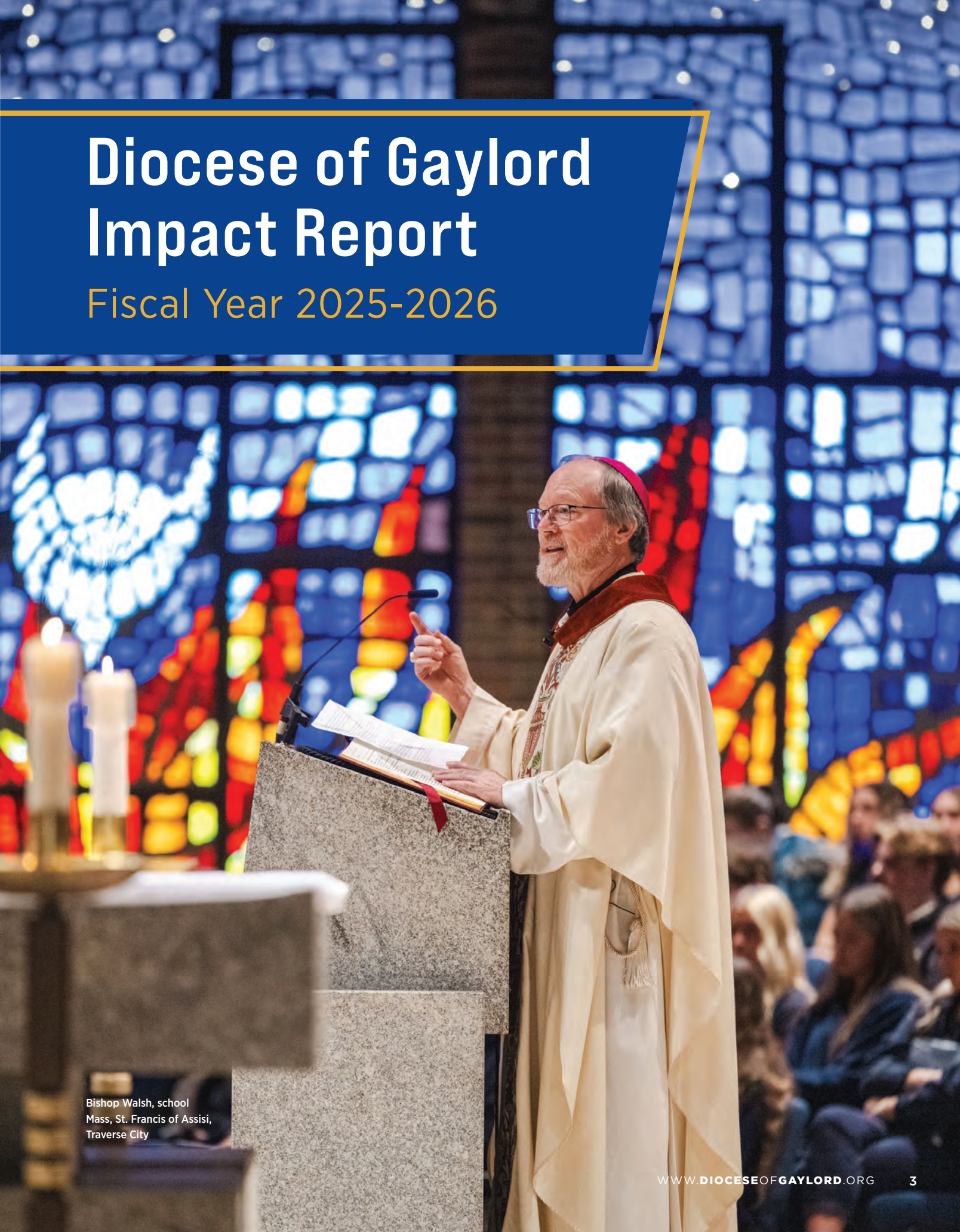
Diocese of Gaylord Impact Report

Fiscal Year 2025-2026



Bishop Walsh, school Mass, St. Francis of Assisi, Traverse City

IMPACT REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I suspect it is a basic human desire to want to make an impact. Every life has meaning and purpose. When we use our gifts and talents properly, we both change the world for the good and change our lives for the better.

This issue of *Faith* magazine is chock-full of examples of impact. We are blessed with a dynamic diocese and people of God on mission. Animated by the sacramental life of the Church and encouraged by a devoted community of believers, there is no limit to what we can accomplish for the Lord.

Much of what this Impact Report frames is the lead up to the July 1, 2026, implementation of our *Pastoral Plan 2026*. With several months of planning and transition from the January date it was announced, almost every aspect of our diocesan life (parish structures, personnel, programs etc.) has been re-imagined through a process of synodality and prayerful discernment.

This was no easy task, but a necessary one, and I believe it puts the Diocese of Gaylord in a better position to handle the continued challenges and opportunities we will face together in the near future.

Our parishes, schools and apostolates are the primary sources of impact. They exist to make disciples and meet the needs of our world.

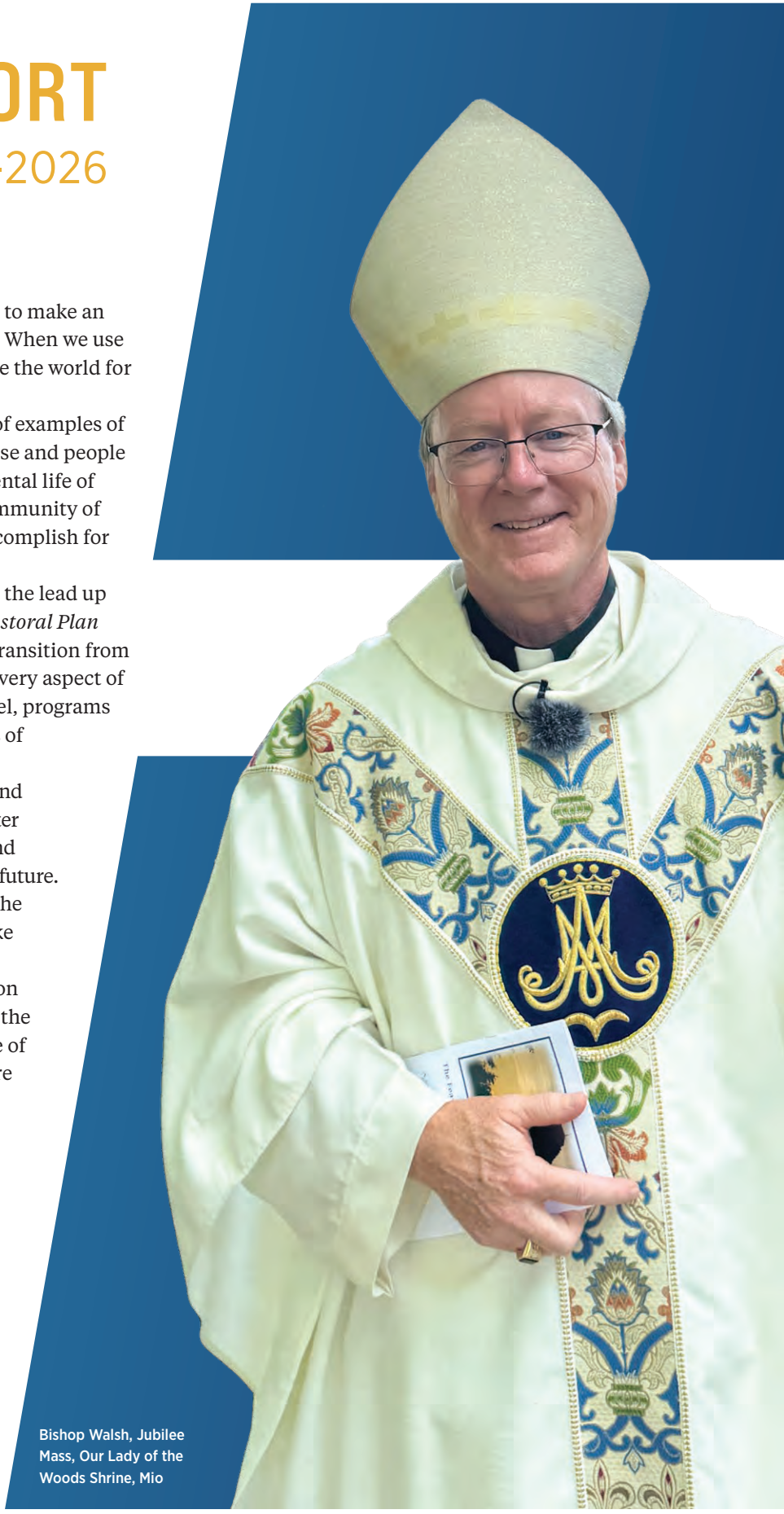
In this Impact Report, you will hear mention of important elements of evangelization like the special annual Masses arranged by our Office of Liturgy and Worship, the St. Joseph's Measure chaplet, Vocations Ministry investment and events, cathedral renovations, Native American and Hispanic Ministry outreach, communication platforms for prayer and faith-based information, Deliverance and Healing Ministry, promotion of sacred music...and so much more.

Let us continue to count our blessings, the biggest of which is God's impact on us!

In Christ our Life!

+ Jeffrey

Most Reverend Jeffrey J. Walsh
Bishop of Gaylord



Bishop Walsh, Jubilee Mass, Our Lady of the Woods Shrine, Mio



Our clergy celebrating Chrism Mass, St. Mary Cathedral, Gaylord

FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026

Diocese by the Numbers*

73 Parishes

2 Shrines

68 Cemeteries

16 Schools

1 Chapel

32 Active Diocese Priests

15 Extern Priests

13 Retired Priests

7 Priests Providing Temporary Coverage

34 Permanent Deacons

1 Brother

21 Religious Sisters

8 Seminarians

6 Directors of Parish Life

1,400 Employees throughout the diocese

40 Diocesan FTEs

* Data reflects the July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026, fiscal year and does not reflect structural changes implemented through the Pastoral Plan beginning July 2026.



Baptism, Our Lady of the Lake, Prudenville



First Communion, Cross in the Woods, Indian River



Confirmation, St. Francis Xavier, Petoskey



Wedding, Immaculate Conception, Traverse City

Parishes by the Numbers*

385
Baptisms

373
First Communions

405
Confirmations

100
Adult Candidates
(Communion and confirmation)

93
Adult Catechumens
(all sacraments)

203
Marriages

855
Adoration hours, average/week

155
Confession hours, average/week

*data reported from 2025 calendar year



Supporting Parishes, Strengthening the Church

At the heart of the Diocese of Gaylord are our parish communities, where Catholics gather to encounter Christ in the sacraments, grow in faith and serve their neighbors. While every parish has its own story, none carries out the mission of the Church alone. Throughout the year, diocesan ministries partnered with pastors, staff and volunteers to provide counsel, resources and support when it was needed most. From planning and formation to outreach and special projects, these examples demonstrate how working together strengthens parish life and helps bring Christ's love to communities throughout Northern Michigan.



Traverse City Public Rosary, Knights of Columbus and Legion of Mary from Holy Rosary, Cedar


Memorial Day remembrance celebration at Leelanau County Veterans Memorial, Father James Siler, St. Mary, Lake Leelanau


125th anniversary celebration, St. Augustine, Boyne Falls

"We have collected nearly $1 million from parishioners via their donation of appreciated securities for our new church building. The diocese has played a vital role in this program and has been quick, efficient and effective in getting us the money for our construction project."

— Jeff Clark, Sacred Heart Parish in Elk Rapids


Jubilee Pilgrimage with Fathers Matthew Wigton and Matthew Furgiuele, Sanctuary of San Damiano, Italy

IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS:

- Supported Sacred Heart Parish in Elk Rapids with its construction campaign, processing more than $940,000 in stock gifts toward its building project.
- Raised more than $330,000 for the renewal of St. Mary, Our Lady of Mount Carmel Cathedral in celebration of its 50th anniversary.
- Purchased and installed generators at St. Mary Cathedral in Gaylord, All Saints in Alpena, St. Augustine in Hillman and St. Francis of Assisi in Lewiston after raising more than $80,000 in the Natural Disaster Relief Fund.
- Safeguarded more than a century of Catholic heritage at St. Francis Xavier Cemetery in Petoskey by digitizing historical records and photographs, protecting these important records for future generations while considering legal requirements.
- Strengthened the stewardship and preservation of sacramental records across the diocese by training priests and parish staff in accurate recordkeeping practices, helping ensure the integrity of Catholics' sacramental histories for generations to come.

Where Faith and Learning Flourish

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Gaylord form students to become faithful disciples, compassionate leaders and lifelong learners. By integrating academic excellence with Catholic values, our schools help young people develop intellectually, spiritually and morally while preparing them to serve their communities and live as witnesses to Christ.



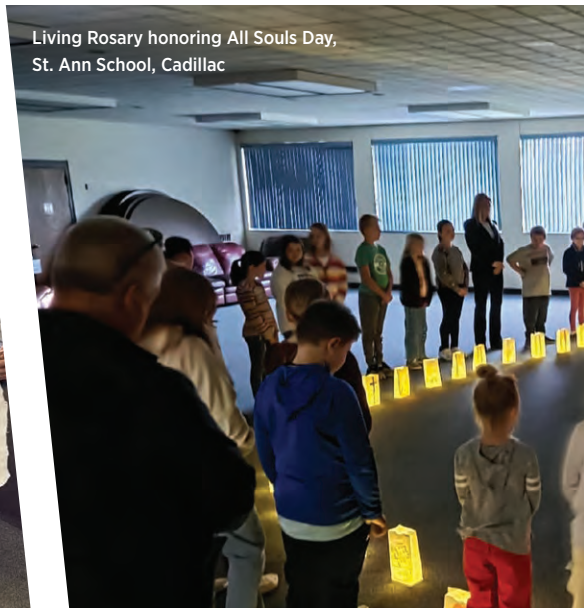
St. Francis High School musical, Wizard of Oz, Traverse City



St. Mary Cathedral School football team



All Saints Day celebration, St. Mary School, Charlevoix



Living Rosary honoring All Souls Day, St. Ann School, Cadillac

Schools by the Numbers

16
Number of schools

254
Number of lay teachers

11:1
Average student to teacher ratio

$5,055.47
Average Tuition

2,753
Student Enrollment

4
Number of religious sisters teaching

$8,698.44
Average Cost to Educate Student



Family wreath making activity, Holy Family School, East Tawas



St. Mary School, Lake Leelanau students at national March for Life, Washington, D.C.



"Holy Family School has given both my girls a true foundation for their future—not only in their everyday lives but in their walk with Christ. This school has helped shape them into the amazing young ladies they are becoming. With the support of terrific teachers and staff and the full support of our parish, any child lucky enough to attend this incredible school will have a bright future ahead of them."

— Jessica Everitt, mother of 4th grader Addison and 8th grader Isabel, Holy Family, East Tawas

OFFICE OF FAITH FORMATION

Growing Disciples for Christ

The Office of Faith Formation supports parishes and ministry leaders in passing on our Catholic faith to our next generation through opportunities like the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) and World Youth Day. These opportunities allow our young people to connect with their peers, deepen their faith and ignite their hearts to strengthen their relationship with Jesus. The office also supports the domestic church through special Masses.



IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

- Ignited a deeper relationship with Christ for 50 high school youth and their chaperones through participation in the National Catholic Youth Conference.
- Launched the Bishop's Youth Advisory Council, bringing together nine middle and high school students from across the Diocese of Gaylord to help the bishop discern effective ways to engage young Catholics.
- Laid the groundwork for the JMJ (Jesus Mary and Joseph) Center for Catholic Studies, a future hub for forming lay faithful to confidently share the Gospel and lead in parish life.
- Mobilized Catholics of all ages to be visible advocates for life through participation in the Michigan March for Life.
- Created welcoming encounters with Christ for diverse members of the faithful through special Masses honoring persons with special needs, agricultural communities and couples celebrating marriage milestones.



Bishop Walsh, Awareness Mass, St. Mary Cathedral, Gaylord



Our pilgrims, National Catholic Youth Conference, Indianapolis



"The Awareness Mass meant the world to our family and was a huge milestone for our son. The Awareness Mass was the first time he was able to attend Mass without the help of a checklist to assist him in following along. For both of our children, it was also the first time they got the opportunity to be gift bearers. This Mass allowed us, as parents, to really feel welcomed in the Church instead of anxious."

— The Lappo family, parishioners of St. Patrick, Traverse City



Parishioners from Divine Mercy, Manistee, 2025 Michigan March for Life



2026 Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion, St. Mary Cathedral, Gaylord

OFFICE OF WORSHIP AND LITURGY

The Source and Summit of Our Faith

At every Mass and sacramental celebration, Catholics are invited into a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ. The Office of Worship and Liturgy strengthens that relationship by providing guidance, formation and support for clergy and lay ministers to unite Catholics across Northern Michigan as one Church.



Gregorian Schola concert, St. Francis of Assisi, Lewiston

IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

- Welcomed 93 catechumens and 100 candidates from across the diocese for the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion, reflecting continued growth in the number of people entering or completing initiation in the Catholic faith.
- Supported parishes in preparing 405 school-aged children to receive confirmation and 373 to receive first Communion, deepening their participation in the sacramental life of the Church.
- Hosted 26 musicians, clergy and liturgical leaders at a Sacred Music Summit, strengthening parish music ministries and enriching worship in our parishes.
- Supported 12 members of the Diocesan Gregorian Schola, representing eight parishes, preserving and promoting the Church's rich musical tradition with concerts throughout the diocese.
- Certified 135 Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, expanding parish capacity to reverently distribute the Eucharist and serve the faithful.
- United nearly 500 priests, deacons, religious and lay faithful at the annual Chrism Mass, celebrating the bonds of communion that strengthen the Diocese of Gaylord as one Church.



"The presenters at the Sacred Music Summit were engaging and informative. I appreciated the knowledge and experience they shared with us. I learned new things! The other aspect of the Sacred Music Summit that was beneficial was having an opportunity to be with musicians from across the diocese. Our opportunities to get together are rare. I am very grateful for everyone who took the time to be there."

— Rita McIntyre, Director of Music Ministries, Cross in the Woods Catholic Shrine, Indian River





Diocesan Sacred Music Summit, Pastoral Center, Gaylord

Answering God's Call

The Office of Vocations helps individuals discern God's call in their lives while fostering a culture of vocations across the Diocese of Gaylord. Through accompaniment, prayer and formation, the office encourages men and women to consider vocations to the priesthood or consecrated life.



Kayaking down the Manistee River, annual seminarian summer gathering



Ordination to the Permanent Diaconate, St. Mary Cathedral, Gaylord



Father Rexroat's vocation visit, St. Francis Xavier, Petoskey



Parish Vocation Team, annual picnic, Holy Childhood of Jesus, Harbor Springs





"The diocese helped me recognize and respond to God's call through its support, guidance and prayer. The Vocations Team encouraged me through monthly meetings with a spiritual director, seminary visits and assistance throughout my discernment. The prayers of the entire diocese, from the bishop to the lay faithful, also reassured me that I would be in good hands. The diocese played a major role in helping me hear and respond to God's call."

— David Hose, diocesan seminarian, Pontifical College Josephinum



Vocations Ministry Workshop, Pastoral Center, Gaylord

IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

- Inspired vocational discernment among young people through visits to 14 Catholic schools and seven vocation-focused events, including seminary visits, Quo Vadis and opportunities to meet Bishop Walsh and diocesan seminarians.
- Celebrated the ordination of Jake Belanger to the transitional diaconate, bringing the Diocese of Gaylord one step closer to its first priestly ordination in six years.
- Celebrated the ordination of five permanent deacons, called to serve alongside priests in sacramental, charitable and pastoral ministry.
- Collected 264 names of faithful young men from around the diocese through the Called by Name Campaign to explore God's call through opportunities for vocational discernment.
- Welcomed five new seminarians into formation for the 2026-27 academic year, strengthening the future of priestly ministry in the Diocese of Gaylord.
- Fostered a stronger culture of vocations by introducing the Vocations Prayer at weekend Masses and helping establish 13 parish-based vocation ministries across the diocese.
- Supported women discerning consecrated life through monthly formation meetings for participants in the diocesan Consecrated Virginity Program and ongoing accompaniment of others exploring a consecrated vocation.

Leading in Faith, Guiding Our Mission

Bishop Jeffrey Walsh provides pastoral leadership for the Church across Northern Michigan, helping clergy, parish leaders and the faithful grow as missionary disciples of Jesus. Through his presence in parishes, schools and communities throughout the Diocese of Gaylord, he fosters unity, accompanies people in their faith journeys and helps guide the local Church in carrying out its mission of evangelization, stewardship and service.



St. Francis High School, Traverse City



Crafting Blankets of Hope, St. Mary, Lake Leelanau



Native American Conference, Pastoral Center, Gaylord



Veteran's Coffee and Donuts gathering, Gaylord Regional Airport

IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS:

- Created the Pastoral Plan 2026, charting a path to strengthen parish life, form missionary disciples and respond to the evolving needs of the Church across Northern Michigan.
- Guided clergy, parish leaders and faithful through the implementation of Pastoral Plan 2026 through ongoing consultation, communication and accompaniment, helping communities navigate change while remaining focused on the mission of the Church.
- Maintained a visible pastoral presence throughout Northern Michigan, traveling more than 32,000 miles to accompany clergy, parish leaders and the faithful in parishes, schools and local communities.
- Expanded opportunities for belonging and participation through initiatives such as the Farm Mass and Awareness Mass, helping more people encounter Christ and feel welcomed within the life of the Church.
- Inspired a devotion to St. Joseph by authoring a prayer and introducing a handcrafted St. Joseph Measure, providing the faithful with a tangible resource for prayer and spiritual growth.

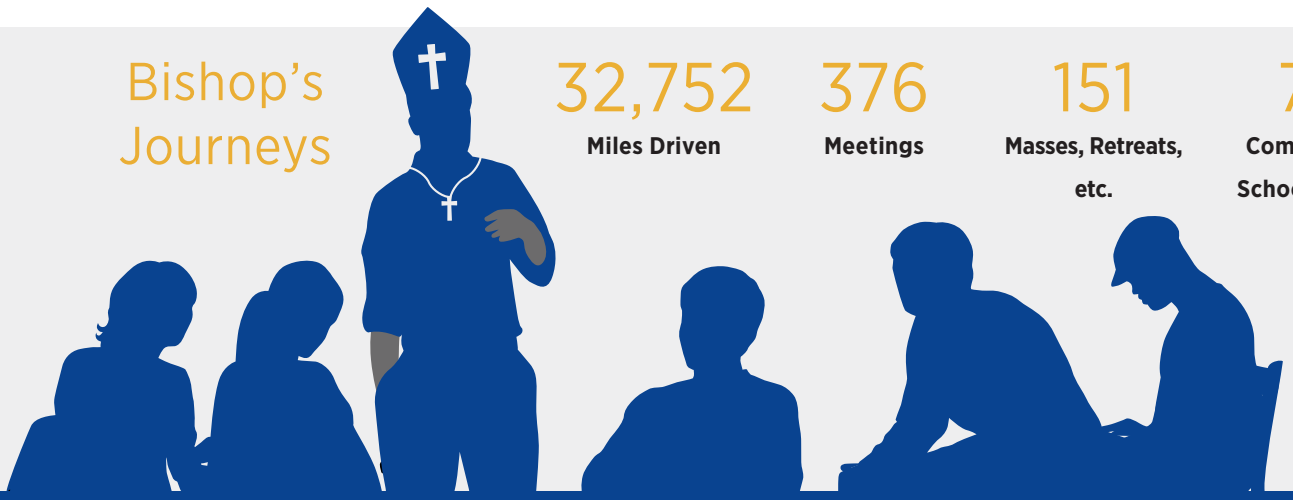
Bishop's Journeys

32,752 Miles Driven

376 Meetings

151 Masses, Retreats, etc.

78 Community/ School Events



Getty/A-Digit

Building Communion Through Communication

The Office of Communications helps unite Catholics across Northern Michigan by sharing the stories, ministries and mission of the Diocese of Gaylord. Through print, digital and social media communications, the office connects parishioners with opportunities for worship, formation and service while helping parishes and diocesan ministries communicate more effectively. By fostering awareness, engagement and a shared sense of mission, the office strengthens communion across the 21-county diocese.





"The Communications Department plays a vital role in keeping our faith-filled community informed and connected. Their communication tools help us reach our parishioners and community members, inviting them to become more involved in parish life and realize God's love."

— Denise Landrie, Development and Communications Coordinator, St. Mary Cathedral Parish and School, Gaylord



Bishop's Weekly Checking In video

IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

- Published six issues of *Faith* magazine, sharing local stories of faith, discipleship and ministry that connected Catholics across Northern Michigan.
- Led diocesan-wide communications for the implementation of the Pastoral Plan, helping parishioners understand and embrace the priorities of *Love, Communion and Mission*.
- Amplified the mission of parishes, schools and diocesan ministries by promoting events, initiatives and resources that invited greater participation in the life of the Church.
- Expanded the reach of diocesan communications by 80 percent through digital, social and video communications that connected Catholics across the 21-county diocese.
- Provided access to Sunday Mass for homebound Catholics through televised liturgies, helping them remain connected to worship and the diocesan faith community.
- Shared the witness of local Catholics, clergy, religious and parish communities, inspiring others to deepen their faith and live the Gospel more fully.

IMPACT REPORT

One Church, Many Cultures

The diocesan Hispanic Ministry helps ensure Spanish-speaking Catholics across Northern Michigan are welcomed, supported and fully integrated into the life of the Church and the community. Through bilingual catechesis, pastoral outreach, sacramental preparation, community-building and immigration support and advocacy, the ministry strengthens participation in parish life and fosters a deeper sense of belonging among Hispanic Catholic families from all over the world.

IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

- Expanded pastoral outreach to seasonal migrant workers by introducing monthly Spanish-language Masses in Lake City, bringing the Eucharist and sacramental life closer to hundreds of Hispanic Catholics working on Christmas tree farms and other agricultural operations.
- Strengthened lay leadership within the Hispanic community by providing formation opportunities for emerging ministry leaders and supporting three women in the two-year "*Mujer Valiente*" (Valiant Woman) leadership program through a partnership with Catholic Extension.
- Increased active participation in parish life by equipping new Hispanic liturgical ministers, doubling the number of lectors from six to 12 and growing volunteer involvement in ministries of hospitality and service.
- Fostered a stronger sense of faith, culture and belonging through cherished traditions and community celebrations, including the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Christmas *Posadas* and *Quinceañeras*.
- Accompanied Hispanic and immigrant families through personal advocacy and pastoral care, helping individuals navigate housing, employment, healthcare, legal challenges and other critical needs while fostering dignity, stability and hope.



Father Wayne Dziekan celebrates Las Posadas

Padre Wayne Dziekan participa en las posadas



Confirmation, Our Lady of Guadalupe Chapel, Traverse City

Confirmación, Capilla de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, Traverse City

Una Iglesia, Muchas Culturas

El Ministerio Hispano diocesano ayuda a garantizar que los católicos de habla hispana en todo el norte de Michigan sean acogidos, apoyados e integrados plenamente en la vida de la Iglesia y de la comunidad. A través de la catequesis bilingüe, el acompañamiento pastoral, la preparación sacramental, la formación de comunidad, así como el apoyo y la defensa de los inmigrantes, el ministerio fortalece la participación en la vida parroquial y fomenta un sentido más profundo de pertenencia entre las familias católicas hispanas provenientes de diversas partes del mundo.



Spanish-language Mass, St. Stephen, Lake City

Misa en español, San Esteban, Lake City

ASPECTOS DESTACADOS DEL IMPACTO

- Se amplió el alcance pastoral a los trabajadores migrantes temporales mediante la introducción de Misas mensuales en español en Lake City y Manton, acercando la Eucaristía y la vida sacramental a cientos de católicos hispanos que trabajan en granjas de árboles de Navidad y en otras operaciones agrícolas.
- Se fortaleció el liderazgo laico dentro de la comunidad hispana al ofrecer oportunidades de formación para nuevos líderes ministeriales y apoyar a tres mujeres en el programa de liderazgo de dos años "Mujer Valiente," a través de una colaboración con Catholic Extension.
- Se incrementó la participación en la vida parroquial al capacitar a nuevos ministros litúrgicos hispanos, duplicando el número de lectores de seis a doce y aumentando la participación de voluntarios en los ministerios de hospitalidad y servicio.
- Se fomentó un sentido más fuerte de fe, cultura y pertenencia mediante tradiciones y celebraciones comunitarias muy apreciadas, incluyendo la festividad de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, las Posadas navideñas y las Quinceañeras.
- Se acompañó a familias hispanas e inmigrantes mediante la defensa de sus necesidades y el cuidado pastoral personalizado, ayudando a las personas a enfrentar desafíos relacionados con vivienda, empleo, atención médica, asuntos legales y otras necesidades críticas, promoviendo al mismo tiempo la dignidad, la estabilidad y la esperanza.

"La presencia del Obispo y del Ministerio Hispano para celebrar Misas en español fortalece la fe de más de 100 trabajadores agrícolas, en su mayoría mexicanos, que llegan cada año al área de Lake City con visas de trabajo."
— Guillermo Águilar, trabajador agrícola migrante

"The presence of the bishop and the Hispanic Ministry to celebrate Masses in Spanish strengthens the faith of over 100 farmworkers—mostly Mexican—who arrive in the Lake City area each year on work visas."
— Guillermo Águilar, seasonal migrant farm worker, Mexico



Corpus Christi procession, Our Lady of Guadalupe Chapel, Traverse City

Procesión del Corpus Christi, capilla de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, Traverse City

Honoring Traditions, Growing in Christ

Native American Ministry builds relationships with Native communities throughout the Diocese of Gaylord while fostering greater understanding, respect and collaboration within the Church. Through outreach, cultural engagement, faith opportunities and pastoral support, the ministry seeks to strengthen communion and accompany Native Catholics on their spiritual journeys.

"The diocesan Native American Ministry is an opportunity to listen with open hearts, show empathy, seek understanding, learn from one another and work together in strengthening our relationship."

— Joan Denemy, parishioner, St. Joseph, West Branch, and member of the Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians

IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

- Invested nearly $17,000 in educational futures of Native American college students through the diocesan Peter Olson Scholarship fund, continuing a 32-year tradition that has awarded nearly $400,000 to help remove financial barriers and support the next generation of leaders.
- Fostered healing, faith and cultural connection through the annual Walking the Red Road Conference, gathering nearly 70 participants to learn from three Native American women who shared powerful personal testimonies of faith, love and healing.
- Strengthened relationships between Native American communities and the Church by partnering with Holy Cross Parish for Rooted in Faith: A Celebration of Unity, bringing nearly 100 participants together to celebrate shared faith, cultural heritage and the restoration of a historic Nativity scene featuring handcrafted cornhusk Native American figures.
- Amplified the voice of Native American Catholics in Northern Michigan through Bishop Jeffrey Walsh's service on the USCCB's Subcommittee on Native American Affairs, helping advance national efforts in Indigenous ministry while strengthening local outreach, cultural engagement and pastoral accompaniment across the diocese.
- Built relationships with Indigenous Catholic leaders from across North America through participation in the national Tekakwitha Conference, bringing perspectives and resources that can help strengthen outreach to Native American communities in the Diocese of Gaylord.



Arlene Kashata speaks at the Native American Conference, Pastoral Center, Gaylord



Cornhusk doll making for Holy Cross' nativity

Finding Hope and Healing in Christ

The Healing and Deliverance Ministry accompanies individuals seeking spiritual healing, freedom and a deeper relationship with Christ. Through prayer, education and pastoral support, the ministry helps people experience God's mercy, find hope in difficult circumstances and grow in spiritual wellness within the life of the Church. With a collaborative team consisting of a diocesan priest specially trained in healing and deliverance ministry, a board-certified psychologist and a trained prayer team, the ministry provides compassionate support and accompaniment rooted in Catholic teaching to those seeking healing from spiritual matters.



Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Saints, Pietro Novelli

> "This ministry has helped me to better understand the source of evil in the world and the importance of frequent reception of the sacraments to always remain in the state of grace."
>
> **— Member of the Ministry's Prayer Team**

IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

- Created pathways to healing for more than 20 individuals and families facing spiritual struggles through prayerful accompaniment grounded in Catholic teaching and pastoral care.
- Provided ministry to people of all ages, from children to seniors, offering prayer, guidance and support tailored to each person's unique circumstances and spiritual needs.
- Strengthening the ministry's ability to serve those seeking help through ongoing formation and specialized deliverance training supported by a generous donor.
- Promoted greater understanding of the Church's teachings on spiritual healing and deliverance, helping individuals move toward spiritual freedom by encouraging renewed participation in the sacraments, prayer and a life of grace.



Bishop blesses cornhusk nativity, Holy Cross, Cross Village

OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENT AND STEWARDSHIP

Strengthening Our Shared Mission

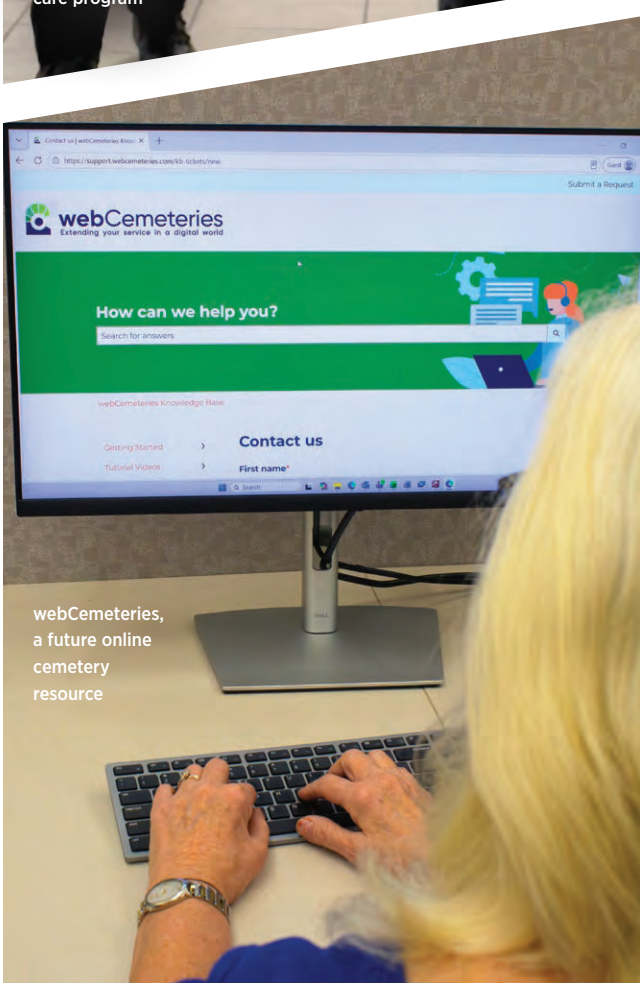
The Office of Development and Stewardship encourages a culture of gratitude, generosity and faithful stewardship throughout the Diocese of Gaylord. The office strengthens missions that form disciples, serve those in need and sustain the future of the Church in Northern Michigan. This is done through supporting the mission of the Church through prayer, service and financial gifts.



Gratitude Tour, Traverse City



Elizabeth Young, BSN, CM, and Father Matthew Furgiuele discuss the new clergy care program



webCemeteries, a future online cemetery resource



Spanish missalettes,
Sacred Heart, Oscoda

IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

- Secured more than $160,000 in grant funding to advance diocesan priorities, including a two-year commitment from the Northern Michigan Catholic Foundation to help implement a diocesan-wide digital management system for Catholic cemeteries.
- Established a Clergy Care Endowment at the Northern Michigan Catholic Foundation and secured four major gifts to provide lasting support for the health and well-being of diocesan priests.
- Expanded access to worship resources for Hispanic Catholics by purchasing and distributing 800 bilingual missalettes to all parishes through a Giving Tuesday appeal that raised more than $10,000.
- Mobilized more than $4 million through the 2025-26 Catholic Services Appeal, sustaining ministries that serve the faithful across Northern Michigan while returning more than $500,000 to parishes that exceeded their goals.

Restoring Hope, Renewing Lives

Supported in part by the annual Catholic Services Appeal (CSA), Catholic Human Services (CHS) extends the Church's mission of charity by providing professional support to individuals and families throughout Northern Michigan. Serving all 21 counties of the Diocese of Gaylord, CHS offers counseling and mental health services, substance use recovery and prevention programs, adoption services, family support and senior assistance programs. Open to all regardless of faith, income, race or ethnicity, CHS helps individuals and families find hope, healing and stability during life's challenges.



Foster Grandparent Marilyn Leix and kindergartner, Mill Creek Academy, Williamsburg

IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

- Expanded specialty Recovery Care services, increasing access to treatment and support for individuals living with substance use disorders.
- Developed new strategic initiatives to increase access to mental health counseling services throughout Northern Michigan.
- Strengthened outreach to parishes across the diocese, helping connect individuals and families with professional support services rooted in Catholic values.
- Extended the Church's ministry of compassion across all 21 counties through counseling, recovery, adoption, family support and senior service programs that bring hope and healing to individuals and families.



Summer youth biking activity, Kalkaska, sponsored in part by Catholic Human Services



Catholic Relief Services, Special Collection for natural disaster





Catholic Human Services Mobile Unit, Project Connect, Alcona County





Pope Leo XIV blesses missionaries, Vatican. CNS photo/Vatican Media

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Supporting Our Neighbors

Through the generosity of the faithful, our diocesan special collections provide critical support to people facing hardship in our local communities and around the world. These collections, held throughout the year, help extend Christ's compassion through ministries and programs that serve those most in need. The collections listed are separate from the Catholic Services Appeal (CSA), which funds many other national and diocesan efforts.

- World Mission Sunday: $89,419.65
- Retirement Fund for Religious: $165,455.60
- Catholic Relief Services Collection: $53,015.91
- CRS Rice Bowl: $40,094
- Gaza Relief: $108,103



Boyne Valley Youth Ministry Mission, Lansing, Michigan

PASTORAL PLAN 2026

Preparing Our Diocese for the Future

The Diocese of Gaylord spent fiscal year 2025-26 engaged in one of the most significant planning efforts in its history. Rooted in prayer, consultation and data-driven discernment, Pastoral Plan 2026 sought to address the current situation of our local Church while strengthening its ability to carry out Christ's mission for generations to come.



Throughout the process, Bishop Walsh, clergy, parish leaders and lay faithful worked together to discern how best to steward our resources, support priests and ensure vibrant parish life across Northern Michigan. The resulting plan was built upon the guiding principles of *Love, Communion and Mission*; it was prepared for implementation beginning July 1, 2026.

A PROCESS GROUNDED IN HOPE

Pastoral planning was never simply about buildings, boundaries or schedules. It was about people.

The planning process recognized both the challenges and opportunities facing the Church in Northern Michigan, including shifting demographics, declining sacramental participation in some areas, financial realities and the need to provide sustainable pastoral care across 21 counties. Throughout the process, leaders sought to balance practical realities with a commitment to preserving the mission of proclaiming the Gospel and celebrating the sacraments.

For some Catholics, the plan brought reassurance and optimism. For others, especially those experiencing changes in parish structure or to a beloved worship site, the process brought understandable sadness and uncertainty. The diocese acknowledges those emotions while inviting all the faithful to move forward together in faith, trusting that Christ continues to guide his Church.





Eucharistic procession, streets of Harbor Springs, Holy Childhood of Jesus

FY 2025-26 IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

- Collected and analyzed demographic, sacramental, financial, Mass attendance, clergy and parish data to better understand both the current situation and future challenges facing the diocese.
- Conducted a year-long pastoral planning process involving clergy, parish finance councils, parish pastoral councils, directors of parish life and diocesan leadership.
- Hosted vicariate meetings, listening sessions and opportunities for feedback to ensure the voices of parish leaders helped shape the final recommendations.
- Developed implementation resources, communication tools and transition materials to help parishes prepare for July 2026 changes.
- Created new parish clusters designed to strengthen pastoral care, balance priest assignments and position parishes for the longer-term. The plan established 18 new parish clusters while maintaining support for Catholic schools, vocations, lay formation and youth ministry.
- Accompanied parish communities affected by closures, limited-use church designations and restructuring through communication, listening and pastoral support as they prepared for a new chapter in diocesan life.



Homebound ministry volunteer Mary Charoth brings Communion to Tom Centala, a MediLodge resident, Alpena



Youth Ministry Scripture Walk, St. Mary of the Woods, Kalkaska

Financial Breakdown

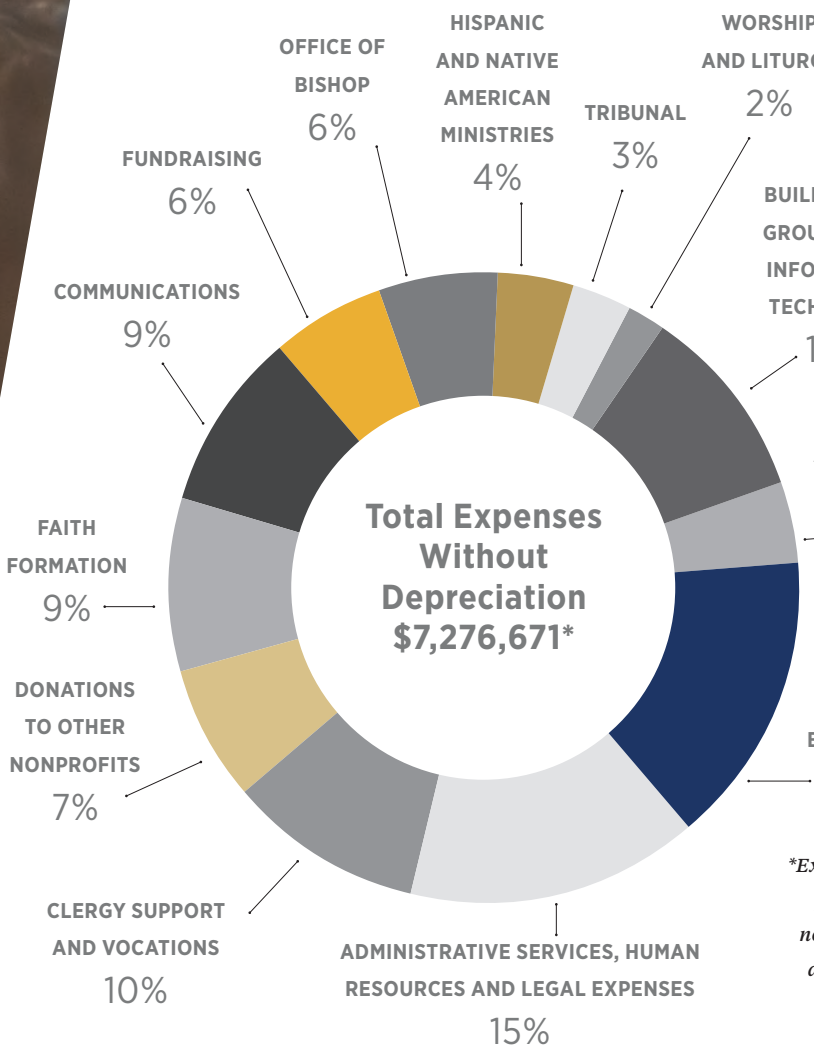
The financial breakdown is a summary of the Diocese of Gaylord's pre-audited statement. The full report, including an annual audit by Dennis Gargland & Niergarth, a public accounting firm, will be available in December and posted on the diocesan website. The diocese strives to be an excellent steward of your gifts and to maintain the highest level of fiscal responsibility.



Chrism Mass



**Charitable support and revenue: The percentages noted exclude investment income net of fees $3,789,633*



**Expenses: The percentages noted exclude depreciation expenses of $258,259.*