

TRANSFORMING HEARTS



St. Agatha Catholic Church

STEWARDSHIP REPORT 2018-2019

Vision Statement

To attract hearts to surrender to the transformative love of God, fortified by the Word, by the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, by a faithful community of disciples, and by participating fully with God in the ongoing resurrection of lives, families and communities.

Mission Statement

Walking in Faith, Living in Love, Being Church after Church, Ever Binding Ourselves to Christ and Moving Forward with Him.

Parish Values

Vibrant God-Praising and Life-Giving Liturgies, Hospitality, Community, Christ-centered Stewardship, Social Outreach and Social Justice.

LETTER FROM THE PASTOR

I continue to be so grateful to have the privilege of shepherding this great parish given us by Jesus Christ himself. I continue to be grateful for such a great parish family to whom and with whom I have the privilege to minister in this community. And I continue to be grateful to all of you who allow God's love to flow through you to care for your families, for our parish family and for those in our community who have the need of our support and care.

Every Sunday, as we gather in Church to give praise and thanksgiving to our Creator, we bind ourselves to Christ in His Sacred Word, in His Body and Blood and in the collective Body of Christ with whom we worship. Every Sunday we humbly present our God-given gifts at the altar, trusting that God will in-Spirit those gifts, now united with the very soul and divinity of Christ himself. Then God offers them back to us to go forth and share those gifts with all whom God places in our path during the week, to "be Church after Church."

I am pleased to present to you our 2019 Parish Stewardship Report that highlights the various ways that you, through your generous sharing of your time, talent and treasure, continue to honor our commitment to Jesus Christ himself to humbly and generously steward this gift – this parish of St. Agatha - that He has given us. Also, as we prepare this November to honor All Saints (Nov. 1st), All Souls (Nov. 2nd), and our loved ones who have passed on in the last year (Nov. 3rd), we honor through our stewardship the legacy that they have left us to build upon, with the pledge to God and to them that we will offer our very best to honor their legacy—God's legacy given to us.

The past year has been a full one as we continue to deepen our faith, care for one another and expand our outreach in care for the community around us. As we seek to touch more lives with the love of Christ, we have begun to expand our evangelization efforts by offering opportunities for parishioners and non-parishioners to deepen their relationship with God in Jesus Christ.

I am ever grateful for our staff who every day help keep this beautiful ship of St. Agatha sailing into the future. And we are all grateful for your continued faithfulness to God and your trust that, in the sacrifices you make for your family, for the poor and for our parish, God will reward you a hundred-fold.

I hope you find yourself and your gifts in some way represented in this report: the fruit of your time, talent and treasure in the past fiscal year. On behalf of the whole community, thank you for your generosity! May your support to our St. Agatha vision always be a true and full reflection of the ways God has been generous to you and how God's love has transformed your heart into the heart of a disciple.

May God bless you and embrace you in His Gentle Peace!

Fr. Larry Dowling, Pastor



LETTER FROM DEACON SHUMPERT

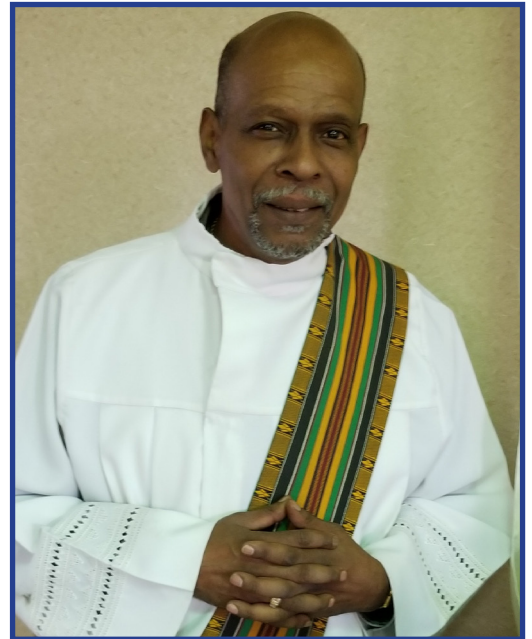
To the Faith filled members of St. Agatha's Catholic Church Community, I am thankful and grateful for the opportunity to serve you in the North Lawndale Community.

It has been an awesome experience thus far to be supported by each one of you in your own way on our spiritual journey.

God has blessed me too serve Him and answer the call of the Deaconate for the last 20 years, and I couldn't think of a better community too serve than St. Agatha's.

I just wanted each one of you too know how thankful, I am for the opportunity too be your Deacon.

Your Brother in Christ,
Deacon Gregory Shumpert
"Class of 1999"



LETTER FROM PARISH COUNCIL PRESIDENT

The St. Agatha Parish Council is a ministry deeply committed to the spiritual and communal development of our parishioners. It establishes the by-laws that govern support ministries such as evangelization, stewardship (giving faithfully to God), education (from Stressed to Blessed and YES [Youth Encounter the Savior]), social justice (Restorative Justice/Peace Hub), and economic development (monthly legal fee assistance), to name a few.

St. Agatha continues to remain a spiritual utopia in North Lawndale by serving communion to the sick and homebound, offering prayer opportunities to those in need of strengthening their faith, feeding the hungry through its food pantry, and providing other means of physical support for those in need.

The nine members of this ministry share a responsibility along with the pastor to plan, define goals, and set strategies for implementing and evaluating the success of those goals for the overall benefit of the church. Members include: Cynthia Boone, vice president; Mary Anderson, secretary; Phyllis Burrell, Mattie Dillard, Stacy Jasper, Janice Oda-Gray, Vickie Martin, and Gloria Seabrook.

We, the members of the St. Agatha Parish Council, will always reflect upon the teaching of Jesus Christ and the Holy Church's mission to love and support thy brethren. We are fully committed spiritually, economically, and culturally to the survival of St. Agatha Catholic Church.

Moses, L. Oliver,
President

FAITH FORMATION - ADULTS, YOUTH AND SENIORS



St. Agatha's 2019 Prayer Breakfast

Prayers Partners was initiated during the St. Agatha Catholic Church Parish Transformation Process. The purpose is to improve parishioners prayers life and faith sharing. The initial activity involved having parishioners pair up as prayer partners during the Lenten season. Many of these prayers partners have made this an ongoing activity. For the past three years, the Prayers Partners have coordinated an annual Prayer Breakfast that is held after Easter each year. We continue to look for ways to support the prayer life of the parishioners. Prayer Partners are co-chaired by Mattie Dillard, Jacqueline Gray and Cynthia Boone.

Golden Agers: Words of Wisdom

A representative from Rush University Hospital recently held an in service for the Golden Agers at its regular monthly meeting on healthy aging and what to expect as we grow older. The topic was very timely, as the group had just completed an intensive search for one of its member's false teeth. The group looked everywhere—even in the garbage can—and called her house to see if she had left them at home. We all had a good laugh when we found that they were still in her mouth. Our lesson: pray unceasingly, and take one day at a time.



Y.E.S. – Youth Encounter the Savior Youth Ministry:

Y.E.S. is held the first and third Saturdays of each month and is a faith-based program for youth and teens ages 7 to 18 years old. The program's mission is to nurture faith-based discipleship; create a safe and sacred space for children and teens to gather; recognize and nurture the gifts of youth to benefit the wider St. Agatha Church Community and North Lawndale Community; and to do all of this Centered in faith, family, and community. Other activities include age appropriate Bible study, dance mime, life skills training, youth choir and activities to nurture the body, mind, and spirit of youth.

St. Agatha Men's Group 2019 Retreat

Nine Members of the Men's Group participated in a Retreat from May 31 through June 2nd at Villa Desiderata. The retreat offered the opportunity for prayer, reflection and discussion of issues related to being men, especially men of faith. The men plan to make this an annual opportunity for the men of the parish and community.



LITURGY AND SACRAMENTS



Gospel Choir:

The St. Agatha Gospel Choir is recording a gospel CD as a fundraiser for the church. Spearheading the project is the Smith Music Association, a 501c3 led by St. Agatha's Minister of music, Dennis Smith. This groundbreaking recording is the first of its kind for an African American parish. The live recording of original music will occur November 8, 2019, at 7:00 PM at St. Agatha. All are invited. Proceeds from the sale of the CDs, which will be available in March, will go directly to St. Agatha.

Participants & Volunteers – By the Numbers

Reception into Full Communion Under 18 Years	1	Reception into Full Communion 18 Years and older	3
First Communions Under 18 Years	2	First Communions 18 Years and older	3
Baptism Under 7 Years	6	Funerals	13
Parish Population			
Registered Families (estimate)	217	Registered Persons (estimate)	338

Be Church After Church



MINISTRIES

Blessed Sacrament/ S.A.F.E.

Blessed Sacrament/ St. Agatha Family Empowerment (S.A.F.E.) is an afterschool and summer camp program for youth ages 6 to 18 years old. Activities include homework/academic enrichment, arts and crafts, health and nutrition, dance, computer lab, sports and recreation. S.A.F.E./Blessed Sacrament operates six days a week. A seven-week Summer Camp offers added activities such as swimming, sports, field trips and cook-outs.



From Stressed to Blessed: Support for Peaceable Parenting

From Stressed to Blessed is a 12-hour/4-session program conducted each week designed to teach parents a method of parenting and problem-solving that will help their children to meet life's challenges, building communication skills and peaceful conflict resolution strategies in families. It teaches an "active" parenting approach in contrast to a "reactive" approach, discipline vs. punishment. A meal and child care is provided during the sessions. Upon completion of the course, participants are awarded a certificate and gift card.

Community Dinner

St Agatha Parish offers a Community Dinner on the second Saturday of each month. Each dinner is sponsored by a ministry of St. Agatha. Community members are invited to partake in a hot nutritious meal and fellowship with community and church members. Participants are encouraged to dialog about ways to improve the North Lawndale community.



Adult, Youth and Child Religious Education Programs

Religious education and formation classes are offered for pre-K through 12th grade students every Sunday from 9:15 to 10:15 a.m. A special breakout Liturgy of the Word is offered every 2nd and 4th Sunday during the 10:30 Mass. Adult Religious Education Sessions and 6-Week Bible study sessions are offered throughout the year.

MINISTRIES

Restorative Justice/ Peace Hub

St. Agatha, as part of its ongoing outreach to the North Lawndale Community, has leveraged funds received from Cook County and other donors to minister to the community to implement restorative justice practices. Our restorative justice work involves engaging youth, parents, and youth and parents together, in building ways to better communicate and peacefully resolve conflict in the home, in schools, and on the streets. Through our RJ Coordinators, parenting instructors and volunteers from the parish community, we have been able to work with youth and adults on our streets, in a few of our local schools, and even in Cook County Jail, to move people away from systems that are systems that focus on retribution, currently reflected in our criminal justice system and in the system of punishment and zero tolerance, rather than on structured discipline, in our homes and schools. We do this in the spirit of Matthew 18: restoring relationships where possible, thus strengthening individuals, families and the community.

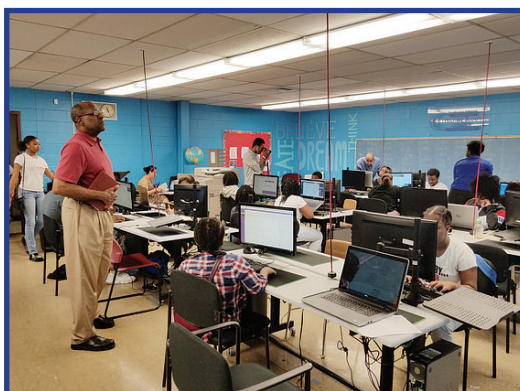


St. Agatha Poetry and Drama Club Reenacts the Last Supper

The St. Agatha Poetry and Drama Club engages parishioners of every age to participate in dramatic readings for special occasions throughout the year. They will present readings during Black History Month, as well as special productions of plays two to three times a year.

Food Pantries

St. Agatha's Food Pantry, in partnership with the Greater Chicago Food Depository, offers a food pantry every Tuesday from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Fresh vegetables, meat, canned goods and other items are provided free to North Lawndale residents and others in need of food. We also coordinate a second Food Pantry at Blessed Sacrament at 2153 S. Millard on Wednesdays.



St. Agatha News School

The St. Agatha News School is an after-School and Summer School program for high school students to develop writing and critical thinking in order to become citizen journalists. After-school courses are offered in 8 week classes Monday through Friday from 3:30 to 5:30. Summer program runs for 7-weeks Monday through Thursday, 8:30 – Noon. Each class creates a Community Newspaper by the end of each course. Students are given a stipend at the end of each course. Students are given a stipend at the end of the completed course work, a certificate of completion and a Press Pass.

MINISTRIES

Partnership with M.U.S.I.C., Inc.

St. Agatha currently provides space for the M.U.S.I.C. Inc. program this program which teaches youth from 1st grade through 8th grade how to learn play the violin and cello. In September, 2017, St. Agatha and M.U.S.I.C., Inc. will partner with S.A.F.E. to add students from our after-school program into music training.



Christmas Basket Outreach

Every year for the last 25 years St. Agatha has offered parents and seniors the opportunity to apply for specific needs they have for their children and themselves. Through the generosity of parish partners in the suburbs, families are provided with most of what they ask for at Christmastime. The process for applying involves participation in a 3-hour Talking Circle where we can discuss hopes and dreams, pains and struggles that families have, as well as discuss values that we seek to pass on to our children. The goal of these sessions is to encourage ongoing parent involvement in support groups that St. Agatha coordinates.



Collaboration with the North Lawndale Restorative Justice Peace Hub and North Lawndale Restorative Justice Community Court

For over two years St. Agatha has been a part of this collaboration of 30+ social services and other organizations to best align our supports to maximize our outreach to local youth and families. Fr. Larry Dowling serves as one of 7 community members on the Steering Committee for the soon-to-open first Restorative Justice Community Court in the nation.











St. Agatha Catholic Church

St. Agatha Parish Staff and Ministry Leaders

Pastor	Rev. Larry Dowling
Deacon	Mr. Greg Shumpert
Minister of Care	Sr. Patricia Kerz, BVM
Religious Education	
Youth Ministry Coordinator	Ms. Jimmie Etheridge
Business Manager	Mrs. Cynthia Smith
St. Agatha Family Empowerment (S.A.F.E.) Director	Mr. Brian Norkett
Tech Lab Coordinator	Mr. David Wolfe
Restorative Justice Coordinator	Mr. Derek Brown
	Mr. Fred Cooper
Parent-to-Parent Coordinator	Ms. Heather Johnson
Minister of Music	Mr. Dennis Smith
Choir Director	Mr. Antonio Anderson
Choir Coordinator	Mr. Mary Anderson
Food Pantry Coordinator:	
St. Agatha	Ms. Refoncia McGowan
Blessed Sacrament	Sr. Patricia Kerz, BVM
Blessed Sacrament Catholic Youth Center Director	Mr. Brian Norkett
Parish Pastoral Council President	Mr. Moses Oliver
Finance Committee President	Mr. Mark Boone
Senior Club	Ms. Phyllis Burrell
Golden Agers	Sr. Patricia Kerz, BVM
Women of St. Agatha	Ms. Kim Henderson
Men of St. Agatha	Mr. Keynin Seabrook
Knights of Peter Claver Grand Knight	Mr. Charles Rush
Grand Lady, Ladies Auxiliary	Mrs. Marcy Bledsoe-Hicks
Grand Lady, Junior Daughters	Ms. Lauren Ball

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