

2024-2025
**Yearly
Highlights**

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Dear Friends,

At the University of St. Thomas, our Catholic mission calls us to form students who are not only academically prepared, but also spiritually grounded and committed to the common good. This year's report reflects how that mission comes alive across campus—through prayer, reflection, community engagement, and justice in action.



Throughout the year, the Office for Mission has fostered meaningful formation experiences that engage the whole person. From sacred spaces of worship to partnerships rooted in justice, our students encountered new ways to live with purpose and lead with heart.

Campus Ministry continued to accompany students in their spiritual journeys through liturgies, retreats, and identity-based ministry. From the ever-growing Fe y Amigos gatherings to the launch of the Afro Christian Fellowship, students created spaces of belonging that celebrated cultural heritage and deepened faith. These initiatives offered students more than a place to worship—they nurtured joy, connection, and authentic community rooted in Catholic tradition.

At the same time, the Center for the Common Good empowered students to live out their values through more than 188,000 hours of community engagement. From voter education and food justice to immersion experiences and civic action, students worked alongside local and global partners to address pressing challenges. These experiences encouraged reflection, solidarity, and a commitment to advancing the common good in real and lasting ways.

Our work in Catholic identity and mission integration also continued to grow. Faculty and staff participated in retreats, vocational programming, and mission-focused seminars. Sacred art installations and interdisciplinary partnerships invited the broader campus into deeper reflection on purpose, justice, and the Catholic intellectual tradition.

Together, these efforts reflect a university deeply rooted in mission and alive with possibility.

Thank you for walking with us in this shared work. Your partnership, generosity, and prayers make it all possible. May we continue to form leaders who think critically, act wisely, and work skillfully to advance the common good.

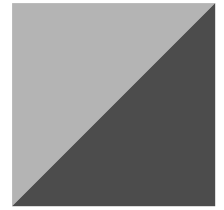
With deep gratitude,

Fr. Chris Collins, S.J.

Vice President for Mission



Office for Mission



Engaging the Mission Faculty Seminar

This past year saw the seventh cohort of faculty participating in the “Engaging the Mission Faculty Seminar” sponsored by the Office for Mission. The group of 18 faculty members from 6 colleges/schools within the university attended monthly meetings through the academic year where they read about and discussed topics including Catholic intellectual tradition, sacred art, and their sense of vocation within a Catholic university. The final meeting of the seminar is a week-long trip to Rome in January 2026. In January 2025, the sixth cohort traveled to Rome to complete the seminar. During their stay the group met with officials from the Dicasteries of Integral Human Development and Culture & Education.



They also visited sacred sites, went to a public audience with Pope Francis, visited the Community of Sant'Egidio, and met with officials from the Vatican Observatory to engage in a conversation about faith and astronomical research. About 100 faculty members have participated in this program to date.

New Faculty Retreat

As part of their year-long orientation through the Academic Affairs Office, all new faculty are expected to attend the New Faculty Retreat directed by the Office for Mission. In 2024-2025, the retreat was offered in two forms, a one-day on-campus event in January and an overnight at Mount Olivet Retreat Center in May. Both introduced new faculty to the history and mission of St. Thomas, offered invitations to incorporate the mission into their teaching and research, and gave them time to reflect on the meaning and the vocation of being a college professor at a Catholic university.

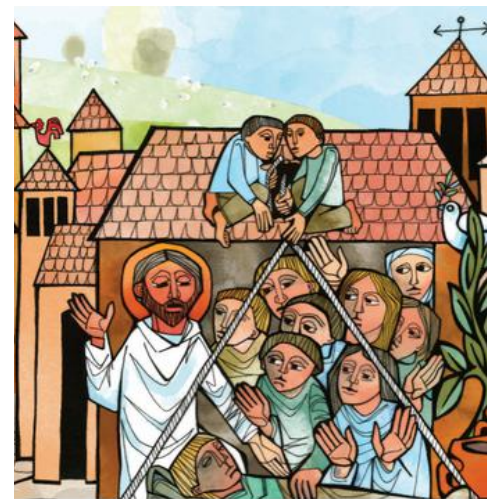
Community Impact

Dr. Paul Wojda: Catholic Hospital Mission Integration Assessment Program and Director of Mission Integration for the Morrison Family College of Health

This past year the Catholic Health Care Ministry Identity Assessment Initiative was started. Directed by Dr. Paul Wojda, a medical ethicist in the Theology Department, and assisted by a team of St. Thomas faculty, the Program uses the Catholic Health Association's Ministry Identity Assessment tool to assist Catholic Health Care Organizations in reviewing and improving their sense of ministry identity.

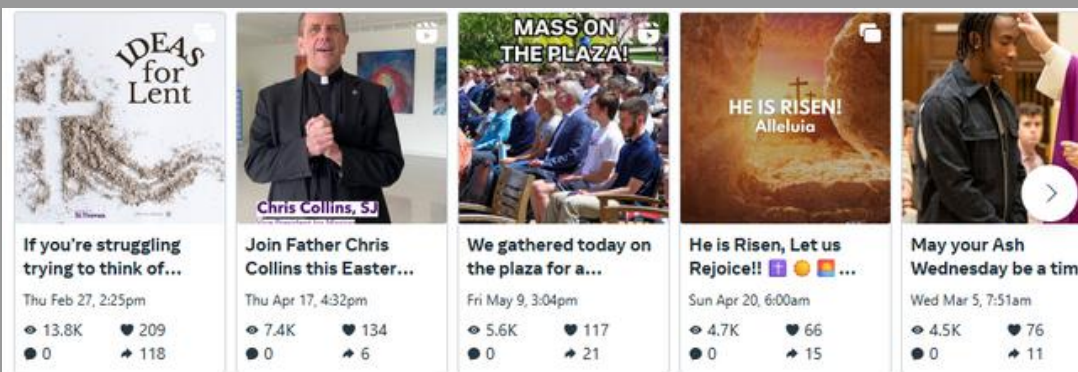
The Office for Mission signed a contract with CHRISTUS Health Systems to run assessments at various CHRISTUS sites for the next five years. In 2024-2025, the St. Thomas team directed assessments at two CHRISTUS Health Systems in Texas.

Dr. Wojda also became the Director of Mission Integration for the Morrison Family College of Health. The MFCoH is the first and only college/school on campus to have a person in that role.



Ministry Identity Assessment
PROCESS OVERVIEW

Office for Mission Digital Connection via Social Media



From July 2024 to June 2025, the Office for Mission's Instagram saw strong growth with nearly 29,000 reached, 2,494 interactions, and 111 new followers, reflecting increased engagement and connection with the community.

Community Impact

Chapel Arts Series

The 2024-2025 Chapel Art Series offered a season of powerful and diverse performances that brought sacred music to life through rich collaborations with musicians from around the world. Highlights included Light From Light: A Jubilee Celebration of the Council of Nicaea, featuring choirs from across the Twin Cities, and the National Lutheran Choir's debut performance, "Healing: Body, Mind, Spirit", which premiered a new commissioned work. Other standout events included Symphonic Sounds, showcasing music written for organ and orchestra; the Advent-themed Luminous Night of the Soul with the Cathedral Choir of the Basilica of St. Mary; and Polish organist Filip Presseisen's improvisational score for the 1903 silent film *La Vie et La Passion de Jesus Christ*. Each performance invited audiences into a deeper encounter with beauty,



The Hoedeman Gallery of Sacred Art

The Hoedeman Gallery of Sacred Art, nestled within the Iversen Center for Faith, remained a cornerstone for visual reflection and aesthetic contemplation throughout the year. With three thoughtfully curated exhibitions, the gallery brought together artists and viewers across traditions and mediums to explore themes rooted in truth, beauty, and goodness. During Fall 2024 we exhibited the artwork of Fr. Jerome Tupa, "An Exploration of Relationship: Art and Faith." In Spring 2025, artwork spanning the 17th - 21st centuries portrayed the Gospel parable of the Good Samaritan through "Who Is My Neighbor." In collaboration with Office for the Mission of Catholic Education, we hosted the 2nd annual Catholic Schools Visual Art Exhibition and featured the artwork of Catholic School students (7th - 12th grade) depicting "The Saints" throughout Summer 2025. Open daily and free to the public, the gallery serves as both a contemplative space and an educational resource, deepening the university's mission of fostering spiritual and intellectual growth through the arts. Whether experienced alongside a Chapel concert or as a quiet visit during the day, the Hoedeman Gallery offers moments of transcendence that stir the imagination and invite all into dialogue with the divine.

Program Highlights



Professional Staff Seminars

Every year, the Office for Mission offers a year-long seminar for professional staff. This year's group included staff from University Advancement, Strategic Enrollment Management, and Student Affairs. The sessions included conversations on St. Thomas as a Catholic university, spirituality, and the sense of vocation.

Ignatian Spirituality Center

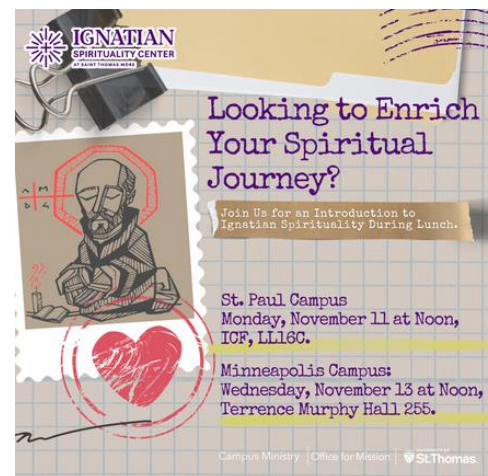
In October 2024, the Office for Mission, welcomed the Ignatian Spirituality Center to campus.

The purpose of the Ignatian Spirituality Center is to help people grow closer to God and share God's love through Ignatian wisdom and practices.

To that end, 24 staff and faculty participated in weekly faith-sharing groups during Advent and Lent.

"I am so glad that St. Thomas offers opportunities for us to express our faith on campus. My faith is not looked upon negatively but is encouraged. What a blessing!"

-St. Thomas Staff Participant of the Lent faith-sharing group.



Other Programming

"Pray it Forward" is a monthly online participatory prayer session led by Fr. Collins.

Invitations are extended to all members of the broad St. Thomas community and friends to join. Every semester, the Office sponsors the "Common Good Reading Group" for faculty and staff who read and discuss a book relevant to mission issues. The Office also sponsors interdisciplinary discussions on new books published by faculty. Complementing the Hoedeman Gallery of Sacred Arts installation on the Good Samaritan, the Office presented a three-part Lenten Luncheon series on Pope Francis' encyclical Fratelli Tutti. As in the past, it also offered multiple tours of the Chapel of St. Thomas Aquinas during the year.

Campus Ministry

Accompaniment Through Prayer, Presence, and Purpose



This year, Campus Ministry deepened its mission to create a welcoming, inclusive, and faith-filled community rooted in the Catholic tradition while extending hospitality to students of all backgrounds. Through a wide array of programs, partnerships, and pastoral care efforts, we accompanied students in their spiritual journeys and created meaningful spaces of connection, and reflection across campus.

Peer Ministry remained a cornerstone of our student leadership model, creating consistent, student-led programming that encouraged faith, community, and service.

Pancakes with Jesus, now a beloved monthly tradition, engaged hundreds of students throughout the year. Its new commuter student edition, Mini Pancakes with Jesus, reached an average of 30 participants per event, creating a much-needed space of belonging and connection for students with off-campus lives.

Retreats offered students sacred pauses amid their academic journeys. Our retreat schedule included the First-Year Retreat, Kairos, Silent Retreat, Cuaresma Retreat, and the sixth annual retreat for Latinx students. A new two-part version of the Crossroads Retreat, titled, “Beyond Career to Calling”, helped students reflect on vocation through the lens of their faith. In addition, our monthly Agape gatherings offered students a consistent rhythm of prayer, fellowship, and shared meals in community.

Throughout the year, Campus Ministry responded to moments of joy and grief with intentional prayer and presence. From the Good Grief Student Vigil, to the Prayer for Peace for the Immigrant Community, to a Vigil for Pope Francis, we stood alongside students and staff to offer solace, solidarity, and hope.





Community Impact

Sacramental Life

Campus Ministry provides a vibrant and supportive spiritual environment for students through various sacraments and opportunities for reflection.

The sacrament of Reconciliation is offered daily before noon Mass, allowing students the opportunity to receive forgiveness and spiritual renewal.

In 2024-2025, 32 couples were married on campus, forming deep connections with the community, often returning to visit and relive cherished memories. The ministry also supported three funerals, honoring the lives of loved ones.

Additionally, six students came into the Catholic Church through OCIA (Baptism, Holy Communion, Confirmation) in 2024-2025. Our mission is to provide a space where students can grow in their faith and understanding of Catholicism as young adults.

2,665

Students Participated in Regular
Campus Ministry Programming

450

 Students at
Weekly Mass

"Because of your encouragement, I found my way to Campus Ministry, where I met some of the most beautiful people I have ever known. Through them, I found community, support, and a deeper sense of belonging here at St. Thomas."

– **First-Year Student**



Sacramental Life

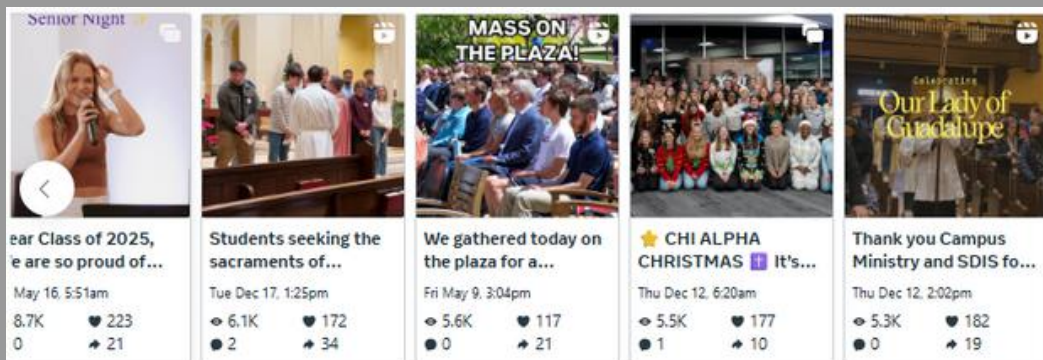
32

Couples
Married on
Campus

6

Students
welcomed
into the
Catholic
Church
through OCIA

Campus Ministry Digital Connection via Social Media



From July 2024 to June 2025, Campus Ministry's Instagram reached over 50,000 users (↑ 709%), with 4,926 content interactions, 8,160 visits, and 290 new followers, showing strong growth and deepening digital engagement.

Program Highlights



Affiliate Ministry

Our affiliate ministry partnerships expanded in both structure and spirit. All 17 missionaries from six affiliate ministries signed memoranda of understanding, aligning expectations and strengthening collaboration. Five joint meetings throughout the year helped build a shared vision, while new resources—including minister profiles, an expanded website, and a shared calendar—made ministry teams more visible and accessible to students. These partnerships significantly multiplied the ministerial reach on campus and contributed to our collective presence at major events like the 2024 Block Party.

Interfaith & Multifaith Ministry

Interfaith and multifaith efforts continued to flourish. Campus Ministry continued to offer weekly Friday prayers, which grew to an average of 25 participants, and introduced a new mid-week halaqa (scripture study group) with an average of six students. The Campus Ministry Iftar dinner drew 75 attendees, while the Eid celebration welcomed 30 students in a joyful close to Ramadan. These events were part of a campus-wide commitment to hosting eight Iftar dinners this year. In the Jewish community, we supported the creation of the first Jewish student group within Campus Ministry, which meets weekly and has grown to five regular participants. These multifaith engagements fostered the creation of Tommie Interfaith, a new student group rooted in dialogue, shared experiences, and interreligious understanding.

Multicultural & Identity-Based Ministry

Multicultural and identity-based ministry saw renewed growth in 2024–2025. Monthly Fe y Amigos gatherings continued, and the Our Lady of Guadalupe Mass and Celebration grew in popularity, drawing an ever-expanding community. Spanish Mass, Las Posadas, and other culturally rooted liturgies remained central to our programming. A major highlight was the launch of Afro Christian Fellowship, creating space for Black and African descent students to celebrate and share their faith. In partnership with St. Peter Claver Parish, the group participated in key liturgical events, including African Thanksgiving and a Lenten retreat that brought the richness of African spirituality to campus.

Center for the Common Good



188,037

COMMUNITY-ENGAGED HOURS
AN INCREASE OF 27% FROM
2023-2024

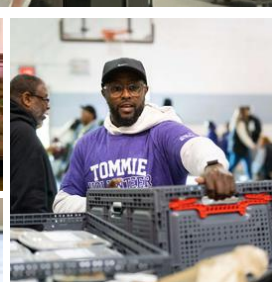
Our students, staff, and faculty actively contribute to our community through academic classes, co-curricular volunteerism, and through their dedication to advancing the common good.

The economic impact of our community-engaged hours is estimated at \$6,827,623, according to the Independent Sector.



Rooted in Mission, Committed to Community

In 2024-2025, the Center for the Common Good deepened its role as a catalyst for student formation and community impact, advancing the university's mission to work for a more just and compassionate world. Through a wide range of academic, co-curricular, and community-based initiatives, students engaged in hands-on learning experiences that emphasized solidarity, dignity, and the common good. Rooted in values of simplicity, reflection, and relationship, these efforts addressed pressing issues such as food insecurity, educational equity, housing instability, public health, and civic participation. With strong partnerships across the Twin Cities and beyond, the Center fostered reciprocal community engagement, empowered students to connect their values with action, and cultivated a campus culture where changemaking is both a mindset and a practice. The impact of this work—measured in volunteer hours, research collaborations, and transformative student experiences—continues to shape future leaders committed to the flourishing of all.



Community Impact

Student Engagement

In 2024-2025, the Center for the Common Good fostered robust student engagement through a wide range of programs that connected learning with action. From weekly volunteer commitments and civic engagement efforts to immersive service experiences and research partnerships, students engaged deeply with social issues impacting our local and global communities. Grounded in reflection, solidarity, and a commitment to the common good, these opportunities empowered students to develop their leadership, explore their values, and make meaningful contributions beyond the classroom.

4,361

COMMUNITY-ENGAGED STUDENTS

AN INCREASE OF 3% FROM
2023-2024

93%

Tommies of the
Class of 2025
Volunteered during
their time at
St. Thomas



The Center for the Common Good, promotes collaborative initiatives to address community challenges, encouraging St. Thomas members to advance the common good locally and globally. The Center for the Common Good, aims to cultivate a lifelong commitment to civic engagement among students.

Digital Connection via Social Media



From July 2024 to June 2025, the Center for the Common Good's Instagram reached over 28,000 users (↑ 47.3%), with 2,085 content interactions, 2,720 visits, and 120 new followers, reflecting steady growth and ongoing interest in social impact initiatives.

Program Highlights



Tommie Shelf: A Mission of Mutual Care

In its 5+ years of operation, Tommie Shelf has continued to deepen its mission to reduce food insecurity through monthly grocery distributions and strong campus and community partnerships. In the 2024-2025 academic year, 4,500 meals were distributed through the Kitchen Coalition program, 1,056 pounds of food were donated to local partners, and a record number of participants utilized Tommie Shelf during October distributions. As the program continues forward, its ongoing success is rooted in dignity, mutual aid, and the collective commitment of the St. Thomas community to care for one another.

Supporting Democratic Engagement

Civic Engagement efforts this year deepened our commitment to voter education, advocacy, and dialogue across the St. Thomas community. With over 700 students engaged and 50+ nonpartisan events hosted, the season reflected a strong and growing interest in civic learning and participation. Deliberative Dialogue sessions invited students, faculty, and staff into thoughtful conversations across difference, building a culture of listening, curiosity, and common good.

Kicked-Off HEAL Volunteers

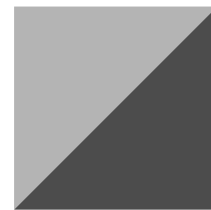
The launch of the HEAL Volunteer Program in spring 2025 created new pathways for students to explore service in health-related fields across the Twin Cities. Through placements in hospitals, clinics, shelters, and advocacy centers, students gained hands-on experience while contributing meaningfully to the common good. With 183 units donated during the 75th blood drive hosted at St. Thomas, HEAL's first semester reflected a strong beginning to a program rooted in care, connection, and community impact.

Immersion Volunteers with Purpose

The VISION program expanded in 2024-2025, offering students immersive volunteer experiences rooted in justice, dignity, and solidarity. With over 2,100 hours of volunteerism completed, VISION fostered reflection, cultural humility, and a deeper sense of purpose—empowering students to return with renewed commitment to the common good.



New Pathways & Vocation



Enhancing the First-Year Experience Program

In 2024-2025, all 1,700 first-year students engaged with the institutional value of vocation through the required FYEX 100 course. As part of this introduction to college life, students explored their sense of purpose and calling during their first semester at St. Thomas. Over the spring and summer of 2024, a dedicated team of staff and faculty collaborated to revise the FYEX curriculum. This included updating an article on the purpose of education to better reflect the mission theme, All for the Common Good, and to deepen alignment with the concept of vocation. A new module, “Vocation and Career,” was also added to help students begin making connections between their values and future pathways.

In August, the Office for Mission co-facilitated a vocation-focused workshop for the 40 faculty and staff teaching FYEX 100. The session invited instructors to reflect on their own vocational journeys and practice leading reflective listening activities—equipping them to accompany students in asking deeper questions about identity, purpose, and the common good.

Vocation Retreat for First-Generation Students

In March 2025, the Office for Mission hosted its first vocation retreat for 34 first-generation students from the St. Paul campus and Dougherty Family College. Centered on the theme “My Story / Our Story,” the retreat invited students to reflect on their personal journeys, values, and sense of purpose. Activities included storytelling, exploring agency for the common good, and an interactive session with Dr. Christopher Wong Michaelson on work and meaning. Students reflected on whether work is a job, career, or calling—and what a good life looks like.

Evaluations highlighted the retreat’s strong impact in helping students connect more deeply with the idea of vocation and with one another.



Program Highlights



Faculty/Staff Mini Grants for Vocational Programming

The launch of Faculty/Staff Mini Grants for Vocational Programming in 2024 sparked new ideas and initiatives connecting vocation to both academics and student life. With \$4,000 awarded across five campus groups, the mini grants supported creative approaches to exploring purpose, calling, and the common good. From classroom innovation to co-curricular engagement, the grant-funded projects helped embed vocational reflection more deeply across the St. Thomas community.

Common Conversation Circles

The launch of Common Conversation Circles in Fall 2024 introduced a new intergenerational program focused on building vocational reflection skills through storytelling and connection. Across three groups, 48 older adults and 44 undergraduate students from three classes met multiple times to share personal stories centered on themes of identity, purpose, and belonging. Designed to counter social isolation and promote reciprocal learning, the circles emphasized that every life holds wisdom worth sharing.

In Spring 2025, two additional circles brought together 18 elders from Episcopal Homes and 25 students from an Intercultural Communication class.

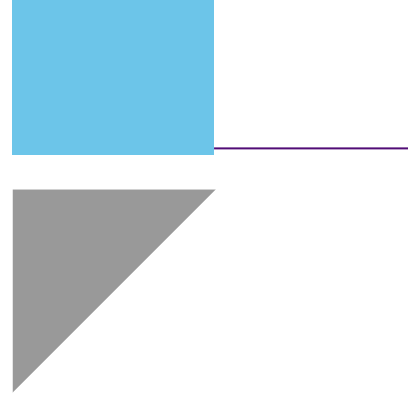
Over the year, 66 older adults and 69 students participated—deepening their understanding of vocation by sharing their story and listening to the views of others.



Next Chapter Retirement Program

The Next Chapter Retirement Program continued to thrive in 2024-2025, offering two full cohorts a six-month journey of vocational reflection and discernment. Participants met monthly to engage Ignatian principles and develop written retirement plans that integrate purpose, freedom, and faith. Known in the local community as a space for spiritual and personal growth, the program also fostered meaningful connection and a strong sense of shared support among those discerning life's next chapter.

Meet Our Team



CHRIS COLLINS, SJ



MICHELE GOODSON



BERNIE BRADY



**KARIN
TRAIL-JOHNSON**



PAUL WOJDA



JACOB BENDA



KATE SALVATORE



**DONNA
MATUSZEWSKI**



**MARTA
PEREIRA VINDAS**



CHRISTINA CROW



**SARAH
CHAMSEDDINE**



ANN JOHNSON



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