

January 10, 2014

Saint Thomas the Apostle Parish Long-range Planning

Thematic Concerns

Based on the 2013 Parish Survey (Pastoral Council and Parish Staff)

FAITH FORMATION

There are concerns that we need to pay attention to:

- How effectively faith formation opportunities are communicated.
- Identifying what populations such opportunities are designed to serve.
- The times and places faith formation opportunities are offered.
- Providing a diversity of learning experiences.

EVANGELIZATION

There is lack of understanding of what evangelization means, what it requires and how it is carried out.

HOSPITALITY/FELLOWSHIP/INCLUSION

Parishioners expressed desire for more opportunities to interact and connect with each other; spend time with each other; better know one another.

- Ideas for convenient parish “community-building” activities should be explored.
- There is a need for process improvement and better follow-up for new members.
- Ways to connect parishioners with and without children should be considered.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

There is concern that we need to do more to take care of people beyond our families and comfort zones.

- Parishioners should have more opportunities to serve those who are needy, marginalized or vulnerable.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

There is concern that our religious education program needs to be more rigorous about Catholic teaching and more appealing to our children.

STAFFING

There is a concern that decisions governing the parish should be based on the pastoral needs of the parish, directing the finances toward these goals.

- Staff job descriptions should align with the long-range plan, and parish vision and mission statements.
- Effective communication between staff should be fostered.

YOUTH MINISTRY

- The vast majority of sixth – twelfth graders in our parish do not participate in Catholic youth ministry.
- Our parish has not been fully engaged in all aspects of youth ministry.
- Parish communication to our Catholic school, public school, and home-school families regarding the importance of youth ministry has not been adequate.
- Our youth ministry has not been engaging and attractive enough to overcome the worldly distractions/attractions that our youth face.

FOCUS

- There is a concern about being too active and busy, both as a Parish and as individuals. Are we forgetting to love God and our neighbors?
- Our mission is: "We provide a spiritual home for all God's family and nurture one another through the sacraments and the principles of Catholic Faith." There is a concern that we have too many ministries and that this is inconsistent with our mission.