



Saint Francis of Assisi Parish - Stewardship Policy

Parish Mission Statement

The **Mission** of Saint Francis of Assisi Parish in Springfield, PA is to be disciples. Centered in the Eucharist, we are called to encounter, follow and imitate Jesus' way of life through the humble example of our patron, Saint Francis of Assisi.

Stewardship Background

Stewardship is an ethic that embodies the responsible planning and management of resources and **Christian Stewardship** refers to our duty to receive God's gifts gratefully, cultivate them responsibly, share them lovingly in justice with others, and return them with increase to the Lord.

Our **Offertory Collection** represents the ongoing freewill offerings of the faithful and is the foundation for accumulating financial means to support our Mission.

The **SFA Pastoral Council** is responsible for, among other things, providing direction for the vision and needs of the Parish through the **Parish Strategic Plan / Pastoral Priorities** aligned with the principles of Christian Stewardship.

The **SFA Finance Council** is responsible for, among other things, evaluating the adequacy of financial resources necessary to achieve the Parish Strategic Plan / Pastoral Priorities, and for providing feedback and direction to the SFA Pastoral Council and the SFA Stewardship/Development Committee, respectively.

The **SFA Stewardship/Development Committee** is responsible for, among other things, promoting the practice of Christian Stewardship among the faithful and, when necessary, overseeing fundraising activities beyond the Offertory Collection.

The **Annual Parish Financial Report** (or APFR) and **Annual Parish Budget** (or APB) are each required to materially reflect all Parish financial activities and are integral to our Parish's demonstration of effective Christian Stewardship.

Policy Objective

To ensure the alignment of our actions with the Parish Mission, Parish Strategic Plan / Pastoral Priorities and principles of Christian Stewardship, this **Stewardship Policy** is intended to provide:

- i) a standard process for the identification and support of **Ministerial Needs**;
- ii) guidelines for the protection, accounting & reporting of **Financial Resources**; and
- iii) guidelines for conducting efficient and organized **Fundraising Activities**.



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1.0 Policy Scope

This Stewardship Policy applies to the Parish in its entirety, inclusive of the **Parish Business Office** and each Parish entity that collects, controls, and or expends funds for their organization or ministry irrespective of formality and whether the organization or ministry has a bank account (each being hereafter referred to as a "**Ministry**").

2.0 Ministerial Needs

Our Parish will continuously strive to identify, prioritize & support Ministerial Needs.

An informal committee, consisting of the Pastor and representatives from the Parish Business Office, SFA Pastoral Council and SFA Finance Council will lead these efforts.

- 2.1 Needs Identification No less than annually, the Parish shall design, implement and administer a Parish-wide outreach effort to facilitate the identification of Ministerial Needs [Exhibit I - Ministerial Needs Request](#)

It is suggested the Needs Identification process be designed to conclude ~four (4) months prior to the start of the Fiscal Year. Ministerial Needs shall be timely communicated to the SFA Pastoral Council and the SFA Finance Council.

- 2.2 Needs Evaluation Within 60 days of receipt of unprioritized Ministerial Needs, the SFA Pastoral Council shall advise on prioritization of Ministerial Needs and identify any needs that appear incompatible with Christian Stewardship. The evaluation process may necessitate follow-up requests and discussions.

- 2.3 Annual Needs Support Within 60 days of determination of prioritized Ministerial Needs, the Parish Business Office, in consult with the SFA Finance Council, shall develop an itemized **Ministerial Support Budget** for the coming fiscal year that accommodates as many needs as possible and is incorporated into the APB.

The Parish Business Office shall administer the Ministerial Support Budget by notifying the requestor of the approval, timing and program parameters with the full authority to substitute alternative Ministerial Needs to meet, but not exceed, the approved Ministerial Support Budget.

- 2.4 Ongoing Needs Support Monitoring of qualifying but unfulfilled Ministerial Needs shall be the ongoing responsibility of the SFA Pastoral Council and may result in future changes to the Parish Strategic Plan/Pastoral Priorities and/or ongoing communication with the SFA Finance Council, and the SFA Stewardship/Development Committee.



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3.0 Financial Resources

Our Parish will continuously strive to demonstrate effective Christian Stewardship in the management of financial resources.

3.1 Fiscal Year The Parish will follow a fiscal year that is defined by Archdiocesan Standards to begin on July 1st and end on June 30th of the successive year.

3.2 Basis of Accounting All Parish books and records will follow a cash-basis of accounting which is the practice of recording revenues when cash is received and recording expenses when an expense is settled in cash.

The Parish Business Office is responsible to centrally manage and maintain financial adjustments that enable the Parish to comply with Archdiocesan Standards that are incompatible with a cash-basis of accounting.

3.3 Parish-Wide Financial Reporting The Parish Business Office is responsible to prepare periodic Parish-wide financial statements that are materially accurate and reflect all Parish financial activities, inclusive of those of the Church, School, and all other Parish Ministries, and enable compliance with Archdiocesan Standards.

The SFA Finance Council is responsible for overseeing the preparation of all Parish-wide financial statements and, in the case of the APFR, providing its approval prior to submission to the Archdiocese.

3.4 Parish-Wide Control Standards The Parish Business Office is responsible to design and implement appropriate systems of internal controls to reasonably ensure that Parish-wide financial statements are materially accurate and to otherwise safeguard Parish assets and prevent fraud, misuse and waste.

The SFA Finance Council is responsible for overseeing the Parish's systems of internal controls and supporting the Parish Business Office in conveying relevant minimum control standards to each Ministry as and when applicable.

3.5 Bank & Investment Account Standards The following represents the minimum level of acceptable standards for bank and investment accounts holding Parish assets. Parish assets include the cash and investments of all Ministries.

NOTE – Accounts and transactional activity should not be recorded on the Parish books if any Ministry is a chapter of larger national or international organization of the same name; such as The Knights of Columbus or St. Vincent de Paul Society, for example.



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- 3.5.1 All accounts must be recognized as the legal property of the Parish and must be configured to use the Parish's unique federal employer identification number (23-1352449) and include the Pastor by name as an authorized signatory.
- 3.5.2 Normally only clergy are to be signatories on Parish-wide accounts. Non-Clergy signatories may be designated on Parish-wide accounts for emergency backup in the absence of a primary signatory. Non-Clergy signatories may be present on Ministry (Non Parish-wide) accounts.
- 3.5.3 Accounts will only be created or modified with the explicit approval of the Pastor. Only Parish-approved financial institution(s) will be used. "Off the books" accounts are never permitted.
- 3.5.4 The number of separate accounts should be kept to a minimum. Notwithstanding, care must be exercised to avoid comingling incompatible assets such as Parish operating funds and Mass stipends or restricted contributions, for example, or creating a lack of transparency detrimental to efficient bookkeeping or oversight.
- 3.5.5 All accounts will be directly addressed to the Pastor at the Parish Business Office.
- 3.5.6 The Pastor will receive, open and review all account statements, including the underlying activity, for reasonableness and authenticity monthly and timely provide statements to the Parish Business Office, which will review the monthly activity in comparison to the financial accounting system and complete a [Monthly Bank Reconciliation](#). (see [Exhibit II](#)) for the approved form of Bank Reconciliation.
- 3.5.7 For accounts operated by any Ministry, the Parish Business Office will provide the account statement timely to the designated leader(s) and may request supporting information at any time.
- 3.5.8 For accounts operated by any Ministry, an itemized record of receipts and expenditures for monies collected, disbursed, and held in balance should be maintained at all times with a summary of such activity filed periodically, no less than annually within 60 days of Fiscal Year end, with the Parish Business Office in the form of a [Ministry Financial Report](#) (see [Exhibit III](#)).
- 3.5.9 At the conclusion of each Fiscal Year, excess funds, those beyond what is reasonable and necessary to sustain the Ministry for the subsequent six (6) month period, if any, are to be remitted to the Parish Business Office concurrent with the submission of the Ministry Financial Report.



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3.5.10 Accumulated excess Ministerial funds received by the Parish Business Office may be appropriated by the Pastor and, if necessary, in consultation with the SFA Finance Council, based on the Parish's essential priorities.

3.6 Physical Cash Controls The following represents the minimum level of acceptable standards for the physical preservation and protection of cash and cash equivalents and is applicable to anyone who handles such assets:

3.6.1 Offertory Collection Process Offertory Collections shall be placed in a safe or locked location on the Parish campus as soon as practical following each Mass. Funds for each Mass should be segregated in a marked, tamper-proof, sealed bag.

Count teams, consisting of no less than two unrelated persons who are not members of parish staff, shall open the bags, count the offertory, then complete and sign an Offertory Collection Summary Sheet that is sent to the Parish Business Office immediately. The offertory must then be deposited at the bank by a member of the count team or a priest and the bank deposit slip/receipt should be separately delivered to the Parish Business Office as soon as possible.

All proceeds, even "loose" receipts, must be recorded in the financial accounting system and Donation Database by the Parish Business Office with care to retain the deposit slip and separate special collections and other restricted or designated funds or tuition and fee receipts received among the Offertory Collection. The Donation Database should be reconciled monthly to the general ledger.

Funds belonging to St. Vincent de Paul Society or other organizations collected among the Offertory Collection should result in the recognition of a book liability and be transferred as soon as possible.

3.6.2 All Cash and Check Receipts Checks should be restrictively endorsed as soon as received. A restricted endorsement can be made by writing "For Deposit Only – SFA Parish/SFA School," or using a restricted endorsement bank stamp.

Cash and checks should be secured in a safe or locked location.

All receipts should be counted at the Parish except where impracticable, such as in the case of certain non-offertory or non-tuition receipts. An itemized record of all receipts should be maintained.

Cash and checks should be deposited at the bank regularly, preferably daily, but no less than once per week, regardless of size or volume. Deposit slips should be retained.



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3.6.3 Electronic Funds Receipts The Parish Business Office shall regularly oversee the timely receipt, application, recognition and reconciliation of all electronic funds receipts, including related to offertory, tuition and other contributions. Adequate supporting documentation shall be retained to support all electronic funds receipts.

Ministries that utilize online electronic payment systems (such as PayPal, Venmo, etc.) to facilitate the collection of funds are cautioned to exercise additional care and diligence as the risk of fraud and misappropriation is heightened. As the proportion of electronic funds receipts to total receipts is observed to increase, the process and internal controls associated with electronic funds receipts is expected to become more formal and mature.

3.7 Disbursements of Cash The following represents the minimum level of acceptable standards for the disbursement of cash in satisfaction of legitimate expenditures and is applicable to anyone who handles such assets for such purpose.

3.7.1 Direct payments in physical cash are to be avoided whenever possible as this increases the risk of misappropriation and potentially reduces transparency and complicates recordkeeping.

3.7.2 The use of a Petty Cash Fund by the Parish Business Office is acceptable but should never exceed \$500 and must be physically secured with a documented record kept of all individual expenditures. Replenishment of the Petty Cash Fund should be achieved by the drawing of a check and not through diversion of other cash receipts. The Petty Cash Fund must have a designated custodian and be counted & reconciled monthly by a responsible individual other than the custodian.

3.7.3 Check stock must be pre-numbered and imprinted with the Parish name and account number and configured to be manually signed. Access to check stock should be restricted and securely locked. Pre-signing blank checks is prohibited.

3.7.4 The use of “rubber” stamps or other facsimile signatures is prohibited.

3.7.5 Use of Credit or Debit Cards The use of credit cards in the name of the Parish is to be very limited with all activity subject to monthly review by an independent person. The Pastor shall have sole authority to determine authorized holders and establish prudent maximum transactional and daily limits. The use of debit cards in the name of the Parish is generally discouraged and, when deemed appropriate, should be minimized in number and closely supervised. Whenever debit cards are used, the Pastor shall have provided written pre-approval, including the establishment of prudent maximum transactional and daily limits.



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3.8 Online Banking

Access to view or download online account information shall be restricted to only authorized account signatories and additionally, in the case of all Parish accounts, the Parish Business Manager.

Access to execute banking transactions online, such as through the initiation of Automated Clearing House transactions, direct deposit or wire transfers, shall be restricted to the Pastor and, if properly delegated, the Parish Business Manager.

3.9 Annual Parish-Wide Budget Process Preparing, implementing and monitoring an Annual Parish Budget, or APB, is required. The APB, in aggregate, must be balanced, meaning that receipts are sufficient to cover disbursements. If the APB is not balanced, then other sources of funds should be identified to cover the projected deficit or expenses reduced to achieve a balanced budget.

The Parish Business Office is responsible to prepare an APB that is reasonable, realistic and attainable and reflects all Parish financial activities, inclusive of those of the Church, School, and all other Parish Ministries, and enable the Parish to comply with Archdiocesan Standards.

- 3.9.1 The SFA Finance Council is responsible for overseeing the preparation of the APB and providing its approval prior to submitting to the Archdiocese.
- 3.9.2 The Parish Business Office, in consultation with the SFA Finance Council, will determine whether and which Ministries shall be required to submit a [Ministry Annual Budget \(see Exhibit IV\)](#).
- 3.9.3 Leader(s) for each Ministry from which a Ministry Annual Budget is requested will receive guidance and support in drafting an annual budget from representatives of the Parish Business Office and or the SFA Finance Council.
- 3.9.4 Leaders will submit the proposed budget to the Parish Business Office timely and in good faith and meet with representatives of the Parish Business Office and or the SFA Finance Council to review details, as and if requested.



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4.0 Fundraising Activities

Our Parish will strive to conduct fundraising appeals that are truthful and forthright, theologically sound, and serve to motivate the faithful to a greater love of God & neighbor.

- 4.1 Fund-raising efforts are to be for defined needs. The relationship of trust between donor and fund-raiser requires that funds collected be used for their intended purposes and are not absorbed by excessive fund-raising costs. Donors are to be informed regarding the use of donated funds and assured that any restrictions on the use of the funds by the donor will be honored.
- 4.2 Parish Ministries should focus on their core activities, which are to be aligned to the Parish Mission Statement, Parish Strategic Plan / Pastoral Priorities and principles of Christian Stewardship, and never place primary or undue emphasis on raising money.
- 4.3 It is never acceptable to use the celebration of the Eucharist, or promise of preferential treatment associated with, as an inducement to fundraise. Fundraising in and around the celebration of Mass is generally discouraged.
- 4.4 The SFA Stewardship/Development Committee is appointed to oversee the scheduling of all fundraising activities. Primary fundraising activities, consisting of the largest parish-wide centralized fundraising events that are conducted annually, will be administered by the SFA Stewardship/Development Committee.
- 4.5 Non-primary fundraising activities, inclusive of small scale fundraising events that have the potential to detract from achieving a Ministry's core objectives or result in donor fatigue, are discouraged.
- 4.6 A "**Fundraising Event**" is defined to include any individual activity designed to accumulate gross proceeds reasonably anticipated to exceed \$1,000. Parish events designed to elicit fellowship without intent to generate profit are excluded. Established ministerial dues and membership fees are excluded.
- 4.7 Fundraising Events must be included in any submitted Ministry Annual Budget and or Ministry Financial Report.
- 4.8 A [Fundraising Request Form](#) must be submitted to the SFA Stewardship/Development Committee for each Fundraising Event ([see Exhibit V](#)) irrespective of whether a Ministry has submitted a Ministry Annual Budget or not.

A Fundraising Request Form should be submitted as soon as possible but in no case later than 90 days prior to the Fundraising Event.



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5.0 Approved Forms

[Exhibit I Ministerial Needs Request](#)

[Exhibit II Monthly Bank Reconciliation](#)

[Exhibit III Ministry Financial Report](#)

[Exhibit IV Ministerial Annual Budget](#)

[Exhibit V Fundraising Request](#)



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Exhibit I

Saint Francis of Assisi Parish Ministerial Needs Request Form

[Exhibit I - Ministerial Needs Request](#)



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Exhibit II

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Monthly Bank Reconciliation Form

NOTE <1> A Bank Reconciliation is a process that explains the difference on a specified date between the account balance shown in the bank statement and the corresponding amount balance shown in the Parish's accounting records and, when completed, is printed and separately signed and dated by the preparer and reviewer and retained on file to demonstrate this control practice was adhered to.

NOTE <2> If using an Accounting Software application, such as Quickbooks, recommend using the software's "Reconciliation" feature. At the conclusion, print, sign, date and retain the reconciliation summary for each account before sharing the completed package with the separate approver.

NOTE <3> Following is an illustrated form when an approved Bank Reconciliation is completed manually:

[Monthly Bank Reconciliation. \(see Exhibit II\)](#)



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Monthly Bank Reconciliation			
As of date:	May 30, 20XX	May 30, 20XX	May 18, 20XX
Account Name:	ABC Checking	ABC Savings	ABC MMarket
Bank Statement Balance:	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 3,201.00	\$ 100,546.00
General Ledger Balance:	\$ 19,750.00	\$ 3,201.00	\$ 100,000.00
DIFFERENCE	\$ (1,750.00)	\$ -	\$ 546.00
TYPE	<i>Bank < Book</i>	<i>Bank = Book</i>	<i>Bank > Book</i>
EXPLANATION NEEDED?	YES	NO	YES
<i>NOTE - ACCOUNT IS PROPERLY RECONCILED WHEN FULL DIFFERENCE ABOVE IS EXPLAINED.</i>			
CATEGORY 1: Outstanding Checks <i>[Drawn in Book; not yet encashed at Bank]</i>			
#435 - May 15th - JD Rentals	\$ (48.00)	\$ -	\$ -
#441 - May 22nd - Zz Co Supplies	\$ (150.00)	\$ -	\$ -
#449 - May 30th - ACE Store	\$ (558.00)	\$ -	\$ -
#450 - May 30th - AoP	\$ (1,790.00)	\$ -	\$ -
Total	\$ (2,546.00)	\$ -	\$ -
CATEGORY 2: Deposits In Transit <i>[Recieved in Book; not yet recieved at Bank]</i>			
Deposit 123 - May 29th - Various	\$ 700.00	\$ -	\$ -
Deposit 345 - May 30th - Various	\$ 90.00	\$ -	\$ -
Total	\$ 790.00	\$ -	\$ -
CATEGORY 3: Other <i>[Explanation needed; evaluate if represents an error in Book]</i>			
Out of balance - adjusted in Book (May)	\$ 6.00	\$ -	\$ -
Unrecorded Fees - adjusted post close (June)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (54.00) A
Unrecorded Interest - adjusted post close (June)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 600.00 A
Total	\$ 6.00	\$ -	\$ 546.00
Total Differences Explained	\$ (1,750.00)	\$ -	\$ 546.00
Total Differences Unexplained	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
A - Errors noted in the reconciliation process should be prominently noted to avoid financial mistatement at period end.			



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Exhibit III

Saint Francis of Assisi Parish Ministry Financial Report Form

[Ministry Financial Report \(see Exhibit III\).](#)



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Exhibit IV

Saint Francis of Assisi Parish Ministry Annual Budget Form

[Ministry Annual Budget \(see Exhibit IV\)](#)



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Exhibit V

Saint Francis of Assisi Parish Fundraising Request Form

[Fundraising Request Form](#)