

THE PROPHETIC PLAN – A strategic initiative for St. Francis Xavier – Detail Accomplishments

1: To continue building strong relationships within our parish and beyond.

1.A. Celebrate our similarities and differences.

- Priests presiding at Masses welcome everyone, including guests; and, they invite those unable to receive communion to come forward for a blessing instead.
- Individual groups conduct social events to better get to know their members.
- The number of Sunday greeters has increased.

1.B. Increase involvement in small faith-sharing groups.

- Small faith-sharing groups have been organized during Lent and have been encouraged to continue to meet. Parishioners have been made aware of and are invited to join these groups which meet weekly and offer a variety of meeting days and times.

1.C. Reach out with care and service to those in need.

- The Food Pantry has extended its services and outreach, see their annual reports for details.
- The All Parish Service Day has grown. In the past two years, about 400-430 parishioners of all ages reached out in service to 16-19 different organizations. Some of these activities strengthened our relationship with our own parishioners; for example, flower deliveries and visits to our parishioners residing at Plymouth Place and Bethlehem Woods. We also did garden clean-ups at the homes of two parishioners through Interfaith Community Partners.
- Some parishioners actively advocated for BEDS permanent housing. Parish representatives and other parishioners attended public meetings at the Village Hall and assisted with letters for the bulletin and to Village Hall trustees in support of permanent housing in La Grange for chronically homeless people.
- Human Concerns continues to be strong focus. A St. Francis Xavier Feast Day prayer service honoring the missionary spirit of our patron saint was conducted. And, a table was displayed in Church with symbols of our Human Concerns ministries for Holy Week and the Easter season as a prayerful reminder of our parish outreach.
- The Ministry of Care was enlarged. We maintain an up-to-date list of volunteers and the homebound people they serve. We continue to communicate the services provided by the Ministry of Care. Eighteen new Ministers of Care were trained and commissioned. Some are also being recommended as Bereavement Ministers

1.D. Reinvigorate our relationship with our sharing parish, St. Agatha.

- The Toy Shower and the Giving Tree continue. Mass is shared with St. Agatha on the Sunday and the evening before Thanksgiving. Our donation of volunteer labor credits allows St. Agatha to use them to purchase food from the Greater Chicago Food Depository.
- Funds have been provided for tuition assistance to St. Agatha students.
- Ascension-St. Susanna was added as a sharing parish. They received capital campaign funds for tuck-pointing their church. Also, our St. Vincent DePaul Society provided funds for a needed refrigerator for their food pantry.
- We participate in one of the Ascension-St. Susanna Bible Study groups and we host that Bible Study group at St. Francis Xavier with Mass and refreshments during Lent. Approximately 35 people have attended.

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- The second floor of Ascension-St. Susanna parish center was professionally tiled with the help of donations from parishioners, the Men's Club, and our Habitat for Humanity ministry.

1.E. Collaborate with our neighboring Catholic parishes and other faith communities.

- St. Francis Xavier representatives attend regular meetings with the leadership of other La Grange faith communities known as the Ministerium.
- We participate as a supporting member of Interfaith Community Partners.
- St. Francis Xavier promotes collaborative endeavors to our parishioners, including Back Door Theater, Taizé Prayer, and various co-sponsored lecture series at *The Well*.
- We co-hosted with Grace Lutheran Church a discussion on Mark Braverman's book: *A Wall in Jerusalem*, and two talks he gave addressing the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.
- We take an active role in local ecumenical prayer services: Taizé, *All Together Under the Son*, and Thanksgiving celebrations.
- Members of St. Francis Xavier planned and conducted a Unity Walk and prayer service for all faith communities and residents in response to the debate about the BEDS permanent housing site proposal to be built at the corner of Ogden and East Avenues. Approximately 300 people attended on the steps of the La Grange Village Hall.
- We partner with St. Cletus and St. John of the Cross concerning food pantry needs. Several parishioners from St. John of the Cross and St. Louise de Marillac volunteer at our pantry.
- Parish members gave a presentation at All Saints Episcopal Church in Western Springs and the Grace Seeds Ministry (who provides fresh produce) about our food pantry ministry.
- We partner with many faith communities in the La Grange/Western Springs/Brookfield area for the annual CROP Walk.
- St. Francis Xavier and St. John of the Cross collaborate on support ministries, youth ministry, and adult faith formation.
- St. Francis Xavier, St. John of the Cross, and St. Cletus are collaborating on the *Renew My Parish* initiative.
- St. Francis Xavier hosted a Food Pantry Open House and invited our parishioners and other faith communities to attend so they could see the ministry they generously support. About 100 parishioners attended.

2: To celebrate meaningful worship experiences with active participation.

2.A. Continue formation of mind, heart, and spirit within the worshipping community.

- The Higgins lecture series was re-instituted as a parish formation event.
- A Spirituality & Worship Commission formation day was conducted.
- Formation is regularly experienced at weekend worship and weekday liturgies.
- Mission Statement Cards were distributed to the parish to emphasize our commitment to the Prophetic Plan.
- The celebration of the 125th anniversary exemplified formation.
- The parish community became more connected when they signed the Parish Book of Commitment.

2.B. Offer a variety of prayer experiences.

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- A variety of experiences continue to be offered, such as the various adult & children's choirs; the children's Liturgy of the Word; Taizé prayer; shared Mass with St. Agatha; CHRP and KAIROS retreats; Bible studies; Quest groups for teens; Stations of the Cross; Living Stations; Tenebrae; Reconciliation services; Lenten Small Faith Groups; Mass prior to the Auction; and, vibrant school masses.
- The Parish Pastoral Council has set the example for all group meetings by beginning their meetings with scripture-based reflection and prayer.
- The number of trained and mandated Ministers of Care has increased to provide worship experiences for the homebound and hospitalized.
- Thursday and Friday morning word and communion services are now led by parishioners.

2.C. Strengthen and increase participation in liturgical ministries.

- Teens plan the welcome ministry for the Sunday 6:00 PM Mass.
- Through personal invitations, new members have been added to Liturgy Planning, Ministry of Care, Lectors, Greeters, Eucharistic Ministers, and Music Ministers.
- Modern communication tools are used to coordinate ministries. The Eucharistic Ministers and Lectors use electronic communications to make sure all masses have a full complement of ministers.

2.D. Continue enriching the music ministry.

- Talented young and established musicians enrich our liturgies with their regular participation.
- Guests from other churches are invited to join with Grace Lutheran and St. Francis Xavier in Taizé prayer.
- Concerts and special choirs are created for special occasions like the picnic Mass, Good Friday, and Christmas Midnight Mass. Opportunities to sing in choirs are available to children, teens, and adults.

2.E. Offer practical and spiritual training and formation for liturgical ministers.

- Teens were recruited and trained as lectors and Eucharistic ministers.
- Many individual ministries offer periodic training, including music, lectors, and Eucharistic ministers.
- A formation series was presented for new Ministers of Care.

3: To provide educational, formational, and spiritual growth opportunities for all adult parishioners.

3.A. Determine educational, formational, and spiritual needs of adults in the parish.

- The *Little Black Book* and the *Little White Book* are used during Lent and Easter. About 16-20 small faith groups participate each year.
- Films emphasizing faith formation, such as *Romero* and *The Mission* are shown and discussed.
- Bible Study continues.
- Surveys were conducted to determine formational needs.

3.B. Network with neighboring parishes, educational institutions, retreat centers and the Archdiocese for adult formation programs.

- Our strong relationship with The Well enhances the faith development of our parishioners through participation in their religious formation programs.
- St. Francis Xavier established weekly dinner meetings with area Catholic parish clergy.

3.C. Provide small group forums for exploration of spiritual experiences.

- Several small faith-sharing groups that were organized for Lent have evolved into weekly meetings. Parishioners have been made aware of and are invited to join these groups.

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3.D. Offer spiritual renewal opportunities to deepen people’s experience of God in their lives.

- Women’s CHRP retreats continue to be strong and to create lasting bonds among the participants.

4: To support education in the Catholic faith for all parish children as a sacred responsibility.

4.A. Provide an excellent Catholic School education.

- St. Francis Xavier is a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence. The annual report of progress toward goals in all five tenet areas is published and on the web site.
- Analysis of assessment data resulted in a new program called Blended Learning, which uses technology as a learning tool for the delivery of curriculum. The technology infrastructure is routinely reviewed and updated.
- An initiative called Responsive Classroom gives teachers, staff, and students the tools needed to create and maintain a positive community that is rich in engaging academics, effective management, and developmentally appropriate teaching.
- Math programs, Language Arts, and Reading Exercises are updated and available online.
- A homework calendar is updated daily and is available online. Home activities are communicated to parents both online and in hard copy.
- Test scores are tracked for grades 3 to 7.
- 7th and 8th graders prepare liturgies throughout the year and participate in retreats. All grades participate in service and sacramental programs.
- Education consultants have been available to teachers for coaching, modeling, and planning. They also have conducted workshops on best teaching practices for classroom teachers. Two teachers serve as technology coaches for the other teachers.

4.B. Provide an excellent Catholic Parish Religious Education program.

- A *Meet & Greet* begins the Religious Education School Year. Parents, students, and catechists meet and get acquainted. Parents see their child’s classroom in the Education Building and children meet their catechist and learn where their classroom is located.
- Religious Education and Day School students jointly participate in projects like the Toy Shower; in prayer services; and, in events like the St. Francis Xavier feast day celebration and the Catholic Women’s Luncheon.
- Students in all grades are encouraged to engage in service opportunities. Money is collected for the Catholic Relief Services during lent and the students learn where the money goes and how it helps those who are in need. Food Pantry Drives are conducted and students stock our parish food pantry shelves with the donations. Students learn about the need for a parish food pantry and how many people/families benefit from this ministry. Franciscan Outreach Drive is an annual collection of personal care products for the homeless. A separate collection also happens for our own B.E.D.S. Program.
- A theme for the year is established and maintained throughout the year. This reminds everyone each week who we are and what we are to be about.
- Weekly prayer over the PA System incorporates Mass responses as a teaching aide. This helps students participate more fully in parish prayer life.

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- Grade level leaders help provide continuity in what lessons are covered each week along with any projects that accompany the theme for the week.
- Grade level masses for grades 3-8 are celebrated at the noon parish mass. Children take active roles at these liturgies. A liturgy practice the day prior to the celebrations provides the students with the confidence needed to take on these liturgical roles. Day School children of the same grade are invited to sit with Religious Education Students at specified masses.
- Families have an opportunity to participate in 3-4 *At Home Lessons*, which open up great discussions about individual and family faith journeys.
- Children in grades 2,3,4 in both the Day School and Religious Education program celebrate the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist together as a parish community.
- A Religious Education Fair ends the school year. Parents and students are able to view accomplishments and thank the catechists for volunteering with this important ministry.

4.C. Engage the parish in the life of the school and the religious education program.

- A volunteer committee identifies and schedules service opportunities for both the Day School and the School of Religious Education. These include the All Parish Service Day, the St. Francis Xavier feast day, and Family Ministry.
- All sixth grade students in both the Day School and the School of Religious Education are invited for Bible distribution during a Sunday liturgy.
- Paper, audio, and internet are used to invite all to events and to report on the events.
- Brochures, the web site, and social media have been updated to better communicate with the entire parish. As a result, more parishioners attend the open house.

4.D. Continue providing personal commitment and financial support for our educational programs.

- An alumni giving program was developed. It supports reunions and special events, an expanded database, and regular correspondence.
- The school auction continues to be very successful.
- A "Fund a Need" program has been used to update technology and some funds have been earmarked for tuition assistance.
- Software has been used to create a giving program at the school auction. It is available for Parish use.

4.E. Create and maintain a physical space that inspires.

- Inspirational quotes have been selected and posted throughout the school.
- The Courtyard in the Education Building was improved by the School Board during summer recess.
- The hallways and stairwells were painted and enhanced to display student work.
- The gym and Joyce Hall were renovated through the efforts of the Capital Campaign.

5: To engage parish teens and young adults in identifying their respective, unique needs and fostering their social, spiritual, and personal growth.

5.A. Create a youth minister position.

- The position was created and a firm foundation was developed by the first incumbent. We have just hired a new Youth Minister.

5.B. Develop a Teen Leadership Council.

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- Teen leaders are enthusiastically working toward enhancing the social, spiritual, and personal growth of fellow teens.

5.C. Develop a Young Adult Leadership Council.

- Young adults in the area had created a new outreach: GIFT (Gathering in Faith Together), but it has since disbanded.

5.D. Facilitate service, social, spiritual and personal growth activities that engage our teens and young adults.

- Our weekend liturgies have been enhanced by the addition of young lectors, commentators, and musicians.
- New retreat and service programs are available for the teens.
- Among the teens, there has been a greater attention and desire for Mission Trips. There is a strong response to service opportunities. In 2015, there were 15 teens who participated in the Mission Trip. In 2016, 29 high school and college teens participated in the mission in Philadelphia. The Virginia Beach trip had 84 teens; Habitat trips to Clarksdale had 20 teens and 20 young adults (ages 20-29).
- St. Francis Xavier continues to send teens and adults on domestic missions to Virginia Beach, VA, on Habitat for Humanity service to Clarksdale, MS, and to a Catholic Heart Work Camp in New Orleans, LA.

5.E. Offer spiritual guidance and educational opportunities to foster a lasting Catholic identity.

- The plan has been developed and awaits further implementation by our new youth minister.
- These efforts continue to be guided by the Quest Discipleship Model.

6. To deepen our commitment to justice, peace, and service.

6.A. Increase participation in outreach and the SFX Peace and Justice Committee.

- The Peace & Justice Committee has initiated actions directed toward immigration and social action issues. This includes letters to Congress and the “Peace Corner” of the bulletin.
- The All Parish Service Days engage approximately 25 lay leaders, 430 parishioners of all ages and partners with 20 organizations.
- The Food Pantry continues to serve an increasing number of people and is well supported by parishioners and others.
- Our relationship with Ascension-St. Susanna provides further opportunities for service.
- The Domestic Violence Outreach group was created in partnership with St. Cletus and St. John of the Cross when parishioners became more aware that this was a growing need.
- St. Francis Xavier participated in the Good Friday Walk for Peace in Englewood.

6.B. Respond to basic human needs through direct service within our parish and beyond.

- A partial list of direct service includes: The Food Pantry; Habitat for Humanity; St. Vincent DePaul; BEDS Plus; Christmas gifts to St. Agatha; Youth Ministry service projects; Day School Service Day; and, Religious Education projects. Our Children excel at service and love of neighbor.
- The All Parish Service Day provided services to the following: Arise Chicago – Information Sharing; Ascension-St. Susanna; BEDS; Big Shoulders; Broadview Detention Center; Challenger Baseball; Community Nurse Association; Feed My Starving Children; Food Pantry; Greater Chicago Food Depository; Harmony, Hope and Healing; Honor Flight; House of Hospitality; Interfaith Community

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Partners; Kolbe House; Maria Kaupas Center; Mission Trip Prayer Service; Random Acts of Kindness; Relay for Life; and, Sole Hope

6.C. Support and deepen the parish commitment to pastoral care.

- More funeral sacristans, bereavement ministers, and ministers of care have been recruited and trained.

6.D. Educate parishioners about Catholic social teaching.

- Catholic Social Teaching is explained in Bulletin articles, especially in the “Peace Corner.”
- Various formation opportunities for children, teens, and adults (like RCIA) include sessions on Catholic Social Teaching.

6.E. Advocate as individuals and as a parish for those in need.

- Staff and parishioners attended Village Hall meetings to advocate for permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless men and women in the LaGrange area.
- The parish continues to offer services through our Human Concerns outreaches, including the St. Vincent DePaul Society, Knights of Columbus, Kitchen Angels, and the Domestic Violence Outreach.

7: To be good stewards of our human and financial resources.

7.A. Create a parish culture of stewardship as a way of life — the giving of time, talent and treasure.

- Options for financial support and for service to others are routinely described in the bulletin.
- *A Ministry Resource Guide* describes over fifty St. Francis Xavier ministries, including what they do, who to contact, and estimated time commitments for volunteers.

7.B. Foster effective communication throughout the parish, including various forms of technology.

- We communicate effectively through the bulletin, announcements at Mass, surveys, e-mail and the “newsletter”, and various meetings. The web site is undergoing a second revision to be more user friendly. A Parish Lenten Blog was created. The School of Religious Education and the Day School use email effectively to communicate with their constituencies.
- The *Enlightn* team has been assembled to develop effective and attractive communications using a variety of media, including video, web, social media, audio, and printing. Parishioner volunteer time for these efforts has also increased.
- A parish Facebook page has been created, and is being maintained.

7.C. Enhance lay leadership.

- There are more than 50 ministries that could appeal to a variety of skills and interests. All are coordinated by lay leaders and supported by staff.
- The Parish Pastoral Council continues to investigate ways of more effectively serving the parish. A revised Commission-based organizational structure will be implemented during the Fall of 2017.

7.D. Provide needed training and other resources to support parish staff and volunteers.

- Training programs and formation activities are in place for various ministries. For example, Ministers of Care can now be trained at St. Francis Xavier.
- St. Francis Xavier looks forward to collaborating with St. John of the Cross and St. Cletus as part of the consortium for *Renew My Church*.

7.E. Be accountable and transparent with all parish finances.

- Financial status is reported in the bulletin and through periodic reports from the pulpit.

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8: To maintain, enhance, and expand parish facilities.

8.A. Develop a plan for the maintenance and enhancement of each parish facility.

- Jaeger Nickola Kuhlman and Associates, an architectural and planning firm, did an assessment of anticipated needs over the next 10 years to assist us in planning.

8.B. Provide space needed for all parish ministries.

- Renovation of parish facilities has increased access to parish facilities by providing Unity Hall, two new meeting rooms, three more restrooms, a remodeled gym, and a modified Joyce Hall to include sound abatement from above.

8.C. Explore the feasibility of building a parish community gathering space.

- The new community gathering space, Unity Hall, reflects fellowship and welcoming as well as a physical representation of the connection between the Church and the Education Building.

8.D. Identify resources needed to enhance parish facilities — financial, legal, planning, design, architectural, etc.

- Needed resources were identified in the initial plans for the Capital Campaign and are being revised as necessary.

8.E. Consider funding options, including an Anniversary Capital Campaign¹, to raise needed funds.

- Options for financial support are explained in the bulletin. These include the Electronic Offertory Program, leaving a legacy, and donations of appreciated stock.
- The Capital Campaign received \$3,980,000 in pledges which allowed us to perform work beyond the scope of the original Master Plan, as well as reach our support goals for St. Agatha and Ascension-St. Susanna Parishes.

¹ The original goals referred to the “Anniversary Capital Campaign.” Subsequently, the title was shortened to “Capital Campaign.” References to either title refer to the same endeavor.