

## What excites me about these Strategic Focus Areas?

28 responses

The concept is very exciting as it's presented. But not all area's do I think were prepared for.

Loving the sense of community and we are being respected and invited and as trust builds we will grow from the church to the community. Excited to be part of this plan and be invited to be part of these groups.

When we start new programs within the parish, More training available for parish volunteers within ministries,

the Faith map... and everything... and that there is plan

targeted, clear path & definition of where we want to go. giving us good direction, encompasses all parts of all ministries in parish.

worship is going to be great - love to see a # of both male & female altar servicers, especiailly young people. our music ministry has been doing quite well, could use more consistency on type of music. the various, types of music helps parishioners learn to be more open to the various types which help us attract. we are blessed with the flexibility and genres we have. identified the focus areas quite well. taking good advantage of technology during times of restriction. Alpha challenges us to think about where we are in our fait journey.

Great that the work is being done and solutions Focus on hospitality when things open up and people are back. Overlap is positive will make the areas more doble

Be good to see people. Looking forward to n increased Alpha and return of SASE.

Great feeling that we are on right track.

process is giving lots of hope.

extension of parish, five small areas; for catholics their faith means more; a learning journey, combatting division in the Church/parishes; reap a good harvest

Helping the poor in our temporary shelters[ service]

Connect group for more committed parishioners

An invitation to less active parishioners to join connect groups

Alpha for the younger age groups

French community inviting other Francophones to attend mass and parish activities .

Answered in previous feedback already submitted.

1. That it is a good foundation for the Spiritual and Faith Growth of our NEW Parish
2. That the PC did a Great job at preparing and promoting this.

3. We were not feeling excitement but rather apprehension that perhaps we might move too fast not fully realizing the consequences of our actions

a.) Discipleship - Becca said a "place to GROW", What will that place be. We realize this will not be a PC decision but choosing the site of one Church or remaining as two Churches is a decision which will have great bearing on whether we grow or continue to lessen in numbers. Leadership's decisions in that direction will have great repercussions for the plan.

b.) Service: getting Service Groups such as K of C and CWL to merge as well will be difficult but needed. People will leave the new Parish over this.

c.) Evangelization- There are many in the Parish who believe that ALPHA should not be the One main focus of Evangelization. This too causes a rift with Parishioners who do not want their Ministries of Evangelization to suffer. ( I believe Sandy did a good job in pointing that out in her summation at the end that this would not be the case

i.) this group felt there were other Strong Ministries that should be promoted

ii) a lot of people don't want to be leaders and we focus on leadership so much, they just want some focus to be on the doers in the Parish. Many want to work for God but not in a leadership role.

iii.) We wondered if Alpha was meeting it's goal to go out and get new people into the Parish and making Catholics or was it just touching people again who already had a relationship with Christ. Alpha needed to be more outward to the Community of Dartmouth and not focused internally on the Parish.

iv.) Glad to hear we need a Strong Catechesis program and a PLAN to involve the youth and Family.

One is very excited about it all one feels very Less connected to church since covid,

It is a plan nice to see we have a plan. Evangelisation (Alpha) is the best channel to encourage people to experience Christ.

The five systems are very important; training and support will be provided to those who will be ministering in those systems. Plan is plausible and credible, do able. Systemic approach. Bringing new people into the church, people who have not experienced a faith community.

Evangelization is the most important. Leonarda MacNeil is very excited about what we are doing with all of the online activities we are doing, Alpha, Cathacatism, St. Andrew evangelization program.

The faith map. It will enable us to see where we can continue to grow in our faith.

Our group was concerned with the meaning of evangelization in the minds of our parishioners. Alpha is seen as recycling the christians already in the pews. We should be seeking new blood. what is another tool needed to reach the broader community? (not shared by all in our group but it was a concern).

youth leadership - getting youth more involved. Faith Map, finding out our gifts; organization of the whole thing - well thought out and compartmentalized

like that items were broken down. Positive talks. one is excited to join a connect group

The strategic plan is very organized and easy to understand. Some had difficulty taking in all the information. These are in hopes that we will soon be able to do this in-person.

I LOVED the idea of the map !

The initiatives to involve families and people of various age groups, the initiatives to grow in community, to meet, to reach out, to be involved

The idea to bringing people together and connecting people of faith together.

I am excited about bringing our faith and the love of God into a deeper relationship with each other within our parish and to focus on spreading this beyond our church our to our community to those in need. Reaching those in need in our community to bring the love of God to them.

Bringing new people into the church.

I was very impressed with the amount of time, energy and caring that went into designing the pastoral plan. It is practical and well balanced. I am excited by the faith map, and especially by the understanding that all other aspects of the plan (and living the plan) such as evangelization and service need to grow out of prayer, worship and a personal encounter with Christ.

Organization and well laid out

Going to make a difference

Very broad not sure how it is going to work

Encouraging look forward to being part of it

Well thought out

Know what we are trying to achieve

Evangelization

Francophone

Syndonality

Following God, not individual

Great plan

Outreach / Emergency Shelters

Inclusion

A one-page plan that is so well articulated excites me. There is opportunity for everyone to participate in working towards its success. Keep the plan always 'current' by reviewing it regularly to determine where we are and what is or isn't working.

They provide a well defined framework for both planning and the delivery of services by the parish.

## What fears do I have about these Strategic Focus Areas?

28 responses

Fears to volunteer and not have enough time to do the work? Perhaps if they worked in teams, not just one leading the way.

not fearful just very ambitious good to keep it small and hope it's not ambitious so we can grow. Need to include the African mass and African community so they can be presented, also the deaf community

Too many changes within the parish that might cause people to leave, due to confusion and misunderstanding about what is happening.

that things might fizzle out is it sustainable plan?

some concern on where will we get the people to help execute the plan. the same people come out and engage. concerned with lack of reaching those who do not have technology presently. hope that once in person continues we can still make use of technology (online, zoom groups etc). need to promote groups like CWL & KoC and what they do, how far they reach & how people can join.

people go to church but are not committed to a particular parish for their convenience, etc.

what does the church mean to them? is it just a place to go on Sunday? what is the importance of church in your life?

Fear if somebody left out. Lack of computer skills. Big initiative and good that we are doing in chunks. technology is good and keeps in the loop. Fear that pandemic wil continue and not get back.

singular focus of Alpha - teaching but not the answer, want something more substantial, regular Catholics pushed aside to get more warm bodiess. Most catholics have not been catechized. need to make catholics more passionate about their faith

Many parishioners have become complacent about going to mass .The Bishop needs to bring back compulsory Sunday mass obligation as soon as Covid restrictions allow.

Answered and submitted previously.

1. That the Plan was being build in the sand and our Parish has too many moving parts operationally that need to be addressed before the Action of the Plan can be realized.

2. That although there is GREAT emphasis of Leaders in the plan there is a need to focus on the needs of the Community. Youth is GOOD but we are an elderly Parish and People feel neglected. Ministries need to serve God but also the people. Feed the Poor. etc. They liked that in the Service component we would do more.

3. We are always Planning. NOW is the time for DOING.

4. We have amazing people in this Parish willing to help! (Use Them - Don't void Them.)

5. Are we discerning God's will correctly? Will the Diocese have the same discernment. It seems in the past we plan and then 1/2 way through the Diocese upsets the apple cart.

Fear down to one church

Execution of the plan, commit to it and finding the people to support them

1. One component that hasn't been mentioned in catechism - it's so important that we teach the faith. Details of a the Faith Map, more fleshing out of this would be beneficial. 2. Burn out - laboureurs are few. People need to be supported, and not over burdened. 3. Fear that some may not feel equipped to be disciple. 4. Fear that we are doing this to pay our bills, to keep our building open, to keep a business running rather than really developing the faith, not to legitimately do the work of Christ.

Mobility issues to attend meetings is an issue. Attracting young members to the parish.

getting people involved might be difficult.

Fears of being outside the comfort zone. Inadequacy. Not schooled enough to do this work. Trust God.

Pandemic - when are we going to get back together. Hard to connect and feel community. How will it work. That it is a herculean task; we have sunken so low that we will be working hard to get back to the top of the hole. We are going to be struggling to get back to our 2000 parishioners. Perception of the church is that it wants to get more bodies; need to get to the root cause of the person in the shelter - not just give them money for gas, etc what about finding the tools to help him get out of his situation; that Alpha is the only tool - not many people are attending and you will need to find other ways to evangelize.

one size doesn't fit all - 2 choices not necessary what works for everyone. Formed.org mentioned as a good choice for people- good solid teachings and courses

The fear is that the separate small groups only allow one to know only a small group of people and that they may be very disconnected.

It initially seemed very diversified with various subtopics, fear that it could be very ambitious

No not really

Fear of not having the knowledge or "skillset" to do the tasks involved.

I am afraid that the plan will not be put into action, like many attempts at change and growth in the past. I think it will be difficult to engage the parishioners on the peripheries, and also to "wrest control" from parishioners who are used to doing things in their own way. I am also concerned that a balance needs to be found between the old ways of doing things and new and exciting ideas, especially in terms of worship. Our parish has many long-time parishioners who need to feel that they are not losing the worship and services that they know and feel comfortable with.

Covid is our biggest challenge

People afraid to come out

Might get discouraged

Need to have a measure of success

Will people come

The next generation

How to get people into the church

culture of invitation

We don't know what and how to do it; how to become interested

Engagement of Youth / Families

Finding the gap/ why are people not coming

Volunteers/ finding and engaging

Fear that the congregation is not going to grow, in fact, that it may reduce in size. We all have a role in evangelization but not everyone is comfortable in speaking openly about their religious beliefs. However, we can privately practice evangelization and be proud of being a Roman Catholic.

None

## How can I contribute to these Strategic Focus Areas?

28 responses

If one knows their gifts it would be a wonder, but perhaps one would have to be lead into or learn what that gift is, by attending a class. Like the singing ministry eg.

Pray for them. continue to other avenues Alpha, Connect, Hearts AFire to continue on our journey.

Have an updated list of all the ministries/programs at CTK along with a short description of what that ministry offers.

share your talents and communication . encourage participation in town hall.

educate parishioners on our ministries & groups, identify which groups can support which focus areas / systems. we need to start referring more to CTH & less to SVDP / STM. promote our ministries.

We can all pray for each group.. You can participate in activities such as adoration, rosary, weekday mass, volunteer to be mass coordinators, readings

Ran out of time

May consider joining connect group

Answered and submitted previously.

This group agreed with one thread in Father Patrick's Synod Prayer. " Do not let us promote disorder." We all agreed that CHANGE is inevitable and we wanted to be promoters of CHANGE if we discern it to be the WILL of God. Prayer is ESSENTIAL. Collectively we felt that all our GIFTS and STRENGTHS should be focused on assisting our Pastoral Leads. We need to get rid of the two church - two Parish feeling that presently exist. Work Together.

We have to be careful to not try to do too much at one time. Eat the Elephant One Bite t a Time.

Evangelistic missionary excites!

If already involved, keep the commitment and try to recruit. Promoting the 5 systems to other people and encouraging them to participate

Maintain current level of involvement; go through plan carefully and discern what skills are required.just being there.

Prayers, lots of prayers.

sharing our past experiences in growing our faith community

Inviting people to Alpha. We always think the church will do it, but we must remember we are the church. We have to be the ones to do the foot work on the front lines.

Need to be able to get back into the church; making a difference in the community, Service, discipleship, evangelization

prayers join a group invite - in inviting questions on how to do it where not able to meet people face to face

This was hard to conceive of since we have been locked down for so long. I would like to do more and will definitely use the map to take my next steps

Something similar to the roadmap mentioned should be useful to help in discernment of the hesitant to determine where the talents should fit the best (according to the needs of the Parish)

I ( Kim Nixon ) would love the connection of parishioners to grow further with Connect groups to grow this with our families, seniors mens, senior couples , youth . To bring this invitation out to all our parishioners...I think of the older gentleman that really needs a faith connection with other parishioners and more prayer in his life to feel connected with God and the Holy Spirit. This connection for myself personally has helped me through this time of covid.

Outreach - knowing my involvement with this I found it not easy to understand the existing ministries and where I could help and serve and the services they offered our community. A better understanding of this and the projects they are involved in is so important to share with our parishioners and to share the impact that perhaps they are having in our community that is in need. I wonder if an ongoing update in our bulletin perhaps quarterly on how they are helping may generate more donations for their cause.

I would love to have outreach expand further and to engage more parishioners in this. I feel it is not only a way to help our community in need , it connects parishioners together in faith as we are the vessel of gods love through action. In the US there is the Sisters of St joseph that through their parish , through parishioners volunteer, offer a community garden for the community in need, tutoring with retired school parishioners, income tax assistant with retired financial people , food pantry ( we have this with SVDP) they offer childcare, soup kitchen. i even thought of counselling ( retired social workers? ) Just to

give some idea . parishioners involved have grown in faith through this , as well as those in need in the community have grown in faith through these initiatives.

By participating in more sessions like the town hall meeting, I may pick up ideas on how I may contribute.

I am currently a Minister of Holy Communion, and am discerning other areas where I may be called to participate.

Would like to find a way to contribute to it

Have to have a plan and watch for increased participation

Friendly and welcoming

Personal communication

Well thought out sermons

Meeting and greeting with other groups how to go about this.

Betty MacDonald / Investigate Close Captioning for Deaf mass

Melanie Music

Actively participate in various ministries and other groups within our church community. Support our parish by giving of our talents and treasures to the extent we are able.

When the time comes to develop plans for these Strategic Focus Areas, I would be happy to facilitate the planning process.

## Any additional comments, questions, ideas, or concerns?

20 responses

I think this concept is very exciting, but with the amalgamation we feel any parish I walk into I can feel at home. The zoom helps so much. Being asked to do something and have enough time to do that. Fear of not doing things right. Perhaps having volunteers working in pairs would spread the responsibility.

1

Excited about the Practical things are being planned, such as connect groups. We can see what we can do and do it! Morning prayer group is being very helpful to learn about our faith.

2

Being asked to do something and have enough time to do that. Fear of not doing things right. Perhaps having volunteers working in pairs would spread the responsibility.

Take the initiative of volunteerings instead of waiting for being asked to do something. We underestimate our own capacity.

These are Hugh initiatives

make sure all ministries in the parish are on board and up to date on reg basis

Importance of getting the congregation back and getting the younger people back. Would pictures of youth groups help advertise for the parish and help us see who is participating. Great to see the focus on french community

We would like to get more direction from our clergy to give us a more solid education in our faith. we are very interested in the new catholic catechism, Symbolon as is presented in RCIA. The more people know and understand about their faith the richer is their faith.

Lack of catechesis from the altar. Suggest a teaching from the catechism put in the bulletin weekly .Example ...fasting before communion, what is the churches teaching on it?

We have to get more people to agree on receiving our weekly bulletin by giving us their email address. For those that don't choose to receive it electronically a printed version must be provided at all masses and handed to them at the end of mass.

missing eucharist , find it too complicated to manoeuvre bulletin, website even to find this, need more volunteers and need to engage them.

Need for more training for volunteering, some of our members need that in order to contribute more.

Well thought out, gives hope for the future that things will be coming out of this, not sure how it is going to unfold especially with COVID; what is the population going to be in the church. Will we have enough bodies who are enthusiastic; The decline in number of parishioners and possible reasons for that - people are more self involved, political correctness, issues within the church

The devil is in the details so hopefully this fills out a little more

We had experience a transition to this Parish and had tried hard to "fit and belong". Since we had joined during COVID times, we have had very limited interactions with community members. We think that the initiatives to strengthen the services to build community and welcoming of new parishioners will be of great help.

In the group was an older very smart gentleman. Covid has made him and his wife feel very disconnected with St Thomas More parish . The merger occurred than covid hit. Health concerns have had them keep very much to themselves. They tried to remain connected through the bulletin and website but feel it isn't easy to manoeuvre. He is pretty good on the computer. I ( Kim Nixon ) wonder after listening to him if there a simpler way to create an easy to manurer email with quick links to important details that we can email out in a group email to help folks feel connected who are used to emails but perhaps gets lost through websites as it seemed was this gentleman's challenge. I know when

I was on the group to call parishioners to check in during Covid ( last fall ) a lot of the older folks didn't have computer, or limited ability and found themselves loosing their connection to the church. They couldn't register for mass found that process too challenging . These are our elderly parishioners that seemed to be lost and would be great to find a way to connect them . This gentleman in my group now goes to the Thursday mass and he hopes that this once a week would be accepting to God. One suggested the ministries to the sick to bring the eucharist to them ?

Over the years many people left the faith or never became involved, not just out of a belief that everything about nature and the universe ultimately can be explained scientifically and thus no place for religion in the modern world, but also out an increasingly cynical mentality that developed towards religion due to the all the negative publicity that impacted the church in more recent years. All this negativity that targeted the church is an example of our faith being put to the test. We must turn to God to give us the empowerment to overcome the natural tendency we may have to simply give up when our faith is tested, to equip us with the "spiritual skills" to help others who are considering leaving their faith and drawing people to or back to the faith.

Two thoughts. The first concerns the homilies. This area was identified as one of the action items, which I was glad to see. I would like to encourage the pastoral team to work on bringing a clear focus to their homilies, making a clear scriptural point and tying that point to practical ways to explore and live it out in the lives of the parishioners. Please keep in mind that you are often "preaching to the quire"-as I already mentioned, many of those attending our celebrations are long-time parishioners. Try to keep them in mind. I wonder, for example, if they needed a four week series on financial giving? I would guess that most of them already contribute (and have for a long time). Preaching to the quire is not only unproductive, it can also be insulting.

My second thought concerns the use of the Alpha program. I haven't taken the course, but I have heard many good and positive comments about it. I have no objection to the continued use of this program. I do object to having it promoted (ie. "flogged") at Mass, and especially during the homilies. In the lead up to the fall session (I think it was), Alpha was promoted as a major part of the homily for three weeks. This is overkill and extremely annoying. I think promoters should make the program known by ensuring that parishioners have access to the information (ie. on the website), and perhaps adding it to the announcements before Mass. I don't feel it should be the focus of the homilies.

We need to further be positive

Close Captioning

Great job - Like the plan - it has simplicity of language and comprehension and shows direction for our church community. Well deserved congratulations to those who worked tirelessly on this plan. Now we all need to work at ensuring its success - one day at a time. Like Father Patrick's comments that this plan will continuously be reviewed and updated. Important point for sure - so if something's isn't working, there will be opportunity to edit/amend to ensure we are headed in the direction that God has laid out for us.

First let me thank you for the work that has been done. The thoughtfulness, dedication, and commitment to developing a good pastoral plan were apparent in the presentation last night. I would

encourage the people developing the plan to be clearly define the goals of each of these focus areas. A plan is fundamentally a roadmap to achieve your goals, so make sure they are well defined. With the goals defined you can move on to developing the details of the plan.