



# Building toward our future 2020 Annual Report



Dear Friends,

To say that 2020 was not what we expected would be an enormous understatement. The repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to send shockwaves through our nation and through our local community. In our parish life, we quickly pivoted online and now have our own hybrid model of in-person and online worship. No matter how you choose to join us, we're always glad you're here!

The collaborative of Saint Bridget and Our Lady of Fatima has developed in many fruitful ways since we began this journey just over a year ago. Our two churches, each with its own unique history and culture, have come together through combined faith formation, ministries, and small groups. The path has been intentional and organic in ways that glorify God.



I'm pleased to announce that we will become Ascension Parish on November 1st. There is something so poignant in this final act of rising into a new parish community and beginning our new life with Jesus together. I want to give my thanks to everyone who submitted a potential parish name and to the naming committee who sorted and ranked the submissions.

Looking ahead, I have been working closely with our staff and pastoral planning committee on ways for us to respond to Christ's call, in Matthew 28, to "make disciples of all nations." Everyone has a unique faith journey, based on life events and experiences. Our parish exists to meet and support people wherever they are in their journey of faith. Our mission, and the driving force of our parish life, is: We help people along the path to a better life through Jesus Christ.

The next step along this path isn't the same for all of us. Perhaps your next step is to attend weekend Mass more regularly, to deepen your prayer life, to reach out to a friend in need, or to serve in a ministry. You may help someone else to move along the path, too. Ultimately, we want to be a growing community of faith where everyone feels welcomed, cared for, and confident to take the next step in their faith journey.

In closing, I want to acknowledge that we are living in a time of economic uncertainty. Thank you to all who continue to invest in our parish. As you consider your giving, I would like to make two requests. First, as you are able, please make a gift to our Grand Annual Collection. When you contribute to the Grand Annual, you invest in our future. Second, again as you are able, I encourage you to consider online giving and recurring offertory gifts to sustain our parish ministries. Please review the following pages for further detail.

Let us remember the words of Jesus in the Good Shepherd discourse: "I came that they might have life and have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). As we celebrate and experience our new life as Ascension Parish, may we honor God and put our trust in Jesus, who loves us, guides us, and provides for our needs.

Yours in Christ,

Father Gerald Souza  
Pastor

# OUR PARISH LIFE

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**Introducing Ascension Parish.  
Two vibrant churches.  
One parish family.**

## **Our Vision**

To be a growing community of faith where everyone feels at home. We exist to help people on the path to a better life through Jesus Christ.

## **Our Message**

In our parish, we preach in Message Series. By exploring a single theme over the course of multiple weekends, we hope to tie the Good News of the Gospel to what's happening in our world, our culture, and our community. Saint Augustine advised us to teach and engage people where they are in order to move them to where God wants them to be.

## **Our Strength**

Over the course of the past year, we have reached over 6,000 people through online and in-person worship. It is a privilege to bring the Good News of the Gospel to so many.

## **Our One-Parish Collaborative**

Our two churches and the geographical area of Maynard and Sudbury will become one new parish. Under the leadership of Father Gerald, one staff will serve the entire parish community. All finances and assets (e.g., buildings) are combined under the new parish.

## **Our Hope**

By bringing together both churches we are able to leverage our resources for a consistent, meaningful weekend experience at both churches. There will be a renewed focus on ministries and high quality faith formation.

## **Our Name**

While each church will retain its name as a worship site, our official name is Ascension of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ Parish. Or Ascension Parish for short.

*"For I know well the plans I have in mind for you, plans for your welfare and not for woe, so as to give you a future of hope."  
-Jeremiah 29:11*





# YOUR FAITH JOURNEY

You were created on purpose, with a purpose and for a purpose. Wherever you are in life, you will always have a next step.

Much like our physical health, our spiritual health needs to be holistic: mind, heart, and actions. While each discipleship path is different, there are key elements.

## Serve.

We have been given unique gifts and talents by God. Using our gifts to serve in ministry creates environments for others to experience God's presence in our parish family and in our extended community.

## Tithe.

We seek to honor God in all areas of life, and this includes our finances. As stewards, not owners of the resources God has given us, we are called to sacrificial giving, which means progressively giving a percentage of our income to the local church and to the poor.

## Engage.

We believe faith grows in a circle. In Small Groups, we grow in fellowship and relationship with one another and with God, and in ways we cannot grow on our own. Small Groups are where our big church gets small.

## Practice.

We know God wants us to live lives of integrity and virtue that stem from our personal relationship with Christ. We strive to deepen our prayer life, turn to scripture, and receive God's grace through the Sacraments.

## Share.

As followers of Christ, we are called to build His kingdom. When we share our faith with others, we seed hope, spread love, and experience our own spiritual growth.

Our parish exists to help all our members take their next step on the path to a better life. To take yours, visit our current website [fatimasudbury.org](http://fatimasudbury.org). Ascension Parish website coming soon.

*"I can do all things through Him  
who strengthens me."  
-Philippians 4:13*

# SHARING OUR TREASURE

To align our vision and mission as one parish with two worship sites, we are taking the following approach to giving:

- Online giving. Please consider automatic giving for your regular Sunday offering. Eliminating the passing of the basket because of COVID-19 has negatively impacted our weekend collection. Online giving is a safe, secure process for scheduled contributions and gives you the flexibility of choosing weekly, biweekly, or monthly gifts. Recurring gifts also enable a more reliable budget forecast.
- We will continue to use ParishSoft Giving under Ascension Parish. If you have an existing account, you will need to open a new one. If you need assistance, please call the parish office 978.443.2647.
- Electronic bill pay. You can give to our parish using your online bank account just as you do to pay bills or schedule automatic bank transfers. Your gifts should be issued to Ascension Parish, 160 Concord Road, Sudbury, MA 01776.
- Offertory envelopes will continue to be mailed monthly to parishioners who have requested them for weekly giving.
- Starting January 1, 2021, the parish will eliminate all second collections except for Clergy Retirement Trust, Retired Religious Sisters, annual missionary appeal, and unusual circumstances such as natural disasters. A percentage of the parish offertory will be reserved for other special collections. The parish will not take second collections for maintenance or other parish needs.
- Moving forward, there will be one Grand Annual Campaign for the new Ascension Parish. The Grand Annual Campaign and regular offertory collections are our primary sources of income to support operations and parish programs. The Grand Annual Campaign is directed to investments in the parish's future. Contributions to the Grand Annual Collection may be made through the end of the year.

## With your financial support, our parish will:

**GROW** and strengthen our children's programs and youth ministry, investing in the next generation.

**EXPAND** adult ministries, pastoral care and Small Groups.

**INCREASE** our investment in technology to provide the best experience at both campuses.

### STEPS INCREASE

One way to think about giving is to assess where you are now in relation to the 4 P's of giving and your ability to grow to the next P.

Prayerfully consider, what is your next step?

- o **STEP 1: Planned.** Allocate a designated amount weekly, monthly or annually.
- o **STEP 2: Prioritized.** Make your gift to God a priority within your budget.
- o **STEP 3: Percentage.** Identify a percentage to give; similar to the biblical standard of the tithe.
- o **STEP 4: Progressive.** Increase your offering as God blesses you over time.

Annual Household Income	Weekly Offering			
	1%	2%	5%	10%
\$25,000	\$5	\$10	\$25	\$50
\$50,000	\$10	\$20	\$50	\$100
\$75,000	\$15	\$30	\$75	\$150
\$100,000	\$20	\$40	\$100	\$200
\$150,000	\$30	\$60	\$150	\$300
\$200,000	\$40	\$80	\$200	\$400

# Our Lady of Fatima Finance Statement

## **Financial Report for Fiscal Year 2020:**

On behalf of Father Souza, the Finance Council presents the operating statement for Fiscal Year 2020 (July 1, 2019-June 30, 2020). During a tumultuous year marked by the outbreak of COVID-19, our parish has been blessed by the commitment and service of our loyal staff and the incredible generosity of our parishioners. Through much hard work and sacrifice, our dedicated people met the challenge to deliver inspiring liturgies (both in-person and via livestream), improve our beautiful facilities, and sustain our vibrant ministries. None of this could have been accomplished without God's grace, the dedication of our professionals, and the donations of our parishioners in response to the crisis. COVID-19 has been a painful challenge that required hard sacrifices in managing parish finances. Fortunately, given an outpouring of support through online giving and special gifts, as well as diligent management of expenses, Our Lady of Fatima ended the year in a healthy financial condition. Hopefully, our online and in-person liturgies have deepened your faith and our many ministries have enriched your lives during this difficult time. Going forward, we are embarking on a number of exciting initiatives including uniting Our Lady of Fatima with Saint Bridget to create one thriving parish, the success of which will require our collective gifts of time, talent, and treasure.

## **2020 Financial Results:**

As would be expected with COVID-19, FY 2020 results bore little resemblance to the budget. The offertory, Grand Annual Collection, and gifts and bequests, which represent the bulk of revenue for the parish, totaled \$695,000--well below the \$786,000 budget. This was largely due to the impact of COVID-19 on Mass attendance, as well as a \$42,000 shortfall in the Grand Annual Collection. The shortfall was partially offset by increased gifts that surpassed expectations. It must be noted that despite the mandatory shutdown, parishioners answered the appeal for help with increased online giving as the year progressed. This is a trend we very much hope will continue and strongly encourage. Given the nearly \$120,000 shortfall in income, Father Souza, the staff, and the Finance Council made very difficult decisions to cut expenses, prioritize capital expenditures, and selectively consolidate staff positions. We are grateful to our staff for their sacrifices, which enabled the parish to manage our reduced income.

In addition to our direct results, Our Lady of Fatima parishioners donated second collections of approximately \$58,269 that benefitted a wide variety of charities, including the St. Vincent de Paul Society, the retirement fund for priests and sisters, and other causes. Such charity reflects the caring community we strive to foster.

## **Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Outlook:**

Looking to FY 2021, the parish will be adding much needed resources in faith formation and finance and operations. Our intent is to maximize our pastoral resources for ministry and alleviate administrative demands. Yet, recognizing that we are still in a very uncertain environment, total expenses are budgeted to remain at reduced levels with payroll and capital spending being tightly managed. As a result, we are budgeting expenses to decline approximately \$32,000 from the 2020 level. The budget process for 2021 has similarly taken a conservative approach to planning income with anticipated levels below that of

2020. We are hopeful, however, that as Mass attendance builds back slowly to more normalized levels and online giving continues to increase, we will be positioned to invest additional resources in desired initiatives meant to advance our numerous ministries, enhance our Mass experiences, and update our facilities.

The parish staff is always diligent in managing parish resources. Our efforts and desire to increase offertories, online giving, the Grand Annual Collection, and gifts reflect our determination to ensure our collective mission and service to God is fulfilled.

## **Parish Reserves:**

The parish maintains a reserve fund that as of June 30, 2020 totaled \$741,000. Such savings have been accumulated from major donations and operating surpluses from previous years. In addition, this past year the parish received a Paycheck Protection Program loan of \$92,000 meant to sustain payrolls in the face of reduced income. While we expect a lower rate of capital spending going forward given present uncertainties, our maintenance and facility needs are many and require our continued stewardship with the help of your generous support.

## **Closing Thoughts:**

We hope this report provides helpful insight into the financial health and needs of the parish. We are thankful for your generous gifts and contributions to the offertories, Grand Annual Collection, and Catholic Appeal. We appreciate and need your ongoing contributions of resources, time, and energy in service to the parish and the successful ministries of Our Lady of Fatima.

With gratitude to God and to you,  
Tom Biggins, Robert Dooley, Stephen Knightly, Dianne Mahany,  
Mary Mullin, Frank Wilson

### **Our Lady of Fatima Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2020 (in thousands)**

	FY2019	FY2020	FY2021
	Actual	Actual	Budget
<b>Parish Revenues</b>			
Offertory & Online Giving	498.8	461.2	450.0
Grand Annual Collection	142.2	124.6	125.0
Religious Ed & Directed Giving	92.0	65.5	63.3
Liturgical Income, Fundraising	47.3	19.7	26.9
Gifts, Bequests, Donations	74.1	109.5	67.0
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$ 854.4</b>	<b>\$ 780.3</b>	<b>\$ 732.2</b>
<b>Parish Expenses</b>			
Staff Expenses	478.0	339.5	304.8
Office Expense	31.9	46.5	39.6
Household/Utilities	43.0	39.9	41.1
Worship, Liturgical, Pastoral	41.7	32.0	37.4
Religious Ed & Youth Ministry	98.5	74.4	41.6
Music	9.9	77.0	95.0
Charitable Works	19.9	3.5	3.5
Physical Maintenance	68.5	69.9	82.0
Physical Improvements	25.4	6.8	14.4
Central Ministry Tithe, Miscellaneous	70.2	74.7	73.0
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 887.1</b>	<b>\$ 764.3</b>	<b>\$ 732.2</b>
<b>Operating Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>\$ (32.7)</b>	<b>\$ 16.1</b>	<b>\$ 0.0</b>
<b>Cash Reserves</b>			
Beginning Balance	\$ 805.0	\$ 758.3	
Capital Items	(14.0)	(33.0)	
Operations	(32.7)	16.1	
<b>Ending Balance</b>	<b>\$ 758.3</b>	<b>\$ 741.4</b>	

# Saint Bridget Finance Statement

On behalf of Father Souza, the Saint Bridget Finance Council submits the following financial report for Fiscal Year 2020 (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020). Despite the outbreak of COVID-19 and the pandemic's subsequent challenges, Saint Bridget is pleased to report positive financial health, as reflected in the summary below.

## **Fiscal Year 2020 Summary**

Father Souza arrived at Saint Bridget at the beginning of the fiscal year, and none of us could have predicted the year that lay ahead. In preparation for collaboration, a new Mass schedule was launched, and the first steps were taken to combine some programs, ministries, and staff with those at Our Lady of Fatima. Even with the financial headwinds brought on by COVID-19, we are happy to report that Saint Bridget finished the year without an operating deficit for the first time in over a decade.

## **Impact of COVID-19**

The outbreak of COVID-19 prevented most in-person activities, including Mass, from happening. This led to declines in offertory collections and donations, and to the loss of Bingo income. To respond to these unprecedented circumstances, we reduced expenses across the board. These included: reducing operating costs to reflect the closure of our buildings, placing staff on temporary unpaid leave, and eliminating some positions altogether. All expenses were reviewed and reduced wherever possible.

## **Outlook for Fiscal Year 2021**

We assume that the impact of COVID-19 will continue to be felt through the end of the fiscal year (June 30, 2021). Our offertory projections are based on run-rate from those of the previous four months, and we are assuming lower donations. The budget assumes much lower staff expenses because clergy and other staff expenses are shared with Our Lady of Fatima, and only two part-time employees will be based solely at Saint Bridget. The budget reflects a \$20,000 gift to fund, in large part, a new sound system for the church. Also, Saint Bridget Parish received a Paycheck Protection Program loan of \$32,500 meant to sustain payrolls in the face of reduced income.

At the beginning of Fiscal Year 2021, we sold the unused lot at the end of Percival Street, and netted approximately \$400,000. Half of the proceeds have been placed in a restricted account for five years, and the other half has been placed in our unrestricted savings account. These assets are not a part of our operating budget, but we anticipate using some of them to make significant capital improvements in the year ahead. These include repairing the roofs on all of our buildings, addressing plumbing issues in the rectory, making repairs to our parking lot, removing asbestos in the school, and more.

In conclusion, we are grateful to everyone for their gifts to Saint Bridget. The financial needs of our parish are real, but the impact of our ministry cannot be quantified. Your giving today is an investment in the future of our families and community.

Prayerfully submitted,

John Bresnahan, Robert Hudson, Pam Ferguson

St. Bridget Parish  
Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2020

	FY2019 Actual	FY2020 Actual	FY2021 Budget
<b>Parish Revenues</b>			
Offertory/Maintenance	227	207	145
Quarterly	31	17	20
Flowers, Candles, Sacramental	13	11	2
Religious Education	19	21	12
Donations	8	9	20
Other Income	38	16	3
Bingo	22	10	0
Lease Income	93	95	123
Total Revenues	451	386	325
<b>Parish Expenses</b>			
Staff Expense	262	143	112
Office Expense	60	47	33
Household/Utilities	68	55	63
Worship/Liturgical/Pastoral	20	8	7
Religious Education	4	3	2
Charitable Works	7	15	8
Physical Maintenance	25	72	58
Physical Improvements	12	7	5
Central Ministry Tythe/Misc	37	34	37
Total Expenses	495	384	325
Net Income	-44	2	0
Cash Reserves			
Parish Investment Fund	111	69	
Parish Checking	13	98	
Ending Balance	124	167	