of operation. This committee was formed as one of the initiatives identified by the strategic planning process that concluded in 2008. The goal of this initiative is to assist with the improvement of overall parish staffing through volunteer support. Since inception, the committee has assisted 250 parishioners with information about volunteer connections and ministry participation.

Highlights of the Volunteer Project Committee’s accomplishments in the last year include the following:

• Collected from parishioners hobby, talent, and skill information to update member records in our ACS (Automated Church Systems) software to build a searchable database for volunteer engagement.

• Held information tables in Emmaus Way after weekend Masses in November and February to connect with parishioners regarding volunteer opportunities and offer support to ministries actively recruiting volunteer and/or program participants.

• Provided follow up with volunteer interests from the intention cards from the Christ Our Hope/United Catholic Appeal campaign.

• Monitored the volunteer email box and responded to requests for assistance and messages from parishioners wishing to volunteer.

• Contacted newly registered parishioners periodically to invite them to become involved in the life of the parish through ministry participation.

• Conducted periodic meetings of the committee to assess the progress of the initiative and to adjust the goals of the committee’s focus to meet ongoing needs.

Finance

The many services, activities, and programs in our parish depend on a comprehensive relationship between staff and volunteers. As a result of the generosity of our parishioners, our staff is responsible for managing a financial budget in excess of $2.5 million, which includes capital improvements and the overall operational cost of St. Christopher Church. The Finance Commission oversees the coordination of budgets from all our ministries and recommends controls in order that our planned expenses do not exceed our actual income.

During the fiscal year ending June 30, 2013, we experienced an improvement in our overall finances. Sunday Collections increased 2.7% over the previous year thanks to the generosity of our parishioners. In addition, School Income increased 3.2% as a result of increased enrollment. Our Parish and School staff continue to be very conscientious in controlling expenses. As a result, we netted a modest surplus of $19,980.

The snapshot of our total assets reflected an increase of $317,048 as of June 30, 2013. The primary reason for this increase is the increase in the endowments. See “Endowments” section in “Outreach” for an analysis of this increase.

Finally, in the monthly contribution envelopes, we include an envelope for our five endowments. This is the ninth year in which the envelope was included in the monthly envelope packet. Last year $30,064 was donated to the funds that were either equally distributed among the five funds, or, if designated, to the designated fund. This was an increase of 6.5% in contributions over the last fiscal year. Our hope is that parishioners will continue to contribute to the endowments and the endowments will continue to grow and help ensure our financial stability.
Friday Night Bingo
This past year Bingo earned $90,405. As in the past years, these funds, along with the net proceeds of our annual festival, have been set aside for the maintenance and upgrades to our facilities. The Building and Grounds section of this report discusses how part of the funds have been used to expand and upgrade our facilities.

Bingo is a project of the parish. School parents serve in the operation of the kitchen for food service. During the year over 5,000 hours of volunteer time is donated.

St. Christopher Mid-Summer Festival
The Saint Christopher Mid-Summer Festival is one of the oldest festivals in the State of Indiana. Since July 10, 1941, our annual festival has been known as “The Festival that is Tops in Food.” During our three-day event, we served over two tons of hand-battered fish, representing about 15,000 fish sandwiches. At St. Christopher, we take great pride in preparing, right in our kitchen, nearly all the food served. Our made-from-scratch pork barbecue and coney sauce are made from recipes dating back to the 1940’s. In addition to the food that is served, we offer a wide variety of amusement rides, children’s games, bingo and Monte Carlo.

The St. Christopher Mid-Summer Festival is the fourth largest annual event held in Speedway. In order to continue our tradition of excellence, it takes a blending of more than 1,000 parish volunteers. Profits from the annual festival, along with that of Friday Night Bingo, have been used to expand and upgrade our facilities as described in the Building and Grounds section. The Festival netted a total of $36,238. Despite a decrease in gross revenue, the festival’s net revenue was comparable to the previous year.
Building and Grounds
As in the past year, we continued to make improvements to our campus. The total amount spent was $119,735.

- **Church**: We had to replace an air conditioner compressor this summer.
- **Office**: We began a project to add a wireless network and upgraded the technology in the office. This project was completed in the July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014 fiscal year.
- **Grounds**: We rewired the garage to bring it up to code.
- **Meeting House**: This past year, we remodeled the space in the house across the street. This allowed us to better utilize the space for meetings, gatherings and festival.
- **School Improvements**: We began a project to add a wireless network, and upgraded the technology in the computer lab and classrooms. This project was completed in the July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014 fiscal year.
- **Parish Activity Center**: We had to replace the air conditioner compressor this summer.

All of this work is made possible through three sources: the Friday Night Bingo, the Festival, and the Wish List.

Mission Collections
Not included in the above figures, are the outreach collections for the missions. St. Christopher has remained very generous to the work of the universal church. Our Community continues to be exceptional in the amount given to the mission ministry. This past year, St. Christopher contributed a total of $43,259 to eight collections. In addition, the Religious Retirement Collection was $8,074 and the Priestly Vocation Fund netted $4,233.

Outreach Funds
St. Vincent DePaul takes up a collection on the fifth Sunday of each month that has a 5th Sunday. As a result, parishioners donated $10,400 to the 5th Sunday collections. This money is used to assist people in our community who are in need.

In addition, our community supported the food pantry with donations of thousands of pounds of food and money. With the help of donations from Gleaners Food Bank and Midwest Food Bank, our food pantry aided approximately 20,000 people this past year. Approximately $6,540 was contributed and used for the needs of our food pantry. Thanks to the generous donations, we were able to provide for the ever-growing need.

Another fund that has been established is the Sr. Marie Wolf Outreach. Most of the funds have been given through the choir concerts that have taken place.

Endowments
Endowment funds play an important role in providing a stable source of funding to the operating budget. The Archdiocesan endowment spending policy provides that 5% of the 12-month average of the market value of the endowment be allocated to the operating budget, thereby carefully balancing the need for current support with future needs. The objective of the policy is to maintain the real purchasing power of the endowment over time.

The market value of our five endowments at the end of this fiscal year was $1,440,265. As the stock market climbed, the market value of our endowments ended the year higher than the past year. We began our endowments in 1993-1994. The original value of the first three endowments listed below at that time was $58,850. The five funds are: the Saint Christopher Parish Endowment, $630,567; the Saint Christopher Total Catholic Education Endowment, $186,091; the Vincent and Roberta Welch Memorial Endowment for Liturgy, $184,846; the School Scholarship Endowment, $286,759; the Saint Christopher Youth Endowment, $152,002.

The increase in these funds comes from three primary sources: recovery in the investment market, contributions through the endowment envelopes, and an additional parish investment. Over $59,000 endowment earnings was allocated as part of the operating budget. It is our hope that these funds will continue to grow and that the monies generated from them will help us continue to be financially stable in the future. The following chart indicated the progress of these funds over the past 14 years.
# St. Christopher
## Annual Financial Report 2012-2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenues</th>
<th>Actual 2012-2013</th>
<th>Budget 2012-2013</th>
<th>Budget 2013-2014</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunday Collections &amp; Other Donations</td>
<td>$1,377,306</td>
<td>$1,381,500</td>
<td>$1,381,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Tuition, Programs &amp; Fees</td>
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<td>Parish Life</td>
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<td>Endowment Distributions and</td>
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<td>Investment Income</td>
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<td>Festival and Bingo Net Income</td>
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<td>Total Revenues</td>
<td>$2,523,456</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liturgy &amp; Sacraments</td>
<td>$43,606</td>
<td>$49,790</td>
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<td>Faith Formation</td>
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<td>Parish Administration</td>
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<td>Parish Life &amp; Outreach</td>
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<td>Properties and Facilities</td>
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<td>School, Preschool &amp; Aftercare</td>
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<td>Youth &amp; Young Adults</td>
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<td>Capital Improvements</td>
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<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
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<td>$2,546,878</td>
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| Net Surplus (Deficit)                   | $19,980          | $(32,733)        | $3,194           |
Christ our Hope

The Archdiocesan Annual Appeal titled Christ our Hope was again held this past November. The goal the parish was challenged to reach was $128,328, the same as last year. We pledged $145,629. The amount received was $135,069.
Operating Income Revenue  2012-2013

Expenses  2012-2013

Parish Life, $33,277
School Tuition, Programs & Fees, $889,154
Endowment Alloc, $97,666
Festival & Bingo, 126,053
Sunday Collections $1,377,306
Investment in Endowment, $100,000
Liturgy & Sacraments, $43,606
Youth & Young Adults, $49,668
Capital Improvement, $119,735
Faith Formation, $68,915
Parish Administration, $655,546
Parish Life & Outreach, $22,904
Properties and Facilities, $343,040
School, Pre-School, Aftercare, High School Assessments, $1,099,062
We, as the Catholic Community of Saint Christopher, seek and work towards a deeper spiritual life.

We do this through our awareness that we are called as a community and as individuals to be the presence (sacrament) of Jesus Christ.

We continue to deepen our relationship with Jesus Christ and one another through our lifelong celebration of the sacraments, lived out and expressed in service to others.

Through continual reflection on who we are called to be, how we celebrate, and why we serve, we deepen our spiritual life.