

# INTERNAL WEAKNESSES

**40 – STEWARDSHIP & ENGAGEMENT** - Too few volunteers beyond core group of common volunteers; Tithing is insufficient; Parishioner involvement- stewardship/donations can always improve, but other underlying issue is getting parishioners involved in the church. Whether it be activities or ministries to build fellowship outside of service, or for things like festivals. More often than not, it's usually the same group of (very dedicated and hardworking) parishioners who usually spearhead such operations; Reaching out, need everybody get involved not just few people; Few free or low-cost fellowship events that strengthen parish community; Often fall on the same volunteers for the same work; We have to rely on volunteers for the festival instead of our own parishioners; We usually have trouble obtaining volunteers for specific needs; People need to be willing to help at any given time and not wait to be asked; Often fall on the same volunteers for the same work; There is a disconnect in volunteerism – 20 people do 90% of work; Armchair parishioners on the periphery; Too few volunteers and same people do everything – how to raise participation; Some groups have organically developed (men's group and Philoptochos that needs to become more dynamic;; Do not engage families as well more than on just Sunday; Lack of parishioner involvement beyond core group; Too few volunteers beyond core group of common volunteers; Trouble getting people to show up to weekday of events (more than half of active parishioner live more than 35 minutes from parish); Poor parish assembly attendance – (past history creates some who do not want to stick around); People have disagreements and stop coming; We do not forgive people enough; dependency on event-based fundraising; Tithing (50%) of operating budget is dependent on the festival); It seems that our focus lately is too much on raising funds for our church. While certainly the church requires money to maintain daily functions, our focus should be on helping others within the community, or perhaps even our own parishioners who could use our help; Frequent requests for donations in a small parish create giving fatigue; Heavy reliance on weekly collections; few sustainable revenue streams; No parish-made products (e.g., baked goods, cookbooks) scaled into ongoing fundraisers; In my opinion, we have a problem with money on many fronts. At times, it feels there are constant collections, asks for sponsorships, auctions, lectures on giving more money through stewardship, etc. In some cases, it is done at a time when it negatively impacts the worship experience (for example, on Holy Thursday evening there is now a basket to collect money for candles on our way up to venerate Christ hanging on the Cross). While some of this is somewhat of a necessity, I think our church would be more successful in collecting these monies if we were using it in more of a community outreach capacity. We are being asked for money to use it to “pay the light bill” and renovate the church in an extravagant manner. It would serve us well to look outside of ourselves and have a greater footprint in the community; We are stretching ourselves way too thin, financially and physically. The church is always asking for money and mainly for beautification. We need a new freezer and the women's bathroom badly needs the plumbing issue addressed; We are always asking for money; We ask our parishioners to consider increasing their stewardship, fund beautification projects, fund the first phase of an expansion project, and sponsor festival items. Other than Philoptochos, our church seems to be only focused on the internal needs of our parish and does not look outside our own four walls to the needs of our city or country. We even solicit donations to fund our Greensboro Urban Ministry outreach; There should be a line item in our budget to set aside funds for philanthropy. Luke 6:38 (NLT) “Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full... The amount you give will determine the amount you get back.”; Financial stewardship and donations are insufficient; Tithing is insufficient ; Armchair parishioners on the periphery; Too few volunteers and same people do everything – how to raise participation; Lack of parishioner involvement beyond core group; Financial stewardship and donations are insufficient; They give money to other community organizations but not the time and talents; There is a disconnect in volunteerism – 20% people Do 90% of work.

**19 – SPIRITUAL FORMATION, CATECHESIS & EDUCATION** - Feeling uncomfortable sharing our faith because we don't feel confident in our ability to explain our beliefs vs other denominations; Catechesis- I'm aware that the logistical challenges (e.g. time, finding a suitable teacher, etc.) would need to be solved but I would like to see a more formalized Catechism class for those wishing to be received into the church; Bible study can be incorporated during summer; either by our website or lesson plans. We should never stop learning; Lack of a formal convert catechism Education; Limited of understanding of protestant theological baggage; Weak catechism area – need to do a better job with formal catechism for new people to unlearn bad habits and learn good habits; Need formal catechism for cradle as well as converts; Need more formal catechism s process for cradles (as well as converts); Weak catechism for new people – only 20% stick and stay , and not all of them truly understand them as fully as they should; Weak catechism area – need to do a better job with formal catechism for new people to unlearn bad habits and learn good habits; Explanation of what the services are and what they mean; Need formal catechism for cradle as well as converts; Religious education is needed for all adults cradle and converts because some are not fed sufficiently ; Explanation of what the services are

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and what they mean; Need more formal catechism s process for cradles (as well as converts); Religious education is needed for all adults cradle and converts because some are not fed sufficiently; Limited of understanding of protestant theological baggage; Lack of a formal convert catechism Education; Weak catechism for new people – only 20% stick and stay , and not all of them truly understand them as fully as they should.

**17 - FACILITIES & MAINTENANCE** - Landscaping and exterior improvements to enhance the overall appeal of the church; Church hall needs updated; Aging facilities in need of repair/replacement (e.g., sewer lines, freezer, stage rug, activity room floors, etc.); Cleaning contractor does not always meet expectations; Pests are not adequately controlled; Limited land and outdoor space for fellowship and growth; Parish facilities (all, parking, classrooms) are underutilized for potential income; The buildings are old and need a lot of repairs; Interiors look fine , but there I massive, deferred maintenance and stuff on the outside needs a lot of work ; Need infrastructure and physical updates; Plumbing issues; Deferred maintenance generally (roof to HVAC); Interiors look fine , but there I massive, deferred maintenance and stuff on the outside needs a lot of work; Need infrastructure and physical updates; The buildings are old and need a lot of repairs; Plumbing issues; Deferred maintenance generally (roof to HVAC).

**13 - LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE** - There have been many surprising changes and renovations in the church over the past year. While there were initial reports from a “beautification committee” with pictures of the specific icons and woodwork to be done on the wall of the altar, it would have been nice to have a chance to offer feedback on some of the other renovations that have taken place. Respectfully, the massive pulpit with stairs, chanter stand and the Narthex furniture have really changed the look and feel of our church in a distracting manner. It is my opinion that there should be some more community input and oversight before things are just ordered and installed; Who decides what we are decorating the church with?; I don’t think my opinions matter since I do not donate as much as other people do; Lack of being able to make quick decisions when needed – too many meetings beating problems to death and not getting anywhere; Succession planning and mentoring is weak to hand off duties to the next generation and outside of the core group; Priest is over worked – 70 hours more per week; Succession planning with clergy (spiritual leader) and ministry leaders; Priest succession because of how great a job Fr Sarandos is doing ; Succession planning and mentoring is weak to hand off duties to the next generation and outside of the core group; Lack of being able to make quick decisions when needed – too many meetings beating problems to death and not getting anywhere; Succession planning with clergy (spiritual leader) and ministry leaders; No documentation of institutional everything they do and processes; Priest succession because of how great a job Fr Sarandos is doing.

**11 - OUTREACH & COMMUNITY** - Outreach (excluding Philoptochos); Influence in the wider community through act of service; Reach out to other churches; Limited partnerships with local businesses, organizations, and grant opportunities; Programming focused mainly on parishioners, with fewer broader community activities; Lots of “necessary” effort put into social events and lass into community service and prayers and church service (e.g., vespers); Outreach urban ministry needs to be broadened and have additional counters; Lack of community outreach and involvement beyond urban ministries and Philoptochos; They give money to other community organizations but not the time and talents ; Lack of community outreach and involvement beyond urban ministries and Philoptochos; Outreach urban ministry needs to be broadened and have additional counters.

**10 - COMMUNICATION & TECHNOLOGY** - Lack of modern communication tools such as digital signage and clear announcements; Some more technological issues can help progress our church. We used to have an electronic bulletin; Communication is weak – bulletin is too long, and important things are missed ; Communications are over concentrated in Sunday bulletin which causes details and things to be lost; Announcements at end of service are good but difficult to cover everything “data glut”; Need to balance how to communicate and find the right way to communicate with people how they want; Communication is weak – bulletin is too long, and important things are missed; Communications are over concentrated in Sunday bulletin which causes details and things to be lost; Announcements at end of service are good but difficult to cover everything “data glut”; Need to balance how to communicate and find the right way to communicate with people how they want.

**7 - LITURGUICAL & WORSHIP** - Number of services- I’ve received comments from some people who would love to see things like Vespers or even Reader services during the week, even it it’s just one day a week; Certain practices (e.g., shared communion spoon, unclear service flow) may feel uncomfortable for visitors; Hours of church services should be on bulletin for all visitors; They would like

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more service during the week (vespers and reader services); They would like more service during the week (vespers and reader services); Trouble getting people to show up to weekday of events (more than half of active parishioner live more than 35 minutes from parish); Failure to use Lord's prayer and others response in the ethnic language of some of the non-Greek parishioners.

**6 – UNWELCOMING / DIVISIVENESS** - We do not forgive people enough; People have disagreements and stop coming; Do not engage families as well more than on just Sunday; When our parishioners have not been in church for a while, we should have a phone chain to call them to see how they are and if they need anything; No new-comers classes/new-comer ministry; No "shepherd" or buddy system to help newcomers connect and feel guided.

**6 - YOUTH RETENTION & EDUCATION** - Inadequate classroom and lounge space for GOYA-age youth; Also, if we are committed to growing the youth of our community, we must also provide them with space to do so. There is a great need for increased Sunday School space, as well as Greek Dance practice space. It is difficult to maintain these programs when the current space is consistently being used as storage, meeting space, etc.; Many kids do not attend regularly except during Sunday school; Keeping the kids in the church after they graduate; Many kids do not attend regularly except during Sunday school; Keeping the kids in the church after they graduate.

**5 - ORGANIZATIONAL AND CLEANUP ISSUES** - I believe we frequently spend money unnecessarily due to poor facility maintenance or storage issues. I have heard of many instances of items needing to be purchased again because things were either used and never returned, just cannot be located in the storage room/junk piles in Sunday School rooms, etc. There needs to be a system of organization and accountability for our belongings or this unnecessary expenditure will continue to be a problem; People do not clean up their own tables after coffee hour; What happens to things people have donated when new things are bought?; No documentation of institutional everything they do and processes; Lack of putting things back when they are found after an event- lack of physical organization with our stuff.

**4 - GREEK IDENTITY** - Clinging to fading Greek identity: We aren't really a Greek congregation. More than half our parishioners are not Greek. Most of our children are not Greek. Everyone speaks English; most people do not understand Greek. Our converts do not speak Greek. Yet a significant chunk of our Sunday liturgy is in Greek. This is an obstacle for many of our parishioners. A large part of learning the faith in the Orthodox church is through the hymns and liturgy- how are our children going to do that if they cannot understand what is being said? (See 1 Corinthians 14). Even if we say it in Greek and repeat it in English, that results in long stretches where more than half the congregation is just waiting for the unintelligible Greek to end. We also put too much emphasis on getting our children to do the Greek dance at the Greek festival every year. Look at the pictures of them dancing: none of them are Greek. It's not an organic part of their identity. They are not Greek, and they never will be. Yet preparing for the Greek dance and performing it each year consumes a lot of time and energy from families that are already stretched. (As an aside: we get that part of the point of having our children dance together is to encourage them to develop friendships and maybe more with each other, but there are other ways to do that.); Lots of tangentially connected members who are plugged in solely on cultural basis; Failure to use Lord's prayer and others response in the ethnic language of some of the non-Greek parishioners.; Lots of tangentially connected members who are plugged in solely on cultural basis.

**3 - DEMOGRAPHICS & LOCATION** - Have many young men coming in but very fewer young women; Population Growth in areas outside of Greensboro; Population Growth in areas outside of Greensboro.

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- Have many young men coming in but very fewer young women;
- Priest is over worked – 70 hours more per week;
- Lots of "necessary" effort put into social events and less into community service and prayers and church service (e.g., vespers);
- Poor parish assembly attendance – (past history creates some who do not want to stick around);
- Some groups have organically developed (men's group and Philoptochos that needs to become more dynamic;