

OPPORTUNITIES

34 - COMMUNITY NEEDS & OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES - Make our church and Orthodoxy more known in the area. Charitable Works in the Local Community – Food banks, homeless shelters, drug and alcohol rehab, prison ministry; More involvement in the community through added personal involvement of parishioners; Local ministries/volunteer organizations that CTS can partner with; Participate in Habitat for Humanity; Participate in home repair donated services through services like Rebuilding Together (in church's name); Select a specific community project and support it in the name of the church; Increase food-type activities such as outside sales and support for charities; Nursing home visitations to those who would like to have someone read to them or simply just talk to so as not to feel lonely; Reaching out to those in need by having a small card that we can give them about CTS when we give them money, food, etc.; Work with local charities, other Churches and Christian Organizations to provide Parishioners opportunities to become more involved in the community to foster relationships outside of our own parish; Expand on-going service to the community in terms of finances, material, manpower and spiritual; Invite the community to our lectures, adult education programs, etc.; Strengthening efforts to address local socioeconomic challenges (e.g. via a food pantry program, homeless ministry, etc.); Strengthening partnerships with local community organizations; Community outreach as begun by Agia Sophia shows how our useful input made locally in Faith based charities draws people to our faith; Provide help to poor in church neighborhood, food, clothing; Reach out to those in prison and family members of those in prison; Help elderly in neighborhood; Outreach programs (adult education); Ride-share service for local individuals; Dozens of reputable nonprofit organizations to partner with in the Harrisburg/Lancaster area; We draw in a sizable crowd from the neighborhood during our Slavic+ Food Fest. It seems that many are comfortable visiting us and that we have the opportunity to be more present in being helpful in our community. I'm delighted that we've been contributing to lunches in the ICU at the hospital. If I were retired, I would be interested in helping more in community activities such as at Bethesda Mission; Partner with agencies who address community needs; Presence in the community; Participation in the community outreach to help others while also helping to spread the word of God through Orthodoxy. We can certainly do more in our community and surrounding areas; Creation of a "speaker's bureau." A few parishioners who would be willing to offer lectures at schools, to clubs, libraries, or other churches on topics such as iconography, church history, North American saints, understanding Orthodoxy, etc.; Invite other groups (Jewish , College students , etc.) to a "short " service to experience it and ask questions; Outreach; Messaging the "Orthodox way"- Agia Sophia Coffeeshop was a great example of living Orthodox; More guest lecturers on various topics; There is a high level of racial, income, and educational inequality in the United States and within our immediate area. Addressing problems such as hunger and homelessness are important, but some may simply need someone to talk to, a fresh pair of clothes for an interview/work, tutoring, internet access, etc. Addressing some of these issues upfront can help prevent people from falling into unemployment, hunger, and homelessness. I also believe that addressing these socioeconomic issues and assisting mothers so they do not feel helpless can go a long way in taking abortion off of the table. There is a great opportunity for our church to provide resources to the community utilizing the skills of our parishioners; Maintain awareness of how political changes may offer new options for grants (even pass-through grants for services such food pantries). Create a relationship with political and municipal leaders to help them understand the church and its mission; This is a question more than anything. Orthodox churches are known for their food festivals. I have attended many in my lifetime before ever becoming interested in Orthodoxy. In what other ways do Orthodox parishes (including CTS) reach out to their communities in both public and private ways; Establish new recreational opportunities such as cycling, walking group, trips to local parks, etc.

27 - GROWING "NONES" & DISSATISFACTION WITH CURRENT CHURCHES - Attraction of Orthodoxy to unchurched (or dissatisfied) Catholics, Episcopal etc.; There are unchurched people and communities throughout Central Pennsylvania ripe for mission work and evangelization; ; I believe with how "crazy" things are moving away from Christ and sacred traditions, that more people are searching for deep, true, and meaningful religions. We sure have that as an Orthodox Christian parish!; People disengaged from other religions or forms of Christianity may be open to Orthodoxy; Understanding present day 'evangelicals' to transfer and reformulate their messages the "Orthodox way"; Many people attend or have attended protestant Christian churches, or churches of other faiths,

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but are starting to feel that they are missing something more, or not receiving the full faith. Some have become discouraged by churches and denominations which are quick to change their values in attempt to draw younger generations or to keep church compatible with world centered lifestyles. We have an opportunity to make the Orthodox faith known and reveal the true faith; People tired of mainstream denominations may be searching for a more authentic experience; Evangelism to the “unchurched” population in Harrisburg; Outreach to parishioners that left our parish & perhaps Orthodoxy all together; Harnessing the energy of “intentional converts” to Orthodoxy; So very many unchurched or disaffected people out there (the Nones); the field ripe for harvest; There is a real hunger in the churches from which I’ve come for a Christian faith that isn’t so colored by the latest cultural trends. Millennials are rejecting the mega-churches and trendy Christian movements. One of the things that drew me to the Orthodox Church was that it was timeless, not trendy, connected to the whole of Church history, and not constantly reinventing the wheel; People are searching for the Faith; Expand visibility and outreach efforts to promote Orthodoxy; The use of icons now in many Catholic and Protestant parishes can serve as focal point to help us introduce Orthodoxy. Most who are walking away from Christianity or church have not yet heard or experienced the Fullness of the Good News as understood and lived in the Orthodox Church. Openness, dialog, and cooperation with other Christian and non-Christian communities and organizations can introduce Orthodoxy and make it familiar, known, putting faces on the Orthodox Church. Are there any interfaith groups in the area where some of our talented people could go and teach and explain Orthodoxy to the non-Orthodox?; Orthodoxy does not have the same negative notoriety as other Christian groups as we are still relatively unfamiliar; There is no other Orthodox community in the Harrisburg area other than Holy Apostles whose ethnic culture is not front-and-center, which makes our parish a magnet in the region; Orthodoxy is seen as culturally interesting, so we can attract people who might just be curious or interesting in observing something different from their own upbringing; Orthodoxy’s therapeutic view of the Christian life fits in well with society’s growing attention to things such as mental health; Have open, honest discussions about current cultural issues; Currently, there seems to be a great interest in ancient faiths and practices. Evangelical Christians’ hunger for connection to the historical and ancient Church; Popular hunger for meaning and authentic experience.

18 - YOUNG SEEKERS & OUTREACH - College student outreach; Do students at Penn State Middletown or other nearby colleges need rides to Church; Visit children in Children’s hospitals taking small gifts at least once a year; Outreach to area colleges – offer rides to students, etc.; Launch a program with surrounding colleges; Reach out to students at several nearby colleges inviting them to existing church activities and creating activities that students might find interesting such as lecture on iconography, history of the church, science and its relationship to Christianity; Help children in neighborhood with after school programming and tutoring and fun activities; Outreach programs (child education); Have youth group more involved in community; Engaging young adults and families; Inquisitive Youth; Engage at local colleges; We need to do more personal outreach to our recently graduated college students to encourage their participation in parish ministries to keep them active in the parish; Young families often look for ways to connect with church; The diocesan youth find Camp Nazareth to be a tremendous spiritual refuge from the world that they live in the rest of the year and for many, this camping experience is the high point of their entire year. Both of my children have had a wonderful time there and both of them, as with many other former campers, have returned there to work during their college years. Metropolitan Nicholas of thrice-blessed memory used to spend several days at camp with each of three camping sessions held by the diocese. Now, Metropolitan Gregory spends the entire 3 weeks at camp each year so it is a true blessing for all of the youth who attend parishes far and wide to get to know their diocesan bishop. The place is truly blessed as was shown at one camping session that was sponsored by the Greek Metropolis of Pittsburgh when some of their youth had serious doubts about their faith. At that time, seven of the holy icons at the camp had been previously anointed with myrrh that was streaming from the Our Lady of Chicago icon. These icons, also started to weep, especially to the astonishment of those children who were doubting their faith. The story was played on at least one Pittsburgh TV station shortly thereafter. Our daughter and son-in-law met at Camp Nazareth and were married in Sts. Cyril & Methodius Church that is located there. The camp had a tremendously positive spiritual impact on their lives and on our son’s life and niece’s life as well. Sorry for my digression here but I feel that this camping experience done in this way where the youth have a property dedicated to them and where they have a sense of ownership could have a very positive impact

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upon the youth of the Diocese of Eastern PA. Right now, there are various Boy Scout camps around Pennsylvania that are closing and there may be an opportunity for us in our diocese to purchase one of these properties; Offer a choir internship to a college music major each year. This was discussed at the choir workshop last year by Benedict Sheehan. This would also be another way to introduce a non-Orthodox person to Orthodoxy; Resurgence of youth looking for authenticity in faith; Seekers looking for the true Apostolic Faith.

16 - INTERNET / TECHNOLOGY / SOCIAL MEDIA - Use YouTube to share higher thinking discussions and/or questions and answers; Use YouTube or social networking to share more about our faith and for outreach; Establish a schedule of videos of services to be posted on YouTube; The rise of digital technology, social media, and Zoom can increase opportunities for outreach; Engage youth and others in education and participation in services through various social media platforms; Connecting via technology (post-Covid19 crisis); Streaming of services; Technological developments during pandemic have increased opportunities for outreach; COVID has shown that having a more robust online presence (live-streaming, and remote education) can increase our impact; Livestreaming to share services; Evolving technology; Social media and online presence are valuable tools to reach and attract more people to the faith. We are currently using them, but it is still an opportunity as we can certainly find more ways to use them more effectively; Online webinars (zoom/skype calls); Maximize technology use; Increase streaming and virtual communication, events and services; Expanded use of Zoom and other technologies for book study, cultural understanding, etc. A history and appreciation of the struggle of Eritrean immigrants, for example, could be a topic, to help our understanding; Technology-savvy public can be reached more quickly and broadly than in the past via social media, podcasts, etc. If less in-person attendance (because of mandates) means more on-line services, opportunity for home-bound and others to view/experience services. Also, because of on-line services, they can be viewed/experienced later, e.g. at a time when parishioner is not working. Pdf's of services are so helpful – a parishioner could even read/pray through the service text if they cannot stay on-line for the video.

16 - PAN ORTHODOX ACTIVITIES & OUTREACH - Increase inter-church activities between area Orthodox churches; Meet with other churches and jointly develop initiatives for community involvement projects; Work with other Orthodox Churches in the area to become better known and not so much of a secret in the area; Cooperation with other Orthodox parishes in Central Pennsylvania can mobilize substantial resources, manpower, and finances for visible and effective evangelism, while also building Orthodox unity and consciousness of a truly American Orthodox Church; Another closer to home and less costly and ambitious opportunity would be to have a Vacation Church School that could be a Pan-Orthodox event sponsored by at least the four churches in the Harrisburg area; Work to unify Orthodox Jurisdictions within our country and with other denominations; Provide services in (downtown) Harrisburg like St. Moses the Black Mission in the Hill District of Pittsburgh; Leaning into pan-orthodox partnerships for collaboration beyond liturgy; Cooperative programs with Holy Apostles; Increased Pan-Orthodox cooperation; Several Orthodox churches in the area, so there are opportunities to work together and increase our visibility; Work with hierarchs and other churches to promote understanding and unity among all Orthodox Learn from other Orthodox churches; Christian missions looking for partnership or support; Team with other local Orthodox churches for expanded outreach/ministries; Ability to share successes with other local parishes after our Strategic Planning.

11 - CIVIL / SOCIAL UNREST & INSTABILITY - Current civil unrest is an opportunity for us to stand up as Christians to provide solidarity with those suffering and speak out against injustices in our society; Find ways for Parishioners to have a presence in civil activities, civil discourse and/or local government, not necessarily to influence or manipulate in any way, but rather to be a light; Racial and social unrest (start conversations about inequality and healing); Increased focus on justice and equality could make our racially diverse parish even more attractive to visitors; Serving those who are hurting and sharing Christ with those in need. In so doing, we live as agents of gospel transformation in a time when it's so desperately needed; Paradoxically, as the world become more unstable, the Gospel

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message can become more appealing (because it is unshakable Truth); Civil unrest may shake people out of comfortable routines and open them spiritually; This is a hurting world that's aching for Good News; Lack of values in society – people looking for meaning from life; Inclusivity, Harmony, Reconciliation - the division and strife within the American nation are tragedies, but they also point to one of the most important aspects of the gospel message - the unity of humanity; People are looking for answers in the current climate of uncertainty.

11 - AREA GROWTH / ECONOMY - Our local area is growing; Economic instability (unfortunately); Economic Growth; Church closures (unfortunately); Growing suburban location; Economy is an obvious one that affects church participation and tithing both as an opportunity and threat; Precarious economy may shake people out of comfortable routines and open them spiritually; LOCATION – populated & emerging area; CTS is relatively unknown - opportunity for growth; Located in a metropolitan area in a State capital; Located in a growing suburban area.

10 - ADVERTISING & COMMUNICATIONS - Develop an advertising plan. Increase exposure to public through TV/publications; Advertising; Inform neighbors of spiritual and other activities going on in the church through advertisements and mailings; Letting the community know we are here and they are welcome to come visit; Advertise in the local community; List our church in places that the other churches are listed (like for newcomers to the area); Many (including myself historically) thought that Orthodox churches were mainly for certain ethnic groups. As I've gotten more familiar with the Orthodox Church as expressed in this country, I understand that although some churches are still heavily ethnic in their identity (to the point that it can be unwelcoming), many parishes are working to change that. I see a wide mix of people at CTS and am excited about that. How can/does CTS show the wider community that Orthodoxy isn't just for Greeks, Russians, Romanians, etc.?.; Spread the Word of God with all we come in contact with; Share our faith asking friends to come and see (Vespers and Liturgy); Proclaim the Orthodox faith and traditions in our local communities and other religious denominations.

10 - MISSION CHURCH - Orthodox Mission Churches – create additional Orthodox mission parishes in central PA; Participate in Mission Central in the name of our church; All around Pennsylvania I see large numbers of Lutheran churches that have severely dwindling membership. My own home parish in the village of Latimore in Adams County is down to an average attendance of 25 on a typical Sunday. The one in my current hometown has already been closed for several years. Are there opportunities for us to use some of these closed church buildings as new Orthodox missions?; Start another mission Church; Launch a mission initiative either here or abroad to give us purpose; Interest rates are low, may be a good time to start a mission parish (in Harrisburg inner city?); Support of mission parishes and clusters of Orthodox Christians within the church's geographic region. This may also reduce some future pressures on growth of the parish; Our metro area could probably support an Orthodox church every 15-20 miles, depending on locations of ethnic Orthodox churches. We could launch mission after mission; Mission; Church plant?

6 - DISRUPTIVE CRISES (e.g., COVID)- COVID 19, people are searching for hope and are in need of the Love of Christ. Experiencing COVID economic crisis may give some greater perspective / compassion for the struggles of “the least of these”; There is no shortage of people in need due to the crisis, new opportunities for ministry; Making cloth masks and donating PPE to local health care professionals; COVID-19 (unfortunately); Precarious pandemic may shake people out of comfortable routines and open them spiritually; Current pandemic leading people to rethink their lives and search for meaning, hope, involvement. God.

ONE OFFS

- Needing a ride to doctors, pharmacy, groceries, if they could go
- The diversity of Orthodoxy is a beacon of harmony
- Our neighbors need God's healing love especially at this time
- Meet great people
- All are welcome to come and see

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- Encourage interaction with St. Tikhon's Monastery and Seminary. Need to develop and encourage young men to go to seminary as this is where our future priests come from and they need our encouragement and support
- As we are all descended from a single father and mother, and we are all redeemed by a single savior, there can be no place for racial exclusion within the church. Likewise, there can be no place for misogyny or misandry - both of which seem to be rising in the modern era - the idea that one sex is fundamentally better than another
- Growing awareness of need to respect and understand diversity in interacting with each other
- Neighborhood witness
- Recruiting new members
- The strength and will and mercy of God, which makes all things possible. Our full cooperation helps!
- Enhance our Christ-based strengths and deal with weaknesses that can distract from our focus on Christ
- I've gotta' believe there are some, but I'm not seeing them at the moment. I'll defer to those with better forward vision than I have

INTERNAL ITEMS THAT DO NOT QUALIFY AS SWOT EXTERNAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Our churches Strategic Planning Process
- Increase church membership through focused contact, and witness, activities. Membership drive
- Strong leadership
- Small groups
- Better leveraging parish hall and grounds for revenue generation.
- People need to belong and our Parish is a big welcoming Family.
- Building on existing diversity within our parish to strengthen outreach to Ethiopian and Eritrean communities.
- Interaction with our Choir on a musical program.
- Church open house, open to the public
- Our church attracts new members
- Continue to encourage laypersons to be in leadership roles in the church
- Partnership program for new converts (internal, but still important)
- Exploratory committee for making the church (and perhaps eventually other parishes in the area) more environmentally friendly in its practices;
- Homegrown veggie swap (internal, but could be fun)?
- Maintain the well-being of the parish through spiritual care, support and encouragement and stewardship.
- Parallel biblical scripture to current social and civic issues we are challenged with in daily life.
- Availability of large area that can easily be allocated for parking.
- Growth and connection for congregation members
- Increased access to information that can improve our operations (i.e. parish strategic planning resources).
- Federal grants to improve our parish physical plant and accessibility
- Educate Parish about OCA organizations
- Education Parish about financial giving choices, such as Roth IRA etc.
- Educate parish members on how to share the Orthodox faith with others
- To live a fuller and richer life in the teachings of the Orthodox faith through education and invitation to the public
- Increased on-line giving can help make giving more regular
- We have a parish community that wants to be involved
- Take part in the traditions and customs of the church and experience new food. You just may like it!
- FESTIVAL- community exposure
- WELCOME- a more consistent welcoming committee
- VESPERS- a chance to plan consistent events prior to/after Vespers, and encourage visitor/community invitations with shorter service
- The many skills of the people who attend this parish.
- Parishioners who continue to hold their jobs may have opportunities to give more to help those in need.
- Parishioners who are not working may have extra time for various ministry opportunities that arise.

THREATS IMPROPERLY LISTED AS OPPORTUNITIES

- These past few months have shown us what threats can be. People losing their jobs, not being able to go out and about and be with other people is a nightmare.
- Not having enough money to pay monthly bills.
- The threats are all opportunities for us to grow and enter dialog that can open doors to faith