

# St. Matthew Catholic Parish Strategic Plan

## **I. PREAMBLE**

St. Matthew Catholic Parish has served the area surrounding Mt. Vernon, Indiana for over 150 years. The primary mission of the parish has been to worship Jesus Christ, give thanks to God for the blessings he has bestowed on this parish, and to help its members to seek eternal salvation. That same mission continues today and into the future.

Periodically, it is necessary to take an introspective look at the overall liturgy, ministries, programs, services and operations of the parish in order to serve the ever evolving and diverse needs of the members of the parish.

This strategic plan has been developed by representatives of the Pastoral Council, Parish Life, Spiritual Life, Finance and Education Commissions and other parishioners. Representatives included: Dan Hayden, Candy Tolliver, Linda Willis, Mark Funkhouser, Kim Krieger, Frank Winiger, Joyce Babillis, Donett May, Steve Searcy, Deacon Tom Evans, Sherri Rapp, John Hendricks, Frank Simutis, Bridget Seifert and Glen Kuper. Melvin Levin served as facilitator and Phyllis Levin served as secretary.

## **II. Parish Mission Statement**

We are St. Matthew Parish. We follow our baptismal promises through faith formation, evangelization and fellowship. We pledge to fully use the unique gifts and talents God has given us. We will pass on our faith and traditions and continue to grow as a parish family.

## **III. Planning Meetings**

Planning meetings were held on January 13, January 27, February 3, February 10, 2011, April 14 and June 20 2011.

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**IV. ISSUES AND INITIATIVES**

**A. STEWARDSHIP**

Each of us has been entrusted by God with gifts in the form of talent, time and treasure. All parishioners have the responsibility to share these God given gifts to fully participate in the liturgy, programs, services, ministries, and operations of the parish.

1. STRATEGIC ISSUE

A Stewardship Program is needed to assist each of us to meet our responsibilities.

a. Strategic Initiative

Establish and implement a Stewardship Program for the parish.

**B. ENHANCED LITURGY**

The liturgy is the center of worship services. Parish volunteers contribute greatly to the quality of worship services at St. Matthew Church. To meet the diverse needs and wants of the way parishioners worship, the liturgy should be regularly evaluated to seek ways to enhance the worship experiences for all parishioners

2. STRATEGIC ISSUE

The diverse needs of the parish, in regards to the liturgy, are not being fully met.

a. Strategic Initiative

Evaluate all current liturgical programs and services including but not limited to: lectors, music, Eucharistic ministers, decorations, themes, and special events, for the purpose of instituting either adjustments, adding new programs and services or discontinuing programs or services no longer needed.

b. Strategic Initiative

Evaluate the need to employ a Director of Liturgy.

**C. FACILITIES**

The parish owns a number of properties ranging from the church to agricultural land. These properties provide space for parish programs and services and produce income to support parish operations.

1. STRATEGIC ISSUE

Parish facilities need to be provided to meet the changing parish needs for programs and services.

a. Strategic Initiative

Review the recent facility feasibility study with special attention focused on providing a gathering area in conjunction with the church . Evaluate the condition of parish facilities and prepare a report on the needs for short term and long term maintenance, construction or demolition.

b. Strategic Initiative

Upgrade the school to meet changing curricular and extracurricular program needs, to improve aesthetics, and modernize educational technology.

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**D. FINANCIAL STABILITY**

In order for the parish to function effectively, adequate funding is required to support the liturgy, ministries, programs, services, and operations of the parish. It is the responsibility of all members of the parish to share equitably of their personal treasure to finance the parish.

1. STRATEGIC ISSUE

Currently, the parish has no outstanding debt obligations; however cash reserves necessary to meet monthly operation costs are stressed.

a. Strategic Initiative

Prepare a budget that incorporates all short term and long term parish operational costs and responsibilities. In cooperation with the Conversion Stewardship Program, develop a process to raise funds necessary to support the budget plan. Implement a communication process to regularly report the status of the budget process to the parish.

**E. OUTREACH**

It is necessary that parishioners feel included in the St. Matthew Parish family. Parishioners must feel good about membership in the parish, and that they eagerly bring family and friends to St. Matthew activities. The opportunity for and expectation that all parishioners fully participate in all parish programs, services, activities and ministries, as they may choose, is necessary for the parish to function effectively as a parish family.

1. STRATEGIC ISSUE

For the parish to grow, thrive and fulfill its evangelistic responsibilities, engagement of current, former, and new members is needed. Additional welcoming and outreach efforts are needed to support the diverse membership of St. Matthew Parish and surrounding community.

a. Strategic Initiative

Develop a process that assures parishioners the opportunity to participate in parish liturgy, programs, services, and ministries, and create the opportunity for members to assume leadership responsibilities.

b. Strategic Initiative

Create a process to engage parishioners in appropriate parish activities that have experienced life changing experiences such as: newly baptized, new members, reunited members, newly married, divorced, and widowed members.

c. Actively seek new members and urge former parish members to return to the parish.

**F. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION/CATHOLIC FAITH FORMATION**

Religious education programs are provided by the parish to aid parishioners to gain an understanding of their faith.

1. STRATEGIC ISSUE

A variety of religious education programs and activities is needed that cover preschool children through senior members of the parish to serve the diverse needs of parishioners.

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- a. Strategic Initiative  
Determine the quality and quantity of religious education programs currently offered in the parish. Seek information on how best to evangelize new members.
- b. Strategic Initiative  
Survey parishioners to identify needs for religious education activities and programs. Strengthen or modify current programs and add new programs as required to meet the needs of parishioners.
- c. Evaluate the need for a Director of Religious Education.

### **G. SCHOOL**

St. Matthew School has been an integral part of the religious education program as St. Matthew Parish beginning as early as 1817. The school serves to pass on the Catholic faith to elementary school age students in an environment of high expectations for both academic achievement and spiritual growth. The school staff has traditionally provided a quality learning and spiritual environment for students resulting in a program recognized for excellence.

#### **1. STRATEGIC ISSUE**

Not all children of the parish are attending St. Matthew School.

- a. Strategic Initiative  
Promote Catholic education for all Catholic children.

#### **2. STRATEGIC ISSUE**

In recent years, concerns have been expressed from within the parish regarding the cost/benefits of the school. Concerns relate to the impact of funding the school possibly detracting from the capability of the parish to provide or expand programs or services for the parish.

- a. Strategic Initiative  
Conduct an analysis of funding for St. Matthew School to determine the full operational costs for programs, services and facilities to determine how future funding for the school should be generated.
- b. Strategic Initiative  
Integrate school activities with church activities to demonstrate the importance of the relationship of the school to the church.

### **H. STAFFING**

Currently the parish has a number of part time and full time professional personnel ranging from the Pastor to business office and school staff.

#### **1. STRATEGIC ISSUE**

Assessment is needed to determine if current staffing is appropriate to provide parish programs, services, and supervision.

- a. Strategic Initiative  
Assess current and long term staffing needed to provide coordination, supervision and implementation of parish programs and services including but not limited to: liturgy ministries, education, business, and facilities management.

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**V. PRIORITY RANKING RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The members of the Strategic Planning Committee recommend to the Parish Pastoral Council the attached Strategic Plan for its consideration. Based on the study of the committee and input from parishioners, the committee has selected the issues listed below as the issues considered to be the most significant to the future of the parish.**

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### **Strategic Planning Committee:**

Candy Tolliver, Linda Willis, Dan Hayden, Mark Funkhouser, Kim Krieger, Frank Winiger, Joyce Babillis, Donett May, Deacon Tom Evans, Sherri Rapp, Glen Kuper, John Hendricks, Frank Simutis, Steve Searcy, Bridget Seifert, Mel Levin, Facilitator.

The committee wishes to express its appreciation to the Parish Pastoral Council for the opportunity to participate in this important process. Establishment of a Strategic Plan for the faith community of St. Matthew Parish is vital for the Parish to grow and prosper into the future.

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