“Give an account for the hope that is in you.” 1 Peter 3:15

Dear Friends in Christ, the Source of our Hope,

Here is an account of ways your contributions and parish resources have been enlisted to carry on Christ’s work. Even with 2010-2011’s Capital Campaign to preserve, repair and update St. Julia Church, we hold in clear view the need to keep our regular funding sources (Offertory, Grand Annual) strong for our parish programs, salaries, supplies, etc. Thank You for all the help you give. I enjoy serving you and serving alongside many of you in vital ministries and projects, such as are briefly recounted here.

Father George Evans

OUR PARISH LIFE AND MINISTRIES IN THE PAST YEAR

************ Through Worship, God Has Strengthened and United Us.

Over the past year (7/09-6/10) we celebrated 36 Baptisms, 55 First Communions, 10 Confirmations, 10 Marriages, and 32 Funerals. A Family Mass, at 9 AM during the Sundays of the school year, was introduced and has begun to grow; and it leads into Café Julia in the Parish Center. A 4-night Lenten Retreat, a 5-parish collaborative effort, prepared us for Holy Week. Triduum celebrations, enhanced by careful planning and strong participation of many parishioners, again featured combined choirs of St. Joseph and St. Julia Churches, participation of youth in our Good Friday procession with the cross, and high numbers of worshipers. Our Mass schedule remains exceptionally full: 6 Masses between 2 churches for Sundays, including Saturday and Sunday evening Masses; and 9 Masses during the week, 6 in one church and 3 in the other. The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults brought to the Easter Vigil one adult, who received the 3 sacraments of initiation, while other adults are in preparation. The Outdoor Mass and Picnic, thanks to a masterful planning committee, accommodated more than 500 people.

************ In Faith Formation, We Have Come To Know and Love God.

Our Religious Education Program involved 420 grade-level students, and more than 60 adults and older teens in teaching and auxiliary roles. Generations of Faith, our twice-yearly intergenerational learning event, focused on themes of “What It Means To Be Catholic” (autumn) and the Sermon on the Mount (spring). Each event was offered twice and reached approximately 270 people of all ages. ARISE, the archdiocesan-wide RE-NEW program, saw over 100 parishioners attend one or both of its 2 6-week seasons in our parish. The Confirmation Preparation has been fine-tuned in its flexibly scheduled mini-courses, single sessions with speakers, retreat, and trips for learning and service. The Coffee and Contemporary Catholicism occasional series gave us the chance to consider Christian perspectives on saints, the Our Father, and a contemporary saint. Twice, a group gathered to discuss the popular novel The Shack.
Discussion of pertinent Church issues followed a parish outing to a local play. *Secrets of a Successful Marriage* offered a dozen couples tips and helps for dialogue on their sacred bond. Our *two councils and seven commissions* continued to meet regularly to plan for deepened commitment of us all to Christ and Church, as did *Sodality, Youth Group, St. Vincent de Paul Society, Bible Study*, and more. Our *Lenten Prayer Circle* offered support to many. Two Campion Center *reflection days* led adults into prayer.

************ *By Serving Others, We Have Followed in Christ’s Path.*

*Liturgical service* is carried out faithfully by more than 100 lectors, Eucharistic ministers, altar servers, choir members, ushers, sacristans, and efficient coordinators of these ministries. Our *Food Supplement Program*, led by the St. Vincent DePaul Society, received recognition from the Greater Boston Food Bank, and served approximately 25 families in its once-monthly distribution in St. Joseph Church. A service day / tour of the Food Bank headquarters gave us a chance to help feed the hungry. *Advent Gift Giving* provided parishioners of all ages a chance to share their generosity and love of neighbor at Christmas, with needy recipients in many inner-city locations. *St. Julia Thrift Shop’s* volunteer staff worked hard to offer useful items at very reasonable cost, and they saved items all year long to share Christmas joy with the poor; the shop conducted a huge sale just before it suspended services to make room for the church renovation project. Our *collaborative initiatives with nearby parishes* are ongoing, with staff members gathering for prayer, discussion and planning. Many parishioners *regularly visit and bring the Eucharist to the sick and homebound* throughout our parish and in our parish’s 3 elder-care sites. At Newton-Wellesley Hospital, our parish priests serve on 24-hour call for *emergency pastoral needs* 4 days/ nights a month. Various parish groups have promoted *parish drives* for food, for supplies, for “baby shower” items, in support of different charities near and far. *Two seminarians* from assisted in our religious education program and received supervision from our staff.

************ *In Community Life and in our Facilities, We Have Gathered.*

*With other local religious leaders,* our priests and staff join for updating, reflection and friendly conversation on a regular basis. Great fun was had at Monte Carlo Night, which brought nearly $40,000 to the parish. Our *parish communications system demanded upkeep but has offered increased technological efficiency*. Our *webpage* continues to mirror the dynamic life of our parish, as does our weekly, fuller *Parish Bulletin*. St. Julia Choir’s *Christmas Pops* attracted over 100 people who came to appreciate its blend of fun and inspiration. The *Parish Newsletter* continued informative outreach, twice yearly, and for the first time this past year by means of e-mail delivery. *The Renovation Project and Capital Campaign* have received considerable attention in its meetings and mailings, through drawings and models. Our *staff* is quite complete, well credentialed and stable, with two full-time priests, three full-time lay Church ministers, a part-time business manager, four part-time office staffers, a full-time custodian, and many musicians coordinated by two professional leaders.
For the second year, St. Julia Parish has shown a surplus of almost $40,000, most of which came from a larger than budgeted Grand Annual drive. The pie chart shows how dependent the parish is on the Grand Annual and Offertory, in that 77% of our revenues comes from these two items. Although Offertory collections decreased slightly from last year, the Grand Annual increased by almost $32,000. To be conservative, next year’s budget has a reduced amount for both line items since we will not be able to retain 10% of the Christmas collection as we have in past years and we do not know how the Capital Campaign will impact the Grand Annual. If we couple this with the loss of almost $18,000 in revenue from the Thrift Shop and $35,000 from an annual social, the revenues for next year are projected to decrease by almost $100,000.

A portion of the salary increase is due to a recent state ruling that musicians who regularly service the parish can no longer be treated as independent contractors but must be issued a payroll check with the appropriate tax withheld. This, along with increases in both lay and clergy health insurance and an additional employee who is now eligible for pension benefits increased the benefits for the year. Due to careful monitoring of ministry expenses (religious education, pastoral, liturgical and youth) each showed some decrease. General office expenses increased by the normal inflation rate but changes made this year in the telephone carrier and both copier leases should produce savings in next year’s budget.

In fiscal year 10 there was a significant decrease in utilities expense, partly due to a change from NSTAR to Gexa Energy for the supply of electricity, although NSTAR still bills for the distribution of electricity. We anticipate further savings in the coming year as the result of an energy audit completed last year. Efficient lighting in those areas of the church, rectory and parish center that get the most daily use. NSTAR paid for 70% of the installation cost and offered a one-year interest-free loan on the remaining 30% ($1,814).

Buildings and grounds account for 12% of the expenses: approximately $34,000 for snow removal and landscaping, $21,000 for property insurance, $13,000 for contracts to maintain the HVAC systems and the elevator in the parish center, $12,000 for cleaning and other repairs to the buildings and $23,000 for replacement of the compressor in the parish center air conditioner and repair of the wall and drainage system behind the statue of St. Julia.
To date, the Capital Campaign expenses are $94,298, $55,000 more than the surplus from operations. Thus we dipped into reserves this year. For both these expenses and the capital repairs to the air conditioner and the back wall, we could have drawn on unrestricted funds deposited in RCAB accounts invested for us by the archdiocese, but the interest rate on the RCAB accounts is 2.25%. So, it is to our advantage to use the reserves in the Citizens Bank accounts rather than RCAB funds. This is what we did.

As you can see, a deficit budget is projected for next year given the uncertainty of revenues in a year when we anticipate beginning significant work on St. Julia Church and may have limited use of the hall for rentals. Ideas for a fundraiser that would use the hall in the next five months or so before the work begins, (or not use the hall at all) but not require significant time commitment from parishioners/staff who are already heavily involved in renovation/capital campaign projects would be most welcome. I am open to any and all ideas and would welcome parishioners stepping up to help organize an event. I await your call to 781-899-2611 or an email to madoyle@stjulia.org.

*Sister Mary Anne Doyle, CSJ*