

~24 people in attendance for Parish Transformation Meeting on September 23, 2015

Old Business

Announcements: Financial issues will be revisited at another time...

Parish Hopes and Concerns sorted/categorized & cross-referenced to group of origin:

- **five** of 5 groups mention (a) growing the parish (b) divisions in parish
- **four** of 5 groups mention (c) enhancing community (d) spiritual/doctrinal growth
- **two** of 5 groups mention (e) maintaining traditions

Growing our Parish

Growth of Parish (#5)

How to get young people to participate in the parish (#5)

Financial instability (#5)

Get attendance at Mass higher (#5)

Sunday School to attract young families (#5)

Parish closure (#5)

Increase church population (#4)

Financial issues of the parish during to fewer people attending Church (#4)

Inability to reverse the loss of Polish parishioners b/c of economic & political considerations (#4)

Previous pastors who left, took parishioners with them (#4)

more people come to Church (#3)

Polish Catholics moving out of area are not replaced by young Americans moving in (#3)

Parish might be closed in the future (#3)

Higher attendance at Mass (#2)

Changing demographics, loss of Parishioners leads to lack of finances (#2)

People need a reason to return to the Parish (#2)

How to recruit & retain parishioners (#2)

We need to continue to grow parish (#1)

Eliminate Divisions in Parish

Unification/integration of school and parish (#5)

How to integrate school & parish (#5)

Unite the church and school (#4)

Division exists between Church and school (#4)

closer cooperation with school families (#3)

Church & School should form one community (#3)

Unity of all members of the Parish (school & church/ English & Polish) (#2)

Lack of school involvement in Parish (#1)

Separation of Poles and Americans (#1)

Enhanced Sense of Community in Parish

More Community (#5)

Development of friendships between parishioners (#5)

more active parishioners (#3)

more young families will get involved in our Parish (#3)

Same 8 volunteers are the only ones organizing parish activities (#3)

Lack of involvement in Parish life (#3)

Greater community (#3)

Increased opportunities to gather & serve outside of Mass (#2)

Develop family-friendly environment at Mass (#2)

Once people are here, they need a reason to stay (that they feel welcome) (#2)

Build a sense of community through increased number of programs in Parish (e.g.

Sunday school, prayer groups, pilgrimages) (#1)

If more programs at parish, maybe more engagement? (#1)

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) (#1)

That Fr. Frank will engage more with parishioners (e.g. greet families after Mass) (#1)

Lack of tools to engage young families (#1)

Spiritual/Doctrinal Growth

Sunday School to attract young families (#5)

Not losing traditions such as genuflecting, kneeling (e.g. showing reverence to God/basics of our faith.) (#5)

That we will grow as a Parish in the virtues of faith, hope, and love (#4)

More activities for spiritual fulfillment (#3)

Have a message for both adults and children—e.g. Sunday school for children (#2)

Once people are here, they need a reason to stay (find spiritual fulfillment) (#2)

Keeping up traditions

The Parish has a long history & a lot of hard work behind it; let's not lose it (#5)

That we can stay traditionally St. Helens: other parishes are consolidating, but we need to remain true to our traditions (#1)

New Business

Determining the Pearls of Great price

Each person wrote down a “pearl” or two on a stickie, that help to make St. Helen’s unique. Then people convened in small groups to discuss and select the top two from their groups’ lists...

Group #1

St. John Paul II statue

Welcoming Community of parishioners

Home away from home for generations for Polish community

Prayer/Taize

Processions (Fatima/Corpus Christi/Resurrection)

Rosary in May

Introduction of Simbang Gabi to the Parish

***Preservation of traditional customs and cultural experiences (e.g. above)**

***New programs, e.g. Taize**

Group #2

The kids' room

A Sanctuary for the school

The neighborhood feel of families in the parish

Processions (Easter, Fatima, Corpus Christi)

Music (organist)

***The school community actively welcomes children & adults**

***Survivor of a changing neighborhood**

Group #3

Corpus Christi Procession

Our Lady of Fatima Procession

Wednesday Prayer group

Saturday Prayer group

Loves Father's homilies

Nightwatch of Jesus' Tomb (Good Friday)

Dad's Club

***Carnival**

***Pope John Paul II/Motorcycles**

Group #4

Location of the Parish & facility

John Paul II statue

Proximity to Ukrainian Catholic Church (joint celebrations)

***Church History (Proud of our past, we move forward in faith)**

***the School**

Group #5

Great dedication to JP II and his mission

Special Parish relationship to JP II

Beautiful church and prime location

Daily Mass (visitors mention how much they appreciate it)

Various ethnic groups attending St. Helen's

Father's blessing of the special gathering of Parishioners after Mass???

***Great dedication to JP II & his Mission**

***Beautiful Church & services (also incorporating different cultures, representative of the parish)**

Began thinking about mission narrative...

By combining some groups with others, we formed three groups to begin thinking about formulating our mission narrative, following information on p. 23 of mission workbook. It asks us to apply different sets of lenses to our parish mission. Each group was assigned two lenses to examine.

Group 1

(a) **charism of our patron saint:** build on St. Helen's call to service

(b) **demographic challenges and opportunities:** stop being two separate parishes; take advantage of cultural traditions and customs of each group

Group 2

(a) **Pearls of great price:** school/ motorcycles

(b) **Biblical story of particular relevance for our parish:** Prodigal son/Good Samaritan

(Additional notes from Sabina):

Our group for parish transformation had Pearls of Wisdom & Scripture. Here is what we talked about:

Pearls of Wisdom:

It seemed like all groups had two topics: our school, and our traditions, especially the processions, including the motorcycle procession!

Scripture:

We chose two passages:

Many Catholics in our neighborhood are not active members of a parish. We would like to welcome those Catholics to St Helen, as in the parable of the prodigal son.

Luke 15:31-32

"My son, the father said "you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found,"

In addition to welcoming fellow Catholics, we would like to serve all those living in our parish boundaries. The parable of the Good Samaritan is a reminder to us too, that we are called to minister to all, no matter their faith.

Luke 10:34

“He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him.

Group 3

(a) particular spiritual challenge of our parish: lack of utilization of the Sacrament of confession (especially among English-speaking congregation)/ lack of reverence for the Eucharist/other Sacraments; need to reach out to non-practicing Catholics. This might be accomplished through service, spiritual activities (pilgrimages), and catechesis.

(b) census or composition of the parish (e.g. professions and vocations): we really have no data on this; maybe we should take a Parish-wide census shortly to figure out who is here.