

SPRING 2026

# Generous Hearts

*In this issue:*

BISHOP'S FUND FOR  
CATHOLIC EDUCATION

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LOVE & CHARITY GRANT IMPACT

---

INTRODUCING AGENCY FUNDS

---

HOW TO LEAVE A LASTING  
LEGACY OF FAITH

*A publication brought to you by*



**CATHOLIC  
FOUNDATION**  
of West Michigan

# Welcoming Our New Director of Annual Giving

The Catholic Foundation welcomes Alex Winn as our new Director of Annual Giving. Alex brings experience in relationship-building and operational strategy from nationally and globally recognized organizations. In partnership with the Diocese of Grand Rapids, he will collaborate with donors, pastors, and parishes throughout the diocese to help families and individuals align their annual charitable giving with their faith and values.

Alex, his wife Clare, and their two children are parishioners at St. Patrick Parish, Parnell. Rooted in the belief that Catholic philanthropy is faith in action, his vision for annual giving strengthens and enriches our Catholic Foundation team.



## Letter from the Executive Director

The celebration of Easter reminds us that the Resurrection is not only the fulfillment of Christ's promise but the call to bring His love into the world. Each day, we witness new life in our parishes, schools, and ministries as neighbors care for one another, share their gifts, and live out the Gospel in tangible ways.

Each generation of the Church is entrusted with the responsibility of carrying forward the faith we have received and ensuring it continues to flourish. In this Generous Hearts issue, you will see that mission in action. The Bishop's Fund for Catholic Education is helping more students and families across our diocese access the gift of a Catholic education, opening doors to formation that shapes both mind and heart. You will also read about this year's Love & Charity grants, supporting 18 ministries that provide compassionate care, hope, and practical help to communities across West Michigan.

These stories remind us that generosity is never simply about a single gift. It is about building something lasting, creating opportunities for faith to take root, ministries to grow, and communities to thrive.

At the Catholic Foundation, we are continually inspired by the vision and generosity of those who care deeply about the future of our Church. Your support allows us to steward resources with care and intention, strengthening the ministries that will shape our Catholic community for years to come. Thank you for the many ways you partner with us in advancing the Church's mission.

With abundant gratitude,

**Teresa Reid**  
Executive Director

## Trustees

Most Rev. David J. Walkowiak  
Very Rev. Colin J. Mulhall  
Michael Lown  
Donald Duba  
Mary Lehman-Panek

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## Staff

**Teresa Reid**  
Executive Director  
**Erinn Hill**  
Stewardship Officer  
**Sarah Sobel**  
Gift Planning Officer  
**Alex Winn**  
Director of Annual Giving

## Mission

We inspire and enable generous support for parishes and ministries rooted in the teachings of the Catholic Church to make a lasting impact in our communities and the lives of others.

## Funding Priorities

Sharing Our Catholic Faith  
Educating Children & Young Adults  
Supporting Religious Vocations  
Helping the Poor & Vulnerable  
Caring for Creation

## Tax Information

EIN: 38-3298981

## Contact

(616) 333-1640  
info@cfwmi.org  
catholicfoundationwmi.org  
360 Division Ave. S.  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503



# Gratitude for Years of Service

The Catholic Foundation offers our deepest gratitude to Msgr. William Duncan for his dedicated service as vicar general and a member of our Board of Trustees. Serving under four bishops over two decades, Msgr. Duncan acted as a faithful and steady presence within the diocese. His work behind the scenes quietly but powerfully advanced the bishop's pastoral priorities, upheld the values of the Church, and supported the Catholic Foundation's reconstitution in 2020.

In honor of his service, the Diocese of Grand Rapids established the Gaudium et Spes Charitable Fund at the Catholic Foundation. We thank Msgr. Duncan for his faithful leadership, commitment to the Church, and his generous service to the Catholic Foundation.



# A Shared Commitment to Catholic Education

## Bishop's Fund for Catholic Education

Every child deserves the opportunity to grow in faith, discover their God-given gifts, and be formed within a Catholic community that nurtures both learning and discipleship. For many families, Catholic education is not simply a preference; it is a calling, rooted in faith and hope for their children's future.

**The Bishop's Fund for Catholic Education exists to honor that calling, opening doors today and providing for the future of our schools.**

Established after the Diocese of Grand Rapids' *In the Name of the Lord* campaign in 1998, the endowment was created to ensure that tuition assistance would always be available to families seeking a Catholic education for their children. The campaign ultimately gave rise to the Catholic Foundation of West Michigan, founded by Most Reverend Robert J. Rose, to strengthen Catholic education throughout the diocese. As the Church's needs grew, the Foundation's mission expanded to support parishes and ministries. Before the launch of the *Our Shepherds-Our Future* campaign in 2019, the Bishop's Fund for Catholic Education stood as the Foundation's largest endowed fund.

Because of generous hearts united in mission, Catholic education remains within reach for families today and for generations to come.

"Catholic education has always been at the heart of our mission as a diocese. The Bishop's Fund for Catholic Education, first established by Bishop Rose, reflects a lasting commitment to families seeking an education rooted in faith. Today, it is my hope and my responsibility to ensure this fund continues to grow so future generations of students may encounter Christ through our Catholic schools."

**Most Reverend David J. Walkowiak**

## 30 Years of Faithful Giving

**Every gift becomes part of something enduring.**

The Bishop's Fund for Catholic Education is the result of decades of generosity united by a shared belief in the mission of Catholic schools. Donors across the diocese have come together through quiet, faithful support to build an endowment that continues to grow and meet the increasing needs of families seeking a Catholic education.

Through years of faithful giving — large and small, immediate and planned — the fund has grown into a lasting source of support for students and schools throughout the diocese.

## Preparing Students To Seek and Fulfill God's Plan for Learning and Life

### Bishop's Scholarships

The mission of Catholic schools is lived out each day in classrooms across the diocese. Tuition assistance from the Bishop's Fund for Catholic Education allows families to choose an education rooted in faith, academic excellence, and community. At times when Catholic education feels out of reach for families, the generosity of those who support tuition assistance removes financial barriers and strengthens our larger Catholic community.

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Grand Rapids are an alliance of **31 vibrant, faith-based learning communities serving more than 6,000 elementary and high school students throughout West Michigan.** Our schools inspire young people to grow in their faith and grace, achieve more in school and in life, develop creativity and character, and feel welcomed and cherished for their unique gifts.

In the current school year alone, \$552,192 in Bishop's Scholarships supported 901 students, helping ensure students are welcomed, supported, and formed in environments where faith and learning go hand in hand.

Tuition assistance is mission-driven evangelization.



### Current School Year

# \$552,192

in Bishop's Scholarships

# 901

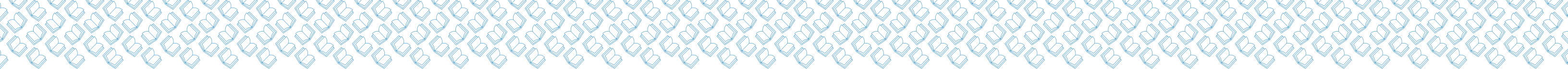
students supported

"Catholic education shaped our lives in lasting ways, and we want that opportunity to remain available for generations to come. Attending St. John Vianney, teaching at both St. Mary (Lowell) and Holy Name of Jesus (Wyoming), and sending our sons to Immaculate Heart of Mary School, we experienced firsthand the impact Catholic education can have. It places faith first and foremost, provides a safe space to learn, and builds a strong academic foundation. Supporting this endowment is our way of helping to ensure that families seeking a Catholic education will continue to find open doors."

**Mark and Valerie Henderson**

"We have been enriched by this community and have felt the support and prayers being offered for us. I feel we are exactly where we are meant to be. With financial assistance and private school aid, I can continue to send my children to West Catholic to help them grow in their faith and knowledge."

**The Ewald family**



## A Renewed Commitment

This generation has been entrusted with strengthening Catholic education for the next.

As enrollment patterns shift, costs rise, and more families seek Catholic education for their children, the need for tuition assistance continues to grow. In the past year alone, Bishop's Scholarship applicants demonstrated more than \$7 million in unmet need. Strengthening the Bishop's Fund for Catholic Education ensures the Church remains ready to respond, sustaining Catholic schools today while investing in their vitality for generations to come.

A strong foundation:

# \$13.7M

total balance

# \$3.2M

in gifts over the last 20 years

## Support the Bishop's Fund for Catholic Education for Today, Tomorrow, and Forever:

Make a gift today with the enclosed envelope, online at [catholicfoundationwmi.org/education-fund](https://catholicfoundationwmi.org/education-fund) or by scanning the QR code.



Contact us to learn more about including Catholic education in your estate plans.





# Always & Forever

Making a Lasting Impact Through Endowment Funds

Endowments are permanent funds that provide annual support to the Catholic causes you cherish. The fund's principle remains intact while the earnings generate a steady stream of funding year after year. This means a gift made today will continue to impact Catholic education, parishes, vocations, and ministries for generations to come.

## Start on Your Timeline

Establish an endowment all at once, build it over multiple years, leave a gift in your will, or pool resources with a group.



The Catholic Foundation will guide you in:

### Selecting a beneficiary

Is your passion for supporting your parish, Catholic school, or favorite ministry?

### Defining a purpose

Do you want your gift to support the area of greatest need, tuition assistance, helping the poor and vulnerable, or another purpose?

### Deciding on a fund name

The name of the fund is a beautiful way to honor your family, a loved one, or the benefiting organization.

### Determining what gift options best suit your situation

You can gift cash, securities, mutual funds, IRA-qualified charitable distributions, or leave a gift in your will.



### Give Up Front

Make an impact as soon as the next year, and every year after. When you fund the endowment up front with a minimum gift of \$25,000, annual grants from the fund begin the following fiscal year.



### Give Over Time

An Equity Building Endowment allows you to make annual contributions to build up the fund's balance over a few years. When you make an initial gift of at least \$5,000, the fund will be invested for growth while you continue to give. Once \$25,000 in gifts is received, annual grants begin.



### Give With Others

A Pooled Endowment allows a group of people to join together to build an endowment. Initial donations can come from two, ten, or even a hundred different donors. Together you can honor a favorite teacher, a retiring pastor, or your graduation class.



### Give a Legacy Gift

Create a legacy of faith without impacting your current finances. A Bridge Endowment allows you to make your intentions known for a planned gift, which will be received upon your passing. By creating the fund agreement now, you can ensure your wishes will be honored.

"Supporting Catholic education has always been important to us, and establishing this endowment for Bishop Baraga Academy was a way to strengthen a new school at a critical moment in its growth. By using an IRA qualified charitable distribution, we were able to give in a way that was both meaningful and responsible, while ensuring the school has a lasting source of support as it builds its future."

**Tom and Laura Madison**

"Our parents taught us that faith is lived through service to others, especially those most in need. Establishing an endowment for God's Kitchen in their honor allows us to carry forward the values they modeled and ensure this vital ministry continues serving our community."

**Wayne and Margo Gagnon**

"Our calling to uplift the marginalized of our community did not begin today — it was seeds planted years ago through the quiet, faithful work we have carried out in our civic and church communities. Each act of service shaped our conviction that compassion is a lifelong responsibility. Through a planned gift to establish the St. Marie Fund for the Marginalized, this conviction will continue to become a legacy of mercy, dignity, and hope."

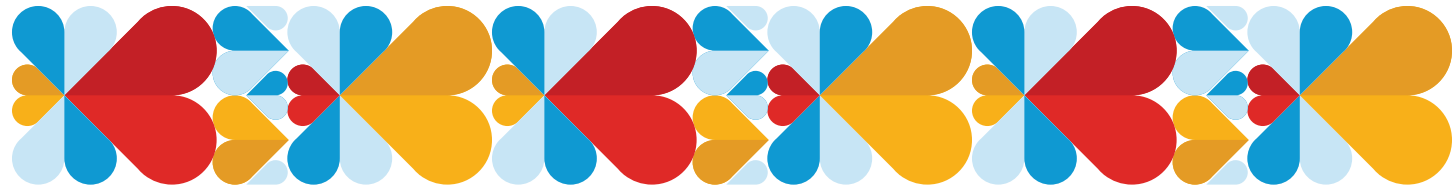
**Deacon Greg and Peggy Anderson**

## Ready to make a gift that reflects your values and creates lasting impact?

Our 280, and counting, endowment funds are providing for the future of the Church. Contact us to learn how your generosity can be a source of growth, strength, and renewal in our Catholic community.



**Sarah Sobel**  
Gift Planning Officer  
ssobel@cfwmi.org  
(616) 475-1251



# Love & Charity

## 2026 Grant Impact

### \$160,000 Awarded to 18 Organizations

The impact of the Love & Charity grant program extends far beyond financial support. It nurtures faith, fosters opportunity, and ensures that our Catholic community continues to flourish for generations to come.

Thanks to the incredible support of Bishop's Angels, the Catholic Business Leaders Forums, and select endowment funds, the program granted \$160,000 to 18 organizations — marking another year of growth!

Every grant awarded is a reflection of the generosity of our donors. Their generosity is evangelizing the Catholic faith, strengthening Catholic education, supporting families in need, and sustaining vital ministries and parishes across West Michigan.

Together, through charity, we are building God's kingdom — one act of love at a time.



### Bishop Baraga Academy, Fremont Grant Amount: \$11,940

Responding to the growing need for accessible Catholic education, the Academy is re-envisioning Catholic education through a Montessori-inspired microschool that integrates faith, nature-based learning, and sustainability. Their **"Investing in Children. Building the Kingdom."** initiative will expand the microschool by equipping their lower elementary classroom (K-2) for Fall 2026 opening.

### Cathedral of Saint Andrew, Grand Rapids Grant Amount: \$5,000

The Cathedral's youth group provides a welcoming space for middle and high school students to grow in their relationship with God and one another. At the **Youth Summer Camp Retreat**, 8–12 grade youth representing English, Spanish, and African Masses will come together to deepen their faith, strengthen community, and inspire continued participation in parish life.

### Catholic Charities West Michigan Grant Amount: \$15,000

At Catholic Charities West Michigan, foster care is a step toward reuniting families and building thriving homes. The purchase of a dedicated **Foster Care Van** will promote healthy development for vulnerable children and aid in reunification by helping transport children to parenting time visits, sibling visits, and medical appointments.

### GRACEAC Grant Amount: \$5,000

The Grand Rapids Area Catholic Elementary Athletic Council (GRACEAC) develops student athletes who display the Christian qualities of good sportsmanship and fair play in every aspect of life. Coaches and parents will receive **Virtues of Greatness Videos** of local sports leaders, sharing the impact that sports and virtues have had on them personally, their teams, and families.

### Harmel Academy of the Trades Grant Amount: \$15,000

Through the **Igniting Formation Through Small Engines and Teamwork** initiative, first-year students will design, assemble, and test functional go-karts powered by small engines — introducing them to foundational concepts in mechanics, fabrication, and teamwork. High school and middle school students will also use the small engines during summer rebuild programs.

### Joseph's Builders Grant Amount: \$15,000

Joseph's Builders is committed to building and renovating homes that support the dignity of the people who live in them. Through mission week and weekends, their **2026 Build Projects** will serve the poor, elderly, and people with disabilities by providing them with good, clean, and safe housing.



### Lake County Area Churches Charities

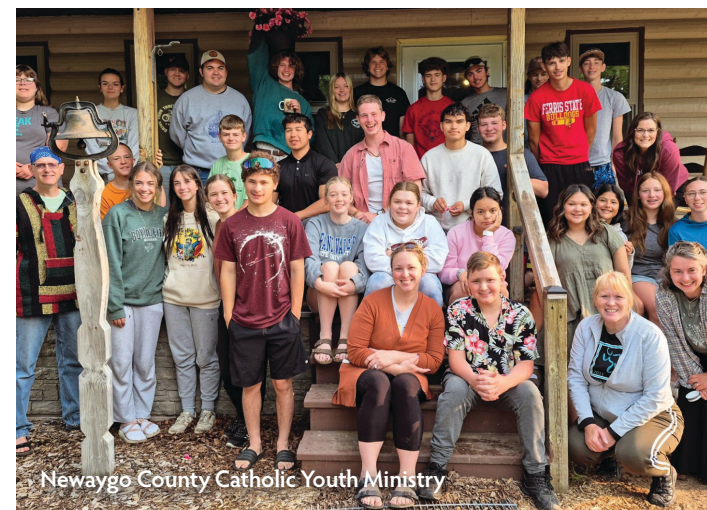
Grant Amount: \$5,000

Located at St. Ann Parish, Baldwin, the **Bread of Life Food Pantry** distributes food each week to the community from newborn babies to seniors, veterans, and the homeless. Through collaboration with area churches, the volunteer-run pantry meets a critical need in Lake County which is ranked highest in the state for food insecurity.

### Laker Catholic Campus Ministry, Allendale

Grant Amount: \$9,500

As part of St. Luke University Parish, the **Laker Catholic Annual Evangelization Retreats** bring Grand Valley State University students away from the busyness of campus to a quiet place, where they can be renewed and transformed through fellowship and deep prayer. These retreats often shape the trajectory of a student's community and life of discipleship.



Newaygo County Catholic Youth Ministry

### Newaygo County Catholic Youth Ministry

Grant Amount: \$10,000

To expand youth ministry in Newaygo County, area parishes joined together to bring in a **NET Ministry Discipleship Team**. Through weekly discipleship groups, youth nights, retreats, and mentoring, NET Ministry meets a deep and previously unmet need for youth evangelization across the county.



Renewing the Catholic Family Speaker Series

### Prince of Peace Parish, Muskegon

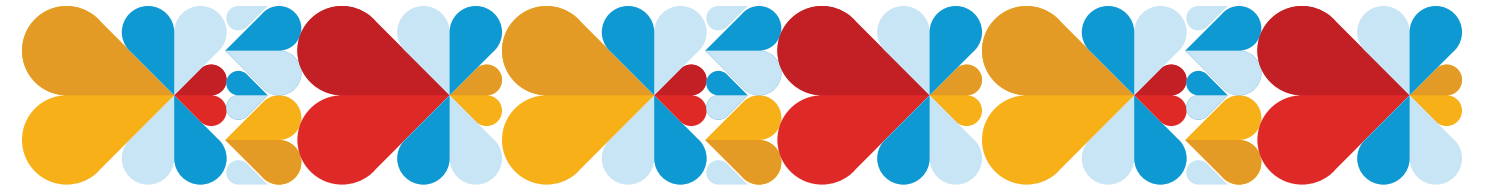
Grant Amount: \$18,235

When local training opportunities were scarce for **Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Adult Formation**, Prince of Peace Parish began offering courses for all three levels of certification. By hosting the courses, the parish has provided training in this Montessori-based religious education program not only to their parishioners, but to individuals from 25 parishes across the diocese.

### Renewing the Catholic Family Speaker Series

Grant Amount: \$10,000

For the second year, the Mission Effectiveness Committees of St. Thomas the Apostle, St. Paul the Apostle, and Immaculate Heart of Mary schools in Grand Rapids are hosting a diocesan-wide **Parent Speaker Series** to educate, equip, and support parents in navigating key issues affecting children today.



Cathedral of Saint Andrew Youth Summer Camp Retreat

### Saint Benedict Institute

Grant Amount: \$15,000

Through the Exodus/Genesis 90 program, book studies, lectures, Eucharistic adoration, and spiritual direction, the **Cultivating Wonder - From Scientific Materialism to Holistic Understanding** program seeks to help students at Hope College move from the mechanistic worldview to a sacramental one — where science fosters wonder and awe instead of undermining their sense of purpose and dignity.

### SS. Peter & Paul Parish, Ionia

Grant Amount: \$5,000

**The Friends of Jesus Fund**, a joint community effort, offers emergency assistance to individuals and families in crisis throughout the Ionia area. The fund assists with shelter, rent, utilities, water, prescription medications, and transportation. Through the fund, they are able to provide immediate relief, answering the calls for help.

### St. Paul Newman Center, Big Rapids

Grant Amount: \$11,500

The **St. Paul Chapel Renovation** seeks to create an ornate worship space for Ferris State University students, parishioners, and all others who come to participate in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The beautification of the space will help lift the mind to God, who is the fullness of all beauty.

### Additional Grant Recipients (under \$5,000)

**Sacred Heart Academy, Grand Rapids** | \$3,000

Integral Formation Conference for Faculty & Families

**Society of St. Vincent de Paul of Grand Rapids** | \$3,325

New Conference Growth

**St. Gregory – Our Lady of Fatima Parish, Hart** | \$1,500

Growing Deeper in Catholic Roots

**St. Mary Magdalen Parish, Kentwood** | \$1,000

Parish & Community Garden

Visit [catholicfoundationwmi.org/love-charity](https://catholicfoundationwmi.org/love-charity) or scan the QR code to watch our video and learn more about how these grants directly impact lives throughout West Michigan.





# Give Today for the Needs of Tomorrow

## Support Where and When It's Needed Most Through Agency Funds

At the Catholic Foundation, we match the needs of our community with generous hearts wishing to make an impact. As your philanthropic partner, we strive to offer versatile giving vehicles for every situation.

Endowment funds allow your gift to live on forever, granting out a portion of the fund's balance each year. Donor advised funds allow you to remain in control, selecting the charities you wish to support on your timeline. But what about when you know now which organization you want to support, but don't want your gift to be endowed?

### Meet Our Newest Charitable Fund Type: Agency Funds

Agency funds are faith-consistent investment funds for the beneficiary of your choosing, such as a parish, Catholic school, or ministry. With an agency fund, you can set aside your gift now to support future capital needs or multi-year projects, reassuring the beneficiary that they have committed support for the work ahead. The entire balance of the fund is available for the beneficiary to request. Once you open the fund, the Catholic Foundation handles the rest — investing the fund for growth through socially responsible investments and ensuring grant distributions honor your intentions.

### Invest in the Mission for Years to Come

Contact us to learn more.



### Agency Funds in Action

"We believe deeply in the mission of Catholic education and in the role St. Mary School plays in forming young hearts and minds. This agency fund allows us to respond to current needs with intention, trusting the Catholic Foundation to steward our gift so it can be used where and when it is most needed."

**Dr. Ralph and Kay Crew**

"This agency fund gives our school the ability to plan with confidence. Having this committed support helps us address capital needs and multi-year projects without delay, allowing us to stay focused on providing a strong Catholic education for our students."

**Colliene Willison, Principal, St. Mary School, Big Rapids**



## Your Faith. Your Impact. Your Legacy.

Do you feel called to make a meaningful impact on your parish, Catholic school, community, and the Church you love? Including one or several of the Church's ministries in your will or trust is a beautiful way to leave a lasting legacy.

### Not sure where to start? Consider these steps.



#### Begin With Reflection

Take time to reflect on the people, ministries, and experiences that have shaped your life and your faith. The Catholic Foundation's free *Exercise in Giving* offers a guided reflection to help you identify your values. Download this 30-minute exercise at: [catholicfoundationwmi.org/ways-to-give/exercise-in-giving/](http://catholicfoundationwmi.org/ways-to-give/exercise-in-giving/)



#### Find the Giving Approach That's Right for You

As experienced gift planners, staff at the Catholic Foundation can help you and your professional advisors structure the right gift to meet your goals — from bequests in your will or trust to beneficiary designations on a retirement account, life insurance policies, and more.



#### Share Your Intentions

Once you have included the Catholic Foundation, a parish, a Catholic school, a Catholic organization, or the Diocese of Grand Rapids in your estate plans, we invite you to join the **Light of Christ Legacy Society**, a community of faithful stewards.



#### Leave a Lasting Legacy of Faith

Your generosity helps ensure that the light of Christ continues to shine brightly across West Michigan — illuminating lives, strengthening faith, and building a more vibrant Catholic future.

"In honor of my late wife and our shared commitment to inclusive Catholic education, I chose to establish an endowment through a gift in my estate. Our passion for supporting diverse learners, especially students with autism, guided this decision. Partnering with the Catholic Foundation of West Michigan allowed me to thoughtfully and creatively design an endowed fund that will continue advocating for inclusive Catholic education. Knowing this mission will strengthen the Church for generations brings me deep peace and confidence."

**Don Karpinski**



# Join a Community of Faithful Stewards

Let us come together to build a future where the light of Christ's love continues to shine brightly for generations to come. By including one or several of the Church's ministries in your will or trust, you can join the Light of Christ Legacy Society — a community of faithful stewards who pray and celebrate together, honor those who came before us, and inspire others to embrace a lasting legacy of faith.



**CATHOLIC FOUNDATION**  
of West Michigan

**Allow us to support your intent and impact.**

(616) 333-1640 | [info@cfwmi.org](mailto:info@cfwmi.org) | 360 Division Ave. S., Grand Rapids, MI 49503 | [catholicfoundationwmi.org](http://catholicfoundationwmi.org)