



**CHURCH OF
ST. FRANCIS XAVIER
ANNUAL REPORT 2024**



THE CHURCH OF ST. FRANCIS XAVIER

Dear Friends,

Once again, we are happy to present our parish's annual report. The world around us has been buffeted by a topsy-turvy election year with a backdrop of continued and escalating war in the Middle East, Ukraine, Sudan and elsewhere. While we have tried to engage in the events around us, we have also taken prayerful time to renew our spiritual lives by participating in the various offerings of our Eucharistic Revival. Our ministries of support, service and prayer have continued to be a vibrant dimension of our community as you will see as you read through the ministry profiles in this report. We continue to learn how to be a more synodal parish in our way of proceeding. Our recent art installation, *Into Light and Truth: Holy Men and Women of the Americas*, not only beautifies our sacred space but it proclaims our renewed commitment or justice for all people.

Financially, we continue to remain strong thanks to your generosity and the rental income from the former parochial school. Although we report a strong surplus on the operating budget, our reserve funds have diminished due to ongoing repairs in the school. We should note here that the tapestries were totally paid for by generous gifts from parishioners earmarked for the project.

As I begin my sixth year as pastor, I continue to be filled with gratitude for all of the devotion and generosity which the parish community manifests every day in so many ways.

May God continue to bless us as we work for God's kingdom.

Sincerely,

Ken Boller, S.J.

Pastor

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR IN REVIEW

PARISHIONERS

5,546 households are currently registered.
350 parishioners supported the church through collection envelopes.
730 parishioners contributed online through Faith Direct.
631 parishioners contributed through Venmo.
The number of people who donated cash is unknown.



BAPTISMS

97 infants were welcomed into our faith community.

FAMILY FAITH

112 students and their families participated in the Family Faith Program.



RCIA

8 adults were baptized, 5 adults received into full communion and confirmed.



MARRIAGES

35 couples chose Xavier as the community within which to be married.

CARDINAL'S APPEAL

\$83,300 goal and \$66,540 was donated.



PASTORAL COUNCIL

Belinda Conway (Chair)
Alan Ahles (Vice-Chair)
Susan Faggiani (Secretary)
Christina Amendolia
Kristen Beckles
Joel Dabu
Andrea Foley-Murphy
John Lucas
Larry Ruth
Todd Schmidt



A LETTER FROM THE FINANCE COUNCIL

Through the gifts of time, talent and treasure, the parishioners and staff of St. Francis Xavier continue to strive to fulfill the mission of the parish to be a prophetic, welcoming community, and an inclusive witness to the presence of Christ Jesus in our midst. As we report our financial results for Fiscal Year 2024, the Finance Council wishes to express its gratitude to the members of our community whose generosity allows the parish to maintain its vibrant life. Your ongoing financial support is essential to the strength of our parish, and we are grateful to those who continue to show their commitment to the parish in this way.

The Statement of Activities summarizes our major sources of revenue and expenditures for the last three years and our budget for this fiscal year. We finished the fiscal year ending August 31, 2024 (FY 2024) with an operating surplus of \$678,272; however the operating surplus includes a payment from our insurer of \$188,000 for lightning damage which will be expended this year to pay for repairs. More importantly, the operating surplus does not include our capital expenditures which in FY 2024 were almost equal to our operating surplus and therefore substantially offset the surplus on a cash basis.

Over the last several years we have had substantial capital expenses including necessary work on the 17th Street property, renovation of the restrooms in Hurtado Hall, installation of a new elevator, air conditioning repairs and others. These capital expenses were funded by operating surpluses and cash reserves. Capital expenditures not included in the operating results were \$618,184 in FY 2024. Capital expenditures in fiscal years 2023 and 2022 were \$681,200 and \$1,191,961 respectively. A significant portion of our capital expenditures were due to the work on the 17th Street property. The rental income for the 17th Street property continues to be vital to the financial security of the parish as it provides half of the parish's annual income and is a key stream of revenue that helps fund the parish's activities and the maintenance of the school and church buildings. The ongoing financial support of our parish community allowed us to make these capital investments while still maintaining the active life of the Xavier community.

We are budgeting a \$299,481 operating surplus this year. We are hopeful that a portion of the operating surplus can be used to replenish the reserves that have been used to fund the capital expenditures in the last three fiscal years as well as funding additional capital expenditures necessary to maintain the church and school and to enrich the life of the parish. Our goal is to continue to ensure that our parish is in a sound financial position so that it may continue to flourish.

We are grateful to have our community at St. Francis Xavier where we seek hope and respite in these challenging times. We remain dependent on your generous support. Your Sunday offertory, maintenance second collection and Christmas and Easter gifts help ensure we cover our operating and capital expenditures and remain a vibrant community of faith. We ask that you consider increasing your total giving, especially for the Sunday offertory so that the parish of St. Francis Xavier can continue to be a welcoming and engaging home, a community that seeks to reflect God's love for us in our words and actions.

We are committed to transparency and accountability so please reach out to any member of the Finance Council if you have any questions. As always, we are grateful for the generosity of the members of the parish with their time, talent and treasure, and for the opportunity we have to serve the parish.

The Parish Finance Council

Fr. Kenneth Boller, S.J., *Pastor*

Jack Schmitt, *Chair*

Robert Ching

Pjeter Dushku

Elizabeth McCaffrey

Catherine O'Hagan Wolfe

Hugh O'Neill

John Winter

The Parish Finance Team

Jared Savino, CPA, *Xavier Parish Accountant*

James Martinez, *Assistant for Financial Planning*

Roseann Vidal, *Director of Business*

PARISH STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES YEAR ENDING AUGUST 31ST

SUPPORT	BUDGET 2024/25	ACTUAL 2023/24	ACTUAL 2022/23	ACTUAL 2021/22
Regular Collections	\$973,500	\$1,018,016	\$911,023	\$828,790
Holiday Collections	\$155,250	\$153,815	\$149,328	\$150,378
TOTAL COLLECTIONS	\$1,128,750	\$1,171,831	\$1,060,351	\$979,168
17th Street Rental Income	\$1,470,831	\$1,434,956	\$1,399,958	\$1,371,504
Spiritual Direction Program Income	\$18,000	\$580	\$9,770	\$5,000
Donations and Bequests	\$112,000	\$119,399	\$181,890	\$275,340
Investment Income	\$1,000	\$1,221	\$4,324	(\$28,231)
Other Income ^{a,d}	\$179,750	\$370,485	\$290,769	\$191,933
TOTAL SUPPORT	\$2,910,331	\$3,133,472	\$2,947,062	\$2,794,713

EXPENSES	BUDGET 2024/25	ACTUAL 2023/24	ACTUAL 2022/23	ACTUAL 2021/22
Salary & Benefits ^b	\$960,585	\$927,358	\$762,355	\$809,373
Music Ministry	\$266,522	\$262,017	\$229,562	\$255,274
Administrative Support	\$207,970	\$165,560	\$176,134	\$165,945
Religious Education & Youth ministry	\$203,868	\$191,963	\$165,785	\$149,137
Insurance	\$112,000	\$102,660	\$113,121	\$91,530
Repairs and Maintenance	\$101,500	\$56,983	\$62,606	\$65,191
Spiritual Direction Program	\$39,400	\$40,000	\$53,981	\$44,160
Stewardship Program	\$33,000	\$29,592	\$33,442	\$29,633
Utilities	\$42,500	\$36,890	\$29,234	\$44,104
Other Programs	\$146,500	\$145,174	\$205,965	\$142,967
Archdiocesan Assessment ^c	\$253,005	\$253,004	\$387,982	\$251,887
Archdiocesan School Support	\$244,000	\$244,000	\$244,000	\$244,000
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$2,610,850	\$2,455,200	\$2,464,165	\$2,263,203
Revenue Over (Under) Expenses	\$299,481	\$678,272	\$482,897	\$531,510

Certain prior year amounts have been reclassified to conform with the current year presentation.

^aIncludes income from votive shrines & candles, weddings, baptisms, funerals, and religious education.

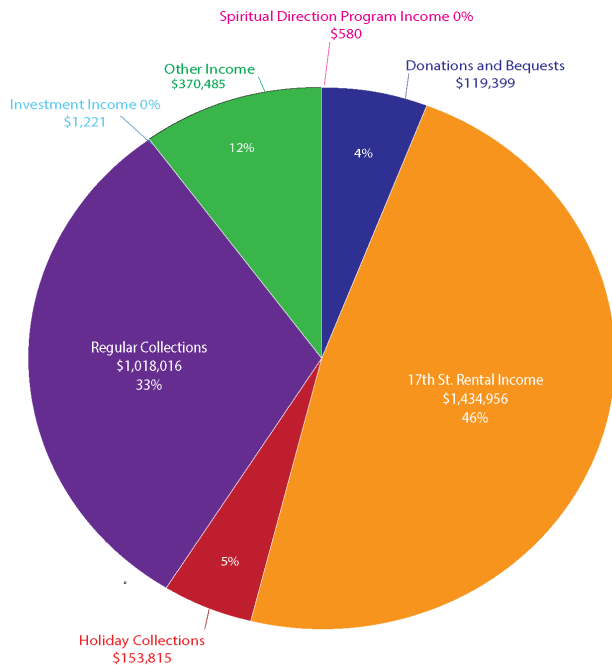
^bIncludes clergy & lay admin salary and benefits not included in Music, Stewardship, Religious Education & Spiritual Direction lines.

^cArchdiocesan Assessment in 21/22, 22/23, 23/24 and 24/25 includes \$42,423 for capital needs and loan repayment of \$131,200 in 22/23.

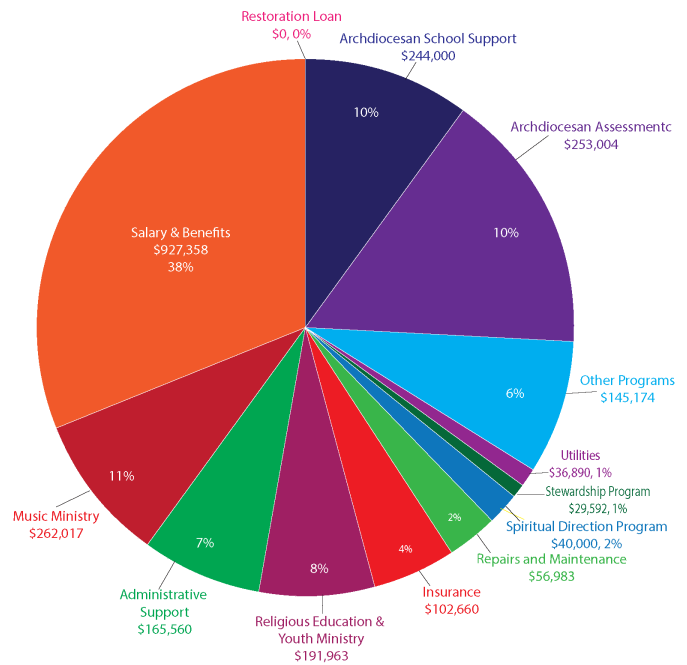
^dIncludes one time Insurance Reimbursement of \$186,881 in 23/24 and Employee Retention Tax Credit of \$136,066 in 22/23.

	2024	2023	2022
Capital Expenditures not included in the Statement of Activities Expenses	\$618,184	\$681,200	\$1,191,961
AS OF AUGUST 31ST THE PARISH HAD CASH BALANCES AND INVESTMENTS AS FOLLOWS:			
Cash and Money Market Funds	\$85,966	\$117,540	\$485,379
Capital Improvement Fund	\$900,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
AS OF AUGUST 31ST THE PARISH HAD THE FOLLOWING RECEIVABLES:			
	\$39,203	\$42,048	\$13,223
AS OF AUGUST 31ST THE PARISH HAD THE FOLLOWING OBLIGATIONS:			
Archdiocese Loan	\$0	\$0	\$131,200
Archdiocese Invoice & Collections	\$8,974	\$10,222	\$45,091
Vendors and Service Providers	\$121,729	\$818	\$246,053
Parish Organizations	\$28,509	\$26,392	\$26,122

Note: Capital Improvement Fund established in 2019 to fund future repairs at 17th St. location and church.



REVENUE = \$3,133,472



EXPENSES = \$2,455,200

THE MUSIC MINISTRY

John Uehlein, Director of Music

I would like to thank all of our music ministers: Members of the **SFX Choir**, members of the **Xavier Players** (singers as well as instrumentalists), members of the **Bell Choir** and members of the **Family Faith Choir** for their extraordinary service this past year. And a special word of thanks to our former Assistant Director of Music: Jacqueline C. Perez. Jackie is continuing as the Family Faith Choir Director, but the position of Assistant Director of Music has been eliminated while at the same time creating an Administrative Assistant position. Above all, **I would like to thank all of you, the people of St. Francis Xavier** for your steadfast commitment to the parish. Whether you join us in person or virtually, we are grateful. It is such an inspiration to hear the sanctuary filled with the one voice of many people — all of you, the Parish of St. Francis Xavier.

As we are ramping up for our first holiday season of the year we have many new members. **The Xavier Choir, Family Faith Choir and The Xavier Players** are all back at their respective liturgies with old and new faces to celebrate. The Bell Choir or **Xavier Campanologists** played at Christmas and Holy Week this past year and are looking forward to doing the same this year. The Campanologists (bell-ringers) presently number 10. We have room for 11. Any takers? For all of these music ministers our primary purpose and role within the Parish is to prayerfully elevate the liturgical ritual with inspiration, poetry and music. This is our Constant Aspiration.

Performing Arts at Xavier, or PAX is once again programming concerts. Throughout the 2022-23 year, we were regaled by five separate piano concerts featuring Brazilian Jazz, Classical, Avant-garde, Romantic and Cole Porter. In December of 2022 we experienced *Go Tell it on the Mountain*, our annual Lessons and Carols with our Homemade Christmas Cookie reception! So far this year we have heard the New York Bulgarian Women's Choir as well as our own pickers and singers of various forms of folk music, both very successful events. We are looking forward to Lessons and Carols, Stephen Hamilton at the organ, a February cabaret and in June The New York Doctor's orchestra featuring two organ concerts.

Our largest single expense covers our cantors and musicians. We are paying a cantor stipend every week and we pride ourselves on the quality and wealth of the cantors we are blessed with in the parish. Expenses also arise for music and materials, whether that is bell gloves or polish or choir binders or music stand lights. As always, we are most grateful for your continuing support.



FAMILY FAITH PROGRAM

Luz Marina Diaz, Director of Religious Education

On Sunday, September 17, 2023, the following catechetical team was commissioned and blessed after the homily of the 9 a.m. Mass.

Director of Religious Education (DRE) and Family Faith Liturgical

Dance Director Luz Marina Diaz

DRE Assistants Adriana Braganza and Michael Judkiewicz

Altar Servers Coordinator Gerry Moss

Family Faith Choir Director Jackie Perez

Parents/Guardians Liason Kerry O'Donnell

Pre-kindergarten/Kindergarten Jolie Guz, Stephanie Almoraza

Assistant: Grace Foley-Murphy

1st grade Claire Igot, Melanie Barnary, Patricia Gordon, and Ezzy Ruis

2nd grade Diana Braganza Assistant: Owen Barbagallo

3rd grade Norma Varela Assistant: Cynthia Teramura

4th grade Jillian Fata and Sophia Ciatto

5th grade Sabrina Perez and Alex Zambito Assistant: Julianna Calabria

6th grade Deirdre Metcalf and Dominic Longo

Confirmation Candidates Ruby Krajic and Francesc Pifarre Esquerda

Special Education Lori Legano

CLOW catechists Annariza Fajardo, Ruby Krajic Assistant: Caroline Gordon

Parents/Guardian Sessions: Ed Poliandro, John Foley-Murphy, Michael Termini, and Luz Marina Diaz.

Jesuit Priests Father Kenneth Boller, SJ (Pastor), Father James Miracky, SJ (Associate Pastor), Father Ricardo da Silva, SJ (Associate Pastor), and Father Thomas Feely, SJ (Superior of Xavier Jesuit Community) were part of the Catechetical team as they facilitate the Family Mass and the Mass class for the different grades.

We had 75 families and the following number of students:

Kindergarten: 3	4th grade: 6
Pre-kindergarten: 10	5th grade: 16
1st grade: 13	6th grade: 15
2nd grade: 17	7th grade: 14
3rd grade: 14	Special education: 3

Fourteen students received the Sacrament of Confirmation on Pentecost Sunday, May 19, 2024, at the 9 a.m. Mass celebrated by The Most Reverend Edmund Whalen, Auxiliary Bishop of New York. This was followed by a confirmation cake celebration in the Mary Chapel.

There were 21 candidates for communion. Nineteen students received their first communion at Xavier on Corpus Christi Sunday, June 2, 2024, during the 9 a.m. Mass. This was followed by a communion cake celebration in the Mary Chapel. Additionally, two candidates received their first holy communion in Italy. All 21 candidates had their first reconciliation on Saturday, March 16, 2024.



On Friday, February 23, 2024, at 6:30 p.m., the Family Faith program and Youth Ministry facilitated the Stations of the Cross titled “Stations of the Cross: Journeying Together with Jesus: Seek, Listen, Reflect, and Pray,” for all the community. We had 293 attendees. On March 29, 2024, a group of confirmation candidates and youth ministry participated in the Pax Christi Stations of the Cross offering a reflection on the meditation on the Resurrection of Jesus and the encounter with Mary Magdalene. (Mt 28: 1-7a)

Parents/Guardians had the opportunity to engage in the following topics:

- Mass is Boring
- All Souls and All Saints
- Musica Divina
- A Thanksgiving Experience
- Magnificat
- Joy (third Sunday of Advent)
- The Holy Family: Jesus, Mary, and Joseph
- Retelling the Magi story
- We Refuse to Be Enemies: How Muslims and Jews Can Make Peace: One Friendship at a Time with Sabehaa Rehman and Walter Ruby
- Holy Week experience with family, how to explain death and resurrection to children
- Stations of the Cross
- Ignatian contemplation with the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple narrative
- Prayer in the Cosmos with sisters Kathleen Deignan and Libby Osgood
- Paula Sarro from Mercy Center on their work with migrant families
- Patrick and Joseph’s celebration
- Stations of the Resurrection Centering Prayer
- Mario Rusell on immigration
- Marybeth Dono on parenting children’s diverse gender identities

A novel aspect of the Family Faith program 2023-2024 was that Confirmation candidates and Youth Ministry members sat and served together for Mass on the first Sunday of each month. Afterward, they had breakfast and activities in the Mary Chapel. Among other activities, the Youth Ministry and Confirmation Class visited the Catacombs at Old St. Patrick’s Church downtown. It is Manhattan’s only Catholic catacomb and cemetery. This provided a smooth transition for confirmation students to join the youth ministry once they completed their sacrament of initiation.

Each Family Faith grade serves at the Welcome Table at least twice a year. A new initiative for the Family Faith 2023-2024 program involved younger students, led by an art team, creating centerpieces for the tables at Hurtado Hall. Meanwhile, Confirmation candidates and Youth Ministry members sorted donated clothes for the Clothing Room.

Additionally, the Family Faith program and Youth Ministry collected over 100 Christmas presents for migrant children. A dedicated group of Confirmation and Youth Ministry students, along with their families, wrapped the gifts and delivered them to the Africana Community Center on a Saturday morning. The center, located at 685 Lenox Ave assists the many African and Haitian individuals arriving in the area. The volunteers spent one to two hours at the center, distributing gifts and making connections with the community.

Pablo Jimenez moved to California on March 18, 2024, to work at Camaldolese Hermits of America / New Camaldoli Hermitage in San Luis Obispo, CA. He served as a 2nd-grade catechist for several years and was the Youth Ministry Coordinator for the last three years. We organized a farewell gathering at Hurtado Hall on Saturday, March 16, at 6:30 pm.

Our Family Faith Choir has continued to participate in our Sunday 9 a.m. liturgies under the direction of Jacqueline Perez. We take great pride in the Family Faith Choir, which was established in 2011. It all began when Nicolas Dosman, who aspired to be a catechist, submitted his CV to Director of Religious Education Luz Marina Diaz. Upon discovering that he was studying for a PhD in music, she invited him to create an intergenerational choir consisting of members from the Family Faith community. Thus, the Family Faith Choir was born.

FROM RCIA TO OCIA: EXPLAINING THE SHIFT

Luz Marina Diaz

The process by which adults formally join the Catholic Church has traditionally been known as the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). However, in November 2021, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops approved a new name for the process: the Order of Christian Initiation for Adults (OCIA).

This name change was motivated by several factors. First, the term “Order” better reflects the idea that the Catholic journey is ongoing. It emphasizes that each catechumen or candidate is making a lifelong commitment to conversion to Christianity in the Catholic way. Second, the new name more accurately represents the fact that multiple rites are part of the larger process of becoming Catholic; it is not just one single rite. Lastly, the term “Order” is reminiscent of the original Latin title for this process, “Ordo Initiationis Christianae Adultorum.”

Important Dates

- September 17, 2023: Start date
- November 19, 2023: Rite of Welcoming and Acceptance at the 11:30 a.m. Mass
- February 18, 2024: Rite of Sending at 11:30 a.m. Mass
Rite of Election at St. Patrick Cathedral
- February 25, 2024: Rite to Continuing Conversion at 11:30 a.m. Mass
- March 3, 2024: First Scrutiny
- March 10, 2024: Second Scrutiny
- March 17, 2024: Third Scrutiny
- March 24, 2024 (Palm Sunday): Mini-Retreat
- March 29, 2024: Stations of the Cross at Noon in the Main Church facilitated by RCIA/OCIA in conjunction with the Music Ministry
- March 30, 2024: Reception of the Sacraments during the Easter Vigil
- May 19, 2024 (Pentecost): Gathering ends for the RCIA 2023-2024

Received the Sacraments of Initiation



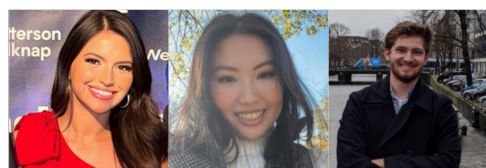
Jack Gooderl Caleb Homewood Jenny Kinder Gayoung Lee Tada Matsutani Dorna Mu Bing Xu Harvard Zhang

Entered into Full Communion with the Catholic Church



Brad Blevins Leena Chen

Catholics who completed the Sacraments of Initiation



Miranda T. Hernandez Helena Gabrielle Ong Tristin Rice

INFANT BAPTISMS

Luz Marina Diaz

On the first Saturday of each month, from 10.30 a.m. to 11.45 a.m., I offer a class about the sacrament of baptism to parents and godparents of children who are soon to be baptized at the Church of St. Francis Xavier and in other parishes. The course includes a conversation about the baptism of Jesus; the meaning of baptism in Jesus' times and the meaning of baptism nowadays; the baptismal rite; the meaning of the different symbols used in baptism (water, oils, candle, white garment); and the responsibility of parents and godparents to raise children in the Christian faith.

At the beginning of the class, after the welcome and initial presentations, we pray with the narrative of Jesus' baptism according to Matthew 3:13–17:

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?' But Jesus answered him, 'Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfil all righteousness'. Then he consented. And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased'.

Participants read the passage aloud and again silently. This is so that we can detect a word, phrase, image, symbol or emotion that stands out for each of us. Then we share insights, comments, and feelings from meditating on this scripture. Some participants are touched by the image of the Holy Spirit as a dove descending from heaven in association with a sense of peace and harmony. Others talk about the heavens opening as an invitation to new beginnings, to starting anew. Some others talk about the relationship between Jesus and John the Baptist and Jesus' baptism as an invitation to be welcomed into a faith community at the beginning of a spiritual journey. Others focus on the last verse: *'This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.'* Finally, we talk about each of us as God's beloved sons and daughters. *'This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased'* has become a hallmark of the baptism classes and an inspiration for daily life.

Baptism is a communal sacrament that we celebrate each month. Two baptism services are offered (except during Lent) for up to six children per service. These services are held on the third Saturday of each month from January to November and on the second Saturday in December.

From 2023 to 2024, 97 children were baptized, and approximately 388 adults attended baptism classes, not including parents and godparents from other parishes.

LITURGICAL MINISTRY

Luz Marina Diaz

The Liturgical Ministry is a vibrant group of dedicated individuals, including Mass Coordinators, Lectors, Altar Servers, Eucharistic Ministers, Hospitality Ministers, Incense Ministers, and Liturgical Dancers. Gerry Moss serves as Xavier's sacristan, playing a crucial role in our worship experience by meticulously arranging and preparing all vestments and linens for use. He takes great care in safeguarding the altar vessels, ensuring they remain in excellent condition. Additionally, Gerry is responsible for maintaining an adequate supply of essential items, such as altar wine and altar bread, including low-gluten hosts. Moreover, Gerry leads the purificator team, a dedicated group that works tirelessly to keep our linens well-stocked and in pristine condition.

As of the end of August 2024, we have 26 Mass Coordinators, 105 lectors, 90 Eucharistic ministers, 29 Hospitality Ministers, and three Incense Ministers. The number of hospitality ministers must increase as we urgently need more volunteers to fill this important role. We have been struggling with the insufficient number of hospitality ministers, particularly affecting the Saturday 5 p.m. Mass, which requires more liturgical ministers in every role.

Why is the Hospitality Ministry important? Hospitality ministry can go a long way in making people feel seen, heard, and valued. Whether it's a warm smile and a welcome word for someone walking into the church alone, opening the door to a person, having a brief chat after the service, or answering a question from newcomers, these small actions can make a world of difference to someone who is searching for a place to belong. The hospitality ministry is a ministry of the heart. It focuses on being intentional in our connections with others. It's not just about making a good first impression; it's about bridging the gap for new visitors and inviting them into the beauty of the Xavier community. It is about hosting the presence of God while hosting people who are made in God's image. Recognizing the impact of hospitality ministers within our faith community, last year, Susan Fagianni, a member of the Pastoral Council, took the initiative to order hospitality badge names designed by Alan Ahles, also a member of the Pastoral Council.

The Liturgical Ministry has coaches who assist parishioners interested in serving as liturgical ministers. They are:

- Stephanie Samoy (Lectors)
- Gerry Moss and Bill Koss (Eucharistic Ministers and Mass Coordinators)
- Ron Oberdick (Hospitality Ministers)
- Luz Marina Diaz (Incense Ministers and coordinator of liturgical dance)

Altar servers are children who have received the sacrament of the Eucharist and wish to serve during the Sunday liturgy at 9 a.m. Gerry Moss is responsible for training and coordinating the Altar Servers. Danila Mendoza manages the weekly Mass schedule, while Luz Marina Diaz oversees the weekend Masses schedule. Additionally, Gerry Moss and Luz Marina Diaz organize the schedule for the High Holiday Liturgies.



LITURGICAL DANCERS

Luz Marina Diaz

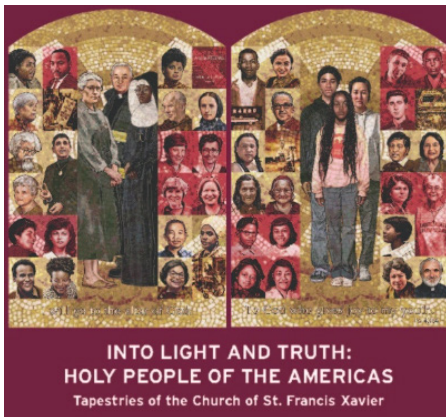
The Xavier Liturgical Dancers had an exciting and busy year during the 2023-2024 season! They performed a wonderful array of liturgical dances. Let's take a moment to highlight some of the special performances that truly captured the spirit of their work this year!

"Every Time I Feel the Spirit," choreographed by Luz Marina Díaz in collaboration with Ramon Thielen (former principal of Dance Theater of Harlem) and Courtni Wilson (former dancer of Dance Theater of Harlem), was performed on June 23, 2024, at the 11:30 a.m. Mass to celebrate Juneteenth.

"This I Believe" by Hillsong and "Bread of Life" by Toolan choreographed by Luz Marina Diaz and performed by Cassandra Agredo, Theresa Herron, Janeen Stevens, Elizabeth Mills, and Luz Marina Díaz at Epiphany Church for a Liturgical Dance Prayer Service on April 18, 2024.

The following pieces were included in the Lessons and Carols program for 2023: "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear," "O Jesulein Süß," "Go Tell It on the Mountain," "Still, Still, Still," and "I Wonder as I Wander." The choreography for these performances was created by Luz Marina Díaz, with the choreography for "I Wonder as I Wander" adapted from Julieta Valero's original work. The Xavier Liturgical Dancers performing included Makiko Sato, Cassandra Agredo, Theresa Herron, Janeen Stevens, Katheleen Cagnina, Elizabeth Mills, Luz Marina Diaz, and Bianca Miller. Additionally, the Isadora Duncan Company was invited to perform the Ave Maria during the Christmas Eve Mass on December 24, 2023, at 4 p.m.





MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS

Our parish is blessed by the ongoing work of more than 20 different ministry groups. Here are some highlights from just a few of these ministries.

ABILITY XAVIER published a four-part series of essays in the bulletin to celebrate Disability Pride Month: history of Disability Pride Month, the importance of language choices when discussing disability, presumed competency, and final reflections. **All of the essays from the July bulletins can be found at sfxavier.org/bulletins.** We also serve as a resource to the parish and other ministries in making our parish more welcoming to people with disabilities.



ART COMMITTEE In the wake of George Floyd’s murder in 2020, the Church of St. Francis Xavier joined faith communities across the country in critically examining ways their community could re-commit to dismantling systemic racism in our world. Continuing their commitment to racial justice and inclusion, which dates to at least 1960, the parish adopted several measures, one of which was to expand the church’s iconography to reflect the diversity of the Parish, by including international and American Saints and Holy People. The second phase of this initiative was the commissioning of two tapestries to hang in the entrance to the church. They are entitled, *Into Light and Truth: Holy People of the Americas*. Renowned artist John Nava, who created tapestries for Cathedral of Our Lady of Angels in Los Angeles, accepted the commission. A number of United States civil rights movement heroes and martyrs are honored in the tapestries, including Harry Belafonte, Martin Luther King, Jr., Fannie Lou Hammer, murdered civil rights workers James Chaney, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner, as well as Birmingham church bombing victims Addie Mae Collins, Denise McNair, Carole Robertson, and Cynthia Wesley. Ernestine Eckstein, Audre Lorde, Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, Rosa Parks, Ida B. Wells, Mother Mary Theodore Williams, and Mary Lou Williams are also represented. “The individuals depicted in the tapestries worked for and gave their lives to advance biblical justice, human rights, and equality,” says Fr. Ken Boller SJ, Pastor of Church of St. Francis Xavier. “John Nava’s vision to honor them by these tapestries is consistent with his lifelong dedication to biblical justice. We are grateful to him for enabling the Church of St. Francis Xavier community to realize our goal of installing iconography that represents the diversity of the people of God.”



BREAKING OPEN THE WORD Starting in March 2020 as a way to pray, reflect and connect remotely, parishioners from all over the country break open the Sunday readings using Lecio Divina and the Spiritual Conversations model. Connecting for 1 hour on a Saturday over Zoom has been a gift to our community. Each week 8-20 people gather, and then break into small groups to share what spoke to them in the readings, reflect on each other's sharing and discuss key take aways. All are welcome to drop in when they are available.

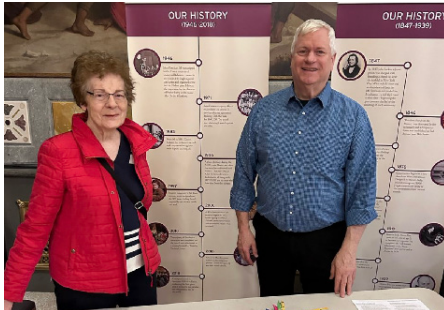


BRUNCH MINISTRY Following informal discussions at a Ministry Retreat a few years ago, and additional thoughts shared at Synod and Eucharistic Revival meetings, the concept of creating and expanding opportunities for fellowship and connection at SFX was born. Getting to know and be known as a member of the community was identified as a way for parishioners to journey together and build the connective tissue necessary to be the body of Christ. So in the spring of 2023, Brunch Ministry kicked off! Brunch Ministry is all about connections, collaboration, aligning values, and growing collegiality. The work of this ministry aims to stir a broader base of parishioners to see SFX as a place to connect as a community, reaching folks who are not already participating in a formal ministry but are looking to do so. Brunch Ministry has set the table for building a community that embraces inclusion and diversity, nourishing empathy through witnessing the strengths, abilities, gifts and talents of others, and developing an appetite for being together communally, outside of liturgy. Since its inception, the Brunch Ministry Team has hosted 3 separate gatherings of parishioners, serving meals, sipping mimosas, and conducting facilitated conversations for nearly 250 parishioners, including children. Participants from many ministries, including Xavier Outings, Family Faith, Young Adults, Gay Catholics, Catholic Lesbians, and the Environmental Ministry have taken the time to invest in deepening personal connections, the way that friend groups do every Sunday afternoon across the city, but here inside our community space. Brunch Ministry strives to create a financially sustainable model that can be replicated at other parishes, establishing a more dynamic Catholic faith community. People are asked to make whatever contributions possible to the expense of brunch but are always welcomed regardless of their ability to contribute monetarily.



THE EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT GROUP (ESG) For 21 years the Employment Support Group (ESG) has served those who come forward by offering advice, skills training, and networking opportunities to help with gaining employment, improving their work situation, and seeking opportunities to explore new career paths. We meet people where they stand and through our sharing, caring and mentoring, we serve their needs.





Our mission . . . that everyone comes away with an insight, is able to share community fellowship and enjoy a sharing session with others who are looking for support. ESG is reaching out to our Community, as we invite new leaders to mentor our wonderful ministry into 2025 and beyond. Please feel free to contact us by email at krcoff5th@netzero.com with comments, questions or ideas.



THE ENVIRONMENT MINISTRY We promoted the Season of Creation 2023 with the theme “Let Justice and Peace Flow.” The Sacred Space team focused on plastic. Our biggest project was a parish in-person and online study sessions of the themes in Laudato Si’. We facilitated the praying of the Laudato Si’ prayer (from the encyclical) at the end of all Masses, organized a park clean-up with Family Faith, and spoke with the RCIA group about our ministry. We also participated in Metro NY Catholic Climate Movement’s (MNYCCM) Mass for the Season of Creation at St. Ignatius Loyola. We have written the weekly Creation Care Column for the bulletin for 52 weeks. Our emphasis this year was the Reduce Plastic Campaign. We showed the film “Microplastic Madness” in person and for a week online; visited the SIMS Materials Recovery Facility in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, where NYCity’s recyclables are sorted (200,000 tons a year); conducted a survey of parishioners on their use of plastic; made postcards for parishioners to sign and send to legislators (approx. 450); celebrated Earth Day by collecting signatures on a petition to legislative heads; and organized a team to travel to Albany two times with Beyond Plastic to lobby for the two bills that would reduce plastic and we distributed a Memo of Support from the parish to legislators. We organized a Christmas sale of products that would help people reduce use of plastic and crafts made mostly by cooperatives and marketed as Fair Trade items; and produced the Lenten Carbon Fast Calendar for the 5th year in English and Spanish and distributed it to other parishes and posted it with Catholic Climate Covenant’s list of resources. We showed the film “Common Ground” on regenerative agriculture; co-sponsored with the LSAP a presentation on sustainable investing; participated in a MNYCCM prayer vigil outside of Sen. Schumer and Sen. Gillibrand’s office to dialogue with them about the Earth Bill; and we hosted MNYCCM’s encounter with Sr. Laura, a Franciscan nun from the Amazon region in Brazil who Vice President of CEAMA, Ecclesial Conference of the Amazon.



LAUDATO SI' ACTION PLATFORM COMMITTEE In just one year, progress has been made on 22 of the 30 priorities identified in the Laudato Si’ Action Plan for the Church of St. Francis Xavier, across several categories identified by the Vatican. On Pentecost 2023, the Church of St. Francis Xavier adopted a three-year Laudato’ Si

Action Plan, based on more than 12 months of research and input from parishioners, leaders of ministries and outreach groups, religious and staff. The plan, “*Greening our Parish, Enriching Our Lives*” was published and distributed. This climate action plan is led by parishioners, including a member of the Pastoral Council and members of the Environment Ministry, along with staff representing the parish, Xavier Mission and Xavier High School.

HEALING PRAYER MINISTRY Now in its fourth year, the Healing Prayer Ministry continues to offer prayer with supplicants for spiritual, emotional, or physical healing. This happens on selected Sundays September-June usually near the Mary Altar in the main sanctuary, after the 11:30 a.m. Mass and newly this year after the 5 p.m. Sunday Mass. Two trained Prayers pray with individuals, couples, or families. Training uses a guidebook, *The Practice of Healing Prayer: A How-To Guide for Catholics* via Zoom sessions, then in-person practice among the team and observation on Sundays. We continue to seek and welcome new Prayers! Ideally we would like to offer the Healing Prayer ministry after all the weekend Masses, but we need more Prayers! For more info or to volunteer, contact Philip Waldrop, Coordinator, at hpm@sfxavier.org or via text or voice at 973-214-6589.

IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY IN EVERYDAY LIFE (ISEL) has focused on Spiritual Ministry at Xavier—giving spiritual direction, directing 19th annotation, supervising directors, directing lent and advent retreats. Our services have crossed parish and geographic boundaries depending on where the Holy Spirit leads us and who God calls us to serve, working in person and virtually. We have about 35 active spiritual directors. Our directors are from many states and diverse backgrounds. In 2024, we had 19 applications for spiritual direction and 5 for spiritual exercises. We had 50 registrations for the last Advent retreat and 73 total enrollments for the 2024 Lent retreat. We look forward to collaborating with other groups within Xavier for spiritual services and opening ourselves to all people who seek spiritual directions and exercises. We also work with OIS (Office of Ignatius Spirituality) and have a page on their website.

LAY SPIRITUALITY (LAY SPIRITS) is a parishioner-inspired program designed to help and support the spiritual growth of laity members who seek a deeper connection with God and a more integrated spiritual life. It is a nine-month program with guest speakers teaching different forms of prayer, including Centering, Contemplation, Imagination, Lectio Divina, the Examen, and other forms of prayer, such as Zen meditation and tai chi. It has been a program at Xavier for over 40 years. Planning began in 2024 to launch a new nine-month cohort in early 2025.





RACIAL JUSTICE GROUP (RJG) engages in prayer, study, and action in pursuit of racial justice. We also welcome collaboration with others (ministries, individuals) to promote living the Parish Pledge for Racial Justice. Over the past year to carry out this mission, RJG encouraged participation from within and beyond the Parish, whether remotely or in person, in the following activities and events: **Prayer:** RJG took responsibility jointly with Ability Xavier for one of the Lenten Stations of the Cross to create reflections that highlighted the need for racial and disability justice. We also collaborated with various ministries, e.g., Music, Rosary and Sacred Space, on Xavier's third Juneteenth liturgy that included music and dance in the African-American tradition and a litany that celebrated many of the holy women and men and seekers of justice depicted in the Parish icons and tapestries. **Study:** RJG held in-person and Zoom sessions that began with Fr. Jim Miracky's video-recorded interview of Xavier's first Summer Read author CNN's John Blake and was followed by small group spiritual conversations of his memoir *More Than I Imagined: What a Black Man Discovered About the White Mother He Never Knew*. We then read and discussed over eight months Clint Smith's award-winning *How the Word Is Passed: A Reckoning with the History of Slavery Across America*. Taking advantage of the release of Ava DuVernay's *Origin*, a film inspired by Isabel Wilkerson's *Caste*, we asked participants to see the movie and then to discuss it on a Zoom session. Finally, we selected and promoted James McBride's *The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store* as Xavier's second Summer Read and also chose lifelong peace and justice advocate Jim Wallis' *The False White Gospel: Rejecting Christian Nationalism, Reclaiming True Faith, and Refounding Democracy* for an election season read. **Action:** We completed a slide deck for a presentation on Unconscious Bias (UB) and Race before successfully piloting it twice as a prelude to doing presentations across the Parish. We also made a group visit to the African Burial Ground National Monument and contemplate leading future group visits from the Parish to heighten awareness of the painful history of slavery in New York City.

SACRED SPACE COMMITTEE continued to work with other Xavier ministries and members of the Xavier community to manifest the liturgy at Xavier through visual installations. This year we started by gathering folks to install a Dia de Los Muertos altar, a major, if a little sombre, Advent/Christmas installation. Our Lent/Easter/Pentecost installation doubled as a shoe drive for Xavier Mission. Our smaller installations included Juneteenth, Pride, and the Season of Creation. Sacred Space Committee was also very involved in the New Art Committee that brought the installation of the John Nava tapestries to Xavier.

THE WOMEN WHO STAYED welcomed Women's Ordination Conference on March 18, 2024, and shared WOC's "Female Images of God in the Bible" and Joan Chittister's "Women Will Call the Church to Truth." We hosted a conversation/book release for Jesus Found in Translation by Lizzie Berne DeGear on January 21. We advocated for female homilists during the five Sundays of Lent, Good Friday, and 16th Sunday of Ordinary Time (Diane Lisanti; Eileen Markey; Sheila Brosnan, SC; Mary Hurson; Roxanne De La Torre; Jackie Perez; Kara Koirtyohann). In honor of Mary Magdalene, women served as hospitality ministers, lectors, homilist, Eucharistic and cup ministers, musical director, cantor, and ASL signer at the 11:30 a.m. Mass on July 21, and then offered "Ella Camina: A Contemplative Walk with the Apostle to the Apostles." We cosponsored "Stations of the Cross: Black Catholic Women Give Witness" with Catholic Lesbians and Xavier Interfaith Ministry. We held four spiritual conversations and changed our Gmail address to TheWomenWhoStayed@sfxavier.org. We lost five friends: Sister Theresa Kane, RSM; Sister Lily Butler, SC; Sister Mary Lou Steele, SC; Don Brophy; Gene Sullivan.

XAVIER ADULT GROUP has been one of the ministries at Xavier for more than 20 years. This ministry has been called "The Fun Group" because each month we visit historical sites, or museums, attend concerts, and invite guest speakers to discuss timely and informative subjects. Most of our members are retired or work part-time. In September a consultant from the NYC Department for the Aging joined us to talk about health insurance. In January Joyce Gold entertained and informed us with her illustrated talk titled "Central Park-The Big Backyard of the City". Our first guided tour was to the Skyscraper Museum, a museum devoted to the study of high-rise buildings, past, present, and future. In November we had a fascinating backstage tour of the Metropolitan Opera and later in the year we did a behind the scenes tour of Radio City Music Hall. Our annual Christmas Lunch was at Le Zie restaurant and was a perfect way to start the holiday season. Each year we have a festive St. Patrick's Day Party and Auction. Music and Art is what we called the day we spent at a concert at Alice Tully Hall followed by a guided tour at the American Folk Art Museum. In May we had a private tour of Sotheby's Auction House. In June an art historian guided us through the Harlem Renaissance exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Join us, register at xaversharingandlearninggroup@gmail.com.





XAVIER INTERFAITH MINISTRY The year under review has been fraught with world instability. Violence has continued unabated in the Middle East and other countries such as the Sudan, Yemen, Syria and Somalia. What can ordinary people do? Sabeeha Rehman and Walter Ruby sat together and explored how to make peace one friendship at a time. This took place at a meeting sponsored by the Family Faith Program and by the Xavier Interfaith Ministry. Sabeeha immigrated to the United States after growing up in Pakistan. She never met a Jew and her perception of Jews have been entirely influenced by the Israeli and Palestinian conflict. Walter never met a Muslim and his opinion was entirely colored by a book by Leon Uris called *Exodus*. But over time they found common grounds to agree and learned that the preciousness of human life is central to both Islam and Jewish thinking. Members of the Committee participated in the annual Martin Luther King interfaith service. The theme was “Is the Dream Deferred? What would Dr. King say in 2024?” Parishioners from St. Charles Borromeo/Resurrection and St. Francis de Sales in Harlem also attended.



ZEN MEDITATION completed its 17 th year of service. The group continues to meditate remotely. There has been a scheduled time for meditation on most Monday evenings. The ministry continues to fill a need for people of different intentions: Beginners and people with curiosity are always welcomed and introduction and instruction is always available. The group also provides a home for those interested in a continuing meditation practice as well as support for those whose primary interests are with other ministries. Well over 600 parishioners have experienced the program since its inception.



LGBTQ+ & ALLIES MINISTRIES

NYC PRIDE MARCH & MASS 2024 LGBTQ+ parishioners and allies of all identities have been active participants in the annual NYC PRIDE March since 1996. Our presence at PRIDE has been increasing as more parishioners understand that Marching is an act of visibility and solidarity — we were 50 strong in 2024, with plenty of room to grow even larger in 2025! In the weeks leading up to the March, members of several ministries collected anecdotes from LGBTQ+ parishioners for publication in the bulletin, highlighting their voices and experiences of faith. PRIDE month was opened with story sharing at a co-planned anniversary mass for all of Xavier’s LGBTQ+ ministries, and the month concluded with a PRIDE liturgy on the Sunday of the March. A blessing for all marchers was offered at the end of mass, followed by a light lunch sponsored by the Brunch Ministry Team. Though sudden and violent windstorms led to the historic decision to end the March early, before our group could actually “step off,” we had already done our work of community, visibility and solidarity. We were there, we were loud, we were proud, and we’ll be back! These collaborative efforts continued to



emphasize that we all have a part to play in PRIDE and sustaining these initiatives in our community. To facilitate an even better experience next year, a planning group has been formed to ensure we invite the inclusion of *all* members of the SFX community to make PRIDE 2025 a month-long experience at our masses and ministries, for the biggest and best March yet!

GAY CATHOLICS A Xavier, 31-year-old ministry (and counting!) Gay Catholics is primarily a gay men's group but all are welcome to attend our meetings and events. We generally meet in-person every first Friday of the month and virtually every third Friday to pray, reflect, celebrate, and support each other. For more than 25 years we have spearheaded the parish's AIDS Walk campaign. We are the only Catholic Parish that participates and we have regularly been one of the top 20 fundraising teams. Every June we march on the NYC Pride March along with the other LGBTQ+ ministries, and allies from across all the parish under the banner of SFX. Our men are represented in almost every aspect of life and ministry at Xavier, from the Welcome Table to the Healing Prayer Ministry, through the hospitality ministry and many other services. As we prepare for our annual in-person retreat with Catholic Lesbians for later this year, we look with hope to 2025, aware that our commitment to welcoming everyone and building a fully inclusive Church is today as relevant and urgent as ever. For more information contact us at gaycatholics@sfxavier.org.

CATHOLIC LESBIANS lost two friends in Sister Theresa Kane, RSM, and Sister Mary Lou Steele, SC. ABC News featured the ministry in "NYC church redefines acceptance for LGBTQ+ people." Cosponsored "Stations of the Cross: Black Catholic Women Give Witness" with The Women Who Stayed and Xavier Interfaith Ministry. Changed our longtime AOL e-mail address to CatholicLesbians@sfxavier.org. Marched in 32nd Annual NYC Dyke March and cohosted annual retreat with Gay Catholics. "Game Night with Gail Kennon"; Jackie Starkey on "Storytelling: A Feminist Perspective"; Natasha Avenis on the Catholic Church's antiabortion propaganda; Roe Sauerzopf organized 21st Annual Christmas Wrapping Party; S. C. Samoy explored the pursuit of the God of Life; Ellie Crum on contemplative prayer and coming out; Liz Sullivan screened *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc*; Larissa Santiago arranged a photo shoot; Avenis looked at the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; Paula Acuti led a conversation on "Reflect. Empower. Unite"; Cristie Traina presented on gender theory and choice in identities; Dorothy Boden emceed our favorite summer reads and a book swap.



WAYS TO FINANCIALLY SUPPORT THE PARISH

There are many ways to support the dynamic ministries of the Church of St. Francis Xavier. Each method of giving ensures the future of our parish and may provide you with tax benefits. The information below will help you decide how best to support the parish.

REGISTER *You're already a member, you just need to register!* If you haven't already registered, you may do so online www.sfxavier.org or by picking up a registration form at the 15th Street reception desk.

FAITH DIRECT Go Green and support the parish online, even while you are away on business or pleasure. Visit our website, www.sfxavier.org and click on the DONATE NOW icon or go directly to www.faihdirect.net and enter parish code: NY406. You can decide upon your weekly offering, special collections, flower offering, one-time gifts, etc. The automatic payments will be taken monthly from your choice of credit card or checking. Plus you have online access to donor statements for tax purposes. You can also link your mobile phone number to your credit/debit card for easier giving. Text any dollar amount to (646)-681-7010 and complete the one-time registration page to enroll.

VENMO Find us at Username: StFrancisXavier-Church or Phone number: 646-596-5696. For new users download the Venmo mobile app to create an account.

ENVELOPE SYSTEM Donors who itemize their tax returns receive an income tax charitable deduction. If you make your donation by check, please make the check payable to the Church of St. Francis Xavier.

SECURITIES By giving appreciated securities that you have owned for more than a year, your charitable deduction is the fair market value of the securities. Such gifts provide income tax savings and eliminate the capital gains tax liability.

GIFTS BY WILL The parish can be remembered in your Will. Suggested wording for such bequests is: I give, devise, and bequeath to the Church of St. Francis Xavier located at 55 West 15th Street, New York, NY, the sum of \$_____ (or ___% of the rest, residue, and remainder of my estate whether real or personal) for its general charitable purposes and without restriction. Please note that under the policy of the archdiocese and the by-laws of the parish corporation, bequests to a parish cannot be restricted unless approved in advance by the archbishop in writing.

GIFTS OF RETIREMENT PLANS Consider naming the Church of St. Francis Xavier, 55 West 15th Street New York, NY 10011 as a beneficiary or contingent beneficiary in your retirement plan, IRA or 401(k). It's easy, requires no attorneys or fee, and is tax advantageous. Call the parish office for further information and the necessary Federal ID.

TIME & TALENT All of our ministries, services and Xavier Mission programs are primarily staffed by parishioners, so we encourage your participation. If you would like to offer your time and talent to Xavier Mission, please contact Cassandra Agredo, Director, Outreach Mission at 212-627-2100 x 208 or cagredo@xaviermission.org; for any of the many ministries in the parish contact the parish office at 212-627-2100.

THE
MISSION STATEMENT
OF THE CHURCH OF
ST. FRANCIS XAVIER

The Church of St. Francis Xavier,
a Roman Catholic parish in the Jesuit tradition,
strives to be a prophetic, welcoming community,
and an inclusive witness to the presence of Christ Jesus in our midst.
Mindful of our utter reliance on God, and need for God's grace,
we rejoice together in our celebration of the sacraments
and proclamation of the Gospel.

As a people of hope, we commit ourselves
through prayerful and creative discernment
to respond to God in our time by:

Being a respectful community
Where seekers and
their questions are welcomed,
Where injustice is challenged,
Where the poor, the alienated and
the marginalized find a home,
And where people are refreshed,
reconciled and renewed.

*Adopted by the Community at Prayer
Rededication Weekend June 19 - 20, 2010*

Thanks also to all those who contributed photographs.