

St. James Parish Meeting, January 16 and 17, 2010

Introduction – Bruce Schmidt, Parish Council president

Slide 2 – Parish Council

Introduction of Parish Council members (see slide for names).

Slide 3 – Purpose of Parish Council

Go over purpose of parish council (see slide for purpose).

The Parish Survey is a means to help us assess where we're at as a Parish in proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ (our mission); and where we need to go. The Survey takes a look at the importance of our various ministries (liturgy, youth faith formation, adult education, music, stewardship, evangelization) to you and the effectiveness in how our Parish is serving your needs. Using your input, our goal is to develop long range plans to better serve the needs of the entire Parish community.

Slide 4 – Outline

Presentation – Joe Kline, Planning Committee chair

As Bruce said, welcome to the parish meeting and thank you for staying after Mass. We hope to have more parish meetings in the future. This presentation was put together by the planning committee at the request of Fr. Steve and the parish council. Last May and June, the planning committee conducted a survey of the parish. We have spent several months reviewing the survey results, have distributed detailed reports of the results to the parish council and the relevant committees, and now will present the key findings of the survey at this meeting along with the next steps for the planning committee and the parish. You will notice that the last page of the packet is a comment sheet. This is for you to provide us comments on the presentation and any addendum comments on your wishes for the future of St. James (comment sheet is posted on the web). The comment sheet may be returned to the church, or you can send your comments to stjamespc@gmail.com. We have also included a section at the bottom for people who are interested in volunteering to serve the parish community. As you will see in the presentation, we have lots of great volunteers, but many more will be needed for the parish to do everything that people expressed interest in. If there is a new activity that you would like to see at St. James, you are probably one of the best people to make it happen.

Slide 5 – Parish Organizational Structure

The slide shows a rough schematic of the parish organizational structure. A more detailed poster version listing the chairs of each committee and sub-committee is posted in the church hall. Jim Walsh graciously put it together and printed it out for us.

As you will note, Fr. Steve is at the top of the org chart. Although he is in charge of everything, he doesn't need to be doing everything. It is the job of the parish to reduce his large workload and take care of the activities that he does not need to be involved with. This is especially important with priest shortage for parishes to reduce the administrative burden from the priests. The parish council is the central operational element of the organization structure. The parish council is an elected body that represents the parish community. All of the committees report to the parish council. Some of the items listed under the parish council are not actual committees, but contain several similar committees. The Finance and Planning committees are in the Stewardship area.

Slide 6 – Planning Committee

I am the chair of the planning committee. I have four very good committee members, Frank Allnutt, Jenny Palla, Will Stann, and Jim Walsh. Nothing would have happened without a lot of help for them. I am very grateful for their assistance. The basic purpose of the planning committee, is to “plan.” What that means in practice is that we determine the future needs of the parish and then determine what facilities and resources are required to meet those goals and needs. The what, when, and how. We do not make decisions. We research and gather information, and then make recommendations to the parish council and Fr. Steve. We also work closely with the parish council to ensure that the future needs of the parish are in line with what the parish wants. Three of the members of the planning committee are also on the parish council. Our planning consists of both short and long term; 1, 3, 5, and 10 years and beyond. We want to make sure that the direction that we are planning for the parish to go, is where the parish wants to go, so please give us feedback at any time.

Slide 7 – Parish Survey

The parish survey was distributed last May and June. Thank you very much to everyone who completed it. The survey consisted of 45 questions covering a range of areas across parish life. Most of the areas are outside of the planning committees responsibilities, so we passed on the information to the pertinent committees. For each question we asked both the importance and effectiveness of St. James, we wanted to make sure that we didn't put effort into fixing weaknesses that no one was interested in. We had 53 respondents (about 18% of the registered families) and many detailed comments. We have asked the committees to let us know any changes that have been implemented as a result of the survey. I will go over some of those within this presentation. One of the overarching themes of the survey was communication. The parish has been doing a poor job of communicating what is happening in the parish. We had multiple comments requesting activities at the church that are already done. The parish is evaluating all of our methods of communication and trying to determine ways to improve it. Your feedback is welcome. Everyone involved with the parish is working very hard to serve the parish. It is very hard to make everyone happy, but we want to try to.

Slide 8 – Overall Survey Results

Here are the average scores for each of the main areas. As you can see, every area was rated to be important. There were several individual questions rated not important, but most of them were rated important. Since we are a small parish, we have to focus on a few areas at a time for improvement. Liturgy and education were the highest rated areas for our effectiveness and were also rated as the most important areas. Stewardship, facilities, and lay ministry were rated as our least effective areas.

Slide 9 – Survey Results: Finances

We will start on finance. We decided to cover the most difficult item, money, first, so that everything will get easier as we go on. Finance is very important. The church has no money of its own and is dependent on the generosity of the parish community for everything. We have a tremendous responsibility to use our funds efficiently and responsibly. I am not on the finance committee, so I will have to defer any detailed questions to the finance committee. There were a lot of questions and comments on how the parish spends money. Most of the comments seemed to fall into these two areas: concerns about the number of paid staffing and the utilization of the weekly offertory. The questions about staffing will be addressed on the next slide. With regards to the weekly offertory, St. James is a large operation that serves hundred of parishioners each week. The staffing, the facilities, and other resources required to serve the community cost a lot of money. The general offertory and some of the 2nd collections are barely enough to cover the base operational budget for the parish. There were multiple comments about St. James not doing enough to serve the poor. This is a very important mission, and is a responsibility of the parish, each one of us, but is not the purpose of the general offertory. We have many 2nd collections to aid people in need, and the share box is also always available. We also organize many activities such as the family to family outreach that occurs for Christmas. Communication was also a common problem concerning the finances. We have an active finance committee that is chaired by Kathy Quinones. The finance committee is working hard to maintain the parish finances. You might have also noticed that most recent parish financial statement included in the bulletin was reformatted and simplified into categories that could be understood by someone without a degree in accounting. This is all part of the effort to help people to see how their hard-earned dollars that they graciously have given to the parish are being spent. Both because of the hard economic times, and because of the future expenses that will be required to obtain the needed facility improvements, we are looking for volunteers to help in creating new fundraising activities, both internal and external to the parish.

Slide 10 – Finances: Staffing

This slide shows the breakdown of the hours worked by the staff. You will notice that we have no full-time staff. You will also notice that most of these staff members volunteer many hours beyond the hours that they are paid. The hours add up to 110 hours per week, less than the equivalent of 3 full-time employees. This is a reasonable

number and is actually quite a bit less than what a lot of parishes have. You will also notice that most of the activities done by the staff are core areas of parish life that require the continuity and training that is difficult to consistently get from volunteers. In addition to the paid staff, we have a considerable number of volunteers. The faith formation has 19 volunteers who actively participate and give of their time to the parish and the children in the faith formation. We wouldn't be able to do it without all of these generous volunteers.

Slide 11 – Survey Results: Education

Education was one of our highest rated areas, in particular we had high ratings for our youth education program (thank you Brigitte) and our parish's efforts towards fostering vocations (thank you Fr. Steve). In particular we had several comments about how we have a prayer intention each week for our encouragement of candidates for religious and priestly vocations. For youth education, there were several comments about a desire for a greater depth of the curriculum. This was already being addressed through a "Catholic cultural specialist" who goes between the different grade levels to highlight rich traditions of our faith. There are no comments under high school youth. That is because there were not any specific comments for this difficult age group. April works very hard to minister to the high school youth, but it is a difficult task since there are so many competing activities for the kids' time and attention. She'll gladly welcome any offers of assistance from volunteers. Under adult education there was a desire for more opportunities. This is another difficult area as Daria has worked very hard to hold new activities, but usually has very poor attendance. She sent out an inquiry to a large number of parishioners to find out what they want for adult education and has formed a steering committee to go through all of the suggestions and determine how best to implement some of the new ideas. For the next steps, if there is an activity you would like to see at the parish, you are probably the best person to help make it happen.

Slide 12 – Survey Results: Liturgy

Liturgy was also one of our highest rated areas. Our key strengths were identified to be our liturgical ministers and our ministry to the sick and homebound. People thought that we did a good job of training and scheduling the ministers. We had lots of comments about the time and frequency of the Masses. This is a difficult area since we share Fr. Steve with St. Augustine and there are not likely to be any more priests out this way any time soon. Our options are somewhat limited until we have a large increase in our Sunday attendance. The only possible option would be to move the 11 am Mass ahead by 30 minutes to 10:30 am. This would require either cancelling confessions or moving them after Mass. There were also a number of comments regarding ushers and greeters. At the 11 am Mass, we have started to have greeters at the side doors to welcome people as they arrive. We are of course always looking for more people to help with both of these ministries. The most highly commented area for the parish was music. The comments varied considerably with everything from too fast, too slow, too much, or not enough. This is a very difficult area because of the varied tastes of our parishioners. Larger parishes solve this by having different music types at each of the

Sunday Masses. Since we only have one Sunday Mass, we have to pick a style. Our music ministry is led by volunteers who work very hard to serve our parish. We do have several paid musicians that assist on Sundays, but most of the members are volunteers. If you have ideas for improvement of the music (and can sing), please join the music ministry.

Slide 13 – Survey Results: Evangelization

The survey found that are strengths in Evangelization were the strong sense of community in the parish and that the parish provided a deeper understanding of the Gospel. The primary areas for improvement and increased activity were outreach to inactive Catholics and to new parishioners. With regards to new parishioners, we recently established a welcoming committee. The welcoming committee has been working hard to put together a welcome kit that can be distributed to new parishioners. The welcome kit contains detailed information about the parish history, the parish staff and committees, and other parish activities. It is aimed to be a resource to introduce a new parishioner to everything going on at St. James and to help them to actively join the community. The welcome kit should be completed soon. It will also be posted on the website so that all parishioners can benefit from the information (it would be too expensive to print it out for everyone). There was also a desire for increased outreach to inactive Catholics. This is a difficult area and is the job of everyone in the parish. Fr. Steve can't go around the local neighborhoods and invite people to Mass, that is for us to do. We are looking into activities that can help train us to effectively reach out to inactive Catholics. There was also a desire for more service activities and outreach to the poor. Previously this was an area that April headed, but she has cut back her hours and no longer is doing this. Wilma Galliker is now heading the service/outreach committee and is looking for volunteers to help. As was stated in several of the previous slides, if you are interested in any of these activities, please volunteer to help and provide feedback on what activities you would like to see.

Slide 14 – Survey Results: Facility Upgrade Options

The survey included a section that asked the parish to rank the importance of a number of different potential major capital improvements to the facilities. The highest ranked items were renovating the existing church and hall, and to increase the parking. These were ranked much higher than building a new church on the property we own on 67. This is a very complex issue that will take a few years to finalize, so I will only address a few of the points at this time. There will be more opportunity for comments as we get closer to actually doing facility upgrades. Any renovation of the current facility will be major because of a number of ordinances that have taken effect since the building was built. These items such as sprinklers, fire alarm systems, storm water management, and parking space requirements for seating capacity increases will add a few hundred thousand dollars to the cost of any renovation. Because of the many issues associated with a major renovation, any renovation will require several years of preparation and approvals before the work can begin. Thus if we want the church to be renovated in the mid-term, we have to start planning and preparing now. Our rough initial estimate is

that a complete renovation on the existing property would cost about \$0.5 M to \$1 M, several times our annual budget. As I mentioned earlier, very few people ranked building a new church high on the facility list. The costs for current new churches are running around \$4 M to \$6 M, considerably more than our current parishioner base can afford. The Archdiocese requires us to have 50% of the money on hand before construction can begin and the remainder would result in mortgage payments considerably larger than our current offertory income (our operating expenses would also likely increase with a new facility). Due to these issues and several more that I haven't discussed, any considerations of building a new church will be evaluated in our 10+ year plan. Our next steps for this year are to integrate the parish desires with our facility needs and develop our 1/3/5 year plans. We will determine which facility needs are most pressing and then start the process of planning, fundraising, and then upgrade the facilities. Parish input will be requested at several steps along the way to make certain that the parish supports the chosen upgrades.

Slide 15 – Planning Committee Next Steps

As I said, our next step is to start writing up the 1/3/5 year plans and present them to the Parish Council and Fr. Steve. The plans will incorporate future demographic predictions with the parish goals. Once the plans are approved, we will take the steps necessary to make the facilities real. As part of this process, and before the Archdiocese will approve any major facility upgrades, we will incorporate our short, mid, and long-term plans into a document called a Master Plan. The Archdiocese wants to make sure that any major investments are part of a future, big picture vision and that they not end up being expensive mistakes that limit future parish options. The key to the entire planning process is communication with the parish. We want to make certain that the plan matches with where everyone wants St. James to go.

Slide 16 – Summary

First off, I want to thank everyone again for their input in the survey. We really appreciate the time that you spent on the survey and the time that you spend coming to this meeting. We have found the comments to be very valuable. Please complete the comment sheet and return them to us. And finally, NOW is the time for your active involvement. Once we have a plan and are moving towards a goal, it is very difficult and often expensive to change the plans. Thanks for your attention and we'll be glad to take questions.

Questions

Saturday, January 16th: approximately 20 people stayed for the presentation (not including small children and Parish Council Members). No questions were asked.

Sunday, January 17th: approximately 40 people stayed for the presentation (not including small children and Parish Council Members). There were several questions.

-- The first question was "The chart does not show the Corporators. The parishioners need to know that there are incorporators." Fr. Steve addressed this and stated that the chart was for the parish operations and that the Corporators are part of the legal aspect of the parish corporate structure.

-- The second question was "Where does the Social Committee fit on the chart?" It is under Evangelization.

-- The third question was "Several years ago there was a list of people and items they had volunteered to do. Are these people going to be contacted to follow up on the items they were interested in volunteering." It was stated that some of the items that were given to the parish in the past may have been lost and to please call back if you'd like to volunteer.

-- The fourth question was about attending Parish Council and committee meetings. It was stated that you don't have to be a member of the Parish Council to come to the meetings. The meetings are open and are advertised in the bulletin and usually announced during Mass. Most of the committees are also open for people interested in helping. Contact the committee chair for more information on specific committees.

-- It was suggested that the bulletin be used as a form of communication. Key comments from the survey could put in the bulletin in the format of a question/response, where the answer could be a more extensively discussed than is possible at the presentation.