

## **Parish Transformation Meeting #2**

\*Approximately 28 people attended the Parish Transformation meeting #2 (9/16/15). The agenda included (a) introductions by new attendees—name, preferred Mass, favorite Bible verse (b) voicing our hopes and concerns and (c) parish overview including patron saint, history, current situation (i.e. October count), demographics, sacramental trends, and financial overview.

### **Hopes and Concerns**

Participants first individually wrote down one hope and one concern for the Parish, then divided into 5 small groups to discuss & summarize.

#### **Group # 5**

Hopes:

Growth of Parish

More Community

Sunday School to attract young families

Development of friendships between parishioners

Unification/integration of school and parish

How to get young people to participate in the parish

Concerns:

Not losing traditions such as genuflecting, kneeling (e.g. showing reverence to God, basics of our faith.)

How to integrate school & parish

Get attendance at Mass higher

Financial instability

The Parish has a long history & a lot of hard work behind it; let's not lose it

Parish closure

#### **Group #4**

Hopes;

Increase church population

Unite the church and school

That we will grow as a Parish in the virtues of faith, hope, and love

Concerns:

Financial issues of the parish during to fewer people attending Church

Inability to reverse the loss of Polish parishioners b/c of economic & political considerations

Also, previous pastors who left took parishioners with them...

Division exists between Church and school

### **Group #3**

#### Hopes:

more people come to Church  
more activities for spiritual fulfillment  
more active parishioners  
more young families will get involved in our Parish  
closer cooperation with school families

#### Concerns:

Church & School should form one community  
Same 8 volunteers are the only ones organizing parish activities  
Lack of involvement in Parish life  
Polish Catholics moving out of the area are not replaced by young Americans moving in  
Parish might be closed in the future

### **Group #2**

#### Hopes:

Develop family-friendly environment at Mass  
Have a message for both adults and children—e.g. Sunday school for children  
Unity of all members of the Parish (school & church, English & Polish)  
Higher attendance at Mass  
Greater community  
Increased opportunities to gather & serve outside of Mass

#### Concerns:

Changing demographics, loss of Parishioners leads to lack of finances  
People need a reason to return to the Parish  
Once they are here, they need a reason to stay (that they feel welcome, find spiritual fulfillment)  
How to recruit & retain parishioners

### **Group #1**

#### Hopes:

That we can stay traditionally St. Helens: other parishes are consolidating, but we need to remain true to our traditions  
We need to continue to grow parish  
Build a sense of community through I'  
Increased number of programs in Parish (e.g. Sunday school, prayer groups, pilgrimages);  
If more programs at parish, maybe more engagement?  
That we can reach out to new people in the neighborhood & make them feel welcome through (a) greeters at Mass  
(b) helping people to stay longer after Mass (e.g. coffee & donuts)

That Fr. Frank will engage more with parishioners (e.g. greet families after Mass).

Concerns:

Lack of school involvement in Parish

Finances—how are we spending money (we bought a big new sign, but was that really the best allocation of resources?)

Separation of Poles and Americans

Lack of tools to engage young families.

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### **Key Parish Data:**

#### **Patron Saint: St. Helen**

During her lifetime Helen was the most popular woman in the Roman Empire and perhaps the entire world. Yet, today, people know little about her. Remembered today as the finder of the true cross, Helen was revered in her lifetime for her church building and charitable activities. Born of pagan parents in 255 A.D. in Drepanum, an ancient city in present day Turkey, Helen became an innkeeper. She married Constantius Chlorus, a Roman general who later cast her aside for political reasons. From this relationship her son, who would become Emperor Constantine I, was born.

Baptized a Christian at age 63, Helen practiced her religion faithfully. Dressing simply, she slipped into Mass in Rome among the crowds, helped at the convent on Mount Sion and performed great works of charity for the poor with her personal funds. Her life was not one of glamour and glory, but one for which God had chosen her. Helen, "Empress of the World" and "Mistress of the Empire," looked upon herself as "servant of the handmaids of Christ." In her glorification of God, Helen exercised great influence on her son's church-building campaign. While excavating for the building of a basilica on the summit of Golgotha, which Helen was supervising, she is credited with **identifying the true cross of Christ**. The relics of the true cross that are venerated everywhere in Christendom today are traditionally associated with Helen. Helen died in Nicomedia in 333 A.D.

\*summarized from website, St. Helen Parish, Howard Beach, NY

[http://www.sthelen.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=10&Itemid=11](http://www.sthelen.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10&Itemid=11)

#### **Parish History:**

St. Helen Church was founded in 1913 to serve Catholics of Polish birth and descent who had moved west of the Polish parishes of St. Stanislaus Kostka, Holy Trinity, St. John Cantius, and Holy Innocents.

On June 6, 1913, Archbishop James E. Quigley appointed Rev. Peter H. Pyterek to organize the Polish Catholics who lived in the territory bounded by North Ave. on the north; Kinzie St. on the

south; Kedzie Ave. on the west; and Wolcott Ave. on the east. The new pastor celebrated Mass for the first time on July 13, 1913 in the assembly hall of the Columbus school located on Augusta Blvd. between Hoyne Ave. and Leavitt St.

Father Pyterek commissioned the architectural firm of Worthmann & Steinbach to draw up plans for a combination church and school building, the cornerstone of which was laid on Nov. 2, 1913. The brick structure, which was built on the south side of Augusta Blvd. near Western Ave., contained a church on the first floor and eight classrooms on the second floor. In order to complete the parish plant, the pastor converted an apartment building at 2315 W. Augusta Blvd. into a rectory and remodeled a building at 2319 W. Augusta Blvd. into a convent. Archbishop Quigley dedicated St. Helen Church on Sept. 6, 1914. On the following day, four Felician Sisters opened the parish school with an enrollment of 312 children.

Enrollment grew so rapidly that a second school building, located just west of the rectory, was constructed and this structure was dedicated on Aug. 23, 1925. Within five years, 1,532 children were enrolled in the parish school.

Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, St. Helen remained a tightly-knit Polish parish. The last improvement in the parish complex made by the founding pastor was the renovation of the convent. This project was completed in 1945 at a cost of \$75,000.

Father Pyterek died on Oct. 25, 1955 after serving as pastor for 42 years. His successor was Very Rev. Msgr. Stanislaus J. Piwowar, S.T.D. Prior to his appointment on Jan. 13, 1956, Msgr. Piwowar had served as executive director of the Catholic League for Religious Assistance to Poland.

Msgr. Piwowar initiated a \$2 million expansion program and under his leadership, the present parish complex took shape. The first phase of this program involved the construction of an eight classroom school addition which was dedicated on Dec. 2, 1956. At the time, 1,332 children were enrolled in St. Helen school under the direction of 17 Felician Sisters.

On July 20, 1957, Msgr. Piwowar was named a Domestic Prelate with the title Right Reverend Monsignor. In January 1958, he announced that Samuel Cardinal Stritch had granted permission for the construction of a new church. In order to increase the amount of parish land on Oakley Blvd., the alley was closed and an adjoining building was purchased at a cost of \$44,000. The old rectory was demolished and the architectural firm of Pirola and Erbach drew up plans for a new church and parish residence.

Ground at the southwest corner of Augusta and Oakley Blvd. was broken for the new church and work began on the rectory at 2315 W. Augusta Blvd. Msgr. Piwowar laid the cornerstone of the church on Aug. 16, 1964. Designed in the form of a fish, a symbol of Christ, the new church was constructed of Wisconsin Lannon Stone and it combines mass and vigor with harmony of design. The oval shape of the interior provides seating for 1,100 persons in eight rows of solid walnut pews. The Stations of the Cross, designed by Armando Santini in nickel and silver, rank among the finest examples of sacred art--they are original in design, meticulous in detail, and vibrant in appearance. The four stained glass bay windows of 16 panels each were designed and executed

by Erhard Stoetner of Milwaukee, WI.

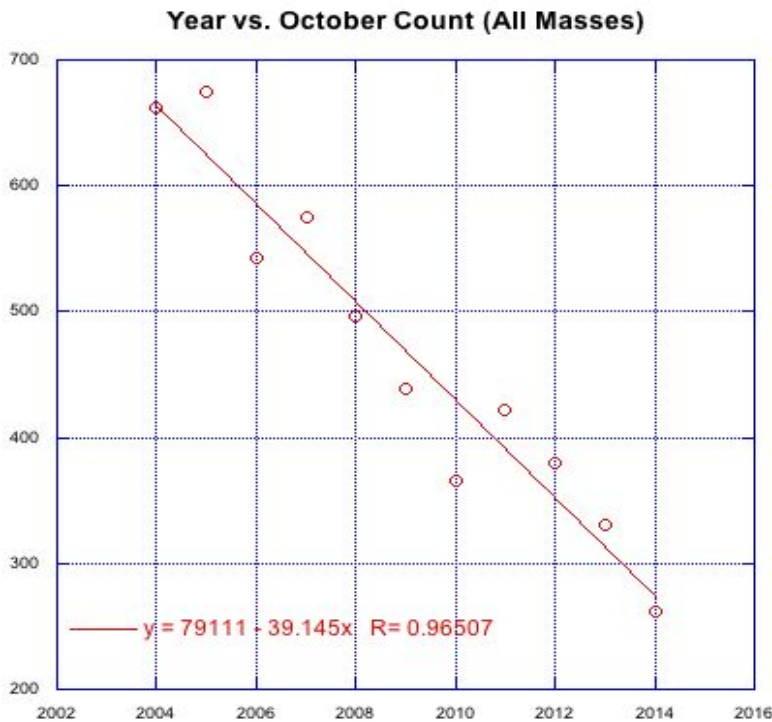
The cost of building the church and rectory was \$1,250,000. The next phase of the expansion program involved the renovation of the second combination building at a cost of \$125,000. This structure, which had been built in 1925, was rededicated on Sept. 21, 1969 as St. Helen Youth Center. The opening of the center, with its gymnasium, auditorium, library, and meeting rooms, marked the 40th anniversary of Msgr. Piwowar's ordination.

In November 1970, the convent on Augusta Blvd. was remodeled once again, this time at a cost of \$35,000. The final project in the renovation program begun by Msgr. Piwowar was the creation of parking and playground facilities on Western Ave. at a cost of \$65,000.

At its peak, more than 2,500 families of Polish descent—approximately 7,500 individuals—belonged to the parish.

\*Summarized from the Polish Genealogical Society of Chicago notes. <http://pgsa.org/research-directory/archdiocese-of-chicago-polish-parishes/st-helen-church-history/>

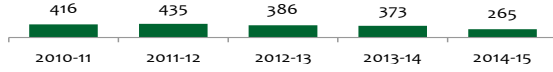
### Current Situation of Parish:



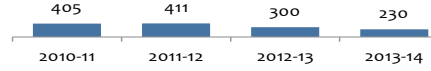
Year	Polish	English	All	diff. from prev. year
2001	771	357	1128	
2002	401	186	586	-484
2003	434	211	644	58
2004	453	209	662	18
2005	423	252	675	13
2006	376	176	543	-132
2007	398	177	575	32
2008	294	203	497	-78
2009	239	200	439	-58
2010	226	140	366	-73
2011	176	246	422	56
2012	193	187	380	-42
2013	169	161	330	-50
2014	113	149	262	-68

**St. Helen**

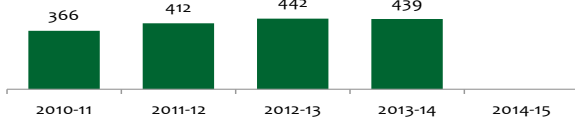
**Weekly Mass Attendance (Oct Count)**



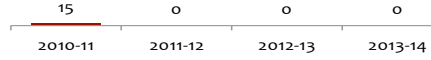
**Registered Families**



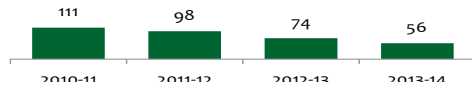
**School Enrollment**



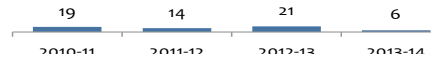
**Religious Education**



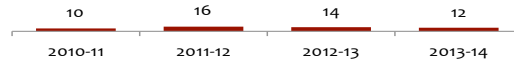
**Baptisms - Infant and Adult**



**Weddings**



**Funerals**



**Demographic Data**

	2010		2015 estimate		2020 projection		Change
Hispanic, All Races	9,866	28.6%	8,325	23.8%	7,137	20.1%	-1,188
White, Non-Hispanic	20,104	58.3%	22,383	64.0%	24,282	68.5%	1,899
Black, Non-Hispanic	2,699	7.8%	2,246	6.4%	1,838	5.2%	-408
Asian, Non-Hispanic	1,079	3.1%	1,240	3.5%	1,396	3.9%	156
Other	712	2.1%	754	2.2%	787	2.2%	33
<b>Total Population:</b>	<b>34,460</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>34,948</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>35,440</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>492</b>
<b>Age</b>	<b>2010</b>		<b>2015 estimate</b>		<b>2020 projection</b>		<b>Change</b>
0-4	2,073	6.0%	1,969	5.6%	1,770	5.0%	-199
5-9	1,318	3.8%	1,995	5.7%	1,948	5.5%	-47
10-14	1,252	3.6%	1,297	3.7%	1,986	5.6%	689
15-17	1,571	4.6%	1,526	4.4%	1,528	4.3%	2
18-24	2,692	7.8%	1,130	3.2%	976	2.8%	-154
25-34	11,717	34.0%	11,287	32.3%	9,155	25.8%	-2,132
35-44	5,587	16.2%	6,395	18.3%	6,998	19.7%	603
45-64	5,698	16.5%	6,578	18.8%	7,911	22.3%	1,333
65+	2,552	7.4%	2,771	7.9%	3,168	8.9%	397
<b>Total Population:</b>	<b>34,460</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>34,948</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>35,440</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>492</b>

Source: Nielsen, Inc. estimates for census tracts within parish boundaries



2014 - PARISH PROFILE

Parish Profile 25.1 DEANERY  
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Parish Name: **St. Helen (71620)**

FISCAL YEAR ENDING:	6/30/2014	6/30/2013	6/30/2012	6/30/2011	6/30/2005
October Count	373	386	435	416	709
Registered Families	230	300	411	405	443
Not Registered Families	50	60	0	0	0
Baptisms	56	74	98	111	71
Funerals	12	14	16	10	19
Weddings	6	21	14	19	20
School Enrollment (K3-8)	439	442	412	366	230
Religious Education Enrollment (K3-8)	0	0	0	15	0
<b>CHURCH REVENUES</b>					
1 Sunday & Holy Day Collection	\$133,383	\$150,439	\$140,912	\$163,288	\$122,735
2 Christmas Collection	\$6,792	\$8,451	\$9,690	\$9,208	\$10,974
3 Easter Collection	\$7,595	\$8,466	\$9,589	\$9,376	\$13,230
4 Other Ordinary Collections	\$10,957	\$11,720	\$14,015	\$18,290	\$41,721
5 Bingo Income	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$58,118
6 Lease	\$4,400	\$5,200	\$5,000	\$6,210	\$4,000
7 Fund Raising	\$636	\$(257)	\$(2,027)	\$2,690	\$1,792
8 Other Church Income	\$25,102	\$34,686	\$32,463	\$42,889	\$41,800
<b>9 Total Church Revenues</b>	<b>\$188,865</b>	<b>\$218,705</b>	<b>\$209,642</b>	<b>\$251,951</b>	<b>\$294,370</b>
<b>CHURCH EXPENSES</b>					
10 Salaries	\$122,868	\$109,710	\$108,364	\$107,830	\$81,929
11 Benefits	\$20,577	\$18,349	\$17,775	\$18,280	\$18,727
12 Occupancy	\$87,232	\$81,678	\$100,093	\$102,790	\$78,668
13 Bingo Expenses	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
14 Other Church Expenses	\$33,157	\$40,310	\$17,949	\$20,417	\$8,272
15 Assessments	\$27,600	\$33,144	\$33,936	\$37,306	\$36,160
<b>16 Total Church Expenses</b>	<b>\$291,434</b>	<b>\$283,191</b>	<b>\$278,117</b>	<b>\$286,623</b>	<b>\$223,756</b>
<b>17 Church Net Operating Excess (Deficit)</b>	<b>\$(102,569)</b>	<b>\$(64,486)</b>	<b>\$(68,475)</b>	<b>\$(34,672)</b>	<b>\$70,614</b>
<b>SCHOOL REVENUES</b>					
18 Tuition and Fees	\$1,648,065	\$1,512,315	\$1,239,736	\$959,727	\$476,570
19 Fundraising	\$433,343	\$235,663	\$256,657	\$236,262	\$0
20 Other School Revenues	\$12,315	\$16,233	\$28,947	\$77,453	\$55,746
<b>21 Total School Revenues</b>	<b>\$2,093,723</b>	<b>\$1,764,211</b>	<b>\$1,525,340</b>	<b>\$1,273,442</b>	<b>\$532,316</b>
<b>SCHOOL EXPENSES</b>					
22 Salaries	\$1,452,438	\$1,327,792	\$1,167,747	\$1,078,764	\$523,235
23 Benefits	\$451,409	\$484,047	\$426,308	\$385,531	\$155,720
24 Occupancy	\$239,020	\$228,972	\$248,689	\$187,536	\$126,639
25 Other School Expenses	\$248,070	\$202,521	\$193,271	\$164,721	\$46,919
26 OCS Assessments	\$10,097	\$10,166	\$9,476	\$8,418	\$4,370
<b>27 Total School Expenses</b>	<b>\$2,401,034</b>	<b>\$2,253,498</b>	<b>\$2,045,491</b>	<b>\$1,824,970</b>	<b>\$856,883</b>
<b>28 School Net Operating Excess (Deficit)</b>	<b>\$(307,311)</b>	<b>\$(489,287)</b>	<b>\$(520,151)</b>	<b>\$(551,528)</b>	<b>\$(324,567)</b>
<b>29 Parish Net Operating Excess (Deficit)</b>	<b>\$(409,880)</b>	<b>\$(553,773)</b>	<b>\$(588,626)</b>	<b>\$(586,200)</b>	<b>\$(253,953)</b>