



SHAPE TOMORROW!

A Long-Range Strategic Plan for St. Mary Parish, Hyde Park

For the decade beginning August 2011

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The Long-Range Strategic Planning Committee

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FOREWORD

After nearly 100 years of serving the Hyde Park community, St. Mary Parish developed a long-range strategic plan in 1996. That plan guided much of our pastoral growth over the next decade. It gave rise to Robisch Hall, the addition to the school, handicapped access to the church and initiatives like small groups.

In 2009, with the arrival of a new pastor, the Pastoral Council commissioned a renewal of the parish strategic plan. The renewal was led by a 15-member committee, representing Pastoral Council, the commissions and the school.

The plan development process involved a 12-month assessment phase, analyzing statistical data and gathering comprehensive input from the parish community. The committee interviewed the staff, group leaders and a broad representation of individual parishioners, culminating in a parish-wide survey in November 2010. Over 600 parishioners took part in the comprehensive survey, which examined everything from general needs to specific Mass time preferences. Parishioner Lainie Fertick, a professional in the field of market research, led the development of the survey and analysis of the data.

Following engagements with the Pastor, commissions and a parish-wide assembly, the final plan was formally adopted by the Pastoral Council on August 8, 2011. It is designed to guide the growth of the parish through 2021.

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LETTER FROM THE PASTOR

August, 2011

Dear Parishioners of St. Mary Church,

These pages contain the hopes and dreams of our parish.

It is the outcome of an 18-month effort to discern the strengths, needs and opportunities of our beloved parish and school. I am profoundly grateful for the impressive number of parishioners who participated in that discernment.

Our parish mission was the cornerstone of this planning process, and this plan supports a singular goal: growing our faith as individuals and as a community. With your embrace, this plan will be the guide for our next decade of pastoral growth.

This document lays out some mighty challenges. How can we elevate the spiritual vitality of our worship? How can we live out the gospel more fully? How can we be more welcoming and inclusive as a community? How can we better support our parishioners in their journey of faith formation? How can we improve our facilities and our organization to aid our mission?

While these challenges are mighty, I am confident that we will realize our goals. But it will only happen with your help. Implementation will not be my sole responsibility as pastor. It will require the work of the entire parish. We'll need leaders to step forward, and we'll need everyone to do their part.

Our future is full of possibility, and from what I've observed in this process, St. Mary parishioners are passionately committed to a better tomorrow!

As the late United Nations Secretary Dag Hammarskjold said, "For all that has been, Thanks! For all that will be, Yes!"

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Ken Schartz, Pastor

PARISH MISSION

Our mission is our reason for being. It states WHY we exist.

Mission

St. Mary Church, Hyde Park, is a Catholic community committed to:

- Gathering for worship of God,
- Spreading and living the teachings of Jesus Christ, and,
- Providing quality Catholic education for all ages

Vision

We are called to be disciples of Jesus, and are committed to:

- Ongoing personal conversion
- Discernment of our gifts through the Holy Spirit,
- Using our gifts to serve others as good stewards of God's varied grace.

We strive to be a grateful, compassionate community, engaged with one another, and committed to our role in building God's kingdom.

GOALS, STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLANS

Our goals are WHAT we want to achieve in order to fulfill our mission. Our strategies are HOW we will accomplish those goals. We will execute our strategies through specific, measureable programs and initiatives. These are our Action Plans.

WORSHIP

GOAL: *Generate a spiritual vitality in Sunday worship which draws the assembly into a closer relationship with Christ and with one another.*

STRATEGY (A): Increase "full, conscious and active" participation in the Mass and other liturgical celebrations.		
RATIONALE: Promoting external and internal participation was the goal of all the liturgical reforms of Vatican Council II, a reform still underway. External participation through responses, singing, postures and gestures or silence is the indispensable means to an internal participation in Christ's prayer to the Father.		
ACTIONS:	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Timing</i>
1. Educate our parish in the celebration of the Eucharist, other sacraments and rites of the Church (e.g. evening prayer) and forms of devotional prayer (e.g. rosary, etc.) through bulletin inserts or articles, a regular column in the bulletin, the Bell, the parish website, homilies, and speakers.	Worship Commission, Pastoral Minister and School	Immediate and ongoing
2. Continue to support and develop a committed base of lay liturgical ministers to serve responsibly in their ministry with a spirit of enthusiasm.	Discipleship Commission and Pastoral Minister	Within one year and ongoing
3. Increase a sense of reverence in parish liturgical celebrations among the clergy, lay liturgical ministers and the assembly.	Worship Commission and Pastoral Minister	Immediate and ongoing
4. Assist our preachers in offering challenging, well-prepared homilies that break open God's word and help the assembly encounter Christ in the Scripture readings and in their lives.	Worship Commission and Pastoral Minister	Immediate and ongoing
5. Study whether a revised Mass schedule would better meet the needs of more parishioners. Consider adding a Sunday evening Mass, young adult content and a children's liturgy. Rationale: Only 42% of parishioners attend Mass every weekend; <i>half</i> of those parishioners attend Mass elsewhere – usually for a more convenient time.	Worship Commission and Pastor	Within two years

STRATEGY (B): Provide music at Mass and other liturgical celebrations that inspires and supports prayerful participation.		
RATIONALE: Music is key to participation in the liturgy and to the experience of encountering the mystery of God in common ritual prayer. In our 2010 survey, our current music ministry rated about average on all attributes tested.		
ACTIONS:	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Timing</i>
1. Re-charter the role of music director, expanding the responsibility and accountability for a more integrated and vibrant ministry.	Pastor	Immediate
2. Establish a Music Committee within the Worship Commission to promote and support the vitality of the ministry	Worship Commission and Music Director	Within one year
3. Train all music ministers to properly lead and inspire the congregation to sing.	Music Director	Immediate and ongoing
4. Periodically teach new music to the congregation before Mass or other celebrations.	Music Director	Immediate and ongoing
5. Strengthen our existing adult traditional choir.	Music Director	Immediate and ongoing
6. Strengthen our contemporary music ministry.	Music Director	Immediate and ongoing
7. Ensure quality music selection (regardless of style) – music that is appropriate for the liturgy and for congregational participation.	Music Director and Music Committee	Within one year and ongoing

DISCIPLESHIP

GOAL: Deepen our commitment to living out the gospel – by utilizing our time, talents and treasure for the good of the parish and the good of our community.

STRATEGY (A): Grow our capacity for stewardship through a spirituality of gratitude and giving.		
RATIONALE: As disciples of Christ, we accept God’s love with gratitude and respond by sharing the gifts God has bestowed on us.		
ACTIONS:	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Timing</i>
1. Establish a new Discipleship Commission, supported by a new staff role: a Talents Coordinator. The commission and Talents Coordinator will be responsible for elevating the level of personal “gift giving” and matching those gifts with parish and community needs. Christian Outreach will become a committee within this commission. The commission will work to increase parishioners’ service within the parish and to those in need.	Pastoral Council and Pastor	Within one year
2. Raise awareness of the three prongs of stewardship—time, talent and treasure—and ensure that stewardship remains at the forefront of parish life.	Discipleship Commission and Finance Commission	Immediate and ongoing
3. Gain a thorough understanding of the talents and abilities of parishioners by offering an assessment inventory.	Discipleship Commission and Talents Coordinator	Within one year and ongoing

STRATEGY (B): Expand the impact of our spiritual gratitude and giving.		
ACTIONS:	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Timing</i>
1. Promote the use of electronic giving. Rationale: Only 30% of our survey-takers use the electronic system today.	Discipleship Commission and Finance Commission	Immediate and ongoing
2. Provide more “bite-sized” opportunities to serve those in need in easy, accessible ways. Rationale: In our survey, 68% of parishioners indicate that they would do more service work if it was easier to access and provide.	Discipleship Commission, Talents Coordinator and Pastoral Minister	Immediate and ongoing
3. Increase the level of involvement by St. Mary School and PREP (Parish Religious Education Program) students in service work for those in need.	Discipleship Commission, School Principal and Pastoral Minister	Immediate and ongoing
4. Provide educational tools to support the call of vocation to the priesthood and religious life.	Discipleship Commission and Pastoral Minister	Immediate and ongoing
5. Maintain supportive Prayer Chain and Bereavement programs.	Discipleship Commission and Pastoral Minister	Immediate and ongoing
6. Broaden our “Circle of Care” – providing more assistance with transportation, meals, companionship, etc.	Discipleship Commission and Pastoral Minister	Immediate and ongoing

STRATEGY (C): Reach out to others in our neighborhood to share Christ’s love.		
RATIONALE: Christ calls us to go and make disciples.		
ACTIONS:	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Timing</i>
1. For our programs and events, extend invitations to the broader community outside the parish.	Discipleship Commission, Faith Formation and Education Commission and Pastoral Staff	Immediate and ongoing
2. Continue to host a variety of ecumenical programs (e.g. Vacation Bible School, concerts in grotto, a speakers series, etc.)	Discipleship Commission and Pastoral Staff	Immediate and ongoing
3. Develop new ways to make our neighbors aware of our parish activities.	Communications Director	Within one year
4. Ensure that the parish’s voice is formally represented on local neighborhood committees and councils.	Pastoral Council	Immediate and ongoing

PARISH LIFE

GOAL: Foster a more welcoming, inclusive and cohesive community – one that values its diversity and gives everyone a sense of belonging.

STRATEGY (A): Increase our connectedness as a community.		
RATIONALE:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our survey-takers said the most important thing a church can do is be warm and inviting. • 25% of parishioners are new within the last five years; 30% of parishioners have no social connection. • Studies indicate that “believing is belonging.” Contrary to the assumption that having beliefs leads one to join a community with those beliefs, it in fact the engagement in a faith community that leads to deeper spiritual commitment. 		
ACTIONS:	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Timing</i>
1. Establish a new Parish Life Commission. The commission will be accountable for communications, hospitality and social engagement. The Welcome Committee, Festival Committee and Sports Association will all fall under its domain.	Pastoral Council	Within one year
2. Encourage and support the development of support groups, social networks and outreach ministries to other constituent groups (widowed/divorced, “empty nesters,” seniors, etc.).	Parish Life Commission and Pastoral Minister	Within one year and ongoing
3. Continue to offer a positive child care experience during Mass through the Ark.	Parish Life Commission and Pastoral Minister	Immediate and ongoing
4. Elevate our embrace of new parishioners by coordinating and updating welcome packages, contacting and meeting all new members, recognizing their own unique gifts as benefits to our community, and offering mentorship for the first year following a parishioner’s arrival.	Parish Life Commission and Pastoral Staff	Immediate and ongoing
5. Conduct more parish “fun” activities to connect individual members and different life groups.	Parish Life Commission	Immediate and ongoing

STRATEGY (B): Enhance the parish communications network.		
RATIONALE: Our sensing interviews indicate that communication is a major opportunity. Better communications will benefit all of our programs and ministries. It will also facilitate increased connectedness between the parish and school.		
ACTIONS:	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Timing</i>
1. Create a Communications Director position within the current staff. This person will be responsible for coordinating both the content and delivery of all parish and school communications.	Pastor and School Principal	Within one year
2. Develop a robust email newsletter / email blast program – including a more complete address list and enhanced capability Rationale: According to our survey, email is the #1 preferred method for communications from the church.	Communications Director	Within two years
3. Bring together the parish and school websites to create one, unified online presence. Unify the visual identity of the parish and school in all published materials.	Communications Director	Within two years

FAITH FORMATION AND EDUCATION

GOAL: Create an integrated approach to catechetical development, using a variety of vehicles to support all parishioners – from children to adults – in a lifelong journey of faith formation.

STRATEGY (A): Create an environment that fosters ongoing faith formation – one that is rich with parish-wide programs and resources.		
RATIONALE: By providing parish-wide programs and opportunities, we will be fulfilling our responsibility of teaching and promoting the Catholic faith.		
ACTIONS:	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Timing</i>
1. Re-charter the Education Commission as the Faith Formation and Education Commission and expand its responsibilities to include the catechetical development of all parishioners.	Faith Formation and Education Commission	Within one year
2. Conduct an annual parish-wide renewal program.	Faith Formation and Education Commission and Pastoral Minister	Annual
3. Increase participation in adult education programs, such as the Lenten Series and Lessons & Libations.	Faith Formation and Education Commission and Pastoral Minister	Immediate and ongoing
4. Increase participation in the devotions, such as Stations of the Cross, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, etc.	Worship Commission and Pastoral Minister	Immediate and ongoing
5. Promote awareness of Church seasons as well as reminders of the liturgical calendar dates (reminders of upcoming Holy Days of Obligation, Feast Days, Vocations week, etc) via enhanced communication methods.	Communications Director and Pastoral Minister	Immediate and ongoing
6. Support the existing efforts of POPS, young adult and youth ministry, and provide educational programs geared toward the spiritual growth of these groups.	Faith Formation and Education Commission and	Immediate and ongoing

	Pastoral Staff	
7. Draw SMS and PREP families into greater participation in parish life by actively encouraging their participation in liturgical ministries and other parish activities.	Discipleship Commission and Pastoral Staff	Immediate and ongoing

STRATEGY (B): Continue to sustain and strengthen our award-winning Parish School.		
RATIONALE: In our survey, academic excellence and high-school prep are the top reasons for choosing St. Mary School.		
ACTIONS:	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Timing</i>
1. Increase communication and support between the school community and the wider parish community. Promote unity between the two. Provide information on the school to all parishioners by emailing the school newsletter to all parishioners and providing notices of school events to all.	Communications Director	Immediate and ongoing
2. Develop stronger ties between school and parish groups. Email parish group activities to all school families.	Communications Director	Immediate and ongoing
3. Promote unity within the school among children of all ages.	School Principal	Immediate and ongoing
4. Ensure continued competence of the K-8 educational program – emphasizing a compelling and competitive junior high program.	School Principal	Immediate and ongoing
5. Maintain current class sizes and student-teacher ratios.	School Principal	Immediate and ongoing
6. Conduct a study to assess the need, feasibility and resource / infrastructure requirements for a new preschool. Rationale: Preschool parents are our key target for enrollment. However, our survey indicated that parish support is mixed, and there is a significant amount of competition.	Faith Formation and Education Commission and School Principal	Within two years

STRATEGY (C): Expand participation in the sacraments.		
RATIONALE: Sacraments nourish, strengthen, and give expression of faith. In our 2010 survey, our sacramental preparation programs received high marks. These are critical moments to create an enduring connection with the church. In addition to providing sacrament preparation for individual candidates, we should re-engage and reinforce the power of the sacraments parish-wide.		
ACTIONS:	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Timing</i>
1. Use times of sacramental preparation to reengage parishioners (e.g. parents with First Communion/Reconciliation recipients; congregation with Baptisms). Strengthen partnership between parish staff and school teachers to facilitate this.	Faith Formation and Education Commission and Pastoral Minister	Immediate and ongoing
2. Provide at least an annual celebration to support marriage.	Faith Formation and Education Commission and Pastoral Minister	Immediate and ongoing
3. Maintain enriching preparation programs for Baptism, Penance, Confirmation and Marriage.	Faith Formation and Education Commission and Pastoral Staff	Immediate and ongoing

STRATEGY (D): Help parishioners become more committed to their own spiritual

development.		
RATIONALE: Our parishioners are at varied stages of life and varied stages of spiritual development. We must provide various ways to meet the spiritual needs of all parishioners.		
ACTIONS:	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Timing</i>
1. Facilitate participation in small faith groups, bible studies, book clubs, prayer groups and parish social functions.	Faith Formation and Education Commission and Pastoral Minister	Immediate and ongoing
2. Strengthen our association with other local parishes so that programs do not have to be offered in every area at every parish.	Faith Formation and Education Commission	Within two years
3. Develop additional Youth (grades 6-8) and Young Adult (20-something) programs that are spiritually based.	Faith Formation and Education Commission and Pastoral Minister	Within two years
4. Improve the collection and usage of the parish library. Move it to a more accessible location.	Faith Formation and Education Commission and Pastoral Minister	Within two years
5. Offer alternative ways to access additional material, such as through web sites, pod casts, webinars, etc.	Faith Formation and Education Commission and Pastoral Minister	Within two years

FACILITIES

GOAL: Maintain and upgrade our facilities to enhance and aid our parish mission, ensuring accessibility for everyone.

STRATEGY (A): Undertake a major restoration, repair, and proactive maintenance plan of the church building.		
RATIONALE: The church building is our greatest asset. It is nearly 100 years old, and it represents the work of leading national artisans from the early 20 th Century. Due to wear and tear and use over time, its condition has deteriorated, and there has been little work done in recent decades to maintain the artwork, stained glass, woodwork, ceiling, etc. Exterior tuck pointing, roofing, step repair and cleaning issues need to be examined. Further neglect could lead to irreparable damage, and this will be a major expense for the parish. In addition, acoustics, accessibility and lighting could be improved. In our survey, church restoration was a top priority on the list of potential facilities improvements.		
ACTIONS:	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Timing</i>
1. Form a project committee for church restoration.	Pastoral Council and Business Manager	Within one year
2. Engage Liturgical consultants, construction and art restoration professionals to assess needs.	Project Committee and Business Manager	Within two years
3. Conduct a competitive bid process.	Project Committee and Business Manager	Within two years
4. Execute the required upgrades.	Project Committee and Business Mngr.	Within three years

STRATEGY (B): Improve parish space utilization.		
<p>RATIONALE: Spaces for meetings and athletics are always in demand in the parish. The school gym is smaller than desired and very limited in the seating it allows for spectators. In our survey, a new parish center is tied (along with church restoration and a new playground) as a top priority for capital improvement. Among school parents, our current facilities rank near the bottom of the list of “satisfiers.” This is an issue for the long-term competitiveness of the school.</p>		
ACTIONS	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Timing</i>
1. Form a project committee for facilities upgrades (including a new parish center / gym).	Pastoral Council, Finance Commission and Business Manager	Within one year
2. Conduct a study to assess the comprehensive needs for office, meeting, social, athletic, Pastor’s living space and any additional school needs (e.g. a preschool). Determine the size and scope requirements for additional facilities.	Project Committee and Business Manager	Within two years
3. Evaluate existing buildings (the Rectory, Seton Center and two houses) for potential space reallocation, and identify any needs for additional property acquisition. Hire an architectural / space planning firm to assist in the process. Use the 1996 “Phase 3” vision as a starting point.	Project Committee, Finance Commission and Business Manager	Within two years
4. Develop architectural plans, and conduct a competitive bidding process.	Project Committee and Business Manager	Within three years
5. Execute the required upgrades.	Project Committee, Finance Commission and Business Manager	Within five years

STRATEGY (C): Generate the capital needed to fund facilities improvements and ongoing maintenance (focusing on church restoration as the top priority).		
<p>RATIONALE: According to our survey, 63% of survey respondents would support a capital fund drive for church restoration. 54% would support a capital fund drive for a parish center.</p>		
ACTIONS:	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Timing</i>
1. Educate the parish on the significance of the treasures of the parish and our responsibilities toward maintaining them.	Discipleship Commission and Communications Director	Immediate and ongoing
2. Use competitive project bids to assess fundraising needs. Evaluate capital campaign needs and other potential funding sources (e.g. charitable grants).	Project Committee and Finance Commission	Within two years
3. Conduct a capital campaign.	Project Committee and Finance Commission	Within two years

ORGANIZATION AND LEADERSHIP

GOAL: Fully leverage and enable our precious people resources in fulfillment of our parish mission.

STRATEGY (A): Optimize the impact of our dedicated parish staff.		
ACTIONS:	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Timing</i>
1. Update the job descriptions for each staff role, creating clear accountabilities and measurable deliverables that align with parish priorities.	Pastor	Within one year
2. Develop an annual evaluation process for all staff. The process should include actionable feedback.	Pastor	Within one year

STRATEGY (B): Expand the impact and effectiveness of our commissions.		
ACTIONS	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Timing</i>
1. Re-charter the role and expectations of each commission to align with parish priorities.	All Commissions	Within one year
2. Create a process for the orderly transition of elected officers on each commission.	All Commissions	Within one year
3. Create a formal organization chart that reflects the four core areas of parish life: Worship, Discipleship, Fellowship and Faith Formation and Education.	Implementation Oversight committee, Pastoral Council and Staff	Within one year

ADDENDUM to SHAPE TOMORROW
A Long-Range Strategic Plan for
St. Mary Parish, Hyde Park
September 1, 2011

Below are listed the ideas that were generated during the Parish Assembly on May 11, 2011. Parishioners heard an overview of the Long Range Strategic Plan and then divided into small groups to discuss strategies for accomplishing some of the goals listed in the Plan. The Plan is divided into four main areas and there were two break out groups for each of the four areas. All notes from the evening were recorded, and because of this, there is duplication of ideas under the headings. Also, everyone was very forthcoming with thoughts and ideas and everything was written down, so many ideas listed in one section could very easily apply to another section.

Father Ken and the members of the Long Range Strategic Plan committee are very grateful to the many parishioners who attended the Assembly and were so willing to share their reaction to the Plan and their ideas for moving the Parish forward. You may have noticed that some of these ideas are already being enacted. Shape Tomorrow!

FAITH FORMATION AND EDUCATION:

How can we facilitate life-long learning?

- Parenting Ministry
- Engaging our youth to be committed to parish via ministries and creating an atmosphere of their value and feeling welcomed
- Provide meaningful volunteer opportunities
- Mentoring ministry that is cross-generational (partnering “master” parishioners with school students or Young Adults (22+) with jr. high/high school parishioners
- Expand available small groups for prayer and study
- Offer a Children’s Mass
- Big favorite – Offer a Young Adult Mass with **inspiring music** that would appeal to all...as everyone likes to feel good and young at heart.
- Make parish library more useable...comfortable seating/good reading material available/improve ambiance and then promote its existence
- Book of the year
- Change vocabulary – First Communion – Celebrating Eucharist for the First Time
- Pilgrimages – local and worldwide
- Connecting generations – opportunities for young and old, Sunday Night Life
- All this will dovetail into a sense of belonging

Commitment to Spiritual Development

- Invite our “master” parishioners into school to share their faith
- Expand Prayer Partner program beyond First Communion candidates to all school students with parishioners...an ongoing program

- Increase and develop more small sharing groups. Effectively communicate availability and invite participation making people feel welcome.
- Speaker series – communicate and expand outside of just during Lent. Study the best times to offer to increase attendance
- Introduce and encourage with the Sports Commission for teams to pray before games and other appropriate times
- Events for couples to develop family learning
- Increase commitment to and provide meaningful training for PREP program teachers
- Offer family rosary night
- School provide opportunities for Religion family-wide homework assignments
- Schedule tours of church to increase appreciation for our historical building
- Offer a list of focused retreats
- Expand or offer programs similar to Why Catholic?
- Programs to help Catholics understand why they do what they do (be able to defend our faith)
- Offer additional Day of Reflection (now offered by the PTO on a school morning during Lent) on Saturday and invite the whole parish
- Ad hoc study groups/groups for men
- Have a spiritual director available
- Handout explaining spiritual development
- Reading list/podcast on SMS website
- Book of the year for everyone – more small groups/book clubs
- Need jr. high and high school educational opportunities, especially for kids leaving Catholic schools

How can we best support existing groups – particularly youth group?

- Study successful youth ministry programs at other parishes to learn what makes them great
- Connect High School Pastoral Ministry Departments with our Youth Ministry to keep our parish high school students connected back to their “home” via offering opportunities for interaction (i.e. Jr. high and intermediate aged student having the opportunity to visit their St Mary high school students for an event at their high school and inviting high school students back for special events
- Have sufficient staff to support and implement effective youth program
- Encourage youth to be a part of the liturgy
- Weekly or monthly meeting with focused activities and topics for jr. high – need structure and leadership

- Yearly meeting with other youth groups in the area
- Need concrete summer activities
- Coordinate with Student Council
- Provide Structured supervision (not just an adult presence)
- Build on teens love of “social”
- Kids are variable – need to communicate with parents
- Parents need to start early helping kids develop good habits
- Increase advertising of how to get involved with activities
- “Young Life” – something like this Activity and Faith – sneak into program
- Expand PREP and POPS
- Education night once per month
- 5 pm mass on Sunday – food and fellowship afterwards
- Intergenerational programs

Ideas to improve retention for school

- Celebrate our Catholic faith and identity
- Offer extra-curricular activities beyond sports

PARISH LIFE

How can we increase our connectedness as a community?

- Open Mass with introductions to those around us
- Tasteful signage
- Pictures of marriage/baptisms/1st Communicates – celebrate sacraments

How can we model Christ’s openness and inclusion in our community?

- More ecumenical events
- Greeters at fellowships/parish events

How can we reach out to new members and make them a part of our community?

- Assign guest to a parishioner
- Parish metros
- Registration cards in church/online registration
- Registration at all fellowships

How can we reach out to disconnected members and make them a part of our community?

- Alumni homecomings
- Personal calls
- Core group to work on disconnected
- Personal contact

- Allow parishioner to display/use talents

What kind of support networks can we create? For example, how can we better help seniors, “empty nesters,” the grieving, etc.?

- Activities for widows/widowers
- Crafty ladies/teen interaction
- Notification of parishioner deaths

How can we communicate effectively to all parishioners?

- Voice mail/one call system
- Electronic newsletter
- Facebook
- Designated greeter at all fellowships
- Improve website

FACILITIES [These discussions covered both the restoration of our Church as well as the feasibility/need for a parish center and/or a new gym. Some of the questions addressed were: How do we get parishioners engaged in supporting this? How do we approach fundraising? Who or what would be helpful to the process?]

- Have drawings of what’s possible, architectural renderings, so people have a clear idea and information
- Be specific about goals, where the money is going, what money is for
- Make vestibule more inviting, improve lighting
- Hire a liturgical consultant
- Prioritize things to be done in church, clarify what is need-based or structural (has to be done) vs. aesthetic (would like to)
- Rally around the centennial of church building for fundraising for church
- Consult with parishes who have undergone a similar process, both about ideas for raising capital and ideas for engaging parishioners
- Explore costs as a way to prioritize: what’s realistic; SMS students’ families spend a lot
- Keep donors informed how money is spent and don’t change priorities midstream
- Explore grants and foundations
- Lead donors – development committee
- Commitment of parishioners to regular contributions to collection and sustainment of same
- Hire professional development consultant
- Distinguish percentage of collection from envelopes, from cash
- Have an Altar Society type group, caring for church besides basic maintenance, regularly and extensively scheduled
- Get SMS involved in care of church for service hours
- Quieter kneelers (hydraulic)

- Consult art restorers on best methods of cleaning church
- Ask donors to sponsor a percentage of specific projects
- “Adopt-a-tile” in grotto (Fr. Dave had asked a parishioner several years ago to design some tiles for the Mary statue in the grotto)
- The current generation of parishioners should imitate those who first built this church; a parish tradition and responsibility as stewards of this church
- Brighter cafeteria
- Incorporate philosophy (of fundraising) into culture of parish membership
 1. From the pulpit, but judiciously
 2. Better if appeal comes from other parishioners
- there are many interests in the parish; need to pull them all together to rally around common goal – sometimes there are conflicting priorities and need to give everyone something from what they want
- We need to recruit personally
- Electronic giving facilitates younger donors (not just for weekly collection, but for fund-raising)
- Broaden pool of donors – invite new donors
- Have multiple projects simultaneously, to offer a range of options for support
 - Both SMS and church facilities
 - Engage children
- We need better facilities for school to be competitive in attracting students
- It’s time to upgrade the gym and school facilities
- Buy Shady Lane to gain more space
- Make the doors of the church easier to open, front doors and also double doors on Shady Lane
- Have heat in the elevator stairwell
- Gym campaign would draw more donors
- Accessibility needs to remain a priority
 - More handrails are needed on the steps to the grotto
 - More handrails on the steps from Shady Lane to Robisch Hall
 - Better sound system in church
 - Sound devices in church for hearing impaired
 - Video screens in church in rear, so those in back can see
 - Make present gym more accessible
 - Whole parish plant needs to be more accessible
- We need a better system to clear snow from church steps, especially on Sundays; ushers would help if shovels were available
- Some were surprised to hear that Church has restoration needs. Need to educate the parish on the problems, needs.
- Prioritize
- The church restoration into Centennial

- Grants! Look into ones that cater into historic. Some members of parish have expertise in finding and filing for grants.
- Gym – doesn't give a good impression.
- Not just about the gym for sports – that space has other uses and for the parish at large
- Parish Center has more benefit than gym
- Don't rule out offsite gym/fields...
- Parishioners-Church, Parents-School: need to find a way to mesh them as one
- It's about the Parish – not parish vs. school
- Benchmark with other local congregations. How did they solve space problems? Do we have common or shared needs? (fits, too, with community theme)
- What is Parish view on obtaining adjacent properties?
- Do we have (share) use a site plan of existing properties?
- We have more space available than people know about (white house...)
- Marketing campaign to share info on current space that we have, need, etc. with parish
- Creative financing – buy properties and rent them out – they should at least by self sustaining. Could even be a source of revenue until we're ready to use.
- Is apartment building on Rectory block still available?
- People respond to individual passions
- Get people to contribute to what interests them
- Some people need to be asked – or else they won't think they are needed (when asked to respond to a large request)
- Fundraising – need to get a holistic picture including all needs (church and other facilities combined)
- Capital campaign and smaller projects (bite size)
- May find parishioners that have an interest/passion that they want to fund directly
- Foundations first, then parishioners
- What can fundraisers do to help us?
- Development director? Need development to be ongoing, not point in time campaign.
- PTO has grant committee – could we grow that for the larger Parish?
- Update website to better communicate facilities need.
- If we don't ask, people won't give
- Unify school/parish websites
- Microsite dedicated to facilities
- Campaign around 2017
- Identify needs in an overall plan
- Is there a campus plan?
- 10 year – or could be longer
- Is structure set up in existing groups (outlines in strategic plan) to develop master plan?
- Do we outsource master plan? (or leverage people with "planning" expertise)?
- Present needs visually

- What about green space?

WORSHIP [Discussion focused on generating a sense of spirituality]

- Have a mass that is strictly done by children (readings, serving, choir, etc.)
- Growing the number of new parishioners
- Providing new missals and mass booklets
- Suggesting more reverence at mass (more appropriate attire). [This was the most dominant topic of the night. Suggestions were made about teaching reverence either through the pulpit, or writing about reverence in the bulleting. Many made it very plain that the minute we enter the church we are to become fully engaged in the reverence of the mass.]
- Providing better for the disabled
- Devote some homilies about why as Catholics we do some of the things we do during mass.
- Reviving the Child's Choir and a vibrant Youth Minister (development in childhood what could carry into adulthood)
- An overall increased support to the music ministry
- Adult servers

STEWARDSHIP [The grateful return of our gifts of time, talent and treasure.]

- Create more opportunities for involvement on a limited time frame
- One call now – good idea
- Be able to go online to the website to find all volunteer opportunities
- Personal note/call to new parishioners: invite to parish event or volunteer opportunity
- Network with newly married/newly registered – allow them to communicate with each other. Search on website for directory? Way to organize directory into categories.
- Using technology going forward...
- Reach out to college students in the area.
- Sunday mass – Grounds for Faith
- Talking up opportunities, i.e. St. Vincent de Paul, at mass; personal invite
- Provide short term small volunteer opportunities
- Talent coordinator: match jobs/tasks to people; personal invitations to get people involved; well-defined opportunities
- Use the bulleting with a want ads section
- Have a way for someone to “champion” a cause or opportunity
- Work closely with welcome committee to share info and strengths listed on registration form
- Utilize strength finders
- Create database/list of people and their availability
- Intergenerational sharing of time, talents, and treasure (work together) ongoing

- Linking activities to a planned faith focus – include prayers, purpose, reflections to stewardship projects
- Join with other local, Hyde Park churches in projects
- Spotlight (perhaps in the bulletin) what's already happening and people who already are sharing and leading as a volunteer
- Calendar of bite size opportunities available online
- Parishioner profile online with self maintenance to include talents/needs
- On line giving: explain and encourage use. Let people know this is the preferred method
- Like at the Assembly, make babysitting available