

**REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS  
OF THE NEMAHA-MARSHALL PASTORAL  
REGION PLANNING TASK FORCE  
ARCHDIOCESE OF KANSAS CITY IN KANSAS**

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The Catholic Church in small rural communities is central to the lives of families and single, typically elderly, parishioners. The Church is especially important to those communities in which it is the sole or one of a handful of communal institutions. The survival of small communities without schools and other community organizations is literally threatened by the loss of its Catholic Church particularly in those communities that are almost entirely Catholic. On the other hand, the reality of demographic changes cannot be ignored in the face of finite resources including parish priests.

The recommendations proposed by the Planning Task Force acknowledge and attempt to address these realities. The foremost guiding principle throughout the planning process was to retain a sacramental presence in the communities of the Nemaha-Marshall Pastoral Region.

Consequently, these recommendations propose keeping all of the current churches open for the foreseeable future with heightened attention to strengthening the elements of parish vitality. Only as a last resort is it recommended that a parish be closed. In so far as possible, parishes served by a single priest are grouped together throughout the sequence of scenarios. These proposed groupings recognize affinities such as public school districts between and among communities in order to encourage collaboration and capitalize on strengths.

Population projections indicate that the out-migration of people from these rural counties in the region has peaked. In all counties except Nemaha populations are expected to increase slightly through 2025. Nemaha is likely to continue to lose population – approximately 500 people or about 4.6% during that period. The three anchor communities – Marysville, Seneca and Sabetha – will continue to attract retirees from area farms and young adults looking for jobs.

The Signs of Parish Vitality developed with the participation of a broad cross section of all the parishes in the Pastoral Region are proposed as an integral guide for parish planning and regular, formal evaluation of vitality. However, support is sought from the Archdiocese for program assistance that will help strengthen parish vitality primarily by offering training of catechists, support for a regional evangelization initiative, and assistance with a regional website.

We believe that, in total, these recommendations meet the objectives of the planning process to honor traditions while responding to the changing realities so that the efforts of the Church to carry on the work of Christ will be strengthened.

Change is a fact of everyday life that requires adaptation for survival as well as for thriving. It can occur so gradually that it's barely noticed from day to day or happen so suddenly that it stuns the senses. We cannot stop change, but we can assess the reality confronting us and plan to mitigate and capitalize upon its impact. These are some of the changes confronting the Region.

- Eighty-two percent of Kansas counties – all of them rural – are estimated to have lost population between 2000 and 2007 according to the U.S. Census Bureau including the three counties of the Pastoral Region that border Nebraska. (See Figure 5 for a map of county population changes between 1990 and 2000.)
- Sixty percent of school districts experienced decreases in enrollments. In the Pastoral Region all but Rock Creek USD 323 (encompassing part of St. Columbkille Parish in Blaine) are projected to continue to experience smaller enrollments through 2010-11 (See Figure 14).
- The State's residents are aging, particularly in rural communities. The Census Bureau projects that number of residents aged 65 years and older in Nemaha County will increase 19.6% from 2000 to 2025, in Marshall County by 13.5%, and in Brown County by 7.4%. The U.S. Department of Agriculture reported in 2002 that the average age of principal farm operators in the area ranges from 55 to 59 years of age.
- The Census Bureau reports that the number of farms declined in Kansas from 110,000 in 1960 to fewer than 64,000 today. According to the Center for Economic and Business Analysis at Kansas University, farm operations require ever-fewer workers. Many farmers are employed part- or full-time in other occupations. The Census Bureau estimated in 2006 that only 1.1% of Kansans are employed in farming. It is higher in the Nemaha-Marshall Pastoral Region – 3.1% in Brown County, 2.3% in Marshall County, and 2.4% in Nemaha County.

The National Catholic Rural Life Conference (NCRLC) reported in 2000, "Rural America is home to one-fifth of its people. While some parts of rural America have fully participated in the nation's long-running expansion, many localities have simply been left behind....Rural counties remain heavily tied to the traditional economic base of agriculture. Without question, most of rural America is often unseen, unacknowledged and unattended. The 51 million Americans who live in rural areas tend to be older, poorer, less healthy and less educated than urban counterparts."

While county estimates are not available for 2006, median household income for Kansans as a whole is estimated to have increased 111.9% from 2000 while for the entire country incomes rose 115.4%. The average Kansas household is falling further behind. Rural households in Kansas fare even worse. In 2000 the Census Bureau reported that median household income in Brown County was 78.7% of the Kansas average, in Marshall County 79%, and in Nemaha County 84.4%.

This stark economic condition may underlie the sentiment reported by the NCRLC, "There is a sense of betrayal and surrender in the countryside....The sense of betrayal in the countryside is felt by those who remain connected to the land and to a rural way of life."

It's not just farming that is changing. Many rural communities are not able to retain high school and college graduates with jobs that offer the challenges, income and promotion opportunities more widely available in larger cities.

On the other hand, deeply held values change little, if at all. The bedrock of rural America is the strength of its families and the cohesion of its communities. Greater percentages of rural residents regularly attend church and volunteer for activities that promote the common good. Faith in God's providential care and perseverance in the face of adversity are hallmarks of rural Kansas.

To this point, the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University released a study in April reporting that only 23% of adult Catholics in the United States attend Mass every week. Further, 68% believe they can be a good Catholic without going to Mass every week. In contrast, headcounts over two weekends at Masses in the Pastoral Region documented that 62% of registered persons in the parishes were in attendance.

Despite population trends in the area, St. Gregory parishioners recently built a new school and construction is beginning on a new school building at Sts. Peter and Paul Parish. New parish halls have been constructed in recent years at Annunciation, St. James and St. Monica-St. Elizabeth Parishes.

There are many indications such as these that the Church is a vital institution of stability in an area that has experienced significant change. Throughout these decades of change, the Archdiocese has maintained its deep commitment to supporting family life in rural communities. It is particularly sensitive to the need for continuing to provide opportunity for all its people to participate in the Eucharist and to receive the sacraments. It is in this spirit that the Pastoral Planning Task Force undertook its charge and presents these findings and recommendations.

The Nemaha-Marshall Pastoral Region is the fifth of eight regions to undertake a planning process within the Archdiocese. Recognizing that the Church must continue to adapt to changing circumstances, Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann wrote in the January 13, 2006 issue of *The Leaven*, “The Church is not about sustaining the status quo. We always have to ask ourselves the question: How can we best fulfill the mission of Jesus today? How can we best use our limited resources 1) to provide for the pastoral and spiritual needs of the Church; 2) to pass the faith on to future generations; and 3) to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus and bring his love to as many people as possible in our time?” He concluded, “Let us pray for one another that we will be willing to make whatever sacrifices are required to fulfill the mission of the Church in this time and place.”

In September 2007, the Archdiocese engaged Michael Maude, president of Partners In Philanthropy of Lawrence, Kansas, to facilitate a planning process. The purpose of the planning process was to study the current realities of the Region and develop a long-range plan that will capitalize on its strengths and opportunities to create a viable, vital future for the Church. The specific objectives were to:

- define the characteristics of a vital parish toward which all parishes should strive in the future;
- determine opportunities for shared resources to help all parishes achieve the qualities of vitality; and
- develop a long-range plan that considers the eventuality of five priests in the Pastoral Region.

In his October letter to parishioners announcing the planning initiative the Archbishop noted, “The Nemaha-Marshall Region has a rich and wonderful tradition of a vibrant Catholic community. There are many changes that have occurred in our society and communities. In order to fulfill the mission Jesus has entrusted to the Church, we must respond to the effects of these changes upon our parish communities. Good pastoral planning involves seeking the best thinking and insights of the entire community.”

Archbishop Naumann in consultation with the priests of the Pastoral Region, appointed the following members of the Planning Task Force to guide the process and develop recommendations. Monsignor Thomas Tank, Chancellor of the Archdiocese, and Carroll Macke, Communications and Planning Director, served *ex officio*.

Linda Buessing	St. Michael Parish, Axtell
Fr. Arul Carasula	St. Bede Parish, Kelly; St. Columbkille Parish, Blaine; St. Patrick Parish, Corning; and St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Onaga
Fran Fangman	Annunciation Parish, Frankfort
Mark Grollmes	St. James Parish, Wetmore
John Haug	St. Mary Parish, St. Benedict
Fr. Albert Hauser, OSB	Holy Family Parish, Summerfield; St. Michael Parish, Axtell; and Administrator, St. Mary Parish, St. Benedict
Gary Heideman	St. Patrick Parish, Corning
Ed Henry	St. Monica-St. Elizabeth Parish, Blue Rapids
Mark Hermes	Sts. Peter and Paul Parish, Seneca
Emmett Koch	St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Onaga
Fr. Mike Koller	Sts. Peter and Paul Parish, Seneca

Christina Lierz	Sacred Heart Parish, Sabetha
Kate Manley	St. Gregory the Great Parish, Marysville
Mike Matthewson	Holy Family Parish, Summerfield
Kristi Meyer	St. Malachy Parish, Beattie
Glen Meyer	Sacred Heart Parish, Baileyville
Fr. Felix Molumeli	St. Mary Parish, St. Benedict
Fr. Kent O'Connor	Sacred Heart Parish, Sabetha; St. Augustine Parish, Fidelity; and St. James Parish, Wetmore
Steve O'Shea	St. Columbkille Parish, Blaine
Fr. Ed Oen, CPPS	Sacred Heart Parish, Baileyville
Fr. Gary Pennings	St. Gregory the Great Parish, Marysville and St. Malachy Parish, Beattie
Fr. Kurity Podila	Assisting St. Bede Parish, Kelly; St. Columbkille Parish, Blaine; St. Patrick Parish, Corning; and St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Onaga
Barb Rettele	St. Augustine Parish, Fidelity
Lisa Ronnebaum	St. Bede Parish, Kelly
Fr. Jim Shaughnessy	Annunciation Parish, Frankfort; St. Joseph Parish, Lillis; and St. Monica-St. Elizabeth Parish, Blue Rapids
John Wegman	St. Joseph Parish, Lillis

Archbishop Naumann in his letter to parishioners explained that the planning process would include local listening sessions in each parish whereby parishioners would be able to reflect on the facts and provide feedback to the Planning Task Force. He asked each parishioner to prayerfully remember the planning effort and to participate in "the important process of planning for a bright future for the life of the Church for years to come."

The steps in the planning process involved the following activities.

September 25, 2007	Priests of the Pastoral Region including Monsignor Tank and Carroll Macke Review the process, determine qualifications of the Planning Task Force, and set a preliminary meeting schedule
Week of October 1	Letter from Archbishop Naumann All parishioners in the Pastoral Region notified of the planning process with an invitation to participate
Weekend of October 6-7	Announcement from pulpits Parish priests described the purpose of the planning process and noted parish representatives on the Planning Task Force at all weekend Masses
October 8-17	Priests of the Pastoral Region Interviews with individual priests to gather information about the history, culture and current status of parishes
October 21	Planning Task Force Description of its role and responsibilities, review of the planning objectives and process, and discussion of the Signs of Parish Vitality

November 10 – January 13	Attendance at weekend Masses Head count of persons attending Mass at each parish over the course of two or three separate weekends
November 15	Planning Task Force Develop Signs of Parish Vitality and discuss implications of demographic trends
November 26 – February 17	Parish Congregations Review demographic and parish census data, discuss implications of trends, and explore ways to fulfill the elements of parish vitality
February 7	Planning Task Force Review feedback from parish meetings and develop preliminary responses to future scenarios
February 25	Regional Parish Leadership (Pastoral, Finance and School Council representatives from each parish) Discuss responses to future scenarios, develop alternative responses, and develop plans to strengthen parish vitality
March 4	Planning Task Force Consider feedback from parish meetings regarding responses to future scenarios and determine opportunities for collaboration among parishes to strengthen parish vitality
March 30 – April 28	Parish Congregations Discuss proposed responses to future scenarios and draft recommendations
April 29	Planning Task Force Consider feedback from parish meetings and develop final recommendations for presentation to Archbishop Naumann

In most instances parish representatives on the Planning Task Force attended meetings at their respective parish and at the regional parish leadership meeting.

Archbishop Naumann attended the regional parish leadership meeting hosted by Annunciation Parish in Frankfort. Due to space limitations attendance was limited to six representatives from each parish.

A total of 490 persons or approximately 10% of registered households participated in the first round of parish meetings. The second round drew 247 persons or about 5% of registered households.



	<u>November 26 – February 17</u>	<u>March 30 – April 28</u>
Annunciation, Frankfort	26	10
Holy Family, Summerfield	17*	2*
Sacred Heart, Baileyville	34	4
Sacred Heart, Sabetha	52	10
St. Augustine, Fidelity	14	7
St. Bede, Kelly	31*	37*
St. Columbkille, Blaine	**	3*
St. Gregory the Great, Marysville	28*	22*
St. James, Wetmore	41	30
St. Joseph, Lillis	**	7*
St. Malachy, Beattie	30*	11*
St. Mary, St. Benedict	90	39
St. Michael, Axtell	42*	12*
St. Monica-St. Elizabeth, Blue Rapids	20	2
St. Patrick, Corning	32*	11*
Sts. Peter and Paul	33	20
St. Vincent de Paul, Onaga	**	20*

\*combined with adjoining parish(es)

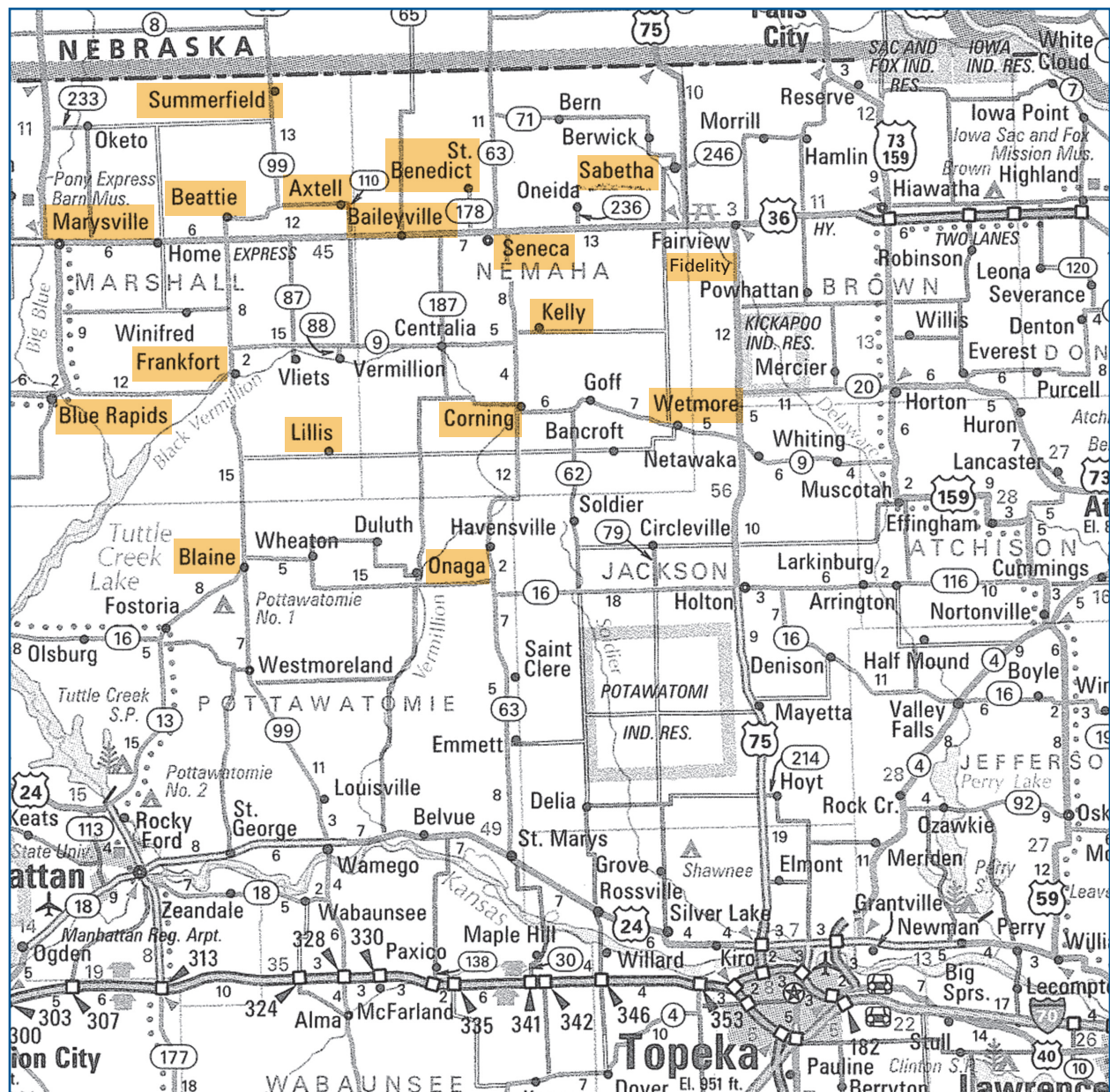
\*\*first round not scheduled since these parishes participated in the St. Mary Pastoral Region planning process

The Nemaha-Marshall Pastoral Region is comprised of 17 parishes serving 2,864 registered households or about 7,592 persons and staffed by nine priests as follows. Additionally, there are three Catholic grade schools at St. Gregory the Great in Marysville, St. Michael in Axtell, and Sts. Peter and Paul in Seneca. All facilities are in good to excellent condition.

Fr. Arul Carasala	St. Bede Parish, Kelly; St. Columbkille Parish, Blaine; St. Patrick Parish, Corning; and St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Onaga
Fr. Albert Hauser, OSB	St. Michael Parish, Axtell and Holy Family Parish, Summerfield and administrator of St. Mary Parish, St. Benedict
Fr. Mike Koller	Sts. Peter and Paul Parish, Seneca
Fr. Felix Molumeli	St. Mary Parish, St. Benedict
Fr. Kent O'Connor	Sacred Heart Parish, Sabetha; St. Augustine Parish, Fidelity; and St. James Parish, Wetmore
Fr. Ed Oen, CPPS	Sacred Heart Parish, Baileyville
Fr. Gary Pennings	St. Gregory the Great, Parish, Marysville and St. Malachy Parish, Beattie (at the time of the planning process; staffed by Fr. Anthony Putti beginning July 1, 2008)
Fr. Kurity Podila	Assisting Fr. Arul Carasala and in residence at St. Columbkille Parish, Blaine
Fr. Jim Shaughnessy	Annunciation Parish, Frankfort; St. Joseph Parish, Lillis; and St. Monica-St. Elizabeth Parish, Blue Rapids

Fr. Arul Carasala, Fr. Kurity Podila and Fr. Anthony Putti are on temporary assignments from their dioceses in India. Fr. Felix Molumeli is on temporary assignment from his home in Lesotho, Africa and works full-time as a clinical psychologist in Beatrice, Nebraska. Fr. Albert Hauser is 74 years of age and is unlikely to be replaced by a confrere from St. Benedict's Abbey when he retires. Fr. Ed Oen is 70 years of age and also is unlikely to be replaced by a confrere from the Kansas City Province of the Society of the Precious Blood when he retires. As of July 1, 2008 there will be only three priests of the Archdiocese serving the Pastoral Region.

The Nemaha-Marshall Pastoral Region (see map next page) initially was comprised of parishes in Nemaha and Marshall Counties only. (St. Augustine Church in Fidelity lies on the Brown County side of the road demarcating Nemaha and Brown Counties while Sabetha, site of Sacred Heart Church, is situated in Nemaha County along the Brown County line.) As a result of the planning recommendations by the St. Mary Pastoral Region, both St. Columbkille Parish in Blaine and St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Onaga in Pottawatomie County were added to the Nemaha-Marshall Pastoral Region (along with St. Joseph Parish in Lillis). Those parishes have greater similarities to neighboring parishes to the north including demographics, income, school districts (see Figure 13), shopping and transportation routes. Consequently, this profile of the Pastoral Region will focus on data for Marshall, Nemaha and Brown Counties. Data for Pottawatomie and Jackson Counties are skewed by growth in exurban areas adjacent to Manhattan and Topeka, which have no bearing on the Nemaha-Marshall Pastoral Region.



Population trends for the northern counties bordering the state line were in a free fall from 1900 through 1970. The decline has continued but at a slower rate (see Figures 1-4). The population in Nemaha County has stabilized for the present. It actually showed a slight increase from 1990 to 2000 (see Figure 5) but then continued to shrink between 2000 and 2006 (see Figure 6). Each of the three counties - Marshall, Nemaha and Brown are home to about 10,000 people. Projections through 2025 show modest gains for Marshall and Brown Counties, though well below the Kansas average, and a further decline for Nemaha County (see Figure 7).

As with most of rural Kansas, these three counties have a disproportionate number of people aged 65 and older – up to 65% more than the state average (see Figure 8). Those numbers are projected to increase through at least 2025 (see Figure 9). Correspondingly, a higher percentage of people aged 65 and older live alone in the Region as compared to the state average (see Figure 10).

On the positive side is the fact that the percentage of children age 0-14 for the Region is approximately equal to the state average (see Figure 8). Also, the percentage of married-couple households with children under age 18 is higher in each of the three counties than the state average. However, the percentage of people in or nearing childbearing age is below the state average (see Figure 8).

Three communities along U.S. Highway 36 anchor business and industry in the Pastoral Region – Marysville, Seneca and Sabetha. All lost population between 2000 and 2006 according to estimates by the U.S. Census Bureau despite retirees moving from farms to towns. Current estimated populations are: Marysville – 3,143; Seneca – 2,064; and Sabetha – 2,519. The Seneca area has roughly twice the proportion of Catholics as the Marysville area and about five times the proportion in the Sabetha area.

As is also true of most rural communities in Kansas, the incomes of residents in these three counties lag behind the average Kansas household ranging from 79% to 84% of the state average (see Figure 11). The distribution of income is considerably different as well with much smaller percentages of households in the upper income categories beginning at \$50,000. Likewise, the percentages of households in the under-\$25,000 category are considerably higher. As a benchmark, the federal poverty income guideline in 2000 for a family of four was \$17,050.

**Annunciation Parish** in Frankfort has 187 registered households of which 16 are considered to be nonpracticing. The total number of registered persons is 454 or 2.4 per household. The number of both registered households and persons has declined since 1990.

The seating capacity of the church is 188. The number of persons attending Masses on the weekends of November 10 and 17 were counted as follows. While approximately half of registered persons attend Mass, the church cannot hold all attendees at only one Mass, which was taken into consideration in recommending responses to future scenarios.

Time	November 10			November 17		
	Number	% persons	% capacity	Number	% persons	% capacity
4:00 Saturday	93	20%	49%	67	15%	36%
10:30 Sunday	147	32%	78%	140	31%	74%
<b>Total</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>128%</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>110%</b>

The number of infant baptisms has decreased since 1990, as has the number of children enrolled in the religious education program as shown below.

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2007
Registered Households	198	NA	225	177	187
Infant Baptisms	12	NA	8	1	8
Confirmations	30	NA	49	0	0
Religious Education	110	NA	139	98	75
RCIA	0	NA	9	0	4

Collections and receipts have held steady in recent years while expenses have crept up somewhat. However, the Parish has a cash balance equal to about 30% of operating expenses and has funds on deposit with the Archdiocese equal to one-third of its operating budget (see Figure 17).

**Holy Family Parish** in Summerfield is the second smallest parish in the Region with 40 registered households and 120 registered persons or 3.0 persons per household probably indicating that the Parish has a significant proportion of young families. Registered parishioners have decreased since 1990. The seating capacity of the church is 240.

Time	average of November 11-18		
	Number	% persons	% capacity
8:15 Sunday	100	83%	42%

The numbers of infant baptisms and of children enrolled in the religious education program have fluctuated since 1990.

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2007
Registered Households	55	NA	40	50	40
Infant Baptisms	4	NA	2	1	4
Confirmations	0	NA	0	0	0
Religious Education	20	NA	31	2	10
RCIA	0	NA	0	0	0

Collections and receipts increased last year while expenses decreased significantly. The Parish has a cash balance well exceeding one year's operating budget and has funds on deposit with the Archdiocese approaching three years' operating expenses (see Figure 18).

**Sacred Heart Parish** in Baileyville has 203 registered households comprised of 550 registered persons or 2.7 per household. The number of registered households is about the same as 1990, but the number of registered persons has declined substantially, which was taken into consideration in developing recommended responses to potential future scenarios.

The seating capacity of the church is 425. The number of persons attending Masses on the weekends of November 10 and 17 were counted as follows. The church can easily accommodate all parishioners at one Mass.

Time	November 10			November 17		
	Number	% persons	% capacity	Number	% persons	% capacity
7:00 Saturday	148	27%	35%	142	26%	33%
9:00 Sunday	202	37%	48%	182	33%	43%
Total	350	64%	82%	324	59%	76%

Collections and receipts have increased steadily in recent years with additional funds provided for capital improvements. Expenses have been flat the last two years. The Parish has a cash balance equal to 17% of operating expenses and has funds on deposit with the Archdiocese equal to 62% of its annual budget (see Figure 19).

**Sacred Heart Parish** in Sabetha has 170 registered households with 438 registered persons or 2.6 per household. The numbers of registered households and persons has grown since 1990. The number of registered persons (730) reported in 2005 was undoubtedly an error.

The seating capacity of the church is 375 with an adjoining parish hall that can be opened to the church when necessary. The number of persons attending Masses on the weekends of November 10 and January 12 were counted as follows. The church could accommodate all parishioners at one Mass for the short term.

Time	November 10			January 12		
	Number	% persons	% capacity	Number	% persons	% capacity
4:00 Saturday	73	17%	20%	123	28%	33%
10:30 Sunday	191	44%	51%	231	53%	62%
<b>Total</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>94%</b>

The number of infant baptisms has fluctuated considerably. The numbers of confirmations and children enrolled in the religious education program since 2000 include St. Augustine.

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2007
Registered Households	112	140	170	146	170
Infant Baptisms	8	15	20	9	6
Confirmations	7	0	43	30	0
Religious Education	88	95	153*	100	123*
RCIA	0	0	0	6	0

\*includes St. Augustine

Collections and receipts had increased from 2004-05 to 2005-06. Contributions for capital improvements in 2006-07 apparently reduced regular collections for last year. Expenses have been increasing significantly. The Parish has a cash balance equal to 30% of operating expenses and has funds on deposit with the Archdiocese equal to just 11% of its annual budget (see Figure 20).

**St. Augustine Parish** in Fidelity has 37 registered households with 100 registered persons or 2.7 per household. It is the smallest parish in the Region. The numbers of registered households and persons has steadily decreased since 1990.

The seating capacity of the church is 240. The number of persons attending Masses on the weekends of November 10-17 and January 13 were counted as follows. Obviously, Mass at this time attracted Catholics beyond the Parish.

Time	November 10			November 17			January 13		
	Number	% persons	% capacity	Number	% persons	% capacity	Number	% persons	% capacity
8:30 Sunday	152	152%	63%	126	126%	53%	85	85%	35%

The numbers of infant baptisms and confirmations have held steady. The religious education program is now combined with Sacred Heart.

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2007
Registered Households	47	45	40	39	37
Infant Baptisms	3	3	2	3	3
Confirmations	4	8	0	4	0
Religious Education	36	30	*	24	*
RCIA	0	0	*	6	0

\*combined with Sacred Heart Parish

Collections and receipts have also held steady despite of a smaller number of registered households while expenses have decreased. The Parish has the highest average ordinary collections per household in the Region. The Parish has a cash balance equal to 30% of operating expenses and has funds on deposit with the Archdiocese about equal to its annual budget (see Figure 21).

**St. Bede Parish** in Kelly has 150 registered households made up of 520 registered persons or 3.5 per household, the second highest family size in the Region probably indicating a large portion of young families. The numbers of registered households and persons has grown since 1990.

The seating capacity of the church is 375. The number of persons attending Masses on the weekends of November 11-18-25 were counted as follows.

Time	November 11			November 18			November 25		
	Number	% persons	% capacity	Number	% persons	% capacity	Number	% persons	% capacity
10:00 Sunday	255	49%	73%	288	55%	82%	276	53%	79%

The numbers of infant baptisms and of children in religious education have been steady in recent years.

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2007
Registered Households	123	123	138	140	150
Infant Baptisms	11	4	4	8	5
Confirmations	16	0	30	23	0
Religious Education	70	76	100	100	110
RCIA	1	0	0	0	4

Collections and receipts have fluctuated significantly in recent years. Expenses increased sharply last year with a net loss the past two years. However, the Parish has a cash balance equal to its annual operating expenses and has a small amount on deposit with the Archdiocese equal to less than 3% of its annual budget (see Figure 22).



**St. Columbkille Parish** in Blaine has 56 registered households made up of 163 (2005 figure) registered persons or 2.9 per household. The numbers of registered households and persons has grown in recent years as families have migrated farther out of the Manhattan area. The figures reported for 1990 are certainly in error.

The seating capacity of the church is 250. The number of persons attending Masses on the weekends of November 10-17 and December 1 were counted as follows. A 50th wedding anniversary celebration inflated the number for November 10.

Time	November 10			November 17			December 1		
	Number	% persons	% capacity	Number	% persons	% capacity	Number	% persons	% capacity
4:00 Saturday	199	122%	80%	87	53%	35%	125	77%	50%

(5:00 pm CDT)

The numbers of infant baptisms and of children in religious education have been steady in recent years.

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2007
Registered Households	198	NA	40	55	56
Infant Baptisms	12	NA	4	2	2
Confirmations	30	NA	0	4	0
Religious Education	110	NA	16	28	27
RCIA	0	0	0	4	0

Collections and receipts have been essentially flat in recent years, as have expenses. This year the church roof was replaced at a cost of approximately \$100,000, most of which was paid for by special contributions. The Parish has a cash balance equal nearly twice its annual operating expenses but has no funds on deposit with the Archdiocese (see Figure 23).

**St. Gregory the Great Parish** in Marysville has 483 registered households comprised of 1,231 registered persons or 2.5 per household. The numbers of registered households and persons has fluctuated significantly since 1990, probably due to record keeping discrepancies.

The seating capacity of the church is 460. The number of persons attending Masses on the weekends of November 11-18 was counted as follows. The church could easily accommodate all parishioners at two Masses, which was taken into consideration in developing recommended responses to potential future scenarios.

Time	Average of November 11-18		
	Number	% persons	% capacity
5:30 Saturday	230	19%	50%
7:00 Sunday	149	12%	32%
10:30 Sunday	265	22%	58%
Total	644	52%	140%

The numbers of infant baptisms have fluctuated somewhat since 1990. The number of children in religious education has declined precipitously since 2000.

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2007
Registered Households	520	710	495	580	483
Infant Baptisms	23	29	20	15	25
Confirmations	0	51	0	0	32
Religious Education	155	196	180	64	60
RCIA	27	0	9	12	7

Collections and receipts increased in 2006-07 as outstanding pledges to the capital campaign for the school were paid. Expenses increased last year, although a surplus was reported reversing a net loss for the previous two years. The Parish has a cash balance equal to 37% of its annual operating expenses and has a substantial amount on deposit with the Archdiocese equal to 75% of its annual budget (see Figure 24).

**St. James Parish** in Wetmore has 70 registered households with 178 registered persons or 2.5 per household. The numbers of registered households and persons has been steady since 2000 following a decline from 1990.

The seating capacity of the church is 150. The number of persons attending Masses on the weekends of November 10 and January 12 were counted as follows. The Parish is considering an addition to the church.

Time	November 10			January 12		
	Number	% persons	% capacity	Number	% persons	% capacity
6:30 Saturday	105	59%	70%	148	83%	99%

The number of infant baptisms has been steady since 2000. The religious education program was combined with Sacred Heart in 2000.

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2007
Registered Households	86	80	60	69	70
Infant Baptisms	7	8	3	3	3
Confirmations	16	10	0	0	0
Religious Education	56	65	*	*	
RCIA	0	0	*	*	0

\*combined with Sacred Heart

Collections and receipts have increased over the past three years. Expenses increased sharply last year resulting in a net loss. However, the Parish has a cash balance equal to 77% of its operating expenses and has a small amount on deposit with the Archdiocese equal to 7% of its annual budget (see Figure 25).

**St. Joseph Parish** in Lillis has 49 registered households with 110 registered persons or 2.2 per household. The numbers of registered households and persons has increased slightly since 1995.

The seating capacity of the church is 275. The number of persons attending Masses on the weekends of November 10-17 was counted as follows.

Time	November 10			November 17		
	Number	% persons	% capacity	Number	% persons	% capacity
6:00 Saturday	101	92%	37%	78	71%	28%

Few infant baptisms have been recorded. The numbers in the religious education program fell off in 2007 to just 14.

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2007
Registered Households	NA	45	39	46	49
Infant Baptisms	NA	0	0	1	0
Confirmations	NA	0	0	13	0
Religious Education	NA	20	16	20	14
RCIA	NA	0	0	0	0

Collections and receipts declined this past year while expenses increased resulting in a net loss. The Parish has a cash balance equal to 33% of its operating expenses and no funds on deposit with the Archdiocese (see Figure 26).

**St. Malachy Parish** in Beattie has 83 registered households with 160 registered persons or 1.9 per household, which is the smallest household size in the Region. The numbers of registered households and persons has fluctuated since 1990, probably due to record keeping discrepancies.

The seating capacity of the church is 280. The number of persons attending Masses on the weekends of November 11-18 was counted as follows.

Time	average of November 11-18		
	Number	% persons	% capacity
8:45 Sunday	133	83%	48%

The number of infant baptisms increased substantially last year while the decline in the number enrolled in religious education is due to combining the upper grades with the youth program at St. Gregory the Great Parish.

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2007
Registered Households	109	NA	86	60	83
Infant Baptisms	6	NA	2	3	8
Confirmations	14	NA	12	0	0
Religious Education	77	NA	65	51	22
RCIA	0	0	0	2	0

Collections and receipts have been up and down over the past three years. The net income loss resulted from the expenditure of a bequest received in a prior year to make capital improvements in 2007. The Parish has a cash balance equal to nearly twice its annual operating expenses. It has no funds on deposit with the Archdiocese (see Figure 27).

**St. Mary Parish** in St. Benedict has 140 registered households with 515 registered persons or 3.7 per household, the largest household size in the Region probably indicating that it is comprised of many young families. The numbers of registered households and persons has increased since 1990.

The seating capacity of this historic church is 550. The number of persons attending Masses on the weekends of November 11-18 was counted as follows.

Time	November 10			January 12		
	Number	% persons	% capacity	Number	% persons	% capacity
9:30 Sunday	276	54%	50%	288	56%	52%

The number of infant baptisms has increased slightly in recent years. The numbers in the religious education program have fluctuated.

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2007
Registered Households	107	113	130	152	140
Infant Baptisms	4	4	7	7	6
Confirmations	16	0	33	28	0
Religious Education	111	102	86	140	86
RCIA	0	1	0	7	0

Collections and receipts have steadily increased the past three years. Expenses have been flat the past two years. The Parish has a cash balance equal to 25% of its operating expenses and a negligible amount of funds on deposit with the Archdiocese (see Figure 28).

**St. Michael Parish** in Axtell has 170 registered households with 375 registered persons or 2.2 per household. The numbers of registered households and persons has declined slightly since 1990.

The seating capacity of the church is 250. The average number of persons attending Masses on the weekends of November 10-17 was counted as follows. The church is not large enough to hold all parishioners at one Mass, which was taken into consideration in the recommended responses to potential future scenarios.

Time	November 10-11			November 17-18		
	Number	% persons	% capacity	Number	% persons	% capacity
5:00 Saturday	206	55%	NA	269	72%	NA
10:15 Sunday						
Total						

The number of infant baptisms has remained fairly steady in recent years. The numbers in the religious education program have fluctuated.

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2007
Registered Households	182	NA	170	160	170
Infant Baptisms	13	NA	12	6	10
Confirmations	0	NA	0	0	0
Religious Education	54	NA	62	94	80
RCIA	0	NA	0	0	0

Collections and receipts have decreased since 2004-05, as have expenses. The Parish has a cash balance equal to 23% of its operating expenses and no funds on deposit with the Archdiocese (see Figure 29).

**St. Monica-St. Elizabeth Parish** in Blue Rapids has 66 registered households comprised of 171 registered persons or 2.6 per household. The merger of these two parishes in about 2002 was self-initiated and is perceived as having a positive outcome.

The seating capacity of the church is 160. There is discussion about a major renovation of the church or construction of a new church. The number of persons attending Masses on the weekends of November 11-18 was counted as follows.

Time	November 11			November 18		
	Number	% persons	% capacity	Number	% persons	% capacity
8:30 Sunday	96	56%	60%	105	61%	66%

There has been a small number of infant baptisms in recent years. The number of children in the religious education program also is small.

	2005	2007
Registered Households	67	66
Infant Baptisms	3	2
Confirmations	0	0
Religious Education	13	19
RCIA	0	0

Collections and receipts have been flat the past three years. Expenses have increased slightly the past two years. A new parish hall was built two years ago largely with funds from two bequests. The Parish has a cash balance about equal to its operating expenses and no funds on deposit with the Archdiocese (see Figure 30).

**St. Patrick Parish** in Corning has 157 registered households with 449 registered persons or 2.9 per household. The numbers of registered households has increased since 1990 while the number of registered persons reported has fluctuated wildly probably reflecting inaccurate estimates.

The seating capacity of the church is 300. The number of persons attending Masses on the weekends of November 11-18 was counted as follows.

Time	November 11			November 18		
	Number	% persons	% capacity	Number	% persons	% capacity
8:00 Sunday	233	52%	78%	221	49%	74%

The number of infant baptisms has held steady until this past year. The numbers in the religious education program also have been relatively consistent.

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2007
Registered Households	125	124	160	160	157
Infant Baptisms	10	8	11	12	6
Confirmations	30	0	29	28	0
Religious Education	90	112	130	140	124
RCIA	0	0	0	0	10

Collections and receipts have steadily increased the past three years, although the Parish has the lowest average collections per household in the Region by far. Expenses also have increased. The Parish has a cash balance equal to 24% of its operating expenses and no funds on deposit with the Archdiocese (see Figure 31).

**Sts. Peter and Paul Parish** in Seneca has 772 registered households with 1,818 registered persons or 2.5 per household. The numbers of registered households and persons have declined steadily since 1990.

The seating capacity of the church is 550. The number of persons attending Masses on the weekends of November 10-17 was counted as follows. The church could accommodate all parishioners at three Masses, which was taken into consideration in recommended responses to potential future scenarios.

Time	November 10			November 17		
	Number	% persons	% capacity	Number	% persons	% capacity
5:00 Saturday	356	20%	65%	312	17%	57%
7:00 Sunday	195	11%	35%	216	12%	39%
9:00 Sunday	423	23%	77%	477	26%	87%
11:00 Sunday	302	17%	55%	279	15%	51%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,276</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>232%</b>	<b>1,284</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>233%</b>

The number of infant baptisms has declined by a third since 1990. The numbers of confirmations, children enrolled in the religious education program, and students in the school have all decreased in recent years.

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2007
Registered Households	870	865	850	801	772
Infant Baptisms	35	37	34	20	22
Confirmations	72	5	76	66	62
Religious Education	83	176	188	185	123
RCIA	6	5	6	2	2

Collections and receipts increased slightly from 2004-05 at the same time pledge payments were received for a campaign to construct a new school building. Expenses have been increasing significantly due in part to the building campaign. The Parish has a significant cash reserve mainly consisting of campaign pledge payments received and not yet expended for construction. It has funds on deposit with the Archdiocese equal to 110% of its annual budget (see Figure 32).

**St. Vincent de Paul Parish** in Onaga has 90 registered households with 240 registered persons (2005 figure) or 2.7 per household. The numbers of registered households and persons has fluctuated somewhat since 1995.

The seating capacity of the church is 225. The number of persons attending Masses on the weekends of November 11-18 was counted as follows.

Time	average of November 11-18		
	Number	% persons	% capacity
6:00 Saturday	100	42%	44%

(7:00 CDT)

The number of infant baptisms has fallen off in recent years, as has the number of children in religious education.

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2007
Registered Households	NA	100	85	100	90
Infant Baptisms	NA	7	5	2	3
Confirmations	NA	0	0	17	0
Religious Education	NA	72	60	79	64
RCIA	NA	3	1	3	1

Collections and receipts have been flat over the past three years while expenses and disbursements increased resulting in a net loss last year. The Parish has a cash balance equal to 49% of its annual operating expenses. It has negligible funds on deposit with the Archdiocese (see Figure 33).



In rural communities the local public schools are often the most important institutions to residents. The declining number of students in many communities threatens potential consolidation with other districts and the subsequent closure of schools. Consequently, families that choose to send their children to Catholic schools often are regarded with scorn. An example of the animosity that underlies the surface: when the public school in Seneca burned to the ground and required passage of a bond issue to be rebuilt there was considerable tension between parochial and public school supporters even though approximately 87% of the school district is Catholic. Catholic school enrollment is only about 8.8% of total school enrollments in Marshall and Nemaha Counties (see Figure 12).

Catholic students must rely upon the public schools for special services. The desire to participate in competitive sports even at a young age is another attraction to enroll in public rather than Catholic schools. However, in each case Catholic school students are able to ride public school buses if they live on established routes.

By contrast, the public schools in Baileyville and St. Benedict are virtually Catholic schools. Only a handful of non-Catholic students attend. The former St. Mary Parish school building is leased to the public school district for elementary grades.

The trend in Catholic school enrollments generally has followed the downward trend in public school enrollments reflecting both the decline in population and fewer children per household (see Figure 14).

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2007
<b>St. Gregory</b>					
Students	138	138	130	115	130
% of registered households	27%	19%	26%	20%	27%

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2007
<b>St. Michael</b>					
Students	62	NA	36	37	35
% of registered households	34%	NA	21%	23%	21%

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2007
<b>Sts. Peter &amp; Paul</b>					
Students	239	202	182	166	175
% of registered households	27%	23%	21%	21%	24%

The cost to educate each student at Catholic schools is less than half the cost at public schools. The three Catholic schools spent an average of \$4,950 per pupil in 2007-07 (includes preschools at St. Gregory and Sts. Peter and Paul) compared to an average of \$12,101 by the public school districts in Marshall and Nemaha Counties (see Figure 15). That is just 41% of the public school cost, a considerably more efficient means of educating students even considering the added costs to public school districts of providing mandated services such as special education.

The cost per registered household in each of the three parishes for the 2006-07 school year follows, which in each case exceeds the average of ordinary collections per household (see Figure 16). Obviously, the parishes must rely on additional fundraising efforts, student fees, and other sources of extraordinary income to support the schools. Few students from other parishes attend these three schools; four from St. Malachy attend St. Gregory; St. Michael has none; Sts. Peter and Paul had one from Onaga. St. Gregory enrolled four non-Catholic students, St. Michael none, and Sts. Peter and Paul eight.

	Cost per Household	Ordinary Collections per Household
St. Gregory	\$1,341	\$1,030
St. Michael	\$1,029	\$833
Sts. Peter & Paul	\$1,229	\$772

The Catholic schools are not only efficient, they are effective. The following shows the proficiency and above scores based on standardized Kansas assessments for these three Catholic schools, all Catholic schools in the Archdiocese, and all Kansas public schools (2006 data except for St. Michael, which shows 2007 data).

	Math	Reading
St. Gregory	77.7	78.2
St. Michael	86.3	68.1
Sts. Peter & Paul	87	92.9
Archdiocese	77.8	87.2
State of Kansas	74.7	80.2

Of course, the purpose of Catholic schools is to ensure the teaching of the faith and moral values. Catholicity is difficult to measure. However, Kathy O'Hara, Superintendent of Archdiocesan Catholic Schools, provided guidance to which the schools provided the following information.

- All eight classroom teachers at St. Gregory are Catholic; twelve of thirteen at Sts. Peter and Paul; and all three at St. Michael.
- Six of the teachers at St. Gregory are lectors or extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist; all twelve at Sts. Peter and Paul are liturgical ministers.
- All teachers at the three schools attend at least one class at the Institute of Religious Studies each summer. Eight teachers at St. Gregory have received certificates for completing 18 hours of classes; two of those at Sts. Peter and Paul have.
- The teachings of the Church are infused across the curricula.
- All students at the three schools are involved as servers, cantors, gift bearers, choir members, and other roles in the celebration of school-day and weekend Masses.
- Additionally, students are involved in activities throughout the year such as food drives, special events, service projects, and awareness raising projects such as Operation Rice Bowl.

The goal of all parishes in the Archdiocese is to be healthy and vibrant churches, capable of carrying out the work of Christ and the Church. Our desire, as Archbishop Naumann noted in his letter to parishioners in the Region, is “to utilize the many resources and gifts God has entrusted to us in order to proclaim the Gospel effectively and to bring the love of Jesus to all the people of Northeastern Kansas.”

The Planning Task Force first defined the elements of parish vitality using as a framework the pastoral priorities identified by Archbishop Naumann. The draft was shared in meetings with parish congregations and responses were sought to the following questions.

- How can the parish capitalize on its strengths to assure that it fulfills the elements of an alive, vital parish?
- What improvements could be made?
- What additional services can or should be provided?
- In what specific ways can the parish collaborate and share resources with other parishes to support one another in sustaining strong parishes?

The Planning Task Force considered this input in adopting the following Signs of Parish Vitality for recommendation to Archbishop Naumann.

## **SIGNS OF PARISH VITALITY IN THE NEMAHA-MARSHALL PASTORAL REGION**

As baptized Catholics we share a common vocation to grow in holiness and to continue the ministry of Jesus as members of his body, the Church: to pray and worship, to heal and serve, to proclaim and teach. Archbishop Naumann has identified five pastoral priorities: conversion, evangelization, Catholic education, serving those in need, and stewardship. These are the functions of an alive, vital parish capable of carrying out the work of the Church in the Nemaha-Marshall Pastoral Region.

### **1.0 CONVERSION**

An essential mission of the Church is to bring individuals into contact with Jesus Christ, allowing them to be transformed by the experience of His love. The Church accomplishes this in numerous ways but most especially through the sacramental life of the Church.

- 1.1 Parishioners participate fully and with fervor in all liturgical celebrations.
- 1.2 Celebration of daily Mass in the parish during the week is well attended.
- 1.3 Parishioners actively seek the Sacrament of Reconciliation throughout the year as a means of deepening their relationships with Jesus Christ.
- 1.4 Pastors provide sacramental ministry to the sick and homebound.
- 1.5 The parish encourages Eucharistic adoration and habitual prayer.
- 1.6 Ongoing prayer and/or Bible study groups are available to parishioners.
- 1.7 The parish (perhaps in collaboration with other parishes) offers periodic occasions for spiritual renewal and/or personal encounters with Jesus Christ for youth and adults.

## **2.0 EVANGELIZATION**

The mission that Jesus gave the Church was to go and make disciples. It is easy for us to become internally focused. However, to really accomplish this mission we must always be seeking to invite others to know Christ and understand the Gospel.

- 2.1 The parish has an active hospitality ministry that welcomes newcomers to the community, invites people to Mass, invites non-parishioners to social events, and warmly greets strangers at Mass and events.
- 2.2 The parish reaches out to lapsed Catholic and strives to reconcile them to the Church, and contacts people who discontinue attending Mass.
- 2.3 The parish invites non-parishioners to attend CCD and religious education programs and ecumenical prayer services.
- 2.4 The parish informs the wider community about teachings of the Church to overcome bias, misperceptions and ignorance.

## **3.0 CATHOLIC EDUCATION**

Catholic education, in all its forms, is an important endeavor of the Church. Catholic schools and religious education classes provide environments where students have the opportunity for formal religious instruction that integrates their faith into all the other disciplines and into their personal moral development. It is equally important to cultivate within adults a desire to continue to grow in their knowledge of their Catholic faith.

- 3.1 The parish aims to enroll all children of registered households in CCD, which can be offered in collaboration with adjoining parishes.
- 3.2 The parish has an adequate number of dynamic, trained catechists.
- 3.3 Adult education programs are offered regularly supported by baby sitting service for young parents.
- 3.4 Seminars are offered for area youth, which can be in collaboration with other parishes.
- 3.5 Information is provided to families of children in all parishes regarding Catholic elementary schools in the Region.
- 3.6 Students are encouraged to participate in Catholic campus ministries at public universities or attend Catholic higher education institutions.

## **4.0 SERVING THOSE IN NEED**

The Church is called to make the love of Christ visible and tangible to all who are poor, who are vulnerable, and who live on the margins of society.

- 4.1 The parish supports women experiencing crisis pregnancies and promotes efforts to protect the unborn.
- 4.2 The parish provides or works with other churches to provide for the material needs of the poor and those temporarily in crisis.
- 4.3 The parish is aware of and responds to the needs of the elderly.

- 4.4 Parish facilities are accessible by the handicapped including unobtrusive space in pew areas.
- 4.5 The parish supports community efforts to benefit those in need including non-Catholics.
- 4.6 The parish is alert to presence of strangers and immigrants and invites them to Mass and parish events.

## **5.0 STEWARDSHIP**

Stewardship is a way of life and a way of looking at life. It is an expression of spirituality and our profound gratitude from seeing everything as God's gift to us. It is out of this gratitude that we inevitably are motivated to want to return some of what God has given us to Him.

- 5.1 In response to lay leadership parishioners generously provide funds for the operating and capital needs of the parish.
- 5.2 Parishioners actively volunteer their time and talent to ensure the success and effectiveness of all parish ministries and events.
- 5.3 Complete parish and school finance reports are regularly communicated to parishioners and included in new member packets.
- 5.4 Parish meets or exceeds Archdiocesan Call to Share and other campaign goals.
- 5.5 Parish generously supports special collections authorized by pastors and/or Parish Councils.

The Nemaha-Marshall Pastoral Region Planning Task Force respectfully submits the following recommendations to Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann. It believes that implementation will marshal the resources of the Pastoral Region to both capitalize upon its strengths and to enable each parish and its members to more fully realize the fruits of parish vitality. While the future cannot be known, it believes that these recommendations should guide decisions over the next five to ten years.

## 1. SIGNS OF PARISH VITALITY

As baptized Catholics we believe that we share a common vocation to grow in holiness and to personify the ministry of Jesus as members of his body, the Church. The Planning Task Force **recommends** that the Signs of Parish Vitality on pages 27-29 be accepted to fulfill the pastoral priorities that you have set forth for the Archdiocese: conversion, evangelization, education, serving those in need, and stewardship. Conversion of the heart is both the root and aim of each of these functions.

Upon acceptance the Planning Task Force **recommends** that the Signs of Parish Vitality be communicated to all parishioners through a variety of means and reinforced at regular intervals within each parish.

The Planning Task Force believes that all parishes regardless of size can, and should be encouraged to, strive to fulfill these expectations of our Catholic faith. Therefore, it **recommends** that these Signs of Parish Vitality form the basis of planning by each parish and of developing initiatives for collaboration among parishes.

## 2. REGIONAL COUNCIL

To support the implementation of these recommendations and to reduce the burden of responsibilities that often falls to pastors, the Planning Task Force **recommends** establishing a Regional Council comprised of a representative from each parish and all pastors. The purpose of the Council will be to:

- identify regional and parish needs to fulfill the Signs of Parish Vitality;
- assist parishes in planning to meet needs and in evaluating progress toward achieving the Signs of Parish Vitality;
- actively promote and support regional programs;
- encourage collaborative initiatives among parishes; and
- develop communications to support regional initiatives.

The key to the success of the Regional Council will be strong lay leadership, active participation of all members including pastors, and working committees. The Planning Task Force suggests at least quarterly meetings to help assure continual progress. Council members should formally report to their parish pastoral councils.

### 3. FUTURE SCENARIOS

The Planning Task Force was charged with the responsibility to recommend a plan for configuring the current seventeen parishes in the region that could be served by as few as five priests at some point in the future. Planning did not take into consideration moving parishes to or from other pastoral regions, such as the parish in Hiawatha.

The Planning Task Force does not believe that just five priests can adequately serve the region. This scenario would place an unreasonable burden on its priests with: larger numbers of people receiving sacraments particularly baptism, confirmation, reconciliation, and anointing of the sick; greater numbers of wedding and funeral services; greater distances to travel between parishes in some cases; increased demands for education; and increased administrative responsibilities. There is great concern that attempting to shoulder these burdens would negatively impact priests' health and welfare perhaps leading to burnout. While a solution for a five-priest scenario is proposed, the Planning Task Force has deep misgivings that it is feasible.

Currently, nine priests serve the seventeen parishes in the Region: four Diocesan priests (three beginning July 1, 2008), three priests (soon to be four beginning July 1) assigned from foreign dioceses, and two order priests. Both of the order priests are at or beyond retirement age. It is unlikely that their orders will be able to replace them when they are no longer able or willing to serve in the Region. The Planning Task Force is aware that a reduction in priests assigned to the Region is likely in the short term. It **recommends** the following parish groupings and closings in responses to these future scenarios. The numbers in parentheses indicate the number of weekend Mass celebrations if more than one at a parish. Within each parish group the assigned priest will determine the parish in which to reside.

In proposing these responses two principles were considered foremost. First, the last resort is to close a parish, which often is the single most important institution to community life. Second, shifting parishes from one cluster to another is minimized in so far as possible to avoid disrupting collaborative programs such as CCD.

A. The assignment of **eight priests** to the Region would mean that one priest rather than two would serve the Baileyville and St. Benedict parishes.

Seneca (4)

Baileyville (2)/St. Benedict

Frankfort (2)/ Blue Rapids/Lillis

Axtell (2)/Summerfield

Onaga/Blaine/Corning/Kelly served by two priests

Sabetha (2)/Fidelity/Wetmore

Marysville (3)/Beattie

B. The assignment of **seven priests** would mean that Blaine would be grouped with Frankfort and Lillis while Blue Rapids would shift to Marysville and Beattie would be grouped with Axtell and Summerfield.

Seneca (4)

Baileyville (2)/St. Benedict

Frankfort (2)/Blaine/Lillis

Axtell (2)/Beattie/Summerfield

Onaga/Corning/Kelly

Sabetha (2)/Fidelity/Wetmore

Marysville (3)/Blue Rapids



C. The assignment of **six priests** would entail closing the parishes at Lillis and Summerfield. Axtell would be grouped with Baileyville and St. Benedict while Blue Rapids would revert to the Frankfort group and Beattie to the Marysville group. The Planning Task Force **recommends** that the Archbishop request that the Lincoln Diocese provide coverage for a weekend Mass at Summerfield in order to keep that parish open. It would be continue to be administered by the priest serving Axtell.

Seneca (4)

Axtell (2)/ Baileyville/St. Benedict

Frankfort (2)/Blaine/Blue Rapids

Onaga/Corning/Kelly

Sabetha (2)/Fidelity/Wetmore

Marysville (3)/Beattie

D. Though this scenario is not considered to be feasible, the assignment of just **five priests** would join Kelly to Seneca, switch Blue Rapids back to the Marysville group, add Onaga to the Frankfort group, and add Corning to the Sabetha group. At this time it would be determined whether to close the Fidelity parish or merge it with Sabetha and retain one weekend Mass.

Seneca (3)/Kelly

Axtell (2)/Baileyville/St. Benedict

Frankfort (2)/Blaine/Onaga

Sabetha/Corning/Wetmore

Marysville (2)/Beattie/Blue Rapids

The Planning Task Force further **recommends** that the Regional Council conduct an analysis a year following each reduction in assigned priests. The analysis would assess the behavior of Catholics in the Region in terms of weekend Mass attendance, changes in parish registrations, impact on parish finances, student enrollments in CCD, etc. The results of the analysis may be reason for making adjustments to the above recommendations for parish groupings and closings.

Also, the Planning Task Force **recommends** that the weekend Mass schedule throughout the Region be coordinated to give the greatest number of Catholics the greatest opportunity to participate. For example, scheduling Saturday evening Masses at approximately the same time at adjoining parishes should be avoided. This issue will become even more critical if the number of priests is reduced. The current Mass schedule follows below.

**Saturday**

4:00 pm	Frankfort		
5:00 pm	Axtell	Blaine (4:00 CST)	Seneca
5:30 pm	Marysville		
6:00 pm	Lillis		
6:30 pm	Wetmore		
7:00 pm	Baileyville	Onaga (6:00 CST)	

**Sunday**

7:00 am	Marysville	Seneca	
7:30 am	Fidelity		
8:00 am	Corning		
8:15 am	Summerfield		
8:30 am	Blue Rapids		
8:45 am	Beattie		
9:00 am	Baileyville	Seneca	
9:30 am	St. Benedict		
10:00 am	Kelly		
10:15 am	Axtell		
10:30 am	Frankfort	Marysville	Sabetha
11:00 am	Seneca		
5:00 pm	Sabetha		

## 4. REGIONAL INITIATIVES

The Planning Task Force recognizes that most parishes in the Region do not have sufficient resources individually to meet each of the Signs of Parish Vitality in a meaningful, sustainable way. Based on input from participants in the parish meetings, the Planning Task Force **recommends** that the Regional Council initiate and/or support efforts to undertake the following activities through a coordinated, collaborative approach for the Region that capitalizes on strengths within the Region. Among the many ideas suggested these are offered as priorities for action.

### A. Plan and promote missions and retreats

Examples include programs such as Christ Renews His Parish, spiritual retreats for senior citizens, Kelly Youth Rally, confirmation retreats, and high school senior retreats at St. Benedict Abbey. These programs should be offered at varying parish locations throughout the Region. Adjoining parishes should jointly sponsor, plan and execute these programs with funding shared on a proportional basis to promote the perception of “shared ownership” and overcome parochialism. Not only do missions and retreats deepen parishioners’ understanding and appreciation of their faith, they provide spiritual renewal and opportunities to reach out to inactive Catholics and others.

### B. Develop and sustain with Archdiocesan support a regional initiative to bring inactive Catholics back into the Church and to evangelize the unchurched

According to a recent Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life survey, roughly one-third of those raised as Catholics have left the Church and one-in-ten American adults are former Catholics. Overall, Pew found that approximately 16% of the population is not affiliated with any faith. Another study by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University found that only 55% of Catholics practice their religion. Nearly every parish in the Region concurred that there are many inactive Catholics in their communities. However, no parish has the knowledge, experience, or resources necessary to develop and sustain a program of evangelization. Most parishioners are deeply uncomfortable with the idea. With the population throughout the Region in decline and aging it is imperative to invite inactive Catholics and others effectively and continually to maintain viable parishes. A comprehensive Regional program with active parish engagement and Archdiocesan support is the only feasible approach.

### C. Plan, schedule and promote adult education programs

A few of the larger parishes provide limited religious education for adults. Otherwise, very little adult education in any form is offered in the Region. In parish meetings participants recognized the importance of both providing multiple opportunities and motivating people to participate. Past experience at most parishes has resulted in disappointing attendance. A coordinated Regional plan and program is needed incorporating a variety of formats such as one-session seminars, series, Bible studies and workshops. The utilization of Archdiocesan and Regional educators, speakers and facilitators at varying parish locations will help stimulate interest as well as relieve priests of primary responsibility. As indicated above, adjoining parishes should also jointly sponsor, plan and execute these programs with funding shared on a proportional basis to promote the perception of “shared ownership” and overcome parochialism. The availability of supporting materials through the Internet will diminish the costs and foster increased participation.

### D. Provide Regional training programs for catechists

Catechetical education of children through CCD programs can be improved by encouraging volunteer teachers to participate in training programs offered by the Archdiocese at varying locations throughout the Region. Few teachers have training in instructional techniques and participate in their own ongoing faith education. This effort coupled with a vibrant adult education program will improve the quality of education for children. Training programs should be jointly sponsored and funded by the parishes in the Region. Catechists who participate in programs should be recognized and rewarded, which will also serve to encourage others.

#### E. Coordinate marriage preparation

The marriage preparation program will benefit from some improvements. Regional recruitment of and training programs for lead couples will assure an adequate supply located throughout the Region for the greatest convenience for engaged couples. Special attention will be given to preparation programs designed specifically for those who plan to enter into second marriages.

#### F. Create and maintain a Regional website

A master website for the Region with links to existing parish websites will enhance communications throughout the Region. It will be especially helpful as Mass times are changed. As Regional programs are developed for missions, retreats and adult education, it will be a useful tool for promotion to generate interest and participation. It can also be used for the dissemination of adult education materials and the sharing of other resources. The Archdiocese has offered assistance. Costs should be borne by all parishes in the Region. At least one individual at each parish should be trained to update and add information.

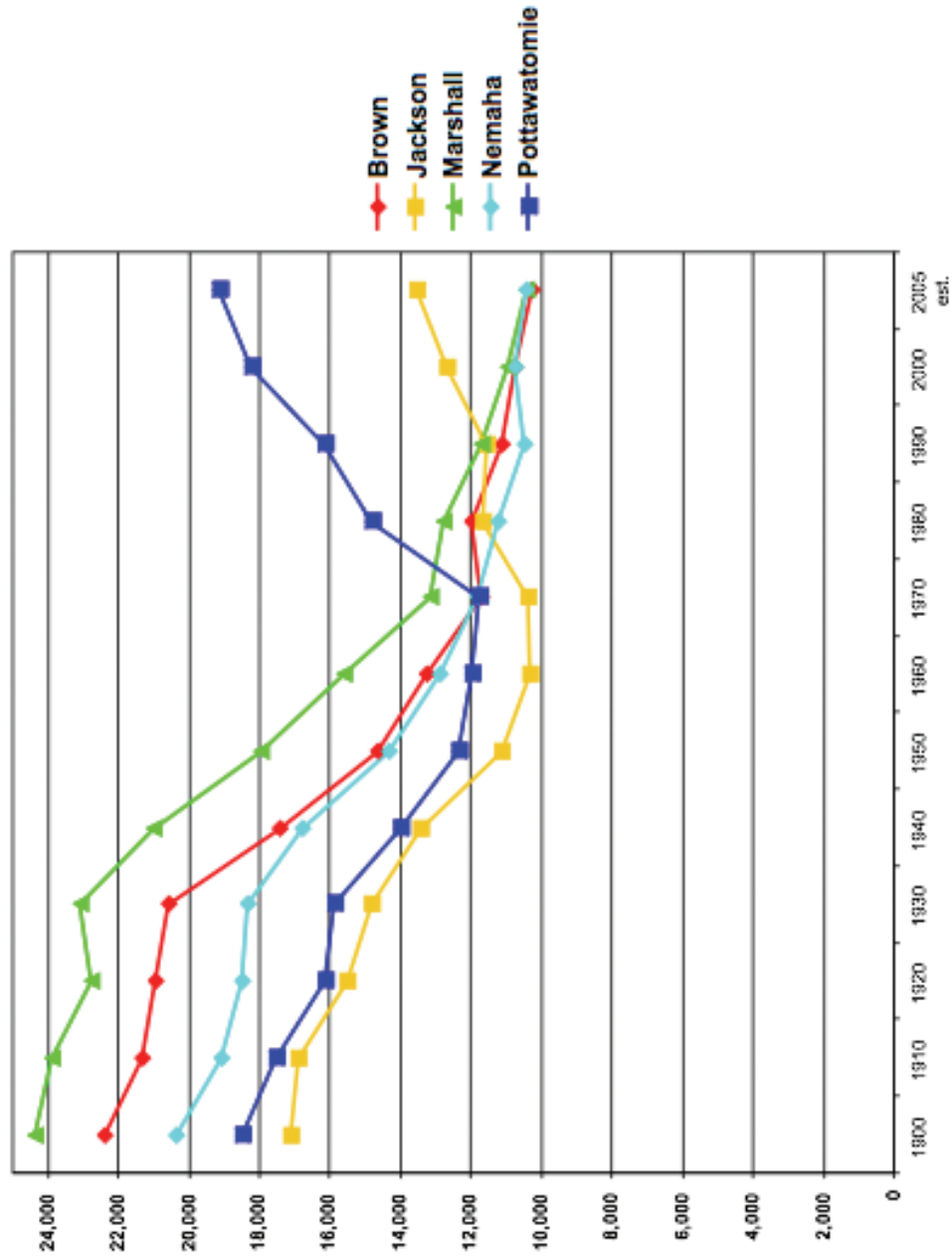
#### G. Provide shared administrative support

Particularly if the number of priests is reduced, the need for administrative support to priests becomes more important. Support is especially needed for the training and support of parish catechists. This individual will also provide needed support for managing Regional missions, retreats, and adult education programs. In these areas this person will serve as staff support for the Regional Council. All parishes should proportionately fund the position.

# APPENDIX

FIGURE 1

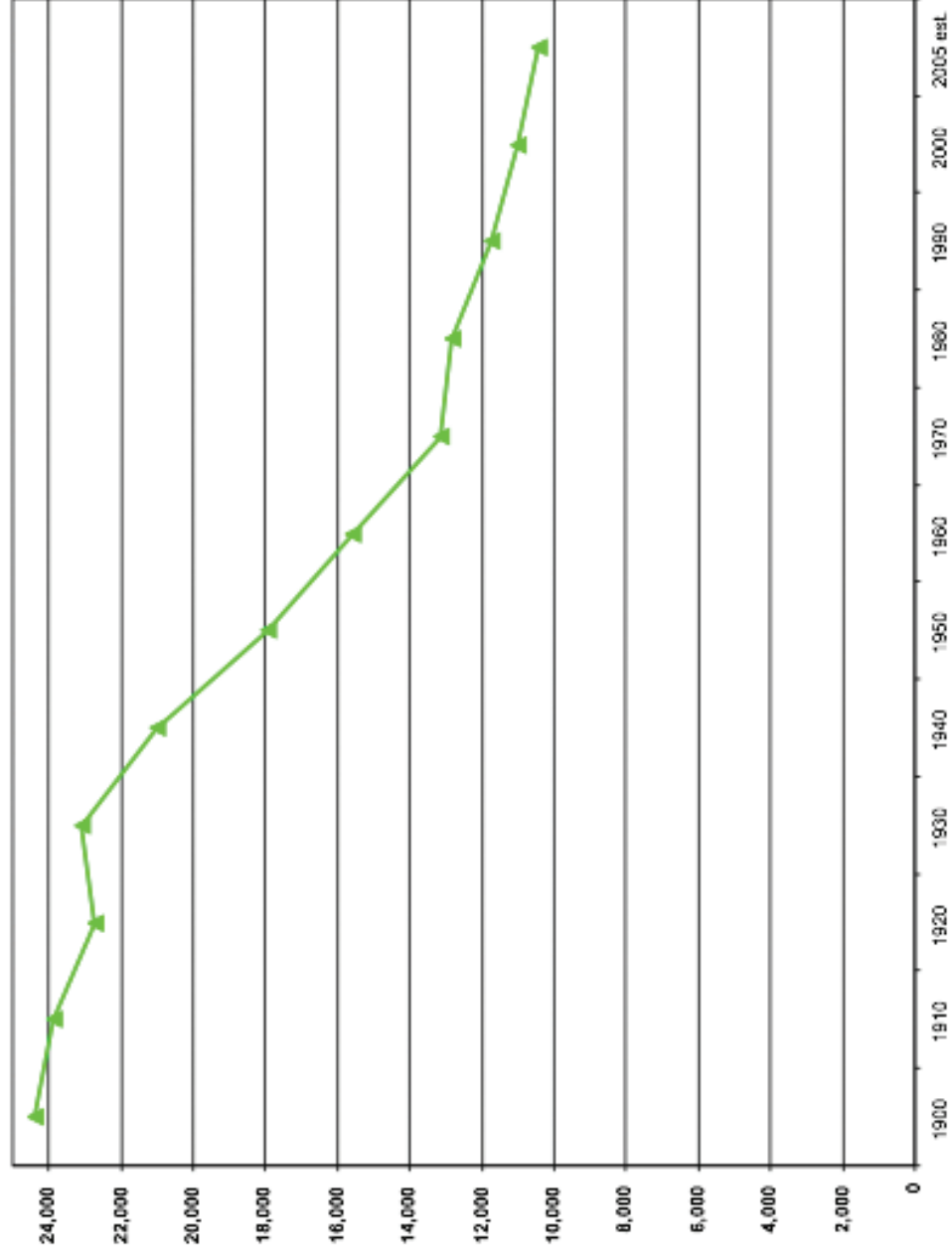
# Population Trends



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

FIGURE 2

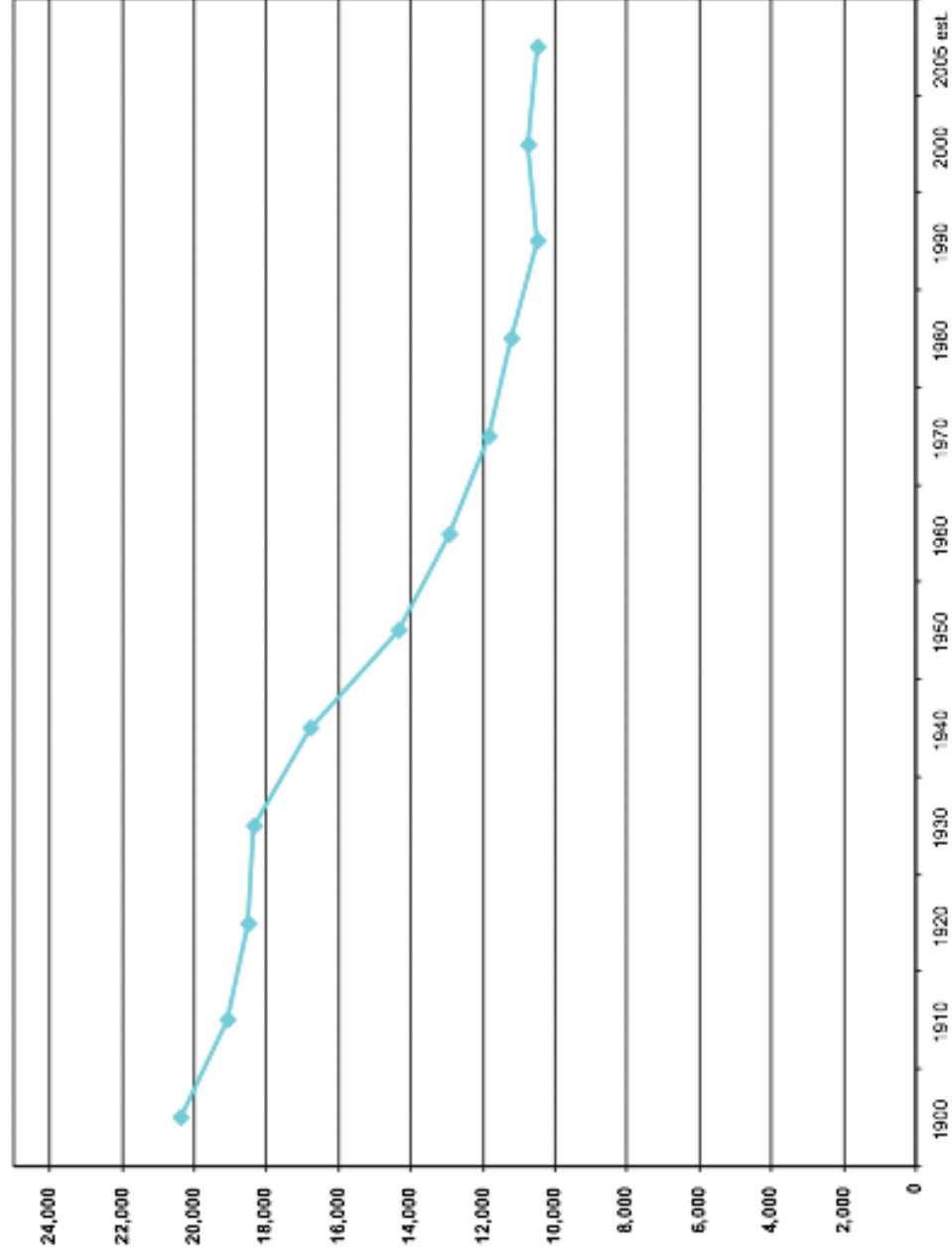
## Population Trends - Marshall



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

FIGURE 3

## Population Trends - Nemaha

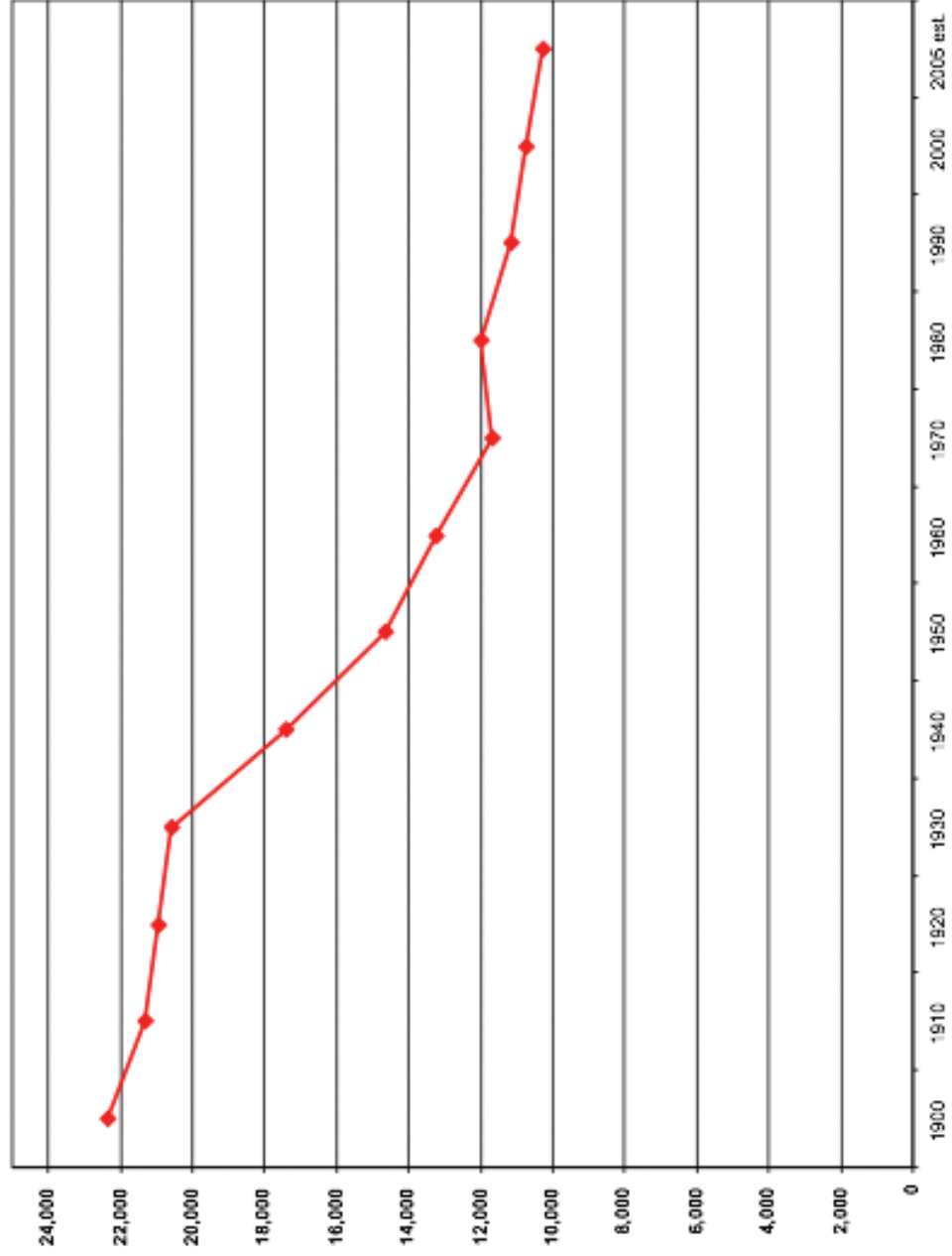


Source: U.S. Census Bureau



FIGURE 4

## Population Trends - Brown

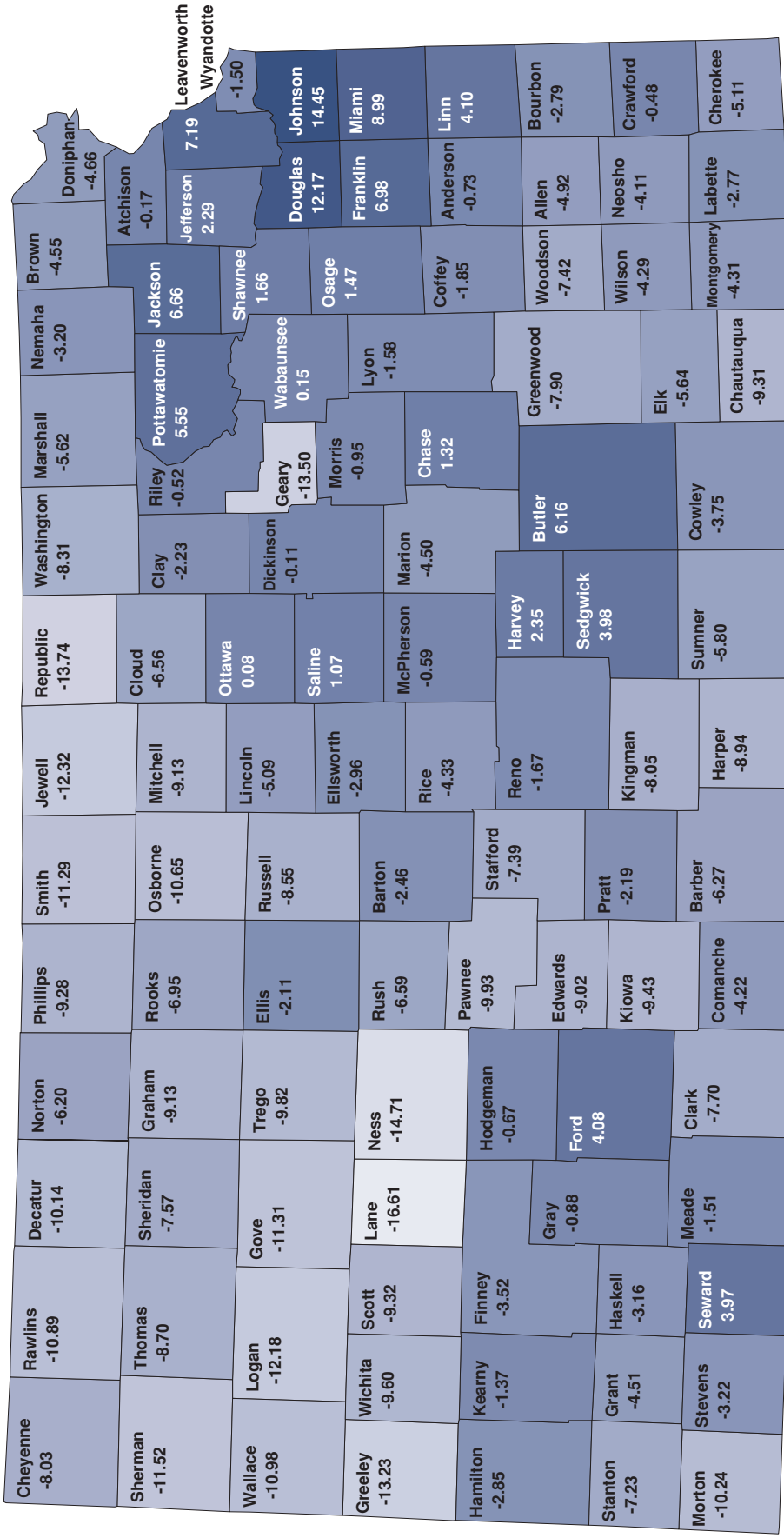


Source: U.S. Census Bureau



**FIGURE 6**

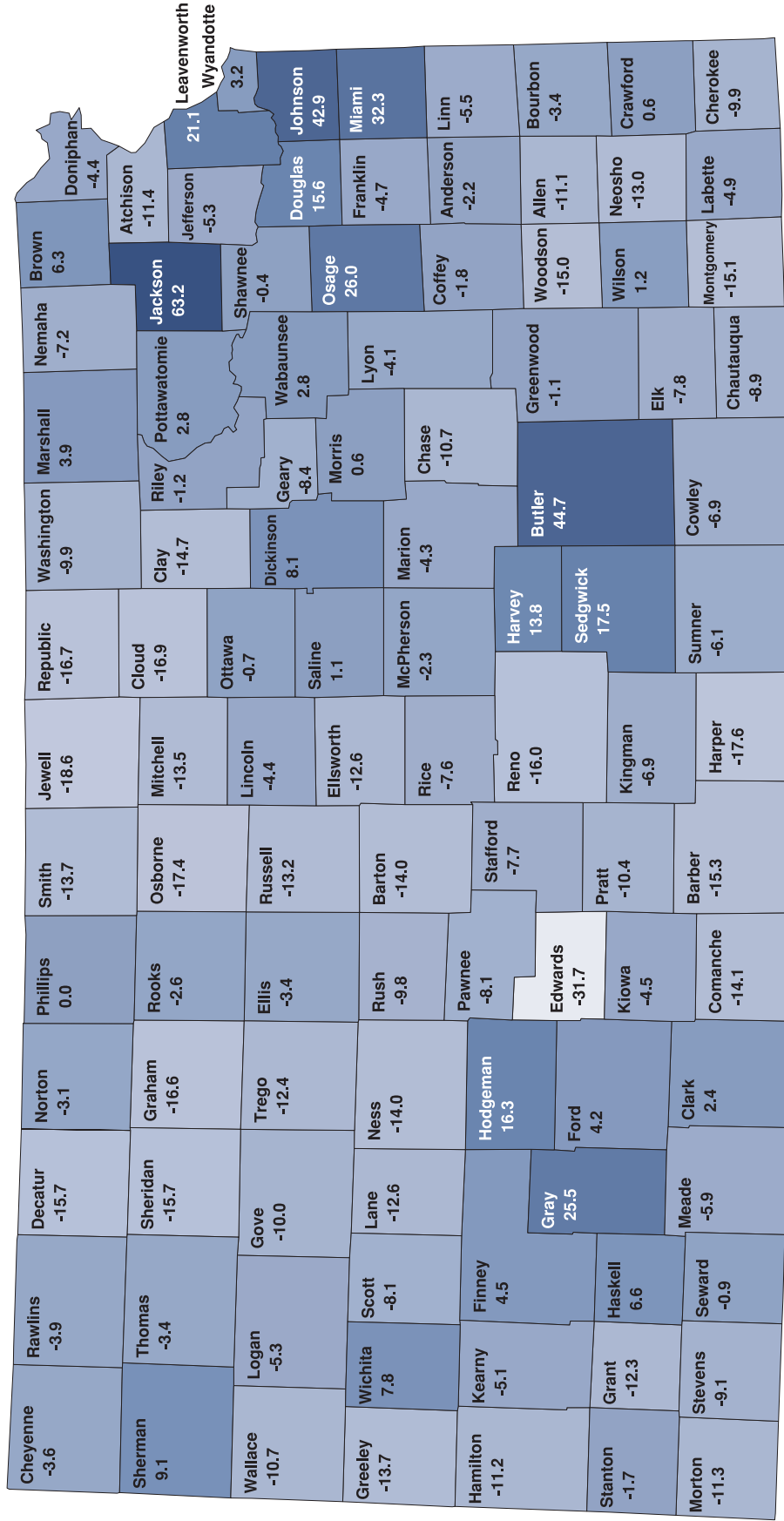
**Percent Population Change in Kansas, by County,  
April 2000–July 2006**



Source: Institute for Policy & Social Research; data from U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates, <http://www.census.gov/popest/counties/CO-EST2006-01.html>

**FIGURE 7**

**Projected Percent Population Change for Kansas, by County  
2000-2025**



Source: Institute for Policy & Social Research; data from Kansas Division of the Budget, July 2006.

**Kansas: 11.1**

FIGURE 8

## Age Cohorts in 2000

	0-14	15-24	24-44	45-64	65+
<b>Brown</b>	2,254 / 21.0%	1,366 / 12.7%	2,578 / 24.0%	2,437 / 22.7%	2,089 / 19.5%
<b>Jackson</b>	2,904 / 22.9%	1,528 / 12.1%	3,380 / 26.7%	2,956 / 23.4%	1,889 / 14.9%
<b>Marshall</b>	2,121 / 19.3%	1,343 / 12.2%	2,586 / 23.6%	2,501 / 22.8%	2,414 / 22.0%
<b>Nemaha</b>	2,472 / 23.1%	1,226 / 11.4%	2,582 / 24.1%	2,078 / 19.4%	2,359 / 22.0%
<b>Pottawatomie</b>	4,375 / 24.0%	2,400 / 13.2%	5,049 / 27.7%	3,934 / 21.6%	2,451 / 13.5%
<b>Kansas average (2006 estimate)</b>	21.9%	14.9%	28.6%	21.4%	13.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

FIGURE 9

## Population Projections of People Aged 65 and Over for 2000-2025

	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	% change 2000-2005
<b>Brown</b>	2,089	2,087	2,174	2,224	2,247	2,244	7.4%
<b>Jackson</b>	1,889	2,283	2,875	3,173	3,253	3,286	74%
<b>Marshall</b>	2,414	2,400	2,508	2,618	2,699	2,741	13.5%
<b>Nemaha</b>	2,359	2,363	2,432	2,543	2,684	2,821	19.6%
<b>Pottawatomie</b>	2,451	2,553	2,602	2,627	2,650	2,661	8.6%
<b>Kansas</b>							27.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau  
The Governor's Economic and Demographic Report, 2005-2006

FIGURE 10

## Composition of Households in 2000

	Householder 65 years and over living alone	Married couple without children under 18 years	Married couple with children under 18 years	Female householder (no husband) with children under 18 years
<b>Brown</b>	678 / 15.7%	1,426 / 33.0%	982 / 22.7%	278 / 6.4%
<b>Jackson</b>	545 / 11.5%	1,633 / 34.5%	1,314 / 27.8%	242 / 5.1%
<b>Marshall</b>	760 / 17.0%	1,535 / 34.4%	1,127 / 25.3%	151 / 3.4%
<b>Nemaha</b>	635 / 16.0%	1,267 / 32.0%	1,182 / 29.9%	124 / 3.1%
<b>Pottawatomie</b>	656 / 9.7%	2,215 / 32.7%	2,013 / 29.7%	324 / 4.8%
<b>Kansas average (2006 estimate)</b>	9.6%	30.0%	22.6%	6.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

FIGURE 11

## Distribution of Household Income in 2000

	< \$24,999	\$25,000 - \$49,999	\$50,000 - \$74,999	\$75,000 - \$99,999	> \$100,000
<b>Brown</b> Median: \$31,971	1,713 / 39.8%	1,480 / 34.4%	708 / 16.4%	297 / 6.9%	108 / 2.5%
<b>Jackson</b> Median: \$40,451	1,266 / 26.7%	1,742 / 36.8%	1,018 / 21.5%	477 / 10.1%	231 / 4.9%
<b>Marshall</b> Median: \$32,089	1,600 / 35.8%	1,624 / 36.4%	736 / 16.5%	285 / 6.4%	220 / 4.9%
<b>Nemaha</b> Median: \$34,296	1,413 / 35.5%	1,502 / 37.7%	698 / 17.5%	205 / 5.1%	165 / 4.1%
<b>Pottawatomie</b> Median: \$40,176	1,898 / 27.8%	2,375 / 34.8%	1,498 / 22.0%	633 / 9.3%	414 / 6.1%
<b>Kansas Average (2006 estimate)</b> Median: \$45,478	25.9%	28.6%	19.5%	11.9%	14.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau



FIGURE 12

## School Enrollment in 2000

	Preschool		Kindergarten		Elementary (1-8)		High School (9-12)	
Brown	223		140		1,288		732	
Jackson	267		218		1,568		926	
Marshall	136		177		1,344		796	
St. Gregory			130 total*					
St. Michael			35 total*					
Nemaha	161		165		1,391		747	
Sts. Peter & Paul			166 total**					
St. Michael			35 total*					
Pottawatomie	206		333		2,445		1,353	

\* 2007

\*\* 2008

Note: Catholic school enrollment is 8.8% of total school enrollments (preschool through 8th grade) for Marshall and Nemaha counties.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Parish Data

FIGURE 13

# Kansas Unified School Districts

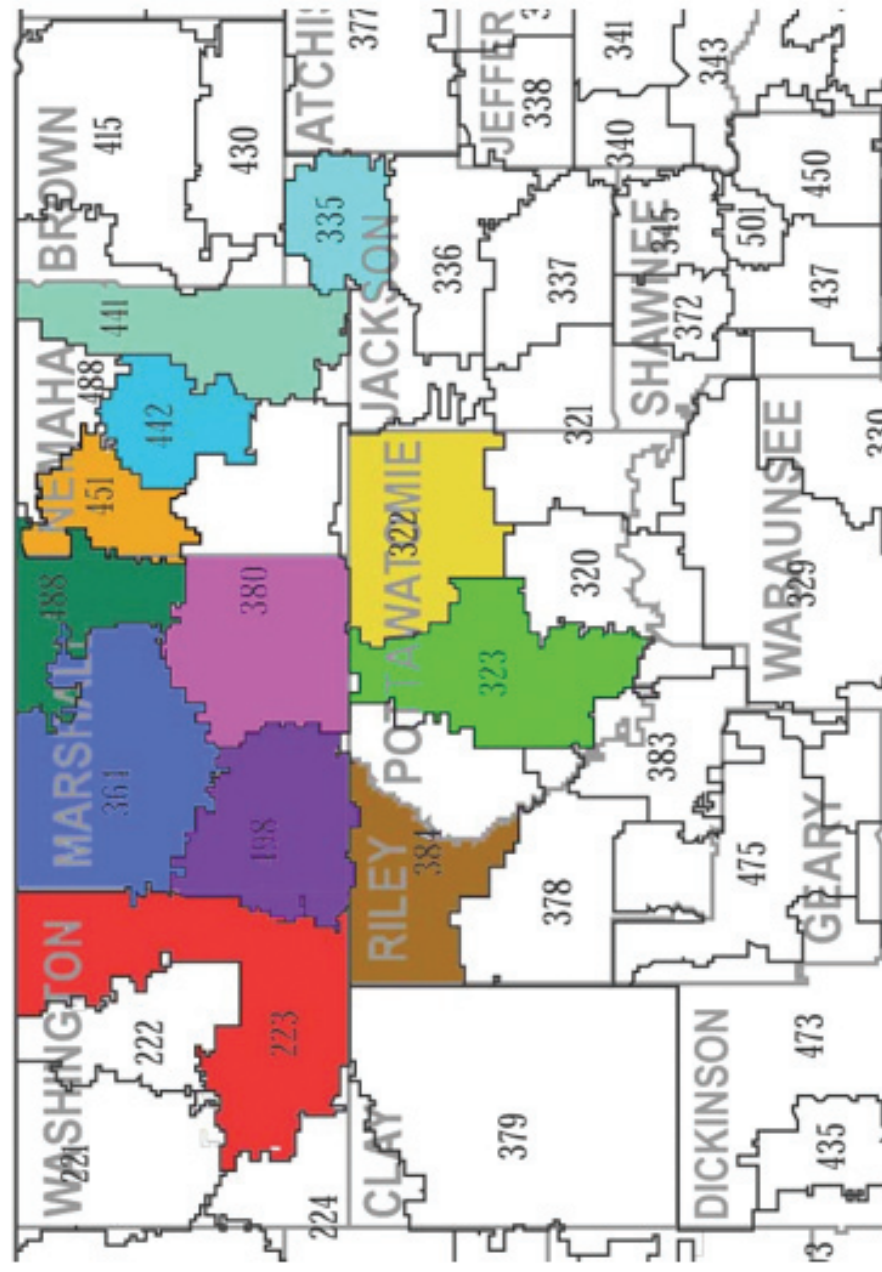
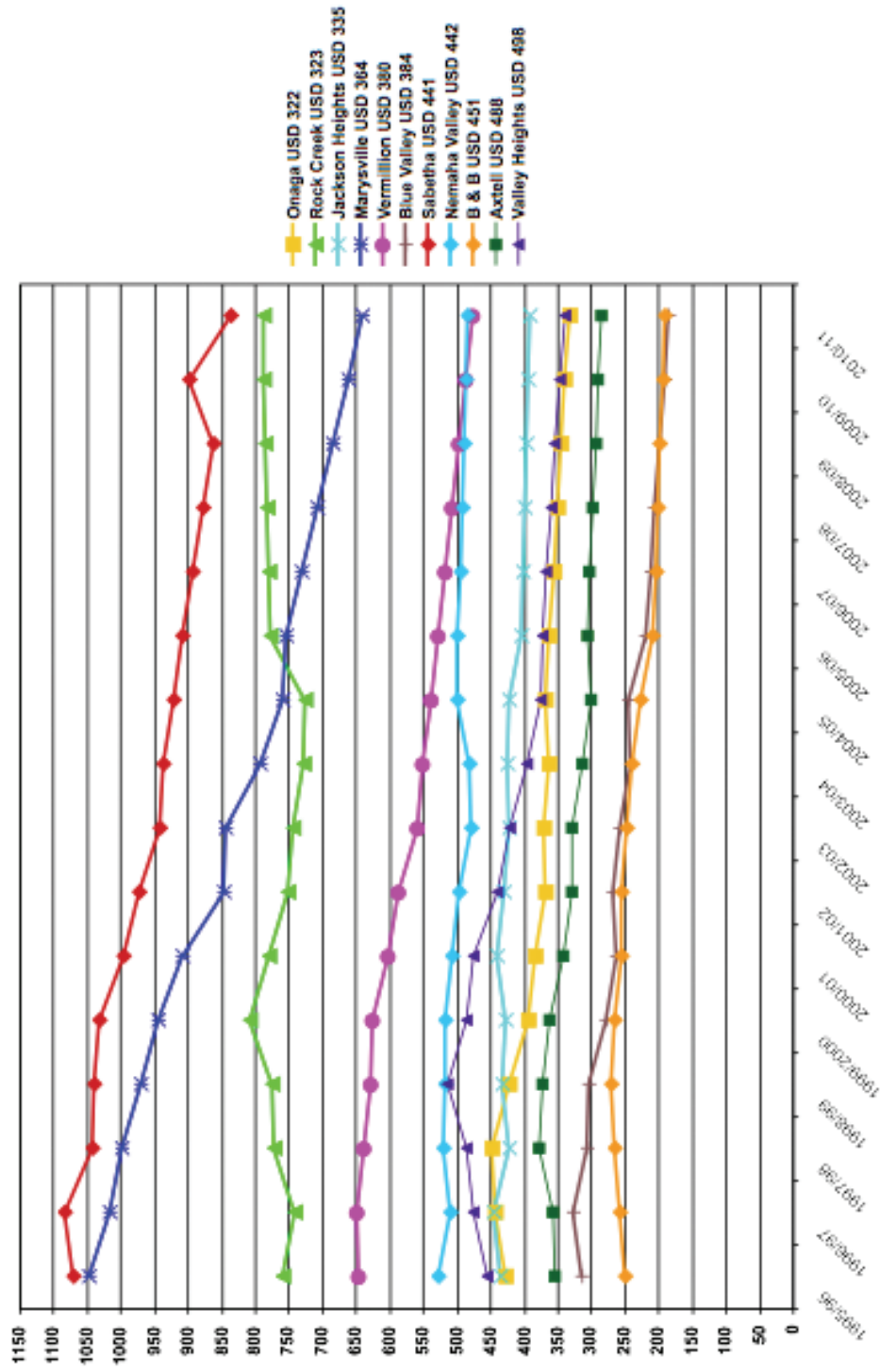


FIGURE 14

# Actual and Projected School Enrollments



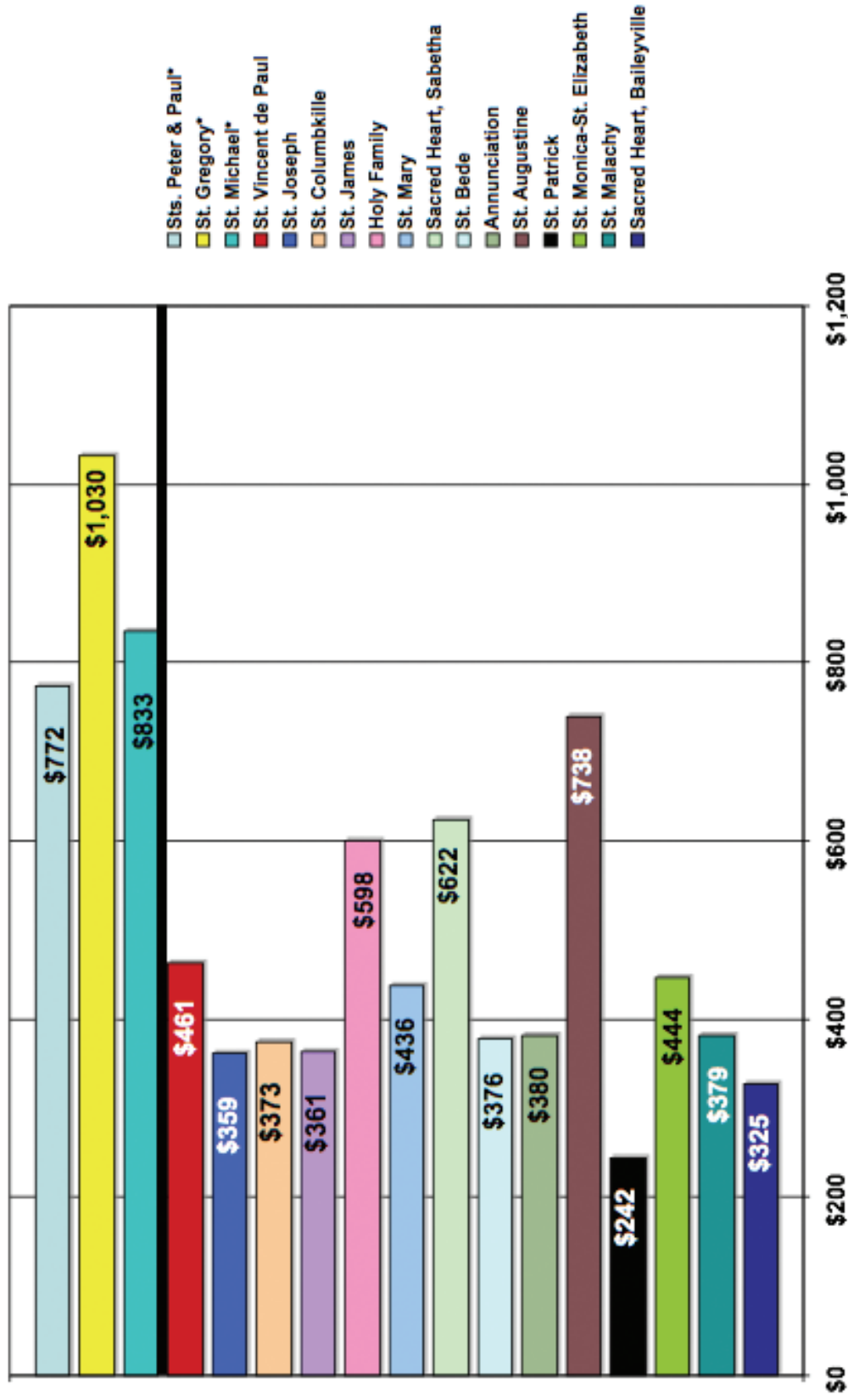
Source: Kansas Department of Education

**FIGURE 15**

<b>Marshall and Nemaha County Schools                      Cost Per Pupil 2006-2007</b>	
Marysville USD 364	\$14,532
Valley Heights USD 498	\$13,840
Vermillion USD 380	\$10,528
Axtell USD 488	\$12,363
B & B USD 451	\$10,998
Nemaha Valley USD 442	\$12,431
Sabetha USD 441	\$10,014
<b>Average</b>	<b>\$12,101</b>
St. Gregory	\$5,021
St. Michael	\$4,605
Sts. Peter & Paul	\$5,224
<b>Average</b>	<b>\$4,950</b>

FIGURE 16

# 2007 Parish Ordinary Collections per Household



\* Includes parish school

FIGURE 17

# Annunciation (Frankfort) - Financial Status

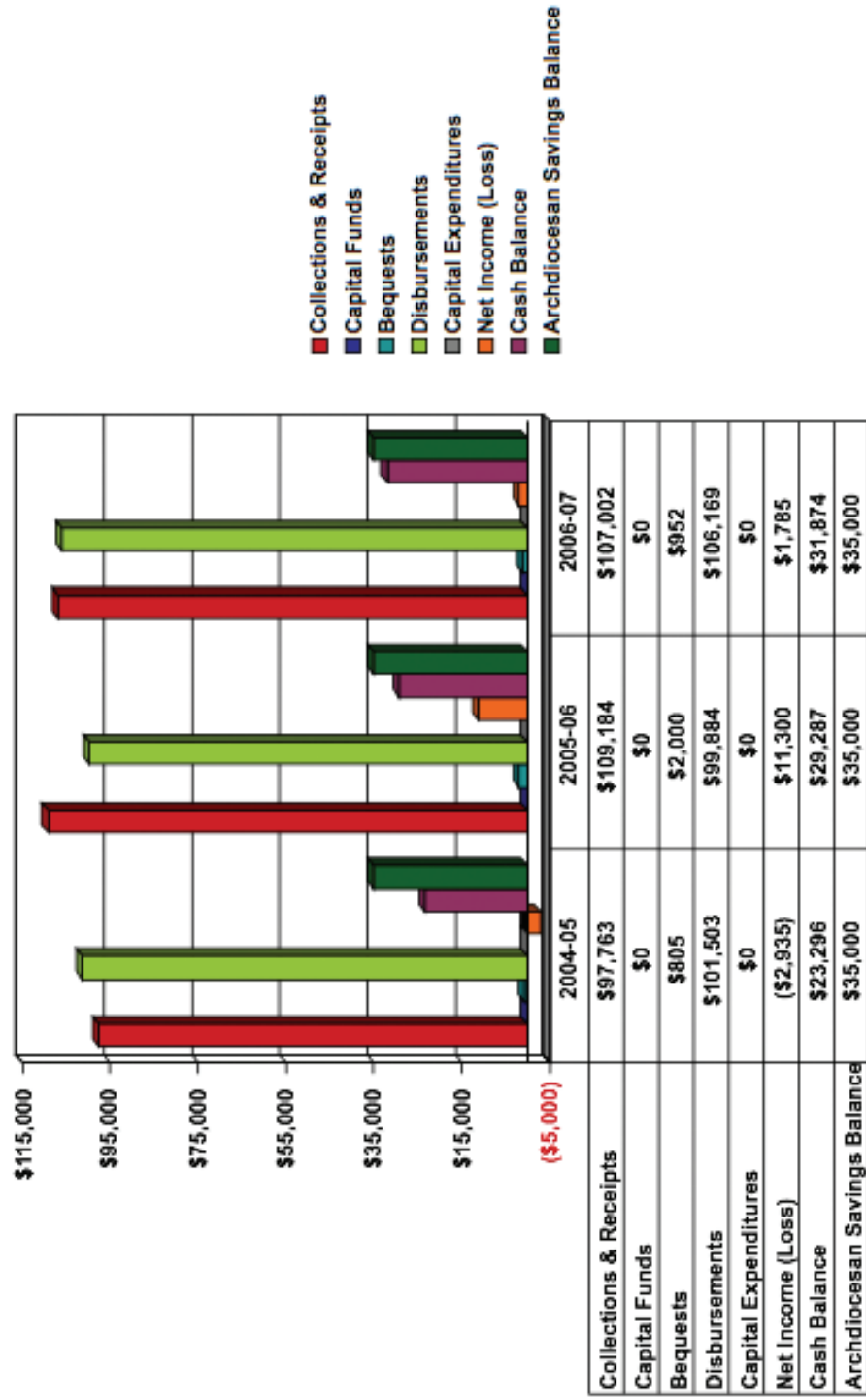


FIGURE 18

# Holy Family (Summerfield) - Financial Status

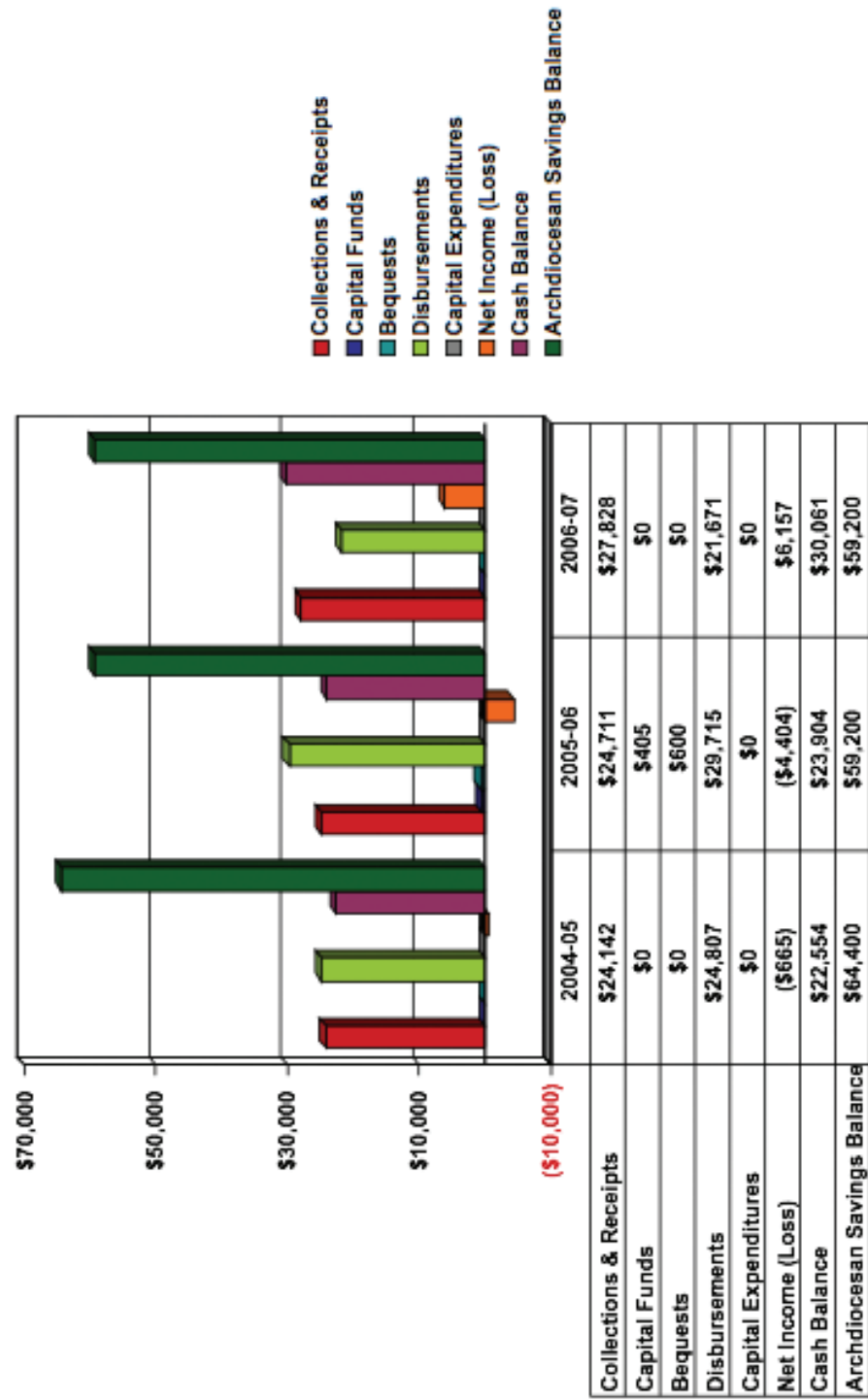


FIGURE 19

# Sacred Heart (Baileyville) - Financial Status

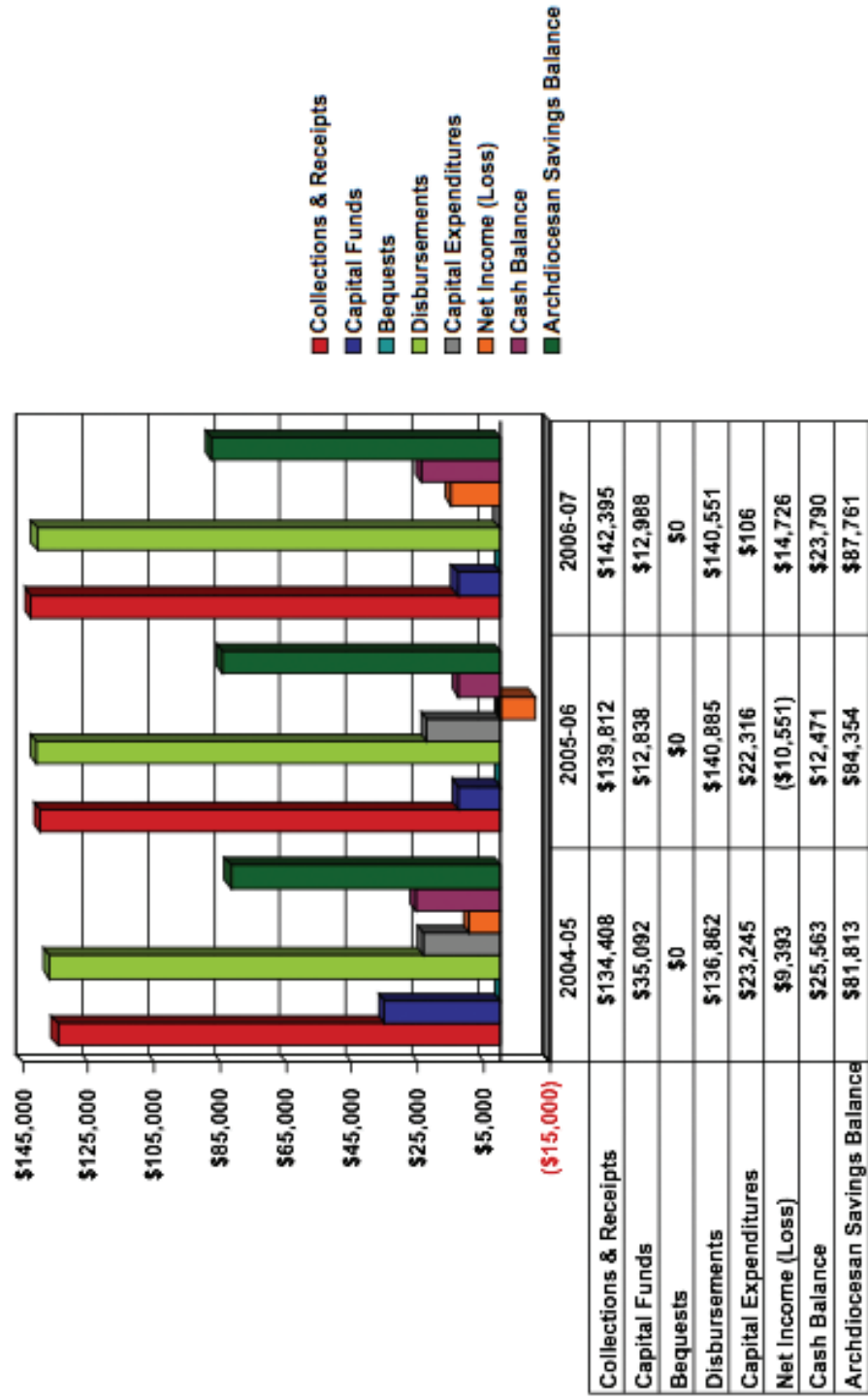




FIGURE 20

# Sacred Heart (Sabetha) - Financial Status

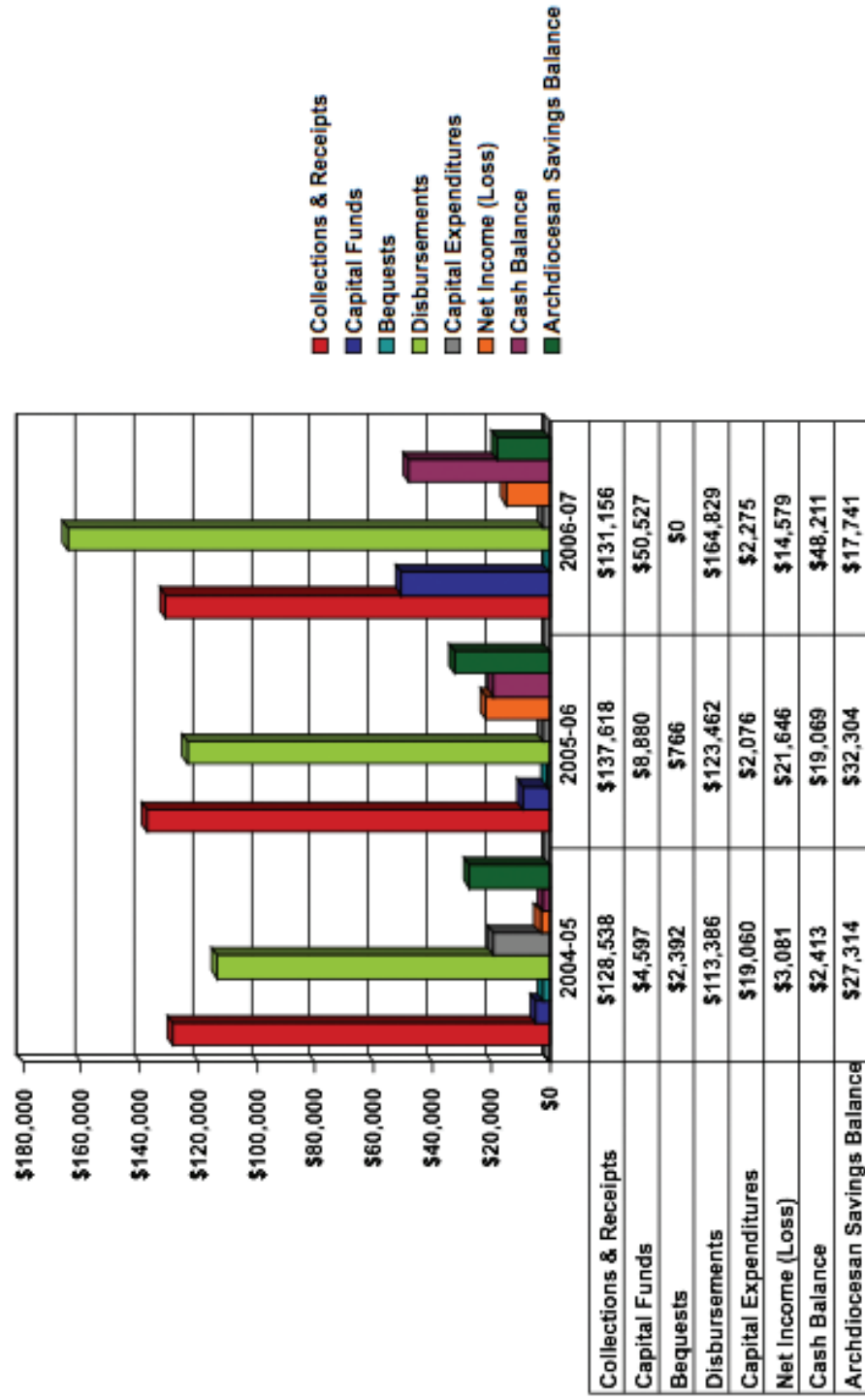


FIGURE 21

# St. Augustine (Fidelity) - Financial Status

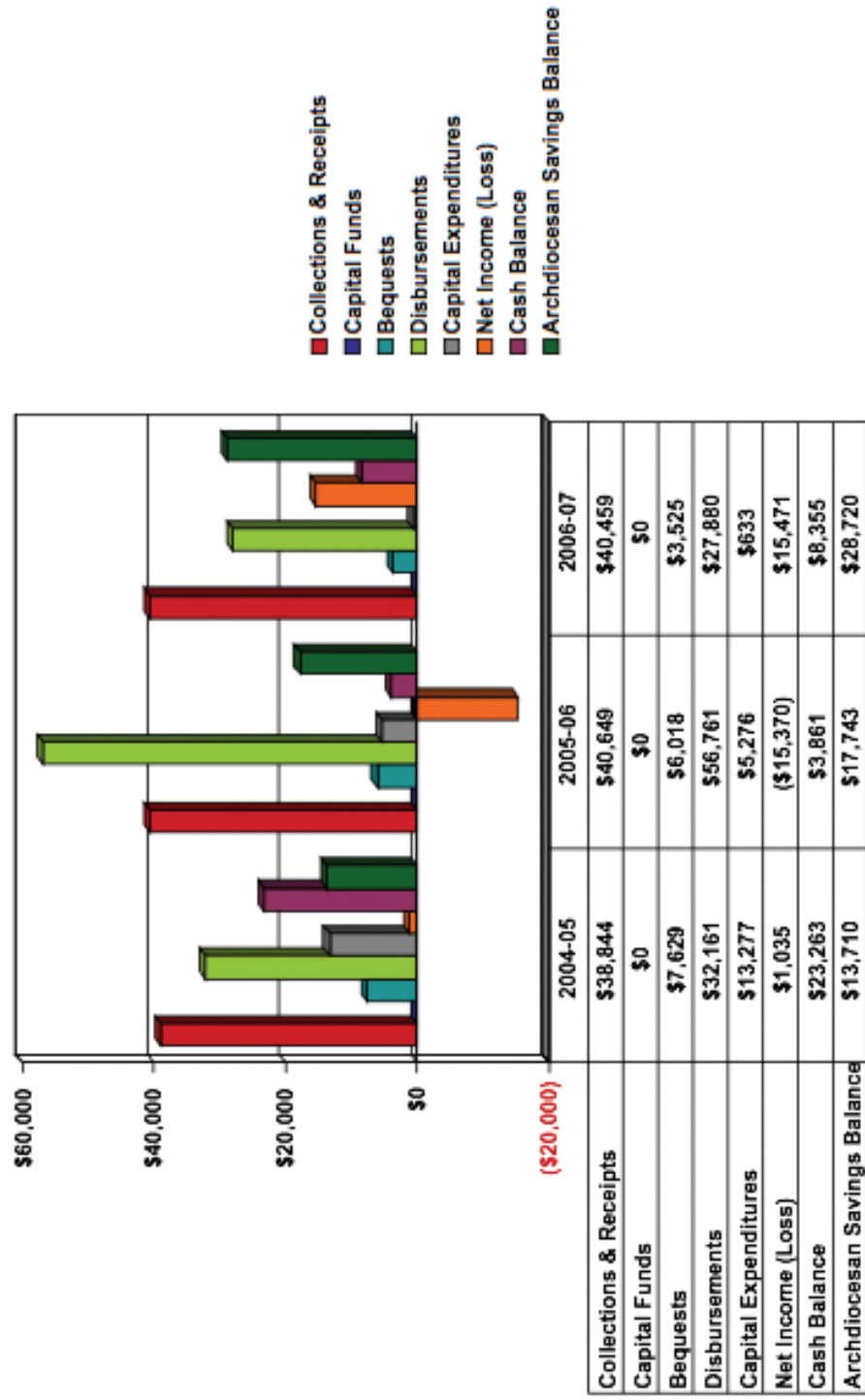


FIGURE 22

# St. Bede (Kelly) - Financial Status

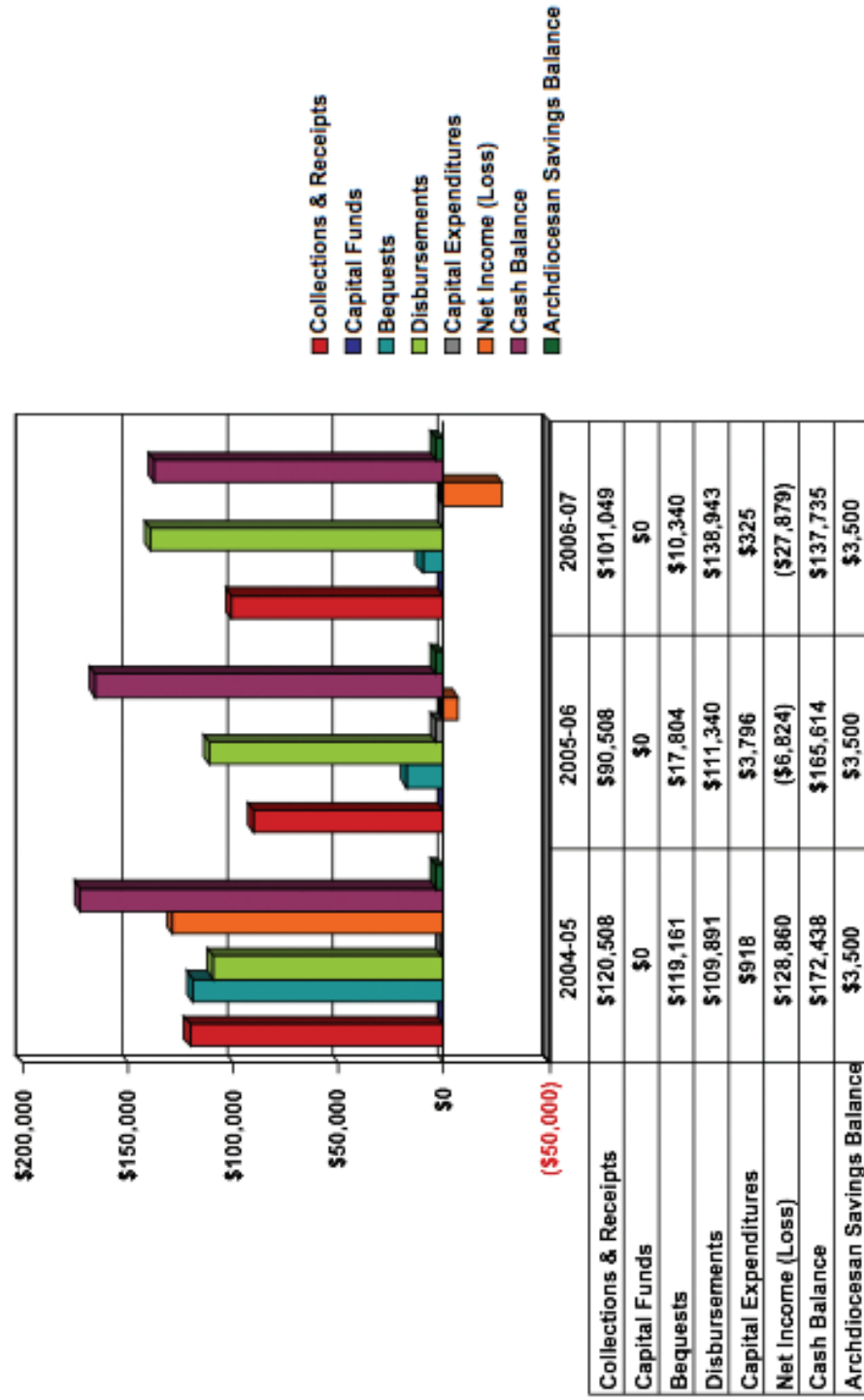


FIGURE 23

# St. Columbkille (Blaine) - Financial Status

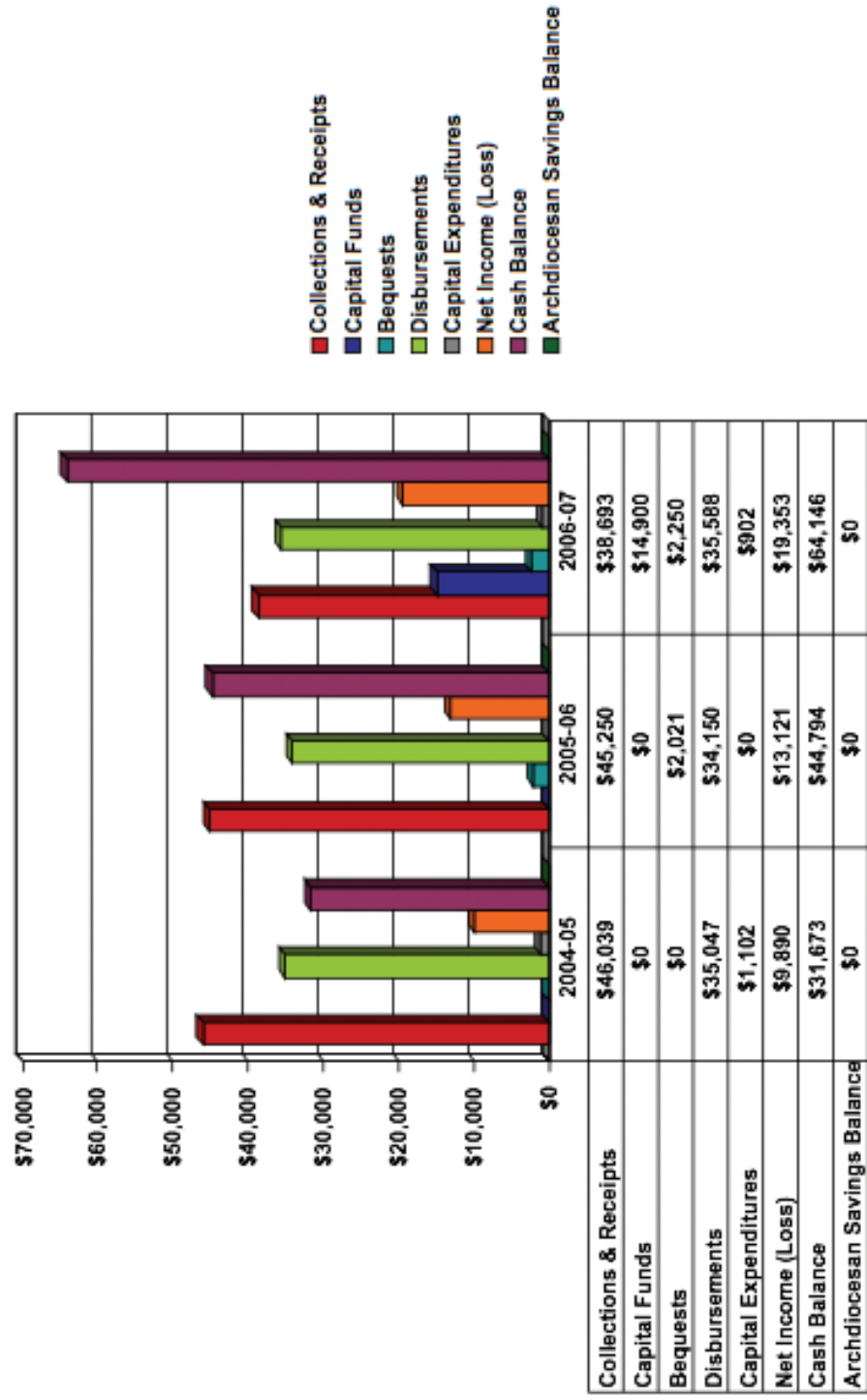
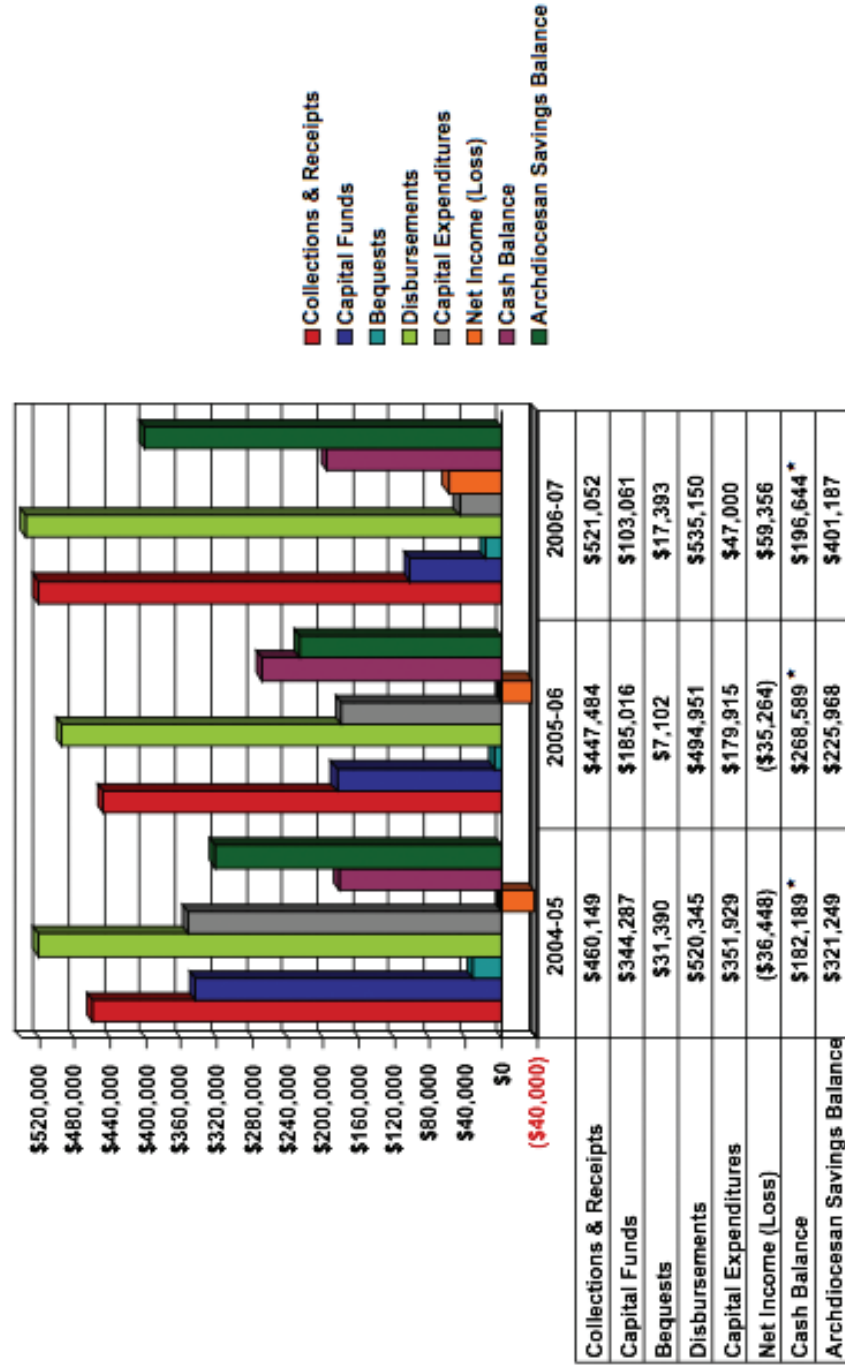


FIGURE 24

# St. Gregory the Great (Marysville) - Financial Status



\* Includes Investments

FIGURE 25

# St. James (Wetmore) - Financial Status

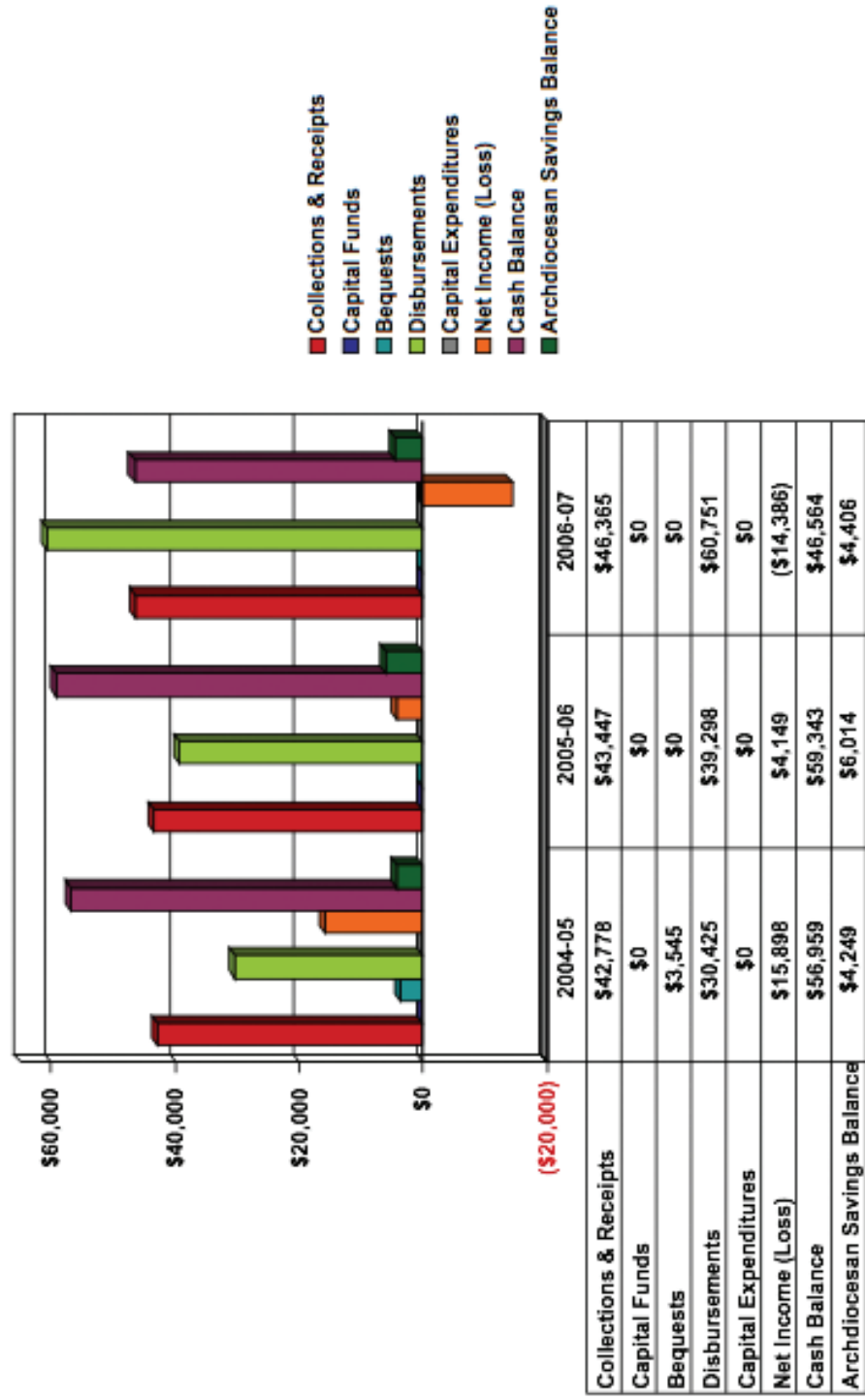


FIGURE 26

# St. Joseph (Lillis) - Financial Status

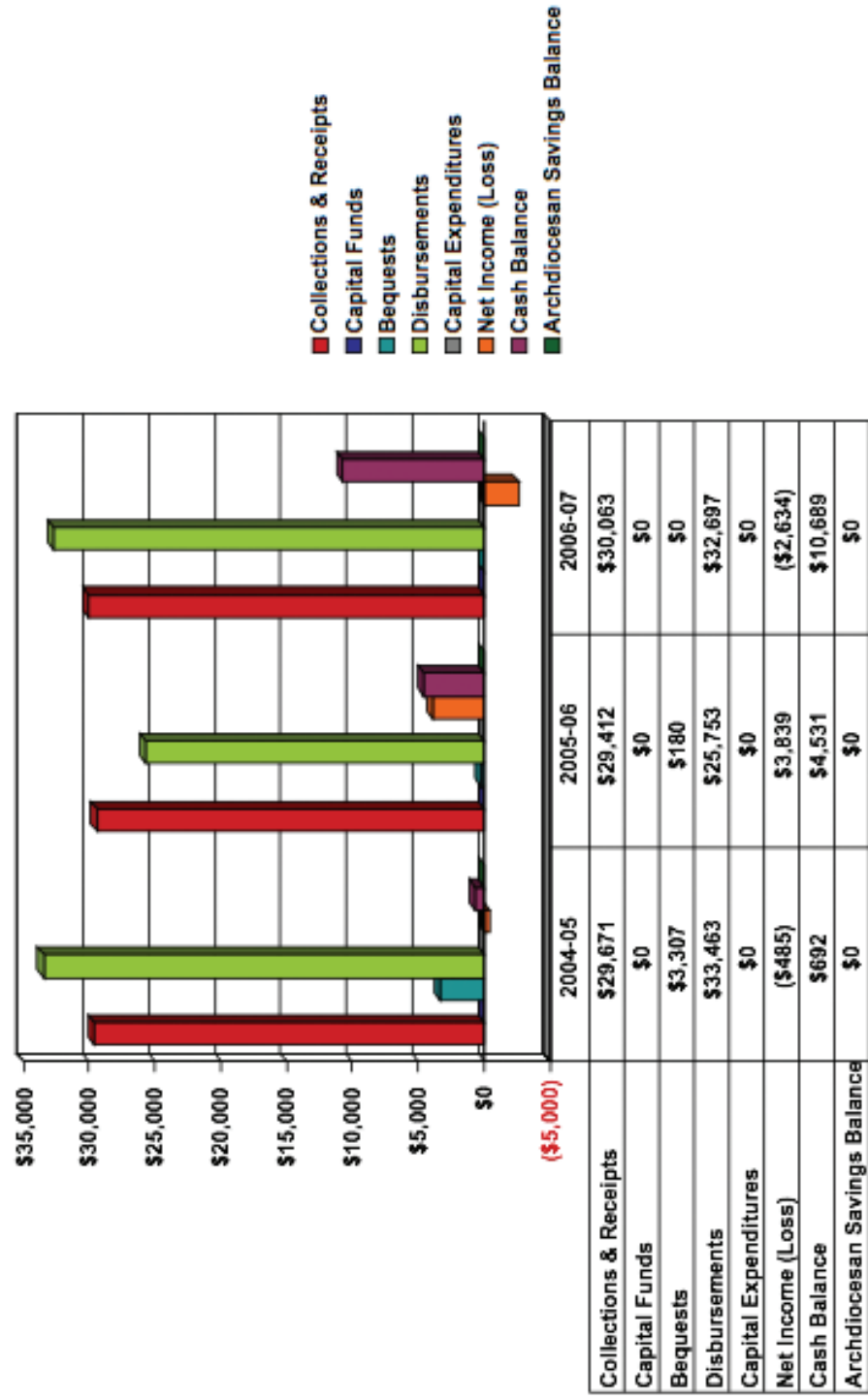
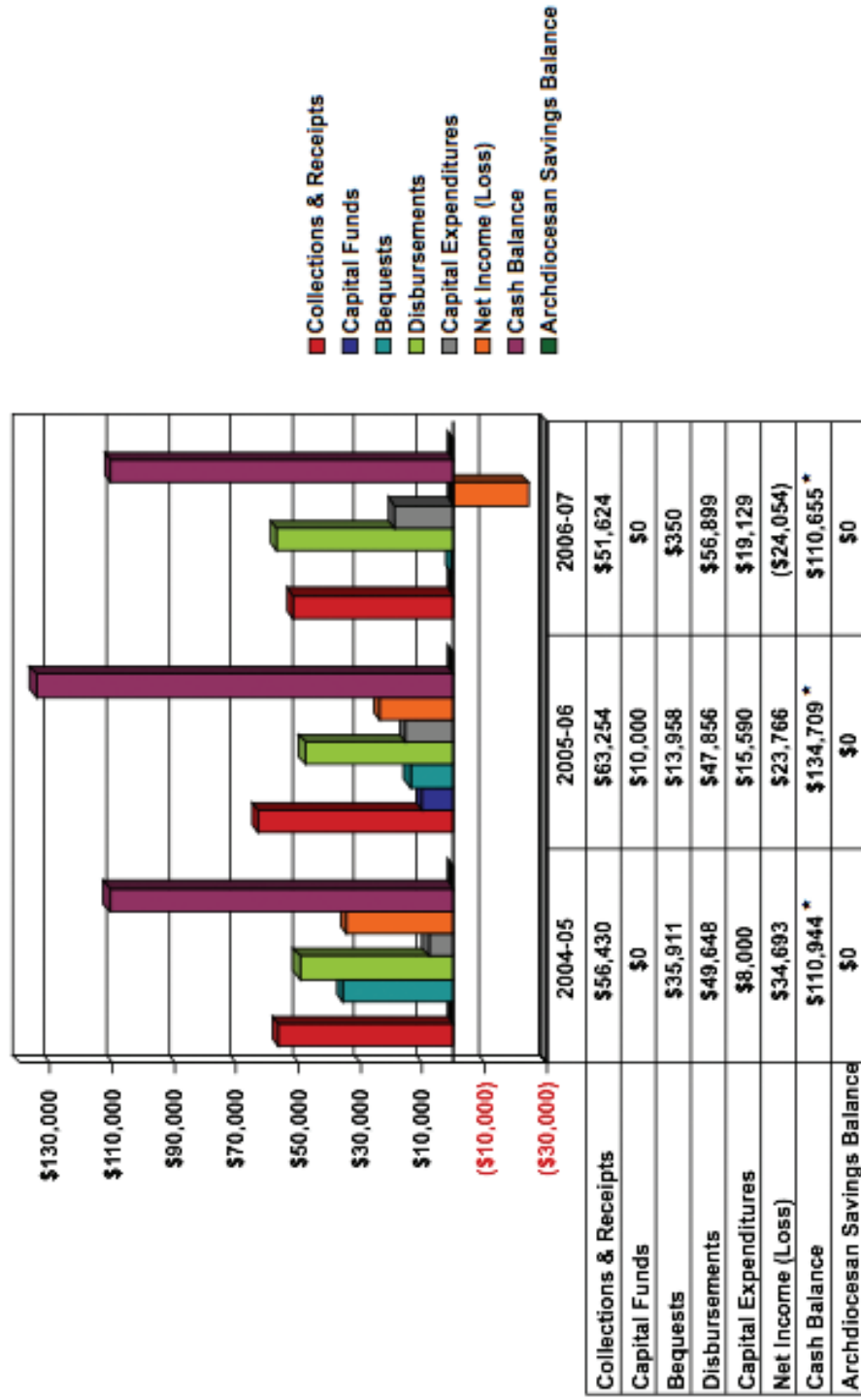


FIGURE 27

# St. Malachy (Beattie) - Financial Status



\* Includes Investments



FIGURE 28

# St. Mary (St. Benedict) - Financial Status

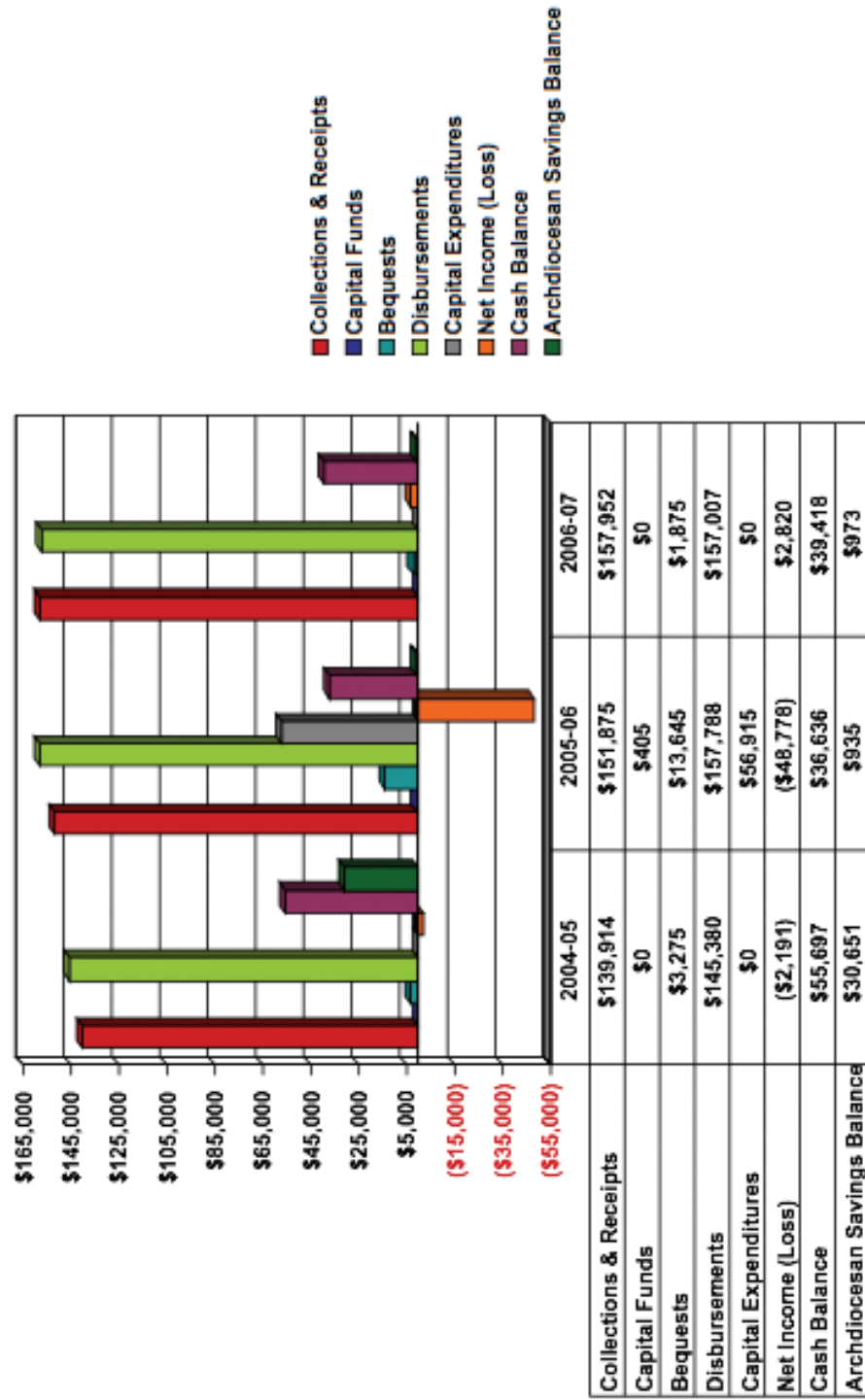


FIGURE 29

# St. Michael (Axtell) - Financial Status

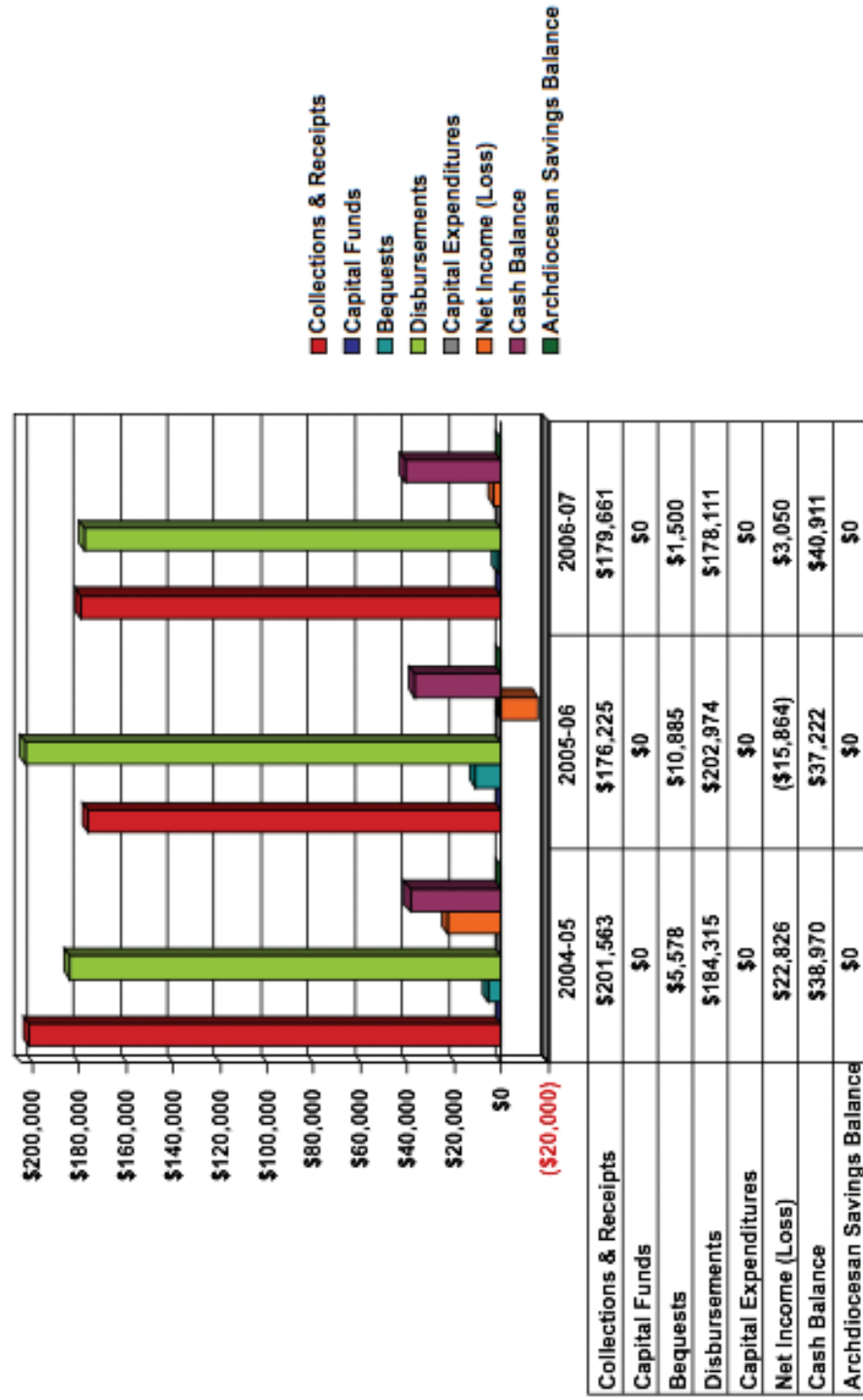


FIGURE 30

# St. Monica - St. Elizabeth (Blue Rapids) - Financial Status

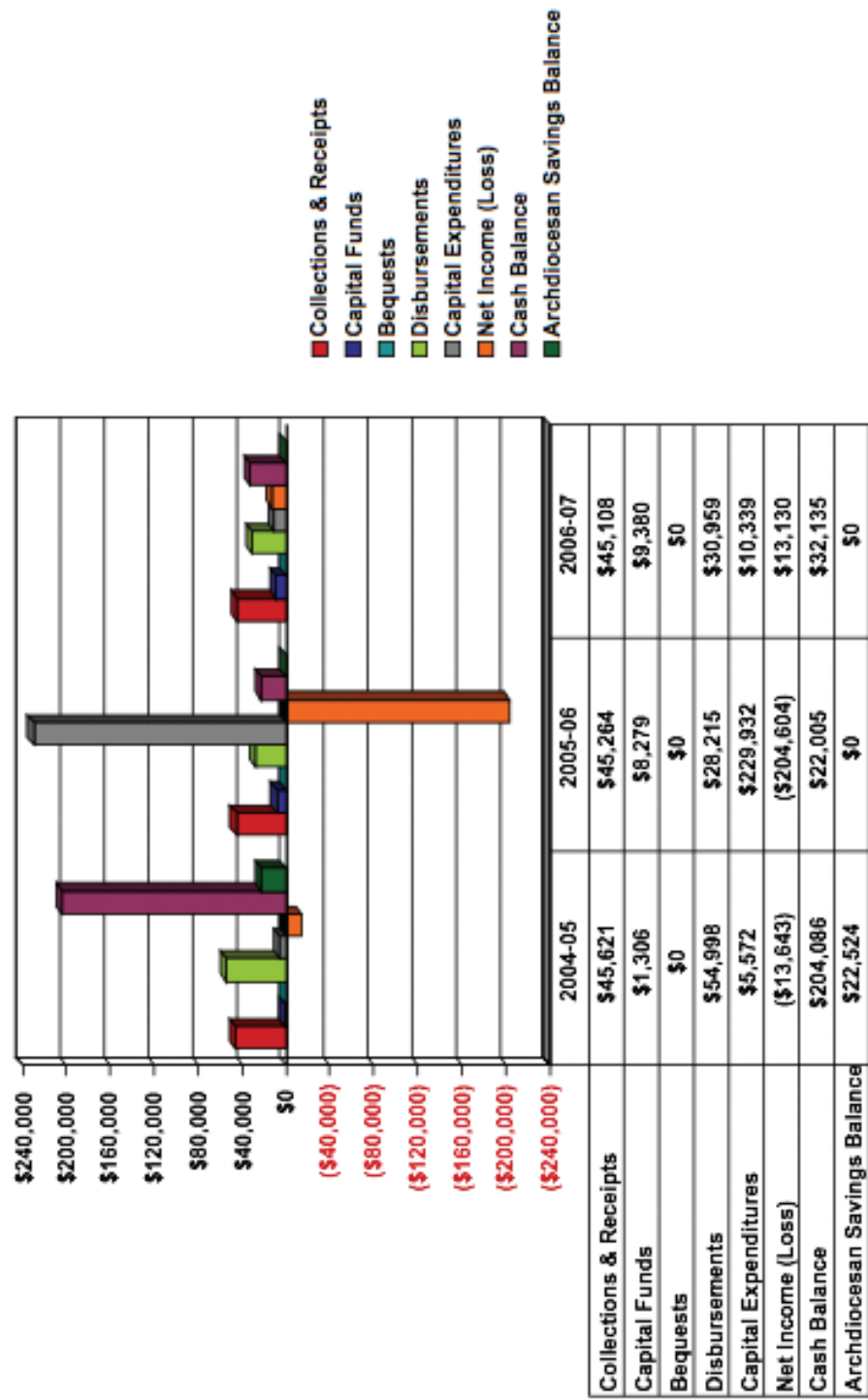


FIGURE 31

# St. Patrick (Corning) - Financial Status

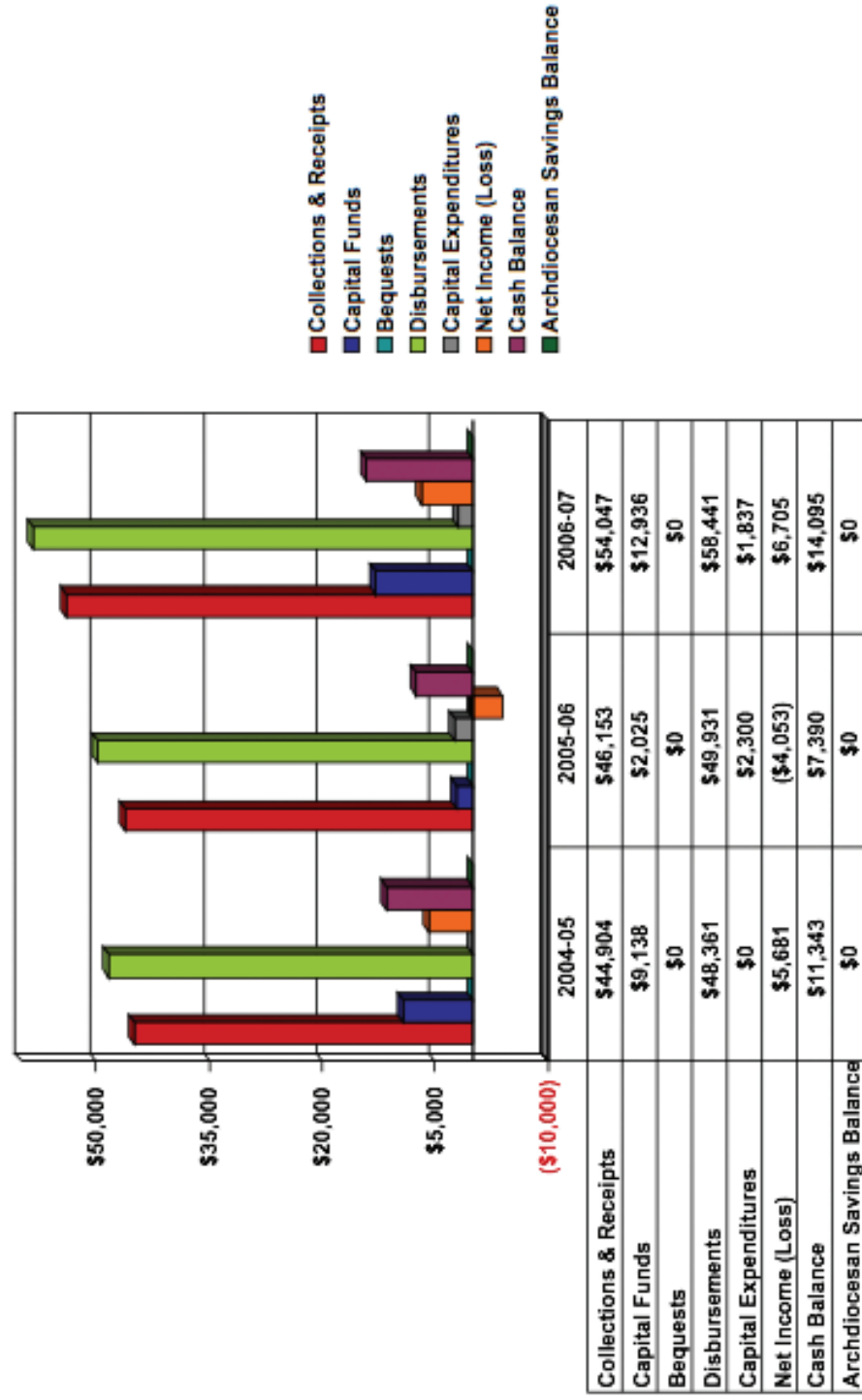


FIGURE 32

# Sts. Peter and Paul (Seneca) - Financial Status

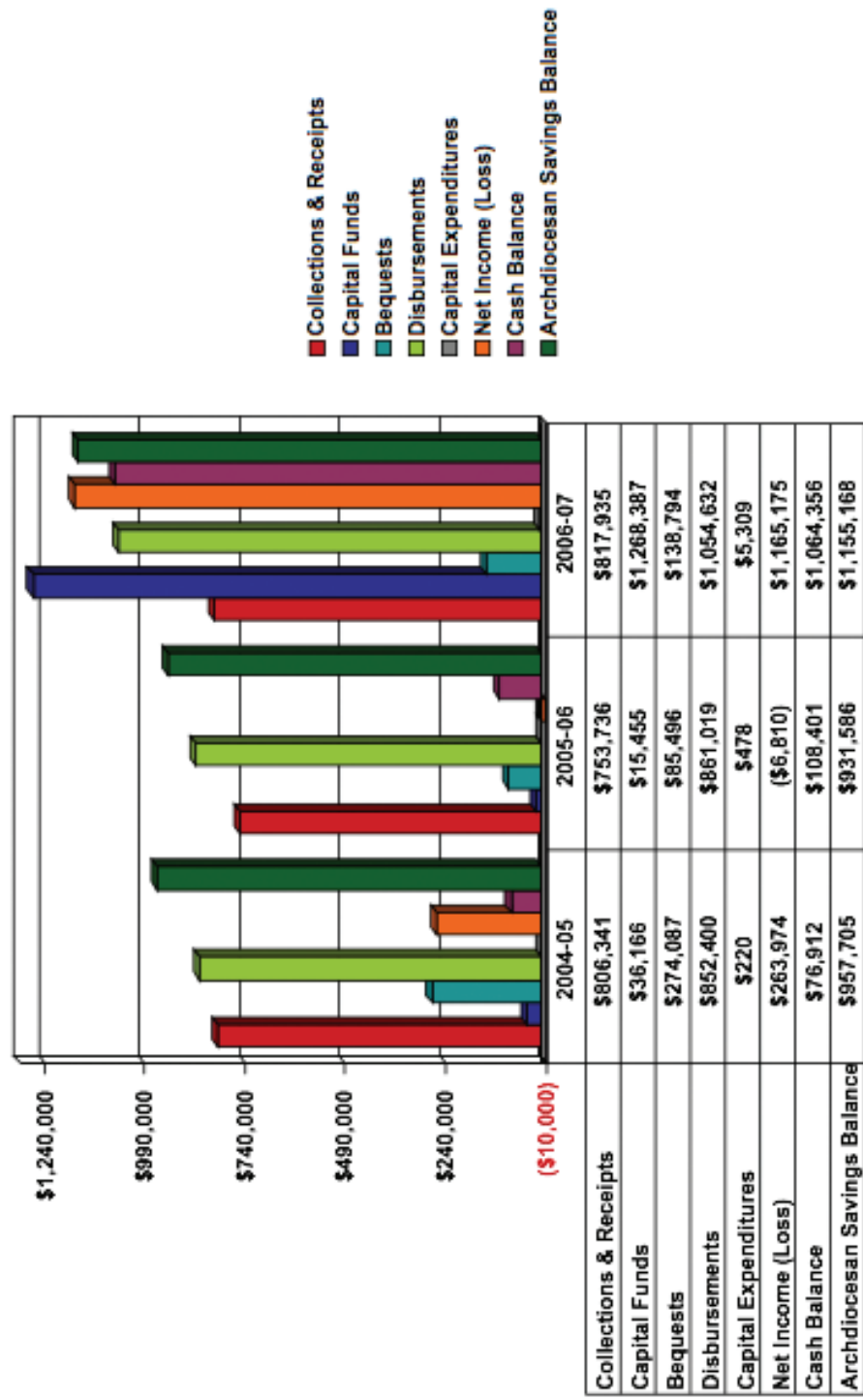


FIGURE 33

# St. Vincent de Paul (Onaga) - Financial Status

