



Gesu Detroit Catholic Parish & School 2025 Laudato Si' Parish Actions – Overview of the Year

In preparing our Laudato Si' Action Plan for 2026, we recognize the importance of looking back and celebrating what was accomplished in 2025. The Gesu Detroit 2025 Laudato Si' Action Plan included a statement of what it would look like and mean to be a Laudato Si' Parish (see the sidebar, with actionable parts of this vision bolded). This served as a key point of reflection on what was accomplished over the past year and what areas should be prioritized for 2026.



1 Tree Planting in renovated main parking lot

Gesu activities across its various commissions/committees and in our school reflect that of a Laudato Si' Parish as defined in our original description (see sidebar). In 2025, we have committed to and shown care for our planet, for impoverished people in our neighborhoods and across the world, and for all of creation in various ways. Together, we have learned more about environmental and social justice issues by sharing information and resources, and we have acted where possible in our sphere of influence to address these issues. It is apparent that, increasingly, individuals and groups at Gesu are understanding our collective moral imperative to function as a Laudato Si' Parish, and, in turn, are truly grasping their connection and role in making conversion of heart, mind, and action a reality.

Gesu's Description of a Laudato Si' Parish

Inspired by Pope Francis' 2015 Encyclical on the climate, a Laudato Si' Parish **targets the effects of irresponsible human consumerism, waste and economic development that contributes to global warming and destruction of our planet.**

This destruction has been especially felt in marginalized communities causing much human suffering. A Laudato Si' Parish is one that **commits to care for the Earth, our common home, and all its living beings, through a life that is sustainable and in solidarity with impoverished and underserved people.** The parish promises to **prayerfully and deliberately examine its use of all resources to support this commitment, and the parishioners promise to try to live more responsible and simpler personal and public lives.** We, at Gesu, are committed to formally becoming a Laudato Si' Parish. In this effort, we join parishes worldwide.

Below are highlights of activities and accomplishments from each of the seven Laudato Si' Goals. A more detailed status update on each of our goals can be found in Appendix A.

- **Response to the Cry of the Earth**
 - **Renovated** the parking lot to capture and manage all stormwater on site and planted its green spaces with native plantings.
 - **Installed** Electric Vehicle chargers.
 - **Installed** water dispensers throughout the campus.
 - **Installed/maintained** a trial pollinator lawn in a section of the campus.
 - Used a pesticide-free lawn care company for campus maintenance.



2 "Learning Lawn" at Rectory Building with Signage



3 Packing food boxes for St Vincent dePaul Society

● **Response to the Cry of the Poor**

- We **Continued** St. Vincent dePaul (SVdP) monthly food pantry and utility assistance for neighbors in need.
- **Participated** in homeless persons ministry activities which included assembling 300 bag lunches for the NOAH Project, and preparing lunch at the Bridge Housing of Pope Francis Center
- **Held** a special collection of \$250 each to Pope Francis Center, Freedom House Detroit, and the Urban

- **Continued** Neighborhood Initiative to help victims of flooding in southwest Detroit.
- **Continued** partnerships, in-person mission assistance, and financial support of non-local Catholic parishes and NGOs in Puerto Rico, Haiti, and Dominican Republic, including parish-wide 'Haiti Box' coin collection between Easter and Pentecost; commissioning of an art print in memory of Bishop Thomas

Gumbleton with proceeds to support mission work in Puerto Rico; and coordinating a Jubilee Year Pilgrimage of Hope five-day mission trip in June to San Juan, PR, led by Gesu pastor Fr. Lorn Snow S.J.



4 Pilgrimage of Hope to Puerto Rico

- **Ecological Economics**

- **Continued** to implement suggestions from the parish campus energy audit by Michigan State University
- **Maintained** and cleaned solar panels on the school roof for optimal efficiency



5 Students cleaning rooftop solar panels

- **Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles**
 - **Advocated** for the use of fixtures and amenities that reduce water and energy use throughout the campus, including in the renovations of the church social hall and new women's bathroom and in planning discussions for the new affordable senior housing project.
 - **Summer renovation** of the church social area provided the addition of an energy efficient dishwasher; we were



7 Gesu School students carrying food waste to the composter



6 Students sort food waste at lunch

able to switch to reusable coffee mugs and juice cups instead of using compostable cups for Sunday coffee and donuts ministry.

- **Continued** use of the share tables, composting, and waste reduction efforts in the school cafeteria.

- **Ecological Education**

- **Provided six tours** of the campus highlighting sustainability initiatives to groups from The Nature Conservancy, Sierra Club, National Wildlife Federation, Detroit Design Month local celebration, and the Great Lakes Bioneers



8 Bioneers tour of Campus with interpretive signage



9 Gesu students presenting at Bioneers Conference

- **Gesu School Science Club** presented their findings on their carbon footprint project at the Great Lakes Bioneers Conference

- **Provided** “Green Team/Laudato Si’ News” section in weekly parish electronic newsletter including links, info/resources, and action

items for Fossil Fuel Nonproliferation Treaty, Catholic Climate Covenant, and Laudato Si’ Movement organizations.

- **Provided** ongoing updates in the electronic newsletter to educate on the “how and why” for the Green Team trial run in establishing a pollinator lawn.
- Three Gesu representatives **attended** the Jesuit Integral Ecology Assembly in June with one serving on the year-long planning committee for this North American ecology conference and another presenting on the ecological accomplishments for both Gesu parish and school.
- **Included** Gesu Laudato Si’ connections in multiple sections of Parish Directory



10 Gesu's presentation at Jesuit Integral Ecology Assembly

- **Ecological Spirituality**

- During Lent, **Stations of the Cross** were hosted weekly by different Gesu committees to include parish-wide prayer opportunities for: ecological justice, refugees/immigrants, peace and justice, Christian Service/Homeless Ministries



11 Green Team Pilgrimage Retreat

- The final weekend in August, Gesu Green Team **hosted a Pilgrimage of Hope** for Creation and weekend retreat at the Ralph A. MacMullan Center (Roscommon, MI) during this 2025 Jubilee Year and in preparation for the Season of Creation

- **Celebrated** the Season of Creation with a full calendar of activities in conjunction with the Southeast Michigan Interfaith Climate Justice Initiative, which concluded with a visit from Detroit's new Archbishop Weisenburger to tour the Gesu campus and celebrate mass in Gesu Church on October 4th in honor of the Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi



12 Archbishop Edward Weisenburger tying a ribbon on the Season of Creation burning bush, pledging to "Listen" to the Voice of Creation.

- **Publicized** the Ignatian Solidarity's 2025 daily Advent Spirituality Challenge which focused on sustainability issues.

- **Community Resilience and Empowerment**

- **Gloryland Neighborhoods Development Corporation (GNDC)**—a separate 501(C)3 organization which also functions as a Gesu Outreach committee—has expanded their free community workshops on DIY home maintenance and repairs in collaboration with Live6 Alliances (a neighborhood-based community planning and development organization working to increase opportunity and enhance the quality of life in Northwest Detroit)



13 *Gloryland DIY Workshop*

- **Supported the Titan Equity Nourishment Network (TENN)** food program at the University of Detroit Mercy with volunteers twice a week in the summer.
- As an on-going project, in 2025 **Beloved Community** at Gesu initiated *Signs of Solidarity*, a poster stating, “We Support Immigrant Families”; 30 local businesses and non-profits post it publicly.



14 *Gesu Strangers No Longer participants in Solemn Procession in downtown Detroit to support immigrant neighbors*

Unexpected Opportunities

This year held unexpected opportunities to further our goal of serving as a Laudato Si' Parish. These are further described below:

- **Gesu Catechesis of the Good Shepherd** Director was introduced to the Jesuit Social Justice and Ecological Secretariat curriculum, a multiple ages curriculum entitled "Letters to the Earth." She was able to incorporate this ecologically minded curriculum into the 2025 Season of Creation across all age groups in the program.

- **Jubilee Year Pilgrimage of Hope for Creation** to the Ralph A. MacMullen (RAM)

Center in Roscommon, MI: The Gesu Green Team jumped at the international call to plan and participate in a Pilgrimage of Hope for Creation in conjunction with the 2025 Season of Creation. The three-day weekend pilgrimage/retreat was held at the RAM Center, a Michigan Department of Natural Resources conference center designated specifically for ecologically minded working groups. There were 27 participants representing several different communities in the Southeast Michigan Interfaith Climate Justice Initiative. Gesu Associate Pastor, Fr. Christopher Alt S.J., attended as the spiritual guide for this pilgrimage. The weekend included evening eco-spiritual group reflections and music around bonfires, outdoor morning prayer and a group multi-point reflection on water, interactive nature hikes, poetry writing, kayaking, swimming, discussions on environmental issues, and interactive group drumming meditation. The pilgrimage concluded with an outdoor Mass presided by Fr. Alt S.J., along with pilgrimage participants serving as lectors, guest speakers to break open the word, eucharistic ministers, and music ministers.



15 Fr Christopher Alt, SJ celebrating Mass at RAM



16 Pilgrimage in Roscommon

- **Campus tour and mass** with Archbishop Edward Weisenburger: To close out the Season of Creation on the October 4th Feast of St. Francis of Assisi and thank Gesu for its work in caring for creation, Archbishop Weisenburger toured Gesu's campus to learn more about the environmental initiatives the parish and school have taken on. He was appointed to the Archdiocese of Detroit in 2025. The tour was followed by a Eucharist presided by Archbishop Weisenberger. The visit was publicized in various Archdiocese of Detroit media, highlighting many environmental initiatives at Gesu. A list of publications related to the event can be found in Appendix B.

- **Participation in the Livernois McNichols Neighborhood Action Agenda initiative:**



Figure 17 Gesu is Recognized as a Community Anchor

- Kresge, a local philanthropy organization that will be moving its headquarters to the area, convened representatives from local businesses, nonprofits, creatives, educators, health and wellness specialists, and institutions such as Gesu to understand needs in the surrounding neighborhoods and develop an action agenda to address those needs. Gesu was included as an anchor institution in the area as

well as for its sustainability efforts. The initiative is ongoing through spring 2026.

- **Petition drive for Invest in MI Kids and Ranked Choice Voting:** Several parishioners became involved in collecting signatures to put two initiatives on the 2026 ballot: one that would increase the tax rate for those making over \$500,000 per year from 4.25% to 5% to fund public schools, and one that would bring ranked choice voting to all elections in Michigan. A petition drive was held after all masses two weekends in October, bringing opportunities to be politically involved and build community resilience to attendees.

- **Implementation of reusable coffee mugs for Sunday Coffee & Donuts:** Although the parish had been using compostable cups for coffee and donuts, it was recognized that a more sustainable option was available for serving coffee and juice after Sunday mass. An energy-efficient dishwasher was installed in an old confessional during the summer renovation of the social area. A Gesu School alum living in New York designed and built an innovative “mug tree” and parishioners donated reusable coffee mugs. Coffee is now served in these mugs, and reusable drinking cups are used for juice. All cups are now washed in the dishwasher, saving the cost of purchasing cups and reducing the volume of trash sent to landfill.



Looking Ahead – The Context and Foreseen Opportunities in 2026

The Gesu Laudato Si' Advisory Board members are humbled by and appreciate the work that Gesu staff, parishioners, students, and partners all have done and continue to do to care for all of creation. While we know we are doing a lot, we also know there is more that can be done. Before diving into the action plan for the year, setting the context for our goals is appropriate. Below are some aspects that were considered in the development of our 2026 plan.

- **Reorganize documentation of 2026 Gesu LS Action Plan Goals** to align directly with the 7 LS Action Platform Goals/focus areas: Our Gesu 2025 LS Action Plan had seven goals, but these goals were not specifically connected to one of each of the 7 LS Action Platform Goals/focus areas. While we mapped our seven Gesu 2025 LS Action Plan goals onto the 7 LS



18 Laudato Si' Advisory Committee celebrates submission of the Action Plan in 2025

Action Platform Goals/focus areas in our Gesu 2025 Laudato Si' Parish application, we have determined it would be better to skip specific goal setting and instead identify actions/initiatives to correspond with each of the 7 LS Action Platform Goals/focus areas.

- **Greater focus on combining education and economics:** In developing the 2025 plan, we recognized that we have already done and continue to do a lot in the focus areas of Ecological Education and Ecological Economics, and that these two can be better combined to promote the benefits of our actions. For example, we have made changes such as energy-efficiency updates, installing

solar panels, and using reusable mugs that save money. Publicizing the benefits of these changes and finding ways to support individuals and households who want to explore ways to be more ecologically- and socially minded in their investments, purchases, and other decisions will be key action items for Gesu in 2026 to build up our work in these focus areas.

- The Church and School will require the **replacement of the boilers and hot water tank** within the next one to two years. This will be a major expense, but also an opportunity to update our heating system to one that is much more environmentally and economically friendly. Research and discernment are ongoing for this update.
- The current parish center, which was previously a convent, will begin a renovation process likely in spring 2026 as part of an **affordable senior housing project**. This will change how buildings are used on the Gesu campus, as the previous rectory will become the site for the new parish offices and the current parish center will no longer be available for general parish use. Many things are stored in the parish center that will need to be moved, re-homed, or thrown out. Finding appropriate new locations for these items is a big task that will take time and creativity.



19 Stormwater Management in Newly-Renovated Parking Lot

may close soon, there is currently a moratorium on all capital improvements until the restructuring is complete. This limits the scope of work that is proposed in the plan for this year.

- **Gesu has great local partners** that support places of worship in thinking about how to operate with the environment in mind, including the City of Detroit's Office of Sustainability, Detroit 2030 District, and Michigan Interfaith Power and Light. We continue to collaborate with a coalition of nonprofit organizations to address climate change effectively and to meet the city's greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals.

- The Archdiocese of Detroit has announced a **restructuring of parishes** which will likely result in the closing of some. To avoid funds being spent on updates to buildings that



20 Gesu school's Courtyard Habitat Project

Appendix A – Detailed review of Gesu 2025 Laudato Si’ Action Plan Goals

Goal #1: We source all supplies and services responsibly and locally when possible.		
Objective	Associated KPIs	Status
1. Raise awareness of ecological economics and opportunities for individuals and families	·Initial planning meeting with co-director of FaithInvest	Ongoing action for 2026
2. Formalize internal policies that support responsible and local sourcing	·Agenda item	Changed project champions and kept this as an action item for 2026
Goal #2: We will protect the Detroit and Rouge Rivers and Great Lakes watersheds		
Objective	Associated KPIs	Status
1. Renovate the parking lots to reduce stormwater runoff. - Plant native plants to help water infiltration	·Secure desired native plants	Native plants were planted in the parking lot renovation. The pollinator lawn project became a “learning lawn” and will need to be replanted after a new ramp and walkway is added to the new parish center. Educational articles were provided in the bulletin and e-blast about the pollinator lawn. The existing rain garden and native plant gardens were maintained this year.
2. Educate others about the importance of stormwater management in protecting our watershed. - Create educational signage for the parking lot - Share the parking lot project via the Bioneers tour and other tours of the space	·Agenda item for subcommittee grant development ·Documentation of communication regarding dates for requested tours	Funds for educational signage have not been procured. Gesu provided two tours as part of the Bioneers conference this year, focused on stormwater management, as well as a tour for the Nature Conservancy.
3. Advocate for fixtures and amenities that reduce water use throughout the campus. - Advocate for water-reducing fixtures such	·Application to the State of MI for tax credits for the Senior Mixed Income Housing project	The Green Team submitted a request for various eco-friendly aspects to be integrated into the senior housing project, including low-flow fixtures and aerated faucets. The list was well-received and planning for the project is ongoing.

<p>as aerated faucets in the senior housing project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain pollinator (bee) lawn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Completion of scheduled maintenance 	
<p>Goal #3: We will be a zero-waste campus</p>		
Objective	Associated KPIs	Status
1. Implement recycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Development of a plan to implement regular, campus-wide recycling 	Although recycling paper and plastic has been ongoing in the school, student-led campus pickup of recycling is inconsistent. Staff champions expect that this school year will help solidify this process. Teacher involvement during teacher orientation is planned so that instruction can be ongoing to all the students in their classrooms. Recycling rates currently vary greatly between classrooms.
2. Become a plastic-free campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Development of written resource for committees •Polish and circulate current drafted recommendations 	Refillable water dispensers were distributed throughout the campus to eliminate the need for disposable water bottles at meetings and events. Work to develop recommendations for greening events and funeral luncheons is in progress/ongoing.
3. Continue the school food composting program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Measured reduction of food waste and garbage bags 	Food share tables are done daily in the cafeteria, and the students are a large part of this process and its success. It was necessary to educate new students to dispose of their waste in the proper bins so this process can continue at the beginning of the year. Daily, volunteer students remove meat from the cafeteria and place the bucket near the compost area. Although the school had staff changes this summer, the compost continues to be maintained by Gesu staff.
<p>Goal #4: Embed ecological awareness and sustainability in parish decision making and everyday practice.</p>		
Objective	Associated KPIs	Status
1. Educate and provide opportunities for key	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Application to the State of MI for tax 	The Green Team is always looking for ways to advocate for sustainable

decision makers to have an ecological conversion	credits for the Senior Mixed Income Housing project ·Development of protocol for EPA Energy STAR education ·Implementation of 3-4 liturgical celebrations	practices throughout the campus. Some groups have started to consult with the Green Team on things before making decisions, demonstrating the impact of our education and advocacy efforts. Staff have indicated that they have reviewed the EPA Energy STAR Action Workbook for Congregations. Gesu celebrates Earth Month/Earth Day (Apr), Laudato Si' Week (May), and Season of Creation (Sep) and incorporates Integral Ecology Stations of the Cross during Lent.
2. Develop internal policies that support responsible and local sourcing	·Agenda item	An error in understanding caused an incorrect committee request for ownership of this action. Clearer communication led to a reassignment for this action for 2026.

Goal #5: Provide leadership in the community in adopting principles of Laudato Si'

Objective	Associated KPIs	Status
1. Educate and provide opportunities for community members to learn about the work at Gesu	·Documentation of communication that leads dates for requested tours ·Regular attendance at National Jesuit Ecology Assembly planning meetings	Gesu provided two tours as part of the Bioneers conference this year, as well as tours for the Nature Conservancy and the National Wildlife Federation/Sierra Club. The Season of Creation included a variety of events and educational resources to raise awareness about environmental issues and how people can act on them. We participated in the 6 Mile Street Fair and at several Coffee & Donuts Sundays to share information and request support for the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Goal #6: Reduce energy use and use energy from renewable sources

Objective	Associated KPIs	Status
1. Reduce energy use throughout the campus	·Development of a report timeline for required energy reporting ·Development of a	In progress/ongoing; Continued reporting to MSU on implementation items from the energy audit and new required reporting to the city on energy use. Staff have implemented most suggestions

	<p>protocol for incorporating the EPA EnergySTAR Action Workbook for Congregations into parish planning and communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Apply to the State of MI for tax credits for the Senior Mixed Income Housing project 	<p>provided in the MSU energy audit but some items, like LED lighting, will be completed as the older fluorescent tubes burn out. Staff have indicated that they have reviewed the EPA Energy STAR Action Workbook for Congregations. The Green Team submitted a request for various eco-friendly aspects to be integrated into the senior housing project, including energy-efficient building materials, appliances, and lights. The list was well-received and planning for the project is ongoing</p>
2. Use energy from renewable sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Maintenance schedule for solar panels •Sub-committee to seek and apply for grants 	<p>Yearly the students assist in cleaning the solar panels on the roof so that they can produce the most energy. The Gesu Science Club has been working on a project to determine its carbon footprint and find ways to offset this CO2 production. Car chargers were installed in the Gesu parking lot and are available to anyone needing to charge their cars.</p>
Goal 7: Continue to assist the poor and underserved and those most affected by climate change.		
Objective	Associated KPIs	Status
1. Assist a parish in Puerto Rico as an example of those who are most impacted by the effects of climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Distribute collection boxes •Commission the creation of an art print with proceeds to raise funds for mission work •Coordinate the June Pilgrimage of Hope mission trip to Puerto Rico 	<p>Ongoing partnerships, mission assistance, and financial support of non-local Catholic parishes and NGOs in Puerto Rico, Haiti, and Dominican Republic.</p>
2. Continue to assist the poor and underserved in Detroit and surrounding communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Publicity of outreach events in printed bulletin and weekly electronic <i>Gesu Update</i> •Routine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •<u>Christian Service Committee</u> members successfully completed their annual outreach events for 2025: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) homeless ministry activities to include assembling 300 bag lunches for the NOAH Project (Feb), preparing and serving lunch at the Pope Francis Center

	<p>committee planning meetings and monthly reports to parish leadership on progress and needs of the Gesu Christian Service Committee, Gloryland Neighborhoods Development Corporation (GNDC), Gesu chapter of St. Vincent de Paul, and the Gesu Circle of Support for Strangers No Longer</p>	<p>Bridge Housing Campus (Feb), serving a meal at Cass Community Center (May), and preparing/ serving a meal at Crossroads Soup Kitchen (Oct). 2) collection for Freedom House of personal care items and men's underwear (Apr). 3) collection of gifts with Gesu Giving Tree donated to clients at the Capuchin Soup Kitchen, Pope Francis Center, and Gesu St. Vincent de Paul Society (Dec). 4) special Gesu offertory collection of \$250 each to Pope Francis Center and Freedom House Detroit, and to the Urban Neighborhood Initiative to help victims of flooding in southwest Detroit. 5) supporting the TENN food program at UDM with Gesu volunteers twice a week in the summer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •<u>Gloryland Neighborhoods Development Corporation (GNDC)</u> is continuing to provide and expand home repair and maintenance workshops in collaboration with Live6 Alliance; however, purchase and rehab of Detroit homes has been stymied due to limited inventory and support from partners as well as sources for financing rehab projects and rising costs of construction. •<u>Gesu chapter of St. Vincent de Paul Society</u> continues to serve the local community surrounding Gesu parish but after major federal aid cuts in 2025, it has concerns about the necessity to raise additional funding to support its monthly food pantry and to provide financial support to neighbors with needs like utility and/or rental assistance. •<u>Gesu Circle of Support for Strangers No Longer (SNL)</u> had many activities, including an educational series called "Know Your Rights" for immigrants, a simulation exercise of refugee experience called "Journey into Exile", formation of a Rapid Response Team to accompany immigrants to court hearings, doctors' appointments and meetings with their legal counsel; financial support for an immigrant family. A full review of SNL activities for 2025 can be found in Appendix C
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Appendix B – Publicity from Archbishop Weisenberger’s Visit

- Detroit Catholic article on October 6, 2025 [*Mass and tour of Gesu Parish and School's 'Laudato Si'' environmental projects*](#)
- Detroit Catholic article on October 7, 2025 [*Archbishop Weisenburger commends Gesu community on Laudato Si' efforts*](#)
- October 8, 2025 [Instagram post](#)

Appendix C: Gesu Circle of Support

Note: While this is a very lengthy report, the Gesu Laudato Sí Advisory Committee believes the comprehensive detail can help other parishes contemplating action on immigration issues in their communities across the United States. We view this work as directly related to Goal 2: Response to the Cry of the Poor.

We cannot remain insensitive; our hearts deadened before the misery of so many innocent people. We must not fail to weep. We must not fail to respond.” ~ Pope Francis

Strangers No Longer (SNL) is a network of Circles of Support in Catholic parishes, religious congregations and immigrant communities to support immigrant neighbors and advocate for a comprehensive, humane immigration policy. Named after a pastoral letter written by the U.S. Bishops, SNL is motivated by Jesus’s call to welcome the stranger – a call echoed by Pope Francis, Pope Leo, and Church leaders throughout time. Since 2017, SNL has created Circles of Support in parishes across Michigan.

This report documents how Gesu’s Circle of Support has expanded its efforts with respect to the three major goals of Strangers No Longer.

Goal #1: Continue to sponsor educational programs regarding U.S. immigration policy; Catholic Social Teaching; and opportunities to hear testimonials by immigrants.

- With financial support from a CDC grant from the National Center for Farmworker Health, SNL hired a project manager for its Bird Flu Dairy Worker Outreach Program. The grant also enabled hiring of six local Spanish-speaking women to educate and support workers on dairy farms in the Thumb and Mid-Michigan regions.
- Stories of immigrants were featured in the Spring 2025 edition of *focus*, a quarterly publication of the Michigan Catholic Conference. The issue, entitled *Seeing Christ in the Immigrant*, explained Catholic Social Teaching on immigration and the Catholic Perspective on Immigration Reform. Copies of the publication were distributed to the 400 guests at the SNL 4th Annual Banquet on April 27, 2025.
- Gesu and other SNL parishes sponsored an educational series entitled “Know Your Rights” in parishes throughout the state. More than 2,000 “Know Your Rights Red Cards” were distributed to those affected by expanded ICE raids in their communities.

- On March 15, 2025, the Gesu Circle of Support hosted “Journey into Exile,” a series of simulation exercises presented by a staff member of Jesuit Refugee Services – Canada. There were close to forty participants who attended this three-hour educational session, which provided a deeper understanding of the refugee experience through videos and role playing of actual immigrant stories.
- On April 27, 2025, members of the Gesu Circle of Support again played a leadership role in SNL’s 4th Annual Banquet at the Ukrainian Cultural Center in Warren, MI. The capacity crowd of 400 people enjoyed a meal, a basket raffle, and keynote speaker Poppy Hernandez, the Governor’s Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and the Office of Global Michigan. The event generated over \$25,000 for critical SNL programs.
- In January 2025, SNL launched a series of monthly gatherings entitled “Assembly of Circle Leaders” meetings. Hosted by Our Mother of Perpetual Help Circle of Support in Oak Park, Michigan, these meetings offer educational presentations on a range of immigration-related issues. Attendees also hear testimonials from immigrants and secure support for them from local Circles.
- Two important lectures were presented at the June 2025 Assembly of Circle Leaders meeting. One speaker talked about fraud in the immigration system and introduced us to an immigrant woman who had been a victim of this practice. This case was submitted to the Office of the Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel for further investigation. The second presentation introduced a Federal program of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Entitled 287(g) agreements, these are partnerships between ICE and local police and sheriffs’ departments. Teams of SNL leaders and concerned residents continue to schedule meetings with local law enforcement agencies to educate them that these agreements encourage racial profiling and undermine public trust in law enforcement. In addition, they divert critical resources from essential public services and can potentially compromise safety and well-being of all residents. At this writing, 31 such Local for Local campaign meetings have been held and 50 are pending.
- Finally, SNL believes it is critical that the broader community hears the often heart-wrenching stories of immigrants. While courageous individuals have been providing these testimonials for several years, SNL recently formalized this effort by naming them “Missionaries of Hope.” Immigrants offer 10-minute presentations about their immigration experience, telling why they left their home country, what their journey was like, and how their family is doing now.
- On Sunday, October 5, 2025, a solemn Mass gathered 550 people at Blessed Sacrament Cathedral, offered by Detroit’s Archbishop Edward Weisenburger. Gesu Circle of Support leadership helped coordinate this deeply spiritual advocacy effort with the

Archbishop and his staff. In his homily, the Archbishop acknowledged the work of SNL over the past eight years. At a special ceremony at the end of Mass, he blessed those who had volunteered to be Missionaries of Hope by sharing their immigration stories.

Goal #2. Continue to offer “direct support and accompaniment services” to immigrants and migrants.

- Following the expansion of ICE interrogations and arrests beginning in January, SNL leadership from Gesu and other Circles formed a Rapid Response Team (RRT). Often urgent requests for help come from Freedom House Detroit, the University of Detroit Mercy Law School Immigration Law Program, and immigration lawyers and staff with the Southwest Detroit Immigrant and Migrant Center seeking immediate help with specific clients. RRT members respond to urgent requests to accompany immigrants to court hearings, doctor appointments, and meetings with their legal counsel.
- Another related program begun this year is FACT – the Family Assistance in Crisis Team. This has been a way of formalizing our Direct Support and Accompaniment Services program. Groups of Circle members “adopt” families in crisis, to temporarily fund utility bills and groceries, and by agreeing to visit immigrants who feel alone and frightened when family breadwinner is detained. SNL staff and friends of immigrants help them locate family members and determine their detention status.
- In early 2017, a Jesuit priest on the faculty at the University of Detroit Mercy, requested a meeting, hoping Gesu parish would help an immigrant couple. The parish embraced them, finding housing; connecting them with an immigration lawyer who offered services *pro bono*; and contributing in countless other ways. A retired TEFL teacher and Gesu Circle member worked with them to help them perfect their English, continuing for eight years. Gesu’s pastor, Fr. Lorn Snow, SJ, offered Gesu Parish as the corporate immigration sponsor. Through this relationship, many parishioners have a more nuanced understanding of the immigration process in the United States.
- Other SNL Circles have also “adopted” families, providing accompaniment and direct services to adults and children from across Michigan’s immigrant communities.
- Strangers No Longer is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Staff, programs and services are funded entirely through the philanthropic support of individuals, parishes, women religious congregations, foundations and government grant-making programs. In the fall of 2025, SNL launched its annual fundraising campaign. At its conclusion on December 30, 2025, SNL had raised \$121,500, exceeding its 2024 goal by 52%. We are deeply grateful to all those who generously offered their support.

Goal #3. Continue to advocate for policies and practices that uphold the human dignity of immigrants and migrants.

- On November 12, 2024, members of the Gesu Circle of Support took part in a second Advocacy Day at the Michigan Capitol in Lansing to urge the passage of the Drive SAFE (Safety, Access, Freedom and Economy) legislation. These bills would have restored driver's licenses for immigrants, regardless of their immigration status. The Gesu Circle of Support and the broader SNL organization had been campaigning for these bills since 2022. Two-hundred SNL supporters came from across the state, including 25 Catholic nuns from six different congregations. Participants visited the offices of all 38 senators and 110 representatives and spoke to the legislators or staff. These volunteers left behind materials explaining the critical importance of these bills for human dignity and safety. Despite these strong efforts, the legislature failed to move these bills out of committee and to the floor for a vote.
- In early January 2025, Gesu Circle leaders along with the Gesu Peace and Justice Committee co-signed a letter to the leadership of the Archdiocese of Detroit urging the bishops to issue an official statement regarding the treatment of immigrants and migrants in Michigan and followed up the letter with a meeting with a representative of then-Archbishop Allen Vigneron.
- The Gesu Circle of Support and broader SNL membership promoted the subsequent Pastoral Letter, dated January 27, 2025, from the bishops of Michigan's seven Catholic Dioceses. This letter expressed concern for immigrant families, urging "continued pastoral and prayerful support for immigrants living and working in the state." The bishops also encouraged the development of "policies that keep immigrant and undocumented families safe and united."
- On July 14, 2025, a Solemn Procession called attention to inhumane treatment of immigrants and migrants at the hands of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers. An estimated 500 SNL members and others gathered at Most Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Detroit's Corktown neighborhood. Attendees included 30 priests and other Christian and Jewish clerics, members of women religious congregations, labor leaders, and citizens from throughout the metropolitan area.

Before marching peacefully to ICE Headquarters, Sr. Rebecca Vanderhaar, IHM, and SNL Chaplain Fr. David Buersmeyer offered prayers and Detroit's new Archbishop Edward Weisenburger offered a blessing and joined the procession. Arriving at the ICE building plaza, the group gathered quietly, offering prayers and singing hymns. SNL Board Chair Judy Brooks and Fr. Buersmeyer attempted to deliver a letter to the Acting ICE Field Office Director Mr. Kevin Raycraft and were denied access. Following the

Solemn Procession on July 14th, a Prayer Vigil has been held each Wednesday morning outside of the ICE Regional Field Office with prayer, signs, and recitation of the rosary.

Subsequently, Ric Pruess, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Business Agent helped make contact with US Senator Gary Peters. The Senator's office helped schedule a meeting with Mr. Raycraft on August 12, 2025. SNL leaders, including Fr. Buersmeyer; Sr. Nina Rodriguez, SSJ; Sr. Valerie Knocke, IHM; and US Representative Shri Thanedar, whose district includes the ICE office, presented the letter requesting changes in specific ICE policies. They delivered a letter from Michigan State Senator Stephanie Chang demanding the release of 16 Hmong residents arrested earlier that week. While ICE leadership expressed no willingness to change their policies, the meeting was seen as an important way of keeping the pressure on ICE.

- Finally, on December 2, 2025, 130 SNL members, concerned citizens and faith leaders participated in a Pilgrimage for Human Dignity to Michigan's State Capitol in Lansing. The day began with attendees being acknowledged in the Senate Chambers during its formal session. A highlight of the event was Sen. Chang's commitment to partner with SNL to hold statewide hearings on ICE's civil rights abuses. The day featured 12 clergy leaders from across the state, including Episcopal Bishop Bonnie Perry, who joined SNL to support legislation prohibiting ICE arrests at churches, schools, court houses, and other "sensitive locations." The day included a luncheon and special Posadas* celebration enacted by SNL members. The pilgrims held sit-down meetings with 12 State Senators and their staff; visited 37 Senate offices and all 110 House offices to deliver packets of information on SNL and its Local for Local campaign, to ask whether agencies plan to enter into 287(g) agreements with ICE. Finally, we could confirm a willingness by leadership of the Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police and Michigan Sheriff's Association to meet with SNL in 2026.
- Advocacy efforts will continue into 2026 with SNL members being encouraged to send emails and make phone calls urging State Senators to support the passage of Senate Bills 508, 509 and 510, which seek to limit the activities of ICE and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers in the state.

*Las Posadas is a nine-day Latin American and Mexican Christmas tradition that reenacts Mary and Joseph's search for shelter in Bethlehem. Posada translates to "inn" or "lodging," and this celebration features nightly processions, carols, festive gatherings, representing the pilgrimage and preparation for Christmas Eve. Las Posadas remind us that Mary and Joseph were strangers seeking shelter in Bethlehem and later were refugees in Egypt as they sought to escape the terrors of King Herod's regime.