We conducted 201 receptions in the first block of parishes. We have seen in excess of 4,000 families at receptions, which is equivalent to 16% of regular envelope users.

“The attendance at the receptions has been exceptional so far,” said Campaign Executive Director Mr. Michael Goodwin, President of Guidance in Giving, Inc., the professional stewardship and development-consulting firm that is assisting the Archdiocese with the campaign.

“It has exceeded our expectations and is a strong indicator of the potential success of the campaign,” Mr. Goodwin added.

Receptions: The Key to Campaign Success

With the majority of Block 1 parishes finishing up their receptions, Pastors and Campaign Committees are now focused on reaching out to parishioners who were unable to attend a reception. The success and momentum gained throughout the Reception Phase is due in large part to the leadership of our Pastors and the dedicated volunteers who donated their time and talent to help prepare and host receptions in their parishes.

Justine Garcia is a parishioner at Our Lady Queen of Peace in Maywood, who spoke about her experience as Reception Coordinator:

“‘When Fr. Larry Fama asked me if I would head the reception team, I knew this would be a huge responsibility. Nevertheless I said, ‘Yes.’ I then chose my team based on what I knew of them from their involvement in various ministries. I didn’t know God would provide me with a team that would have the exact gifts and talents that we needed. We truly enjoyed each other’s company: we laughed, we sang, and with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, prepared for each reception with nothing but peace and joy in our hearts. Although Fr. Larry thanked me, I thank him because a multitude of blessings were revealed throughout the process.”

During an early committee-training meeting at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in Newark, parishioners were concerned about pledging, and hesitant regarding their involvement with the campaign. Msgr. Joseph F. Ambrosio responded, “We need to support them (Archdiocese of Newark), and they need to support us (Parishes). It’s that simple.” This simple explanation motivated the committee to conduct four outstanding informational receptions. The parish campaign has experienced great initial success. Currently, the parish has surpassed 73% of its We Are Living Stones Campaign goal in pledges.

Building on the success and momentum gained through the Reception Phase, parishes will now enter into the General Phase of the campaign to invite and challenge those who have not yet made a commitment to join in this endeavor. The General Phase specifically focuses on reaching out to parishioners on a larger scale in comparison to the smaller and more intimate reception events. The We Are Living Stones Campaign Office has coordinated a mailing to every registered Block 1 household containing a letter from their respective pastor, a We Are Living Stones brochure, and a personalized pledge card.
Here are some examples of how our Block 1 parishes will be using their parish sharing funds:

**St. Catherine of Siena**
**HILLSIDE**
~ Purchase the adjacent house/property so that it may house Religious Sisters who will minister in the parish
~ Ultimately build a chapel that will offer Mass

**St. Francis of Assisi**
**HACKENSACK**
~ Pay down a portion of its parish debt
~ Install a new sound system in the church

**Saint Peter Claver**
**MONTCLAIR**
~ Replace the Martin Luther King Hall boiler
~ Install a confessional
~ Replace the Church's four ac units

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“*We have this confidence in God, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in regard to whatever we ask, we know that what we have asked Him for is ours.*”

(1 John 5:14)