

**47 - OUTREACH & EDUCATION ABOUT ORTHODOXY TO SEEKERS** - Best Practices

in gathering, teaching how to share , implement with our -- Ministries, services, stewardship - what is working; Being aware of social issues and letting the Grand Rapids community know where we stand on such issues; So many people are searching for faith that is focused on worship, we can provide that; Display the light of Christ through outreach; Education; Creating single page documents with facts and highlights about the divine liturgy and placing at Pangari and in the slots of pews in church Examples: Why do we have the Great Entrance each week during liturgy, whats the difference between Small Entrance vs. "Great Entrance? How is Orthodoxy different from the Catholic faith?; Making a document (KEEP IN SIMPLE) with description of what each ICON symbolizes in the church; Reach out to attract and include the younger generation; Expand the effort to attract non-orthodox members; There are many opportunities in West Michigan for outreach, mission trips, spiritual retreats, service projects available to our community; Education of both young and older members; "Recruiting" Activities – kids are asked to bring a friend to GOYA. Moms are asked to bring a mom friend. Etc....; External education and speaking engagements; Many faith communities are changing with the times, and changing their "truths" to match the modern social mores, but people seem to be searching for "The Truth." Our church which has The Truth has the opportunity to draw in people who are in search of the reality through Christ; Many are looking for a sense of purpose in a sometimes chaotic, overwhelming world; Reach out to the community at large ie, the poor, the homeless, the marginalized, the imprisoned; Teaching and spreading the word about Orthodoxy through partnerships with local organizations, academic institutions and other churches; Strengthen Holy Trinity's witness for Orthodox Christianity in Grand Rapids and West Michigan. (Matt. 28 16-20); More community-wide outreach; -Speakers / programs / education open to the public; Build relationships and collaborative network with non-orthodox people in the community; Renewed evangelism of non-Christians; Promote the Orthodox virtues: Faith in God, Hope, Knowledge of God, Wisdom, Honesty, Humility, Obedience to the will of God, Patience / Diligence to accomplish His will, Courage, Faithfulness, Temperance, Kindness / Generosity, Gratitude / Contentment, and Love; - spiritual thirst: the dryness / emptiness of the world and its promising ideologies that don't provide lasting meaning and fulfillment; Grow outreach; Mentoring; Increase membership; Build awareness of faith; be aware of peoples' needs: prayers, etc.; Spiritual and theological confusion amongst protestant population and the orthodox faith as the answer; The desire for tradition and a concrete sense of value and truth which many people lack; The chaos, troubles and deterioration of the economy and city around us provide us an opportunity to share the clarity, truth and salvation the Orthodox Church offers; Non-church people generally have a distorted view of Christianity and are very ignorant as to the true nature and beliefs of the church; Renewed evangelism of non-Christians; Promote the Orthodox virtues: Faith in God, Hope, Knowledge of God, Wisdom, Honesty, Humility, Obedience to the will of God, Patience / Diligence to accomplish His will, Courage, Faithfulness, Temperance, Kindness / Generosity, Gratitude / Contentment, and Love.; Many local potential members who are looking for spiritual nourishment.; Community outreach with speakers, who discuss views on timely issues. We have a strong history of this and should get back to it; General lack of awareness of Orthodoxy (lots of opportunity for improvement); Community outreach; Orthodoxy is most exciting thing; Increasing interest in Orthodoxy; There appears to be many people in West Michigan that are not members of our church that want to learn more about Orthodoxy; Many Americans are learning about Orthodoxy, and look for a local parish to attend; Increased interest in Orthodoxy from seekers outside the faith; -growing interest in Orthodoxy, especially from disgruntled Protestants; Greater community curiosity about our faith; Interest in ancient faiths; Lots of people in western Michigan who are interested in Orthodoxy; Educational resources/materials available to learn/teach others about our faith; Interest in Greek (as well as other ethnic) tradition; Expansion of multicultural activities/ learning;

**27 - EXTERNAL PHILANTHROPY & COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES** - The economy is going downhill so people who are needy will become even worse off. Opportunities abound to help provide food and clothing; Volunteering at local charities; So many poor and the needs of the world around and people we can love; Mission work; ministry to the poor, sick, and needy.; Use Project GR as a model for building ministries that help people in need. (Works of mercy); ministry to the poor, sick, and needy; Western Michigan many outreach opportunities and ministry work; Community philanthropy participation; A multitude of community services that offer options for serving those in need; Philanthropy; -Partnership with local charities on an ongoing basis (e.g. food pantry, God's kitchen, Kid's Food Basket); Develop a set of dedicated philanthropies to support in an ongoing way; Continued involvement in GR community; Provide hosting for non-profit groups; Enlightening the Grand Rapids community with the love of Christ through our Holy Orthodox Church; A Greater Grand Rapids Community with many established Christian outreach programs that we could participate in.; More Hands-on Community Service outside our home; Our church's public reputation; Build relationships and collaborative network with non-orthodox people in the community.; Many great local service organizations that we could partner with; Participating in community events; Vast community needs; Vast need around the world; Collaborations with other faith communities, nonprofits, schools....; Involvement in community (Grand Rapids); An abundance of community events have made a comeback in the past 12 months; opportunity to engage in other festivals, parades, etc.; that engage them in the faith but in a fun and entertaining way;

**20 - SOCIAL / MORAL ISSUES** - Social issues & understanding youth/YA exposure to such issues (gay marriage, abortion, women's rights, etc.); Many are looking for a sense of purpose in a sometimes chaotic, overwhelming world; Trends among younger folks looking for more structure than a non-denominational church can provide; Desire for peace and calm at a time of perceived volatility; Need to do good at a time when things look bad; Learn how to be resolute in our Orthodoxy in the face of worldly contradiction; Social and economic upheaval presents myriad opportunities to love and serve others, in great and small ways, especially to those people who fall through the cracks, and to demonstrate what a Christian is, counter to the popular perception; People's hopelessness as they realize they cannot "live their best life" provides an opportunity to show them a more hope-filled definition of the good life; Unrest, division, violence, issues such as abortion, LGBTQ in the World is an opportunity to share the Gospel to bring help and healing love.; Void of counterbalance to today's messaging in so many areas – sexuality, material wealth, charity, etc.; Social and moral issues that need to be discussed and our answers shared in the community; Discussion on impact of Dobbs decision on abortion that Orthodox can discuss and address; Social issues where people need help; Spiritual emptiness and depression that Orthodoxy can fill; Divisiveness in the world to teach how not to judge others and teach repentance and look into ourselves; Many people feel estranged; The lack of meaning and purpose which is associated with modern times and particularly amongst generations; Activism; The views of on social issues are changing to rapidly vs our unwavering truth and historical roots are available; People are desperately looking for meaning;

**16 - TECHNOLOGY / SOCIAL MEDIA** - External communication via mobile devices and technology. People are mobile and will continue to live on their devices. Text and email initiatives can be used by the church to communicate. They are easy to set up and manage; There is a larger digital opportunity (e.g. social media, web development, document storage and preservation, digital finance, membership identification, etc.); Leveraging social media platforms to create awareness of HTGOC and the Orthodox faith that Orthodoxy is open to all ethnicities and backgrounds; Technology and ability to further leverage it to connect with younger parish members; The use of social media to educate and inspire others about our Lord and his teachings; Widespread adoption of online learning & virtual meetings; Develop guidelines for the use of technology that respects privacy and the inherent dignity of the liturgy and other services; Digital technology offers tools for outreach; Use of media to connect and grow our fellowship, faith and outreach.; Social Media to communicate and share the ministry; Improve communications and the use of technology in reaching our parishioners.; Digital expansion (apps, virtual meetings, online outreach, website, etc.); A more active FB and community

awareness program by the newly appointed coordinator; Social media helps educate our community on who we are; Internet is helping people find Orthodoxy; Social media;

**16 - PAN ORTHODOX OPPORTUNITIES**- There may be an opportunity to support or develop and orthodox-friendly child care center in the area (possibly pan-orthodox); -Opportunities to increase social interactions (understanding there may be some sensitivities in some cases) with the other local Orthodox churches (beyond St George and St Nicholas) to include; Russian, Romanian, Ethiopian, Eritrean and Coptic); Expand activities and worship opportunities with other Orthodox churches; Strong Orthodox community in GR who we can engage with; -we have connections in the area, the community, the national Orthodox community, and perhaps parts of the world that can help guild us.; There are great Orthodox Christians in the area; Deeper connection to other Orthodox parishes; Pan-Orthodoxy; Engaging with other Orthodox organizations like OCF, OCMC, etc.; Pan Orthodoxy; Pan-orthodox communities in the area; Pan-orthodox communities in the area; Partnering with other Orthodox churches in GR for a more universal Orthodox experiences; -Stronger partnership with our Orthodox Brothers and Sisters: St. Nicholas, St. George, Lansing, Muskegon, Kalamazoo; Engage with OCF/GVSU; Activities with other Orthodox churches;

**9 - GROWING AREA** - Orthodox Christian individuals/families moving to the W Michigan area; People exiting the workforce (more time for services/volunteering?); Grand Rapids is growing; people are moving here; Growth in our metropolitan area population.; Growing, thriving city with strong community support for religious life; Real estate market in Grand Rapids; Grand Rapids is a growing city; People are flocking to surrounding areas and countryside around Grand Rapids;

**ONE – OFFS:**

- ~Global repentance;
- ~Retrench and return to intensely spiritual focus;
- ~Martyrdom;
- ~Build relationships with our guardian angels and personally know our saints;
- ~Autocephalous Orthodox church with American leadership;
- ~Celebrate our diversity;
- ~Learn how to be resolute in our Orthodoxy in the face of worldly contradiction.;
- ~We are trying to figure out what to do to best help each other, the community, and possibly could reach out to the world;
- ~ There is a monastery 45 minutes away , another an hour away, and another four hours away for help and guidance.;
- ~Good weather.;
- ~Develop parish environmental awareness and dedication to improving our performance as a parish;
- ~Service;
- ~Needs of youth;
- ~Needs of elderly (Orthodox retirement community?!);
- ~The general search for meaningful existence;
- ~Engagement/leadership in initiatives of the metropolis/archdiocese.;
- ~Religious retail (i.e., Baker, and any others left);
- ~Talents/businesses of parishioners (church directory of services/businesses of parishioners?);
- ~Interfaith Collaborations;
- ~Intentional Orthodox Christian communities;
- ~mystery, meditation/prayer;
- ~Studying – what’s successful for other Parishes;
- ~There are opportunities to increase the perception and attraction of the ethnic/cultural diversity of the orthodox church especially for those who convert or relocate;

**INTERNAL HOLY TRINITY ISSUES AND NOT TO BE CONSIDERED AS EXTERNAL OPPORTUNITIES**

## OPPORTUNITIES

Develop our people in all aspects of the church (religion, brick & mortar);  
Require Board Members to attend more services. (Set example);  
Pass the tray;  
Summer picnic;  
Clean the church;  
Youth sermons are enough for the specific Sundays (eliminate adult sermon);  
Remodel hall;  
Once a month memorials;  
Safety Training;  
New address book with pictures;  
Make sure exterior/grounds are kept up;  
People to serve on Parish council;  
To re-structure the Parish Council and the leadership roles within it to make the council and its outcomes more effective.;  
Invest in staff positions needed to focus our efforts and operations for growth.;  
Listen to the community as to wants and needs;  
Start church at 10:00;  
Define direction with relatively new priest and develop new trajectory;  
New members Sunday: Introductions of newly baptized, those that have moved to GR;  
Re-engage with former parishioners/Orthodox Christians in the area who have stopped coming to church;  
When people leave = call them. I think Father does this. People leave for 3 reasons: Some hurt feelings, Too much culture and not enough teaching;  
Continue to support organizations outside of our church. Volunteer with the youth at various charities;  
Mission Work;  
I personally enjoy larger events outside of the traditional liturgy service and would attend/work more if available (assuming labor and finances permit);  
Youth Facility / Hub for events / conferences / GOYO type events;  
Community Center – an opportunity to recruit others to our faith;  
Facility upgrades to enhance the worship experience and relevance of the church;  
Update church;  
Build youth center; -we live in a beautiful area with good land;  
There is a large amount of land available for purchase.;  
Room for expansion;  
Determine how we can utilize our church for other revenue producing events;  
Take part in more community events for fundraising opportunities in attempt to improve solvency;  
Expand the bookstore offering to online and include more apparel and Greek items;  
Underutilizing Young people/ professionals; More inter-church or camp-like opportunities for the youth;  
We have a diverse group of people who can help each other;  
We have general contractors, builders, iconographer, chanters, politicians, gardeners, farmers, chefs, homemakers and prayer warriors. People of every age.;

### OTHER / NOT AN OPPORTUNITY

Losing active youth when they go to college/leave for a period of time;  
Individuals finding other communities/activities to replace, rather than supplement what the Church offers;  
I don't know;