

Fraternally Yours®

 **FCSLA**Life

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FIRST CATHOLIC SLOVAK LADIES ASSOCIATION

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*Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known
that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help,
or sought thy intercession, was left unaided.*

Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee,

O Virgin of virgins, my Mother.

*To thee do I come, before thee I stand,
sinful and sorrowful.*

*O Mother of the Word Incarnate,
despise not my petitions,
but in thy mercy
hear and answer me.*

Amen.



ŽENSKÁ JEDNOTA

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THE QUIET STRENGTH THAT SHAPES THE WORLD

There are many kinds of power in this world. Some are loud, visible, measurable. They win awards, command headlines, shape markets. And then there is the quieter power — the kind that forms human hearts, steadies uncertain steps, and whispers courage when the world feels overwhelming. This is the power we celebrate on Mother's Day.

Motherhood is not defined by biology alone. It is defined by devotion — by the countless small, unseen acts of love that accumulate over time into something extraordinary. A mother is often the first person to believe in us before we have done anything to earn belief. She sees possibility where others see uncertainty. She sees promise where others see flaws. She sees worth before the world has had its say.

Mothers are architects of resilience. They teach us how to stand back up when life knocks us down, not always through lectures or instruction, but through example. They show us that strength does not always roar. Sometimes strength sounds like a calm voice at the end of a difficult day saying, "Try again tomorrow." Sometimes strength looks like sacrifice that no one applauds. Sometimes it feels like patience when patience is the hardest thing to offer.

We live in a culture that celebrates speed, efficiency, and measurable achievement. But motherhood reminds us that the most important work in life often cannot be rushed or quantified. You cannot hurry the building of character. You cannot spreadsheet compassion. You cannot algorithm empathy. These things are cultivated slowly, intentionally, through presence and persistence.

Many mothers carry worries they rarely share. They wonder if they are doing enough, giving enough, guiding well enough. They second-guess decisions. They replay conversations. They hope their children will grow into lives filled with meaning and kindness. Yet even in uncertainty, they continue to show up — again and again — offering the steady reassurance that someone is always in your corner.

Motherhood is also not limited to those raising children today. There are grandmothers whose wisdom echoes across generations. There are stepmothers, adoptive mothers, mentors, teachers, aunts, and family friends who step into nurturing roles that change lives forever. There are women who have longed to be mothers and express that love in other ways that bless the world. And there are those who carry the memory of mothers who are no longer here physically, yet remain deeply present in the values they instilled and the love they gave.

For some, Mother's Day is joyful. For others, it is complicated. It may stir grief, longing, or reflection. It may remind us of words left unsaid or moments we wish we could revisit. Yet even in complexity, the spirit of motherhood endures — a reminder that love given generously never truly disappears. It echoes in how we treat others. It surfaces in how we persevere. It lives on in the quiet ways we choose compassion over indifference.

Perhaps the greatest tribute we can offer on Mother's Day is not found in flowers or cards alone, but in the lives we live. Every time we extend patience when it would be easier to be harsh, every time we offer encouragement when someone feels uncertain, every time we choose kindness when the world feels unkind, we honor the legacy of those who nurtured us.

Motherhood teaches us that influence is often invisible. Seeds planted in love may take years to bloom. But bloom they do — in confidence, in courage, in generosity, in the willingness to lift others as we ourselves were lifted.

Dear Friends, This Mother's Day, we celebrate the women whose love has shaped our stories in ways both large and small. We thank those who stood beside us, behind us, and sometimes gently pushed us forward when we doubted our own ability to take the next step. Their work may not always make headlines, but it makes something far more important: it makes humanity a little more compassionate, a little more hopeful, and a little more whole. And that is a legacy worthy of honor every day of the year.

Until next Month,

Warmly, *Carolyn*

First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association 2025 National Officer's Annual Reports

2025 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE NATIONAL CHAPLAIN Reverend Monsignor Peter M. Polando

My dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,
Pochvaleny bud Pan Jezis Kristus!

I reflect upon the past two years and acknowledge how quickly time has flown by these forty-six years of priestly ministry, twenty-two of which I have been with you in such an honored capacity as your National Chaplain. My ministry has been blessed by encounters with our membership, the celebrations of the Sacraments, special moments of our Association, and prayerful meditations for all of you each day! I appreciate all the occasions when we have gathered together. My prayer is that we continue to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ more fervently.

I attended either in person or virtually (rarely) the Executive Board Committee quarterly meetings on 13 February, 8 May, 21 August, and 6 November 2025. Those who participate in these gatherings hash out many issues that are brought before the Board of Directors and recommendations are made to them for the good of the Association. I am very grateful and honored to be a member of this Committee and believe that what is accomplished within the meetings assists the members of the Board of Directors in their decisions in guiding the Association.

The members of the Board of Directors met for their quarterly meetings on 26 March, 12 June, 17-18 September, and 3 December 2025. The performance of our investments was thoroughly discussed, dividends on our products were proposed for Board approval, and some monies for donations were approved during these meetings. I hope that the members of the Association know that the Board of Directors keeps you very much in mind as they maintain a secure future for all of us. Special Board meetings for issues at hand occurred on: 7 February, 4:00-5:00 PM; 8 April, 11:00 AM-12:00 PM; 28 May; and, 10 October.

A Pro Life prayer service occurred virtually on 23 January at 12:00 to 1:00 PM. Members of the Home Office and I had a prayer service on the feast day of Saint Ann on 26 July. It was a beautiful day and we offered prayers for the living and deceased members of the Association along with their families.

There have been a number of occasions throughout the year when I have traveled to the Home Office for my participation in various discussions for the good of the Association. I appreciate the persons with involving my input to the issues at hand and the ability to come to a decision and/or resolve of the particular matter.



My monthly columns in *Fraternally Yours* have been thought provoking for me and hopefully inspirational to our Members. My main thrust is to share our Faith through the Sacred Scriptures, the writings of the early Fathers and the Saints of the Church, Church teaching especially through the wisdom of the Second Vatican Council, and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. All of us are striving towards eternal life in the Kingdom of God. The everyday experiences of our lives should somehow be reflected in the above sources of our Faith Tradition.

Thank you for your prayers and for having me as your National Chaplain. May God bless you! Saint Ann, pray for us!

MEMORIAL DAY PRAYER

★ Lord God, we remember today those who
★ gave their lives so that others might live in
★ freedom. Their courage and sacrifice were
★ a gift beyond measure. Comfort those who
★ still grieve, and may their souls
★ rest in Your mercy. Help us
★ to honor them not only with
★ words, but with lives worthy of
★ what they gave. Through Christ
★ our Lord. Amen.

Message from our Chief Executive Officer MICHAEL J. AGAN



ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2025



A Year of Transition

2025 marked a pivotal year of transition for the Association. We are deeply appreciative of the guidance and support received from Cynthia Maleski, our associates, and the Board of Directors. Their contributions have been instrumental in navigating this period of change.

The strength of our Association lies in its people. One of our first adjustments was a modest restructuring of staff to better align our people with process. Fostering a culture centered on collaboration, efficiency, empowerment, and accountability remains a priority. Another priority is building security. We recently updated security for the building by integrating a camera, lighting, and badge system. We are committed to serving our members, agents, and each other with greater effectiveness.

Financial Strength and Resilience

We are a financially strong Association. Our focus is to build upon that strength. 2025 financial results were as anticipated with negative net income, while experiencing growth in surplus. Detailed information is available in Frank Rando's annual report.

During our AM Best Meeting in August, our "A-, Excellent" rating was reaffirmed, though a negative outlook was assigned. A negative outlook means they will lower our rating if we do not improve our operations. The review acknowledged the company's strong balance sheet but noted concerns regarding low-income levels in recent years and insufficient growth to offset deaths and surrenders, which led to a reduction in assets.

We are focused on building a high-performing operation, emphasizing modernization and efficiency. Our goal is not merely to survive, but to thrive in a competitive and changing environment. We are proud of our strong balance sheet, which reflects the prudent stewardship of past leaders. However, challenging economic conditions

have impacted our income statement, prompting us to implement several expense-saving initiatives and prioritize product development to better serve existing and prospective members. We need to increase sales, and our agents and recommenders need to help us step up to the challenge. We are committed to reversing negative income trends in this challenging economic environment to build a robust and thriving insurance operation. This will enable us to improve financial security and deliver greater support to our members, branches, districts, and community initiatives, strengthening the overall impact of our Association. This transition will help us to thrive for the next 100 years.

Product initiatives implemented in 2025 including enhancements to both life and annuities had a positive impact on our sales and begin to address some of our challenges.

Sales Performance & Product Innovation

We place strong emphasis on sales and product innovation. Sales were up for both Life and Annuities. New business life premiums doubled while annuity premiums grew by 20 percent. We must grow to reach our potential. Our focus is on developing new offerings that appeal to prospective members while also enhancing the value provided to our current members. We introduced a new single pay whole life in January and a new multi-year guaranteed annuity (MYGA) series in November. We will introduce a new nonparticipating whole life product (non-dividend paying) in 2026. This allows us to offer more guaranteed death benefit coverage at a lower premium rate. Through these initiatives, we aim to foster a vibrant and growing membership base.

Technology, Modernization and Operational Efficiency

One of the most significant initiatives undertaken this year is beginning the replacement of our policy administration system. While our current system has served us well, we are poised to harness new technology to further

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2025

enhance the service we provide to our members, recommenders, and agents. This modernization effort is designed to eliminate paperwork, streamline our processes, and enable us to develop products that address the evolving needs of our membership. We recognize that this is a substantial investment, both in time and resources. However, the benefits of the new administration system are clear and will support us in several key areas.

- By focusing on substantive service improvements, we are committed to elevating the experience of our members, recommenders, and agents. Our aim is to foster stronger relationships and deliver more effective support across all interactions, ensuring that everyone who engages with our organization feels valued and well-served. We should engage with our members according to their preferences, whether through self-service or by connecting them directly with a person when they call.
- We are actively working to increase efficiency and simplify our processes by minimizing the reliance on paper documents. This transition to digital solutions will help eliminate unnecessary paperwork, resulting in faster, more secure transactions and a more seamless experience for all involved.
- Our efforts to streamline workflows are aimed at improving overall operational efficiency. By refining our systems and procedures, we are better equipped to ensure smooth operations and achieve better outcomes for all stakeholders.
- A key aspect of this modernization is the development of new products that meet the needs of both current and future members. Our commitment to innovation allows us to enhance the value we deliver and strengthen the foundation of our membership base.

Strengthening and Securing Our Fraternal Mission

Fraternal is the heart of our Association. Our fraternal focus remains on modernization, effectiveness, and efficiency, with an emphasis on digital solutions that ease business processes, strengthen financial support as profitability grows, enhance our product offerings, and update the branch manual to align with our bylaws. We are committed to reducing paperwork and simplifying interactions with the home office.

The adoption of electronic funds transfer (EFT) and electronic signatures will further streamline business operations. Increased financial support for branches and districts, along with improved product offerings,

are key strategies to attract new members- including younger individuals eager to engage in fraternalism.

We completed our Ohio Department of Insurance (ODI) 5-year exam. The ODI confirmed we are in excellent financial condition and offered suggestions for improvements as we move into the future.

Ensuring our members' financial security is at the heart of our mission. Safeguarding your financial and personal information stands as our highest priority. As external threats become increasingly sophisticated, targeting both identities and savings, we remain vigilant in monitoring and addressing these risks.

Looking Ahead

We launched an 18-month operational plan designed to jumpstart necessary changes for a thriving fraternal organization. These objectives align with our overall strategy and touch every aspect of our business, ensuring comprehensive progress and sustainable growth. Each initiative we undertake serves to reinforce our mission, vision, and dedication to our members who built this Association.

A special note of gratitude to the management team, all associates, and the board of directors for your contributions this year. It is an honor to be part of this Association, following in the footsteps of many outstanding leaders. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting so many members and branch/district leaders at fraternal events. This transition is a marathon, not a sprint, and our goal is to be the best possible insurance company providing superior support to a thriving fraternal. We are optimistic about the bright future ahead and look forward to continued progress and success.

Michael J. Agan

Michael J. Agan
CEO



HONORING OUR MOTHERS

To every mother who has loved, sacrificed, and held her family together with gentle strength — we see you, we honor you, and we are grateful. Happy Mother's Day.

NATIONAL CHAIR OF THE BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2025

Jeanette Palanca, National Director, Chair of the Board



Reverend Chaplain, Members of the Board of Directors, Branch Officers, and Fellow Members,

Leading with Purpose, Stewarding Our Future

As I reflect on the past year, I am proud of the strategic leadership the Board of Directors has provided during a period of meaningful progress for FCSLA

Life. From the Board's vantage point, our role has been to set direction, ensure accountability, and safeguard the long-term health of the organization, not to manage daily operations.

Our work in 2025 focused on the big picture: **strengthening our mission, modernizing our Society, and positioning FCSLA Life for a strong and sustainable future.**

The Board's Strategic Responsibilities in 2025

Throughout the year, the Board concentrated on responsibilities that define effective governance, high level oversight and strategic decision making that guide the entire organization.

Strategic Financial Oversight

- Setting expectations for long-term financial strength and sustainability
- Reviewing financial performance at a strategic level to ensure resilience
- Confirming investment strategies align with mission and risk tolerance
- Ensuring regulatory and fiduciary responsibilities are met

Guiding Product & Business Modernization

- Approving strategic initiatives that modernize our product portfolio
- Supporting the long-term vision for digital transformation
- Encouraging innovation that positions the Society for future generations
- Ensuring modernization efforts align with mission and values

Strengthening Our Fraternal Mission

- Affirming the importance of our Catholic values and fraternal purpose
- Supporting a strategic framework that enables branches and members to thrive
- Ensuring fraternal programming remains relevant, accessible, and mission driven

Governance & Leadership Oversight

- Providing strategic direction to the CEO and executive leadership
- Monitoring progress on organizational goals and long-term plans
- Reviewing and updating governance structures for clarity and accountability
- Preparing for the 2027 Quadrennial Convention with transparency and foresight

These responsibilities reflect the Board's true role: exercising sound governance, providing strategic oversight, and ensuring the Society's continued stability and success.

Modernizing Our Products and Business: A Strategic Imperative

The Board's role in modernization is not to implement systems or design products—it is to set the strategic direction that enables modernization to occur.

Setting the Vision for Product Evolution

- Ensuring product strategy meets the needs of today's families and tomorrow's members
- Supporting a long-term roadmap for competitive, mission aligned offerings
- Encouraging innovation that strengthens members' financial security

Championing Operational Modernization

- Approving investments in technology and infrastructure
- Supporting a multi-year digital transformation strategy
- Ensuring modernization enhances member experience and organizational resilience

Prioritizing Members' Financial Well Being

- Maintaining a strong financial foundation
- Supporting products that help members build and protect their financial futures
- Ensuring transparency, trust, and long-term value in every initiative

Our work is grounded in our mission. Every strategic decision is measured against it.

Looking Ahead: Governance Modernization for a Stronger Tomorrow

As we prepare for the 2027 Quadrennial Convention, the Board is undertaking a thoughtful, forward looking review of our governance structure. Modern governance is essential for a modern organization.

Why Governance Modernization Matters

- Strengthens continuity and stability in leadership

NATIONAL CHAIR OF THE BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2025

- Ensures clarity in roles, responsibilities, and expectations
- Aligns our Society with best practices in the fraternal and financial sectors
- Positions FCSLA Life for long-term success in a changing environment

Strategic Governance Initiatives

- Implementing staggered elections for continuity of experience
- Clarifying board composition, terms, and responsibilities
- Updating bylaws to reflect modern governance standards while honoring our heritage

These initiatives are not merely administrative; they are foundational to the Society's future stability and effectiveness.

Strengthening Fraternalism Through Strategic Support

We are also exploring new, modern ways to support and incentivize branches that continue meaningful outreach in their communities. Branches are the heart of our Society, and strengthening their work through thoughtful, strategic support will help ensure our fraternal purpose remains vibrant and visible.

These initiatives are foundational to the Society's future stability and effectiveness.

Strengthening Leadership for the Future

Having served on two previous terms, I have seen first-hand how the Board of Directors has grown in experience, confidence, and impact. Today's Board is more

strategically engaged than ever before, an evolution that naturally brings more responsibility, deeper discussions, and greater expectations for each director.

As we look to the future, it is essential that we continue to guide the organization through our membership. We must actively seek individuals in our districts and branches who have insurance, financial, fraternal, or leadership experience, people who can continue to drive the organization forward. **It is up to each one of us to identify and encourage those who can make a meaningful difference, at the local and national level.**

Our work to modernize governance will soon introduce a more modern, accessible path to Board service, a change that will shape the future of leadership at FCSLA Life. More information will come in the months ahead, but I can assure you: this evolution will strengthen our Society for generations.

A Future Built on Vision and Stewardship

FCSLA Life has endured and thrived for more than a century because we have always balanced tradition with progress. As we continue to modernize our products, operations, and governance, the Board remains committed to leading with clarity, purpose, and faithfulness to our mission.

Thank you for your trust and your membership. Together, we are building a strong and vibrant future for FCSLA Life.

Respectfully,

Jeanette Palanca

National Director, Chair of the Board

NATIONAL SECRETARY'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2025

Kimberly A. Graham



Reverend Monsignor, CEO, National Officers, and Members of First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association (FCSLA Life),

2025 was a year of meaningful progress and growth as we continued to execute our

strategic principles in support of sustained, managed expansion. As I review our key goals, I am pleased to share with you the important developments and progress at the Association's Home Office with you, our members. During 2025, the top three operational priorities at the home office revolved around sales, staffing and technology. As we close the door on 2025

and look ahead to 2026, our outlook remains focused on continuing these priorities. Our efforts will focus on supporting our sales team, developing new products and our digital transformation to improve operational efficiency. The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) represents a key technological advancement that will help optimize operations, personalize services and strengthen our competitive position. At the home office we remain committed to balancing productivity gains with thoughtful consideration of the ethical and social implications of these technologies.

In 2025, we hired our first CEO Mike Agan which was as a result of the governance changes adopted at the 43rd Quadrennial Convention and a CEO transition took place. Cynthia Maleski, Esquire, former FCSLA Life National

NATIONAL SECRETARY'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2025

President/CEO/Chair of the Board and National Trustee was honored at a farewell dinner to honor her years of outstanding service and contributions to our society. CEO Agan and the management team embarked on an 18-month Operational Plan to successfully execute the operational initiatives. Next, CEO Mike Agan, conducted a reorganization of the associates and reporting.

I am honored to be submitting my annual report and sharing with each of you a summary of the operations of our Association's National Office. FCSLA Life was founded on the belief that financial security should be within reach of everyone. After 133 years, that purpose continues to drive our organization while embracing our Catholic values and Slavic traditions.

Over the past year, FCSLA Life has achieved meaningful accomplishments. We remain focused on advancing the organization through operational excellence, continued financial strength, and enhanced member value, in direct alignment with our Strategic Plan. The strategic plan is discussed and updated at every board meeting. The key principles of our strategic plan are to build upon our rich heritage while embracing our mission and vision and achieving a balance in developing action plans to achieve key corporate objectives and align its focus among its various constituencies.

Since staffing was one of our three priorities 2025, Human Resources Leader Karen McHugh was very busy filing several open positions. In addition, Ms. McHugh continued to update our employee benefits, employee policies and held several employee engagement events in 2025.

As part of our continued focus on our younger members, the Young Adult Leadership Council (YALC) held several meetings in 2025, including an in-person meeting at the home office during the summer. The YALC provided valuable feedback to the marketing department on current initiatives with an emphasis on technology, social media, and targeted outreach strategies designed to engage this demographic. In addition, the YALC proposed new event concepts to strengthen engagement among younger FCSLA members and developed guidelines to assist districts in hosting young adult programs and ensuring a smooth transition to future YALC leadership. In the fourth quarter, an internal Young Adult Group consisting of employees was formed and they are working on fraternal benefits that might appeal to younger adults and ideas about the fraternal of the future.

FCSLA Life maintains a low tolerance for cyber risk and implements comprehensive mitigation strategies to safeguard member and organizational data. In 2025, the Enterprise Risk Management Committee continued to prioritize our capital position and financial resilience,

supported by an external investment manager focused on investment optimization and portfolio diversification. Concurrently, the Association strengthened its privacy, governance, and cybersecurity posture through enhanced initiatives and ongoing training for employees, management, and the Board of Directors.

FCSLA Life continues to be financially strong. At the end of 2025, our admitted assets were \$1.1 billion in admitted assets. The staff continues to demonstrate flexibility and support while strengthening organizational capabilities, maintaining a member-centric focus, and exercising disciplined control over unit costs.

Insurance and Annuity Activities: The following report covers from January 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025. A report resembling this is presented to the Board of Directors at each quarterly meeting.

Life Insurance: FCSLA Life sold 328 new Life Certificates (including conversions) in 2025 with a total face value of \$9,720,926. (A total of 291 new Life Certificates - including conversions - were sold in 2024, with a face amount totaling \$6,557,035.)

Life Insurance Dividends: Dividends are a non-guaranteed value, voted on annually by the Board of Directors. The Association continues to pay a dividend every year since 1924. Dividends were distributed in the following manner in 2025:

	2025	2024
Cash dividends via check	\$60,107	\$60,951
Accumulated dividends	\$110,458	\$112,239
Dividends used to reduce premiums	\$19,490	\$19,490
Dividends used to reduce loan balances	\$1,004	\$1,652
Dividends for paid-up additional insurance (PUA)	\$1,189,477	\$1,184,038
Total distributed dividends	\$1,397,840	\$1,395,369
Interest on accumulated dividends	\$204,019	\$200,027
PUA purchased with dividends	\$3,597,158	\$3,636,475

Loans: Members with life insurance certificates are eligible to take loans against their certificates as outlined in their contract. A loan may not exceed the contract loan value. Any prior debt will be included in and made a part of a new loan. The interest rate charged is dependent upon the contract language of the certificate, the range being 4%-8%.

	2025	2024
All unpaid loans and interest balance	\$1,544,659	\$1,665,460
Total number of loans	685	739

NATIONAL SECRETARY'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2025

Annuities: FCSLA Life sold 255 Annuities in 2025 for a total balance or Face Amount of \$10,751,018. (A total of 289 Annuity Certificates were sold in 2024, with a face amount totaling \$8,130,069.)

Fifty Year Checks: FCSLA Life rewards members who have reached 50 years of consecutive membership with a one-time \$75 check 1,004 members achieved 50-year status in 2025. (970 members achieved this in 2024.)

Post Mortem Benefit: This benefit is a non-guaranteed value, voted annually by the Board of Directors.

	2025	2024
Amount paid:	\$1,766,976	\$1,891,079

Slovak-American Cookbook: First published in 1952, the Slovak-American cookbook remains one of FCSLA Life's most enduring and popular publications. Reprinted most recently in 2022, it continues to feature traditional Slovak-American recipes from the original edition. Now in its 27th printing, with more than a quarter-million copies sold, the emerald hardback cookbooks is a meaningful way we preserve and share our Slovak heritage and culture. With more families cooking at home, demand for the cookbook has increased. Many branches purchase copies for fundraising efforts or present them as welcome gifts to new members. Pat Bowles, from our staff, continues to support this initiative by coordinating cookbook distribution to members.

	2025	2024
Number purchased:	542	356

Sales: In 2025, FCSLA Life strengthened its sales performance and market position through focused product development, expanded digital tools and closer alignment between the Home Office and the sales force under the leadership of National Sales Manager Paul Smithers. Key priorities included membership growth, expansion of distribution channels, and diversification of the product portfolio. Premium reductions across the whole life product line became effective January 1, 2025, and a new Multi-Year Guarantee Annuity (MYGA) was launched in November 2025.

FCSLA Life's niche products and established distribution channels continue to balance sustained managed growth opportunities. Mr. Smithers, in collaboration with the Regional Sales Managers, supported producers with enhanced tools and resources to promote disciplined, balanced growth. Continued investments in digital platforms – including HubSpot for marketing and CRM and AccuPoint for recruitment – improved operational efficiency and agent engagement. Additional support was provided by the Agent Administrator Angie Finizia.

Sales performance management was further strengthened through improved tracking of objectives and regular training and communication, including monthly recorded teleconferences focused on sales strategies, product updates, and professional development. These initiatives position the sales organization for continued growth in 2026, supported by enhanced digital capabilities and an expanding product portfolio. We still offer members the opportunity to receive a free *Family Records Guide*. The booklet helps members to record their wishes and organize life's many details.

As of 12/31/25, we have 771 contracted agents, 34 fully licensed recommenders, and 37 Pennsylvania restricted license recommenders.

In 2025, the Friends and Family Program continued to provide membership referrals. This program allows our members to be rewarded \$25 for referring potential new members if they meet our three requirements. 110 referrals came in from the Friends and Family campaign from January 1 - December 31, 2025.

	2025	2024
Commissions paid to sales force:	\$913,122	\$784,858

New Business: In 2025, the issuance of new business became more efficient as a result of recently implemented tools, including the illustration system, eApp, Prescription Check, and Net at Risk. These tools enhancements enabled the New Business Department to assess applicant risk more quickly and streamline the submission process for our producers. Underwriters Stacey Magoch and David Shank demonstrated exceptional professionalism and responsiveness, consistently providing high-quality service to support our producers. Annuities continue to play an important role in long-term retirement planning. The Home Office Annuities team is led by Alex Semon. Beginning in 2025, crediting yield rates have been managed at the Home Office allowing for greater flexibility and more timely decision-making through improved asset-liability matching.

Technology: We hold quarterly IT Steering Committee meetings which cover both the Strategical and Operational areas. At these meetings, the managing officers meet with the IT managed service provider, our IT Manager Mark Lombardi along with our Insurance Manager Paula Dalpiaz and Programmer/Analyst Jim Deak to review computer software and hardware requirements for compliance, security, and potential obsolescence. All pending IT projects are discussed to identify status, options, billable hours, and cost. FCSLA Life is implementing modern technologies and digital strategies to promote growth. In 2025, we held a successful disaster recovery test and penetration testing on our IT systems

NATIONAL SECRETARY'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2025

with favorable results. During this test we again used our virtual meeting program that allowed us to have breakout sessions with our various teams.

In response to member requests, in May 2025 we successfully launched our new Member Portal enhancing accessibility and improving the overall member experience. Many of our members have signed up and are enjoying the benefits of reviewing their policy information at any time of the day. We transitioned the fax lines to digital/encrypted lines as well as implementing a new phone system. Multi-factor authentication (MFA) for all employees was implemented. In the fourth quarter, we began Phase 1 of our Policy Administration System (PAS). The first step was to select a Business Analyst to assist us in vetting and identifying our new PAS vendor. In 2025, we implemented Microsoft Teams for all associates, upgraded to Microsoft 365 and upgraded to Windows 11 operating systems.

Enterprise Risk Management (ERM): FCSLA Life maintains an integrated Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) framework that is aligned with Association's overall risk profile and supports informed decision-making across the organization. The ERM Committee chaired by Katherine Bowes, National Fraternal and Youth Director is composed of the managing officers, Insurance Manager, IT Manager, National Sales Manager, and Head of Human Resources and holds quarterly meetings on review and evaluation of risks and corresponding strategies.

Brand Awareness: In 2025, we focused on growing membership by promoting our brand and telling our story through multiple marketing channels, which increased overall brand awareness. We maintained an active presence on social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, X and LinkedIn, helping to expand our reach and strengthen member engagement. Our Marketing team of Stephanie Koval as our Marketing Coordinator and Jaidin Knipp as our Promotions Coordinator played a key role in enhancing our social media presence. In collaboration with the Young Adult Leadership Council, the team generated new ideas and strategies to engage younger members more effectively.

Website: In 2025, we continued to enhance and update our website www.fcsla.com with the support of our website administrator, Dynamics Online, Inc. Utilizing a mobile-friendly WordPress platform, the Marketing Team is able to make timely updates that ensure current, relevant content for members and prospective members. Strategic search engine optimization (SEO) efforts contributed to increased website traffic and overall engagement. Website analytics are reviewed monthly to evaluate visitor behavior, referral sources, search queries and page level performance. These insights help identify

traffic trends, popular document and the average time visitors spend on each page, supporting data-driven improvements to content and functionality.

The website continues to serve as an important resource for members, branch officers, prospective members and producers by providing access to Association information, product updates, programs, and printable forms. The Marketing Team works closely with internal partners to ensure the website reflects current initiatives, branch activities, and organizational priorities.

Ohio Department of Insurance Audit

In 2025, we completed our five-year examination covering the period of 1/1/19 – 12/31/23. The state examiners issued a clean public report.

Board of Directors: As National Secretary I support the board of directors by attending quarterly Executive Committee and Board of Directors meetings and accurately recording minutes and resolutions adopted by the board during those sessions. I maintain custody of these official records and prepare them for timely circulation to the Board, as required by law, regulation, and Association policy. In addition, I certify the contents of corporate records to third parties, including the Superintendent of the Ohio Department of Insurance, when necessary. I fulfill all statutory duties of the Secretary in accordance with Ohio nonprofit law, including ORC 1702.34 ensuring the integrity, accuracy, and compliance of the corporate governance records.

Districts: FCSLA Life currently has 15 active districts, which play a vital role in supporting branches through collaboration, shared resources, and joint activities. In 2025, we held our 24th Annual District Presidents' meeting in person on May 1, 2025. National Chaplain Monsignor Peter M. Polando celebrated a Mass and a led a May Crowning. Each District President shared updates on district governance, activities and charitable initiatives. CEO Mike Agan provided an overview of the Strategic Plan, the AM Best review, and key Home Office operations. Discussions also included the implementation of an association-wide charity and guidance on responsible stewardship of funds and benefits received from the Home Office. National Fraternal and Youth Director Katherine Bowes outlined upcoming changes related to branch privacy practices and bank account requirements. Approximately \$15,000 was paid out for the annual district funding for 2025 (as compared to \$14,216 for 2024). The annual district funding guidelines include 3 components. Operations - Each district will receive a base amount of money contingent upon the number of members in each district and if the district holds at least one meeting with an informational sales

NATIONAL SECRETARY'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2025

presentation. Life Insurance and Annuity Certificate Sales - Additional money can be earned by the sale of any new life insurance or annuity certificate attributed to the district. Fraternal/Religious and Cultural Heritage Events/Activities - Districts can earn even more by holding fraternal/religious/heritage events.

Branches and Fraternal Outreach: Our Association is recognized as one of the leading fraternal societies active in the United States and our branch structure remains a defining strength. The shared bond of branch membership fosters fellowship reinforces our mission and provides a meaningful competitive advantage over commercial insurance providers. Today, FCSLA Life supports 539 branches in 29 states, each playing a vital role in connecting members, strengthening communities and advancing our fraternal purpose. Branch Officers are encouraged to review and share the monthly Branch Newsletter “*Branch Buzz*” with all their officers to ensure consistent communication and engagement at the local level. In 2025, branches demonstrated exceptional commitment through continued participation in the Matching Funds program. The breadth, creativity, and local impact of branch-led initiatives reflect a deep dedication to service and philanthropy within their communities. These efforts highlight the enduring strength of our fraternal model and the remarkable leadership of our branch officers and members.

	2025	2024
Branches		
# Projects	170	178
Amount Raised	\$1,098,045	\$1,404,424
Amount Matched	\$105,929	\$111,312
# Branches Participating	108	111
# Branches Completing the maximum projects	40	55
Districts		
# Projects	7	7
Amount Raised	\$10,899	\$8,349
Amount Matched	\$4,200	\$4,200
# Districts Participating	4	5
# Districts Completing the maximum projects	3	2

In 2025, in recognition of the March for Life in Washington, D.C., we held a virtual prayer service led by our National Chaplain Monsignor Peter M. Polando. Join Hands Day, observed on the first Saturday in May, encourages volunteer service projects that bring together participants of all ages. During 2025, districts and branches across the Association took part in this community service initiatives through a variety of creative and meaningful outdoor activities.

	2025	2024
Branch fraternal activity reimbursement	\$143,274	\$94,865
Branch compensation	\$662,439	\$709,841

Fraternalist of the Year: The 2025 Fraternalist of the Year is Laurie Muffler who is President of the Louise Yash District and the President of branches S023 and J130. She is a dedicated volunteer whose leadership and service significantly enhance both FCSLA activities and her local Wisconsin community. The FCSLA's 2025 Youth of the Year is Samuel Miklovic who is a member of S101 located in St. Louis, Missouri. He is a high achieving student and community leader who is dedicated to serving his branch, parish, school, community, and family.

Scholarships: During the 2024-2025 scholarship year, FCSLA Life awarded \$254,750 in scholarships to member students ranging from elementary school through graduate studies. This annual program remains one of the most generous and meaningful benefits offered by our Association, reflecting our longstanding commitment to education and the future of our members.

2025 was the seventh year of both the *Florence Hovanec Memorial Award* and the John & Geraldine Gaydos Award. In addition, the *Anna Hurban Scholarship Fund*, established in 2017, continues to thrive and provide vital educational support to deserving students across all academic levels. Scholarship applications are available on our website and are also published in the January and February issues of *Fraternally Yours*. Members interested in contributing to these scholarship funds and supporting the educational goals of our young members can find additional details in the upcoming issues of *Fraternally Yours*.

St Anne Day Wreath Laying Ceremony: The annual wreath-laying ceremony honoring the Feast Day of Saint Anne, the Association's official patron saint, was observed in 2025, with a blessing offered by National Chaplain Monsignor Peter M. Polando.

My Fraternal/Educational Activities: In 2025, I attended the Spring Slovak Catholic Federation (SCF) board meeting; the Fall SCF board meeting was cancelled. Throughout the year, I also participated in the Slovak Heritage festival in Pittsburgh, the Ohio and Pennsylvania Fraternal Alliance meetings and the American Fraternal Alliance Spring Symposium and Executive Summit. Additionally, I was honored I had the opportunity to attend numerous District and Branch events, providing valuable opportunities to engage directly with members and leaders across the Association.

Home Office Staff: Due to several retirements in the last few years and anticipated organizational growth,

NATIONAL SECRETARY'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2025

new staff members were hired, and cross-training initiatives continued to ensure operational continuity and flexibility. We have been fortunate to welcome educated, experienced individuals who have integrated seamlessly into the organization. At the FCSLA Life Home Office, I continue to be impressed by the dedication and professionalism of our staff. Their commitment to serving our members, as well as supporting branch and district officers and producers is evident in their daily work. The National Officers place great trust in this team, whose institutional knowledge, reliability, and skill are essential to the effective operation of our organization.

A.M. Best Review: In preparation for the A.M. Best annual rating review, the FCSLA Life executive leadership team developed a comprehensive business report and participated in an in-person rating interview at A.M. Best headquarters in New Jersey. The review encompassed key areas of the organization, including management, financial performance, sales, operations, fraternal activities, strategic planning, investments, and enterprise risk management. Our presentation highlighted the Association's recent accomplishments and strategic initiatives. We are proud to report that FCSLA Life maintained an A- (Excellent) Rating from A.M. Best for 2025.

In closing, I extend my sincere thanks to CEO Mike Agan for his leadership, vision, and steadfast commitment to advancing our Association, and to Interim National Treasurer Frank Rando for his sound financial insight and guidance. I am grateful for their partnership throughout the year, as well as for the dedication and service of the National Officers on the Board of Directors.

Reflecting on the past year, I am continually impressed by the commitment of our branches and districts and the unwavering loyalty of our officers who sustain and strengthen our fraternal mission. I also extend my appreciation to our producers, whose efforts

help bring financial security to our members, and to our Home Office staff, whose professionalism, flexibility and dedication are essential to our success. As your National Secretary, I thank you for your trust and confidence, and for the opportunity to serve you, the FCSLA Life members.

I am energized by the initiatives before us and confident that our continued focus on strategic digital transformation will position FCSLA Life for sustained growth and service for generations to come.

With sincere appreciation,

Kimberly A. Graham
National Secretary

FCSLALife®		Kimberly Graham, National Secretary	
<u>Insurance and Annuity Activities</u>			
January to December 2025 Year-To-Date (YTD) Totals			
LIFE	Total Certs	Insurance	
New Cert - New Member	278	7,089,063	Approved 2025
New Cert - Current Member	35	2,353,863	Approved 2025
Conversion New	15	278,000	Approved 2025
Reinstates	1	903	Cancelled prior to current year, now active.
Deaths - Paid	1,472	8,273,486	
Death Benefit - Escheatables	36	52,803	
Surrender	804	4,575,568	Requested to cancel - cash value
Surrender - No Value	3	195,000	Requested to cancel - no value
Surrender - 1035 Exchange	7	430,479	New cert purchased or dep in anny.
Matured - Paid	30	37,406	Endowments
Expired - Juvenile Term	95	1,408,000	25 year old term certificates
Lapse - No Value	31	1,114,043	Expelled - no value
Expel - APL Loan exceeds CV	5	170,000	HO expelled - no value left
Expel - Loan exceeds CV	39	344,748	HO expelled - no value left
Expired from Extended	81	266,264	
Expired Term Insurance	3	100,600	Adult Term cert reached end of contract period. No options.
Matured Conversion	14	253,000	25 year old term certificates Matured-new cert purchased
Requested Conversion	1	25,000	New cert purchased.
Matured Canadian Fraternal	1	1,815	Canadian Post Mortem Benefit dropped
Deaths - Fraternal	1	1,000	Canadian Post Mortem Benefit dropped
ANNUITIES:			
New Cert - New Member	155		Approved 2025
New Cert - Current Member	100		Approved 2025
Conversion from Rider	25		Edu/Ret Matured. Funds left here.
Cash Surrender	280		
Surrender - Conversion Exchange	1		
Surrender - 1035 Exchange	102		Surrender Tradition IRA. Converted to Roth IRA
Surrender - Transfer	187		Surrender Qual Anny. Leaving FCSLA (Trustee xfer)
Settlement - Cancel Reserve	95		Settled Anny.
Death Benefit - Paid	247		
Death Benefit - Internal Xfer	16		Member deceased. Spouse xfer funds to own anny.
Death Benefit - Escheatables	10		
Totals as of:			
	12/31/2025	12/31/2024	
Membership	97,778	99,790	
Certificates	125,826	128,684	
Insurance Inforce (includes PUA)	923,722,862	930,356,938	
YTD New Members (Life&Annu)	433	406	
YTD New Member Insurance	7,089,063	5,024,605	

NATIONAL TREASURER'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2025

Frank Rando



To the National Directors and Members of FCSLA Life,

I am pleased to present the 2025 Annual Treasurer's Report for First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association (FCSLA Life). This report highlights the financial performance of the Association, summarizes key economic conditions, and outlines the actions taken to strengthen our

organization for the future.

Summary

In 2025, FCSLA Life maintained a strong financial position despite a challenging economic environment marked by elevated interest rates and periods of market volatility. Total assets ended the year at \$1.058 billion, supported by a conservative, bond-focused investment portfolio and disciplined financial management. Premium growth in both life insurance and annuity products, including the successful launch of Multi-Year Guaranteed Annuities, contributed to improved operating results compared to 2024 and provide a solid foundation for a promising outlook in 2026 and beyond.

Strategic investment actions continued to enhance portfolio quality and long-term income potential, while statutory surplus increased to \$110.4 million. With an A- (Excellent) Financial Strength Rating affirmed by AM Best, FCSLA Life remains well positioned to meet member obligations, support fraternal activities, and continue building long-term financial stability.

Economic Conditions at Year-End 2025

FCSLA Life's financial results in 2025 were influenced by changes in interest rates and broader market conditions in the United States. Throughout the year, the Federal Reserve maintained relatively elevated interest rates while balancing inflation control with steady economic growth. By year-end, longer-term bond yields—particularly the 10-Year U.S. Treasury—generally remained in the low-to-mid-4% range.

Because FCSLA Life invests primarily in high-quality bonds, these rate levels directly affect investment income and annuity crediting strategies. While equity markets posted solid gains during 2025, periodic volatility occurred due to global developments and shifting expectations regarding future interest rate changes.

Despite ongoing economic uncertainty, FCSLA Life remained focused on conservative investment

management, disciplined product pricing, and protecting the long-term financial strength of the Association.

Financial Statements

This report includes comparative balance sheets and income statements for 2025 and 2024, providing a clear picture of FCSLA Life's financial performance.

Our financial statements are audited annually by an independent accounting firm. The audit of our 2024 financial statements resulted in an unqualified opinion, reaffirming the integrity of our financial reporting.

In addition, National Auditors and National Trustees conduct regular reviews of our financial records in accordance with our Constitution and Bylaws, reinforcing transparency and accountability.

FCSLA Life follows Statutory Accounting Principles (SAP), as prescribed by the Ohio Department of Insurance and the National Association of Insurance Commissioners. These standards provide a conservative framework for financial reporting and emphasize solvency and policyholder protection.

Balance Sheet & Investments

At year-end 2025, total assets declined by approximately \$22 million to \$1.058 billion, representing a 2.0% decrease from the prior year. This decrease was primarily the result of claims and benefit payments exceeding new premium inflows during the year. Cash on hand decreased modestly by \$0.8 million, ending the year at \$19.3 million.

Our investment portfolio remains highly concentrated in bonds, representing approximately 99% of the assets invested, consistent with our long-standing conservative strategy and liability structure. In 2025, we updated our Investment Guidelines to reduce higher-exposure areas and improve overall portfolio balance, further strengthening stability, credit quality, and diversification.

Portfolio Allocation

- Industrial Bonds: 63.2%
- Financial Bonds: 18.3%
- Utilities: 8.9%
- Municipal Bonds: 4.2%
- Mortgage-Backed and Asset-Backed Securities (MBS/ABS): 3.9%
- Cash/Money Market: 1.6%
- Other: 0.2%

During 2025, approximately \$16.7 million in bonds matured and \$41.6 million were called or sold. We reinvested \$44.7 million into new bonds, in part through

NATIONAL TREASURER'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2025

an Investment Optimization Plan designed to replace lower-quality or near-maturity securities with higher-quality, better-yielding investments. These portfolio adjustments were made thoughtfully to enhance long-term income, manage risk, and further strengthen overall portfolio quality.

Income Statement – Operating Results

Total revenue for 2025 was \$73.3 million, compared to \$71.7 million in 2024.

Key revenue drivers included:

- Life insurance premiums increased by \$1.3 million (35.6%) to \$5.1 million.
- Annuity premiums increased by \$2.0 million (11.5%) to \$19.3 million.
- Investment income totaled \$49.7 million before Statutory adjustments.

FCSLA Life currently offers Silver, Gold, and Platinum Elite annuities, along with Multi-Year Guaranteed Annuities (MYGA), which launched in November 2025.

Crediting rates as of year-end 2025 were:

Elite Series Annuities

- Platinum Elite: 5.00%
- Gold: 4.85%
- Silver: 4.75%

MYGA Products

- 7-Year: 4.90%
- 5-Year: 4.80%
- 3-Year: 4.00%

Early response to the MYGA product has been encouraging and is expected to support premium growth in 2026.

Investment Income & Reserve Changes

Investment income before statutory adjustments declined by \$1.2 million from 2024, primarily due to lower average asset levels as benefit payments exceeded new premium inflows.

Life and annuity reserves declined by \$20.7 million, reflecting premiums received, interest credited, and benefits paid. Major benefit payments included:

- Insurance death benefits: \$8.9 million
- Annuity benefits: \$66.1 million
- Life surrender benefits: \$2.5 million

Commission expenses increased modestly due to higher annuity sales activity.

Operating Expenses & Fraternal Benefits

After policy benefits and related expenses, \$12.9 million

remained available for general operations and fraternal activities.

Total operating expenses were \$8.6 million, up from \$8.0 million in 2024, driven primarily by staffing changes, recruiting costs, leadership transition, and healthcare inflation.

FCSLA Life dedicated \$4.1 million to fraternal activities in 2025 similar to 2024.

Net Income & Financial Stability

Dividends of \$1.4 million were paid to members in both 2025 and 2024.

Net operating income before dividends and realized gains/ (losses) totaled \$1.6M consistent with the prior year.

During 2025, a strategic bond sale related to Walgreens resulted in a realized loss of approximately \$880,000. This decision allowed us to reinvest proceeds into higher-yielding bonds, with an expected recovery of the loss within approximately 18 months. Management believes this was a prudent action to limit future downside risk while improving long-term portfolio returns.

Statutory surplus increased to \$110.4 million, a 1.5% improvement over 2024. Our solvency ratio remained approximately 110%, meaning we hold \$110 in assets for every \$100 of liabilities.

In 2025, A.M. Best affirmed our A- (Excellent) Financial Strength Rating. While the outlook was revised to negative from stable related to competitive pressures in the annuity market and elevated claims activity (including deaths, withdrawals, and surrenders) exceeding new premium inflows since 2022. Our risk-adjusted capitalization and liquidity remain strong. Actions are underway to improve profitability through new product offerings and continued investment optimization.

Conclusion

Despite ongoing economic challenges, FCSLA Life remains financially resilient. Through conservative investment practices, strategic product development, and disciplined financial management, the Association is well positioned to serve members today and in the future.

Closing Remarks

2025 was a year of meaningful progress and positive change at FCSLA Life. Our home office team continues to support daily operations with dedication and professionalism.

Key initiatives included enhanced building security, modernization of technology systems, new product development, and strengthened oversight of our asset managers.

NATIONAL TREASURER'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2025

We are especially encouraged by the leadership of our new CEO, Mike Agan. His experience, strategic insight, and disciplined management approach are guiding FCSLA Life toward greater operational efficiency and financial strength. Under his direction, we are focusing on growth, accountability, and long-term value creation—laying the foundation for continued prosperity for our members and the Association.

We also appreciate the dedication of our National Secretary/COO, Kimberly A. Graham. Her commitment to service and continued dedication to her role help keep our organization focused on serving our members.

Thank you to the Board of Directors for your commitment to governance and stewardship, and to our Branch

Officers and Directors whose efforts directly support our members and communities.

It has been an honor to serve FCSLA Life as Controller since 2016 and to step into the role of Interim National Treasurer/CFO in July 2023. I remain fully committed to supporting the Association's continued success as we move confidently into the future. Thank you for your continued trust, support, and commitment to our Association.

Respectfully submitted,

Frank Rando

Interim National Treasurer / CFO

March 2025

Statement of Financial Position-December 31, 2025 and 2024

Admitted Assets		
Category	2025	2024
Cash & Short Term Investments	\$ 19,331,926	\$ 20,137,783
Bonds	1,013,226,369	1,032,853,156
Preferred Stock	1,020,000	1,020,000
Common Stock	361,201	338,606
Investment Income Due & Accrued	13,323,079	13,846,717
Property Plant & Equipment, Net	4,293,179	4,280,511
Certificate Loans & Accrued Interest	1,545,196	1,667,415
Other Assets	59,308	331,926
Interest Maintenance Reserve	4,404,673	5,140,775
Total Admitted Assets	\$ 1,057,564,931	\$ 1,079,616,889

Liabilities & Surplus		
Category	2025	2024
Life Reserves	\$ 309,303,573	\$ 308,139,880
Annuity Reserves	613,961,790	637,044,511
Death Claims Payable	2,172,470	3,168,418
Unearned Premiums	381,919	367,718
Matured Endowments	325,501	331,474
Provision for Dividends Payable	1,400,000	1,400,000
Accumulated Dividends & Interest	5,459,115	5,359,913
Accrued Convention Donations	300,000	187,500
Provision for Future Conventions	288,839	163,281
Asset Valuation Reserve	10,852,977	11,995,822
Other Liabilities	2,743,723	2,741,312
Total Liabilities	\$ 947,189,907	\$ 970,899,829
Surplus	\$ 110,375,024	\$ 108,717,060
Total Liabilities and Surplus Funds	\$ 1,057,564,931	\$ 1,079,616,889

Statement of Operations Years Ended December 31, 2025 and 2024

Revenue	2025	2024
Insurance Premiums	\$ 5,175,801	\$ 3,791,985
Annuity Premiums	19,353,751	17,309,909
Investment Income	49,412,246	50,661,004
Amortization of IMR	(762,064)	(552,734)
Rental Income	483,370	459,215
Other Revenue	45,670	34,211
Total Revenue	\$73,708,774	\$71,703,590

Policy Holder & Direct Expenses	2025	2024
Change in Life & Annuity Reserves	\$ (20,678,135)	\$ (24,718,362)
Life & Annuity Benefits	78,037,044	80,909,914
Salaries - Life and Annuity Employees	1,018,479	883,694
Underwriting & Commissions Expenses	960,198	827,136
Total Policy Holder & Direct Expenses	\$ 59,337,586	\$ 57,902,382

Net Revenue before General Operating and Fraternal Expenses, Dividends and Realized Capital Gains/(Losses)	\$ 14,371,188	\$ 13,801,208
General Operating Expenses	8,640,207	8,012,399
Net Income from Business Operations before Fraternal Expenses, Dividends and Realized Capital Gains/(Losses)	\$ 5,730,981	\$ 5,788,809
Fraternal Expenses	4,105,664	4,176,854
Net Income before Member Dividends & Realized Capital Gains/(Losses)	\$ 1,625,317	\$ 1,611,955
Dividend to Members	1,393,180	1,394,184
Net Income before Realized Capital Gains/(Losses)	\$ 232,137	\$ 217,771
Realized Capital Gains/(Losses)	(880,308)	827,203
Total Net Income /(Loss)	\$ (648,171)	\$ 1,044,974



NATIONAL DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2025

S úctou a v duchu našej viery pozdravujeme všetkých členov Prvej katolíckej slovenskej ženskej jednoty a prosíme Pána Boha, aby naďalej žehnal našu organizáciu a všetkých jej členov. Nech nás aj naďalej sprevádza príhovor našej patrónky, svätej Anny.

The National Directors of the First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association, **Kristina Menke, Kristine Midcap, Michael Beckman, and Jeanette Palanca**, continue to work collaboratively with the Board of Directors and leadership team to guide the organization through a period of thoughtful progress, stability, and strategic planning for the future.

Throughout the past year, the National Directors remained focused on strengthening governance, supporting leadership transition, and ensuring that the Association continues to operate with the financial discipline and fraternal mission that have sustained FCSLA Life for generations.

A significant focus of the Board's work has been the continued stabilization and maturation of the organization's governance structure. What began as an important evolution in recent years has developed into a clearer and more effective framework for leadership, oversight, and accountability. This strengthened structure has improved clarity of roles and responsibilities, enhanced transparency in decision-making, and positioned the organization to respond thoughtfully to the challenges facing the fraternal insurance industry.

In support of the Association's long-term vision through Strategic Planning, they have also been actively engaged in laying the groundwork for the organization's future direction. Through careful analysis and collaborative discussion, the committee has begun to outline priorities that will support sustainable growth, operational efficiency, and adaptability in a rapidly changing environment.

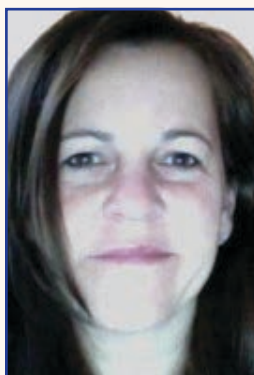
The National Directors have also supported continued investment in technology and operational improvements designed to strengthen FCSLA's financial footprint within the industry. These efforts include enhancements to internal systems and the member portal, with particular focus on privacy, security, and overall user experience. These improvements are helping safeguard member



Michael Beckman



Kristina Menke



Kristine Midcap



Jeanette Palanca

information while providing members with a more accessible and reliable digital experience.

The work of the Board has also included important committee service that supports the overall governance and oversight of the organization. Directors have participated in committees including Executive, Governance, Strategic Planning, and Transition Oversight, ensuring that leadership transitions and strategic initiatives are implemented with stability and continuity.

In addition to their national responsibilities, the Directors remain active within their local branches and communities. Through participation in branch meetings and service activities, they continue to support the fraternal mission that lies at the heart of FCSLA Life. These local engagements reinforce the

connection between national leadership and the members whose commitment and volunteer spirit sustain the Association's work.

As FCSLA Life moves forward, the National Directors remain committed to responsible governance, strategic planning, and the continued strengthening of the organization for future generations. Guided by faith, tradition, and a shared dedication to service, the Board continues its work to ensure that the First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association remains a strong and vibrant fraternal benefit society.

Fraternally submitted,

Michael Beckman

Kristina Menke

Kristine Midcap

Jeanette Palanca

National Directors

First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association

NATIONAL TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2025

Lorraine Gibas and Joseph Senko

Pochváleny bud Pan Ježíš Kristus!
Praise be to the Lord Jesus Christ!

During 2025 we have continued to support the organization's governance, financial oversight, and long-term strategic stewardship through consistent full participation in matters directed to the Executive Committee and to the full Board. As Trustees, our primary additional area of responsibility has been the review and verification of organizational invoices, and beginning in 2025, active participation on the Investment Committee of the organization. The focus of this internal committee is to ensure transparent compliant and prudent management of the organization's financial assets.

Our regular quarterly review of invoices confirmed accuracy, compliance, and alignment with internal controls. The organization's records were in impeccably good order, and we thank Interim Treasurer Frank Rando and National Secretary Kim Graham for facilitating these reviews amidst a very busy Home Office schedule.

As part of the Investment Committee, we discussed the



Lorraine Gibas



Joseph Senko

organization's Investment Policy Statement, reviewed reports from external investment managers on asset allocation and risk exposure, and participated in quarterly OTTI reviews.

In addition to the Trustee's specific stated responsibilities mentioned above, we served on additional Committees of the Board including the Strategic Relations Committee, Board Performance and Review Committee and Donations

Committee, and new in 2025, the Compensation Oversight Committee and Governance Committee.

We continue to appreciate the significance of the trust placed in us as Trustees of the Board by the membership, and look forward to continuing to contribute to the success of FCSLA through this position in the next 2 years of our term.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorraine Gibas
National Trustee

Joseph Senko
National Trustee

NATIONAL AUDITORS AND AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2025

Mary B. Andreano, Dennis L. Povondra and Barbara A. Sekerak

Reverend Monsignor Polando, CEO Mike Agan, National Officers and Fraternal Members of the First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association

*Požehnaný bud'
Ježíš Kristus!
Blessed be Jesus
Christ!*



Mary Andreano



Dennis Povondra



Barbara Sekerak

audit engagement letter and conducting special investigations as needed related to financial matters. A description of the duties of the audit committee is in the Board Manual and are reviewed and updated as needed.

The National Auditors attended four board meetings in 2025 and

The Audit Committee and National Auditors are Barbara Sekerak, Chairperson, Dennis Povondra and Mary Andreano. The Audit Committee is responsible for completing two audits annually, reviewing the statutory audit and IRS tax form 990, approving the annual

special meetings called by the Chair of the Board. We conducted audits for the last half of 2024 and the first half of 2025 with no findings. We met with management to discuss the audits and reported the results of the audits

NATIONAL AUDITORS AND AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2025

to the Board of Directors. Thank you to the management team and staff for properly maintaining, accounting and reporting the financial records of the organization.

The National Auditors reviewed the 2024 Statutory Audit with the outside auditors Horovitz, Rudoy & Roterman (H2R). The audit was filed timely with the Ohio Department of Insurance with no findings. We reviewed the 2024 IRS Tax Form 990 before it was filed with the IRS in September, 2024. We reviewed and approved a three-year H2R engagement letter and recommended the firm be hired for the 2025 - 2027 audits. We stay updated on accounting and reporting changes from H2R.

The Audit Committee is also responsible for monitoring and reporting to the Board of Directors the call summary reports from the Security Voice Hotline, a national toll-free telephone monitoring service where employees and members can anonymously report any suspicions and or information of wrongdoing, unethical or illegal acts or other forms of loss which could affect the Association's financial information, operation, properties, employees or members.

The Audit Committee coordinated a compliance audit in 2025 with law firm Squire Patton Boggs and consulting firm Noble Consulting. The findings from the audit will be incorporated into processes.

National Auditor Dennis Povondra serves on the Property Advisory Committee as the chair and is a member of the Compensation Oversight Committee. Dennis is Treasurer and member of the South Dakota district. Barbara Sekerak is on the Philanthropic & Scholarship committee as the chair and a member for the Property Advisory Committee. Barbara is President and member of her Cleveland Branch. Mary Andreano is the chair of the Strategic Relations Committee and a member of the Compensation Oversight Committee.

The National Auditors Mary Andreano and Barbara Sekerak along with the Board of Directors attended the American Fraternal Alliance Spring Symposium in Cleveland this spring. An opportunity to represent FSCLA while learning and connecting with those in the AFA.

We thank the management team and staff at Home Office for their perseverance and dedication to maintain timely and accurate reporting and respond timely and graciously to our audit requests. We are honored and blessed to serve the organization.

Mary B. Andreano
Dennis L. Povondra
Barbara A. Sekerak

FCSLA Life Sr. Br. 319 & Jr. Br. 187 Allentown, PA

Annual Baseball Outing

June 20, 2026



IronPigs vs. Worcester Red Sox

Where: Coca Cola Park Allentown

Gates open at 5:15pm ~ Game Begins at 6:35 pm

Free for Members ~ Non-Members \$40.00

Includes free parking, Seating in the Tiki Terrace

Buffet and Soft Drinks included

Call Michele Mrazik Grasso 610-762-1973 for more info.



Space is Limited! Call today. R.S.V.P by June 3, 2026

Minors must be accompanied by adult or legal guardian.

Four Generations, One Century

Mary Komsa, a member of S156, Struthers, Ohio, since the age of 29, turned 100 on August 21st. She was honored by her family at a 100th birthday celebration and is pictured with her daughter, granddaughter, and great-granddaughter – representing four generations of the FCSLA Life membership in their family.



Editor's Memorial Day Reflection

Memorial Day - Monday, May 25, 2026

Memorial Day invites us into a quieter kind of gratitude — the kind that doesn't shout, doesn't wave banners, but instead bows its head. It reminds us that freedom has a cost measured not in dollars, but in lives given, families forever changed, and futures surrendered for a promise bigger than any one person.

We remember those who never came home. We remember the empty chairs at dinner tables, the birthdays missed, the stories unfinished. Their sacrifice is not just history — it is the foundation beneath the everyday blessings we often take for granted.

Perhaps the most meaningful way to honor them is not only with words, but with how we live:

with kindness instead of cruelty,

with unity instead of division,

with gratitude instead of entitlement.

May we hold space today for reflection.

May we speak their names.

May we live lives worthy of what they gave.

Because remembrance is not about dwelling in sorrow — it is about carrying forward the light they left behind.

St. John Fish Fry Going Strong in Year Three

For the third consecutive year, FCSLA Senior Branch 81 in Whiting, Indiana has played an important role in supporting the St. John the Baptist School capital fund through its popular Lenten fish fries. The second of six scheduled dinners once again brought the community together, with proceeds dedicated to the ongoing replacement of the school heating system.

Thanks to the creativity and commitment of a hardworking committee and volunteers, the school cafeteria was once again transformed into a lively seafood dining experience. FCSLA officers and Branch 81 members contributed by preparing a wide selection of traditional ethnic baked goods. Guests had the opportunity to purchase favorites such as roshky, nut rolls, pistachio, chop suey, and blueberry-lemon cakes. Members also organized, plated, and served desserts while assisting guests throughout the evening.

Volunteers from FCSLA filled a variety of roles, from working in the kitchen to managing raffle tickets and tip boards, refreshing the salad bar, and handling cleanup duties. Many guests were familiar faces, returning to enjoy the fresh quality and variety of fish, shrimp, and combination dinners. The impressive 18-foot, all-you-can-eat salad bar once again proved to be a highlight, offering something for everyone.

Soft background music from the Marilyn Gaza Jazz Trio added to the welcoming atmosphere. This thoughtful contribution, gifted by a devoted FCSLA member, elevated the dining experience and made the evening even more memorable. The event concluded with the drawing of raffle prizes and basket winners.

Special recognition is extended to Jamie Sandona, Faith Formation Coordinator, along with FCSLA members Andrea Lucas and Tom Markovich, whose leadership and organization continue to ensure the success of these events. Notably, many of these dedicated individuals no longer have children attending the school; they continue to give their time and energy purely out of the goodness of their hearts and their deep love and commitment to St. John School and its future. As part of a matching fund initiative, St. John School will receive an additional \$600 toward its capital improvement efforts. FCSLA Home Office support is also gratefully acknowledged, as their partnership continues to strengthen these meaningful fundraising activities.



First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association Life WO93 2026 Calendar of Events in Tabor, S.D.

May 03: Monthly Meeting — Tabor, SD

June 07: Czech Days Float Assembly in Joyce Sestak Shop 1:30PM — Need Volunteers

June 19-20: Czech Days in Tabor, SD — Volunteers Always Needed

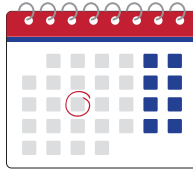
July 05: Monthly Meeting in Tabor, SD

August 02: Annual Picnic in Takota Park/5PM Pot Luck. FCSLA WO 93 will supply refreshments and hot dogs. Inclement weather will move into Beseda Hall.

September 06: Monthly Meeting in Tabor, SD

October 25: Annual Halloween Party, Noon Potluck, prizes for best costumes/all ages, meeting, games, etc. Beseda Hall in Tabor, SD

November 01: District 13 S.D. State Meeting: Host/ FCSLA W060 Vodnany SD — 12:00. RSVP for catered meal count to District Officer. It is requested: All S.D. FCSLA Life Members — Please Attend.



December 06: St. Nick/Christmas Party, Noon Potluck, cookie exchange, meeting, honor 50-year members and “Fraternalist of the Year,” honor our scholarship winners, games, and refreshments in Beseda Hall, Tabor, SD. Branch WO93 will supply coffee & juice.

January 10, 2027: Election of Officers Meeting 10:00 AM, Beseda Hall in Tabor, SD. Pot Luck Brunch to follow.

Monthly Meetings & Locations Subject to Change

Any questions? Call Secretary Joyce Sestak @ 605-463-2268 or Treasurer Bonnie Vavruska @ 605-463-2253 or Vice-President Anne Mello @ 605-664-5630 or President Terry Sestak @ 605-463-2528. Thank you!

The Local Agent for our area is Sherry Povondra. FCSLA is offering new lower rates — check it out! Please contact Sherry with your insurance needs @ 605-463-2571.

FCSLA Chicago District Commemorates the Installation of the Honorary Consul of the Slovak Republic in Chicago Joseph Seliga JD



On January 29, 2026, Mr. Joseph Seliga JD was installed as the Honorary Consul of the Slovak Republic in Chicago by the Ambassador of the Slovak Republic to the United States, Andrej Droba, and the Consul General of the Slovak Republic in New York, Beatrice Szabóová. Several members of the Chicagoland Slovak community, the Slovak Mission, and Honorary Consuls from across the United States witnessed this historic event. The FCSLA Chicago District was well represented by Lorraine Gibas, Jarmila Hlubocky, Dr. Fay Hlubocky, Jeanette Palanca, Joyce Kelly, Mary Therese Tylus, Joe and Therese Buc, and Tom Lynch. Congratulations to Honorary Consul Seliga!



A Century of Dolly!

Former National Auditor Dolores "Dolly" Ragan will turn 100 in May. If you would like to send her a card please mail your card to: Patti Dzambo, 3616 Sanderling Drive SE, Southport, NC 28461. The family would love for her to receive 100 + cards.

S114 Annual. Lorain, Ohio Christmas Meeting

St. Ann Branch S114 of Lorain, Ohio held their Annual Christmas Meeting and Party on Sunday, December 21, 2025 at American Slovak Club. The year's report of Senior and Junior branches was given including activities and events. The year's deceased members were named and members were reminded to pray for them, the home bound, ill and in nursing homes.

Election of officers followed with the officers agreeing to serve for the next year. They are Bernadette Danevich, President; Cynthia Sams, Recording Secretary; Joanne Mrosko, Senior Branch Treasurer; Cheryl Deeks, Junior Branch Treasurer; Margaret Thomas, Financial Secretary; Ellen Butorec, Auditor; and newly elected officers, Ann Kurta, Vice-President and Marge Kurta, Auditor. A raffle was held with many prizes, cash and a gift from FCSLA Life. As the meal was being served, Margaret Thomas did a reading about Christmas. Christmas decorations done by Cheryl Deeks made the event very festive.

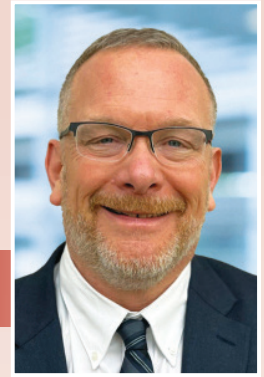
A Christmas Blessing was read by President Bernie and all were wished a Happy, healthy and Blessed New Year from all the officers.



Permanent Life Insurance as a Tool for Charitable Giving

Strategies for Philanthropists and Financial Planners

Paul Smithers, CLU, ChFC, ChSNC, National Sales Manager



Introduction: Overview of Permanent Life Insurance and Charitable Giving

Permanent life insurance offers unique opportunities for individuals to support charitable causes while securing their financial legacy. As philanthropy grows in importance among both individuals and organizations, understanding how life insurance can enhance charitable giving is essential. This article explores key strategies and examples for using permanent life insurance to benefit charities, providing guidance for philanthropists and financial planners.

Understanding Permanent Life Insurance: Types and Features

Permanent life insurance refers to policies that provide coverage for the insured's entire lifetime, unlike term life insurance which covers a specific period, good examples of permanent life insurance are the whole life policies available from FCSLA Life. These policies build cash value over time, and may provide dividends, making them versatile tools in financial and philanthropic planning.

Benefits of Using Life Insurance for Charitable Giving

Utilizing permanent life insurance for charitable giving offers several advantages. First, policyholders may receive tax benefits, such as deductions for premium payments or donated policy values. Second, life insurance enables donors to create a lasting legacy, ensuring charitable organizations receive substantial support even after their lifetime. Lastly, these strategies can make it easier to provide larger gifts than would be possible through direct cash donations.

Example 1: Naming a Charity as Beneficiary

One straightforward method is to designate a charity as the beneficiary of a permanent life insurance policy. Upon the insured's death, the charity receives the death benefit, which can be significantly larger than annual cash contributions. This approach allows donors to ensure a sizable, guaranteed gift while retaining ownership and control of the policy during their lifetime.

Example 2: Donating a Policy to a Charity

A donor can transfer ownership of an existing permanent life insurance policy to a charitable organization. Once the charity owns the policy, the donor may receive an immediate income tax deduction for the policy's value. The charity can either keep the policy in force by paying

premiums or surrender it for its cash value, using the proceeds to fund its mission.

Example 3: Using Policy Dividends for Charitable Donations

Many permanent life insurance policies pay dividends, which policyholders can use in various ways. Donors may choose to direct these dividends to their chosen charity as annual gifts. This strategy provides ongoing support to the organization, while the donor retains the core policy for future charitable or legacy planning.

Example 4: Charitable Remainder Trusts with Life Insurance

Combining life insurance with a charitable remainder trust (CRT) can offer both philanthropic and financial benefits. Donors place assets in a CRT, which provides income to them or their beneficiaries for a specified period. Afterward, the remaining assets go to the designated charity. Life insurance can be used to replace the value donated to the trust, ensuring heirs receive equivalent assets while supporting charity.

Considerations and Best Practices

When incorporating permanent life insurance into charitable giving plans, it is vital to consult with legal, tax, and financial professionals. The tax implications can vary based on the strategy used and individual circumstances. Donors should ensure their plans align with their philanthropic goals, comply with relevant regulations, and maximize benefits for both themselves and their chosen charities.

Conclusion: Summary and Encouragement for Philanthropic Planning

Permanent life insurance offers versatile and powerful options for charitable giving. By understanding the available strategies and carefully considering legal and financial implications, philanthropists and financial

planners can create lasting impact for charitable organizations. Thoughtful planning ensures both personal financial goals and philanthropic aspirations are achieved, leaving a meaningful legacy for generations to come.

For more information:

- Contact your local FCSLA Life representative
- Call the FCSLA Life home office: 800-464-4642
- Email Sales@FCSLA.com
- Go to <https://www.fcsla.com/about/rsm/> for the FCSLA Life sales team contact information

- Scan this QR code for the sales team contact information:



Chicago District Celebrates the traditional “Slovenská Štedra Večera” with the Slovak Catholic Mission

On December 14, 2025, FCSLA Chicago District Officers and Branch leaders were invited to celebrate the traditional Slovak Christmas Eve dinner with Rev. Stanislav Bindas and the Slovak Catholic Mission congregation. This annual celebration commenced with the Holy Mass recited in Slovak and during his Homily Rev Bindas encouraged all to prepare for the Baby Jesus to enter our hearts and souls. After Mass, guests were entertained by a Slovak Christmas Nativity program where children sang Slovak Christmas folk carols to the Holy Family. Prior to dinner, guests were formally welcomed by Rev Bindas, Chicago District President Lorraine Gibas, and the Honorary Slovak Consul of Chicago, Rosemary Wisnosky who announced her retirement and introduced incoming Consul Joseph Seliga JD who will be installed in 2026. Then, the traditional Christmas Eve dinner was initiated with prayers including the: blessed oplatky, Kapustnica (sauerkraut soup with mushrooms); breaded fish and potato salad, bobalky (sweet buns with hot milk and poppy seeds) and nut/poppy seed rolls with other sweet Slovak delicacies. All proceeds and donations were directed to help support the continued development of the new Slovak Church, mission.



Dr. Fay Hlubocky S248/J175 Jarmila Hlubocky S248/J175, Reverend Stanislav Bindas, President Lorraine Gibas, Carol Rosenthal S421



Incoming SK Consul Joseph Seliga JD, his wife Vanessa Seliga, Honorary SK Consult Chicago Rosemary Wisnosky, Jarmila Hlubocky S248/J175, President Lorraine Gibas, Dr Fay Hlubocky S248/J175

Scholarship Luncheon Hosted by S156, Struthers, Ohio



MATCHING FUNDS ACTIVITIES

BRANCH S44, MT. PLEASANT, PA Cash Purse Event

FCSLA Life S44, Mt. Pleasant, PA, held its second annual matching funds event on March 1, 2026 to benefit Vastation Church. Two-hundred-fifty (250) people were present for the “cash Purse” event. Everyone in attendance enjoyed a delicious luncheon, appetizers, and dessert, all homemade by the women of the parish. The event raised over \$12,700 to benefit the church.



On August 17, 2025, the annual scholarship luncheon was hosted by FCSLA Life Branch S156. Struthers, Ohio at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish Center with one-hundred-thirty-one in attendance. Everyone enjoyed a menu of chicken francese, pasta, green beans, mashed potatoes, oven roasted potatoes, classic caesar salad, and strawberry cake for dessert. We were pleased to have guests from our Cleveland office – Mike Again, our CEO and his wife, Katherine Bowes, our Fraternal, Marketing & Communications Director and her assistant Marissa Smith. We are grateful to Dominic Miller, who served as photographer for the event.

The Youngstown District had eight National scholarship winners this year, however; only three were able to attend the dinner. Brandon Yurcisin, S156 is attending St. Charles Boreomeo Seminary; and Corinne & Gwenyth McCluskey, J192 are attending Holy Family School. Congratulations to all the District Winners and to everyone who took the time to apply.

A special thank you to those who helped make the day so memorable for all in attendance.



PLEASE NOTE

FCSLA Life is a trade name and service mark of First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association of the United States of America. Our association has not changed its legal name which remains First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association of the United States of America.

We have adopted and may use FCSLA Life as a trade name for our organization and as a mark for services that we render.



ANNOUNCEMENT

Effective immediately please snail mail any information for *Fraternally Yours* to:
Carolyn Bazik, Editor, 413 Oley Street, Reading, PA 19601-2531

Post Office Box 1617 is no longer available to receive mail.



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Certain Choice MYGA 3- ICC25-SPA(3)-0925
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Certain Choice MYGA 7- ICC25-SPA(7)-0925
9%, 8%, 7%, 6%, 5%, 4%, 3%

Initial Guarantee Rate

3 year- 4.5% APY
 5 year- 4.8% APY
 7 year- 4.9% APY

The FCSLA Certain Choice Annuity is a Single Premium Deferred Annuity
Not available in all states

10% surrender charge free withdrawals are available in the first year of the contract and all subsequent years during the surrender charge period

RMD distributions are available surrender charge free in the first year of the contract and all subsequent years during the surrender charge period in addition to the 10% surrender charge free withdrawals

Interest rates on new issues of the FCSLA Certain Choice SPDA products can change at any time

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5- 25-SPA(5)-0925	5- 25-SPA(5)-0925-FL
7- 25-SPA(7)-0925	7- 25-SPA(7)-0925-FL

Not available in all states



Rating Date: October 2025
2025-2026 rating period
For the latest Best's Rating, access www.ambest.com

Questions?

Contact your local FCSLA Life Representative
or
Scan the QR code to contact a regional sales manager



Creamy Dream Bars

Chill, Slice, and Devour

CREAMY LEMON SQUARES

1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, room temperature, plus more for pan
1/2 cup confectioners' sugar, plus more for dusting
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 cup all-purpose flour, (spooned and leveled)
4 large egg yolks
1 can (14 ounces) sweetened condensed milk
3/4 cup fresh lemon juice (from about 3 lemons)

Preheat oven to 350°F. Butter an 8-inch square baking pan. Line bottom with parchment paper, leaving an overhang on two sides; butter paper.

Crust:

Using an electric mixer, beat butter, sugar, and salt until light and fluffy. Add flour, and mix on low just until combined. Press dough into the bottom and 1/2 inch up sides of prepared pan; prick all over with a fork. Bake until lightly golden, 15 to 20 minutes.

To keep the dough from sticking to your fingers when pressing in the crust, lightly flour them first.

Filling:

In a large bowl, whisk together yolks, condensed milk, and lemon juice until smooth. Pour over hot crust in pan; return to oven, and bake until filling is set, 25 to 30 minutes. Cool completely in pan.

Refrigerate until filling is firm, about 2 hours or up to 3 days. Using paper overhang, lift cake onto a work surface; cut into 16 squares, and dust with confectioners sugar.

Refrigerate lemon bars in an airtight container or covered with plastic wrap for up to 3 days.

OATMEAL RAISIN BARS

3/4 cup (1 1/2 sticks) unsalted butter, melted, plus more for pan
3/4 cup packed light-brown sugar
1/4 cup granulated sugar
1 large egg
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 cup all-purpose flour, (spooned and leveled)

2 cups old-fashioned rolled oats (*not quick-cooking*)

1 cup raisins

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Butter an 8-inch square baking pan. Line bottom with parchment paper, leaving an overhang on two sides; butter paper.

In a large bowl, whisk together butter, sugars, egg, salt, and cinnamon until smooth.

Add flour, oats, and raisins; fold in just until combined.

Spread batter in prepared pan, and bake until a toothpick inserted in center comes out with moist crumbs attached, 25 to 30 minutes. Cool completely in pan.

Using paper overhang, lift cake onto a work surface; cut into 16 bars.

To store the bars, make sure they are completely cooked before transferring to an airtight container. Keep them at room temperature for up to 3 days. To double the recipe, bake them in a 9X13 pan.

KEY LIME BARS

5 3/4 ounces graham crackers (about one-third of a 1-pound box), ground to fine crumbs in a food processor (1 cup plus 2 1/2 tablespoons)

1/3 cup sugar

5 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted

3 large egg yolks

1 1/2 teaspoons finely grated lime zest (about 2 limes)

1 can (14 ounces) sweetened condensed milk

2/3 cup fresh Key-lime juice (about 20 Key limes)

1/4 cup heavy cream

2 Key limes, thinly sliced into half-moons, for garnish

Preheat oven to 350°F. Stir together crumbs, sugar, and butter in a small bowl.:

Press evenly onto bottom of an 8-inch square glass or ceramic pan. Bake until dry and golden brown, about 10 minutes. Let cool in pan on a wire rack. Leave oven on.

Place egg yolks and zest in the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the whisk attachment; beat on high speed until

mixture is very thick, about 5 minutes.

On medium speed, pour in condensed milk in a steady stream, scraping down sides of bowl. Beat on high speed until thick, about 3 minutes.

On low speed, add lime juice; mix until just combined.

Pour filling over crust; spread evenly. Bake until just set, about 10 minutes.

Let cool completely on a wire rack. Chill at least 4 hours or overnight.

Prepare topping and serve:

Beat cream in a medium bowl until stiff peaks just form.

Cut dessert into 1 1/2-by-2-inch rectangles. Garnish each with whipped cream and a slice of Key lime.

Other Toppings:

Besides a dollop of whipped cream to finish these bars, there are other garnishes instead of or as well as the cream:

Lime zest

Dusting of powdered sugar

Shredded coconut

NO-BAKE PEANUT BUTTER BARS

1 1/2 cups cornflakes cereal, lightly crushed

1 1/2 cups powdered sugar, sifted

1/2 cup (4 oz.) cup salted butter, melted

1 1/4 cups creamy peanut butter, divided

1 cup bittersweet chocolate chips

Flaky sea salt, for garnish

Line an 8-inch square baking pan with parchment paper. Stir together cornflakes, powdered sugar, butter, and 1 cup of the peanut butter in a medium bowl until combined.

Press mixture evenly into prepared pan.

Add chocolate chips and remaining 1/4 cup peanut butter to a medium microwave-safe bowl. Microwave on HIGH in 30 second intervals, stirring between intervals, until chocolate chips are melted, about 1 minute.

Stir to combine. Spread evenly over cornflakes mixture.

Sprinkle with flaky sea salt.

Chill bars, uncovered, until firm, at least 4 hours or up to overnight.

Remove from refrigerator, and cut into squares.

In an airtight container, peanut butter bars will keep for 5 to 7 days. In a freezer, if wrapped properly, they're good for about 3 months.



The FCSLA Life Mission Statement

We provide financial security to our members while embracing our Catholic values and Slavic traditions.



The FCSLA Life Vision is to:

Be a Premier Fraternal Benefit Society that offers quality financial products and benefits.