

Diocese of Bridgeport Parish Pastoral Plan

“Building a Bridge to the Future”

Part One: Introductory Information

Parish:

St. James Church

Pastor:

Thomas Lynch

Date:

Plan Year One: October 1, 2016 to September 30, 2017
Plan Year Two: October 1, 2017 to September 30, 2018

Parish Task Force Members:

Leadership Position:

- 1) Father Thomas Lynch
- 2) Father Rogerio Perri
- 3) Jim Clifford
- 4) Marika David
- 5) Magalie Granado
- 6) Jim Hodska
- 7) Dernsta Honore
- 8) Marcy Kelly
- 9) Thomas Kelly
- 10) Richard Zboray
- 11)
- 12)

Pastor
Associate Pastor

Add additional lines if there are more Task Force members

Signature of the Pastor: _____

Pastoral Challenge #1: Parish Goals and Action Steps

A. Pastoral Challenge to be addressed:

- Catechesis and Education
- Evangelization
- Family Life
- Leadership**
- Liturgy and Worship

B. Rationale for Choosing this Priority Area:

1. Canon Law (Canon 536): *"While not required, Canon Law provides for the establishment of a Parish Pastoral Council to assist the Pastor in planning, coordinating, guiding, and directing all aspects of Parish life."*
2. Diocese of Bridgeport (January 2008): *"It has been, and remains, the consistent policy of the Diocese of Bridgeport that a Parish Pastoral Council be established in each Parish."*

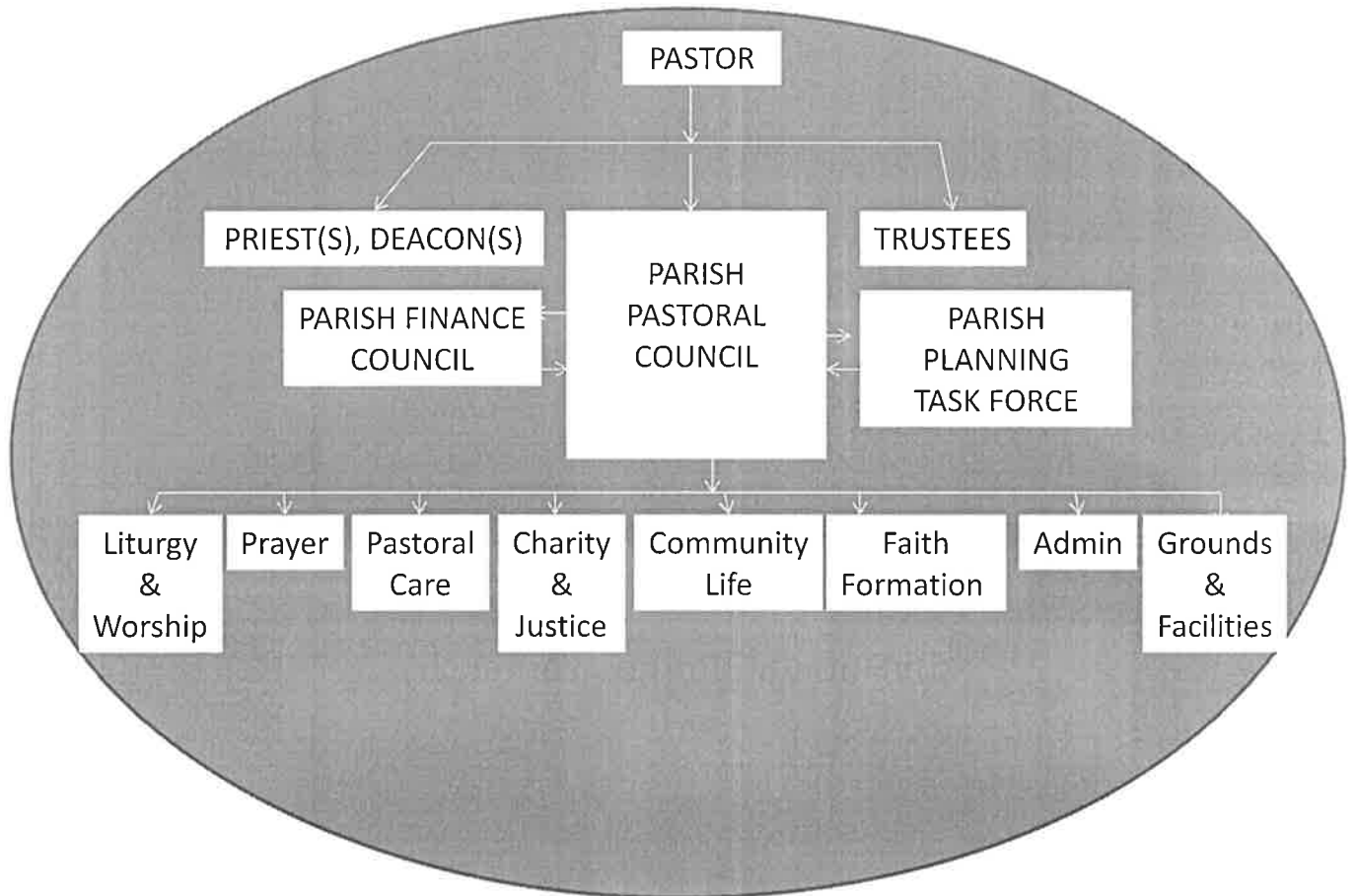
C. Statement of the First Goal to be achieved:

Re-institute a Pastoral Council to support Parish Leadership in monitoring, advising and decision-making of Parish Operations, Spiritual Development and Financial Oversight. With input from the Finance Council, the Pastoral Council will be responsible for mediating the feasibility of Objectives set by the Pastoral Planning Task Force, and for those Objectives accepted, the Council will be responsible for timely implementation. The Pastoral Council will be specifically responsible for:

1. The promotion, implementation, calling together, support and expansion of the St. James "Live Your Faith" Initiative
2. The promotion, implementation, calling together, support and expansion of the St. James "Disciples' Way: Living The Gospel Message" Initiative
3. Overseeing the evaluation and implementation of Pastoral Plan Objectives
4. Approving the Parish Budget, Budget modifications, and Parish Spending

The Council will be structured into the St. James Parish Organization as shown below:

St. James Community of Faith



The Council will regularly meet with the Pastor to offer advice and assistance on the short-and-long terms needs of the Parish. The Council will be responsible for continually refining and maintaining the Pastoral Vision.

The Council will be:

1. Comprised of 9 members and the Pastor of the Parish who will have the right to vote. The Chairperson of the Finance Council and Lead for the Planning Task Force will serve as non-voting members.
2. Each year, one third of the Council will be replaced. The specifics for which members to be replaced will be defined by the Council. Replaced members can be re-nominated.
3. The Council will be comprised of Parishioners, 18 years old and older, who:
 - a. Love and care for St. James and who have experienced the difference that has made in their lives
 - b. Embrace the Pastoral Vision as set out in the Parish Pastoral Plan
 - c. Have a *passion* for moving St. James forward

- d. Have knowledge of the Parish, its resources and its Mission
 - e. Regularly celebrate the Eucharist, and have at least 3 years of active involvement in the Parish..
4. Method of Selection:
- a. Parishioners will nominate Candidates for the Council
 - b. If the Candidate accepts the nomination, Parish leadership will vet the Nominee
 - c. The Parish will be asked to pray that the Holy Spirit will guide the final selection of accepted candidates
 - d. The names of the accepted candidates will be placed in a bowl, and the Pastor will randomly pick the Council members

Measures for Success:

1. Re-institution of the Pastoral Council
2. Starting the implementation of at least one Plan to achieve Objectives within six months of re-institution.

Summary Information for Action Step #1:

- Timeline for completion:
 - October 1-Definition of Candidate Qualifications
 - Promotion of the Pastoral Council and Candidate Nomination: October 8-21
 - October 22-November 12-Parishioners to nominate or self-nominate Candidates
 - November 1-22: Vetting of Candidates
 - November 26-December 3: The names of accepted Candidates will be placed in a sealed box and placed near the altar. Parishioners will be asked to pray for the Holy Spirit to guide the final selection.
 - December 4: Selection of Council by randomly picking names from the box
 - December 5-13: Notification to selected Council Members; set first meeting date
 - December 17-18: Parish Announcement of Parish Council Members in Bulletin, on website and from Pulpit

- Responsible person/Task Force: Pastor/Pastoral Planning Task Force
- Diocesan Office assisting (if any): none
- Projected Costs (if any): While the re-instituting of the Council incurs no cost, the Actions to accomplish the Community Goals will need to be budgeted

Pastoral Challenge #2: Parish Goals and Action Steps

A. Pastoral Challenge to be addressed:

- Catechesis and Education
- Evangelization**
- Family Life
- Leadership
- Liturgy and Worship

B. Rationale for Choosing this Priority Area:

Evangelization (Global Challenge) “The New Evangelization calls all followers of Christ to be formed in faith, celebrate the faith, and be witnesses to the ends of the earth. The work of the Church is to bring all people into relationship with God by teaching that social justice is an integral part of the Church’s mission” (U.S. Bishops, Communities of Salt and Light). Also, “Our faith needs to prove its fruitfulness by penetrating the believer’s entire life, including its worldly dimensions, and by activating him toward justice and love especially regarding the needy” (Gaudium Et Spes, Pope Paul VI, December 7, 1965).

1. St. James is committed to living the Gospel in light of Social Charity and Social Justice.
2. The Gospel is the life of the Church and our faith community must encourage full participation by all.
3. We are to evangelize people through witnessing the Gospel by teaching and action.

The above rationale is supported by the 2016 St. James Disciple Maker Index that showed that 86% of the responders want to be formed as Disciples of Jesus.

C. Statement of the Second Goal to be achieved:

To encourage living the radical demands of the Gospel through our service to others, especially the marginalized and the poor.

a. Action Step# 1 to achieve Second Goal:

To create a better understanding of Evangelization and how to best lead the community to service (Education).

1. Work with leaders from Social Outreach and Faith Formation to develop a teaching plan for evangelization with an emphasis on the greater understanding of what it means to live the radical demands of Jesus. Purpose: to create understanding of our Catholic calling to Evangelization.
2. Meet with Leaders/Representatives from all St. James ministries to help educate their people on Evangelization. Meet quarterly to review progress.

Measures for Success:

More Parishioners are living the Church's Social Gospel:

- Plan Year 1: Double the number of Parishioners involved in Social Outreach
- Plan Year 2: Double the Plan 1 Year total

Summary Information for Action Step #1:

- Timeline for completion: Initial 12month period
- Responsible person/Task Force: Social Outreach, Jim Hodska, Faith Formation, St. James School
- Diocesan Office assisting (if any): none required at this time
- Projected Costs (if any): to be determined. (Books and/or Study Guides)

b. Action Step #2 to achieve Second Goal:

To create and implement an action plan to have Social Outreach and Social Justice working in all ministries (Action).

1. Form Charity and Justice Action Teams with representatives from all St. James Ministries. Purpose: to bring our understanding of Evangelization to action.
2. Train ministries for Evangelization of Charity, Justice and Peace-Making.

Measures for success:

Commitment by all ministries to action

Summary Information for Action Step #2:

- Timeline for completion: by 18 months after initialization
- Responsible person/Task Force: St. James ministries leaders
- Diocesan Office assisting (if any): none required at this time
- Projected Costs (if any): to be determined.

Pastoral Challenge #3: Parish Goals and Action Steps

A. Pastoral Challenge to be addressed:

- Catechesis and Education
- Evangelization
- Family Life
- Leadership
- Liturgy and Worship**

B. Rationale for Choosing this Priority Area:

Liturgy enables us to build our relationship with God and others. But only a few Parishioners presently have an understanding of the depth of our Faith and its practices. For example, mass concludes with The Rite of Sending Forth, but few in our Parish know that they are directed to use their Spiritual Power energized at mass to live the Gospels and serve God. Our Parishioners should understand John Chyrsostom when he says: *"If you cannot find Christ in the beggar at the Church door, you will not find Him in the Chalice."*

Recalling the Second Vatican Council's constitution on the Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Pope Francis said, "the Church is calling us to have and to promote an authentic liturgical life, so that there may be harmony between what the liturgy celebrates, and what we live in our daily existence." The liturgy, he said, "is the privileged place to hear the voice of the Lord, who guides us on the path of righteousness and Christian perfection."

"The liturgy, he continued, invites us to a journey of conversion and penance, especially during Lent, "the time of interior renewal, of the remission of sins, the time in which we are called to rediscover the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, that makes us go from the darkness of sin to the light of grace and friendship with Jesus." The Pope said we must never forget "the great strength that this Sacrament has for the Christian life: it makes us grow in union with God, makes us regain lost joy and experience the consolation of knowing we are personally welcomed by the merciful embrace of the Father."

Liturgy encompasses not only attending mass, but visiting the homebound, anointing the sick, etc. Too few Parishioners leave and experience God in their daily lives. James 2:17: *If one of you tells him, "Go in peace; stay warm and well fed," but does not provide for his physical needs, what good is that? So too, faith by itself, if it is not complemented by action, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith and I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds....*

Parishioners should recognize and experience God's gifts of Forgiveness and Mercy that He gives with unconditional love. A gift given should be a gift given away. Through Reconciliation, a person receives God's compassionate gift of forgiveness--and that gift should be given by forgiving others. Receiving Eucharist, a person receives God's gift of unconditional love--and that gift should be given to others in daily life outside the Church.

C. **Statement of the Third Goal to be achieved:**

Reinvigorate our Liturgy to support Parishioners in the journey to be more relational, engaged and empowered.

1. Call our adult Parishioners to truly embrace the Catholic Faith, but with a greater understanding and experience of God's unconditional love
2. Drive Parishioners out of the isolation and desolation of "Self"
3. Show Parishioners how to extend Liturgy in daily life by becoming disciples and living the Disciples' Prayer:

Spirit of God, who dwells within me, I believe that you have chosen me from all time to be your presence and light in this world. As a disciple, in your name and power, may I show your love and care for others as I:

Love in every interaction

Give to anyone who asks of me

Lend without any hope of return

Never cling to my treasure on earth

Act with compassion

Avoid judging others

Give to the poor

Feed the hungry

Give rest to the weary

Offer drink to the thirsty

Welcome the stranger

Clothe the naked

Visit those in prison

Comfort the sick

Bind the injured

Forgive unconditionally

Never condemn

Love my enemies

Pray for those who mistreat me

Offer no resistance to injury

Settle quickly with my adversaries

Do good to those who hate me

Bless those who curse me

Seek out the lost

Bring back the strayed

Thank you for your loving presence within me. Help me respond wholeheartedly to your call to be your disciple, for the world desperately needs your love and care.

These behaviors are not add-ons but derived from our encounters with God in the Eucharist and Reconciliation.

4. Reset each of the four parts of a Mass:
 - a. Reset *Gathering* by working with Greeters and Ushers to help them build relationships with Parishioners
 - b. Reset *Word* to empower Parishioners through sermons and reflection on the Word in Sermon
 - c. Reset Eucharist so Parishioners understand they are to allow themselves to be moved beyond Obligation or Convenience to a Faith of Commitment
 - d. Reset the *Rite of Sending Forth* so that Parishioners "Go forth and live the Gospel" by sharing the gifts received at mass with others in their daily lives.

a. Action Step# 1 to achieve Third Goal:

1. Re-energize Liturgy and Worship
2. Re-educate the Community of Faith
3. Ongoing formation for our Liturgical Ministry
 - a. Add new faces
 - b. Use Ministries to identify candidates for service
 - c. Establish standards
 - d. Train those who participate as Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, Acolytes, Sacristans, Greeters and Ushers

Measures for Success:

Qualitative increase in Parishioners' energy for living a Catholic life.

Summary Information for Action Step #1:

- Timeline for completion – 6 months
- Responsible person/Task Force – Fr. Rogerio Perri
- Diocesan Office assisting – none required at this time
- Projected costs – Books, Retreat day

b. Action Step #2 to achieve Third Goal:

Worship, as defined by St. James, is the coming together to hear the radical demands of the Gospel within the context of a Community of Faith

1. Create a Worship team
2. Work on the liturgical seasons as an entity to determine how they can integrate the Social Gospel and be celebrated ritually year after year.

Measures for success:

Qualitative increase in Parishioners' energy for living the Social Gospel supported by annual surveys to quantify growth.

Summary Information for Action Step #2:

- Timeline for completion : Within Plan Year 1
- Responsible person/Task Force: Fr. Rogerio Perri
- Diocesan Office assisting (if any): none at this time
- Projected Costs (if any): TBD

Temporalities and Administrative Challenge #1: Parish Goals and Action Steps

A. Temporalities and Administrative Challenge to be addressed:

- Buildings and Facilities
- Community Life**
- Finances

B. Rationale for Choosing this Priority Area:

1. Our Evangelization objective focuses on "Works"; our Liturgy and Worship objective the experience of God's love. Our Community Life objective looks to hold the two together, build our Faith Community, and further St. James as a relational, engaged and empowered Community.

2. Parishioners participating in the Survey appear to be in a core group gaining much from what the Parish offers. This assumption is reinforced by approximately the same number of Parishioners who participated in our Disciples' Way initiative as provided survey input. Our challenge is to expand this core group.

3. The number of younger, non-white and economically disadvantaged Parishioners who participated in the Survey was a much smaller percentage than expected based on demographics. These same Parishioners are underrepresented in ministry leadership.

4. In our Self-Assessment, we identified as a challenge: *"Inviting, engaging and empowering the 'silent majority' of parishioners is our next great task. St. James has a strong core, but how we will expand to more people and promote more consistent spiritual practices?"* By holding together Evangelization and Liturgy/Worship, Community will transform our members to move beyond ritual observance to embrace a truly Catholic life.

5. Living the Social Gospel is difficult. A Faith Community to encourage and support one another in living it every day is needed.

C. Statement of the Fourth Goal:

1. To provide opportunities for all parishioners to come together in our diversity, to offer their time, energy and resources to address needs and to encourage community building based on trust and Catholic principles.
2. To better Invite, Orient and Connect people

3. To help people connect at a deeper level, not only to become "involved" in the Parish. As is stated in our Mission: *See a face, learn a name, hear a story. Love one another!*

a. Action Step# 1 to achieve Fourth Goal:

Create a Community Life Ministry.

The new Community Life Ministry will identify community needs and develop and implement community-wide programs. The Ministry will embrace stewardship and encourage parishioners to actively participate in the life of the parish.

As envisioned by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops: The ministry of community life *builds* an environment of love, support, appreciation for diversity, and judicious acceptance that models Catholic principles; *develops* meaningful relationships; and *nurtures* Catholic faith. The content of our message will be heard only when it is lived in our relationships and community life. To teach compassion, generosity, tolerance, peace, forgiveness, acceptance, and love as gospel values and to identify ourselves as Christians require us to live these values in our interactions with young people and in our community life. God's reign was proclaimed through the relationships Jesus initiated, and it continues to be heralded every time we witness our belief in him through the relationships in our community. The community life of the first Christians was a sign to everyone that Christ was in their midst (see Acts 2:42-47). The ministry of community life is not only *what* we do (activity), but *who* we are (identity) and *how* we interact (relationships). (Adapted from U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops - <http://www.usccb.org/about/laity-marriage-family-life-and-youth/young-adults/renewing-the-vision.cfm#life>)

The Community Life Ministry will specifically:

- create an environment characterized by gospel values that nurtures meaningful relationships among parishioners
- develops the friendship-making and friendship-maintaining skills of people grounded in Christian values;
- enrich family relationships through programs, activities, and resources to improve skills such as family communication, decision making, and faith sharing
- provide opportunities for multicultural community building that promote respect for people's racial and ethnic cultures as well as economic status and develop skills for communication and understanding
- engage parishioners in the life, activities, and ministries of the parish in meaningful and age-appropriate ways
- coordinate and make Ministries and staff aware of Parish initiatives and opportunities for service and faith formation
- teach skills to promote positive and healthy interaction
- teach and promote a stance of non-violence in every interaction

Measures of Success:

Increase in Parishioners' gifts of stewardship time and talents to build a Community of Faith that lives the Social Gospel.

Summary Information for Action Step #1:

- Timeline for completion: The Community Life Ministry is to be established within six months of Plan acceptance.
- Responsible person/Task Force: Pastor and Pastoral Council; a Community Life Minister may need to be hired part- or full-time; and/or a team of volunteer Community Life Ministers may be needed
- Diocesan Office assisting (if any): TBD
- Projected Costs (if any): TBD

b. Action Step# 2 to achieve Fourth Goal:

Investigate through Focus Groups and "House Meetings" what will be helpful and what are the challenges to greater participation in the Parish. We will include an exploration with young, non-white and economically disadvantaged Parishioners.

Measures of Success:

Qualitative increase in Parishioners' energy for living the Social Gospel supported by annual surveys to quantify growth.

Summary Information for Action Step #2:

- Timeline for completion: The Investigation will be completed and a report produced identifying specific ways to remove barriers and build participation by the end of the second year of the Plan
- Responsible person/Task Force: Community Life Ministry
- Diocesan Office assisting (if any): Guidance for holding Focus Groups as offered in the May 2016 Survey sessions
- Projected Costs (if any): TBD

c. Action Step# 3 to achieve Fourth Goal:

Expand active Parishioner participation by:

1. Holding "Invitation Sundays" to invite people to attend a mass and learn more about the St. James Community of Faith
2. For new members, holding Orientation sessions to familiarize them with the St. James culture

3. For existing members, establishing a mentoring program to provide Spiritual Guides for Faith Journeys
4. For service and ministries, recruiting members with personal invitations from the Pastoral Council
5. Expand our call to Stewardship to build the Community with time and energy as well as resources

Measures of Success:

Qualitative increase in Parishioners' energy for living the Social Gospel supported by annual surveys to quantify growth.

Summary Information for Action Step #3:

- Timeline for completion: Action on two of the steps within year one of the plan and the remainder in the second.
- Responsible person/Task Force: Community Life Ministry
- Diocesan Office assisting (if any): None at this time
- Projected Costs (if any): TBD

d. Action Step# 4 to achieve Fourth Goal:

Build an Engaged Church by moving deeper than meeting for activities and becoming superficially "involved":

1. Help Parishioners develop a Spiritual Commitment:
 - a. Involve Faith in every aspect of life
 - b. Because of my Faith, I have meaning and purpose in life
 - c. My Faith gives me inner peace
2. Help Parishioners develop Spiritual Behaviors:
 - a. Develop strengths
 - b. Take unpopular stands if necessary to defend the Faith
 - c. Speak words of kindness to those in need of encouragement
3. Set expectations for Parishioners
4. Follow-up on Parishioners' Spiritual Progress *individually*
5. Promote the development of friendships within our Community of Faith

Measures of Success:

Qualitative increase in Parishioners' energy for living the Social Gospel supported by annual surveys to quantify growth.

Summary Information for Action Step #4:

- Timeline for completion: Action on two of the steps within year one of the plan and the remainder in the second.
- Responsible person/Task Force: Community Life Ministry
- Diocesan Office assisting (if any): None at this time
- Projected Costs (if any): TBD

Temporalities and Administrative Challenge #2: Parish Goals and Action Steps

A. **Temporalities and Administrative Challenge to be addressed:**

- Buildings and Facilities
- Community Life
- Finances**

B. **Statement of the Fifth Goal to be achieved:**

Re-orient the Finance Council from Reactive mode to a Proactive direction that will better support the expansion of the St. James Parish financial base.

a. **Action Step# 1 to achieve Fifth Goal:**

1. Restructure the Finance Council so each members will have responsibility for and develop proficiency at least one of the following areas:

- a. Budgeting/ business manager
- b. Stewardship of finance
- c. Bequests/gifts/investment/ endowments
- d. Third party oversight (contracts and vendor relations)
- e. Legal/salary and benefits
- f. Capital campaigns
- g. Marketing
- h. Administration

2. Restructure the Budgeting process

- a. Make Ministries and Services responsible for developing and managing budgets for it one's area of responsibility; the responsibility can be further delegated at the "owner's" discretion with approval from the Finance Council and Pastor
- b. The Finance Council will make regularly scheduled reports available to those charged with budgetary responsibility
- c. Exemptions to the budget will be brought to the Finance Council for consideration and Pastor for approval

Summary Information for Action Step #1:

- Timeline for completion: Restructure the Finance Council within Plan Year 1; restructure the budgetary process within Plan Year 2
- Responsible person/Task Force: Finance Council Chairperson
- Diocesan Office assisting (if any): None at this time
- Projected Costs (if any): TBD

CHALLENGES NOT ADDRESSED IN THE PLAN

In our Parish Assessment, we identified the following challenge which is not addressed in the Plan:

Transition of Parish Leadership. As Pastor Lynch starts to lessen his Parish engagement, the Parish seeks a smooth transition that continues work in progress.