

**BEYOND**



**...A NEW CENTURY BEGINS!**

**A FRESH VISION, A NEW PLAN,  
FOR A GROWING COMMUNITY**



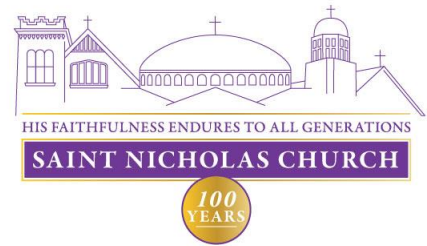
**STRATEGIC PLAN 2022**

**St. Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Church**



# St. Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church

2250 East Paris Avenue SE ■ Grand Rapids, MI 49546



March 6, 2022

Dear Friends,

One of the phrases heard in connection with young people with great capabilities whether at graduation ceremonies or other occasions is that they "hold the future in their hands". Our St Nicholas Parish turns 100 years young this year, and I think we are holding the future in our hands, right now.

Almost two years ago, with a blessing from His Grace, Bishop ANTHONY and the encouragement of our Parish Council, a process began by asking deep questions of our entire parish: What are our strengths and weaknesses? and Where would we like to go? We gathered dozens of our fellow parishioners to compile those perspectives and with them, forged new common understandings of who we are, why we exist, and what we're here to do. Then with the "one heart and one mouth" that we pray for in the Divine Liturgy, we took our newfound unity of identity and purpose and honed the wisdom and perspective of our entire parish community into a step-by-step roadmap to the future.

As you read through these pages, I hope you will become as excited as I am for a future that is not just a hope and a dream but an achievable destination as well.

We first and foremost thank our Almighty God for His Providence in leading us in this process. I believe it was His leading that has inspired everyone involved. Each of the forty members of the Strategic Planning Team has sacrificed much time and energy to bring us to this place. They are the true authors of this plan. They were capably organized by our Core Planning Team, consisting of Sam Bander, Chris Khorey, Alison Khorey, Rob Rinvelt, Mike Simon, and Debra Taylor-Weis who accepted additional sacrifices in preparing for the gathering of the larger team. Every winning team has a winning coaching staff, and I have been blessed to witness the gifted leadership of Mike Simon, our former Parish Council chair and Joe David who now takes up that mantle. They have been generous and courageous in their support of our Strategic chairman, Sam Bander, who has led this process for the last two years with great dedication and passion. Supporting all of the above with loving organization is our Parish Administrator, Keith McAdams. Lastly, but certainly far from least, I want to share my appreciation for Bill Marianes, whom God has led to come alongside our parish, skillfully using his God-given talents and giftedness in order to help us find our own.

May you be inspired by the future this booklet paints, so that you might join your own God-given talents and giftedness in making it a reality.

Yours in Christ,

Very Rev. Michael Nasser

Pastor

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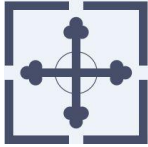
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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

***St. Nicholas Orthodox Church exists to seek and share Christ's love  
so that all will find eternal life in Him.***

Progress and success require periodically assessing of where you are, where you want to be, and how you will get there. Our St. Nicholas parish is a pioneer in undertaking such a systematic, ambitious, and exciting process. We are focused on helping our faithful and creating the strongest and most dynamic parish. This comprehensive Strategic Plan will help all of us manage the “busyness” of our Parish without turning our church into a “business”. We will make history together as we implement this Strategic Plan for the benefit of our parish and parishioners.

For the last year, approximately 40 dedicated lay stewards and our clergy, representing the significant diversity found within our parish, have worked joyfully and diligently to analyze available data and issues and develop this Strategic Plan by consensus with input from many of our faithful. Through a disciplined process, we conducted a detailed analysis of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) of our parish and developed the following **Mission Statement**:

***The Mission of St. Nicholas Orthodox Church is to be a worshipping community,  
living and sharing the Faith given by Christ to the Apostles.***

We also carefully analyzed the behaviors we wanted to model in our parish. We concluded that to drive our culture and priorities and to provide a framework for decision-making we will embrace the following shared **Core Values**:

- ***Christ-Centered Love***
- ***Generous Stewardship***
- ***Faithful Worship***
- ***Caring Community***
- ***Spiritual Transformation***

In determining what we hoped to accomplish and where we were going, we developed a dynamic and inspirational **Vision** that proclaims that:

***Within three years, St. Nicholas Orthodox Church will materially and measurably:***

- ***Build True Community***
- ***Improve External Service & Evangelism***
- ***Enhance Parishioner Engagement & Spiritual Growth***

To address our Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats, stay true to our Mission and Core Values, and pursue our Vision, we identified three strategic areas of focus and organized a separate Task Force to identify and address goals in each area:

1. **Build True Community**
2. **Improve External Service and Evangelism**
3. **Enhance Parishioner Engagement and Spiritual Growth**

By consensus, these three Task Force teams then developed Strategic Goals and the detailed action plans to achieve them, all of which met the “SMART” goal criteria of being Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistically written and with an achievable Timetable.

Our Strategic Plan that follows this Executive Summary is in two distinct parts:

**Part 1:** (pages 8-20) includes more detail as to the process, the team, our Statement of Why and the details of our SWOT Analysis, Core Values, Mission, and Vision.

**Part 2:** (pages 21-32) lays out the three specific SMART Goals and the very methodical, step-by-step implementation action plan and process to achieve each goal, including precise timelines, areas of responsibility, and how we will measure success.

The length of this Strategic Plan may give some pause. However, given the vast diversity of our parish faithful and our needs, we wanted to provide both a thorough analysis of what we must do and a comprehensive plan to accomplish everything in a unified and effective manner. At all times, we ensured that our parish, parish-level ministries, and parishioners were the primary focus of every aspect of our planning.

Now the real work begins as we commit ourselves to dedicate the necessary resources and prioritize our efforts to work diligently to achieve this blueprint that offers us an exciting road map to our sacred destiny. We have also established a methodical process to assess our successes and challenges and make necessary adjustments to achieve measurable positive results. Please walk with us as we take this journey of faith. The future of the faithful of our parish depends on how diligently we achieve this Strategic Plan as stewards of God’s many blessings.

With this Strategic Plan, we now have a clear road map for how our St. Nicholas parish **exists to seek and share Christ’s love so that all will find eternal life in Him.**



## **PART ONE**

### **THE STATEMENT OF WHY, PROCESS, MISSION, SWOT, CORE VALUES, VISION, STRATEGIC GOALS**

#### **START with WHY** \_\_\_\_\_

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ gave us His life as an example of how each of us should live. He also asked us to nurture and grow His Church. Our Father gives us all of our many other blessings. The question is what will we do with all of these gifts for God's greater glory and for a righteous life both here and as we prepare for a "good account before the awesome judgment seat of Christ" for all of eternity?

Visionaries understand the importance of first creating a clear vision of "Why?"<sup>1</sup> It is said that the two most important days of your life are:

1. The day you were born; and
2. The day you figure out "Why?"<sup>2</sup>

Once one knows their "Why?", there is no end to the creativity, enthusiasm, energy and dedication they will devote to the achievement of what God has called them to do. Christ clearly communicated the "Why?" of His coming to be with us and the "Why?" of God's expectations of us. The Apostles understood their "Why?" and sacrificed everything to achieve the Lord's vision. Now, it is our turn.

It is critical for each organization and Church to also know it's "Why?" Understanding one's "Why" is Biblical: "*Men, why are you doing these things?*"<sup>3</sup> Through this Strategic Plan, St. Nicholas Orthodox Church commits to emulate the kingdom of God in the Midwest United States. We unequivocally state:

***St. Nicholas exists to seek and share Christ's love so that all will find eternal life in Him.***

"*Come and see*"<sup>4</sup> how you can change your life and the lives of others for the better by joining a dedicated team of disciples seeking to discover and live their callings through a strong, dynamic, faithful, and purposeful Orthodox parish.

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<sup>1</sup> See Simon Sinek, [Start With Why - How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone To Take Action](#). @Ted.com

<sup>2</sup> This is a slightly modified expression of belief offered by famed author and philosopher Mark Twain

<sup>3</sup> Acts 14:15

<sup>4</sup> John 1:46

## WHY STRATEGIC PLANNING?

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Strategic Planning is first and foremost Biblical and Christ-centered. At the very end of our Lord's ministry on this earth, He gave His Apostles a clear strategic plan as to how they were to achieve His vision by saying: *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you."*<sup>5</sup>

In Jeremiah 29:11-12 we hear: *"For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans for well-being, and not for calamity, in order to give you a future and a hope. When you call out to me and come and pray to me, I'll hear you."*

The Book of Acts, written by St Luke, has been described as: *"... a blueprint for reproducing the specific details and aspects of the Church... However, it is of great importance for understanding the organization and structure of the Church..."*<sup>6</sup> And in the rich Holy Gospel, we find Christ's clear strategic direction and plan given to his Apostles: *"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*<sup>7</sup>

The world has changed so dramatically since both our Lord's time on this earth and since the Orthodox Church first arrived in the United States. And the speed of change is accelerating at a more rapid pace.

All of this data and information inevitably leads to the conclusion that to thrive in the current millennium, our parish must consider the existence of rapidly changing, practical realities, without abandoning the truth and essence of our Orthodox Faith and Holy Traditions and most importantly the timeless teachings of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In other words, there can be no indifference. If we are not moving forward, we are moving backward.

One of the common challenges of strategic planning for a large and diverse parish is the need to fully appreciate and meaningfully address the issues experienced by our parishioners. Thus, our Strategic Planning Team was comprised of very diverse representatives of our parish who were primarily focused on the opportunities, needs, and challenges of all of our parishioners and parish-level ministries. It remains incumbent upon all who serve our church to listen to, and focus on, the unique needs of our faithful and of those who are seeking Christ. We believe this Strategic Plan does that.

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<sup>5</sup> Matthew 28:19-20

<sup>6</sup> St Athanasius Academy of Orthodox Theology, *The Orthodox Study Bible*, (United States: St. Athanasius Academy Septuagint, 2008), 1468

<sup>7</sup> Acts 1:8



## WHAT is STRATEGIC PLANNING? \_\_\_\_\_

Strategic planning is a process to define our direction (strategy) and allocate our resources to achieve our goals. A strategic plan must answer four fundamental questions:

1. Why do we exist?  
We must be able to articulate why we exist and why anyone should want to be a part of our church.
2. Where are we now?  
This step consists of a factual assessment of current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, programs, talents, and financial resources and needs.
3. Where do we want to be?  
Following our sense of God's calling, we determine our consensus and comprehensive vision of where we want to be within a reasonable period of time.
4. How will we get there?  
This is where specific activities are outlined in each area which we determine to be critical in making our vision a reality.



## WHAT is our PLAN? \_\_\_\_\_

To do the initial work, a Strategic Planning Committee that grew to over 40 diverse lay leaders and clergy was formed.<sup>8</sup> Every effort was made to be as inclusive and diverse as possible as we gathered people of all different perspectives, constituencies and regions of our Parish family. We adopted the following 6-Step Strategic Work Plan:

- Step One      Strategic Planning Opening Retreat
- Step Two      Task Force Meetings
- Step Three    Communications of the Draft Strategic Plan Outline
- Step Four    Strategic Planning Second Retreat
- Step Five    Finalize Strategic Plan and Roll Out Event
- Step Six      Implementation of the Strategic Plan

## MISSION \_\_\_\_\_

A critical part of any strategic planning process is developing a clear description of the fundamental purpose for which an organization exists and what it does to achieve its Vision. Mission answers the question: “What do we do?” A Mission statement is clearly biblical: “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations.”<sup>9</sup>

To address the needs of the parish more particularly, we adopted the new St. Nicholas Orthodox Church Mission Statement:

***To be a worshipping community, living and sharing the Faith given by Christ to the Apostles.***

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<sup>8</sup> The Strategic Planning Committee was led by our priest, Fr Michael, chairman, Sam Bander, and consisted of the following faithful and hard-working members (in alphabetical order: Alan Abraham, Dan Abraham, Dn. Justin Adolphson, Melissa Adolphson, Amy Amash, Mimi Amash, David Cowles, Teresa Cramer, Joe David, Christopher de Morrow, Christine Elias, Mykel Giannakakos, Rami Haddad, Donna Hattem, Duane Hattem, Ryan Kaufman, Yuri Kazarov, Alison Khorey, Archdn. David Khorey, Chris Khorey, Greg Lambert, Marian Lambert, Elaine Lewis, Keith McAdams, Vicky Nasser, Melissa Powell, Jeff Reining, Rob Rinvelt, David Robinson, Subdn. Nicholas Rock, Mike Simon, Carol Steele, Greg Storey, David Tappan, Debra Taylor-Weiss, Barbara Thomas, Gretchen Zahn).

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The Planning Committee and its Facilitator devoted many hundreds of hours of work over many months to do the work to develop this Strategic Plan. The volunteer Strategic Planning Committee members thank God for our many blessings, and we are thankful for the opportunity to be stewards of Christ’s church and this Parish. The Implementation Teams formed to achieve this Strategic Plan will include the Strategic Planning Committee and many more individuals who will volunteer to lead and work on our 3 Strategic Goals. We humbly and respectfully thank all of our co-workers in advance for their dedication and stewardship.

<sup>9</sup> Matthew 28:19

## SWAT ANALYSIS

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Proper strategic planning requires a comprehensive analysis of the current state by examining one's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats ("SWOT"). A SWOT Analysis focuses on the: (a) Internal Factors comprised of Strengths and Weaknesses; and (b) External Factors comprised of Opportunities and Threats that include socio-cultural shifts, macroeconomic matters, technological advances, changes in laws, or our environment, etc.

Such an analysis and testing of oneself is biblical: "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves!"<sup>10</sup> The entire parish family and each

member of the Strategic Planning Committee participated in this SWOT Analysis and several community forums for our parish.

At the first three-day retreat, the Strategic Planning Committee assessed many unique Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. However, to make the final SWOT list, a particular item had to be listed by many people and agreed-upon by consensus. The Strategic Planning Committee extensively discussed all items in order to reach a consensus on our Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Obviously, this list is a static assessment at this point in time and will inevitably be modified as our parishioners, parish, Diocese, and the world around us continue to change.

As a result, the strategic planning process must remain dynamic and not static in order to address new or different Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. This is one of the challenges that must be addressed as this Strategic Plan is implemented, periodically re-assessed, refreshed, and potentially modified to remain a living and breathing document and roadmap through a constantly changing environment

To maximize the effectiveness and results of any strategic plan, the various strategic goals should address as many of the items that were discovered in the SWOT Analysis as possible. This Strategic Plan does that. A summary of the consensus SWOT conclusions follows:



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<sup>10</sup> 2 Corinthians 13:5



## **ST. NICHOLAS SWOT SUMMARY**

**STRENGTHS:** (characteristics of our parish that give us advantages including things we do well)

- Diverse Parishioners & Great Teamwork
- Faith
- Fr. Michael & Clergy
- Variety of Ministries, including Religious Education, Community Outreach, Music, Technology
- Fiscally capable and generous
- Facilities
- Debt Free

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**WEAKNESS:** (characteristics that place our parish at a disadvantage including problems we face that we must overcome)

- Lack of True Community, Loving Fellowship and Connectedness
- Lack of Vision / Leadership
- Outreach and Evangelism
- Resistance to Change
- Stewardship and Engagement (time, talent, and treasures)
- Liturgical Engagement
- Lack of Religious Understanding
- Youth Ministries

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**OPPORTUNITIES:** (include external chances to improve our performance in our environment)

- Pathways and external resources to Evangelize
- People seeking meaning, truth, and stability
- Community Service
- Grand Rapids/West Michigan culture and growth

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**THREATS:** (include external elements in our environment that could be problematic for our parish or inhibit our success)

- Secularism
- Antagonism towards Christianity
- “Busyness”
- Cancel Culture and Political Intrusion
- Technology and Social Media

There are many interesting and valuable pieces of information and inferences that can be drawn from this SWOT Analysis. Significant time must be spent by the various ministries and leaders of the parish to continue to assess and address the items identified in the SWOT Analysis.

We acknowledge the reality that our post-immigrant church generation is experiencing massive numbers of interfaith marriages, as well as the significant wonderful outreach and evangelism opportunities in our extremely ethnically diverse parish family. Accordingly, we must work diligently to be a church that ***exists to seek and share Christ’s love so that all will find eternal life in Him.***

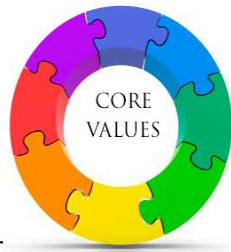


## CORE VALUES \_\_\_\_\_

Core Values are beliefs shared among the stakeholders in an organization. They drive an organization's culture and priorities and provide a framework to help make decisions. God presented us critical Core Values in the Ten Commandments, and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ augmented them in his Sermon on the Mount with what is known as the Beatitudes.<sup>11</sup>

After numerous small and large group discussions, the Strategic Planning Committee agreed by consensus that the following Core Values should guide the Parish in everything we do:

- Christ-Centered Love
- Generous Stewardship
- Faithful Worship
- Caring Community
- Spiritual Transformation



## VISION \_\_\_\_\_

Vision defines what the organization hopes to do in the future. Vision is a long-term view and focuses on: (1) What do we want to accomplish? (2) Where are we going? (3) What do we want to be in the future?



A Vision is clearly biblical: *“Where there is no vision, the people will perish.”*<sup>12</sup> After numerous and extensive small and large group discussions, the Strategic Planning Committee by consensus agreed upon the following Vision for the Parish:

*Within three years, St. Nicholas Orthodox Church will materially and measurably:*

- Build True Community
- Improve External Service and Evangelism
- Enhance Parishioner Engagement and Spiritual Growth

## STRATEGIC GOALS \_\_\_\_\_

Strategy is a roadmap of how to implement the Vision and achieve the organization's goals. It keeps the organization going in the right direction. Strategic Goals are only as effective as the process and discipline implemented to achieve and monitor them.

Setting strategic goals and action plans is biblical. Throughout the Holy Gospel, our Lord provided his apostles and disciples such clear direction and step-by-step instructions. *“Let*

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<sup>11</sup> Matthew 5:1-16

<sup>12</sup> Proverbs 29:18



your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”<sup>13</sup> “These twelve Jesus sent rather to the lost sheep of the house you go... Heal the sick, raise the out demons.”<sup>14</sup> The Strategic the **SMART** goal process to help Goal is achieved if all of the various identified in the process are diligently pursued and executed.



out, charging them... go of Israel. And preach as dead, cleanse lepers, cast Planning Committee used ensure that each Strategic actions and steps

The SMART Goal process requires that each Strategic Goal be:

- ❑ **Specific:** Is the goal specific enough for clarity so that everyone will understand it?
- ❑ **Measurable:** Is there a way to measure the success of the goal?
- ❑ **Attainable:** Is the goal truly attainable by us within a reasonable time?
- ❑ **Relevant and Realistically Written:** Is the goal relevant to our situation and realistically written to address our needs?
- ❑ **Timeline:** Is there a timeline associated to the goal to ensure completion and accountability?

### **STRATEGIC TASK FORCES**

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At the first Strategic Planning retreat, the Strategic Planning Committee brainstormed many specific strategic items they felt addressed the Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats and were consistent with the Core Values, focused on the Mission and helped achieve the Vision. After many hours of discussions, the Strategic Planning Committee consolidated all of the many items and organized them into three Strategic Areas of Focus to systematically address the most critical issues. three Strategic Areas of Focus are:

- ❑ Stewardship and Engagement
- ❑ Welcoming, Outreach, In-Reach and Evangelism
- ❑ Religious Education and Liturgical Engagement

### **THREE STRATEGIC GOALS**

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In the months between the two strategic planning retreats, the Strategic Planning Committee divided itself into these three Strategic Task Forces and began bi-weekly meetings and calls to develop a reasonable number of the most important specific SMART Strategic Goals to be achieved in their Strategic Area.

At a second retreat, the Strategic Planning Committee thoroughly discussed and agreed upon the specific wording of each SMART Strategic Goal and a detailed Action Plan to achieve each goal that outlined: (1) each specific action to be undertaken; (2) who was responsible for doing

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<sup>13</sup> Matthew 5:16

<sup>14</sup> Matthew 10:1, 5-8

each required action; (3) how we would measure the successful achievement of that action; and (4) the timetable for the achievement of the action.

Here are the summary titles for the SMART goals in the three Strategic Areas of Focus:

- Stewardship and Engagement
- Welcoming, Outreach, In-Reach and Evangelism
- Religious Education and Liturgical Engagement

### **CAN WE DO THIS?** \_\_\_\_\_

Some of the challenges we will address have been with us for a while. Others are new. Each of us has unique gifts that must be celebrated and put to the best use for God's greater glory and for our salvation. And all of us working together can achieve the unimaginable.

*“God has appointed some in the church as follows: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then wonderworkers, also those having the gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those with different kinds of tongues.”<sup>15</sup>*

Just as our Lord appointed 70 Disciples to go to “every city and place”<sup>16</sup> and preach the Word, so too must all of us in the parish family become disciples and share the good news. This Strategic Plan affords each of us that opportunity.

### **IMPLEMENTATION and ACCOUNTABILITY** \_\_\_\_\_

To be successful, any true Strategic Plan should follow a 4-P approach: (1) use the right **P**rocess; (2) recruit the right **P**eople; (3) develop the best, practical **P**lan; and (4) **P**erform effectively and fully implement the plan. We believe that with God's grace and the invaluable and essential assistance and presence of the Holy Spirit, this strategic planning process allowed the right team to deploy the right process to reach important goals and action plans. What remains is the most critical and difficult step, namely the performance and implementation of this strategic plan.

The initial hard work of the Strategic Planning Committee and facilitator, Bill Marianes, is now complete with the publishing of this Strategic Plan. The parish will now reorganize itself and dedicate the necessary resources (human, financial, time, and other) to ensure complete implementation and success. This will require the dedication of time and the active involvement of a much bigger and broader group of the faithful. Indeed, significant additional human and financial resources and operational changes will be required if we are to be successful.

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<sup>15</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:28

<sup>16</sup> Luke 10:1



To achieve the three Strategic Goals, reconstituted “Implementation Task Forces” will be formed - one for each of the strategic goals identified by the Strategic Planning Committee. These new Implementation Task Forces will include some members of the initial Strategic Planning Task Forces and will also add large numbers of individuals from throughout (and perhaps outside) the parish who can assist in the achievement of the three Strategic Goals.

We are also implementing an unprecedented level of accountability and transparency. As you can see, every action plan step for all three Strategic Goals is clearly measurable and has a deadline. We will be regularly and publicly reporting on our progress. We have also instituted multiple feedback and accountability loops to ensure that we stay on track and are focused on achieving success. All of this will be publicly tracked and reported on our Parish Strategic Plan website ([www.stnicholasgr.com/strategic-planning](http://www.stnicholasgr.com/strategic-planning)) and will be shared with parishioners regularly. And after we have achieved every strategic goal, we will again measure how well we have addressed our challenges and then reassess where we go from there. Failure is not an option!

### **You Are Invited to Join the Team**

We invite anyone who is interested in working on any specific Strategic Goal to volunteer and offer their stewardship of time and talents. The more experienced and dedicated souls we have working together, the more we can achieve. These newly constituted and expanded three Strategic Planning Implementation Task Forces will execute and manage the tasks identified in the specific Strategic Action Plans contained in this Strategic Plan.

Each Strategic Goal will have Goal Co-Captains who are the individuals primarily responsible for ensuring that the Implementation Task Force team working on that strategic goal stays on track and on schedule. The overall implementation of every aspect of this Strategic Plan will be coordinated by the Goal Co-Captains, a Head Coach, together with Fr Michael, all of whom form our Implementation Headquarters (“IHQ”) to help ensure the entire project remains on track. At the same time, we welcome all the faithful of our parish family to join us on this holy journey of faith by contacting us and volunteering at: [strategicplanning@stnicholasgr.com](mailto:strategicplanning@stnicholasgr.com).

### **COMMUNICATION and BREADTH**

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The proper and effective communication of this Strategic Plan, and the progress made on its achievement, will be equally critical. Accordingly, regular communications about how we are achieving our exciting Strategic Goals and Vision is an integral part of this Strategic Plan. Our clergy and IHQ will be regularly communicating to all the faithful all of the latest updates regarding our progress. The parish website and other publications will be reformatted to feature active links and content to each of the elements of our Vision and three Strategic Goals. By regularly communicating our progress and successes, we will make our Strategic Plan both real and achievable.

Some might be concerned that the breadth of this Strategic Plan may be overwhelming. So too are the challenges that face our parish and Holy Orthodox Church. Given the disparate

needs, and varied talents, of our faithful, it is critical to have Strategic Goals that serve the vast diversity of our parish, stewards and challenges. Prioritization and allocation of available resources will inevitably be required. Each step sets out the time period and sequence from the previous action item(s) and steps. Once the start date for any Strategic Goal is finally determined by the Head Coaches and Strategic Goal Co-Captains, the timetable for its achievement is then clearly established. We have also included numerous reporting and accountability processes and feedback loops to ensure that we transparently report our progress and do not drop the ball on any of this critical and holy work.

## CONCLUSION

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There is something in this Strategic Plan for everyone that will allow us to address our most significant issues. After thorough research, careful and prayerful reflection and diligent work by over 40 dedicated faithful from our parish, we believe that the systematic implementation of the detailed action plans in this Strategic Plan will allow us to directly address our needs and allow us to measurably improve our service to the faithful entrusted to us.

We do not believe our resources to implement this Strategic Plan are scarce given the extraordinary God-given talents that exist within the faithful of our parish. We believe we live in a world of abundance. By the grace of God and with the essential support of the Holy Spirit, we can make a difference and achieve all of our Strategic Goals in the fullness of time. Our future can be very bright if we work together!

Throughout the process, our Parish will remain true to our **Core Values**:

- **Christ-Centered Love**
- **Generous Stewardship**
- **Faithful Worship**
- **Caring Community**
- **Spiritual Transformation**

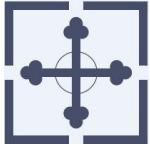
We want as many of our faithful as possible involved in the transformational improvements that will result from this exciting Strategic Plan. If you or anyone you know wants more information or to volunteer, please contact the parish office directly or email us at: [strategicplanning@stnicholasgr.com](mailto:strategicplanning@stnicholasgr.com). You can always access this entire Strategic Plan and check out our progress which we will regularly update, by going to our St. Nicholas Parish Strategic Planning website at: [www.stnicholasgr.com/strategic-planning](http://www.stnicholasgr.com/strategic-planning).

There is plenty of room for the active engagement of every person and organization prepared to ensure that our parish continues to humbly **seek and share Christ's love so that all will find eternal life in Him**, and by achieving our **Vision** that **within three years, St. Nicholas Orthodox Church will materially and measurably**:

- **Build True Community**
- **Improve External Service and Evangelism**
- **Enhance Parishioner Engagement and Spiritual Growth**

**May God bless our St. Nicholas Orthodox Parish and its faithful on this journey!**





## **PART TWO**

### **SPECIFIC ACTION PLANS FOR EACH OF THE 3 STRATEGIC GOALS**

#### **BUILD TRUE COMMUNITY**

- 1.1 Research the most effective Welcoming Ministry and similar Interpersonal Engagement Ministry
- 1.2 Develop the most effective True Community Ministries & Programs
- 1.3 Identify the modalities, processes, and procedures to welcome 100% of visitors, achieve the 30% interpersonal engagement, and a 50% increase of parishioners reporting a sense of true community (collectively, the Targets).
- 1.4 Implement the True Community Ministries Programs
- 1.5 Compile and access the results of the True Community Ministries & Programs and make necessary improvements.

#### **EXTERNAL SERVICE and EVANGELISM**

- 2.1 Define and research the most effective External Service and Evangelism Ministries.
- 2.2 Develop the most effective External Service Ministry and Evangelism Ministry.
- 2.3 Identify the modalities, processes, and procedures to achieve the stated Targets.
- 2.4 Implement the External Service Ministry and Evangelism Ministry to achieve the Targets.
- 2.5 Compile and assess the results of the External Service Ministry and Evangelism Ministry and make necessary improvements.

#### **PARISHIONER ENGAGEMENT and SPIRITUAL GROWTH**

- 3.1 Research the most effective Stewardship and Ministry Engagement and Spiritual Growth Programs (Engagement Programs).
- 3.2 Develop the most effective Engagement Programs
- 3.3 Recruit and train the parish Engagement Ambassadors.
- 3.4 Implement the Engagement Programs to achieve the Engagement Targets.
- 3.5 Compile and assess the results of the Engagement Programs and make necessary improvements.







## **BUILD TRUE COMMUNITY**

Within 23 months, develop and implement the following effective ministries (the True Community Ministries Program):

- a) Total Welcoming Ministry in which 100% of visitors actively complete the parish comprehensive welcoming process
- b) New or enhanced Interpersonal Engagement Activity Programs in which a minimum of 30% of parishioners actively participate
- c) A 50% increase in the baseline number of parishioners that report in an evaluation that they feel the parish has a sense of true community

<b>BUILD TRUE COMMUNITY - GOAL 1.1 ACTION PLAN</b>			
Within 3 months, research the most effective Welcoming Ministry and Interpersonal Engagement Ministry (True Community Ministries & Programs).			
<b>Key Actions Necessary to Achieve Strategic Goal 1.1</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timetable</b>	<b>Completion Confirmation Test</b>
1. Form Total Community Team 1	Strategic Planning Team and Goal Co-Captains	1 month after start date	Total Community Team 1 members agree to serve
2. Research and identify definitions of effective Total Welcoming and Interpersonal Engagement Ministries & Programs (including Small Group Ministries) (collectively, True Community Ministries & Programs), metrics to determine effectiveness and how success will be determined.	Total Community Team 1	2 months after step 1	Effectiveness definitions and metrics determined
3. Identify at least 5 welcoming ministries and 5 interpersonal engagement ministries (including Small Group Ministries) to evaluate and consider from both inside and outside the Orthodox ecosystem.	Total Community Team 1	Simultaneously with step 2	At least 5 welcoming ministries and 5 interpersonal engagement ministries identified for study

<b>BUILD TRUE COMMUNITY - GOAL 1.2 ACTION PLAN</b>			
Within 3 months, develop the most effective True Community Ministries & Programs.			
<b>Key Actions Necessary to Achieve Strategic Goal 1.2</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timetable</b>	<b>Completion Confirmation Test</b>
4. Analyze the St. Nicholas ministries and issues and baselines and metrics on: (a) total welcoming; (b) interpersonal engagement activity programs; (c) parish sense of true community, and evaluate and study the Total Welcoming and Interpersonal Engagement Activities & Programs identified in step 3 to determine their effectiveness and applicability to the parish based on the definitions and criteria of effectiveness and success from step 2.	Total Community Team 1	1 month after step 3	Evaluation of alternative total Welcoming and Interpersonal Engagement Ministries is completed
5. Modify researched programs, or develop new elements, as necessary, to finalize the creation of official St. Nicholas True Community Ministries & Programs.	Total Community Team 1	2 months after step 1	True Community Ministries & Programs and finalized

<b>BUILD TRUE COMMUNITY - GOAL 1.3 ACTION PLAN</b>			
Within 3 months, identify the modalities, processes and procedures to welcome 100% of visitors, achieve the 30% interpersonal engagement and a 50% true community evaluation (collectively the Targets).			
<b>Key Actions Necessary to Achieve Strategic Goal 1.3</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timetable</b>	<b>Completion Confirmation Test</b>
6. Identify best implementation modalities (technology, ministry participants, etc.) to achieve the 100% Welcoming Ministry and 30% Interpersonal Engagement Activity Programs and 50% Parishioner True Community assessments (the Targets) and recruit and train True Community Ministries & Programs participants (True Community Disciples)	Total Community Team 1	1 month after step 5	True Community Ministries & Programs delivery modalities are determined and True Community Disciples are recruited
7. Develop True Community Ministries & Programs and True Community Disciples implementation training programs and prepare ministry delivery modalities and materials.	Total Community Team 1 and True Community Disciples	3 months after step 5 (and Concurrent with step 6)	True Community Disciples are trained and delivery modalities are set up

<b>BUILD TRUE COMMUNITY - GOAL 1.4 ACTION PLAN</b>			
Within 12 months, implement the True Community Ministries & Programs to achieve the Targets.			
<b>Key Actions Necessary to Achieve Strategic Goal 1.4</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timetable</b>	<b>Completion Confirmation Test</b>
8. Implement the True Community Ministries & Programs to achieve the Targets.	True Community Disciples	12 months after step 7	True Community Ministries & Programs are fully launched
9. Track and report on the achievements of the Targets are on a monthly basis and implement improvements to True Community Ministries & Programs to overcome impediments to success.	Total Community Team 1 and True Community Disciples	Concurrent with step 8	True Community Ministries & Programs Target achievement is reported monthly improvements are implemented

<b>BUILD TRUE COMMUNITY - GOAL 1.5 ACTION PLAN</b>			
Within 2 months, compile and access the results of the True Community Ministries & Programs and make necessary improvements.			
<b>Key Actions Necessary to Achieve Strategic Goal 1.5</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timetable</b>	<b>Completion Confirmation Test</b>
10. Obtain and compile qualitative and quantitative data from True Community Ministries & Programs implementation as to the effectiveness and success (based on criteria established in step 20 and identify areas for improvement.	Total Community Team 1 and True Community Disciples	1 month after step 9	True Community Ministries & Programs assessments are compiled
11. Finalize True Community Ministries & Programs effectiveness assessment analysis and make the True Community Ministries & Programs more effective based on information identified in step 10.	Total Community Team 1 and True Community Disciples	1 month after step 10	True Community Ministries & Programs implementation assessment analysis is completed and True Community Ministries & Programs are refined accordingly

BUILDING TRUE COMMUNITY COMPELLING SCOREBOARD		
Lead Measure Action	Deadline Date	Status: Percent Complete and Date
1. Form Total Community Team 1	April 6, 2022	
2. Definition of Meaningful True Community	May 6, 2022	
3. Research and identify measurements to determine success of goals.	June 6, 2022	
4. Research Total welcoming for visitors and Engagement with current parishioners.	June 6, 2022	
5. Evaluate Welcoming Ministries and Interpersonal Engagement with current parishioners	July 6, 2022	
6. Finalize True Community Ministries & Programs	September 6, 2022	
7. Identify best Implementation Measurements	October 6, 2022	
8. Train True Community Ministries and Programs and implement delivery measurements.	December 6, 2022	
9. Implement True Community Ministries & Programs	December 6, 2023	
10. Track and report on the achievements of the Targets on a monthly basis and make necessary improvements.	December 6, 2024	
11. Obtain and compile effectiveness data from True Community Ministries & Programs implementation.	January 6, 2025	
12. Compile the results of the True Community Ministries & Programs effectiveness assessments and improve the True Community Ministries accordingly.	February 6, 2025	







## **EXTERNAL SERVICE AND EVANGELISM**

Within 36 months, develop and implement the following effective External Ministries:

- a) External Service Ministry that will achieve at least
  - i. 33% increase in parishioner meaningful engagement within 24 months; and
  - ii. 50% increase in parishioner meaningful engagement
- b) Evangelism Ministry that will have a meaningful interaction with
  - i. 100% of lapsed St. Nicholas parishioners; and
  - ii. At least 700 non-Orthodox individuals who interact with the parish, including through specific external evangelism activities

<b>EXTERNAL SERVICE and EVANGELISM- GOAL 2.1 ACTION PLAN</b>			
Within 3 months, define and research the most effective External Service Ministry and Evangelism Ministry.			
<b>Key Actions Necessary to Achieve Strategic Goal 2.1</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timetable</b>	<b>Completion Confirmation Test</b>
1. Form External Service Ministry and Evangelism Ministry (collectively the External Ministries).	Strategic Planning Team and Goal Co-Captains	1 month after start date	External Ministries Team 2 members agree to serve
2. Identify definitions of “parishioner engagement” and “meaningful engagement” and levels of engagement with both lapsed parishioners and non-Orthodox individuals.	External Ministries Team 2	1 month after step 1	Engagement definition determined
3. Research and identify metrics to determine effectiveness of External Ministries and how success will be determined based on the definition in step 2.	External Ministries Team 2	1 month after step 2	Effectiveness metrics determined
4. Identify at least 5 External Service Ministries and at least 5 Evangelism Ministries to evaluate and consider from both inside and outside the Orthodox ecosystem.	External Ministries Team 2	Simultaneously with steps 2 and 3	Analysis of St. Nicholas baseline is completed

<b>EXTERNAL SERVICE and EVANGELISM- GOAL 2.2 ACTION PLAN</b>			
Within 4 months, develop the most effective External Service Ministry and Evangelism Ministry.			
<b>Key Actions Necessary to Achieve Strategic Goal 2.2</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timetable</b>	<b>Completion Confirmation Test</b>
5. Research and analyze the St. Nicholas ministries' baseline on those key engagement metrics identified in steps 2 and 3.	External Ministries Team 2	2 months after steps 3 and 4	Analysis of St. Nicholas baseline is completed
6. Evaluate the 5 External Service Ministries and 5 Evangelism Ministries identified in step 4 to determine their effectiveness and applicability to St. Nicholas based on definitions criteria of effectiveness and success determined in steps 2 and 3.	External Ministries Team 2	Simultaneously with step 5	Evaluation of alternative External Ministries is completed
7. Modify researched programs or develop new elements, as necessary, to finalize the creation of official two St. Nicholas External Ministries.	External Ministries Team 2	2 months after steps 5 and 6	St. Nicholas two External Ministries are finalized

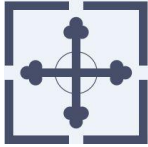
<b>EXTERNAL SERVICE and EVANGELISM- GOAL 2.3 ACTION PLAN</b>			
Within 3 months, identify implementation modalities and processes and recruit External Ministry Teams.			
<b>Key Actions Necessary to Achieve Strategic Goal 2.3</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timetable</b>	<b>Completion Confirmation Test</b>
8. Identify best implementation modalities (technology, ministries participants, etc.) to achieve the following Targets: (a) at least (i) 33% increase in parishioner meaningful engagement within 24 months; and (ii) 50% increase in parishioner meaningful engagement within 36 months; and (b) meaningful interact with (i) 100% of lapsed St. Nicholas parishioners; and (ii) at least 700 non-Orthodox individuals who interact with the parish, including through specific external evangelism activities. Recruit and train the parishioners who will implement the External Ministries (External Ministries Disciples).	External Ministries Team 2	1 month after step 7	External Ministries Program delivery modalities determined and External Ministries Disciples are recruited
9. Develop External Ministries implementation training programs, train External Ministries Disciples and prepare External Ministries delivery modalities and materials.	External Ministries Team 2 and External Ministries Disciples	3 months after step 7 and simultaneously with step 8	External Ministries Disciples are trained and all delivery modalities are set up and materials are prepared

<b>EXTERNAL SERVICE and EVANGELISM- GOAL 2.4 ACTION PLAN</b>			
Within 24 months, implement the External Service Ministry and Evangelism Ministry to achieve the Targets.			
<b>Key Actions Necessary to Achieve Strategic Goal 2.4</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timetable</b>	<b>Completion Confirmation Test</b>
10. Implement the Two External Ministries to achieve the Targets.	External Ministries Disciples	24 months after step 9	External Ministries are fully achieved
11. Track and report on the achievement of the Targets on a monthly basis and implement improvements to External Ministries to overcome impediments to success.	External Ministries Team 2 and External Ministries Disciples	Concurrent with step 10	Targets achievement are reported monthly and External Ministry improvements are implemented

<b>EXTERNAL SERVICE and EVANGELISM- GOAL 2.5 ACTION PLAN</b>			
Within 24 months, compile and assess the results of the External Service and Evangelism Ministry and make necessary improvements.			
<b>Key Actions Necessary to Achieve Strategic Goal 2.5</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timetable</b>	<b>Completion Confirmation Test</b>
12. Obtain and compile qualitative and quantitative data from both External Ministries as to the effectiveness and success (based on criteria established in steps 2 and 3) and identify areas for improvement.	External Ministries Team 2 and External Ministries Disciples	1 month after step 11	Welcoming Ministry and Outreach and Evangelism Program assessments are compiled
13. Finalize and deliver both External Ministries assessment analysis report, make all refinements necessary to make those External Ministries more effective based on information identified in step 11 and revise and improve them accordingly.	External Ministries Team 2 and External Ministries Disciples	1 month after step 12	External Ministries implementation assessment analysis is completed and External Ministries are refined accordingly

EXTERNAL SERVICE and EVANGELISM COMPELLING SCOREBOARD		
Lead Measure Action	Deadline Date	Status: Percent Complete and Date
1. Form External Ministries Team 2	April 6, 2022	
2. Define meaningful engagement	May 6, 2022	
3. Research and identify metrics to determine effectiveness	June 6, 2022	
4. Identify and evaluate alternative External Ministries	June 6, 2022	
5. Research and analyze St. Nicholas External Ministries baseline	August 6, 2022	
6. Evaluate alternative External Ministries	August 6, 2022	
7. Finalize creation of both External Ministries	October 6, 2022	
8. Identify best implementation modalities	November 6, 2022	
9. Develop training programs and delivery modalities	January 6, 2023	
10. Implement the External Ministries	January 6, 2025	
11. Track and report on the achievement of the Targets and make necessary improvements	January 6, 2025	
12. Obtain and compile effectiveness data from External Ministries	February 6, 2025	
13. Compile the results of the External Ministries effectiveness assessment and improve the External Ministries accordingly	March 6, 2025	





## PARISHIONER ENGAGEMENT AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Within 36 months, develop and implement effective Parishioner Engagement and Spiritual Growth Programs (collectively Engagement Programs) that will achieve the following Engagement Target:

- a) Increase ministries engagement by at least 50%
- b) Increase the parishioner financial stewardship so that:
  - i. All parish operating expenses (plus increases in funding for parish-chosen external charities and philanthropies that equal at least 10% of the other operating expenses) are paid through parishioner stewardship and
  - ii. The median annual stewardship contribution from parishioners increases by at least 75%
- c) Actively engage at least 50% of parishioners in a religious education and spiritual engagement program

<b>PARISHIONER ENGAGEMENT AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH- GOAL 3.1 ACTION PLAN</b>			
Within 4 months, research the most effective stewardship, and ministry and spiritual engagement programs.			
<b>Key Actions Necessary to Achieve Strategic Goal 3.1</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timetable</b>	<b>Completion Confirmation Test</b>
1. Form Parishioner Engagement and Spiritual Growth Team (Engagement Programs Team).	Strategic Planning Team and Goal Co-Captains	1 month after start date	Engagement Programs Ministry Team
2. Determine stewardship and ministry and spiritual engagement key definitions and effectiveness metrics.	Engagement Programs Ministry Team 3	2 months after step 1	Engagement definitions and metrics determined
3. Analyze the parish baseline on those key stewardship, ministry, and spiritual engagement effectiveness metrics and survey/research parish impediments to achieving increased stewardship and ministry and spiritual engagement success.	Engagement Programs Ministry Team 3	1 month after step 2	Parish baselines and parish impediments determinations are finalized
4. Identify at least 5 stewardship/ministry engagement and 5 spiritual growth programs, to consider from both inside and outside the Orthodox ecosystem.	Engagement Programs Ministry Team 3	Simultaneously with steps 2 and 3	At least 5 stewardship/ministry engagement and 5 spiritual growth programs are examined

<b>PARISHIONER ENGAGEMENT AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH- GOAL 3.2 ACTION PLAN</b> Within 4 months, develop the most effective Engagement Programs.			
<b>Key Actions Necessary to Achieve Strategic Goal 3.2</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timetable</b>	<b>Completion Confirmation Test</b>
5. Evaluate researched stewardship/ministry engagement and spiritual growth programs for effectiveness against key performance metrics and parish baselines based on criteria of effectiveness determined in step 2.	Engagement Programs Ministry Team 3	2 months after step 4	Evaluation of alternative stewardship ministry engagement, and spiritual engagement programs is completed
6. Modify or develop stewardship/ministry engagement and spiritual growth programs (collectively the Engagement Programs) for utilization at St. Nicholas and finalize Engagement Programs and establish monthly performance benchmarks.	Engagement Programs Ministry Team 3	2 months after step 5	Engagement Programs are finalized and monthly performance benchmarks are determined

<b>PARISHIONER ENGAGEMENT AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH- GOAL 3.3 ACTION PLAN</b> Within 2 months, recruit and train the parish Engagement Ambassadors.			
<b>Key Actions Necessary to Achieve Strategic Goal 3.3</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timetable</b>	<b>Completion Confirmation Test</b>
7. Identify and Recruit the Engagement Ambassadors who can implement the Engagement Programs.	Engagement Programs Ministry Team 3	1 month after step 6	Engagement Ambassadors are recruited
8. Develop Engagement Ambassadors training program and train the Engagement Ambassadors selected in step 7.	Engagement Programs Ministry Team 3	1 month after step 7	Engagement Ambassadors are train

<b>PARISHIONER ENGAGEMENT AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH- GOAL 3.4 ACTION PLAN</b> Within 24 months, implement the Engagement Programs to achieve the Engagement Targets.			
<b>Key Actions Necessary to Achieve Strategic Goal 3.4</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timetable</b>	<b>Completion Confirmation Test</b>
9. Implement Engagement Programs to achieve the Engagement Targets.	Engagement Ambassadors	24 months after step 8	Engagement Programs are fully launched
10. Track and report on monthly performance benchmarks determined in step6 and continue Engagement Ambassadors' follow-up with parishioners until Engagement Targets are achieved.	Engagement Ambassadors	Simultaneously with step 9	Established monthly Engagement Targets are achieved



<b>PARISHIONER ENGAGEMENT AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH- GOAL 3.5 ACTION PLAN</b>			
Within 2 months, compile and assess the results of the Parishioner Engagement Programs and make necessary improvements.			
<b>Key Actions Necessary to Achieve Strategic Goal 3.5</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timetable</b>	<b>Completion Confirmation Test</b>
11. Obtain and compile qualitative and quantitative data from Engagement Programs and compile as to the effectiveness and success (based on criteria established in step 2) and identify areas for improvement.	Engagement Ambassadors and Engagement Ministry Team 3	1 month after step 10	Engagement Programs assessments are completed
12. Finalize and deliver Engagement Programs assessment analysis report and make all refinements necessary to make the Engagement Ministries more effective based on information identified in step 11.	Engagement Ambassadors and Engagement Ministry Team 3	1 month after step 11	Engagement Programs analysis is completed and Engagement Programs are refined accordingly

<b>PARISHIONER ENGAGEMENT AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH COMPELLING SCOREBOARD</b>		
<b>Lead Measure Action</b>	<b>Deadline Date</b>	<b>Status: Percent Complete and Date</b>
1. Form Engagement Ministry Team 3	April 20, 2022	
2. Develop definitions and effectiveness metrics	June 20, 2022	
3. Analyze parish baselines and engagement success impediments	July 20, 2022	
4. Research Engagement Programs	July 20, 2022	
5. Evaluate Engagement Programs	August 20, 2022	
6. Finalize Engagement Programs	November 20, 2022	
7. Identify and recruit Engagement Ambassadors	December 20, 2022	
8. Train Engagement Ambassadors	January 20, 2023	
9. Implement Engagement Program and manage the interim monthly Targets	January 20, 2025	
10. Track performance data from Engagement Programs implementation	January 20, 2025	
11. Obtain qualitative and quantitative assessment data from Engagement Programs	February 20, 2025	
12. Improve Engagement Programs based on lessons learned in step 11	March 20, 2025	

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