

Hello, my name is Laura Reiter and I am a member of St. Mary's Finance Council. I would like to take some time today to update you on the financial condition of St. Mary's Church.

St. Mary's Church, as well as with all of our households, runs on a very tight budget. Parish income consists of weekly collections, fundraisers consisting of the farmer's breakfasts and the summer festival, and gifts. Expenses consist mainly of the wages and benefits of employees, followed by repairs and maintenance, utilities, liturgical expenses and support of our most precious asset, our Catholic school.

We are currently a little more than halfway through our fiscal year. Although the staff at St. Mary's has done an excellent job at keeping expenses to a minimum and within the budget that was set for the year, there are a few concerns.

Weekly collections are down about \$21,000 since last year at this time. Also, St. Mary's has not collected the amount assessed by the Diocese of Superior for our share of the 2015-16 Catholic Services Appeal. We are currently \$7,000 short of our goal. This amount becomes an expense to the parish if it is not collected by our parishioners.

We on the finance council have recently been forced to authorize that money be taken out of St. Mary's savings account to pay for ordinary operating costs. This is a cause of concern for us.

St. Mary's is truly a gift to all of us, just consider what St. Mary's does for you. Besides being a holy place where we can receive our blessed sacraments, adults have opportunities for spiritual growth with Adoration, bible studies, and the music ministry. Our Catholic School is empowering children with the faith they need to continue the traditions of the Church. The youth group is strong and involved in service and faith-building endeavors. Our parish is involved in our community by supporting Our Sister's House and serving those in need. Even the floors of the church are shining brightly again!

On behalf of the finance council, I would like everyone to please consider all the gifts you receive from St. Mary's Church. Please prayerfully consider if this is a time that you can give a gift back, whether by increasing your weekly contribution or by making a donation to the Catholic Services Appeal. Even a small amount will help.

It is through our gifts that St. Mary's is able to offer her gifts. I appreciate your time and God Bless you all.