

The Cathedral Star

December 2014

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Glimpses of our Organist at Work **Philip Brisson**

St. Augustine of Hippo is credited for saying “He who sings, prays twice.” Later, this expression grew to “He who sings *well* prays twice.” A logical extension of the meaning of this



adage could be “A person who directs well prays twice.” This idea would bring to visitors and members of the Cathedral of the Assumption thoughts of our music director, Dr. Philip Brisson. Obviously, a musician of his caliber is not just born with his abilities. In a recent interview, Dr. Brisson explained the steps in his journey to become such a distinguished organist.

Dr. Phil had graciously allowed this interviewer to come to his office. Seated at his spacious desk, he explained how his career began. He is from a family of 4 boys and one girl. His sister began to take lessons on the piano, which had been his mother’s and grandmother’s, now located behind his desk. His sister would practice her pieces and afterward Phil would learn them

too. After a while, his mother said, “Maybe he should take piano lessons too.” That’s how it all got started.

He took piano lessons in grammar school, which he said was “just something I did.” Starting high school he played hockey in summer and winter in New York where he grew up. Later in high school he resumed his interest in piano. His beginning teacher referred him to a teacher (a concert pianist) who taught more advanced students. Phil watched this teacher play the organ and he thought this was “really cool.” Consequently, after training, he subbed at church for the teacher in his junior and senior year. Realizing then that he liked the organ better than the piano, he switched from piano to organ lessons. By his senior year, he had his first church job at St. James Presbyterian Church in Ridgewood, Queens. However, he said, “I felt really bad because I was getting money and

(Continued on page 2)

In this issue

Glimpses of our Organist at Work:

Dr. Philip Brisson

We are the Church Together

Father Jeff

Annual Report

Income vs. Expense

Fiscal Year Budget

Work for Justice & Save the Date!

Annual Parish Statistical Information

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Glimpses of Our Organist at Work

(Continued from page 1)

wasn't really playing well. I was playing with my hands and not the pedals." It was at this time he knew he wanted to major in organ in college. His teacher said, "Oh, you're not ready for that." He suggested that he major in something else while building his organ skills, so Phil chose psychology. He said in his first year he joined a fraternity and did all the crazy things first year college students do. The second year he started a BA degree program with a piano major. The third year he auditioned for the four-year BM program at Queen's College in organ performance, so it



took him seven years to get his undergraduate degree. He was able to pay his way through college because of his church jobs. Working as a professional organist since he was in high school, he became full-time

when he started college. At age 20, he had his first full-time job at Our Lady of the Cenacle, Queens, New York. He went on to get his Master's in sacred music at Westminster Choir College, completing his doctorate at Eastman in 2001.

Dr. Brisson was ready to search for a job. He sent out many applications settling on two possibilities and finally became music director of the Cathedral of the Assumption. He has been here since August 2001.

Philip's job is a demanding one. He is responsible for training the traditional choir and the contemporary choir on Sundays. This involves two hours practice time and two hours on Sunday for both choirs. The dedicated hard work of the choirs and their director results in the beautiful music that lifts our hearts and souls to God. Dr. Brisson is proud that the Cathedral music program can stand against other programs of Cathedrals that are much larger and wealthier than our Cathedral. Below is a picture of Janet Lee, choral librarian, who spends one or two hours a week assembling the choir's folders for the Sunday Masses.

Phil plans the Sunday Masses a year ahead, striving to make the music reflect the themes of the liturgy. At a given practice, he selects some music that may be well known to the choir, some may be new last



year, and some may be completely new, so that the anthems of each practice range in difficulty.

Pictured below is the renovated practice room for both choirs. Philip is standing by the digital organ. Having this organ has helped the traditional choir tremendously because before it was purchased, they practiced with the piano and had to transition to the organ when they sang in Church. Another feature of the room is that the backs of the chairs are ergonomically shaped to promote good posture so singers' lungs can work properly.



Phil attends staff meetings, organizes and maintains the music library, plans and schedules concerts, and, believe it or not, hosts the visiting musicians.

Finding practice time for himself is yet another issue. To keep his skills sharp, he gives recitals all over the country. He keeps a map of the United States near his desk where he has placed push pins in each state where he has presented a recital: 35 so far. He is now 44 years old and plans to give a recital in all 50 states by the time he is 50.



Philip said he used to try to practice in the evenings at home, but along came Charlotte, now 3 ½ years old. The problem is his home organ is in the room next to Charlotte's so he had to give that up. He said the number one impediment to home practice for musicians is when the children come along. They would like to help them play the instrument.

While we are on the subject of family, Phil explained how he met and married his wife Penny. While he was playing at a Sunday evening chapel service at Hobart College, he noticed an alto singing in the congregation. Afterward he introduced himself. He told his mother that he had met the girl he was going to marry. (Love at first sight!) They dated for four years, both graduating from their respective colleges, (her major in Japanese), moved to Louisville in August of 2001, and married in Baltimore that same year. They didn't know anyone in Louisville, but that made them closer because they were dependent on each other.

(Continued on page 4)

We are the Church Together

Taken from Fr. Jeff's September 20, 2014 State of the Cathedral Homily

The State of our Worship... Good

- 9:30am Sunday choir is thriving with the influx of section leaders and new voices. (Mom wants them to sing at her funeral, which hopefully will be many years from now!)
- Our most significant development is Fr. Tony Olges joining our Cathedral family sharing his spiritual insights and pastoral presence.
- We debuted the Jazz Psalms Encounter on October 23rd, the brainchild of parishioner Chuck Marohnic who partnered with our choirs to produce this wonderful prayer experience.
- And although we have some new ministers, we can really use many more!

The State of our Formation... Good

- Adult faith formation opportunities have expanded. (How Catholics Read the Bible; The Book of Job; The Gospel of John; Intentional Discipleship Think Tank; Six Short Stories of Flannery O'Connor; The Book of Revelation; and Why Catholic faith sharing groups)
- Retreat opportunities continue to be offered as well as our regular Religious Education program for children and youth (which now offers a viewing of Fr. Robert Barron's *Catholicism* video series to interested parents).

The State of our Social Concerns... Good

- The Feed My Neighbor "Let's Dance Louisville" initiative raised in one night just over half the operating cost of our Daily Lunch annual budget! (\$72,000)
- We continue to support our partner ministries of The House of Ruth for families effected by HIV/AIDS, the St. John's Center for homeless men, Nativity Academy; our Haiti school mission; as well as our annual support of the Catholic Services Appeal which last year saw us as the Archdiocese's fourth largest donor!
- Formation opportunities around Catholic Social Teachings take place in November and December while Social Concerns "Conversations" around legislative issues will take place in late January.

The State of our Administration... Okay

- Our parish plant is in good condition thanks to our past Building A Future of Hope Campaign that has been funding our construction projects. In addition to the new choir rehearsal suite we dedicated in the past year to Archbishop Kelly, we are now close to completing a new Education space on the second floor of the office building that will allow us to expand our formation opportunities.
- We have plans in the hopper for beautifying our grounds so as to make our cathedral exterior as beautiful and inviting as its interior.
- Additionally, we have begun a project to create a life size bronze statue of Mother Catherine Spalding to be placed on our front plaza. This historic project will make us the first to offer the City of Louisville, and indeed the State of Kentucky, a public statue that both celebrates a female leader and witnesses to our Catholic mission of service. (It is not too late to become a part of this historic effort!)
- **Here is our challenge.** Our parish finances are doing okay, but we have an ongoing struggle with regard to our weekend collec-

tions. At the close of our past fiscal year our parish budget managed to finish in the black despite a \$62,000 shortfall in our weekend collections, thanks to a great degree to our frugal staff and our "Feed My Neighbor" initiative.

- Our parish budget (indeed all parish budgets) depends on our weekend collection for the great majority of the funds we need to pay our salaries, run our programs, and provide our worship. This year we have built our budget on the presumption that we can collect as a parish community at least \$17,500 each weekend. Unfortunately, we are falling short most weekends. (The notice on stewardship that we place in the bulletin each week monitors this trajectory.) If we continue on this path we will deplete all our savings by year-end. Now is the time for each of us to take action to change this course.
- Historically members of the Cathedral have been generous and today we benefit from their legacy. We are responsible for passing this legacy on to those who will follow us. I know just about all of us receive solicitations every week from countless worthy groups and initiatives. Yet, if we are going to be able to continue to provide our own worshipping community this Cathedral experience we have all been drawn to, then each of us must invest ourselves here. Our decisions today will determine our Cathedral tomorrow.

The State of our Parish Life... Good

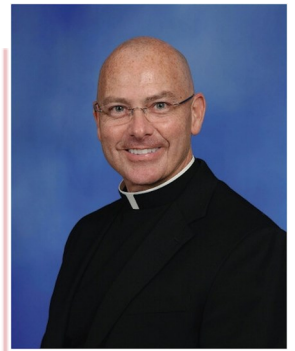
- Last year we enjoyed wonderful parish gatherings such as our Roaring Twenties party and our day at the Louisville Zoo. Currently we have an enthusiastic team of parishioners working on a parish Spring Fling celebration that will take place on Saturday, April 11th right in-between Easter and Thunder Over Louisville! (I hear it is going to be GROOVY.)
- Our RCIA program has a large group of wonderful individuals who have come to join us; it is now up to thirteen individuals.
- Our Cathedral Concierges continue to welcome new members into our parish family. We welcomed 23 households this past year. Our Cathedral Concierges help folks discern how they wish to get engaged in our parish activities and ministries.

There is much more I could share, but this gives us a good sense of where we are at as a parish. We have great possibility and even greater potential. The potential of our Cathedral parish reminds me of a movie I saw this past summer called, "Lucy." The premise of the movie was that a woman named "Lucy" went from using only 10% of her brain to using 100% of it and everything that she was able to do because of this transformation. (Now I have learned that it is an urban myth that human beings only use 10% of our brains, but the concept is still intriguing.) It makes me think about our collective body we call the Cathedral of the Assumption parish.

All the things we are doing – all the worship we provide, all the formation we enjoy, all the outreach we accomplish – all we are doing is accomplished with only 12.5% of our registered parishioners in an active Cathedral ministry, and only 49% of our registered parishioners offering any demonstrable financial assistance.

Just imagine how we could be transformed if some of the other 87.5% of us stepped up to a ministry! Just imagine what we could

(Continued on page 5)



Annual Report: Operating Income Statement

INCOME	Fiscal Year Ending 06-30-2014			Year-vs-Year		
	Actual	Budget	Better (Worse)	2013-14	2012-13	Better (Worse)
Collections	906,552	970,000	(63,448)	906,552	999,822	(93,270)
Social Concerns	35,676	41,500	(5,824)	35,676	94,529	(58,853)
Feed My Neighbor-Fundraising	73,290	40,000	33,290	73,290	62,032	11,258
FMN Donations	20,007	0	20,007	20,007	0	20,007
Gifts & Bequests	31,089	20,000	11,089	31,089	14,150	16,939
Fundraising-Misc	10	1,000	(990)	10	1,396	(1,386)
Diocesan Subsidies	38,778	38,250	528	38,778	38,250	528
Interest	283	130	153	283	144	139
Miscellaneous (A)	108,763	83,350	25,413	108,763	51,441	57,322
Total Income	1,214,448	1,194,230	20,218	1,214,448	1,261,764	(47,316)
EXPENSES						
Administration (B)	322,287	337,829	15,542	322,287	322,224	(63)
Worship/Music	224,160	226,926	2,766	224,160	194,295	(29,865)
Parish Life	68,804	77,390	8,586	68,804	64,748	(4,056)
Formation	17,473	24,935	7,462	17,473	17,302	(171)
Social Concerns	6,809	5,690	(1,119)	6,809	67,928	61,119
Charitable Donations	24,248	22,400	(1,848)	24,248	14,109	(10,139)
Feed My Neighbor-Kitchen	121,965	124,391	2,426	121,965	43,533	(78,432)
Plant/Maintenance	262,395	259,609	(2,786)	262,395	263,016	621
Diocesan Assessments	79,853	80,910	1,057	79,853	77,682	(2,171)
Non-Parish Collections (C)	17,349	25,050	7,701	17,349	24,765	7,416
Miscellaneous (D)	10,627	9,100	(1,527)	10,627	13,263	2,636
Total Expenses	1,155,970	1,194,230	38,260	1,155,970	1,102,865	(53,105)
Net Surplus or (Deficit)	58,478	0	58,478	58,478	158,899	(100,421)

Explanations

(A) Rental income, mass income, religious education fees, Chancery and Center for Interfaith expense recoveries, etc.

(B) Includes staff salary and benefits.

(C) Peter's Pence, Catholic Charities, Retired Religious, etc.

(D) Chancery and Center for Interfaith expense (see note above for recovery of expense).

Glimpses of Our Organist at Work

(Continued from page 2)

Dr. Brisson provided the following information about this little barrel that sits on a table in his office. "I ordered the 3 liter barrel from a shop that would allow a custom carving in the front, which I designed myself.

"Cathedral parishioner, John Smart, Central Division Manager for Heaven Hill Distilleries, Inc. donated the 'white lightning.' After it is finished aging in our barrel, it will become bourbon.

"The aging process is being overseen by our Bass Section Leader, Soloist, and now Cathedral Master Distiller, Rick Rebilas. A fifty-gallon barrel might take 4+ years to age, but our little barrel will take only 6 to 9 months!



We've all heard of the 'angels share,' which is the portion of alcohol that evaporates over time and is taken by the angels as it rises up to heaven, but since we are the Cathedral of the Assumption, I thought Our Lady might prefer to take her own share instead!"

Somehow he didn't mention the party the choirs are going to have with the contents of that little barrel.

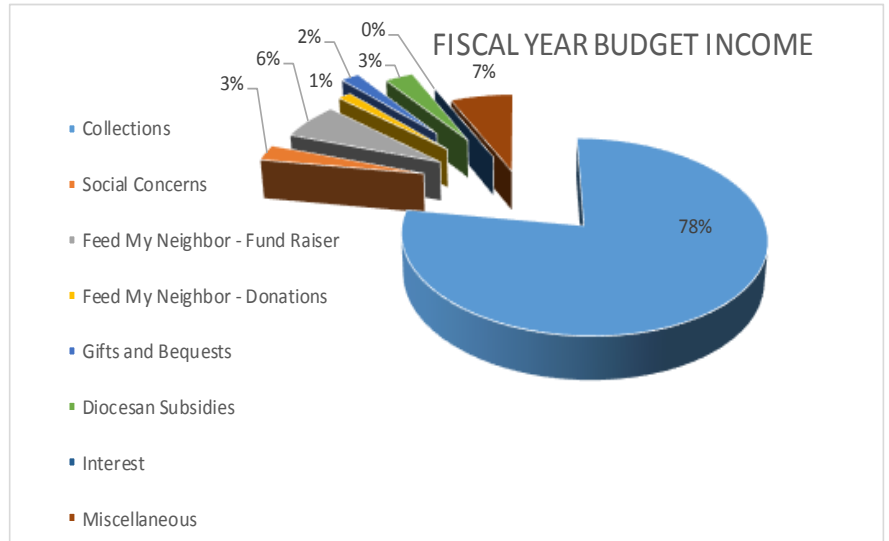
We are indeed fortunate to have such a dedicated and talented music director and our two choirs here at the Cathedral. Our liturgies, weddings, funerals, concerts, and civic affairs are greatly enhanced by their musical gifts to us. Thank you Dr. Brisson. We are grateful.

Fiscal Year 2014-2015 Budget

(July 1, 2014—June 30, 2015)

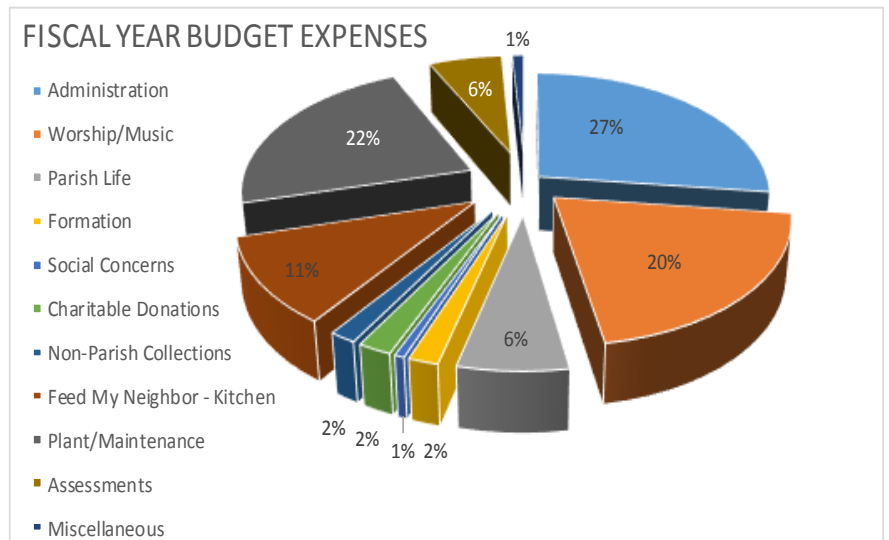
Income

Collections - 78%	\$970,000
Social Concerns - 3%	\$35,000
Feed My Neighbor - Fund Raiser - 6%	\$81,000
Feed My Neighbor - Donations - 1%	\$18,000
Gifts and Bequests - 2%	\$25,000
Diocesan Subsidies - 3%	\$38,650
Interest - 0%	\$420
Miscellaneous - 7%	\$81,500
Total Income	\$1,249,570



Expenses

Administration - 27%	\$337,404
Worship/Music - 20%	\$253,969
Parish Life - 6%	\$80,355
Formation - 2%	\$21,722
Social Concerns - 1%	\$7,150
Charitable Donations - 2%	\$24,640
Non-Parish Collections - 2%	\$19,550
Feed My Neighbor - Kitchen - 11%	\$138,077
Plant/Maintenance - 22%	\$279,723
Assessments - 6%	\$75,380
Miscellaneous - 1%	\$11,600
Total Expenses	\$1,249,570



We are the Church Together

(Continued from page 3)

accomplish together if some of the 51% began to donate some of their resources to our mission!

My prayer for our Cathedral family is that we will wake up to our great potential, and more deeply invest ourselves in our Cathedral experience. If you (like the first son in Jesus' story) are a part of the 12.5% or the 49% who are in the vineyard, thank you! You can be proud of all you are accomplishing to advance Jesus Christ's mission. If you (like the second son in Jesus' story) are a part of the 87.5%

or the 51% watching from outside the vineyard, join us! Together we will do great things for the glory of God and hear Jesus speak these words when we stand before him face to face, "Well done my good and faithful servant, well done."

May God bless our Cathedral of the Assumption, and may God bless each of you.

Fr. Jeff

Hot button issues in our local community and beyond

Catholic Social Justice

Faithful Citizenship

IF YOU WANT
PEACE,
WORK FOR
JUSTICE

Carrying the message of our gospel values to the public arena

Three issues with conversations led by topic experts

Three Tuesdays in January, 6:30-8:00 PM, Cathedral Undercroft

Come listen, learn, discuss

- ❖ **January 6** Immigration- Emphasis on both immigrant and refugee policies, with a speaker from Catholic Charities Legal Dept.
- ❖ **January 13** The Seamless Garment of Life – With Emphasis on the Death Penalty, presented by Fr. Patrick Delahanty
- ❖ **January 20** Poverty – Payday Lending, with presenter Jason Hall

Sponsored by Cathedral Social Concerns Committee in partnership with Catholic Charities
For free registration, call the Cathedral Parish Office
582-2971



Pictures from Halloween with the Daily Lunch Program Volunteers and Staff.

Time Travelers Save the Date!

If you enjoyed the Roaring 20s,
you're going to love the Swingin' 60s!

Come out for a night of fun,
fellowship, and feasting as our church
community celebrates our
Cathedral's rich history

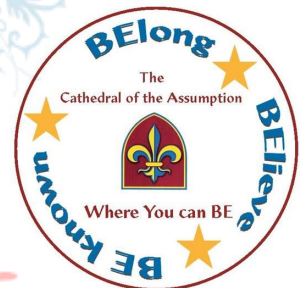
Block out your calendars for
Saturday, April 11, 2015 at 6:30PM
and get ready for an outta sight party!

Tickets will be available in March
Keep an eye on the
bulletin for further updates

Annual Parish Statistical Information

By: Angela Wiggins

Parish Population	Households	1,229
	Individual Members	2,571
Formation	Children and Youth in Religious Education	49
	Volunteer Catechists	11
	RCIA Candidates and Catechumens	13
	Why Catholic, Spring and Fall 2013	5 groups in Spring; 5 groups in Fall
	Adult Formation Offerings	6 Series offered through the year
Sacraments and Rites	Baptisms	23
	First Eucharist	25
	Confirmations	21
	Marriages	21
	Funerals	16



Cathedral of the Assumption

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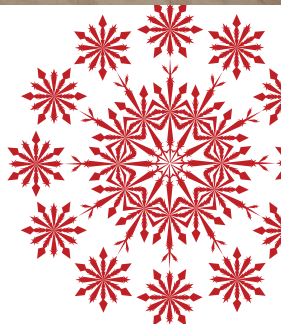


Non-Profit Org.

U. S. Postage

PAID

Louisville, KY
Permit No. 842



Advent and Christmas banners at our sister parish, Cathedrale St. Louis, in Jeremie, Haiti.
Material for banners was donated by some of our Cathedral parishioners.



The Cathedral Star Staff Members

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