



Strategic Planning

Pax Christi Catholic Community

July 2020 Revision
Approved by the Community Council on July 21, 2020

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Section I

Introduction

As a result of the Strategic Plan of 2018, much has changed in the structure of the parish. A new ministry council was formed (Communications), and other councils received name changes that more clearly reflect the mission and values of the parish (the Stewardship Council became the Hospitality and Community Outreach Council, Lay Leadership Development became the Lay Leadership Development and Engagement Council, Faith Formation became the Lifelong Faith Formation Council, and Finance became the Finance and Development Council). In the fall of 2018, a facilitated leadership retreat was held to guide councils in setting goals to be accomplished by June of 2019. The ministry councils again renewed their goal-setting commitments to the parish in the fall of 2019, sharing their targeted actions as noted in the November Community Council minutes.

As a result of the pandemic of 2020, there has been great disruption in the normal and familiar ways of gathering and living as a faith community. There has been a shift in focus of what it means to be church in the world. This comes with a recognition of how God is present in our communities—both in the daily lives of people and in how people’s spiritual gifts are manifest in their homes, workplaces, and neighborhoods—and not just in how we use our gifts to operate the institution of church. As a result of the pandemic, people are getting enormous spiritual satisfaction from loving their neighbors. We have become more focused in building the kingdom of God in all areas of our culture.

In light of this cultural shift, we pose these questions to support the transformation happening in our church:

1. How do we equip and support people to live as kingdom agents every day in every relationship and circumstance?
2. Are people experiencing life as God intends (spiritually, physically, emotionally, relationally, economically)? How does our church respond to changing needs, especially those resulting from the pandemic?
3. How do we respond to ensuring the well-being of the community we live in beyond our church walls? How do we support our congregation’s involvement in community agencies and boards and help them achieve their missions?

With every crisis is an opportunity to imagine what new goodness might arise out of a catastrophe. Herein lies the goal of these revisions to the Strategic Plan: to offer updated Challenge Statements, Verification Points, and renewed Questions for consideration—for a parish striving to live vibrantly in the tensions of today’s ecclesial, environmental, and socially complex environments, where compassionate engagement of its members is urgent and crucial. It is to this point that the Community Council, at its May 19, 2020 meeting, discussed and affirmed the need for an update to the Strategic Plan to create a living document.

We share our findings with you as you embrace the possibilities that are before us as a church beyond the walls of 12100 Pioneer Trail.

Bruce Koehn, Dave Putrich, Dave Wagner, Fred Baumer, Jane Schmitz, Nicholle Check, Patti Christensen, and Phyllis Olson

June 30, 2020

Note: The original introduction to the Strategic Plan of 2018 is now found in the Appendix.

Section II

Purpose Statement

Welcome All to Joyfully Experience God's Love and Mercy

Our Purpose is intended to answer the question of why Pax Christi exists, and how Pax Christi intends to be a distinct, relevant and essential part of people's lives. It is uniquely our own.

This Purpose is inspired by the vision of our founders, by the Sermon on the Mount that inspired them, and by the example of Jesus. Our Purpose both informs and reflects our mission and core values. It is used internally as a guide for our Staff, Community Council, and Lay Leadership to help ensure that what we do and how we do it are consistent with our distinct reason to exist. It is also used to focus and to sharpen our internal and external communications.

This Purpose reminds us that we desire to always be inclusive and that we seek to create space and a sense of belonging for all. Consistent with our founding principles, our inclusive spirit, and strong commitment to social justice compels us to take special care for those who feel abandoned or marginalized by society or the Church.

This Purpose raises our expectations for the work we do. It speaks to our intention to create consistently meaningful and joyful experiences for those we touch. It recognizes the special role of the laity at Pax Christi who—in partnership with clergy and staff—live out our values and help to create these meaningful experiences.

Every program, service or personal engagement at Pax Christi can be internally evaluated by whether or not it lives up to our Purpose for being. We can ask, for example:

- Does the Mass or the homily we have planned live up to our Purpose?
- Is our choice of language inclusive and our outreach designed to “welcome all”?
- Is our Lay Leadership engaged with lay staff and the ordained to create an experience here that is meaningful and leaves people with a sense of peace and belonging?
- Does this proposed initiative lead to experiencing the peace of God's Love and Mercy?

We aspire to live our new Purpose every day. We want all that we touch to be left with a clear sense that Pax Christi Catholic Community exists to “Welcome all to Joyfully Experience God's Love and Mercy.”

Section III

Mission Statement

As a community of faith nourished by the Eucharist, we are committed in our discipleship with Christ to act for justice, be of generous service, and welcome all authentically to Pax Christi Catholic Community.

As a community of faith nourished by the Eucharist,

The Second Vatican Council called forth the People of God to be nourished by the Eucharist and sent forth to be Christ for others (*Lumen Gentium*). We gather together as believers and seekers on our journey of faith.

we are committed in our discipleship with Christ

We are who we are because of our common commitment to walk in the ways of Christ and to believe in and live the gospel message.

to act for justice,

As a cornerstone of the parish since its inception in 1981, justice calls us to hear the cry of the poor (Psalm 34:7), to care for the earth (*Laudato Si*), and be moved to work toward racial and gender equity and systemic change in society.

be of generous service,

In our outreach to the people of Pax Christi and the broader community, we have a unified calling to pray, serve, and share our resources with others.

and welcome all authentically to Pax Christi Catholic Community.

As the faithful, we are compelled to impart a spirit of hospitality in which a diverse community can share, love, and grow in this spiritual home of Pax Christi.

Section IV

Values: Who We Are

God-Centered

Justice

Inclusion

Spiritual Growth

Stewardship

Lay Leadership

God-Centered

We hold God as the center of our daily lives and provide a place for spiritual rest and rejuvenation.

As humans, we are created in the image and likeness of God and we long to be in communion with God. We believe the way to God and the way to peace is made possible by our union with Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Our unity with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and the unity of the Catholic Church are manifested in the celebration of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist. In this celebration, Christ is present not only in the Eucharist, but also in the presider, the assembly and the Word. Through Sacraments, worship, and prayer, we become God-centered. We find a place to disconnect from our busy world and focus on our connection to God.

Justice

We advocate for the marginalized and act as catalysts for systemic change.

Jesus announced his earthly mission in this key passage from Luke:

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.
The Spirit has anointed me to preach good news to the poor,
to proclaim release to the captive, recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. (4:18–19)*

Jesus' first public proclamation in the synagogue is a justice statement, and it positioned him on the fringes of his society. Jesus himself would be despised as he moved to the margins to share in the life of those who confronted societal systems by living in a different way. When Pax Christi began its life as a faith community in 1981, a commitment was made to share a percentage of every collection with groups working for social justice. The names that have been

given to the various spaces in the building remind us of men and women who have dedicated their lives to justice pursuits.

Inclusion

We build relationships and create an inclusive culture through our attitudes, actions, and activities.

In the Gospel, Jesus gave us a strong example of how to love our brothers and sisters. He welcomed people from all walks of life to his table. He invited them to participate in his journey and created a place where they could belong. This is the spirit of Christian hospitality. We must welcome all people to share in the life of Pax Christi without passing judgement.

Our community strives to provide a safe, secure place where one can wrestle freely with life's struggles and share life's joys with others. In doing so, we must keep in mind the idea that "hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where change can take place" (Henri Nouwen).

Spiritual Growth

We engage in a lifelong process of spiritual growth and continually learn how to live out our faith.

We are ministers of God, each with our own unique gifts, "full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another" (Romans 15:14), and we must share these gifts with our families, our friends, and our community.

From the Book of Genesis to the Book of Revelation, we are introduced to a God we can never come to know fully—God who creates night and day, a God who sees a new heaven and a new earth. We believe that creation did not end with the last page of the Book of Genesis nor did revelation end with the last page of the Bible. We strive to follow a God who seeks to stir our minds and souls and our faith to new life and who encourages us to grow and mature each day.

Stewardship

We acknowledge our God-given gifts and put them into action as we pray, serve, and share.

We have many opportunities to share our gifts, as well as to encourage, enhance, and support the gifts of all in the community. We join together in spreading the gospel message and encourage spiritual growth in one another. The greatest wisdom for the community lies within the community itself because God speaks to and through the people. God's plan for the people lies within the hearts of the people, and through careful stewardship of its gifts, our community strives to discern and live out God's plan.

Lay Leadership

We co-lead and share in the responsibility of upholding the mission of the church.

Lay leadership was one of the founding principles of Pax Christi Catholic Community. The church began as a grassroots effort set forth by the laity in an effort to create a church community that would meet the spiritual needs of many families in the growing southwestern metropolitan area.

The principle of lay leadership remains a key value to be upheld. As stated by the Second Vatican Council, the Church is the People of God, the community of the baptized. In collaboration with the ordained we all hold responsibility for the life and the mission of the Church.

Section V

Overarching Goals

Belonging

Vision

Through invitation, welcoming and relationship-building, all who are touched by this community feel a deep sense of inclusion.

Description

Genuine relationships can only exist when we honor the dignity of every person by acknowledging everyone as a child of God. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we need to challenge ourselves to find new ways to creatively apply invitation and relationship-building both inside and outside our doors. Inside our doors, people feel a sense of belonging, are engaged in our faith community, and are experiencing growth in their own faith journey. Outside our doors, people value the growing relationships with Pax Christi members and begin to see the relevance of “trying out” a faith community such as Pax Christi.

Expected Outcomes

- Our membership feels more comfortable sharing their faith experience with others.
- We develop our capacity for our members to be more welcoming and create a sense of belonging, particularly through small group experiences.
- Youth are more engaged in our community and encourage others to attend youth activities.
- Our worship and sacramental experiences are inviting, of high quality and relevant to all those that attend.
- People who have considered themselves on the margins of the church and society feel a genuine sense of welcoming and belonging.
- Youth and young adults feel compelled to join small faith groups and participate in internal and external ministries.

Indicators of Success (Reviewed by the Community Council)

- Regular attendance at weekend Mass increases 2% annually. (Review this metric after the pandemic is over and in-person Masses resume.)
- Overall membership at Pax Christi grows 1% annually.
- Youth and young adult presence and participation grows by 10% annually and is regarded among the best community experiences in the area.
- Stories of members' engagement in the community, various agencies and boards are regularly highlighted.
- The number of households contributing regularly grows by 3% annually.
- The number of new people utilizing the SERVE hub and who are engaged in ministry increases by 2% annually.

Key Challenges Related to this Goal

- Strengthening the Identity and Relevancy of Pax Christi's Purpose, Mission, Values
- Prioritizing Pax Christi as a Place of Sabbath and a Place of Community
- Addressing Declining Member Sacramental Participation
- Responding to Changing Demographics
- Growing Vitality Through Outreach
- Inspiring Service and Ministry
- Supporting and Encouraging Lifelong Discipleship

Believing

Vision

From a deep sense of belonging, we are able to invigorate our beliefs through lifelong formation that attends to the spiritual growth of all members.

Description

Members who belong to Pax Christi are inspired to be spiritually engaged in their faith community and in all aspects of their daily lives. We establish relevance and strengthen our faith by studying scripture, engaging in spiritual practices, discussing faith-based topics, and conversing with others. We put our faith into action by sharing with and serving those around us.

Expected Outcomes

- Belief-building curriculum and activities that focus on all stages of spiritual growth formation, with renewed emphasis on middle- through high-school youth.
- Our members exhibit a growing interest in the opportunities to increase their knowledge of scripture and its application to one's daily life.
- All members see themselves as lifelong disciples.
- Members are encouraged to participate in relevant learning opportunities.
- A renewed perspective of how faith is formed by providing fresh and relevant content that develops personal and communal belief.

Indicators for Success (Reviewed by the Community Council)

- Increase in number of children, youth, and adults participating in formation activities by 10% annually.
- The number of members celebrating the sacraments of initiation increases annually.
- Increase and diversification in Spark youth groups by 10% annually.
- Increase in number of members participating in faith-building and justice activities both on and beyond the Pax Christi campus.

Key Challenges Related to this Goal

- Strengthening the Identity and Relevancy of Pax Christi's Purpose, Mission, Values
- Addressing Declining Member Sacramental Participation
- Creating and Maintaining a Vital Youth Ministry Program

- Inspiring Service and Ministry
- Maximizing the Potential Building and Grounds
- Supporting and Encouraging Lifelong Discipleship

Section VI

Key Challenges

Strengthening the Identity and Relevancy of Pax Christi Catholic Community's Purpose, Mission and Values

*For as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them...
(Romans 12:4–6)*

Challenge

Pax Christi's unique Purpose (why we exist), Mission (how we act), and Values (how we are guided) shapes a community's identity. We believe that it is more important than ever to maintain and even strengthen that identity. The parish was founded as a one-presbyter parish, so its leadership and parishioners must, at the very least, understand and communicate through word and action our Purpose, Mission, and Values. Pax Christi will continue to face a change in presbyters, deacons, and staff, and so it is imperative that the community rely on the Purpose, Mission, and Values to guide the selection of its leaders. Pax Christi must be a vital, indispensable community of faith nourished by the Eucharist (as the Mission states) to remain relevant in the spiritual lives of busy people, from cradle to grave. We aspire to be a parish where people belong and engage because our community plays a rich and essential role in their lives and faith journey. From its beginning, Pax Christi has belonged within the structures of the Roman Catholic Church, but also believed that it had a desire to share its vision with the larger Church as a prophetic voice to address its clericalism, exclusion of women's roles, inclusive liturgical language, and collaborative leadership. Understanding, adopting, and committing to Pax's Purpose, Mission and Values is a way not only to belong to the parish but to believe in its prophetic stance toward the larger church.

Verification

- In 2014, when speaking at the Pax Christi Lenten Retreat, Bishop Remi De Roo, (1924–), the only living participant of the Vatican II Council, stated that Pax Christi was one of the finest example of a Vatican II parishes he has ever witnessed, based upon his understanding of lay leadership of the community and Pax Christi's vision for how a parish acts within the larger Roman Church.

- In his Archdiocesan Pastoral Visitation in 2013, Regional Vicar Fr. Robert Schwartz identified as strengths of Pax Christi: Volunteers are “the face of Jesus shown to the world.” Discipleship leads to compassion in serving others. He also cited that the strong lay leadership structure maintained strong mission and ministries and supported the pastoral leadership.
- Fr. Michael Byron was assigned as pastor in July 2018. Pax Christi is again a one-presbyter parish. There is an archdiocesan policy that pastor assignments are reviewed every six years.
- The lay leadership structure maintains strong mission, vision, and ministries, and supports the pastoral leadership.
- There is an opportunity for more diverse leadership on the pastoral councils. For example, high school youths joined several councils in 2019–2020 after a strong effort to bring them in. Still, the council membership by age does not reflect the parish demographics.

Questions

- How can Pax Christi be a prophetic parish witness to the larger Church?
- How can our Purpose, Mission, and Values be communicated more effectively to invite new membership, inspire existing members, and reinforce decision-making among councils and staff?
- How are Pax’s Christi’s Purpose, Mission, and Values used as a way to create relevancy and identity (i.e., Belonging) among the many groups who gather under the Pax Christi name?
- How can Pax Christi elevate the voices and experiences of lay people (through lay preaching or witnessing) to reveal the living Christ in our everyday lives and serve as hope and inspiration for others?
- How can its Purpose, Mission, and Values be more explicitly raised up throughout the liturgical year, on the campus, in new member orientation, stewardship appeals, and website?
- Where can lay leadership roles be expanded to enhance the spiritual development of the parish?
- How can we use lay leadership to enhance the impact of our current and future pastors?

Responding to our Changing Demographics

The only future worth building includes everyone.
(Pope Francis in Ted Talk, 2017)

Challenge

How does Pope Francis' statement challenge Pax Christi Catholic Community and the changing demographics we face today? Pax Christi has experienced growing diversity—both inside our doors and in our greater community. Diversity is defined by culture, age, race, religion, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, political leanings, sexual orientation, gender identification, marital status, and family makeup, to name a few. Are all welcome? If welcome, how do we serve all with differing needs and expectations? And how do we communicate that welcome?

Verification

Note: Pax Christi will conduct a parish-wide census starting late summer/early fall, to conclude by the end of 2020, prior to the start of its 40th anniversary year in 2021. The primary goal is to capture current contact information, including email addresses and cell phone numbers; however, optional self-reported age will be included in the census questionnaire. Pax Christi last conducted a parish-wide census in 2007–08. In addition to gathering accurate contact data, the census will purge current lists of incorrect, duplicate data in order to save money (i.e., Flocknote charges based on numbers/membership; also, any mailing charges. This “clean” data will allow us to better communicate to known member populations.

- Seventy-six percent of the Eden Prairie's residents are 18 years or older and 12 percent are 65 years and older (see edenprairie.org). Pax Christi's population: The largest percentage of Pax Christi members falls in the 50–69-year age category—2,929 or 29 percent (2018–19 Pax Christi statistics).
- Nationwide, according to a Pew Forum report which examined American religiosity in 2014 and compared it to 2007, there were 50.9 million adult Catholics as of 2014 (excluding children under 18), forming about 20.8 percent of the U.S. population, down from 54.3 million and 23.9 percent in 2007. The report also found that the Catholic population is aging, forming a higher percentage of the elderly population than the young; retention rates are also worse among the young.
- Pax Christi's membership has remained relatively stable within the last 13 years (3,617 households in 2006; 3,464 households in 2018–19).
- The current population of Eden Prairie is 64,893 (estimate as of July 1, 2019); this is a 6.7 percent increase since 2010 (see edenprairie.org).
- Just over 1,800 registered households—slightly more than half of the total—are in Eden Prairie zip codes (55347, 55346, 55344, and 55343). Pax Christi draws from 127 zip codes;

therefore, we are attracting from other geographical areas. (Pax Christi demographic data; June 1, 2020)

- Nationwide, two-thirds of Americans don't attend church on a regular basis (one time per month). Catholics attending church has decreased from 43 percent in 2004 to 22 percent in 2016.
- Pax Christi membership continues to be healthier than many parishes, but there has been a large decline in the Gen Z (2,424 to 2,264), while Millennials (1,386 to 1,760) and the Gen X (1,951 to 1,997) population has increased slightly. (Pax Christi Demographic Statistics, comparative years 2011–2016)
- Latest internal statistics indicate the largest declines in Pax Christi membership fall in the following categories (2018–2019 Pax Christi annual report):
 - Birth to 18 years old: 1,980 (-98 fewer from 2018 to 2019)
 - 19 to 29 years old: 1,692 (-13 fewer from 2018 to 2019)

Questions

- Does lay leadership and ministry opportunities reflect our membership?
- Can we fulfill the needs of a multi-generational population?
- How do we open minds and hearts of the community to diversity?
- Can we offer a diversity of liturgical opportunities to fit the different populations?
- Can we meet the ministry needs of the growing aged population?
- How do we invite and engage youth? How are we relevant to their lives and experience?
- Can Pax Christi honor all the traditions of a diverse population?
- What role can Pax Christi play with non-Catholics in our Eden Prairie community?
- How do we welcome someone if their beliefs are in conflict with the Church? How do we discuss/address conflicts—doctrinal, political, spiritual—within our own membership?

Engaging in Effective Communication

Like apples of gold in settings of silver is a word spoken in right circumstances. (Proverbs 25:11)

Challenge

Good communication builds relationships, trust, and community. Without consistent, engaging, and targeted communication, important information may be dropped, misconstrued, ignored, or simply lost in the shuffle. We can get so busy churning out various communications that we don't stop to make sure we are speaking to the correct audience with the correct message using the most effective tools, timing, and frequency.

Effective communication was listed as a concern or weakness in almost every council and ministry area at Pax Christi—and as an opportunity. Pax Christi is fortunate to have talented and innovative staff and shared ministers along with adequate funds for getting information to the greater church. Communication needs to remain a priority through all planning processes of budgeting, hiring, and technology. Some of the current challenges are determining what channels are the most effective, the quantity of information (too much or too little), and the style of the communication. Not only do we need to communicate effectively now but be aware that this challenge is an ongoing concern.

Communication is sometimes brought up only at the end of a planning process; however, the ways in which we communicate an event, program, or ministry should be considered from the very beginning. Communication is not just the “tack-on” activity at the end of planning. Through integrated communication, we create a plan that invites, includes, and welcomes.

Verification

Anecdotally, some parish community members have reported that they “never heard” about an event or an offering, despite promotion on multiple channels, including print, digital, website, etc.

- Do we communicate in a way that connects with the people we most want to reach and motivate to act?
- Where is the breakdown in communication if a message is not received?

During winter 2019/spring 2020, members of the Communications Council interviewed ministry area directors and council chairs regarding communication; this was a follow-up vehicle to an online survey, which addressed communications frequency, tools, effectiveness, and challenges. The summary of the results of that process revealed the following needs:

- Training, increased use of Flocknote among leadership, shared ministers
- Social media training: intro to channels and how best to use social media tools

- Understanding of communications resources, procedures at Pax Christi (see Style Guide)
- Need to communicate the “Pax Christi story” to engage parishioners. The Communications Council takes this to mean sharing of human-interest stories of parishioners—i.e., their experiences at Pax Christi and why this community means so much to them.

Current communication concerns and ideas by ministry area

Arts, Campus, and Gardens

- Appropriately convey the expenditure on the camera/screen project in the sanctuary space
- Need for greater/wider shared minister participation in events (move away from the idea of the STP—“same ten people” doing bulk of ACG service)
- Increase use of entire campus through effective wayfinding/signage (Note: This will be accomplished after rebranding process in 2020.)

Care and Support

- Need to communicate all offerings of this ministry areas (self-described as “hidden ministry”)
- Not an events-based ministry; challenge to keep a dozen ministry groups in front of parish
- Lots of ideas; need communications help to execute them

Finance and Development

- Consider increased use and promotion of digital-giving options, including text-to-donate, and (preferably) participation in EFT, especially with decreased in-person donations; perhaps share stories of our grant recipients and their work that continues during pandemic
- Continued need for transparent communication of financial status, including investments and use of contributions
- Financial education of parishioners on benefits of planned giving

Hospitality and Community Outreach

- Would like to “knock on doors” or reach out to drive new membership
- Would like to invite larger (external) community to big Pax Christi event

Justice

- Communication challenges—
 - How do we as a faith community connect to our call to social justice?
 - How do we tell this story internally? How do we put the story together?
 - Communication between ministry areas

Lay Leadership Development and Engagement

- Alternate, multimedia delivery of leadership discernment process, including videos, Zoom meetings (or similar), and personal letters
- How do we motivate members to participate in leadership?
- How do current leaders communicate “why we do it”?
- How do we make service relevant to people’s lives?

- How do we encourage people to feel as though they have gifts to share and time to do it?
- Lack of response to communication (magazine articles) is hard to gauge. Not working or just not hearing?
- How do we use social media as part of our communications strategy? Need support.

Lifelong Faith Formation

- Digital or otherwise modified delivery of Faith Formation programming, materials during 2020–21 (home study, hybrid study with some home/some onsite)
- Communicate modified calendar for preparation and celebrations of sacraments
- Maintain opportunities for social, spiritual groups to meet online or in ways that meet social distancing guidelines
- Any way to take advantage of sanctuary screens beyond Mass announcements?

Pastor

- Perception that pastor is “too busy” is not accurate
- Communicate that pastor is readily available to meet, serve pastoral needs and issues

Worship

- Continued delivery of Live Stream Masses
- Other worship opportunities, including parking lot Masses
- Increased usage of video screens in addition to Mass announcements need to continue ministry of Live Stream Mass, celebration of sacraments with limited attendance with up-to-date equipment; share participation reports (worldwide map)

Youth and Young Adult

- Transparent communication to build trust and enable project/program ownership

Questions

- What are the barriers that Pax Christi needs to overcome to generate effective communication?
- How can we expand our communication to other faith communities?
- Are we transparent with the community about our challenges and needs? Do we make a clear ask?
- How do we measure whether communication methods are working? Is it just attendance at events? How do we measure program/ministry awareness?
- How do we communicate to community members who are not regularly in the building?
- Is the small group of community members who do not use digital communications “worth” keeping expensive, more traditional communication channels?
- Do we ensure there are multiple touchpoints with members on a particular topic? Do they encounter the message in different forms over a period of time?
- How do we make the general community aware of the work being done through lay leadership?
- How do we communicate the need for all members to engage themselves in some way? How do we ask for the “give and take” of a community? How do we ask more directly

for commitment...that it's not just a "nice to have," but a minimum level of involvement?

- How does Pax Christi measure the effectiveness of its communication?
- How does Pax Christi determine the communications needs of audiences—both internal and external? Are web analytics the only tangible measurement?
- How effective are we at conveying the story of Pax Christi?
- How do we encourage people to share why they are members of Pax Christi and why they are engaged in its ministries? And how do we best share these stories?
- What do we convey in the Pax Christi "brand"?
- Should the volume of communications be reconsidered? Is it possible that there is too much information going out to the community?
- How does the Communications Council educate ministry areas about available communications resources/tools and encourage their use? How does the Communications Council help other councils use communications to further initiatives and celebrate success?
- How do we maintain and build digital/online communication due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Addressing Declining Member Sacramental Preparation

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger and he who believes in me shall never thirst." (John 6:35)

Challenge

The number of U.S. Catholics who identify themselves by a parish membership or as self-identified member of the Church has stayed relatively the same over the past decade; however, there is a significant increase of the number of Catholics who no longer identify as Catholic over the past decade. Following national trends, Pax Christi has seen a significant decline in Mass attendance over the decade. The U.S. decline in Baptisms, First Communion, and Confirmations is also replicated at Pax Christi. Given that Eden Prairie residents have trended older over the decade, the challenge is still there to understand what the decline in sacraments will mean for the long-term health of the parish.

Verification

Statistics from National Statistics from the Center for the Applied Apostolate (CARA), FAQs, 2018

- Parish-connected U.S. Catholics in 2010 were 65.6 million, and in 2019 were 68.7 million, up .045%. (Official Catholic Directory)
- Catholic U.S. population as self-identified through a survey was 78.3 million in 2010, and 76.3 million in 2018, down .02%.
- Foreign-born adult Catholics as self-identified through a survey within that number are 13.7 million in 2010, and 12.7 million in 2018, down .07%.
- Those raised Catholic who no longer self-identify as Catholic (survey-based estimate) was 19.0 million in 2010 and 26.1 million in 2018, up 27%.
- Catholics who attend Mass every week (survey-based estimate) was 24.2% in 2010 and is estimated at 21.1 % in 2018, down 12%.
- Catholics who attend Mass once a month (including weekly and more frequent attenders: survey-based estimate was 48.9% in 2010 and 45.3% in 2018, down .07%.
- Infant baptisms in 2010 were 806,138, and 615,119 in 2018, down 23%.
- Adult baptisms in 2010 were 41,600 and 36,431 in 2018, down 12%.
- Confirmations in 2010 were 597,402 and 556,418 in 2018, down .06%.
- Marriages in 2010 were 168,400 and 143,082 in 2018, down 15%.

Pax Statistics

Over the decade from 2010–2019, Pax Christi households and number of members are nearly similar, especially in regards to sacramental attendance, which has decreased significantly.

- Pax Christi households in 2010–2011 were 3,158 with 9,087 Members. Households in 2019 were 3,464, an increase of .08% and members were 9,998, an increase of .09%.
- Total Mass Attendance in 2010 was 153,620 and 115,045 in 2018-2019, down 25%.
- Virtual Mass Attendance at the end of March (when the pandemic began) through June, 2020, can be seen in the diagram below.
- Pax Christi baptisms in 2010 were 140, and 96 in 2018–2019, down 21%.
- Pax Christi Confirmations in 2010 were 171 and 112 in 2019–2020, down 34%.
- Pax Christi First Eucharist celebrants in 2010 were 150 and 76 in 2019-2020, down 49%.
- Pax Christi weddings in 2010 were 20, and 28 in 2019–2020, up 28%.

Questions

- With the advent of Online Streaming beginning in March, 2020, what can we learn from the number of weekly hits for streaming?
- Will the parish census to be completed by December 2020 give us insight into the numbers affiliated with the parish compared to the numbers who participate in live-streaming or coming to the sanctuary?
- Will parish census data give us insight into potential participants in First Eucharist and Confirmation, as well as youth faith formation?
- What do we know about the issues that lead to a decline in regular Mass attendance?
- What evangelization efforts can we put in place to attract disaffected and new members to the faith?
- Are there ways we can focus on the sacraments to increase their importance and participation?
- What can be learned from other churches who have worked to increase participation?

| WEEK OF | UNIQUE VIEWS DURING SAT LIVE STREAM | AVERAGE TIME ON PAGE | UNIQUE VIEWS ON SUN | AVERAGE TIME ON PAGE | UNIQUE VIEWS MON-FRI | AVERAGE TIME ON PAGE |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| | | | | | | |
| 6-27-2020 | 145 | 00:08:02 | 92 | 0:06:03 | | |
| 6-20-2020 | 144 | 00:05:38 | 71 | 0:05:18 | 50 | 00:06:11 |
| 6-13-2020 | 160 | 00:06:59 | 116 | 0:09:07 | 40 | 00:06:12 |
| 6-6-2020 | 517 | 00:23:47 | 363 | 0:04:33 | 123 | 00:07:32 |
| 5-30-2020 | 503 | 00:30:46 | 295 | 0:08:31 | **833 | 00:48:57 |
| 5-23-2020 | 507 | 00:52:30 | 343 | 0:04:45 | 143 | 00:19:02 |
| 5-16-2020 | 531 | 00:36:59 | 375 | 0:08:20 | 156 | 00:38:46 |
| 5-9-2020 | 551 | 01:14:58 | 354 | 0:05:26 | 115 | 01:19:12 |
| 5-2-2020 | 555 | 00:51:04 | 446 | 0:10:53 | 155 | 00:21:34 |
| 4-25-2020 | 571 | 00:59:39 | 472 | 0:07:15 | 164 | 00:37:21 |
| 4-18-2020 | 581 | 00:33:00 | 474 | 0:07:01 | 174 | 00:24:08 |
| 4-12-2020 | | | 2,128 | 0:59:05 | 213 | 00:33:34 |
| 4-10-2020 | 1,156 | 00:59:28 | | | | |
| 4-9-2020 | 1,101 | 00:07:54 | | | | |
| 4-4-2020 | 862 | 01:13:43 | 679 | 0:02:17 | 891 | 00:19:07 |
| 3-28-2020 | 857 | 00:58:28 | 538 | 0:11:50 | 784 | 00:13:11 |
| 3-22-2020 | 951 | 00:19:39 | 1,044 | 0:52:34 | 309 | 00:28:50 |
| | | | | | | |
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Prioritizing Pax Christi as a Place of Sabbath and a Place of Community

*We need to rediscover a contemplative spirit so that the love of God may warm our hearts.
Pope Francis (@pontifex)*

Challenge

The roots of taking a “Sabbath’s rest” are referred to in Genesis: “So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all the work done in creation” (2:3). The emphasis, according to some Scripture scholars, is on God making the Sabbath holy. The Sabbath already exists, but how does one mark the day as holy? The challenge for 21st century Christians is on an intentional insertion in one’s life to have a rhythm of rest and renewal amidst the busyness and activity of life. Although our Sunday liturgy serves as a Sabbath time and space for many, it is not assumed that Sabbath is one specified day celebrated by all; it is rather a conscious decision to seek quiet to the rhythm of life by setting aside some time to choose quiet refreshment for our mind, body, soul, and spirit.

Many people, when asked, “How are you?,” will reply, “Busy!” As a faith community—and because of the size and talent we have in parishioners and staff—the challenge is to continue to form disciples, offering important opportunities for members to grow in their faith journey, while not adding to the stress, and sometimes guilt, of “another thing to attend” or program to participate in.

The Effects of COVID-19 on our Worshipping Community

The way we “did church” and experienced community pre-pandemic has changed. We do not know what “normal” looks like, our parish community’s life will not be the same. There is grief and loss. We will be a community of “gathered” and “scattered” parishioners as some of our community chooses to come to church and others choose to stay at home. An ongoing challenge will be to continue our community’s hospitality of being welcoming and engaging in our “in-person” and “virtual” communities.

Verification

- In 2016, there were 815 responses in the Member Engagement (ME) Survey for Pax Christi regarding worship and prayer. Thirty percent of those responding felt that worship and prayer were important. (No comparative data is available to update this information using the ME survey.)
- Multiple Ministry Councils of Pax Christi, in their presentations to the Strategic Planning Team, identified the following as concerns for the community:
 - Sports and activities in family life contribute to lack of time and busyness
 - Too many opportunities and limited participation

- Needing more wellness and prayer components
- Busy schedules and time constraints
- We're always connected through multichannel communication
- Youth are wanting quiet time
- Wayne Muller stated in his book *Sabbath: Finding Rest, Renewal, and Delight in Our Busy Lives*: "When we allow the rush and pressure of our days to fall away, even for a short period of time, we are more able to discern the essential truth of what lies before us. Through meditation, prayer, and stillness, we refine our vision, we sharpen our hearing."
- Pax Christi provided the Labyrinth Prayer for many years, multiple times per year; Silent Saturdays were offered twice a year as well as Centering Prayer and Soul Collage. Most of these prayer forms were attended by 12–20 persons. Centering Prayer was discontinued due to lack of participants.
- COVID-19 has changed the way Christians practice their faith. Forty-eight percent of Christians report praying more than usual and 17% say they are reading the Bible more than usual. Non-Christians have also sought out spiritual guidance during the crisis, some by tuning to an online message (16% other faith, 2% no faith), meeting with a small group or Bible study online (16% other faith, 1% no faith). Twelve percent of those with another faith say they have started praying, something that they admit to not having done regularly prior to the pandemic. (Barna Access, May 2020)
- The top five things parishioners want from their church right now: prayer and emotional support (52%), connection and community (33%), Bible-centered message of hope and encouragement (38%), someone to talk to/counseling (19%), opportunities to serve and help others (25%). (ChurchPulseWeekly, Barna Access, May 2020)

Questions

- In the midst of providing many opportunities for spiritual growth, is the parish meeting the needs of the faith community?
- Does providing too many opportunities for spiritual growth increase the anxiety of having to choose among many goods?
- How does the parish evaluate what is too much programming, given a multi-council reality, and a desire to provide a place and space for Sabbath rest?
- Can the parish be seen as a center for spiritual growth rather than a consumeristic "they have/they don't have what I need?"
- Is there a way to collaborate with other area Catholic or non-Catholic churches to provide opportunities to enhance one's spiritual journey?
- Has the COVID-19 "shelter in place" given individuals and families the opportunity to encounter a different kind of Sabbath rest and an experience of "freedom" from our sometimes frenetic-and over-scheduled lives that they will want to continue to maintain?
- How can we use the disruption of COVID-19 to make space in our community for discerning what God is calling us to do or become as a church and as a community?

- How do we honor and give space to express the incredible loss and grief experienced in this time that we cannot return to the same church/parish we left?
- Amidst this COVID-19 crisis, how do we keep a place of Sabbath that “welcomes all to joyfully experience God's mercy and peace?”
- How will we re-shape our vision of community to embrace a both/and mindset that frames our community as both physical **and** virtual rather than either/or?
- What do we need to do to maintain a high-quality welcoming virtual worship presence as we turn our attention back to in-person worship?
- What ways can we be intentional about making our virtual community members, as well as new members, feel as welcome and valued as those who gather in person?
- How can we continue to shift some of our community's prayer and devotional opportunities to an online format, in addition to holding them in-person (e.g., Bible studies, retreats, etc.)?

Creating and Maintaining a Vital Youth Ministry Program

Youth ministry has to be synodal; it should involve a “journeying together” that values “the charisms that the Spirit bestows in accordance with the vocation and role each of the Church’s members, through a process of co-responsibility ... Motivated by this spirit, we can move onwards toward a participatory and co-responsible Church, one capable of appreciating its own rich variety, gratefully accepting the contributions of the lay faithful, including young people, and women, consecrated persons, as well as groups, associations and movements. No one should be excluded or exclude themselves. Christus Vivit, Pope Francis, (2019), 206

Challenge

A vital youth ministry program is one that tends to the spiritual development of young members (grades 6–12) through Faith Formation classes, relationship-building, and service, to create a foundation of belonging to the Pax Christi community with a shared faith, common values, and a commitment to each other and fellow humanity.

The adolescent years are important and formative as a child transitions to adulthood. We all should seek to walk with our youth and their families as they build authentic relationships with God and others in our community. We aspire to share with them opportunities that allow them to experience the joys of living in a community of faith. As a community, we have an opportunity to create a sense of belonging within the church through connecting with our youth today. During the COVID-19 crisis, our Youth Ministry staff has done a remarkable job of reaching out to youth and parents through online scripture, social justice and prayer courses, Virtual Youth Room twice a week, a Virtual Baccalaureate service, PaxConnex sessions online, PaxConnex Instagram on daily Scripture, and parent resources on Flocknote. Summer options (Zoom events, park meetings, etc.) are being considered. The Youth Ministry team is also determining software needs and functionality for record-keeping and communication. Ongoing challenges to meet student and family needs continue as they prepare for fall and beyond in the midst of uncertain limitations.

Verification

There is increasing recognition in ministry that “belonging” and building relationships opens the door to “believing,” and that community and relationships are essential to a foundation of faith. (Faith Formation SWOC Analysis)

The following information comes from a national survey conducted by Springtide Research Institute during 2019 and can be found in their publication *Belonging: Reconnecting America’s Loneliest Generation*.

- **First Finding: Many Young People Are Lonely**
 1. One in three of our young people feel completely alone much of the time.
 2. Nearly 40% have no one to talk to and feel left out.
 3. Participating in religious groups has virtually no protective effect against the experience of loneliness. Data showed that loneliness extends to young people participating in other organizations (sports, school clubs, service clubs, professional associations, etc.).
- **Second Finding: Many Young People Are Socially Isolated**
 1. Sixty-six percent of 13–25 year olds have three or fewer meaningful interactions on a typical day.
 2. Nearly 40% of young people feel at times as if no one knows them.
- **Third Finding: Many Young People Are Stressed**
 1. Over 50% of 13–25 year olds experience multiple stress factors.
 2. Thirty-five percent of young people ages 13–25 say they have no one to turn to when they're stressed.
- **Fourth Finding: Participation is Not Belonging**
 1. On a scale of 1 to 10, over 60% of 13–25 year olds in our study rank their trust level at 5 or lower for all institutions except nonprofits.
 2. Nearly 25% of young people who attend worship gatherings weekly or more still feel as though no one understands them. However, young people who have a relationship with a trusted adult in a religious institution are more trusting, less isolated, less stressed, more confident about their future, and more connected.
- **Fifth Finding: The Impact of Trusted Adults**
 1. One trusted adult in the life of a young person cuts severe isolation in half.
 2. Young people are four times more likely to feel understood if they have one trusted adult in their life.
 3. Nearly 20% of young people with one trusted adult in their life ALWAYS feel as though they are understood.

Questions

- How can we invite and include youth to be on our ministry councils and participate in ministries?
- How can we aggressively target the young people on the periphery to help repair their social networks and create a protective barrier against loneliness that can keep the whole network from unraveling?
- How do we cultivate the process of “belongingness” as identified by the study with our young people including: being noticed and paying attention to their life, knowing their names, and accepting them without judgment?
- Do we need to have a “Youth Council” to our other ministry councils?
- Do we provide a holistic, multi-platform method to reach out to youth?
- How might a mentoring program, beginning in sixth grade, be a way for kids to connect to a Pax Christi parishioner through ninth grade and beyond?

- How do we create intergenerational opportunities for parishioners to interact with our youth, to listen to them, learn from them, appreciate them, support and encourage them?

Inspiring Service and Ministry

As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace. Whoever preaches, let it be with the words of God; whoever serves, let it be with the strength that God supplies, so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (1 Peter 4:10–11)

Challenge

Pax Christi is blessed with a significant number of people who serve as shared ministers within the community. Those who serve give their time and talents by volunteering in service projects, ministry areas, and in leadership roles such as committee or council members. In 2019, Pax Christi developed SERVE, an online service portal that connects members with 21 categories of service possibilities. Parishioners who use this website to volunteer are contacted by ministry staff connected to each volunteer area. Also, SERVE is introduced to new parishioners during their registration process. Still, there is a challenge because a vast number of those serving give their time over and over again. To increase engagement and to spread the workload, we need to inspire participation among those who do not currently serve. SERVE is creative way to connect shared ministers with the needs at Pax Christi and the greater community.

Verification

- The overall number of people volunteering in the United States has fallen over the past several years. In 2011, 26.8% of Americans volunteered annually. In 2015, that number dropped to 24.9%. (Bureau of Labor Statistics has not added more current data.)
- Older volunteers were more likely to volunteer mainly for religious organizations than younger volunteers. Of volunteers age 65 and over, 42.7 percent served mainly through or for a religious organization, compared with 25.4 percent of volunteers age 16 to 24. (Bureau of Labor Statistics)
- Many ministries within our parish see the same people volunteering and taking the lead over and over again. (Anecdotal from SWOC Presentations)
- Twelve percent of Pax Christi parishioners volunteer five hours or more each week in the parish, while 29% of parishioners volunteer one hour or less each week. (2016 Pax Christi Gallup ME25)
- The Lay Leadership Development and Engagement Council in 2020 revised the discernment process and it is now *A Calling to Leadership*. The process focuses on prayer and reflection.

Questions

- How do we use SERVE and other tools to create ongoing opportunities of ownership of the parish?
- How do we communicate the value of service?
- How do we inspire those who do not volunteer as a shared minister to step forward?
- What skill set or commitment level is required of servers, ministers, and lay leaders?
- How do we develop and mentor future leaders?
- Are there forces occurring that will make volunteerism more challenging?
- Does the volume of programs and ministries lead to burnout?
- Should we consider narrowing down or focusing volunteer needs?
- Do we want to create an opportunity that allows anyone to start whatever ministry they want?
- Should there be a formalized process to evaluate and approve new ministry initiatives?
- Does the general population of Pax Christi know the meaning of “shared ministry?”

Supporting and Encouraging Lifelong Discipleship

Then Jesus approached and said to them, “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:18–20)

Challenge

Discipleship, in its basic definition, means “the actions taken to be a follower of Christ.” To get to the concrete reality of discipleship, it means studying the person of Jesus, paying attention to our Baptismal invitation to walk in the light of Christ, and being serious and intentional about making a difference in others’ lives. The formation of the People of God as disciples is lifelong, ongoing, an integration of lived experience with the faith journey built on a multi-dimensional approach of the living tradition of the Church, an exploration of scripture and its meaning for the Christian today, and an attentiveness to the deep and mystical movement of the person’s spirituality. Many who feel a sense of belonging to a faith community look to that community to provide opportunities to grow as disciples. Discipleship is formed by connections to the people of God, who are the Body of Christ. It is the expectation of the parish to provide sources of growth in discipleship for its members. The distance created by COVID-19 makes it much more difficult to connect with other members. It makes it more difficult for members to attend seminars and/or classes that help grow their discipleship. It makes it more difficult for members to have a sense of belonging when opportunities to gather are limited.

Verification

- There is a paradigm shift happening in the church. First came *attractional*—to have the best worship and programs attracted people. Next came *missional*—to prioritize outreach and making a difference locally, nationally and globally, which will inspire people to join a church. The current movement is *relational*—that is, how does our church support active, faith-filled relationships among its members, the local community, and beyond. Today, belonging to a community leads to believing in the faith. (SWOC Council Presentations)
- As Christians, we are called to live like Jesus. In scripture, Jesus sends his followers out in pairs to spread the gospel and to form disciples. “Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them in pairs ahead of him to every city and place where he himself was going to come” (Luke 10:1).
- Research has shown that member engagement drives spiritual commitment and engaged members are ten times more likely to invite others to participate in their parish. (Gallup ME25)

- In 2016, 37% of respondents to the Pax Christi Member Engagement Survey strongly agreed that their spiritual needs were currently met. This was an increase from 28% in 2013. (Pax Christi Gallup ME25)
- In 2016, 23% of respondents to the Pax Christi Member Engagement Survey strongly agreed that “There is someone in my parish who encourages my spiritual development.” This was an increase from 19% in 2013. (Pax Christi Gallup ME25).
- In 2013, 15% of respondents to the Pax Christi Member Engagement Survey strongly agreed that “Aside from family members, I have a best friend in my parish.” This was 14% lower than the percentage from all Christian groups who had taken the same survey in 2013. (2013 Pax Christi Gallup ME25)
- In 2013, 43% of respondents to the Pax Christi Member Engagement Survey strongly agreed that “In my parish, I have opportunities to learn and grow.” In 2016, this grew to 48% of respondents. (Pax Christi Gallup ME25).

Questions

- What strategies or structures can be implemented to foster relationship-building among Pax Christi members? And how do we do that in light of COVID-19?
- Do the educational opportunities that exist at Pax Christi cover every stage of life? If not, where are the gaps? Can we expand online offerings for spiritual growth? How will that work?
- Do members of the community feel empowered to reach out to others and to share their faith?
- Does our current organizational structure lead us to forming disciples?
- Is the parish able to provide reoccurring opportunities for its members to meet and grow together, and is that supported in personnel and financial resources?
- How should Pax Christi members reach out to those who are attending Mass but are not actively engaged in the life of the parish?
- If Pax Christi expands offerings online, how do we measure effectiveness?
- Members who are most vulnerable to COVID-19 may choose not to enter the building. What creative things can we do to help them maintain their sense of belonging? Their spiritual growth? Their sense of discipleship?

Growing Vitality Through Outreach

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

Challenge

The overwhelming hope for Pax Christi Catholic Community is to see it flourish for many decades to come. To meet that goal, we need to cultivate a continual flow of engaged members through the parish. Providing opportunities for people to feel that sense of belonging to Pax Christi is imperative. This paradigm shift of “belonging, then believing” is key to connecting with those who are participants. We must not sit and wait for people to simply come to us. Instead, the current Pax Christi membership and staff need to extend their reach beyond our four walls. Participation strategies need to strive to constantly build relationships, engage in activities and styles that attract people, and be open to carrying out some of our Catholic traditions in different ways.

Verification

- The Councils at Pax Christi, through their SWOC (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, concerns) analyses, identified the following as growth opportunities for our community:
 - Attentiveness to new ideas, addressing trends and flexibility
 - Multichannel communication, technology, and social media culture
 - Relationship-building opportunities (e.g. small groups, intergenerational mentoring, etc.)
 - Partnerships with other churches
- Barna studies have indicated that many people who identify themselves as being Christian are “dechurched,” and 89% believe in God but have discarded believing they need to be part of a church. Presently we are in the post-Christian era where 71% of Americans don’t attend church on a weekly basis. The American Christian Church dropout rate has increased from 59% in 2011 to 64% in 2019. Catholics attending church has fallen from 43% in 2004 to 22% in 2016. This trend is reflected in Pax Christi’s decline in attendance and participation in Mass and Faith Formation: attendance at Mass (162,257 in 2011 to 110,124 in 2019) and participation in Faith Formation (elementary 857 to 242 in 2019; secondary 416 to 255 in 2019) has decreased (Pax Christi demographic statistics, 2017 and 2020).
- According to the Barna and Pew studies on various age groups:
 - Gen Z (1996 and earlier): 78% believe in God but 41% do not attend any services

- Millennials (1977–1995): 49% identify as Christians and 40% consider themselves “nones”
- Gen X (1965–1976): 36% identify with being Christian but not belonging to a church
- Boomers (1946–1964): 44% identify with being Christian but not belonging to a church
- Elders (1945 and older): 84% consider themselves Christians and most likely to attend church regularly
- Studies and articles by Barna, Pew Research, James White, and Jonathan Merritt have identified several criteria to address the concerns of our multigenerational population. Examples of the challenges that were singled out in the research include:
 - Young people tend to be biblically illiterate, looking for individual freedom, relational acceptance and lifestyle affirmation.
 - People are multiracial both individually and in families, and looking for the communication of the gospel, as well as, being allowed to be in and valued by the community.
 - Participants want a church that loves one another, all generations working together (generational diversity), and a desire to make a difference with their lives, and are attracted to what will enable them to make the difference.

Questions

- Why would our faith community commit to the shifting paradigm of believing then belonging to belonging then believing?
- What types of social outreach activities would help build relationships among people with common spiritual values and goals? What are the outcomes we would like to see?
- If evangelization is sharing our faith, how do we encourage parishioners to invest in their relationships and when the time is right invite people who are searching or who may not have a church join us?
- Who are we trying to attract and how do we attract them?
- How will our community develop new ways of doing things? Why would there be any value in doing things a new way? How would we balance our traditions with a rapidly changing society?
- What do “unchurched” or “dechurched” persons need from a community in order to feel welcomed and accepted in order to explore or grow in their relationship with God and faith community?
- What are some ways that we could invite Catholics who have left the Church to return if they have not found a church home?
- Are we seeing the results we desired from our Strategic Planning efforts from 2017–19?

Maximizing the Potential of Building and Grounds

Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house, that I may take pleasure in it and that I may be glorified, says the Lord. (Haggai 1:8)

Challenge

The building and grounds of our parish are widely considered to be a strength of Pax Christi, and the current space we have is utilized for many diverse activities. In response to challenges laid out in the 2016 Strategic Plan, Pax Christi has completed a Master Site Plan, and developed relevant security measures and plans to address random acts of violence. Ongoing work to address anticipated changes in parish demographics will continue to be needed.

A major challenge emerged in 2019–2020, addressing the safety of parishioners and staff returning to the building with the threat of COVID-19.

Verification

- New cameras and screens were installed in July of 2020 to address the sight line issues. (ACG SWOC Analysis)
- Size of building and multi-purpose uses create usability as a host site to build community and diocesan relationships. (ACG SWOC Analysis)
- Rebranding in 2020 will lead to consistent signage throughout the Pax Christi campus.
- Pax Christi is debt-free and has approximately 20 years of funding for maintenance and repairs. (Pax Christi financial documents)
- Continued focus on delivering on the Master Site plan.
- Large group of ACG shared ministers, with approximately 250 people on the list. (ACG Presentation to Strategic Planning Team)

Questions

- Does the parish have a current and accurate replacement and average life schedule for its building assets?
- How does Pax Christi maintain its current facility in the era of COVID-19?
- What new policies need to be put in place and communicated due to COVID-19?
- How does Pax Christi effectively communicate the many benefits that our facility offers to a diverse group of parishioners?
- Does Pax Christi address different generational needs at Pax Christi with our current facility?

- How does the campus environment continue to address the needs expressed in the other challenges?

Staffing to Meet New Challenges and Opportunities

Christian ministry is the public activity of a baptized follower of Jesus Christ flowing from the Spirit's charism and an individual personality on behalf of a Christian community to witness to, serve, and realize the kingdom of God.
(Thomas O'Meara in *Theology of Ministry*)

Challenge

Pax Christi has a reputation and is a model as a Lay Leadership run parish. Its staff as lay leaders is fully engaged, works well with Lay Leadership as shared ministers, and is open to change. The challenge is to efficiently staff ongoing facility/operational needs, program/ministry (both current and future) needs, and to prepare for changes in key staff positions, including the pastor of our parish. To fully utilize the gifts and talents of both staff and other lay leaders without over burdening is a fine balancing act. Planning for change enables the parish to be proactive instead of reactive and prepares everyone for a “new normal” and to welcome change. In anticipation of changes happening in our church directly and broadly, there needs to be a succession plan in place for the ordained and staff.

The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020–2021 causes a relook at staff responsibilities, which includes shifts in areas of focus and new opportunities, positioning the parish to grow in dimensions reflective to this Strategic Plan.

Verification

- Building Services staffing will require more technology interest and capability. (ACG presentation to Strategic Planning Team)
- The number of Adult Faith Formation opportunities have increased over the last two years, with the following offered during 2019–2020:
 - Women with Spirit: 110 women
 - Women & Scripture Event: 100 women
 - RCIA: 8 candidates, along with their sponsors, 1 additional team member
 - Baptism Prep: Monthly Class, average of 4–5 couples per class
 - Men's Group: Monthly Gatherings August–October averaged 20 men, November–February averaged 35 men
 - Book Club: Fall participation of 25 people, Winter Participation of 24; Spring participation of 27 people
 - Lectio Divina: Spring Participation (weekly) of 12 people
 - Engaged Couples Retreat in November: 8 couples participated
 - Lenten Retreat “Be Who You Are”: 85 participants
 - SoulCollage: 3 events, average of 3 participants per gathering

- Giving has been flat, yet stable over the past eight years. These years have seen both a generational transition as the founding generation aged and an influx of newer families who have counterbalanced the change. (Pax Christi News Generosity issues, October 2017-2019)
 - Operating costs 2017–2018 FYE \$2,868,462
 - Operating costs 2018–2019 FYE \$2,820,667 -1.67%
 - Operating costs 2019–2020 FYE (appr.)\$2,625,000 ~-10.5%
 - Second quarter Employee Retention Credit will reduce operating cost by approximately \$100,000 (tbd)
- Pastor change is inevitable and usually is accompanied by a drop in giving. Although there was a pastor change in 2018, the accompanying tax law changes and the finalization of the archdiocesan bankruptcy makes it difficult to determine the financial impact of the pastor change. While the parish has maintained the level of giving close to budget during the initial three months of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is uncertain that level of giving will be sustained as the pandemic elongates before a vaccine is available.
 - Regular Contributions 2017–2018 FYE \$2,944,842
 - Regular Contributions 2018–2019 FYE \$2,707,654 -8%
 - Regular Contributions 2019–2020 FYE (appr.)\$2,650,000 -2%
 - Fr. Mike Byron became pastor in July 2018.
 - On September 25, 2018, Judge Robert Kressel approved a \$210 million settlement between the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis and more than 400 survivors, the largest such settlement in the nation. The parish felt a reprised fallout of this decision in the fall of 2018.
 - It is unclear the number of parishioners who took advantage of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, particularly regarding bunching and donor advised funds, which would have affected charitable giving in December of 2017, thus decreasing the general revenue in FY 2018–2019.
- Membership and participation is declining and aging. A decline in revenue will impact future programming and services. (Pax Christi Membership Statistics)
- Fr. Mike Byron’s collaborative leadership style, energy, and willingness to be aware of the functions of the parish while allowing the strengths and talents within the staff and laity to flourish, is aligned with the parish’s founding core value of lay leadership.

Questions

- How does the parish manage the fine dance between having the ability to change structures within the parish to attend to existing and emerging needs, and defining how that looks within the current staff structure?
- What will the parish do to maintain a healthy ordained ministry presence that is consistent with the core values and overall ecclesiology of the parish?
- How can the parish prepare for a transition in worship staff and the liturgical impact that makes?

Sustaining Financial Health

*The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.
(2 Corinthians 9:6)*

Challenge

Pax Christi is in solid financial position at the present time as evidenced by parish financial statements. Regular contributions have remained relatively flat since 2011, a period in which participation in Mass and Faith Formation has decreased by roughly half. This strong financial position has been created by several large, one-time donations and fiscal discipline. The concern is that the trend of declining participation is likely to result in declining regular financial contributions. Since the parish cannot rely on one-time contributions to fund operating expenses or offset inflation, a shortage in regular contributions would lead to a reduction in programs and services, which could further accelerate the downward trend in participation.

While the beginnings of COVID-19 have caused programming to initially cease and worship to look very different, there was an initial exuberant financial support by parishioners and others. With the extension of the pandemic and the shifting to virtual programming, the financial impact on the parish's resources and reserves is still to be determined.

Verification

- Capital Reserve is \$1,600,000 (Pax Christi May 2020 Statement of Financial Position). Near term projects that will draw down this balance are the video project for the worship space and the pedestrian access path (the latter is a response to the Strategic Plan of 2018 to create a Master Site Plan).
- Cash Reserve: \$2,477,000 (Pax Christi May 2020 Statement of Financial Position)
- Pax Christi Community Endowment Fund: \$529,000 (Pax Christi May 2020 balance)
- Long Term Debt: \$0
- Fiscal Discipline - spending actual to budget for last 7 years

| | <u>Actual</u> | <u>Budget</u> |
|------|---------------|---------------|
| 2013 | 2,874,006 | 3,003,470 |
| 2014 | 2,981,387 | 2,941,095 |
| 2015 | 2,767,840 | 2,874,000 |
| 2016 | 2,736,990 | 2,817,355 |
| 2017 | 2,911,113 | 2,810,455 |
| 2018 | 2,883,874 | 2,926,109 |
| 2019 | 2,820,667 | 2,982,922 |

(Pax Christi Fiscal Year End Balance Sheets, 2013–2019)

- Regular Contributions have been relatively flat for 8 years:

| | |
|------|-----------|
| 2012 | 2,708,120 |
| 2013 | 2,865,237 |
| 2014 | 2,790,819 |
| 2015 | 2,784,320 |
| 2016 | 2,782,947 |
| 2017 | 2,829,154 |
| 2018 | 2,944,842 |
| 2019 | 2,707,654 |

(PaxChristiNews, October Generosity Reports)
- 53% of the parish membership gives 91% of annual operating revenue. The remaining 9% of operating revenue comes from non-registered households and anonymous loose cash gifts
 - 483 (14%) households give 62% of annual operating revenue
 - 760 (22%) households give 75% of annual operating revenue
 - 1135 (33%) households give 85% of annual operating revenue

(Pax Christi Fiscal Year End Balance Demographics, 2018-2019)

Questions

- How do we further strengthen our culture of stewardship and broaden a sense of financial responsibility to include all members of the parish?
- How do we structure stewardship communications to be effective across diverse populations?
- How does Pax Christi maintain a strong financial position in light of the headwinds (bankruptcy in local diocese, decline in Mass attendance and celebration of the sacraments) facing the Roman Catholic Church generally?
- How do we address different generational needs in order to keep them engaged in contributing to the financial health of the parish?
- How do we meet varying desire for transparency with regard to the financial resources and budget of the parish?
- Are there models of giving that could be introduced to increase emotional and financial engagement to sustain the parish, ministries, and/or justice grants? Examples might include enabling targeted gifts to specific ministries, initiatives, justice grants, or donations of appreciated stock, etc.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has opened the door to the opportunity to reimagine the breadth of community in which parish life is lived. How will the adjustments to programs and staffing reflect these necessary changes?

Section VII

Appendix

Introduction to the 2018 Strategic Plan

In 2011, Pax Christi leadership developed a strategic plan that focused on five key initiatives that would support the life and growth of members, and would guide effective ministry over the next five years. On October 19, 2016, the Community Council of Pax Christi discussed and approved the need for a new strategic plan. Topics for particular consideration for this process included outreach to those who are struggling to find religious relevance in their lives, preparation for a time of pastor and parish transition, and the goal of seeing church that has influence and ministry beyond the campus.

The Community Council commissioned a Strategic Planning Team to ascertain the key challenges facing the parish today, to review and update the mission and values statements, and to identify overarching goals to guide the work of the parish ministry councils over the next three years.

The Strategic Planning Team, guided by prayer and the presence of the Spirit, met over the course of seventeen months following a process that received the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges of each of the ministry areas, as well as deep reflection and consideration of national and local data and trends in the church. The Strategic Planning Team used consensus decision-making in creating all of its final documents for the mission, purpose, and value statements, identifying the key challenges that face the parish, and generating the overarching goals. The Strategic Planning Team utilized a variety of ways to collect feedback from key stakeholders on each of the components of the plan. This new strategic plan contains:

- Mission Statement (revised)
- Purpose Statement (new)
- Values (revised)
- Thirteen Key Challenges (new), and
- Two Overarching Goals (new)
- Vision (eliminated)

which will guide the parish through 2021. The final document was received and approved by the Community Council at its June 19, 2018 meeting.

As the sponsors of this strategic plan, the Community Council will establish a path for its communication to the parish and oversee its implementation through the eight ministry councils.

Submitted in the spirit of Pax Christi by the members of the Strategic Planning Team:

Bruce Koehn, Carolyn Zucker, Dave Wagner, Jane Schmitz, Joan Pare', Joe Stich, Kate Lohrenz, Lisa Cox, Michael Ramirez

Section VIII

Glossary of Terms

Children’s Faith Formation

For Pax Christi, the specific programming that is offered to children and families in:

- Children’s Liturgy of the Word during the Sunday Masses (ages 4 through third grade)
- Sacramental preparation programs of First Reconciliation and First Eucharist (both second grade and older)
- Finding God Program (grades 1–5)
- Good Shepherd (ages 4 through third grade)
- Godly Play (ages 4–6)
- Vacation Bible Camp

Engagement

Congregational engagement describes the degree of belonging an individual has in his or her congregation. But it is deeper than belonging to a “club”; engaged members use the language of “family” when they talk about their churches. They want to know they are valued and that they make meaningful contributions to the mission and ministry of their churches – not in terms of dollars and cents, but in contributing their greatest talents to accomplish something bigger than themselves. (*Growing An Engaged Church*, Albert Winseman, Gallup Press, 2007, pg. 67)

Master Site Plan

A long-range plan includes an architectural plan, landscape architecture documents, and detailed engineering drawings of proposed improvements to develop or improve the land and building complex to balance and harmonize all elements for future ministries of this community.

Participation

As referenced in these key challenges, participation refers to the members who attend Mass and receive the Initiation Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.

Relevance

As referenced in these key challenges, the ways in which the Catholic Church, and in particular, Pax Christi, holds purpose, meaning, and influences a person’s life and faith journey.

Sabbath

The Scriptures refer to God’s “day of rest” first in Genesis (2:3), and then *Sabbath* as an entire year of rest is mentioned in Leviticus (25:3-5):

Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard and gather in its crop, but during the seventh year the land shall have a sabbath rest, a sabbath to the LORD; you shall not sow your field nor prune your vineyard: Your harvest’s

aftergrowth you shall not reap, and your grapes of untrimmed vines you shall not gather; the land shall have a sabbatical year.

Sabbath, in contemporary terms, means to allow time in one's life to rest and be renewed.

Shared Minister

A person who shares in the work of the church as they live out their baptismal call. They work alongside professional ministers to carry out the mission of Christ. Shared ministers are more than “volunteers” because of the nature of their good works, lived out on behalf of the Christian community to build the kingdom of God.

Youth Ministry

At Pax Christi, youth ministry is defined as the

- Formation programs (PaxConnex—6th – 8th grade)
- Confirmation (tenth grade and older)
- Spark Groups (ninth grade and older)
- Social activities, service, mission trips, and relationship-building that comprise this age group