



St. Mary's of the Lake—St. Benedict's Watkins Glen—Odessa, NY 2023-2024 Annual Parish Report



St. Mary and St. Benedict, Pray For Us

From Fr. Jeff

The past year has been a time of both bringing back more of what COVID took away and introducing new events. We brought back Sunday morning coffee hours at St. Mary's of the Lake. We began last July with monthly coffee hours held on the first Sunday of each month. We started with random volunteers. When we decided to continue the coffee hours throughout the whole year, we started asking committees to host a coffee hour. This gives them a chance to be seen and for parishioners to talk with them about their ministries. Our goal is a coffee hour every month but we do not always have enough volunteers. If you, or a group of parishioners would like to volunteer to host, please call the parish office.

For new events, on October 4th we offered a pet blessing. Why October 4th? Because it is the memorial of St. Francis of Assisi. This fall, October 4th falls on a First Friday when we have Adoration. We will end Adoration at 5:30 pm. Then, we will offer the pet blessing Friday, October 4th at 6:00 pm by the St. Francis statue in the courtyard at St. Mary's.



Last October, we also offered the first Mass in Spanish in Schuyler County. There is a growing population of Spanish speaking people here. The third Corporal Work of Mercy is to welcome the stranger (Leviticus 19:34, Matthew 25:35). Recognizing how most of our families started with immigrants to the United States, we want the Spanish people to feel welcome. The first Mass was offered at Bergen Farms in Odessa. Another Mass was offered at Gates Farm near Burdett. In January of this year, we made a Spanish Mass a regular monthly event at St. Benedict's on the second Sunday of each month at 7:30 pm. The Mass is followed by a meal cooked by one of the Spanish attendees. I do not speak any Spanish. So, we are grateful that Fr. Brendan Buckley, O.F.M. Cap. is available through the diocese (who pays his salary) to offer these Masses.

The year also came with some challenges. On Holy Thursday, the sound system at St. Mary's died just as we began Mass. It turned out two amplifiers had died. It took three or four weeks to make the replacements. So, we are very grateful to two families who lent us portable amplifiers while we waited for the repairs. We were blessed to have plenty of money in our Memorial Account to cover the \$4,000 bill. The Memorial Account is where we place donations given in memory of a deceased person. We thank those who have given to this fund.

We also had an intermittent water and odor problem in the Parish Center at St. Mary's. Because it was intermittent, it took us some time to identify the cause. It turned out the sewer line outside the building was 99% plugged due to a shift in the pipe underground. It cost St. Mary's \$13,000 to complete the necessary work followed by \$1,780 to replace blacktop.



Fr. Jeff

I invite you to read the rest of this report on the state of our parishes.

Journeying Together

ST. MARY'S OF THE LAKE
Watkins Glen, NY
ST. BENEDICT'S
Odessa, NY



Nationwide Eucharistic Revival



On June 2, 2024 we had our second annual Eucharistic Procession for the feast of Corpus Christi. We thank God for a beautiful day and for the 50-60 people who joined in the procession. As we walked eight blocks, it was wonderful to see people stop what they were doing and watch as we passed their homes with the Eucharist.



Faith Formation for Children and Youth

This year we continued with the same model for our faith formation activities for children and Confirmation preparation. We had two young boys, Noah and John, make their First Reconciliation in December and their First Communion on May 5th. We are delighted to have them join us at the table of the Lord. We had six teens complete year one of our two year Confirmation preparation program. They should be confirmed in Spring 2025.

Last December Deacon Dan Pavlina began a new assignment closer to his new home. With this, Fr. Jeff took responsibility for the baptismal preparation classes for parents who desire to have their infants baptized.

Then, in May, Rosemary Nabogis retired. We are grateful for her ministry with us since 2018. She began as Pastoral Minister and Cemetery Coordinator. In 2021, the faith formation duties were added to her responsibilities. She absorbed it with love and care for the children. We thank her for her ministry here and pray for her future endeavors. We have been seeking to fill her position since her departure without success. Now, because of the budget deficit, Fr. Jeff has decided to change the position to a part-time faith formation only. Fr. Jeff will oversee faith formation until a replacement has been hired.

St. Mary's of the Lake and St. Benedict's Combined Faith Formation and Sacraments

Parish Statistics (Year ending)	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Baptisms	10	2	0	0	11	3	9
First Communion	9	8	0***	11	4	3	2
Confirmations	3	8	0***	8	0	7	0
RCIA	0	3	0***	2	2	4	1
Weddings	6	9	2	3	11	8	8
Funerals/burials	28	17	19	31	36	31	30
Faith Formation Enrollment K-12	65	49	40	55	44	9	15

*There were no First Communion, Confirmation, or RCIA celebrations in the 2020 year due to COVID.

St. Mary's and Holy Cross Cemeteries

As COVID swept our nation, the number of funerals rose from 19 to 31, peaking at 36 in 2022. Thankfully, the numbers have fallen slightly to 30.

As the 2023-2024 fiscal year began, we made an adjustment in our cemetery operations. St. Mary's Cemetery was previously mowed by our church maintenance person but we had been unable to fill that position. So, we hired a contractor to mow St. Mary's Cemetery. At the same time, the parishioner who was taking care of the mowing at Holy Cross Cemetery was no longer able to do so. So, the same contractor was hired to mow at Holy Cross Cemetery. We hired the same contractor for this year. We had some issues in May 2024 with the timing of mowing but we worked through them. This was pure logistics. *A special note from Fr. Jeff—we learned of some of the issues through third hand comments. **If you have concerns about the cemeteries, please call me first.***

Because of your generosity in our two annual second collections for our cemeteries and an *unusually high* year for grave sales, we now have funds to accept bids to complete some much needed drainage work. One might think on top of a hill the water would run off easily but the clay soil holds the water causing water issues when digging graves and excessive settling in new graves.

From Fr. Jeff A Common Misconception About St. Benedict's

In the last three months I have received a few comments from parishioners who think that if we close St. Benedict's that it would be a financial gain for St. Mary's. I am concerned that this is based on a mistaken idea that St. Benedict's does not have enough money to pay its bills because attendance at Mass there averages between 40 and 60.

These attendance numbers are correct. However, that does not mean St. Benedict's does not have enough money to pay its bills. For the last fiscal year, St. Benedict's had an operating deficit of \$3,300 out of expenses totaling \$65,956 (5%). It would have been about \$1,500 better except in June a number of parishioners were away. So we did not receive their normal contributions. They have returned and caught up on their contributions in July in the new fiscal year. ***This is the first time St. Benedict's had a real deficit.*** St. Benedict's has more than enough to cover this deficit in their checking account. Here, I will note that the largest portion (\$44,956) of St. Benedict's budget is to help pay for the salaries and benefits of our combined staff.

I understand that it might still seem prudent to close St. Benedict's to save on the building expenses and property insurance. These totaled \$14,845 last year. If we were to close St. Benedict's but were unable to sell the building, these expenses would not change significantly.

However, if we close St. Benedict's it is likely the income from parishioners who attended St. Benedict's until it closed would **decrease**. Why? You might think if St. Benedict's closed, all those who go there would automatically come to St. Mary's. However, it is likely, and common when churches close, that some of the people who historically attended St. Benedict's would NOT attend St. Mary's. Typically there are some who stop going to church. Others might attend a different church such as St. Mary our Mother Church in Horseheads as some of them have Horseheads addresses.

For our fiscal year 2024-2025, while both churches face deficits, it is actually St. Mary's that has the bigger issue of not having enough income. St. Benedict's faces a deficit of \$4,800 out of \$67,332 (7.1%) while St. Mary's faces a deficit of \$36,000 out of \$367,500 (9.8%).

How is it that St. Benedict's is doing better? They have some very generous parishioners both in money and in volunteering. For instance, St. Benedict's parishioners clean their church as volunteers. St. Mary's has had a part-time cleaning person for 15 hours/week. This costs St. Mary's \$16,500 each year.

Please note that we are working on ways to help all our parishioners be better aware of our financial challenges and are always open to input/ideas for strengthening us in the future.

Please pray we find a way to bring more people to both churches. It is the people we care about. If we do get more people to church and they give to the collection, then we would be in better financial shape.

Peace,



Fr. Jeff's Presentations

- In the Fall he offered a three-part series, *Made for Discipleship*—<https://renewaloffaith.org/made-for-discipleship/>
- In February he offered a presentation called *Why Go to Confession?* in March—<https://renewaloffaith.org/whyconfession/>
- Followed by *Why Go to Mass (weekly)?* In March - <https://renewaloffaith.org/whymass/>

Diocesan Census

Our records are old and information is out-of-date. For many people, we do not have current contact information, especially phone numbers. In some cases, we have adult children still listed as living in the house who have long since moved away. It is time to update our records. Most parishes in our diocese have the same issue. So, our diocese has began a new census. We are asking everyone to complete a new census form. If you have not already completed it, you can do so at



<https://tinyurl.com/2cfg9yx3>

Should you have any questions, you can contact the Parish Office at 607-535-2786 or email the Diocesan Census Team at census@dor.org

	St. Mary's of the Lake						
Parish Statistics (Year ending)	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Number of Registered Individuals	1,669	1,664	1,642	1,629	1,591	1,533	1,509
Number of Registered Families	861	863	824	817	785	742	738
Average Sunday Attendance	339	365	300*	225**	200	212	226

*In 2020, the attendance numbers are for the 8 months prior to the arrival of the Coronavirus in early March.

**In 2021, the numbers cover from July 1, 2020—June 30, 2021. The numbers started small and rose throughout the year, averaging 310 for four Masses (no Mass at St. Benedict's) in June 2021.

	St. Benedict's						
Parish Statistics (Year ending)	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Number of Registered Individuals	195	162	161	169	145	140	120
Number of Registered Families	94	91	92	88	84	80	72
Average Saturday Evening	74	71	61*	***	47	49	48

*In 2020, the attendance numbers are for the 8 months prior to the arrival of the Coronavirus in early March.

***In the fiscal year ending 2021, there were no weekend Masses at St. Benedict's due to the Coronavirus social distancing capacity.

The Balance Sheet

St. Mary's of the Lake		St. Benedict	
Assets		Assets	
Checking	\$140,332	Checking	\$ 51,044
Restricted	\$12,359	Restricted	\$ 8,319
Stable Patrimony	\$752,374	Stable Patrimony	\$ 143,623
Accounts Receivable	\$8,247	Total Assets	\$ 202,986
Total Assets	\$913,312		
Liabilities		Liabilities	
Total Liabilities	\$3,644	Total Liabilities	\$40
Total Fund Balance	\$909,668	Total Fund Balance	\$202,946

Definitions:

Restricted—These funds were given for a specific purpose specified in writing.

Stable Patrimony—These are our long-term investments that we have accumulated over the years. There has been no new money added in over 10 years. Last year \$87,000 was withdrawn from St. Mary's of the Lake to cover St. Mary's share of channeling injunction costs. No money has been withdrawn from St. Benedict's since 2013.

Total Fund Balance—This number represents our net assets.

How Are Our Finances?

Fr. Jeff Shares His Thoughts on the Finances

The 2023-2024 fiscal year was the first year both our parishes had operating deficits. These are due to increase in salaries (*barely* matching the rate of inflation), benefits, and insurance. We are working hard to eliminate the deficits *at both parishes*.



St. Mary's began the year with a budgeted deficit of \$55,450. During the year we were *blessed* with a \$40,000 donation from an estate of a *former* parishioner. We are very fortunate to have received this but we cannot build a future dependent on such gifts. Some years we do not receive any bequests. When we do, it is typically \$500—\$1,000. With this \$40,000 bequest we ended this year with a surplus of \$24,004. Without this bequest, the deficit would have been \$15,996. This deficit included the \$17,000 of unexpected repairs I mentioned on page one. The final deficit would have been far worse if parishioners had not increased their contributions to St. Mary's by \$20,685 (8.2%). The deficit was also alleviated by the fact that we have not had a paid cleaning person since January and a without a Pastoral Minister on staff for most of May and all of June and remain so. This is a significant savings but *we cannot maintain the faith formation program without some help (paid or volunteer).*



St. Benedict's began the year with a budgeted deficit of \$2,400. It ended the year with an operating deficit of \$3,300 out of expenses totaling \$65,956 (5%). (Please see page three for more on St. Benedict's finances.) *This is the first time they have had a real deficit.* St. Benedict's has more than enough to cover this deficit in their checking account. I will note that the largest portion (\$44,956) of St. Benedict's budget is to help pay for the salaries and benefits of our combined staff.

Please note that these deficits include salaries and benefits for a full-time Pastoral Minister. Going forward, if someone becomes available we would still hire a part-time faith formation coordinator but we will try to continue without this being a full-time position. The cleaning position being vacant for July and August has saved approximately \$2,600. Having no one in the pastoral minister position for July and August has saved around \$9,750. Adjusting to the position being part-time (20 hours/wk (no benefits)) for the remainder of the year *could* save another \$23,200, resulting in a total savings for the year of \$35,550 between the two parishes.

I'm sure you are wondering about the status of the diocesan bankruptcy and sexual abuse lawsuits. Earlier this summer the diocese reached an agreement with the victims attorneys and most of the insurance companies. This plan is being voted on now by the claimants. If it passes, we could end the bankruptcy in the next few months. We already paid our anticipated portion to escrow in the 2022-2023 fiscal year (St. Mary's—\$152,190, St. Benedict's—\$27,297). The attorneys representing the parishes in the lawsuits will need to be paid a small amount of additional legal fees as the bankruptcy concludes (assumes the agreement passes the victims' vote and the judge approves). I know that some people feel the parishes should not have to pay anything. Knowing we have victims in our parish, how much do you think we would have to pay to settle lawsuits on our own? Do not blame the victims. They did not choose to be victims. Thankfully, we had money in reserves to cover this and still have money left over. Let us pray that no one, in or outside the church, is ever victimized again.

Please be assured of my continuing efforts and those of our Business Manager, Terri Orbin, Finance Director, Donna Haraty, and our Finance Council as we work to ensure the financial fitness of our parishes. Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Jeff".

St. Benedict's



Online Giving!

We now offer online giving. Here are three ways to get started:

1. Go to www.stmarystben.org/giving
2. Text GiveStBens or GiveStMarys to 607-367-6177. It will send you a link to click on.
3. Scan the QR Code for your church

St. Mary's



Donate
Online



St. Mary's of the Lake

Annual Financial Report - July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2023-2024	2023-2024	2024-2025
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Budget	Budget Variance	Budget
Operating Revenue						
Regular Collections	\$ 243,578	\$ 251,689	\$ 274,174	\$ 250,500	\$ 21,874	\$ 271,200
Auxiliary Receipts	\$ 13,947	\$ 13,799	\$ 12,926	\$ 12,600	\$ 326	\$ 12,000
Ministry Programs	\$ 10,525	\$ 7,855	\$ 7,325	\$ 6,700	\$ 625	\$ 6,525
School Tuition	\$ 705	\$ 930	\$ 550	\$ 800	\$ (250)	\$ 500
Gifts and Donations	\$ 18,469	\$ 34,838	\$ 62,037	\$ 9,500	\$ 52,537	\$ 19,000
Fundraising	\$ 3,267	\$ 12,659	\$ 14,472	\$ 12,300	\$ 2,172	\$ 13,600
Interest and Dividend Income	\$ 55	\$ 51	\$ 34	\$ 50	\$ (16)	\$ 35
Rental Income	\$ 1,690	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,820	\$ 1,600	\$ 220	\$ 7,440
Other Operating Revenue	\$ 3,045	\$ 1,705	\$ 1,667	\$ 800	\$ 867	\$ 1,200
Total Operating Revenue	\$ 295,281	\$ 325,025	\$375,007	\$ 294,850	\$ 78,355	\$ 331,500
Operating Expense						
Salaries and Benefits	\$ 159,552	\$ 188,495	\$ 175,312	\$ 187,233	\$ 11,921	\$ 184,815
Professional Development	\$ 1,319	\$ 846	\$ 1,135	\$ 791	\$ (344)	\$ 885
Insurance	\$ 21,757	\$ 23,690	\$ 29,342	\$ 29,339	\$ (3)	\$ 32,441
Ministries and Programs	\$ 1,170	\$ 1,781	\$ 5,233	\$ 1,000	\$ (4,233)	\$ 3,200
Social Events	\$ 245	\$ 90	\$ 173	\$ 100	\$ (73)	\$ 100
Fees and Interest Expense	\$ 1,129	\$ 733	\$ 986	\$ 1,200	\$ 214	\$ 1,100
Supplies Expenses	\$ 16,912	\$ 16,878	\$ 15,183	\$ 15,921	\$ 738	\$ 15,453
Rectory and Other Expenses	\$ 3,074	\$ 2,197	\$ 2,786	\$ 2,525	\$ (261)	\$ 2,750
Building Maintenance	\$ 32,726	\$ 41,172	\$ 48,164	\$ 35,500	\$ (12,664)	\$ 31,964
Purchase of Services	\$ 27,014	\$ 24,572	\$ 25,934	\$ 34,885	\$ 8,951	\$ 51,939
School Assessment	\$ 1,514	\$ 1,402	\$ 1,218	\$ 1,218	\$ 0	\$ 1,218
Fundraising	\$ 2,277	\$ 4,666	\$ 5,508	\$ 3,800	\$ (1,708)	\$ 5,250
Other Operating Expenses	\$ 30,432	\$ 27,450	\$ 31,536	\$ 28,288	\$ (3,248)	\$ 27,885
Donations and Gifts to Others	\$ 8,462	\$ 8,747	\$ 8,415	\$ 8,500	\$ 85	\$ 8,500
Total Operating Expense	\$ 307,583	\$ 342,719	\$ 351,003	\$ 350,300	\$ (624)	\$ 367,500
Net Operating Revenue	\$ (12,302)	\$ (17,694)	\$ 24,004	\$ (55,450)	\$ 77,731	\$ (36,000)
Non-Operating Revenue						
Change in Market Value	\$ (93,168)	\$ 73,214	\$ 85,713	\$ -	\$ 85,713	\$ -
Affiliated Organizations	\$ 130	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other Non-Operating Revenue	\$ 35,923	\$ 500	\$ 450	\$ -	\$ 450	\$ -
Total Non-Operating Revenue	\$ (57,115)	\$ 73,714	\$ 86,163	\$ -	\$ 86,163	\$ -
Non-Operating Expenses						
Capital Purchases	\$ 1,225	\$ 7,296	\$ 683	\$ -	\$ (683)	\$ -
Affiliated Organizations Expenses	\$ 536	\$ 90	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other Non-Operating Expenses	\$ 1,966	\$ 154,273	\$ 2,082	\$ -	\$ (2,082)	\$ -
Total Non-Operating Expenses	\$ 3,727	\$ 161,659	\$ 2,765	\$ -	\$ (2,765)	\$ -
Net Non-Operating Revenue	\$ (60,842)	\$ (87,945)	\$ 83,397	\$ -	\$ 83,397	\$ -
Net Revenue	\$ (73,144)	\$ (105,639)	\$ 105,678	\$ (55,450)	\$ 161,128	\$ (36,000)

St Benedict's

Annual Financial Report - July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2023-2024	2023-2024	2024-2025
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Budget	Budget Variance	Budget
Operating Revenue						
Regular Collections	\$ 63,649	\$ 64,261	\$ 61,819	\$ 62,410	\$ (591)	\$ 61,770
Auxiliary Receipts	\$ 350	\$ 490	\$ 575	\$ 400	\$ 175	\$ 500
Ministry Programs	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 250	\$ 200	\$ 50	\$ 250
Gifts and Donations	\$ 1,060	\$ 5,054	\$ -	\$ 100	\$ (100)	\$ -
Interest and Dividend Income	\$ 15	\$ 17	\$ 12	\$ 17	\$ (5)	\$ 12
Total Operating Revenue	\$ 65,274	\$ 70,022	\$ 62,656	\$ 63,127	\$ (471)	\$ 62,532
Operating Expense						
Salaries and Benefits	\$ 40,230	\$ 39,428	\$ 44,956	\$ 45,596	\$ 640	\$ 46,505
Insurance	\$ 3,573	\$ 3,939	\$ 4,996	\$ 4,996	\$ 0	\$ 5,528
Social Events	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 43	\$ -	\$ (43)	\$ 50
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 12	\$ -	\$ (12)	\$ 6
Supplies Expenses	\$ 1,379	\$ 824	\$ 715	\$ 468	\$ (247)	\$ 485
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 470	\$ -	\$ (470)	\$ -
Building Maintenance	\$ 10,951	\$ 9,653	\$ 9,849	\$ 10,419	\$ 570	\$ 10,564
Purchase of Services	\$ 208	\$ 700	\$ 1,585	\$ 900	\$ (685)	\$ 1,080
School Assessment	\$ 270	\$ 316	\$ 318	\$ 318	\$ 0	\$ 321
Other Operating Expenses	\$ 2,115	\$ 1,554	\$ 2,012	\$ 1,830	\$ (182)	\$ 1,793
Donations and Gifts to Others	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 0	\$ 1,000
Total Operating Expense	\$ 59,726	\$ 57,415	\$ 65,956	\$ 65,227	\$ (429)	\$ 67,332
Net Operating Revenue	\$ 5,548	\$ 12,607	\$ (3,300)	\$ (2,400)	\$ (900)	\$ (4,800)
Non-Operating Revenue						
Change in Market Value	\$ (15,685)	\$ 12,757	\$ 16,362	\$ -	\$ 12,757	\$ -
Affiliated Organizations	\$ -	\$ 314	\$ 687	\$ -	\$ 314	\$ -
Other Non-Operating Revenue	\$ 8,492	\$ 50	\$ 400	\$ -	\$ 50	\$ -
Total Non-Operating Revenue	\$ (7,193)	\$ 13,121	\$ 17,449	\$ -	\$ 13,121	\$ -
Non-Operating Expenses						
Capital/Equipment Purchases	\$ 3,679	\$ 2,919	\$ 1,398	\$ -	\$ (2,919)	\$ -
Affiliated Organizations	\$ 80	\$ 57	\$ 225	\$ -	\$ (57)	\$ -
Other Non-Operating Expenses	\$ 331	\$ 27,655	\$ 397	\$ -	\$ (27,655)	\$ -
Total Non-Operating Expenses	\$ 4,090	\$ 30,631	\$ 2,020	\$ -	\$ (30,631)	\$ -
Net Non-Operating Revenue	\$ (11,283)	\$ (17,509)	\$ 15,428	\$ -	\$ (17,509)	\$ -
Net Revenue	\$ (5,735)	\$ (4,902)	\$ 12,128	\$ -	\$ (4,902)	\$ (4,800)

St. Mary's of the Lake
St. Benedict's
P.O. Box 289
Watkins Glen, NY 14891


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Here is your annual report of parish life and finances for St. Mary's of the Lake in Watkins Glen and St. Benedict's in Odessa.

We invite you to read this report and then join us for some listening sessions. These are your opportunity to ask questions and to share your input on our future.

Saturday, September 21st – 9:00 am in St. Mary's Parish Center
September 29th – 11:15 am (following Mass) in St. Mary's Parish Center

Please RSVP by calling the office at 607-535-2786
or email Fr. Jeff at fr.jeffrey.tunncliff@dor.org

Our Leadership			
Staff Fr. Jeffrey S. Tunncliff, Parochial Administrator Donna Haraty, Finance Director Terri Orbin, Business Manager Helen Specchio, Secretary Maria Rondinaro, Faith Formation Assistant Deacon Rick Roy Deacon Tom Ruda		Parish Council Joan Argetsinger Nancy Dickerson Brenda Herforth Jason Herforth John Juhasz Cindy Kain Alice Rothfuss Peggy Scott Wendy Coleman (Youth Rep)	Finance Council Paul Clifford Pat Gill Brenda Herforth Teresa Letteer Deb Melanson Tom Phillips Linda VanArsdale