



Sister Parish Annual Report 2025





Our Mission

Sister Parish exists to foster mutual understanding and commitment to peace and justice among people in the United States and Central America. This objective is pursued through intentional linking of parishes or groups in the United States with parishes and faith communities in Central America. Delegation travel to the North and South with homestays is an essential aspect in enhancing awareness and understanding and in nurturing closer relationships.

Our Vision

We believe the Kingdom of God is already present but not complete, and the liberating Gospel calls us to work together to build this Kingdom through: ***Consciousness-raising, Solidarity, Reconciliation, and Ecumenism.***

PO Box 5202, Fargo, ND 58105
(612) 326-4361 www.sisterparish.org

Letter from the Executive Director

2025 was a year of organization and continuous learning.

These are great news of happiness and great goals achievements, new Sister Parishes!!! We welcome Divine Mercy linkage in Faribault, MN; with St. Francis of Assisi in Panajachel, Guatemala; and Rockbridge in Austin, Texas, with San Jose de La Montaña, in El Salvador.



We strengthened teamwork through training sessions focused on reflection, history, and leadership practices. We are constantly learning and sharing experiences—everyone is both a student and a teacher.

I learned that the reality of each community is different, and the way of seeking God, accompanying others, learning, and communicating varies greatly from one group to another. You cannot expect that by copying what works well in one group, it will work exactly the same in another.

Therefore, you must be open to adapting to each context.

—César Tox, Guatemala Regional Coordinator

The voices of women were heard.

During the delegation from St. Thomas Lutheran Church, IN, to Chichipate, El Estor, Guatemala, the women bravely expressed their desire for a women-only meeting with the sisters from St. Thomas. The meeting was held, and as a result of their request, there are now 14 scholarship recipients in their community—10 girls and 4 boys.

Amid our fears and daily challenges in both the North and the South, we continue striving to stay focused on our mission and vision. The Kingdom of God is present, though not yet complete. Let us continue praying, reflecting, and taking action to help bring this Kingdom to fulfillment.

Thank you all for continuing to be part of our organization, for participating in Bible studies, delegations, committees, your constant prayers, and your generous donations.

Lets keep strengthening our faith and actions through our Sister Parish work,

Ruth Garrido

Executive Director



“From our community, we always keep you in our prayers and praises, thanking God for the bond that unites us as brothers and sisters. Let us continue walking together in faith, praying for one another, trusting that the Lord always blesses and protects us. Receive our warmest embrace and our blessings.”

-Pedro Sica
San Ant3nio Cun3n,
Guatemala

2025 Letter from the Board

President's Report

2025 has been a year of change and growth for Sister Parish, Inc. Although Ruth Garrido stepped into the executive director position in August 2024, 2025 was a year of transition and learning especially since I was also new

to the role as president of the board. Thank goodness for Ruth's previous experience as a Sister Parish staff and Carrie Stengel's continued presence as the US coordinator until the end of December 2025! Along with Ruth, Salvadoran Coordinator, Jorge Gomez, and Guatemalan Coordinator, Cesar Tox, nurtured the current twelve partnerships and developed two new North American churches to be paired with communities in the south. Also, hats off to Gary Larson, our long-time volunteer accountant, and our consultant, Edgar Alvarez, for simplifying our financial reporting system which creates more transparency and shortens the amount of staff time.



Our Sister Parish Board of Directors meets in-person at Sister Parish churches twice a year. In May, we met at St Joan of Arc-Minneapolis (paired with Tierra Nueva II) and at Downers Grove (IL) First United Methodist (paired with UPAVIM) in November. We welcomed Carl Malischke, Bob Burrell, and Ashley (Templeton) Rivas to the board. We so appreciate the contributions of Linda Main and David Scott who terms ended in December. Our board meetings are a mix of reviewing financials, determining policies and staffing, planning for the future, and everything that revolves around keeping an organization functional so that our local partnerships can continue to be supported and grow. But, part of the in-person meetings also include time to discuss how to deepen our relationships with each other and our hermanamientos.



Here's an excerpt from our November meeting:

Open Discussion Time: Solidarity vs Charity (David)

We discussed solidarity according to a definition from Darlene Marquez-Caramanzana and a reflection from Emily Young-Johnson. We discussed ideas such as learning through encounter; responding to requests; the nature of justice and justice vs. fairness vs. equality vs. equity; dignity; sisterhood; the kingdom of God; connection; challenging conventions and challenging Americans' sense of power; using small gifts to share one's own story; helping the community through the directiva vs. one-on-one; not showing favoritism to individuals; how we represent communities, not ourselves as individuals; the importance of SP staff in knowing the community and monitoring how projects go, though this raises additional questions; the ways in which projects can be a challenge in the South in terms of making sure the benefits are distributed broadly and fairly; the responsibilities of those who receive scholarships; the role of the Southern Directiva; needing to listen and take the risk; solidarity within North communities in terms of trip funding; the need to keep talking amid disagreement/conflict and to share courageously and truthfully; the challenge of how to manage groups where people are at different levels of knowledge and awareness of issues; and what our role as a board is in supporting the staff in the pursuit of solidarity.

Thanks to each of you for your continued interest, prayers, and financial support.

Jan Heikes

2025 Sister Parish Inc. Board of Directors

United States

Jan Heikes
Patricia Cespedes-Schueller
Kate Casserly
Carl Malischke

Bob Burrell
Ashley Rivas
David Scott
Linda Main



“We welcome you with hearts full of joy as part of this relationship. We walk together, step by step, building a future of mutual support. Perhaps we will not live to see all the fruits, but we are certain that future generations will reap what we are sowing today with hope.”

-Santos

Virginia, Ixcan.



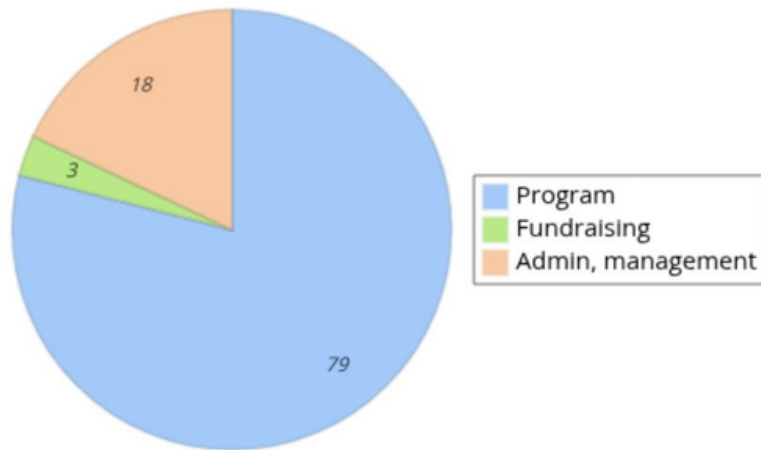


Financial Report 2025



Sister Parish - Expenses 2026

Data in %




Income

- Contributions, grants (donations, virtual del donations (not fees)) etc. \$ 94,527.75
 - Program service revenue (projects, delegation fees, 2 % on projects) etc. \$ 122,548.78
 - Interest \$ 5,333.00
- TOTAL \$ 222,409.53**

Expense

- Salaries, compensation, health, payroll taxes \$ 10,334.45
 - Professional fees \$ 59,126.20
 - Occupancy, rent, utilities, maintenancem, etc. \$2,969.62
 - Printing, publications, postage \$ 1,892.00
 - Operations and other expenses \$ 112,140.20
- TOTAL \$ 186,462.47**





Thank you to all who donated time and in-kind gifts to the Sister Parish mission.

Special thanks to Gary Larson for his accounting support.

Thank you to the Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa and Thrivent Choice for grants to Sister Parish, and to those who direct donations through these programs.



Sister Parish Member Communities

**Christ Episcopal Church
Blacksburg, VA**

San Andrés Itzapa Episcopal Community,
Guatemala

**Danville Congregational Church
Danville, CA**

Iglesia Católica de San Antonio , Guatemala

**North Dakota Committee
Fargo, ND**

San Marcos Evangelista, Tierra Nueva I ,
Guatemala

**First Lutheran Church of Duluth
Duluth, MN**

San Antonio Los Ranchos, El Salvador

**First United Methodist & Congregational United
Church of Christ Churches of Decorah
Decorah, IA**

San José Potrerillos, El Salvador

**Downers Grove First United Methodist Church
Downers Grive, IL**

UPAVIM, Guatemala

**Divine Mercy Catholic Church
Faribault, MN**

San Francisco de Asís, Guatemala

**Wallingford United Methodist Church
Seattle, WA**

Cantón Guarjila, El Salvador

**East Orrington Congregational Church
Orrington, ME**

Virginia, Guatemala

**St. Joan of Arc Catholic Community,
Minneapolis, MN**

Iglesia Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe,
Tierra Nueva II, Guatemala

**St. Thomas Lutheran Church
Bloomington, IN**

Santo Domingo de Guzmán, Guatemala

**Catholic Community of St. Francis of Assisi
Raleigh, NC**

Las Margaritas II, Guatemala

**Rockbridge Church, United Methodist
Community
Cedarpark, TX**

And the communities of:

- Chontalá, Guatemala
- San José de la Montaña, El Salvador
- Zaragoza, El Slvador



Thank you for being part of our Sister Parish community. May we continue to open our hearts and our communities to transformation.

