

57 - PARISHIONER ENGAGEMENT & STEWARDSHIP- Too much reliance on a small number of givers; Stewardship – Communication around stewardship can feel confusing. (Consideration for an envelope system to donate.); Continued dependency on festivals and other fundraisers to raise money for operations. IOW, asking the community to fund the parish; -Stewardship giving is average; Stewardship – Communication around stewardship can feel confusing. (Consideration for an envelope system to donate.); Lack of dedicated volunteerism. Like teaching Sunday school or Choir; Giving of time and talent; Core of volunteers who do everything; Many congregants are not stewards; Small group of volunteers. We need a more broad based volunteer effort that includes more than just 10-20% of our members; Engagement (Same folks tapped to do jobs in the parish); Burn out our volunteers; A core of volunteers, to the exclusion of most or all others; Low engagement in long-term volunteer opportunities (choir, teaching, Philoptochos, etc.) – vs. short-term (events/immediate needs); -volunteerism: people will help with food / cleaning / maintenance, but few are willing to help with ministries (let alone lead ministries); Many parishioners give \$1 in tray (Bishop told people that is not acceptable); Lots of lip service to volunteering as a parish in the community, but when opportunities are presented there are very few takers; Same Volunteers over and over; A wonderful core carry the weight; Absence of volunteerism and sometimes off-putting; Volunteerism; Not enough volunteers to lead ministries or to develop people hearts; Stewardship is too sporadic and unpredictable and not consistent; Need to tap into people's interests and talents better and get people more involved in different activities; Need to find out what people want to volunteer and encourage them to use their interests and talents – lots of people with talents not being fully utilized; Not enough volunteers to lead ministries or to develop people hearts; Volunteerism; Dependence on a few volunteers who contribute the bulk of effort in parish activities; Not enough people are willing to take leadership roles in positions within the church or events that we try to undertake; 80/20 rule with leadership; 80% of workload is done by 20% of parish. Often difficult to get volunteers with many competing events; Apathy and volunteer fatigue with two festivals.; Financial support; Deep pockets/short arms (challenges of stewardship).; 80 / 20 – 20% of volunteers do the majority of the work; Need more volunteers who are committed to doing all the things that need to be done; Volunteerism for fund raising seems to be anchored by the same individuals year after year which is not sustainable; Although they are very dedicated, could lead to burnout; Dependence on a few very generous stewards; Trays not passed (\$5 – 7,000 loss); Young are not encouraged to make donations (good training); Sporadic stewardship; Not a broad enough group of volunteers – not the same usual suspects; Need to tap into people's interests and talents better and get people more involved in different activities; Need to find out what people want to volunteer and encourage them to use their interests and talents – lots of people with talents not being fully utilized; Need more encounters and engagement; Activity and engagement in parish; Not spreading wings and getting parishioners engaged and active in the parish and inclusive and get involved in the life of the church; Dependent on a small group of people; Need more intensity of commitment; Percent of active parishioners.; Fundraising for capital needs/fundraising.; Not asking people to help and work together. Does not give projects to different people according to their strengths.; The times we schedule HTGOC community work (many of us who work during the day would love to help and would show up in the evening hours); Historic decline of stewards, partly the result of ethnic Greek founders passing on. Fewer stewards – even if overall giving rises – is not a sound long-term situation; More discipleship beyond just youth; Exit interviews on why people leave Position or church; Significant amount of apathy within our church members; Lack adult programs without a labor intensive work/fundraising component; "Selling my neighbor a sandwich to pay for my kids to go to camp".

55 - UNWELCOMING, CLANISH, CLIQUISH & LACK OF FELLOWSHIP (INREACH)

- We tend to be clanish; We are not always kind to one another; All feeling accepted; Feeling that all "belong"; Too cliquish; A mistrust of Christians who become Orthodox as adults; Don't reach out to those different from us; Fear of strangers; Too cliquish; Lack of inclusivity; Don't reach out to those different from us; Many people have been estranged that can be welcomed home; Possible feeling of exclusivity; Familiarity only extends to certain groups/ people; clicks; limited warmth; staying within

WEAKNESSES

comfortable circles; Not always welcoming; Don't know who all of our parishioners are; Not a community that everyone knows each other – by name, “face” in person; Cliques, and not among just the young.; Cliques exist, defined, and not open (intentional not intentional); Many people have been estranged that can be welcomed home; History of being unwelcoming for visitors or guests; Can be an intimidating/unwelcoming environment if you are not one of the core original members/families; A lack of camaraderie among parishioners that was present among earlier generations; Family rivalries; Silos (clicks within the church); Community does not know one another as well, particularly with new converts and different ethnicities; little to no face-to-face social outreach; with many moving here the last few years, people do not know one another very well; Need more outreach to each other and parishioners; Knowing needs of parishioners, ie: supporting life issues, family issues, work, crisis; Too many estranged former parishioners; People in other parishes speaking poorly of others; People favoring one person over others; People ignoring others; More accepted of a historical member, family, or made it in to the core group of people; Too much gossip/negativity; We can be presumptive and intolerant of the individual when that person does not meet pre-supposed expectations.; We have a tendency to take for granted gifts given by parishioners. We sometimes find ourselves elevating or preferring certain types of gifts over others, as opposed to simply being grateful for what was given at any scale.; Our excitement over our own interests often causes us to lose sight of the interests of others, particularly when they are not common.; Not always good at integrating people who are on the margins: blind, gay, schizophrenic, older and single, difficult to love, different from us; For those newer to the church or Orthodox faith, the fundamentals can sometimes feel unclear or overwhelming. By continuing to be cognizant of the fact we are all at a different point in our spiritual journey, and understanding of the Orthodox faith, newer parish members will feel more welcomed and a sense of belonging; Nothing in place to highlight new families or members; Our excitement over our own interests often causes us to lose sight of the interests of others, particularly when they are not common; Division amongst parishioners; Need to integrate people on margins blind, gay or hard to love; Not reaching out to members who have left; No consistent policy of reaching out to our disgruntled parishioners and former parishioners in the hopes of addressing their concerns and bringing them back into the community; Poor organized outreach to parishioners who have quit or simply drifted away; We do not have any organized service via personal involvement to individuals or specific people groups (e.g. the elderly), for members of our community in need; Lack of connection; People want their voices to be heard and their position to be valued. Limit voice or value even if perceived, but not real, can be damaging; Fellowship groups by mixed and same age groups meeting perhaps mo/quarterly(?).

36 - RELIGIOUS EDUCATION - Many of our people don't fully understand the beliefs of the Orthodox Church; Lack of programs aimed at spiritual growth for today's earthly challenges; Lack general knowledge of Scripture that provides a base for understanding; theological, social, and political issues; Poor parental support of religious education. We're not dedicated to giving religious education it's own time slot, so that we don't have to stay longer after liturgy; Christian should be able explain to non Christians and those of other faiths what we believe. (Nicene Creed, define and list our sacraments, tell someone how to become a believer in Christ); Adult education; We don't all fully understand the beliefs of the Orthodox church on a number of important topics; Need to educate people about being Christ centered; Understanding connection of Liturgy and daily living; As a whole, we are spiritually undisciplined. We are babies; I have heard a number of occasions where people who have grown up in the church say they don't understand the beliefs/theology/ workings of the church; Education and support groups from Cradle to End of Life. Training of mentors to become leaders or mentors of: a) newly baptized -converts and infant/parent/godparent nucleus; b) various age groups including: 1) who and how to date; 2) couples remarriage; 3) parents from pre-pregnancy, expecting, creation of Orthodox Christian home; 4) Christian child rearing; 5) how to assist teens to mature in personal walk with Christ; 6) how to cultivate a child's heart toward a loving relationship with Christ; 7) to give “all our lives to Christ our God.” at every age+stage of life. By grade 12 grade every Holy Trinity Orthodox; Acquire knowledge of scripture base of understanding social and political and

WEAKNESSES

theological issues; Understanding connection of Liturgy and daily living; Not living a Christian life intentionally and in daily life; A general lack of knowledge of the faith; need more education and reminders of why we do the things we do such as lighting a candle, standing often during liturgy, when to gesture our cross, when is proper to enter the church during liturgy, why we don't walk down middle aisle during liturgy to sit down..etc; Lack of church education among long-time members; Low participation adult religious education events and study groups; Not grasping opportunities to engage adults in education programs who are intimidated by traditional bible study; young parents are generally inarticulate about the faith and don't enliven the faith in daily living in the home; Lack of clarity regarding "rules" for orthodox Christians; (Sometimes) Adherence to the sacraments.; The complexity of the Orthodox faith.; Lack of integration for newcomers into the life of the church, e.g. a) "how to be Orthodox" for those who are new to Orthodoxy – how to set up an icon corner, incorporate prayers, include children in the life of the church at home and at church, how to interact with clergy, etc. b) opportunities for adult/teen catechesis or intellectual/spiritual development, not just social activities [I think we are beginning to start this sort of thing but historically has been absent; Lack of knowledge of Purpose & sense of spiritual direction; Orthodox traditions around the role of women in the church and gay marriage; Not readers – intimidated by The Bible; So many of us are at different levels of understanding on the topic of our daily/weekly rituals; Lack of spiritual engagement; Dwindling attendance at Bible study/spiritual study groups (start strong, end with a handful of people); Disconnect between tradition and our everyday life of loving and living for Christ; People connected socially and not because of Christ so they leave; Not good at discipleship—and not just of youth; Many of us need help in balancing the daily pressures of life and the need for our spiritual growth. The daily pressures of life seem to be winning; Formal nature and strictness of our pre-sanctified services may be intimidating to some that are not familiar with our traditional rituals.

34 - LEADERSHIP / MANAGEMENT ISSUES - There are lots of silos of ministries with less of a cohesive and coordinated effort; Need better coordination; Not expanding leadership; Mentoring and growing leadership; No mentoring; PC spends too much time on business and not on spiritual growth of community; Leadership legacy...needs to include the inclusion, encouragement, and training younger age groups, potential leaders to assume laity leadership roles for the future well being of HTGOC community; Parish council seems to be a recycling of the same individuals; we need broader participation; Lack of willingness to assume leadership roles; perception that a few key people "run" the parish; core group is relatively old and tired; the up-and-coming generation (young families who have moved here in the last few years and young adults) are disengaged, especially when it comes to leadership; Not enough people willing to take leadership roles; Lack of interest to serve on Parish Council; We sometimes struggle to focus on how best to use our resources, focus our ideas. We have so many people who are great at leading, it is sometimes difficult to get a consensus as people have different ideas; Board Members are not attending church regularly; Operational Transparency; Do not know who leaders are – email, photo, role; Poor Mentorship/passing on of knowledge; Not confrontational enough in healthy ways - have superficial arguments over trivial things and then can't have concentration on big issues; People want to stay in control and no let other helpful; Locking out people from strategic plans; Lack of specific direction.; We often take a bureaucratic approach. We have a tendency to focus on formal administrative programs vs personal and individual relationships as spiritual solutions; Lack of broad participation especially in leadership roles; Nonconfrontational in an unhealthy way. Are we confrontational on things that don't matter, and nonconfrontational on things that do?; We often take a bureaucratic approach. We have a tendency to focus on formal administrative programs vs personal and individual relationships as spiritual solutions.; Record keeping; my wife was Chrismated at HTGOC and there is no record of her Chrismation or the details surrounding it; Board Member Assignments/Responsibilities; Parish Council spends too much time on the "business" of the church and not enough time "on spiritual growth" of our community; Split over priorities; Some in leaders over the years in fundraising areas have been stubborn, inflexible, unwelcoming and intimidating, not spreading love and joyful community events; One of the reasons that our past attempt at Strategic Planning was unsuccessful, was that many parishioners did not

WEAKNESSES

support the effort; We don't have a clear direction on where we are going as a church; Record keeping; Community is not always on the same page. There are too many opinions about how assets should be used. There seems to be too much debate over direction.

28 - YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS - Youth - sometimes we do not understand how to reach them - relevance of Church; Not maintaining younger members once they are graduated from school; Weak high school student attendance; The challenges of educating and holding on to our youth.; Our GOYA is weak – no service. We play basketball. People ask about our youth group; Appealing to the youth; Youth involvement; The youth program needs to be more developed – it is lacking spiritual development; Keeping young adults involved and interested in Orthodoxy. *This could also be seen as an external threat socially and due to the culture/politics of the times. We have a new generation of young people who question dogma and our religion like never before (especially those in higher education). For cradle Orthodox in past generations there was no question, just acceptance, it was not a fight to keep them or prove anything to them. We need to try to find a way to inspire future generations and fight the stigma attached to a perception that we are a narrow minded judgmental faith but a faith of love, trust, acceptance and no human judgement. WE need to address the world and issues we live in today and the messages they send our children and young people; Don't reach back to youth once they leave; Youth Choir adequately trained; In the past, the youth organizations were cliquish, and this wasn't sufficiently discouraged by the adult lay leaders; College ministries: connecting with and retaining our college age youth; Lack of church education among long-time members; Like all Christian denominations in the US we have lost the interest and attendance of our young adults. (ages 24 to 45); Faith-based opportunities for youth/young adults: we have great lecture series, speakers, etc. but typically very scholarly and aimed towards adults. Could incorporate more interactive components into events to encourage engagement in different ways; YAL engagement for social purposes is great but bridging the gap of social-faith is something that can be improved; Low attendance for Goya and young adult population; Young adult community; We often lose the younger generation – when they go to college they often don't return to church; Young people need more opportunities to come together and form bonds; poor retention: youth seem to be involved, but after graduating from high school they're seldom seen, suggestions they're more attached to programs / people than to Christ / His Church; Lack of youth volunteerism in the community; Terrible retention in middle age and young adults who grew up in the life of the church nowhere to be found; Parent involvement for youth programs; College ministry for those from outside of west Michigan finding a church community; We want the best for our children, and that sure doesn't look like martyrdom. We are wooed by "success."; Going to church or Sunday School may be perceived as boring for younger generation – need to figure out how to make it more fun.

28 - WORSHIP & PARTICIPATION ISSUES - poor worship attendance / punctuality; Lack of punctuality in participating in the Liturgy; Attendance in services during the week; Attendance at Divine Liturgy.; Late arrival and sometimes lackadaisical involvement in services; Parish members sit as spectators and do not get involved in singing & chanting, which makes the service less participatory; Low attendance at services other than Sunday Liturgy (including Orthros, major feast days, HT-hosted pan-Orthodox services, etc.); Consistent, widespread tardiness to Sunday Liturgy; I think the church misses an opportunity to have more study that relates to our current lives. The liturgy is a nice service, but it is long. I find myself constantly drifting and losing focus. And many times I am not really educated about what is being spoken. My knowledge is limited and even my wife will ask me questions I can not answer. I do realize this is on me. The more attentive I am, the more I will learn and gain. But the process is not a simple one to follow; Hymns repeated in Greek & English; Long sermons; The complexity of the Divine Liturgy.; Attendance in services during the week; Ensure sermon has that takeaway (more in depth is printed, shared and can be studied later via the email). Making sermon more young parishioner, old, family and more accessible and able to leave on that message.; Many parishioners only 1 of 2 spouses attend; Reading of Sunday of events published in email or the bulletin, (highlight 1 or 2); Could use more chanters. People are attracted to Orthodox chant and the traditional

WEAKNESSES

worship style; At times chanters' music; Lack of church service online; We have stopped using technology to take our services to our parishioners.; Give details of additional services – start/end time for working parishioners to be able to attend all or part of for family to plan; Church attendance isn't what it could be; Orthodox service intimidates the unfamiliar with rituals; Worship services/Orthodoxy can feel unfamiliar or intimidating (a result of differing customs/methods/expectations by three different priests since Fr. Bogdan); Infrequent church attendance is more common than frequent church attendance; Very few teens and young adults involved in choir, altar, and reading during services; BUSY PEOPLE - A strong "professional" culture. We just don't have time for regular church attendance or contemplation; Young women are rarely given roles during the service that would support their feeling of importance or participation and value; Have many families where only one of the spouse attends church.

16 - LACK OF OUTREACH & EVANGELISM - inward, parochial vision, both with evangelism and outreach Lack of evangelism and inviting people to come to church; More intentional evangelism to the world and who we are; little to no evangelism; Lack of understanding/visibility of Orthodoxy in the area; Community outreach — more reactive to other finding us rather than being proactive and reaching out to others in the Grand Rapids community; Limited outreach; Outreach had been dismal, especially if is a non-Greeks efforts; Not enough outreach every day or week and not just occasionally; Need more outreach to poor and needy; Poor connection to Grand Rapids community; Not enough outreach every day or week and not just occasionally; Need to do more outreach with non-profits and other charities helping people; Not as well known among Grand Rapids Churches; Lack of outreach to grow membership (posted service hours on sign?); Could connect more with Pan Orthodox community throughout the year; Too much internal emphasis.

16 - FACILITIES - Hall needs remodeling; Facilities; Social hall in need of renovation; The outside property needs upkeep; Church needs iconography and additional beauty- its more desolate than other churches; Need outside places for kids to play safely; Church is dirty; Poor use of outdoor grounds. Possible development could include natural park, picnic area, playground, etc.; An aging church building with structural challenges (small altar, brick walls, etc.); facilities: limited spaces / function, datedness; Aging facilities in need of facelift, which creates perceptions of the life of the church of those who may visit (or even attend); Facility upkeep; Don't keep church maintained; Our seasoned building will require major updating/maintenance; Contingencies – roof, kitchen, bathroom, other repairs – continue to be funded with one-off giving appeals.

13 - FAMILY ISSUES - Young families have many conflicting options for how to spend their time and talents so regular attendance is sparse.; Young family participation in liturgy; Support for families with extremely young children – no nursery etc.; Get younger families to bring kids to church; Not always good at embracing young families who are disruptive; Need to reach out to children's and families and engage the families more; Haven't always been good at embracing young families and their children's disruptions in church; May need increase resources for babies/toddles on Sundays; Inspiring parents to be committed to Christ and faith; Lack of commitment for parents to make church and Christ top priority in their lives and kids' lives; Better parishioner support of Sunday to bring the kids; Parents lack of instilling a Love of Christ and participating in the Life of the church as the number one priority in raising their children.; Families - lack of Faith and culture awareness - both youth and adults.

13 - TOO GREEK / ETHNIC - Too much emphasis on Greek culture vs faith/spirituality; Perception of outsiders that you have to be Greek to join the church; Racial discrimination against non-Greeks; Language and ethnicity can be an obstacle for some visitors, newcomers, and parishioners; Big G, little O – overemphasis on Hellenic heritage vs. Orthodoxy; Recognize that not everyone who may want to be an active parishioner wants to be Greek as well. If the heritage component can be tempered somewhat, then it can still be a "good thing" without creating strife. This includes the youth organizations as well; Sometimes overly focused on ethnicity, particularly being Greek; Lack of focus

WEAKNESSES

on other cultures. Focus on the Greek is great, but I think it's simply respectful to celebrate the backgrounds of our devout parishioners from other lands, and may make us a more welcoming, interesting place to the outside world. For instance, we could expand Yassou to celebrate our various cultures.; Conflicts over cultural impacts of church; We don't talk about our community to our community like we are one community. (We talk about Greeks, Romanians, Serbs, Eritreans, cradle, convert, married, single, young, old... Common tribe comes from common ground. We are Orthodox Christians.); Diverse cultures are not appreciated; Split over language and culture.

10 - INADEQUATE PHILANTHROPY - Give away very little collectively of parishioner money (bake sale and endowments is not "our" money) we give \$0 of our own stewardship money to charitable causes; Need more outreach to poor and needy; over-reliance on General Endowment and Philoptochos to serve the underprivileged; Extremely weak focus on philanthropy; I am not aware of any philanthropical projects outside of Philoptochos other than the building project.; Do no face to face social and philanthropic outreach to intentionally reach out to poor and marginalized; Need more people helping others who need help; Not good enough at giving more to charity that serve people in need (Matthew 25); Better at giving to charity than serving those who have fallen through the cracks: hungry, thirsty, stranger, naked, sick, prisoner (Matt. 25:31-46); orphans and widows (James 1:27); poor, victims, homeless, marginalized; Good at community service, not great; we could do more community-wide.

7 – COMMUNICATIONS / TECHNOLOGIES INADEQUACIES - No quarterly or monthly bulletin of highlights – community and spiritual; Communication can sometimes feel daunting and shared via many channels. (I am personally unaware of where I should look for the ultimate "source of truth" regarding church events, parish calendar, etc...); small digital presence, WhatsApp Telegram or FaceBook groups to speed communication (people are too inconvenienced to open emails); Sunday Bulletin & weekly email needs additions: welcome guests, prayer requests, etc.; Need a new address book with pictures; Knowledge of/use of talents and businesses of parishioners. (A directory? I'd love to know if we had plumbers, CPAs, hairdressers, etc., to use/hire).; Technology.

6 - STAFFING SHORTAGES - Need more religious Education teachers; Church Custodian; Grounds need a grounds keeper; Inadequate administrative support for the parish Priest appears over-worked; We penny-pinch when we should be investing in more effective operations and staff.

6 - AGING CONGREGATION - Aging population and sustainability; Aging parish; Older parishioner base; Most of the engaged 'workers' in our parish are aging out; Have generational gaps with lesser representation of young people and families; Loss of Elderly Community Leadership.

6 - NOT GREEK / ETHNIC ENOUGH - Should pay more attention to our Greek Orthodox heritage: Greek Language; We have drifted away from the original language of the gospel and liturgy. Orthodoxy has prided itself on tradition and Greek Orthodoxy needs to forge its identity with the Greek Language and culture intact.; If the argument is that there are too many converts who don't understand Greek, set up didactic sessions or display project translations during liturgy. If you insist on being a Greek Orthodox church, you need to have the expectation that the converted members adapt. You cannot separate the religion from the language, it doesn't work that way and it's been happening for decades, insidiously; Replacing Terry's chanting with English is an affront to Greek Orthodoxy and I fear when we all realize it, it will be too late.; Concerned about Greek language being more and more deleted.

5 - SUNDAY SCHOOL - Sunday school rigor and financial support of Sunday school; Weakened and underfunded Sunday school program; Lack of accountability eg. regarding Sunday school attendance; A weakened Sunday school program (underfunded, understaffed, low/inconsistent attendance); Low Sunday School attendance.

WEAKNESSES

5 - RESISTENCE TO CHANGE - Difficulty with change.; Traditions – caught up in the past; Not keeping up with current social changes; The challenges of Church tenets in modern age.; Self-preservation, indifference, reluctance, complacency.

4 - NOT ENOUGH MINISTRIES/ACTIVITIES - We don't have enough events to strengthen the bond of our community. Examples: Dinners; athletic events; more bible study or speaker series. The more you get people together, the stronger and closer our community gets.; Need more activities; underdeveloped ministries; We need a specific times and a space to share spiritual conversations and prayer with parishioners in addition to, not replacing, Liturgy+services.

4 - FESTIVAL - Yassou – tremendous use of church resources and volunteer capacity with very little connection to Orthodoxy; We place too much emphasis on Yassou, which depletes volunteerism and attendance in worship and other spiritual endeavors.; Festivals drain volunteer energy from other things.

2- GREEK SCHOOL - Lack of Greek school teacher; Greek School.

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- ~ No retreat center in Western Michigan;
- ~ No monasteries in Western Michigan
- ~ No intentional Orthodox communities living communally;
- ~ I am 82 and am the only bass in choir;
- ~ Fr. Pappas takes great pride in mentioning monks (esp Paisios and Porphyrios) in his sermons and uncovering the mysticism is one thing that draws me to the religion. We have, however, lost our way to the origins of these holy men and their gifts The monks of Mt. Athos don't change their language because a non-Greek enters their quarters. I presume this is why the seminary requires the language be learned to become a priest. Historically, most physicians and lawyers of the 18-th centuries were very well versed in Greek and Latin.;
- ~ The church is a well-oiled machine;
- ~ Not enough support for the elderly of our community;
- ~ Need outdoor worship;
- ~ An unconsecrated church;
- ~ Lack of commitment to environmental stewardship;
- ~ Archdiocesan leadership/communication (first time in my life I've felt as uncomfortable with that as I do now).;
- ~ Need a dress code: See St. Nick's;
- ~ No house blessing;
- ~ Not being asked why a child doesn't serve in the altar of attend Sunday;
- ~ Some use our fundraising as personal piggy banks;
- ~ Idealize unrealistic/monastic goals (unapproachable as a result);
- ~ Act as farm team for "regular" choir;
- ~ A tendency toward absolutism in some quarters; a tendency toward nominalism in others;
- ~ Loss of Traditions;
- ~ Diminishing numbers;
- ~ Disdain for sacrifice and suffering (in today's milieu of immediate gratification).;