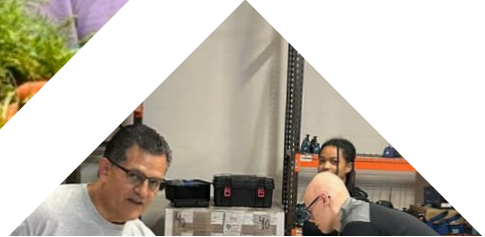




ST. JOHN THE DIVINE  
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH



# TOGETHER WE THRIVE

ANNUAL  
STEWARDSHIP  
REPORT  
2023



## OUR MISSION

The Mission of St. John the Divine is to proclaim the Holy Gospel by teaching and spreading Orthodox Christian Faith in a dynamic and welcoming community devoted to serving all people who seek a growing relationship with Jesus Christ.

## OUR VISION

With the Grace of God, to provide a loving and caring Community where all belong to Christ through worship, sacramental life, everyday spiritual discipline, sanctification, education, witness, and fellowship.

## OUR STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY MISSION

Seek greater participation in ministries and encourage full financial support through education and community. Provide a source of information defining how to be a member in good standing through volunteerism and financial support.

## OUR STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY VISION

Achieve maximum parishioner involvement via volunteerism and financial support.

Dear beloved Church family,

**“The Church is a hospital, and not a courtroom, for souls. She does not condemn on behalf of sins, but grants remission of sins.” St. John Chrysostom**

I pray that you and your families are doing well.

Let me begin by thanking you for being part of our Church family. This December will mark my 17th year as your Parish Priest, and more importantly three years of us worshipping in our new church. Every day, when I stand before my icons in prayer, I thank God for the opportunity to serve and minister to you. One of the greatest joys in my life is having the opportunity to serve you. As you know, we are living in some very exciting times here at St. John the Divine. This month, we will usher in the first phase of our new iconography project. Over the last three years, we have grown into our new space with additional ministries, aiming to meet every demographic of our community. We have added new ministries such as the Boy Scouts, Zoe Ministry (For Widows), and Starting Fresh (a ministry for those separated and divorced) just to name a few. In addition, many of you see new faces each week, with record number of people entering our Catechism and Bible Study courses from all over the country. Our viewership for our services has increased, and so has our social media presence. We've had to increase both our staff and our clergy, to meet the growing demands of this community, which exist both in person and online. We have grown while remaining true to our roots and never forgetting 107-year history. There is no doubt that we are working towards the final commandment of God to, “go out to all nations...”

With that said, we must remember that to whom much is given, much is expected. Christ tells us that, “the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.” St. John Chrysostom goes on to say, “the most successful Churches are not limited by the 4 walls of the Church, but they make their Church the 4 corners of the world.” God needs us to continue to be His hands, His feet, and His arms both inside and outside the walls of our Church. As such, I am asking you to look at your offerings both in time, in talent but also in treasure. Pray that God will help you fan the flame of the gifts He has given you to make a difference in this world. As you read this letter, consider how you can step forward in your giving, so that together, we thrive.

Thanks,

Rev. Dr. Nicholas G. Louh, Parish Priest

Dear Church Family,

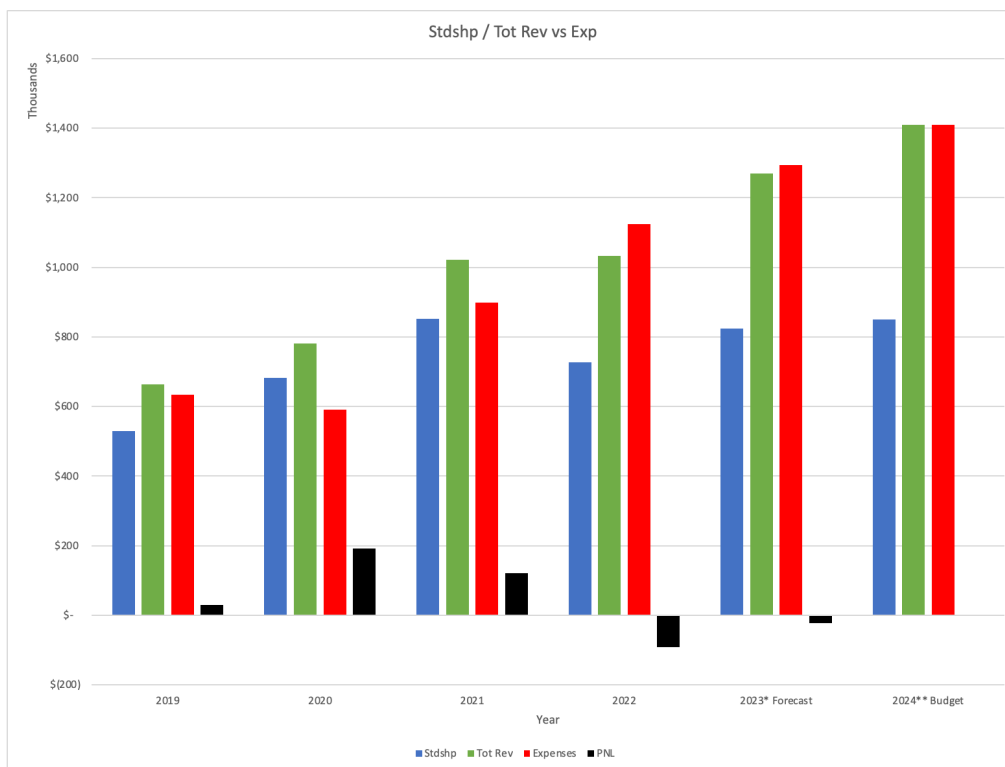
Thanks be to God, St. John the Divine is growing. We are growing in worship, in attendance, in ministries and in our impact to the greater Jacksonville community. Your stewardship provides the foundation for parish ministries and sustains church operations, which helps our church family live their faith and grow in Christ.

As we continue to grow, it is important to understand our church's financial well-being and overall state of operations.

Since fully reopening from Covid, our **Operating Expenses (Red Bar)** have risen **123%** whereas **Stewardship (Blue Bar)** has risen only **63%**.

We have all experienced the pain of hyper inflation over the past few years and the church is not immune from rising costs.

Thanks be to God our fundraising activity and Early Learning Center have helped us stay afloat but as you can see, in 2022 and 2023, we've had to dip into Reserves to fund operations.



Our 2024 operating budget is **\$1,409,404** or **\$3,861 Per Day**, and that is just to break even. But let's be clear, remaining status quo is NOT our goal. Our goal is to continuously grow in Christ and do God's work. There are so many areas of need and they all require resources.

We ask that you prayerfully consider your stewardship for 2024 and join us in committing to the future of St. John the Divine. With God, together we thrive!

Yours in Christ,

*Nassim Elias*

Nassim Elias  
Nassim Elias, Parish Council Treasurer & Stewardship Chair





A Look Back  
at Our  
2023  
Season  
of Giving



Throughout the year, the GOYANs have worked with children of Kim's Open Door. Kim's Open Door is an organization that provide services to refugees, immigrants and other vulnerable populations locally in Jacksonville.



At the Last Supper, as we read in Chapter 15 of the Gospel of John, Jesus instructed His disciples, "I Am the Vine; you are the branches." He was telling us that the purpose of our abiding Him is that we may bear fruit for God in the world. "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit..." Just as the vine bears fruit only through its branches, so Jesus has chosen to work in the world through us.





The Church, Event Center, and ELC came together in October to help a special family not only celebrate the raising of funds for children's cancer research, but to also celebrate the life of their beautiful daughter, who passed away from cancer.



“Whatever you do,  
work at it with all  
your heart, as  
working for the  
Lord, not for  
men...”

Colossians 3:23



Parishioners writing letters of encouragement to prisoners through the Orthodox Prison Ministry.



The Greek Dance Ministry threw an amazing Night Under the Stars event that raised funds for the Youth Dance Group.

“Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. *Let them* do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold to eternal life.”

1 Timothy 6:17-19



Church members working on prayer shawls for the Philoptochos Prayer Shawl ministry. This ministry provides handmade shawls for those in need as gifts of comfort, hope and peace.





“A rich man is not one that has much, but who gives much. For what he gives away remains his forever.”

St. John Chrysostom

Fr. Nick and Fr. Sebastian are able to touch the lives of so many of our Church family members through our ministries, which are funded by your stewardship.







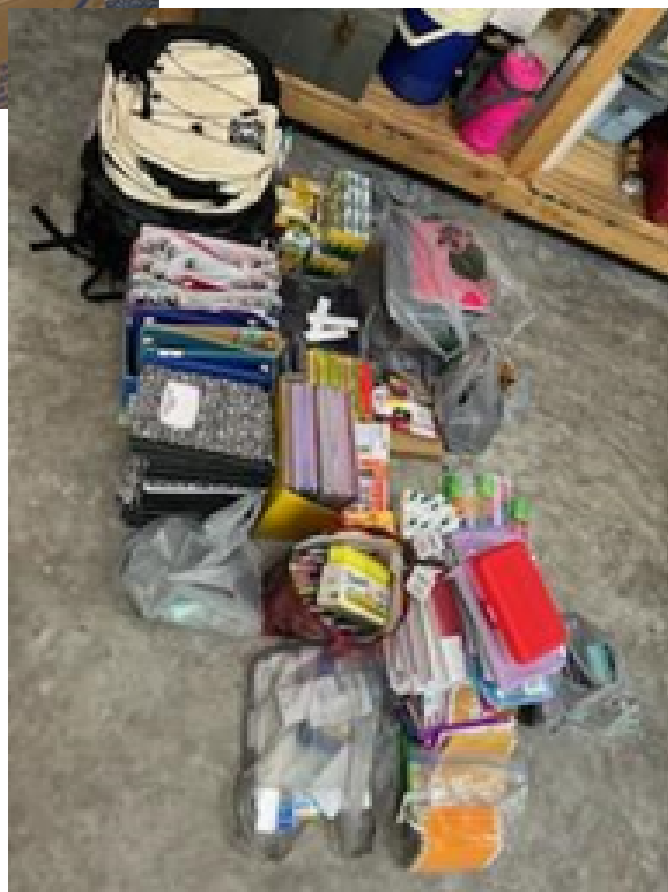
Our church members through the various ministries (AHEPA, Philoptochos, City Rescue Mission, Garden Ministry & Serve Day) help the people of Jacksonville. The highlight of each year is packing food for Hunger Fight.







Thanks to the generosity of our church family, Philoptochos was able to provide school supplies to three elementary schools in Jacksonville -- Andrew Robinson, Southside Acres & Woodland Acres



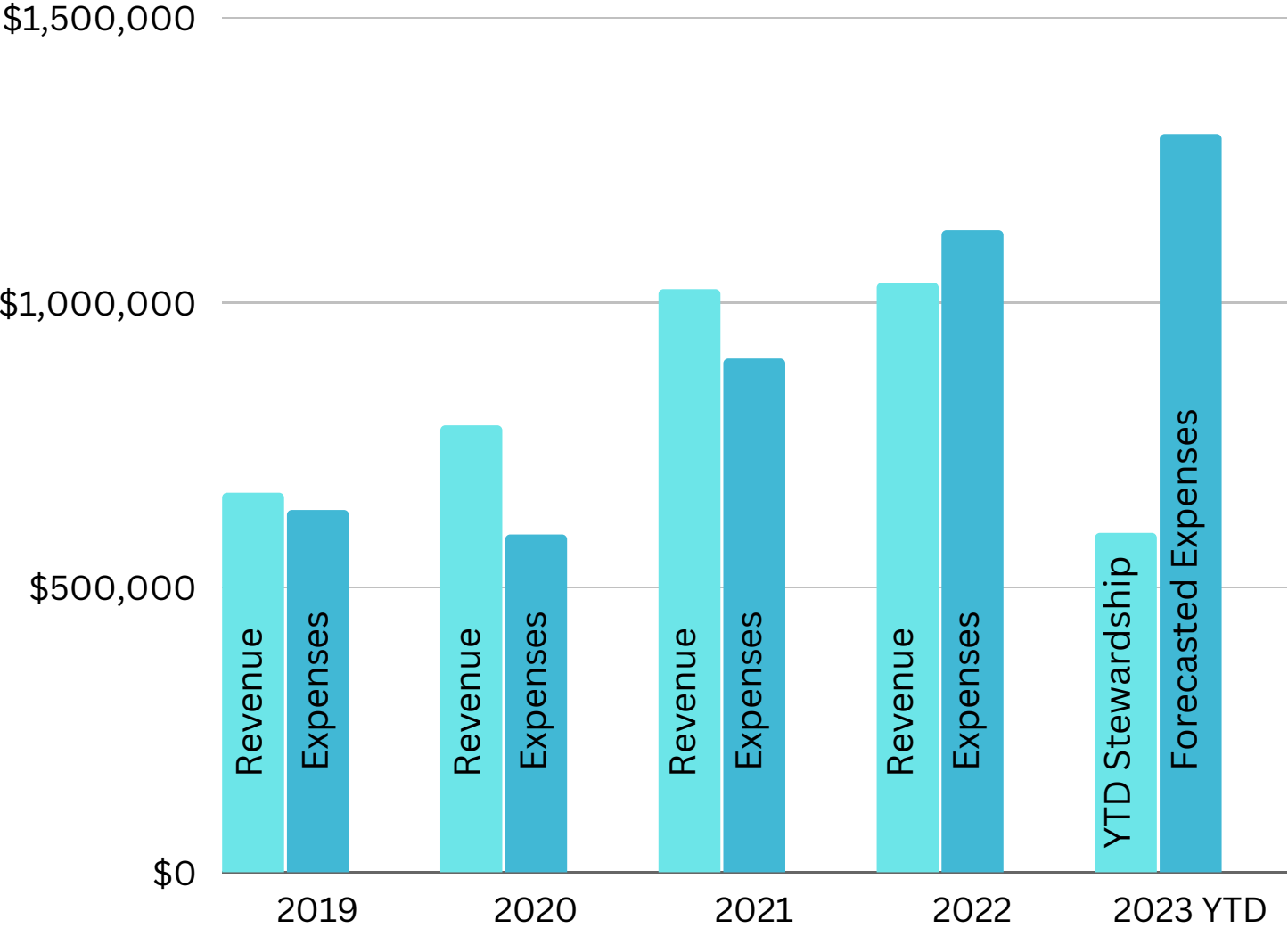
School Supplies are a necessity and many of the area families cannot purchase them. Only through your generosity can these children be helped.



# A Look at the Numbers

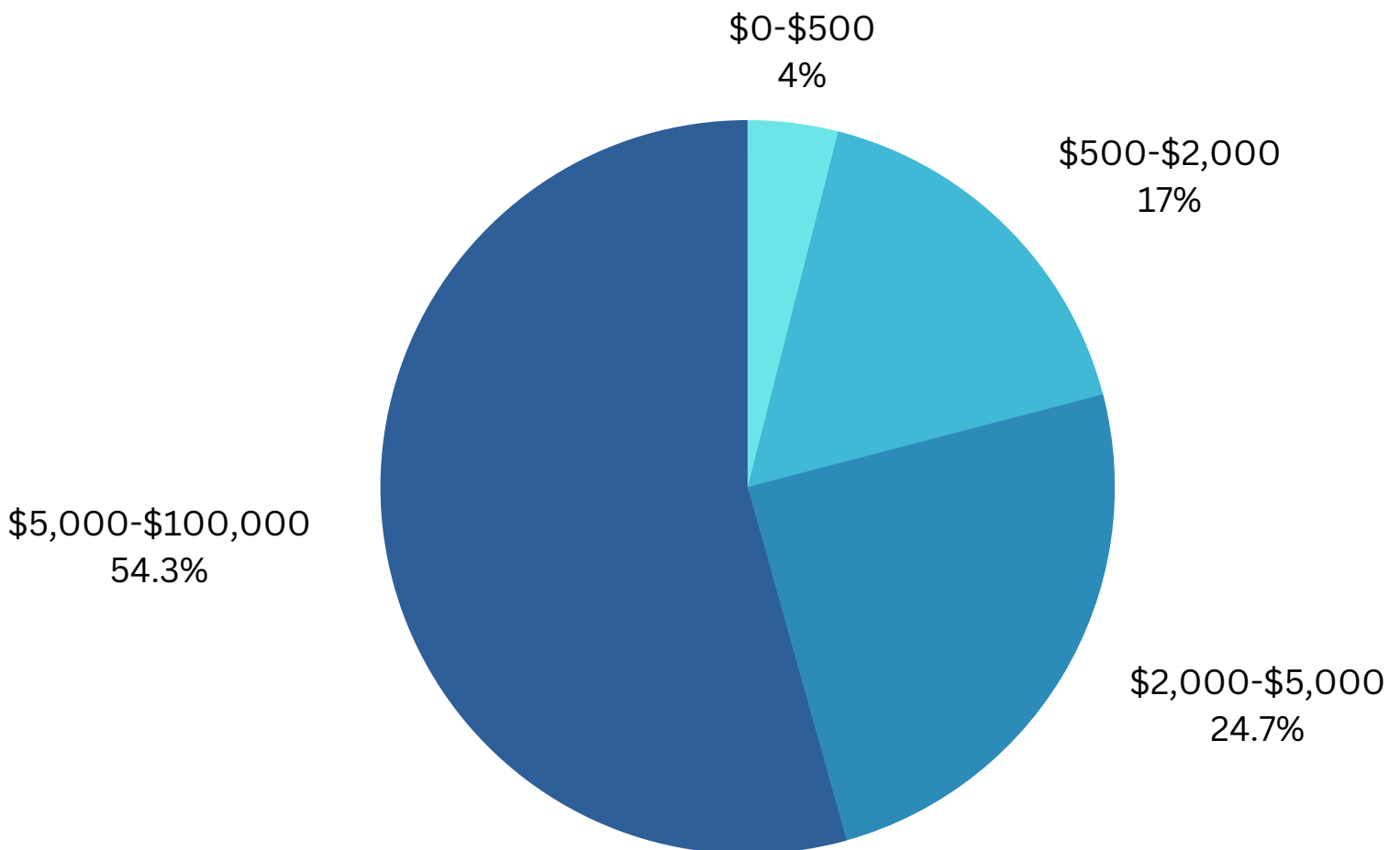


# Total Revenue vs. Expenses



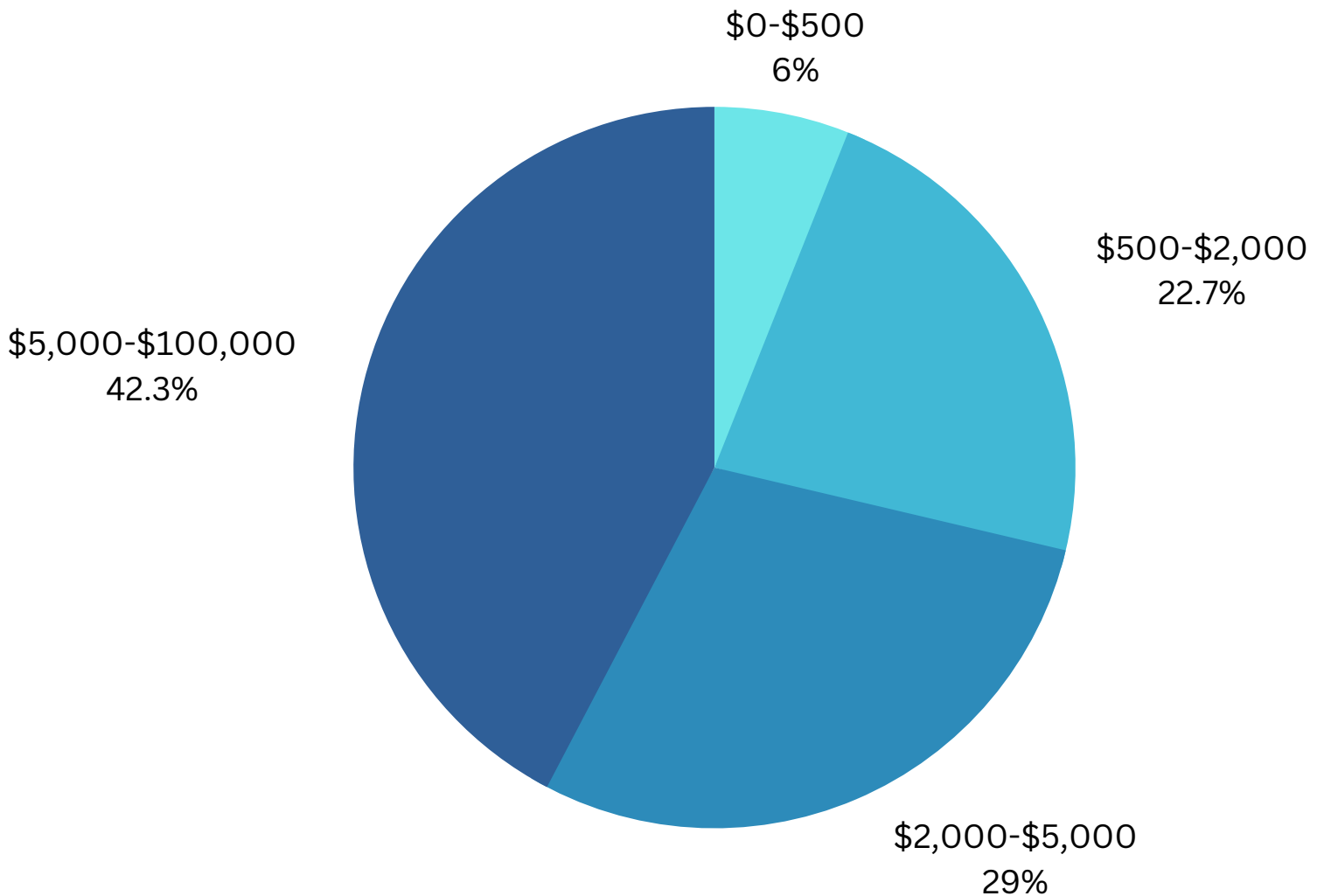
# 2022 Stewardship

Amount Given Range	Number of Households	Contributions
\$0-\$500	126	\$31,533
\$500-\$2,000	125	\$134,963
\$2,000-\$5,000	63	\$196,559
\$5,000-\$100,000	39	\$432,134
Totals	353	\$795,189



# 2023 YTD Stewardship

Amount Given Range	Number of Households	Contributions
\$0-\$500	139	\$35,872
\$500-\$2,000	120	\$134,656
\$2,000-\$5,000	53	\$172,366
\$5,000-\$100,000	25	\$251,577
Totals	337	\$594,471



The annual budget for our  
Church is  
**\$1,409,404.**

This breaks down to a cost of  
**\$3,861 per day**

God has blessed us so much. Let us never take that for granted. Let us take that blessing and be a blessing in the lives of the people of inside and outside the walls of our church. Make your investment today in His Church so that together, as a Church family, we can thrive.

Scan here to pledge today



“Stewardship is about being grateful, responsible stewards of the gifts we receive from God. The tradition of giving back to God and to the church comes from the Biblical practice of “tithing”, which means to give back a tenth of our earnings to God. “

-Numbers 18:26