



State of the Parish Report

St. Lawrence Catholic Church

February 2013

Good Day!

This weekend, we've passed the halfway point of our school and fiscal year and felt this would be a good time to give you a report on the State of our Parish here at St. Lawrence. We hope for this to become an annual tradition where the Parish Pastoral Council keeps you abreast of changes and make you aware of any challenges on the horizon before the end of the year. With the changes and activities going on at St. Lawrence, we are happy to report that the state of our parish is growing stronger.

Over the last year, we've changed the structure of St. Lawrence in order to help us move forward as a parish and meet five major goals

1. Grow Our Church Membership
2. Increase School Enrollment
3. Get Out of Debt
4. Improve our Facilities
5. Become an Anchor in the Community

The Commissions have been working hard to plan and coordinate efforts between volunteers, committees, and the various ministries in order to meet these goals. Currently, our central goal is eliminating our debt. Just two years ago, our total debt to the Archdiocese was close to \$540,000, which put us in difficult positions, including placement on a special watch list by the Archdiocese, postponing the Master Plan, reducing staff, etc

Thanks to our Finance Commission and your increased support, spearheaded by our new Stewardship and Community Life Commission, our debt is down to about \$365,000. We are on our way to eliminating the debt, but we are not there yet. Since last year's appeal, we've noticed a drop in collections putting us below budget. Should this continue, we'd have to cut back in extra debt payments and struggle to meet costs. At worst we could be in danger of borrowing again from the Archdiocese. The Finance Commission, however wishes to extend a big thank you for your generous gifts and contributions during December and the Christmas season which have put a huge dent in this year's deficit.

Stewardship has been working on the next Annual Appeal called "Let A Gift Of Love Be Your Legacy," which launches next weekend. Finance builds each year's budget based on your intentions given during the appeal, making you an important part of this process. After each month's tabulations, extra monies left after expenses go towards extra debt payments and a maintenance fund. Imagine what we could do without the debt over our heads. We could tackle over \$800,000 in deferred and potential maintenance. We do know that life can hit



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unexpectedly, drastically changing priorities. This is only something to remember when considering your intention, and as you continue to the best of your ability to follow through on it during the year.

Treasure is not the only component of life here. St. Lawrence also runs on the tireless, compassionate, and dedicated gifts of time and talent evident each and every day here or in the greater community. Whether it's a tiny corps of volunteers teaching SMRE or running Scouts whose projects have been so beneficial to the parish, such as a current Eagle Scout project to install fiber optic cables and upgrade our wireless internet capabilities making future technological upgrades possible, a group of ladies offering friendly ears and hearts to troubled mothers in the Gabriel Project, a handyman installing a much needed water heater free of charge in the cafeteria, a group of friends renovating the Rectory, the numerous volunteers who plan, execute, and man the stalls and games for our Annual Fall Festival which is growing year after year, plus the ministers, lectors, servers, musicians, and others who keep our Masses and other liturgical celebrations beautiful and prayerful. These are only a few examples of the work keeping St. Lawrence a vibrant, attractive community of faith within and outside of these walls.

These efforts require countless hours not just to execute but also to plan and lead. That's where we the Council and Commissions enter. Stewardship has been blessed to welcome several new members increasing their effectiveness in assisting the ministries under their umbrella, the most exciting of which is the new motorcycle group which shows a great deal of promise. Our new Spiritual Life Commission is building its membership to provide you with beautiful Masses every Sunday and Holy Day and extra opportunities to celebrate our Catholic heritage.

Our School Commission is in the final year of the Catholic Schools Management program which, along with the voucher program, has been instrumental in the school's growth resulting in enrollment above expected levels. To keep our classes small, the 3rd, 4th, and 7th grades now have two classes. The new Annual Fund and Planned Giving initiatives have been extremely helpful in future planning. Our School continues to be at the forefront of evolving technology with a new website to attract more prospective families, acquiring smart boards for every classroom, and rolling out iPads to enhance student learning preparing them for high school and beyond. A special thanks goes out to Mrs. Kathryn Kutan for her amazing work that has just earned Kids Care a Level 1 Rating in the Paths to Quality Program. This means that Kids Care is now certified as an environment where parents are assured that their young children are safe and well cared for. But that's not the end. Work has begun on achieving higher levels that will let parents know that even the youngest children will receive the same level of quality



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education and development that will prepare them for Pre-School whether they stay at St. Lawrence or not. This compliments the awards our School has already received including two Blue Ribbons of Excellence from the US Department of Education to the recent 'A' ranking from the State.

Our Faith Formation Commission is rebuilding while also planning SMRE, a Vacation Bible School designed by our own catechists, and administering the popular Great Adventure Bible Studies and recently concluded Lumen Gentium discussions as part of the Year of Faith. We on the Council have a couple of exciting projects in the works including a new Pictorial Directory and a revamp of the Church's website to go along with the School's.

We work diligently to plan and execute these programs to the best of our ability, but our greatest challenge is manpower. The Council and Commissions need new people every year. It has been difficult over the last few years to find people willing to accept these positions of leadership, allowing those serving to move on to other endeavors at term's end or offering new ideas and solutions to the challenges we face. No words can adequately express the commitment, efforts, and time given by core groups of volunteers on the Commissions, the Council or our ministries serving the Church, School, or the greater community. If you currently volunteer in a ministry, Commission, or the Council thank you. St. Lawrence cannot run without you. But, we need new faces, new blood, new ideas to keep us moving forward. I would ask, no, I would challenge you, especially those looking to or have never gotten involved to do so. Any one or a combination of ministries would love to have you, but we need those willing to serve in leadership positions as a member of our School, Finance, Stewardship, and especially our Faith Formation and Spiritual Life Commissions which desperately need members. We have three seats opening up on the Council in August that we must also replenish.

Despite our challenges and because of the highlights that I've spoken of, we are on the way to a brighter future. As long as we all continue in our gifts of time, talent, and treasure to the best of our ability, we'll be out of debt, our school and church populations will increase as we pray each week at Mass, and we can renovate the Parish facilities. But we cannot get there without you. If you are interested in joining a ministry, a Commission, or the Council, the Parish Office can put you in touch with the right contact. We've all been blessed, and we've all been sent to extend these blessings to each other and outside these walls.

Together we can get there!

Thank you and God bless you!

St. Lawrence Parish Council