



SUNDAY MASS ATTENDANCE

2024 REPORT



ARCHDIOCESE OF
CINCINNATI

SUMMARY

This report demonstrates a continued positive trend in Mass attendance bringing the archdiocese closer to pre-pandemic levels. In tandem with fewer Masses and scheduling changes, we saw church utilization continue to increase, moving us closer to our target.

Take a deeper look at the findings of the 2024 attendance report.



Fourth year of increased Mass attendance



Continued return to Mass post-pandemic



Fewer Masses were offered



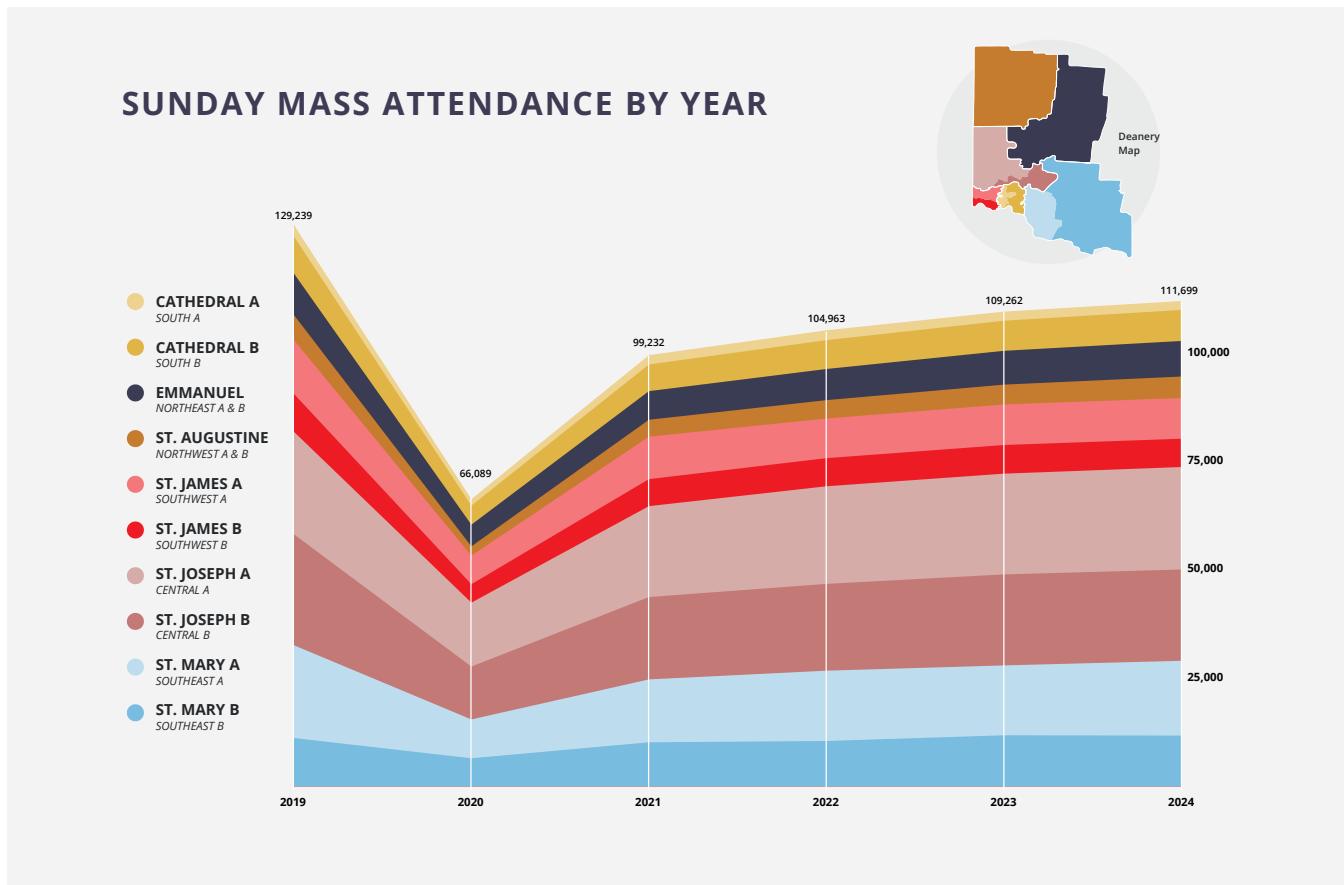
Church utilization is still growing



SUNDAY MASS ATTENDANCE BY YEAR

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Annual Change	Percent Change
CATHEDRAL A SOUTH A	11,116	6,450	10,127	10,428	11,741	11,675	-66	-1%
CATHEDRAL B SOUTH B	21,360	8,942	14,475	16,181	16,086	17,211	1,125	7%
EMMANUEL NORTHEAST A & B	25,551	12,167	18,962	19,981	20,948	21,017	69	0%
ST. AUGUSTINE NORTHWEST A & B	23,598	14,710	20,918	22,466	23,185	23,588	403	2%
ST. JAMES A SOUTHWEST A	8,728	4,245	6,216	6,477	6,596	6,514	-82	-1%
ST. JAMES B SOUTHWEST B	12,408	6,589	9,774	9,122	9,336	9,369	33	0%
ST. JOSEPH A CENTRAL A	5,766	2,124	3,896	4,228	4,560	4,945	385	8%
ST. JOSEPH B CENTRAL B	9,561	4,988	6,587	7,171	7,786	8,186	400	5%
ST. MARY A SOUTHEAST A	8,505	4,386	6,137	6,640	6,921	7,138	217	3%
ST. MARY B SOUTHEAST B	2,646	1,488	2,140	2,269	2,103	2,056	-47	-2%
Totals:	129,239	66,089	99,232	104,963	109,262	111,699	2,437	2%
Rolling Percent Change:	-3%	-49%	50%	6%	4%	2%		

Totals only include Mass attendance for Families of Parishes and do not include other institutions within the Archdiocese.

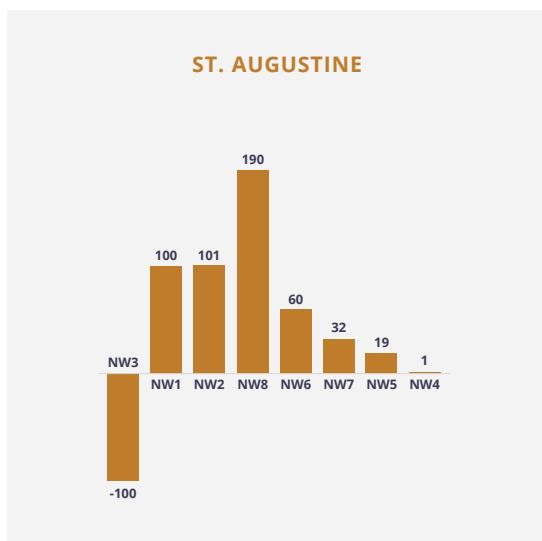
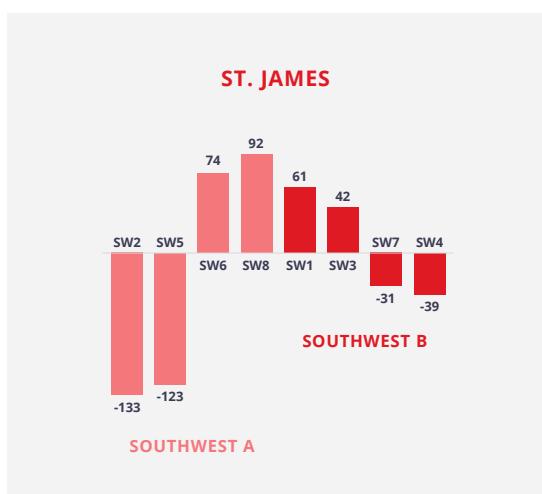
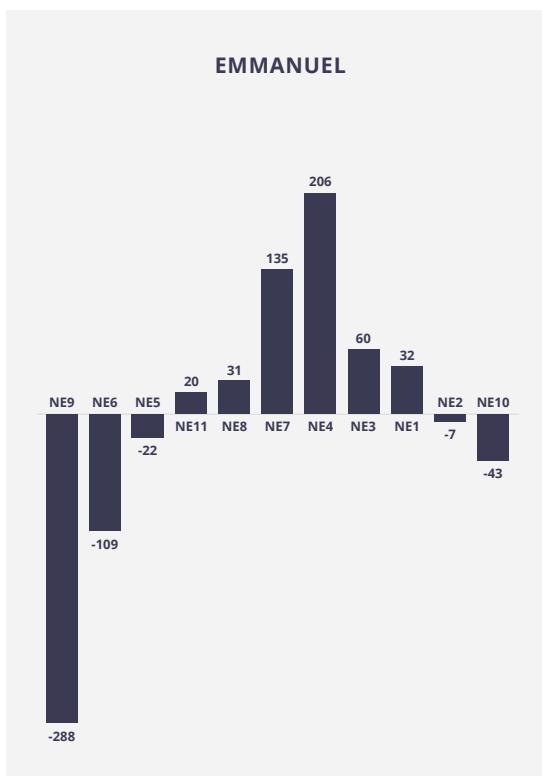
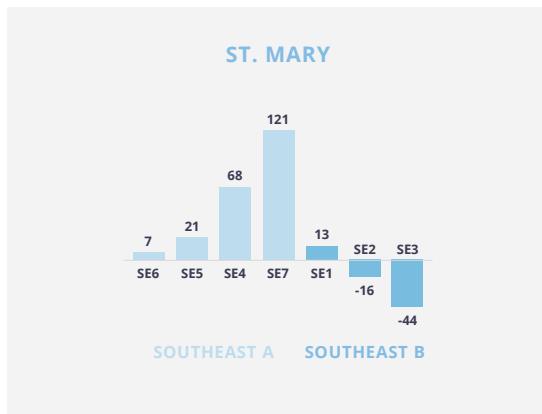
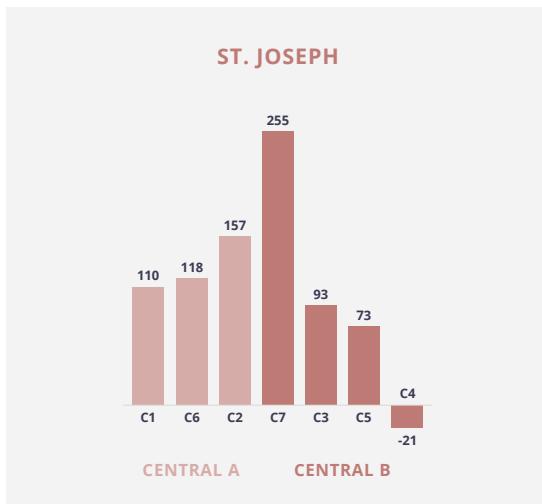


SUNDAY MASS ATTENDANCE

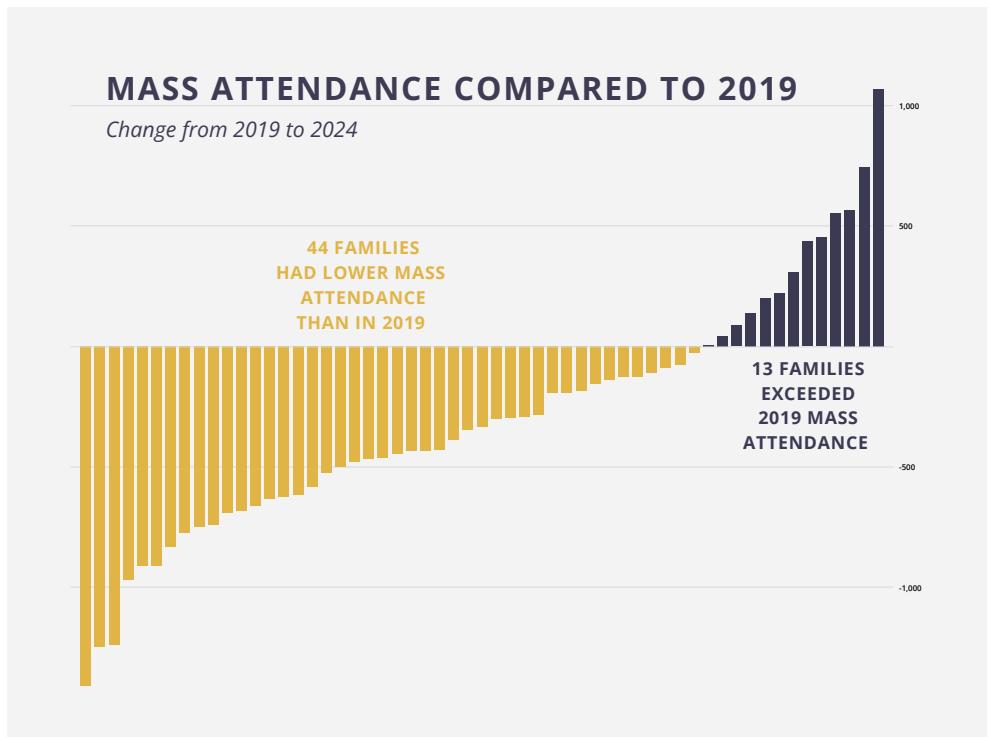
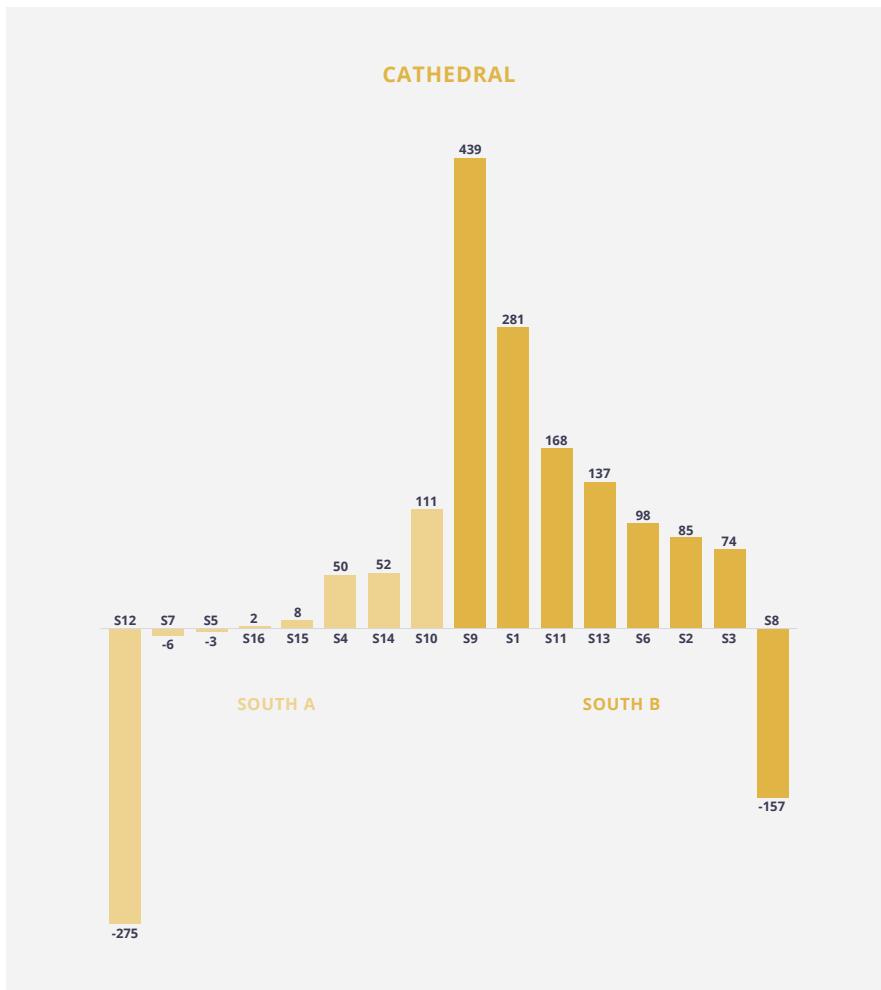
Sunday Mass attendance continues to increase in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati for the last four years straight. 2024 saw a healthy 2% growth since 2023 with a total of 113,670 of the faithful attending Mass. Also, individual deaneries appear to be moving into a steady state period of smaller changes year-to-year. While we continue to climb closer to our 2019 pre-pandemic attendance, four years of increase is a strong and encouraging trend for our archdiocese that will hopefully continue as Families of Parishes focus on the vision for the future and the “Why” at the root of the Beacons of Light project: “To proclaim the Gospel and make disciples in this particular time and place.” Participation in the Eucharist, and in particular Sunday Mass, is a foundational principle in Beacons of Light.

MASS COUNT CHANGE BY PARISH

2023 to 2024



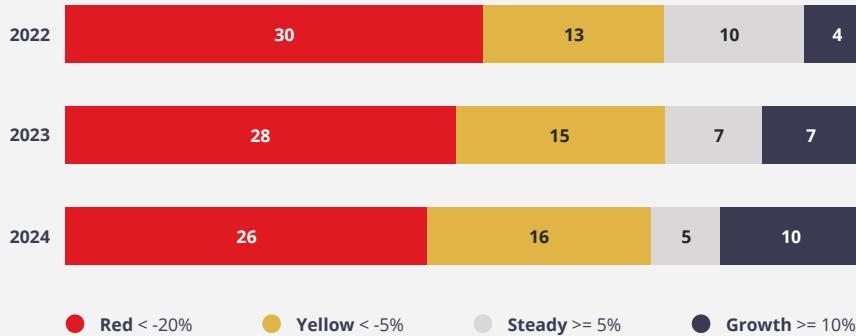
Continued focus and effort are needed to keep calling people back to faith, the Church, and to Mass as we can see in the comparison below of 2019 to 2024 counts for our Families. Only 13 of our Families have recovered fully and are exceeding their 2019 counts.



Families are showing a positive climb year-over-year back to previous 2019 counts. The graph below shows a steady % difference movement from Red to Yellow or even jumping to Growth while exceeding previous counts each year. This suggests that over the next five years, with regular growth between 2-4%, we could begin to exceed pre-pandemic counts. This is an indication of a significant change in the life and vitality of the archdiocese which prior to COVID saw a regular annual decline of 2-3% and mimics what we are also seeing nationally.

FAMILY RECOVERY

Percent difference compared to 2019



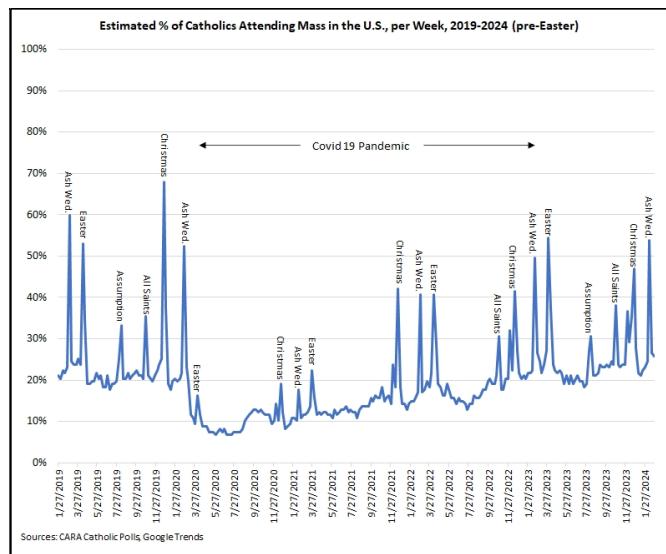
● Red < -20% ● Yellow < -5% ● Grey Steady >= 5% ● Dark Blue Growth >= 10%

NATIONAL CHANGES

Catholic Mass attendance is on its way back towards pre-pandemic levels. CARA reports in their “1964” research blog that the national rate of attendance at Christmas Mass 2019 was nearly 70% of all Catholics, a figure that had fallen to less than 20% in 2020. Throughout the year of 2020, Mass attendance rates remained below 20%, with the exception of Christmas Mass that saw a slight uptick of Mass-goers. Ordinary weekly Masses remained small (sub-20%) throughout 2021 as well, except for Christmas, Ash Wednesday, and Easter Masses, which saw huge upticks that year, bringing attendance levels to those Masses over the 40% threshold.

In 2023, attendance at ordinary Masses had risen a little higher, straddling the 20% line, and Christmas remained around 40%. Ash Wednesday and Easter, however, both shot up over the 50% mark in 2023, rising above the 50% mark for the first time since 2020. CARA notes that Christmas of that year may not have seen the same upswing due to caution related to winter illnesses.

Now, in 2024, Ash Wednesday’s Mass attendance was recorded as just a bit higher than it was in 2020. This suggests that Catholic Mass attendance is on its way back towards pre-pandemic levels. Indeed, the rate of Mass attendance in ordinary weeks appears to be about the same as it was in 2019, and 2024’s Ash Wednesday lagged only about 5 points behind that of 2019.



[CARA's “1964” research blog](#)

SCHEDULE CHANGES

After reducing over 110 Sunday Masses across the archdiocese since 2019 we are nonetheless seeing a steady increase in Mass attendance. One factor that could both negatively and positively impact Mass attendance is changes to the number of Masses for the Sunday obligation a Family of Parishes. The parameters of Beacons of Light define how many Masses Church law allows each priest to celebrate daily and how to calibrate the number of Masses offered in a church based on utilization of seating. These parameters exist not only to guard against over-extending our priests, but also to result in church buildings that are at least half-full for any given Sunday Mass, fostering greater participation. Over the last four years there has been a reduction of 89 Masses and an increase in Mass count of 13,522. So, we can suggest that proper Mass scheduling that improves priest and community participation has benefited the Families and archdiocese.



PARAMETER

4

The regular Mass schedule for a Family of Parishes may not assume more than two Masses per day per priest.

MASS ATTENDANCE VS. NUMBER OF MASSES



Totals only include Mass attendance for Families of Parishes and do not include other institutions within the Archdiocese.

FAMILY PRIEST TO MASS SCHEDULE RATIO



We continue to see opportunity in improving our ratio of priests to Mass times across the archdiocese. 28 of our Families exceed the Church law by one or more Mass times while 29 Families meet the expectation of no more than three Masses per weekend per assigned priest.

CHURCH UTILIZATION

In 2024 we have an overall average across all churches of 50% utilization, up 16% from 2021 which is a positive and encouraging statistic. From 2023 to 2024, 41% (83) of our churches improved their utilization for Sunday Masses by at least 5%. This means that churches are fuller, meaning more vibrant liturgical celebrations and a better use of human and physical resources. In some cases, the increased utilization results from simply reporting capacity more accurately to an archdiocesan standard (27"). (This is an important reason to assure all churches have reported current and accurate seating capacity numbers.) Since this year has seen less Mass schedule changes utilization improvements is strongly attributed to true Mass attendance growth. There are still 35% (72) of our churches with declining utilization numbers (17 of these have been declining for over two years, nine are below the 50% threshold) which need attention to this matter.

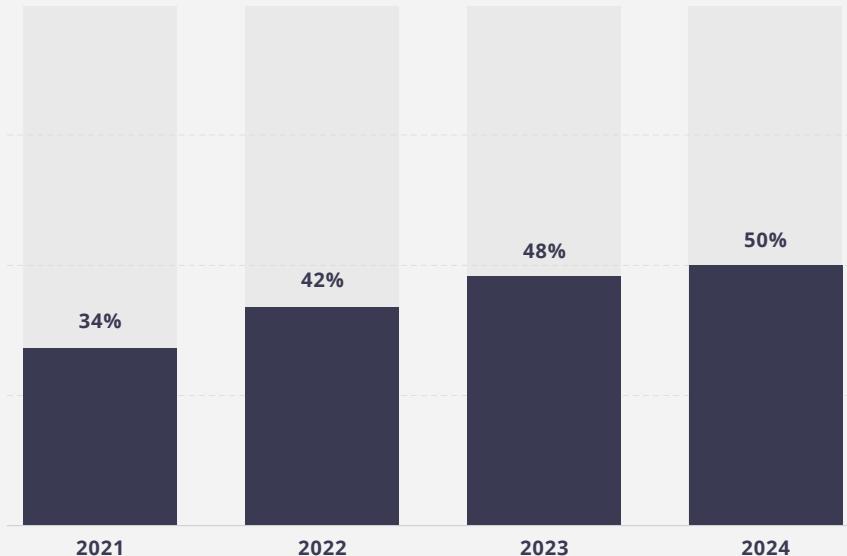


PARAMETER

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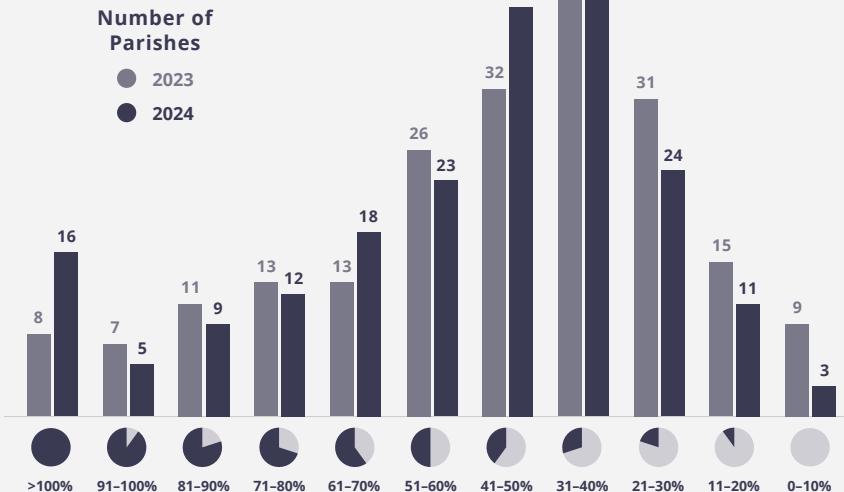
A regularly scheduled Mass for the Sunday precept must have annual average attendance of at least 50% of the church capacity.

OVERALL ARCHDIOCESE UTILIZATION

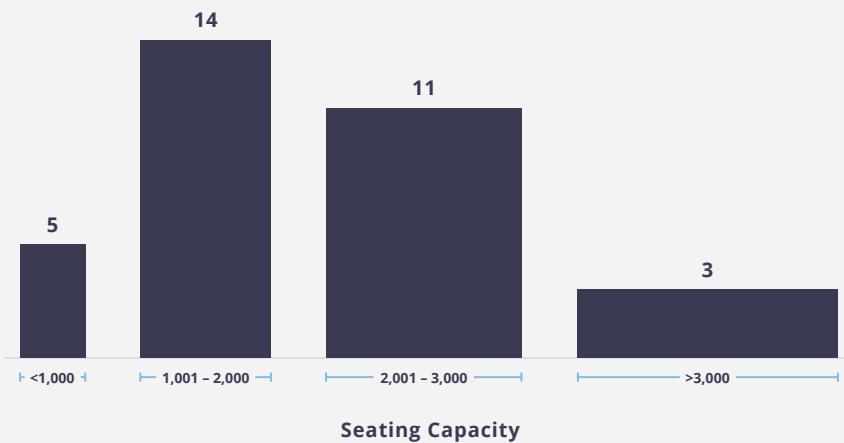


Whereas many Families with smaller church capacities have adjusted their Sunday Mass schedule to reach an appropriate level of utilization and can't reduce Masses further, many Families with larger seating capacities and Mass schedules have further work to do in this regard.

2024 UTILIZATION



FAMILIES WITH UNDER 50% UTILIZATION



CHANGES WITHIN A FAMILY

This year's October count summary is reporting at the Family level rather than primarily focusing on the parish/church given the recognized pressure of Mass schedule times on parishioners and their choices on where to attend Mass. This fact alone can cause one or another parish within a Family to see changes in Mass counts and utilization that isn't indicative of the overall

health of the Family nor reflect the continued good faith work of the Pastors and Families to assure parishioners have Mass time options that meet the overall needs of their parishioners. As our Families continue to move toward unification focusing our attention on the overall health and vitality of the Family will be preeminent.