



Small, Faithful Acts that Make a Difference

Friends,

As we share this annual report, I want to begin with a simple word of thanks.

What you will read below reflects a year of real growth and real work at the Franciscan Center for Urban Ministry. It tells the story of meals served, gardens built, advocacy pursued, and lives accompanied. But beneath every number and every program is something more basic and more powerful:

people who chose to serve. None of this happens without the generosity of so many of you.

Over the past two years, our community has grown in visible ways. More people are joining us for worship, and just as importantly, many of those same people are stepping into service. They are moving from the pews into the kitchen, the garden, the neighborhood, and the work of advocacy. That movement matters. **It tells us that faith is being lived, not simply professed.**

Everything described in this report has been made possible by volunteers and by those who support them—financially, prayerfully, and through steady encouragement. Your generosity allows us not only to respond to immediate needs, but to build something enduring:

a community rooted in dignity, compassion, and hope.

Thank you for your trust in this work, and for being part of a community that believes small, faithful acts—repeated over time—can make a real difference.

With gratitude, Fr. Mike OFM



800+ volunteer roles filled

THIS PAST YEAR, THE WORK OF THE FRANCISCAN CENTER WAS CARRIED FORWARD BY THE COMMITMENT AND GENEROSITY OF OUR VOLUNTEERS MAKING SMALL, FAITHFUL ACTS THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

Fighting Food Insecurity at Our Door and Beyond

Food insecurity remains one of the most visible needs in our city, and volunteers are at the heart of our response. **Our sandwich ministry operates 365 days a year**, with two distributions on Sundays. Guests receive two sandwiches of their choice, a freshly baked snack, and a drink. In 2025, volunteers prepared and served 32,789 meals.



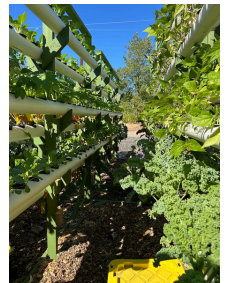
Twice each week, year-round, **teams of volunteers also prepare and serve a hot, healthy meal**, providing 9,482 meals in 2025. During the coldest months of the year—from December 1 through March 31—volunteers **extend this care to the city's warming center**, serving 1,080 meals to individuals experiencing homelessness.

In partnership with the House of Bread, our volunteers source, prepare, and **serve weekend meals year-round in the House of Bread dining room**, adding another 7,800 meals.

Across these four programs, volunteers helped prepare and serve 51,151 meals in 2025.

Hydroponic Urban Farming with Levo International

Our response to food insecurity extended beyond meals. In partnership with Levo Int'l, more than 100 volunteers helped build two urban hydroponic farms in Hartford's North End, strengthening local food access while building relationships across neighborhoods.



Caring for Creation with Access to Clean Water

This year marked an important shift in how we balance hospitality with care for creation. We ended the routine distribution of single-use plastic water bottles and installed a bottle-filling water station at the rear of the building, available eight months of the year.

Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance: Advocating for Change, Together

Service at the Center extended beyond direct outreach to **public advocacy**.



Through GHIAA and the Interfaith Eco-Justice Network, volunteers joined with faith leaders across the region and achieved success during the legislative special session, particularly in the areas of **protecting immigrants and pollinators and advancing affordable housing**.

Open Hearts and Family & Friends of LGBTQ+ Ministry



Alongside this work of hospitality, sustainability, and advocacy, the Franciscan Center continued to foster spaces for dialogue, reflection, and encounter. In June, the Open Hearts Ministry hosted a panel with families of faith and their LGBTQ children, moderated by SPSA parishioner Dr. Richard Stillson. In September, the Friends & Family of LGBT Persons ministry welcomed Carl Siciliano, author of *Making Room*, which chronicles his founding of the Ali Forney Center, the nation's largest housing program for LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness. **These well-attended gatherings reflect the Center's commitment to accompaniment, dignity, and solidarity with those who are often pushed to the margins, especially young people and their families.**

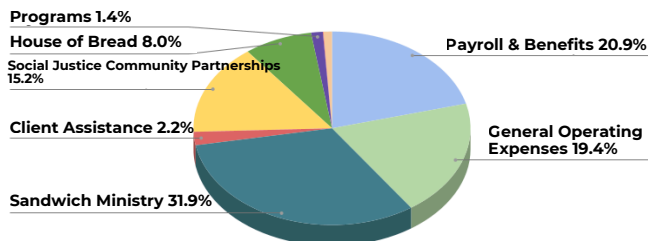
Clare Gallery: Contemplation Towards Action



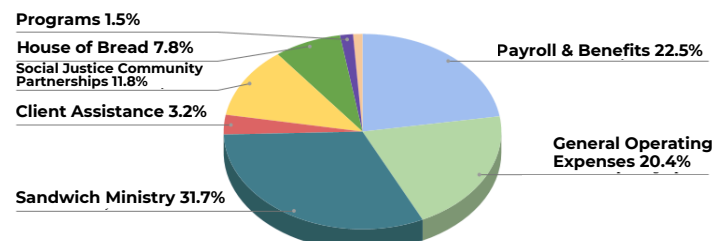
That same commitment shaped a particularly strong and integrated year for the Clare Gallery. Four exhibitions explored mysticism, human dignity, and contemplative seeing: *Works Engaging the Words of Modern Mystics*; *Letters from Prison*, featuring artwork and correspondence from people in Connecticut's correctional facilities; *Inner Visions*, examining ways of seeing and knowing through saints and historical figures; and *Portals and Paintings*, inviting slow, meditative engagement with painting. Supported by artist talks, panel discussions, and **more than 500 hours of service** from the ministry team, the Gallery's programming offered **a coherent movement from contemplation toward compassion, showing how art can deepen reflection, awaken conscience, and foster meaningful encounter.**

Supporting our Mission

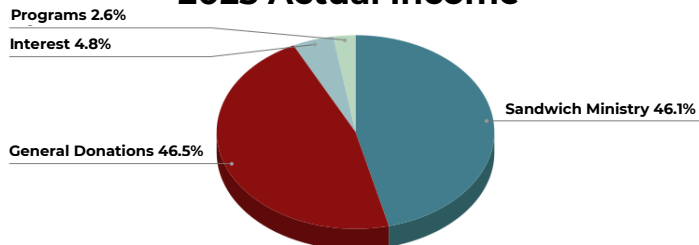
2025 Actual Expenses



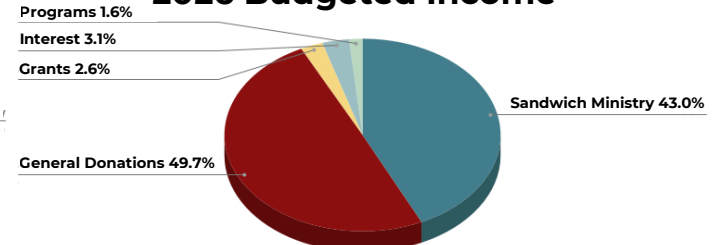
2026 Budgeted Expenses



2025 Actual Income



2026 Budgeted Income



Over 90% of our income is from donations to the Franciscan Center for Urban Ministry, and targeted donations to the Sandwich Ministry, to meet the needs of those who come to our door, and to aid our community partners in their similar work. We thank you for generously supporting these needs in 2025.

The increasing need, and the ever-increasing prices for food and other necessities is a challenge that we are called to meet, together. Let us continue our mission in 2026 to help those in need including the marginalized in Hartford and the surrounding communities.

To partner with us and support our mission, please scan the code or go to bit.ly/give-to-franciscan-center to donate.

