

Text of St John Parish Plan Discussion

Masses: Saturday, October 22, 2011 – 5:00PM Vigil
 Sunday, October 23, 2011 – 8:30AM & 10:30AM

Purpose: To bring to the Parish the results of the planning process we have been engaged in over the past seven months. To inform and make people aware what came of their input. We want them to begin the process of buy-in and investment in the activities that will take us into the next phase of life at St John Parish.

Introduction: 2 Minutes

Presenter: ***Father Crispin***

Points to cover:

- Introducing the topic
- Remind the parishioners why it was and is important
- Indicate your support and commitment
- Show them you are excited

Plan Discussion: 10 Minutes

Background

Presenter: ***Vigil – Jesse Franklin / Sun 8:30 – Frank Feeman / Sun 10:30 – Chris Kaufman***

Points to cover:

- Why we did this – Our parish has come to a “cross-roads” moment when it is time to take stock and decide deliberately how we will move into the future. Some of the items that have come together include:
 - Our church attendance is up and rising
 - Our school is robust, healthy, and at capacity enrollment
 - The school has just finished their accreditation process and 5-Year Plan
 - Father Crispin has been assigned to a definite term as pastor
 - Agnes Jacobson, our long-term and spectacular school Principal, has retired
 - Bernadette O’Leary, highly qualified, experienced, and energetic, is our new Principal
 - Parish debt is in excess of \$1.5 million
 - Several important physical plant items must be tackled in the near term, including the school plumbing and the church bell tower.

We knew we could jump in and start tackling the “red-alert” items. We could have started a campaign to pay down the debt and pull in funding for the major items we knew about but we decided “Ready – Fire – Aim” was probably not the best approach. There were several reasons for this but two are probably enough:

- First: We were pretty sure if we did not take a strong and thorough approach to creating a plan, if we just jumped in, we would miss important things and they would pop up to bite us down the road.
- Second: We felt as a parish, we owed it to ourselves and each other to create a plan that showed good stewardship and commitment to a thoughtful approach to the future rather than being reactive – especially if we were planning to have serious conversations about investments and money.

Process:

When we started the process we looked at the guidelines for planning and decision-making from the Archdiocese. The guidelines are very clear about a number of things including:

- **Advisory System:** The parish governance model is an advisory model. The parish provides input, advice, and recommendations and the pastor either validates or makes the final decision.
- **Inclusion:** We are instructed to get participation, input, and advice from parish members, commissions, etc.
- **Consensus:** To the extent we possibly can, we seek consensus and unity in our plans, initiatives, and decisions.

So – a paramount principle of our process was listening and input.

The process took seven months. We utilized three teams:

- **Father’s Core Team:** Staff and Commission leaders (Pastoral Council, Liturgy, School, Finance) as well as some past commission leaders.
- **Larger Core Team:** Additional Commission leaders and individuals who had expressed strong interest in participating
- **Parish at Large:** Open invitation team from the entire parish

We held a total of 16 team meetings of various types as well as lots of offline organizational meetings:

The Last Plan:

Part of our process was to build on work previously done. We want to be sure we acknowledge all the work done in the previous plan that was created as part of the last capital campaign process. We want to thank the group that led that planning effort – it was excellent work and it became the parent of this plan.

Results:

Lessons Learned

One thing you often discover when you set out to make a plan like this is you encounter something that needs to be taken care of before you can be effective creating a plan. That happened during our planning.

During the Community input sessions, we got the message loud and clear there was a strong desire to talk through the issues related to the parish debt. We felt it was an important enough topic and people felt strongly enough about it that we better take the time to address it. We actually stopped the planning process for about 3 weeks to take a breather and talk about it.

So, on June 16th Father used his homily time to talk about the debt, how it had come about, and that it is time to move forward and deal with it rather than dwelling on the issues of the past. It did not mean we were not going to learn lessons from what had happened. A key point of the plan we are creating is the improvement on the processes of debt management, parish financial communications, and consultative advice around major financial matters.

The Outcome

Our work as a parish boiled down to some clear direction we have given ourselves:

Who we are:

We are a community of faith. Our mission statement describes our faith and how we come together as a community to live that faith. If you have not read our Mission Statement, I recommend take a little time and do so. Beyond that, however, one theme ran through all of our meetings and discussions: Community.

We are a community of faith made up of people who love and care for one another.

Again and again we heard this. It is our defining characteristic. We are a community. We live our faith together and are good stewards of our community.

There is a longer description of our identity along with a copy of our Mission Statement available at the table we have set up (Vigil in vestibule / Sunday in Egan Hall entrance). You're welcome to pick one up and take a closer look.

What this means:

When we boiled it down, we found six areas we need to focus on and be good at. These are:

- Faith: Striving for full and active participation, lifelong faith formation for all, and integrating our faith as central to our lives
- Ministries: The way we serve one another, the larger community and the world
- Finance: The strong underlying financial framework that allows us to deliver on our mission
- Facilities & Grounds: The stewardship of our buildings and land
- Business Management: The way we operate and manage the nuts and bolts of this nonprofit organization
- Communications: How we effectively talk and listen to each other.

The Focus Areas

Please pass down the handouts that are at the end of the pews.

In order to take us into the future, we have created five focus areas. Each one has been assigned an owner by Father and is starting on their individual plan. These are:

<i>Faith – Leaders: Anne Merklin & Rob Ungaro</i>	
Element	Outcome
Liturgy	Parishioners and visitors fully and actively participate in parish Liturgies, , music, and prayer services.
Faith Formation	The people of the parish actively engage in life-long learning and spiritual growth in their faith, the sacraments and prayer so that parishioners may fully integrate their faith into their daily lives so as to become true disciples of Christ.

Areas we are looking at include:

- Rebuilding volunteer teams for sacramental preparation and faith formation programs.
- Revitalizing the Faith Formation Commission
- Enhancing faith formation for adults in both the parish and the school

Ministries – Leader: TBD – We are working on a setting up an organization and leadership team for this group. Watch the bulletin and listen for more information on this Focus Area.

Element	Outcome
Overriding Ministries Framework	An active and effective ministries structure designed to support and provide for the outcomes desired by St. John Parish.
Faith Ministries	Ministry structures to engage St. John’s parishioners in active worship and life-long faith formation including education in the Catholic Faith.
Community & Social Ministries	To create and encourage a welcoming and vibrant faith community that welcomes and is hospitable to all current, potential, and new parishioners
Education Ministries	Provide excellent and accessible pre-school to grade eight Catholic and academic education to all parish children at Saint John School.
Outreach Ministries	Provide support, services, and connection to those parishioners in need as well as those in the larger community and the world.

Examples:

Finance – Frank Feeman w/ Ellen Petrie of Finance Commission

Element	Outcome
Financial Management	Streamlined and robust financial methods and mechanisms for control, reporting, and appropriate communications
Financial Strategy & Plan	Financial Strategy to assure the dependable and predictable financial health of St John Parish
Financial Risk Management	Identify, prioritize, fund, and resolve high priority, short-term financial issues. Issues for resolution include current parish debt and anticipated short-term facilities expenses.

Examples:

The Finance Council has prepared an 18 month work plan that reflects the guidance of our planning process.

Projects in the work plan include:

- Developing a multiyear financial plan based on input from the Parish ministries, Facilities group and staff.

- The plan will address projected revenues, necessary reserve levels, funding facilities needs, repaying debt and ongoing operations.
- Designing new more frequent and understandable financial reports for the Parish at large.
- Reviews of accounting controls.

Facilities and Grounds – Leader: Steve Berlage	
Element	Outcome
Facilities Management	Deliberate, organized, and predictable facilities and grounds planning and management methodology including adequate funding and financial management
Facilities Vision	Define and achieve a specific state of the facilities and grounds in the next five years.
High Priority Facilities Issues	Identify, prioritize, fund, and resolve high priority, short-term facilities issues.

Examples of areas we will be looking at:

- An engineering evaluation of the entire campus
- Overall space and facilities utilization
- Creation of a long-term facilities vision

Business Management – Leader: Dani D’Amelio	
Element	Outcome
Operational Management	Optimized operational and organizational management model

Examples:

- Efficient use of technology
- Effective use of volunteers
- Clarity around how the various commissions, committees, staff, etc. communicate and work together.

Communications – Leader: Gretchen Swanson

Element	Outcome
	TBD

Examples:

- Enhancing and creating regular and easy to use communication methods for the various desires and needs of our parishioners
- Making sure our communications are reaching everyone
 - High tech folks
 - Low tech folks
 - Regular attendees
 - Home bound
 - School families

Recap Thoughts

- 2011 is not 1958
- The concepts of community and family have evolved
- We want to be a community
- *It will take work to remain a strong and thriving community*
- *We will start from a position that mission leads and we will find the finances to make it happen rather than the other way around.*

What Next?

Each of these areas is now creating a plan and in the near future will be looking for help. Some areas will need very specific types of help and some will need general help. If you are interested there are a few ways:

1. We have a signup sheet at the table we have set up
2. We have a location on the web site where you can let us know
3. Call the parish office and let Evie know
4. Someone may come looking for you

We will be creating reports to Father Crispin. These will be available on the Plan webpage and we will be reporting periodically about or status in the bulletin.

Our materials and reports will be available to you at the web site or by calling the office and asking for a copy of the latest. We are moving.

Please take a look at the table we have set up. There are some additional handouts and information on how to stay informed. You can also ask any questions you have and if we don't have the answer, we will find it and get back to you.

Thanks to everyone who worked on this, it was a true team effort – not always easy but worthwhile.