



ST JOHN

STRATEGIC PLAN

A SHARED VISION
FOR THE FUTURE

2018



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is with great joy that I introduce to you the St. John Strategic Plan. This has been a work in progress over a number of years. Many of you have poured your time and energy into this work, with the aim to make St. John a stronger parish in the years ahead, by God's grace.

Where will St. John be in five or ten years? What will our ministries, our facilities, and our community look like? These are the questions we hope to address with the strategic plan. Through the process of creating this plan our parish has identified some specific areas where we can grow. Seven goals were created to address these areas. In this document you will be introduced to the seven goals and find out about the background work that led to their development, as well as the necessary steps ahead to achieve them.

Your prayers are especially needed as we begin a new chapter in the life of our parish. This work must be grounded in the spiritual life of our community, done in a spirit of love, of joy, of peace, of kindness. (Galatians 5:22-23)

Thank you to all who have contributed to this—directly or indirectly, on current or former strategic planning teams, through surveys and retreats, by suggestion or by critique. Each of your contributions have positively affected the result. Thank you to Father Theodore and Father Timothy for the spiritual groundwork you have laid over the course of many years.

May we have the discernment, patience, and humility to seek God's will in all things.

In His Love,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Father Matthew', written in a cursive style.

Father Matthew

Introduction

In this document, you will be introduced to the Strategic Plan of St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church. This plan will—by God’s grace—inaugurate a new phase in the life of our parish: One of spiritual growth, of renewal and ultimately of creating an abiding vision for our parish for decades to come.

You will have the opportunity to shape this future, together with all of your beloved brothers and sisters in Christ. Much work has been done to create this plan; yet there is far more work in the months ahead to shape and mold the foundations of our vibrant parish – focusing ever more intently upon the Gospel message of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our community is entering a new stage of life as a parish.

What follows is a brief background about the strategic planning process and what has been accomplished in the preceding months, as well as what remains to be done in the months ahead.

What is a Strategic Plan?

We are using a tool called a strategic plan as a way for our parish to address the most pressing concerns within the community in a thoughtful and comprehensive manner. More specifically, strategic planning is a process to define our direction (our strategy) and to devote our energy and resources to achieving our goals.

A strategic plan must answer four fundamental questions:

- 1. Why do we exist? – Statement of Why**
- 2. Where are we now? – Our Current State**
- 3. Where do we want to be? – Our Desired Future State**
- 4. How will we get there? – The Action Plan**

An Analogy

Imagine you want to build a house for your family. You don’t know what rooms you will need, nor the best configuration of the rooms, nor how large to make each room. But you know that you want to consider every kind of floorplan until you find the best. A strategic plan is a way to 1) ensure that you’re considering the broadest range of floorplans, 2) judge which floorplan is the best and 3) be prepared with the tools and supplies to build the house.

Over the last nine months we have been laying out all the tools and supplies and creating a decision-making process for determining the best floorplan. But the decisions have not been made yet. ***Now is your chance to get involved. You can help to shape our future together.***

Why do we exist? – Statement of Why

We must be able to articulate why we exist and why anyone should want to be a part of our church. This is expressed in our **Statement of Why**, our **Mission Statement**, and our **Core Values** (on Page 5).

Where are we now? – Our Current State

This step consists of a factual assessment of current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, programs, talents, needs, and financial resources. This was the parish-wide **SWOT Analysis** (on Pages 6–8).

Where do we want to be? – Our Desired Future State

This is the comprehensive vision of where we want to be within a reasonable time period. These are our **Vision**, **Areas of Focus**, and **Goals** (on Pages 9–11).

How will we get there? – The Action Plan

This is where we get specific. A course of action is outlined for each goal, so that all goals can be achieved, and our vision becomes reality. These are our **Action Plans** (on Pages 12–27).

Why Do We Exist?

At the first strategic planning retreat in September 2017, 30 participants—representing a cross-section of the parish—extensively discussed the reason why St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church exists and what our mission and our core values are. These candid and thoughtful discussions took many hours and a great deal of wordsmithing, involving all of the participants, until a consensus was achieved. Here are their conclusions:

Statement of Why – Why St. John Exists

St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church provides an authentic experience of transformational love, healing, peace and the fullness of truth and salvation through Jesus Christ.

Mission Statement of St. John

The Mission of St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church is to reach out and welcome all people to live an Orthodox Christian life, grow spiritually and become disciples of Jesus Christ through serving others.

Core Values of St. John

- Cohesive, Loving and Hospitable Community
- Education and Spiritual Growth
- Maintaining/Living Orthodox Faith/Tradition
- Sacramental/Liturgical Life
- Living a Prayerful and Orthodox Life
- Community Outreach and Service to Those in Need
- Missions and Evangelism
- Transparent Communication

Where Are We Now?

The SWOT Analysis

For most of our community this was the first introduction to the strategic plan. Everyone was invited to offer a perspective on what's going well in the parish (Strengths), what needs improvement (Weaknesses), which external factors can help us (Opportunities) and, which external factors might hinder us (Threats).

Fifty-three parishioners, 20% of the adult parishioners at St. John, replied with nearly 400 unique comments. These individual comments were compiled, sorted, and grouped with similar comments. This SWOT analysis became the basis of the strategic plan. Each section below is ordered from the most frequently-cited comment to the least frequently-cited.

Strengths (of the Parish)

1. Commitment to accessible liturgical /sacramental life
2. Love for God and one another
3. Sense of community
4. Welcoming to all
5. Commitment to spiritual growth and education
6. Quality, caring and accessible clergy
7. Vibrant ministries
8. Demographically diverse parish
9. Family friendly

Weaknesses (of the Parish)

1. Inadequate stewardship – including time, talents and treasure (annual and capital)
2. Inadequate broad engagement
3. Inadequate facilities
4. Lack of unity (vision, parish size, building size, and ASA)
5. Lack of open communications
6. Insufficient education regarding the church and its traditions
7. Unwelcoming – cliquish – a lack of connectedness
8. Distractions in church
9. Inadequate outreach
10. Too much emphasis on Greek cultural identity

Opportunities (external to the parish)

1. Evangelism among the larger population and growing numbers of seekers
2. Increasing ethnic population and diversity
3. Serve the great socio-economic need
4. Partner with growing number of groups
5. New and expanding technologies
6. Increasing pan-Orthodox interactions

Threats (external to the parish)

1. Moral decay (secularization, materialism, individualism)
2. Active antagonism and attempted brainwashing in education, media and politics that is antithetical to Orthodox Christian beliefs
3. Societal redefining of Christian terms and beliefs
4. Anti-Christian laws
5. Rising cost of property and construction and church accessibility
6. Perceived Greek ethnic exclusivity of the church

Where Do We Want to Be?

The final actions of the September retreat were to create a vision statement to address the major weaknesses of our parish, and to identify areas to focus on to address these weaknesses. Five areas of focus were identified.

The Vision of St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church is that we will:

- Achieve consensus and begin to implement a plan for our parish's future (including our parish home, size, mission churches, school, and the means to achieve these goals)
- Develop a more cohesive united community
- Pursue charitable acts
- Foster engagement in spiritual life and education
- Implement comprehensive stewardship
- Evangelize the broader community

Areas of Focus (Listed Alphabetically)

1. Charitable Acts & Service
2. Cohesion & Consensus
3. Evangelism
4. Spiritual Life & Education
5. Stewardship

Five planning teams were created, one for each area of focus. Over the next four months, until the February 2018 retreat, they produced seven realistic and attainable goals and an action plan for each goal. At the retreat, all of the planning teams met together, presented their goals and action plans, and meticulously revised and edited them with the entire strategic planning team, until everyone came to consensus on the precise wording. The seven refined goals (ordered alphabetically by the area of focus they addressed) are:

Goal

1

Signature Charitable Program

Within 18 months, we will design and implement a signature service program that engages at least 20% of parish families, integrating all age groups.

Goal

2

Parish Facilities & Growth Plan

Within 2 years, we will develop, and submit for necessary approvals, a consensus-based, comprehensive written plan for our parish facilities and the growth of Orthodoxy in the area through a process that builds parish-wide trust and cohesion.

Goal

3

Comprehensive Welcoming & Newcomer Ministry

Within 9 months, we will develop and successfully implement a comprehensive Welcoming and Newcomer Ministry that ensures that all newcomers feel fully welcomed and included in the parish.

Goal

4

Signature Outreach Evangelism Program

Within 16 months, we will develop and successfully implement a signature evangelism program that effectively witnesses our faith to the broader community.

Goal

5

Worship & Sacramental Life Engagement

Within 2 years, we will develop and implement a process that will more fully engage our parishioners in worship, Sacraments, and the spiritual life.

Goal

6

Youth & Adult Education and Spiritual Formation Program

Within 2 years we will develop and implement an improved adult and youth educational and spiritual formation program.

Goal

7

Comprehensive Stewardship Program

Within 6 months, we will develop a Comprehensive Stewardship Program to continuously improve overall engagement in the parish; this program will be fully implemented within 14 months.

How Will We Get There?

WITH YOU and the Action Plans!

We want as many of our faithful parishioners as possible involved in the transformational improvements that will result from this exciting strategic plan. There is plenty of room for the active engagement of every person in our parish!

We invite anyone who is interested in working on any specific goal to volunteer and offer their stewardship of time and talents. We will achieve far greater results if we have a broad representation of parishioners, with their diversity of skills and experiences, working together toward a shared vision for the future.

Some of the challenges we will address have been with us for a while. Others are new.

Throughout this strategic plan we will be accountable to the parish and transparent in all things. The progress will be publicly tracked and reported on our parish strategic plan website (www.stjohnngoc.org/our-parish/strategic-plan/) and will be shared with the parish through weekly bulletins and monthly newsletters. We will also have a bulletin board with relevant information. At any time, you can speak with the goal coordinator of each goal to find out about the latest status. The goal coordinators will be listed on the bulletin board.

After thorough research, careful and prayerful reflection and the diligent work of more than 40 dedicated, faithful parishioners from within our parish, this strategic planning team has created detailed action plans which will allow us to directly address our needs and to measurably improve our service to the faithful and to the greater community.

Following the action plans below, there is a glossary of the terms used in this strategic plan (Explanation of Terms), as well as a brief background describing the steps taken by the parish leading up to this strategic plan (Background).

Goal 1: Signature Charitable Program

Within 18 months, we will design and implement a Signature Service Program that engages at least 20% of parish families, integrating all age groups.

Action Plan

SPECIFIC ACTIONS	WHO	HOW LONG	COMPLETION CRITERIA
1. Form Goal 1 Team.	Strategic Planning Team and Goal 1 Coordinator	1 month from Start Date	Goal 1 Team members agree to serve.
2. Determine and develop most effective method to gather all relevant information to examine existing charitable programs in to-be agreed-upon geographical area(s).	Goal 1 Team	2 months after step 1	Examination methodology is finalized.
3. Identify all existing charitable programs to be researched.	Goal 1 Team	1 month after step 2	List of service programs to be researched is completed.
4. Complete the examination of the identified service programs using the examination methodology, and determine unfulfilled needs and most promising charitable programs for the parish to adopt as its "Signature Service Program."	Goal 1 Team	4 months after step 3	Examination of all service programs is completed, unfulfilled needs are identified, and the most promising possible signature service programs are identified.
5. Research and develop an effectiveness assessment tool for signature service programs.	Goal 1 Team	Concurrent with step 4	Effectiveness assessment tool is completed.
6. Determine several of the most promising signature service program options for the parish to consider and perform proposed preliminary budget and manpower needs.	Goal 1 Team	4 months after step 4	Most promising signature service programs and preliminary budget and staffing plans are determined.
7. Determine the method to receive input from the parish and use the method to reach consensus as to which signature service program will be adopted.	Goal 1 Team	3 months after step 6	Signature Service Program has been selected by community consensus process.
8. Finalize branding, promotion, budget and action plan for implementing the Signature Service Program and begin implementation.	Goal 1 Team	3 months after step 7	Final implementation plan is completed, and Signature Service Project initiated.
9. Implement the effectiveness assessment tool to manage on-going effectiveness of the Signature Service Program and ensure alignment with our overall parish vision.	Goal 1 Team	Continuing regularly starting at least 6 months after step 8, and ongoing thereafter	Assessments are completed, and improvements implemented as necessary.

Goal 2: Parish Facilities & Growth Plan

Within 2 years, we will develop, and submit for necessary approvals, a consensus-based, comprehensive written plan for our parish facilities and the growth of Orthodoxy in the area through a process that builds parish-wide trust and cohesion.

Action Plan

SPECIFIC ACTIONS	WHO	HOW LONG	COMPLETION CRITERIA
1. Form Goal 2 Team.	Strategic Planning Team and Goal Coordinator	1 month from Start Date	Goal 2 Team members agree to serve.
2. Review, assess and evaluate all previous parish efforts to assess and address parish growth and facility needs.	Goal 2 Team	1 month after step 1	List of issues are documented.
3. Research how other churches successfully reached a consensus regarding their parish growth and facility needs.	Goal 2 Team	2 months after step 2	Research report is completed regarding other church best practices.
4. Create a comprehensive plan for obtaining a parish consensus (the “Parish Consensus Process”) regarding our growth and facility needs that incorporates all lessons learned, research of best practices, communication ground rules, types of parishioner input, and how these inputs will be used.	Goal 2 Team	3 months after step 3	Parish consensus process is finally determined.

SPECIFIC ACTIONS	WHO	HOW LONG	COMPLETION CRITERIA
5. Research and compile an overview of our parish growth and facility options.	Goal 2 Team	Concurrent with step 4	Research is completed, and data is ready to present to parish.
6. Present growth and facility options and the new parish consensus process, which will be used to achieve consensus through open and respectful dialogue.	Goal 2 Team	1 month after step 5	Parish consensus process and parish growth and facilities options are presented to the parish.
7. Implement the parish consensus process for receiving input from parishioners multiple times and using multiple modalities.	Goal 2 Team	8 months after step 6	Input is received from parishioners.
8. Compile all the input received and create a proposed first draft of our consensus-derived “Parish Facilities and Growth Plan.”	Goal 2 Team	1 month after step 7	First draft of Parish Facilities and Growth Plan is written.
9. Discuss preliminary Parish Facilities and Growth Plan) with the metropolis and appropriate governmental agencies; revise plan based on feedback.	Goal 2 Team	1 month after step 8	Metropolis and governmental input is received and incorporated.
10. Present proposed Parish Facilities and Growth Plan to the parish and revise according to feedback; determine if parish-wide consensus has been achieved.	Goal 2 Team	1 month after step 9	Revised Parish Facilities and Growth Plan is written.
11a. If consensus has been achieved, present finalized Parish Facilities and Growth Plan to the metropolis and appropriate governmental agencies for necessary final approvals. Goal 2 is complete, and Parish Facilities and Growth Plan implementation begins.	Goal 2 Team	1 month after step 10	Finalized Parish Facilities and Growth Plan has been submitted to metropolis and government.
11b. If consensus has not been achieved, use the Parish Consensus Process to make changes to Parish Facilities and Growth Plan.	Goal 2 Team	3 months after step 10	Consensus revised Parish Facilities and Growth Plan is written.
12. Present and obtain parish-wide approval of revised Parish Facilities and Growth Plan.	Goal 2 Team	1 month after step 11b	Parish approves plan.
13. Present finalized Parish Facilities and Growth Plan to the metropolis and appropriate governmental agencies for necessary final approvals. Goal 2 is complete, and Parish Facilities and Growth Plan implementation begins.		1 month after step 12	Finalized Parish Facilities and Growth Plan has been submitted to metropolis and government.

Goal 3: Comprehensive Welcoming & Newcomer Ministry

Within 9 months, we will develop and successfully implement a comprehensive Welcoming and Newcomer Ministry that ensures that all newcomers feel fully welcomed and included in the parish.

Action Plan

Specific Actions	Who	How Long	Completion Criteria
1. Form Goal 3 Team.	Strategic Planning Team and Goal Coordinator	1 month from Start Date	Goal 3 Team members agree to serve.
2. Research best practices in church welcoming (including Orthodox and non-Orthodox churches) to determine a comprehensive welcoming experience.	Goal 3 Team	2 months after step 1	Analysis report of the best welcoming practices is completed.
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of our current parish welcoming strategies.	Goal 3 Team	Concurrent with step 2	Analysis report of our parish's best welcoming practices is completed.
4. Develop a practical and effective welcoming strategy, specific action, plans, timetables and an assessment tool based on findings of internal and external research.	Goal 3 Team	4 months after step 3	Detailed welcoming action plans and assessment tool are completed.
5. Implement action plan.	Goal 3 Team	2 months after step 4	Action plan is initiated, and schedule is maintained.
6. Implement the assessment tool to manage on-going effectiveness of the New Welcoming and Newcomer Ministry and ensure alignment with our overall parish vision.	Goal 3 Team	Beginning 6 months after step 5 and continuing every 6 months thereafter	Improvements are made to the welcoming plan initiatives.

Goal 4: Signature Outreach Evangelism Program

Within 16 months, we will develop and successfully implement a Signature Evangelism Program that effectively witnesses our faith to the broader community.

Action Plan

Specific Actions	Who	How Long	Completion Criteria
1. Form Goal 4 Team.	Strategic Planning Team and Goal Coordinator	1 month from Start Date	Goal 4 Team members agree to serve.
2. Research and develop an effectiveness assessment tool for the evangelism program.	Goal 4 Team	2 months after step 1	Evangelization program assessment tool is developed.
3. Develop a baseline inventory of all current and past parish evangelism programs, including the number and demographic of the participants, the area served, structure, and effectiveness.	Goal 4 Team	4 months after step 2	Evangelism inventory is completed.
4. Conduct comprehensive research to determine best-in-class evangelism methods, structure and success factors from Orthodox and non-Orthodox parishes.	Goal 4 Team	Concurrent with step 3	Evangelism best practices report is completed.
5. Compile a resource list of local organizations, activities, and venues.	Goal 4 Team	Concurrent with steps 3 and 4	Comprehensive resource list is completed.
6. Determine how best to ascertain what areas of evangelism are most important to the parish and obtain that information from parish.	Goal 4 Team	2 months after step 4	Parish outreach priority information is collected.
7. Interpret the data results, identify the most attractive parish Signature Evangelism Program and develop strategy, budget, fundraising mechanism, communications and implementation plan for Signature Evangelism Program, including date, time and goals.	Goal 4 Team	3 months after step 6	Planning of recommended Signature Evangelism Program is completed.
8. Obtain any necessary approvals.	Goal 4 Team	2 months after step 7	Necessary approvals are obtained.
9. Present Signature Evangelism Program to the parish and recruit a new Evangelism Ministry Team.	Goal 4 Team	1 month after step 8	The Signature Evangelism Program has been presented to the parish.
10. Implement Signature Evangelism Program.	Evangelism Ministry Team	1 month after step 9	Signature Evangelism Program is implemented.
11. Implement the assessment tool to manage on-going effectiveness of the Signature Evangelism Program and ensure alignment with our overall parish vision.	Evangelism Ministry Team	Beginning 6 months after step 10 and continuously thereafter	Signature Evangelism Program is evaluated and revised as needed, and success is determined.

Goal 5: Worship & Sacramental Life Engagement

Within 2 years, we will develop and implement a process that will more fully engage our parishioners in worship, Sacraments, and the spiritual life.

Action Plan

Specific Actions	Who	How Long	Completion Criteria
1. Form Goal 5 Team.	Strategic Planning Team and Goal Coordinator	1 month from Start Date	Goal 5 Team members agree to serve.
2. Gather research from similar work done in Orthodox and non-Orthodox churches and how they address the issues of greater engagement in worship, Sacraments, and the spiritual life, and create a report.	Goal 5 Team	2 months after step 1	Best methods report is finalized.
3. Create an effectiveness assessment tool and develop data collection methods and tools that will identify positive and negative factors affecting engagement in worship, Sacraments, and the spiritual life.	Goal 5 Team	2 months after step 2	Assessment process and tools are developed.
4. Distribute data collection tools to parishioners and collect data.	Goal 5 Team	2 months after step 3	Data is collected.
5. Compile, analyze and prioritize results, including list of factors preventing engagement in worship, Sacraments, and the spiritual life that can be effectively addressed.	Goal 5 Team	2 months after step 4	Report on the factors preventing engagement is finalized.
6. Develop strategies to address the list of prioritized factors so as to enhance engagement in worship, Sacraments, and the spiritual life, including detailed action plans, timelines, and budgets for each factor and goal.	Goal 5 Team	4 months after step 5	Each factor has a written action plan and budget, as well as the expected timeline to implement the solution.
7. Implement the action plans addressing each factor in order of priority established in step 6.	Goal 5 Team	11 months after step 6	Action plans are implemented.
8. Announce/publicize the completion of each implementation to help create momentum and support.	Goal 5 Team	Concurrent with step 7	Information is communicated to the parish.
9. Implement effectiveness assessment tool to ensure modifications are made as necessary to improve effectiveness and consistent alignment with our overall parish vision.	Goal 5 Team	Ongoing after step 8	Changes are made, implemented, and modified as necessary.

Goal 6: Youth & Adult Education and Spiritual Formation Program

Within 2 years we will develop and implement an improved adult and youth educational and spiritual formation program.

Action Plan

Specific Actions	Who	How Long	Completion Criteria
1. Form Goal 6 Team.	Strategic Planning Team and Goal Coordinator	1 month from Start Date	Goal 6 Team members agree to serve.
2. Research effective educational and spiritual formation programs of Orthodox and non-Orthodox parishes and how they measured effectiveness.	Goal 6 Team	4 months after step 1	Research is completed, and a report of the most effective programs is completed.
3. Create a comprehensive list of current educational and spiritual formation parish programs and identify gaps and overlaps in current programs based on research in step 2.	Goal 6 Team	Concurrent with step 2	Program list and gap analysis report is created.
4. Finalize identification and prioritization of learning and program outcomes for each educational level and program.	Goal 6 Team	2 months after step 3	Learning outcomes are identified for each level.
5. Research and determine best effectiveness assessment tools to be used for each type of learning or program outcome, and educator effectiveness assessment and training.	Goal 6 Team	2 months after step 4	Research is completed, and method of assessment is identified for each outcome.
6. Using best assessment methods identified above, assess existing parish programs and curriculum for alignment with learning and program outcomes; and identify areas for program improvement, development, or replacement.	Goal 6 Team	2 months after step 5	Assessment of current programs and curriculum is completed, and areas for improvement are identified.
7. Using best assessment methods, assess researched curriculum, programs, and educator recruitment methods from other sources and identify curriculum and programs to be implemented or partially implemented.	Goal 6 Team	Concurrent with step 6	Assessment of best-fit programs is completed, and programs are identified for implementation.
8. Approve, adapt, develop, and/or create curriculum based on assessment of parish and other programs that aligns with the agreed upon outcomes.	Goal 6 Team	6 months after step 7	Curriculum is approved for final programs list.
9. Recruit and train educators as necessary to most effectively implement new curriculum and programs.	Goal 6 Team	6 months after step 8	Educators are trained to implement new programs and curriculum.
10. Implement new or improved educational and spiritual formation programs as appropriate.	Goal 6 Team	1 month after step 9	New and improved programs are implemented.
11. Using effectiveness assessment tool, perform a yearly assessment of each program to ensure modifications are made as necessary to improve effectiveness and constant alignment with our overall parish vision.	Goal 6 Team	After 1 year and yearly thereafter	Assessments are performed yearly, and improvements made.

Goal 7: Comprehensive Stewardship Program

Within 6 months, we will develop a Comprehensive Stewardship Program to continuously improve overall engagement in the parish; this program will be fully implemented within 14 months.

Action Plan

Specific Actions	Who	How Long	Completion Criteria
1. Form Goal 7 Team.	Strategic Planning Team and Goal Coordinator	1 month from Start Date	Goal 7 Team members agree to serve.
2. Research and compile parish history of stewardship programs and results; and identify what has been successful in our parish and areas for improvements and, where possible, establish baseline data.	Goal 7 Team	2 months after step 1	Research of past and existing stewardship program is completed.
3. Research at least 3 other successful best practices of parish/church stewardship comprehensive programs and identify elements that can be incorporated into a new parish Comprehensive Stewardship Program.	Goal 7 Team	Concurrent with step 2	Research is done, and summary of new best practices is completed.
4. Develop a new Comprehensive Stewardship Program and a stewardship effectiveness assessment tool based on best practices research.	Goal 7 Team	3 months after step 3	New stewardship program and effectiveness assessment tool are developed.
5. Recruit and train a “Stewardship Ministry Team” to carry out the new Comprehensive Stewardship Program.	Goal 7 Team	2 months after step 4	Stewardship Ministry Team is recruited and agrees to serve.
6. Develop and deliver a communication plan to educate all parishioners about the Comprehensive Stewardship Program.	Goal 7 Team and Stewardship Ministry Team	4 months after step 5	Stewardship education and communication plan is developed and communicated to the parish.
7. Roll out new Comprehensive Stewardship Program and engage all parishioners.	Stewardship Ministry Team	2 months after step 6	Comprehensive Stewardship Program is implemented.
8. Use the stewardship effectiveness assessment tool to manage ongoing effectiveness of the Comprehensive Stewardship Program to ensure alignment with our overall parish vision.	Stewardship Ministry Team	Beginning 3 months after step 7 and continuing every 4 months thereafter	Assessment is completed, revisions are made, and success is determined.

Explanation of Terms

Action Plan: The means by which a goal is achieved; the steps to take and expected time to reach the goal. See the action plans on Pages 14–27.

Area of Focus: An area cited repeatedly by the parish as a weakness—through the SWOT analysis—that the strategic planning team focused on to create a goal (or goals) to address the weakness. See the areas of focus on Page 9.

Goal: A concrete improvement which is aligned with the parish vision and directly addresses one or more of the parish’s weaknesses (i.e. an area of focus), and will be achieved on a specific timeline, following a specific action plan. See the goals on Pages 10–11.

Goal Team: The volunteer team of parishioners that have pledged their time and talents to collectively work towards completion of a goal.

Goal Coordinator: The person(s) responsible for ensuring that a goal is following its timeline. If following the timeline is not possible, the coordinator(s) must explain to the community why it is not.

Implementation: The phase that begins with the publication of this strategic plan and will continue until each action plan is completed and each goal is achieved.

Strategic Plan: See the above explanation on Page 3.

Strategic Plan Leadership: Diane Cherry and Maria Souza, under the guidance of Father Matthew. Diane and Maria will oversee the entire process and, through the communications committee, will report progress on the strategic plan to the entire parish.

Vision: The parish’s answer to the question, “Where do we want to be?” See our parish’s vision on Page 9.

Bill Marianes

This document owes many thanks to Bill Marianes, a devoted Orthodox Christian who has a passion for developing stewardship programs and strategic plans across Orthodoxy in America. He has managed strategic planning processes for churches and jurisdictions that cover nearly 20% of U.S. Orthodoxy; and his process was utilized here at St. John. He offered to work with us pro bono, mentoring and facilitating our strategic plan to its successful completion. Following his guidance, we began the process by assembling a large strategic planning team: More than 80 parishioners were invited, and about half accepted. We then had two strategic planning retreats, which—along with numerous task force and leadership meetings—produced the enclosed strategic plan. Learn more about Bill’s work at his website: www.stewardshipcalling.com.

Background

What Led to the Creation of this Strategic Plan?

In March 2014, the Metropolis of San Francisco completed its strategic plan. One of the goals coming out of this was to provide the framework, tools and support for a parish-level strategic planning process. This was met with the release of *Visioning for the Future: A Guidebook for our Parishes* which outlined the parish-level strategic planning process.

In 2014, our Parish Council reviewed the recommendations from the Metropolis and determined that it would be beneficial for our parish to develop a strategic plan specifically tailored to our parish. The Parish Council selected 14 parishioners to participate in a strategic planning team, with the direction that this team use the metropolis guidebook. This team met for the first time in August 2015; the November 2015 general assembly included further discussion about strategic planning. (For a good summary of these events, see the November 2016 monthly newsletter, available on the parish website under bulletin archives). By late 2016 the parish's "homegrown" survey had been completed and the summary results were released. The work of planning a parish-wide retreat then began.

In researching how to create a successful parish-wide retreat, co-leads Diane Cherry and Kent Taylor looked at Bill Marianes' website, www.stewardshipcalling.com. Bill has facilitated several parishes' and Metropolises' strategic planning efforts, including our own Metropolis of San Francisco. Father Theodore had worked with Bill on the Metropolis's Strategic Plan and, along with the Parish Council, was very supportive of working with Bill to complete our strategic plan.

As we began the new strategic planning process, the homegrown survey and other data points were studied, to ensure that all relevant issues would be included. When Father Theodore announced his departure, the strategic plan took a pause for a couple of months. Then Father Matthew arrived in June, and the plan was resumed.

While Bill's strategic planning process encompassed many of the same steps as the metropolis guidebook, it also included the creation a new, larger strategic planning team. Eighty-five parishioners were invited to participate, including all the former team members, as well as a wide cross-section of the parish. Nearly half agreed to, and this team met for the first time at the September 2017 retreat. Preceding this retreat, the entire parish was invited to participate in the SWOT analysis, which became the basis of the retreat and the strategic plan, as described in this document.



St. John the Baptist

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