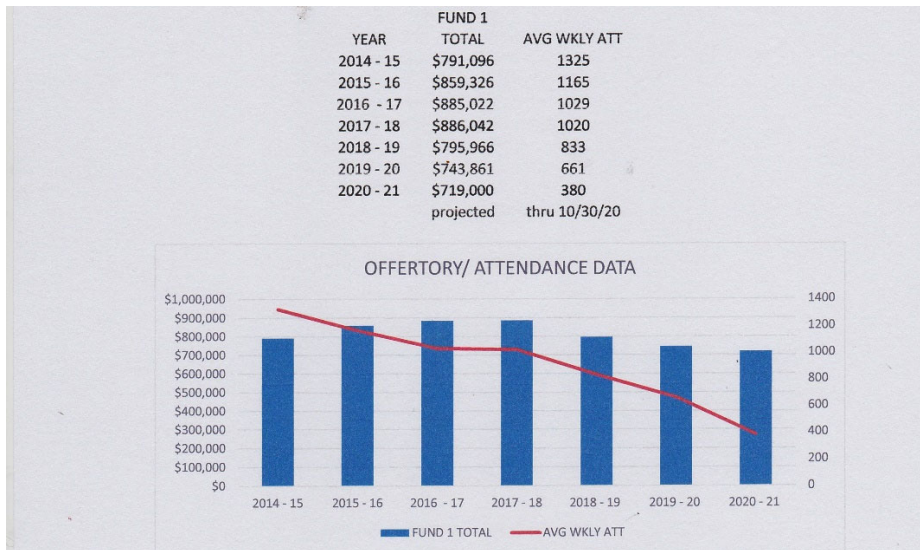


Financial Generosity of ABVM Parishioners Helps Parish Weather the Storm of Declining Mass Attendance and COVID-19

Since 2015 there has been a gradual but steady decline in Mass attendance at ABVM. This trend is typical for the Catholic Church, as a whole, from fiscal 2015 through fiscal 2019. In fiscal 2020 the decline was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic which continues into fiscal 2021.

The graph below shows the decline in attendance at weekend Masses from fiscal 2015 through the first four months of fiscal 2021 as well as the Offertory collection totals for the same period. The data shows that, while the average weekly attendance declined by ~50% between 2014 and 2020, the Offertory collection totals actually rose from 2014-2018. This result is due to the increased giving of our parishioners. After 2018, the Offertory collection declined by ~17% by the end of fiscal 2020. Despite the pandemic, which began in March, we did finish fiscal 2020 with about 3% greater income than budgeted for the weekly Offertory collection. Our 2021 weekly Offertory budget is slightly less than fiscal 2020. Through the first four months of fiscal 2021, we are projecting a \$21,000 deficit in the overall 2021 Offertory budget.



We are blessed in that the average Offertory contribution per Mass attendee is increasing. Thank you, parishioners; thank you, Holy Spirit. The increase is not easy to explain. Part of the increase is because some of our parishioners have increased their donation. Part is because more

parishioners are donating through Faith Direct, an electronic fund transfer. Using Faith Direct, parishioners are able to donate when they are unable to attend Mass. In September and October, Faith Direct donations represented forty-four percent of our Offertory collection income.

We must note that to a certain extent Father Scott was prescient in 2016 when he initiated the Parish Development Council. The purpose of the Council is to obtain funds for the parish other than the Offertory collection, which some scholars projected would be diminishing because of the decline in attendance within the Church as a whole. One of the committees of the Council is the Parish Appeal Committee. The Parish Appeal has become a consistent secondary source of income to support the budget. In 2020, the Appeal raised in excess of \$162,000, of which \$150,000 supported the parish and \$12,000 was added to the Emergency Fund.