



## SWOT Analysis

Within the last few months, members of the Parish Council sat down with members of our parish community and asked them to help us complete a SWOT Analysis. A SWOT is a useful technique for understanding what the **Strengths** and **Weaknesses** are within our parish and for identifying both the **Opportunities** open to us, and the **Threats** that we face. Parish Council members met with approximately 60 individuals with a variety of backgrounds, ages, and involvement levels.

Listed below are over 250 comments provided to Parish Council members who facilitated the discussion. Minimal alterations have been made (less than a dozen) to correct spelling and grammar. The hope was that the original intent of the comment was not altered.

Preceding each of the comments section is a picture graph (wordle) indicating the frequency of a comment mentioned by the group members. The larger the word or phrase, the more often the comment was mentioned by parishioners.

What makes SWOT particularly powerful is, with little thought, it can help you uncover opportunities that you are well-placed to exploit. By understanding the weaknesses of your organization, you can manage and eliminate threats that would otherwise catch you unaware.

Strengths and weaknesses are often internal to your organization, while opportunities and threats are generally related to external factors.

# Strengths



## STRENGTHS:

### Dedicated Volunteers

- Core group of leaders/active/responsible
- Generous parishioners, both financially and in terms of volunteering
- Broad range of skills in parish
- Loyal groups of volunteers
- Wealth of talent in many areas
- Consistent/active leadership
- Spirit of volunteerism
- People willing to invite

### School

- A Catholic School with great teachers/proximity to St. Mary's School
- St. Mary's School brings energy and connection to the youth.
- School
- SMS and REP/CYO
- Partnership with St. Mary's School
- Proximity to school
- Close proximity to our school next door with programs for youth.

## Ministries

- Many ministries and opportunities for involvement within the parish - everyone can find something - or find support when needed.
- Like the new process of children' offering - coming forward to give at the altar.
- Pastoral care efforts at Sacred Heart, including but not limited to: people (our pastor, pastoral associate, and parish nursing committee) and efforts: homebound communion routes, prayer shawls, caring ministry, visits to the hospital and hospice care, prayer chain, etc.
- Wide range of ministries
- Ministries (breadth and width)
- Many and varied parish ministries available for volunteers.
- Outreach to home bound

## Prayers & Sacraments

- Meeting large sacramental needs from young to old (baptisms to funerals).
- We care about the well-being of our fellow parishioners, we pray for them, aid them as possible, we really have a community where folks support each other
- Power of sacraments
- Daily mass
- Eucharistic adoration
- Rosary before mass

## Celebrations/Events

- When it comes to big celebrations, people like to participate. Even if they can't participate, they'll often bring some food to help out beforehand.
- When we want to do something, like a KERMES or Our Lady of Guadalupe Celebration, we get it done even if we are few in number!
- Community gathering events
- New efforts being initiated, such as parish picnic and children's collection

## Facility/Space/Upgrades/Gathering Space

- Beauty of stained glass
- Recent facility upgrades (parking lot, office, top of the hill)
- Gathering spaces-opportunity to gather.
- Rectory space

## Welcoming

- Welcoming to visitors and new members.
- Welcoming environment!
- Welcoming parish
- Inviting & vibrant church

## Generous Community

- Positive responsiveness of parish to special requests and financial needs when asked.
- Strong sense of service through the Thanksgiving baskets, Christmas Giving Tree, Undie Sunday, etc..... people like to give to our wider community in need.
- Generous parish community available for charitable projects including Thanksgiving Baskets and Giving Tree. Also, generosity for designated organization collections.

#### Music

- Musical direction that Teresa is providing, as well as our liturgy and overall celebration of the Sacraments
- Music liturgy/reverence
- Vibrant music liturgy

#### Wendy

- Wendy - pastoral associate forms relationships well and is visible in parish life.
- Wendy's openness, warmth, and gifts for ministry
- Our Pastoral Associate, Wendy.

#### Faith Formation

- Adult Education/Call to be Catholic series is excellent
- Teaching-education
- Faith formation/Call to be Catholic

#### Staff

- Staff-dedicated priest
- Creative staff

#### History

- History of parish
- Generational History – deep family connections to parish

#### Hispanic

- Hispanic ministry
- Hispanic members/component

#### Bulletin/Newsletter

- Bulletin/newsletter communication

#### Vision

- Parish Vision

#### Youth Involvement

- Involvement by the children and youth (especially at liturgy)

# Weaknesses



## WEAKNESSES

### Priests/Staff

- One priest to serve and do all the work/lack of priest's presence and engagement in the community and at St. Mary's/likability of priest to meet needs of all (impression that his personal interests are of greater importance than those of the parish and Owatonna community)
- Limited by 1 priest/no Deacon. Need greater availability of priest to serve people spiritually. Less time/focus on administrative and diocese work.
- Disconnect between church and school. Desire for more priest presence and visibility with students, staff at school, and REP students and teachers.
- We struggle with not having a Hispanic priest or deacon / we need more of a Hispanic outreach to support us
- Lack of priests assigned in Owatonna: need 3 for our current twinned parishes of SH and HT as well as St. Joe's and Christ the King and have 1 (Fr. John) plus the temporary help of an unassigned priest, Fr. Stephen.
- Priest availability – one priest doing multiple assignments
- We often hear “no” to ideas we have.
- Confusion regarding office staff and WHO DOES WHAT? Who is available to serve families/elderly/dying in times of need? Especially in times of crisis and more immediate need. Feeling we need more responsiveness.
- Transitions – example given of challenges in scheduling, etc. of ministers in transition from Wendy to Teresa

- Staff Retention
- Resistance to change.

#### Parishioner Engagement

- Same volunteers seem to do all the 'work' - lack of involvement from much of parish
- Lack of depth (#'s) of involvement
- Lack of support for our youth
- Lack of support for our youth
- Passionate volunteers are overbearing
- Drawing additional volunteers (#) and broader base of volunteers
- Not engaging the Christmas and Easter Catholics
- Lack of involvement outside of Mass
- Engagement of middle aged membership

#### Youth

- Lack of youth leadership and involvement within the parish (maybe weakness of REP leadership and teachers also).
- Reaching out to young people, including teens, young families, and young adults
- Not enough youth involvement
- Lack of Youth involvement-children and families
- Lack of liturgy for Youth & preschool
- Very few youth programs/opportunities for youth involvement and support of our youth to foster future membership.

#### Transparency/Trust

- Need for more transparency. Parishioners should have access to finance and parish council minutes.
- Lack of knowledge of parish finances. (Wish for Quarterly Financial Reports!)
- Transparency. Members felt strongly about this word and gave these as examples:
  - Finances (regular bulletin updates on giving and seeing the budget at the start and close of the fiscal year)
  - Making Mass time changes without questionnaire or input (like St. Joe's did); felt blindsided
  - Communication overall
- Lack of trust in leadership
- Transparency of decisions

#### Finance/Tithing

- Decreasing weekly/monthly giving/operating below budget needs
- Inability to make the Catholic Ministries Appeal goal for DOW. Hurts our parish budget, feel it's a great burden to us
- Financial position
- Low amount of parishioners tithing.
- Lack of spirit of tithing

#### Facility/Space Upgrade

- Lack of progress to update church interior/decor/signage and lighting outside of Cedar St. (Worship space needs updating).
- Too much clutter-info and resources
- Altar-not worthy of God
- Access to church and flow
- Lack of Sacredness of worship space

### Sacramental Knowledge

- We need to better our Masses (ministers need more training, etc.)
- Lack of knowledge pertaining to Sacraments.
- Unwilling to be taught about liturgy/Church/Sacraments...
- Better understanding/education about Sacraments.

### Membership/Attendance

- Declining Mass attendance
- Diminished attendance and membership.
- Decrease Mass attendance

### Ministries

- Loss of post-nursery programming on Sunday (Children's Liturgy of the Word)
- How do we perpetuate programs (Liturgy of the Word ended when Jennye did, CCW no longer active, Legion of Mary just disbanded)
- Communication of opportunities – ministry lists and stewardship

### Focus/Follow-up

- Lack of action plans-implementation
- Lack of focus and follow-up.

### Homily

- Culturally, people do not feel "fed" when a homily is read to them as opposed to being preached to directly with questions, explaining what God is asking of them based on the scriptures that week, etc. We want to have the word of God explained to us in terms of how we can grow spiritually....
- Homily not educational about faith

### Welcoming Spiritual Environment

- Lack of a welcoming atmosphere
- Create a more hospitable and parishioner-friendly environment for attending services.

### Mass

- Limited Mass times - we are not serving our community well by having the same Mass times.
- More Confession and Eucharistic adoration times and emphasis.

### Evangelization/Outreach

- Lack of evangelization in our community
- Promotion of Sacred Heart Community (Ministerial Association)

### Technology

- Lack of use of technology to communicate with parish and give faith messages. People want uplifting faith messages.

### Music

- We have a gap between the children's choir and older adult music. Need something in between. Need to bring in some music with some energy/contemporary music for teens/young adults/young families.

### Communication

- Lack of communication/updates from parish leadership, councils, and committees. (Minimal use of technology)

# Opportunities



## OPPORTUNITIES

### Promote Faith/Ministries

- Stories about apparitions/saints/miracles
- Civic relationships are good
- Promotion of our Mass times and special events in the newspaper to attract newcomers
- We are going to offer sessions after some Masses this Lent to learn more about the who/what/when/where/why of Lent and Easter, why we don't eat meat, Easter about more than eggs and a bunny, etc.
- Connect/create ecumenical service program within community
- Marketing of faith
- Marketing promotion for our parish community
- Deacon Placido, Fr. Ubaldo, Fr. Jose may be resources in teaching/catechesis to Hispanic population
- Strength of the Catholic faith when compared to all faith denominations in town
- Promote Catholic websites
- Stronger attachment/attention to diocesan programming
- Prayer guidance/teaching
- Option for adult formation
- Promote easily accessible educational materials (CD's, DVD's, promote)
- Improve ministry to the parishioners and improve spiritual growth = more focus on the people and less priest time spend on diocese and administrative work. Hire support to do more of administration work if needed.
- Family Ministry
- Open parish facilities for use by outside groups/more visibility in community
- Better Social Justice formation for the whole parish. Beyond the many charitable outreaches we do, we can form people in Catholic Social Teaching using quotes in the bulletin that feature bishop's statements on voting, immigration, etc. as well as a retreat day



- Ordained deacon coming here (hopefully) can celebrate that event as a parish, also expand ministries here and educate parishioners on role of deacon vs. priest
- Inform the community with events such as: Advent and Lenten Reflection Days

#### Youth Involvement

- Improve opportunities that cater to young families/teens/young adults - meals, social events, fun activities
- Engage and involve St. Mary's students in weekend Masses.
- More dynamic youth leaders
- Child programming, we can build upon – cherub choir, etc.
- Need vibrancy in youth ministry
- Harness the energy and intellect of our youth to discover our needs for the future.
- Location of SMS
- Proximity to SMS
- SMS

#### Technology/Social Media

- Broaden communication and outreach through technology (email blasts, newsletters, fliers, faith based and inspirational)
- More frequent updates to the parish website - calendar - parish council minutes
- Social media
- Social Media
- Make use of technology
- Value and empower youth and their technological experience and vision to prepare the parish for the coming years.

#### Mass/Confession Times

- Provide a weekend Mass that would appeal to younger families/youth (contemporary music, homily to apply to younger generation)
- Provide a weekend Mass with more contemporary music and youth/younger adult involvement.
- Daily Mass offered around the lunch hour once a month, with Confession prior and a potluck afterward
- Rock & roll mass (music liturgy)
- Change times of events (evening Mass/Confession)

#### Communicate Financial Need

- Opportunity for parish leadership to talk more openly about financial needs. Opportunity to visit older adults/elderly and minister to them regarding including the parish in estate planning.
- Change to tithe and support the parish.
- Identify realistic needs of the church and where money should be invested for the most return.
- Better communicate the need for finances

#### St. Joe's Partnership

- Coordinate efforts with St. Joes to adjust Mass times and provide 1 Mass with contemporary music and appeal to younger students/families.
- Combine resources with St. Joe's/unite to meet Catholic community needs/change Mass times to better serve our community.
- Create a VISION with St. Joe's for one Owatonna Catholic community
- Teamwork between St. Joes, Sacred Heart, and St. Mary's School

#### Retreat/Picnic/Events

- Continue parish picnic - food brings people together and is inviting - simple meal on Wednesday evening prior to REP events?
- We can once again offer a retreat for those that will take advantage of it
- Parish Mission/retreat.
- Event opportunities (partnership opportunities)

#### Engage Non-Participating Members

- Reaching out to veterans
- Volunteerism and service to the parish.
- Engaging non-participating members

#### Foster/Recruit Involvement

- Recruit more/new people to help with ministries so same volunteers aren't always doing the work. FOSTER Involvement. Follow up with people following Confirmation and Baptism.

#### Update Space/Facility

- Update interior of church

# Threats



## THREATS

### Societal Norms

- Social change – busier schedules, less sense of belonging or loyalty, perceived need for church/religion
- Upbringing – some families do not include spirituality in their lives together
- Marrying and divorce rate
- The busyness and priorities of people in this day and age
- Everyone's busy
- Society pressure on individuals
- TV/cellphones/computers/social media distractions
- Societal non-denomination

### Membership & Involvement

- Limited volunteer pool
- Decreasing commitment from younger generations
- Loss of membership (1 in/4 out)
- Lack of effort to draw our youth is a major threat to our future parish.
- Losing teens and young adults/young couples at an alarming rate
- Atrophy of programs, ministries, and members here. Cited examples like long time groups like Council of Catholic Women, Legion of Mary and Serra Club dying out because of lack of members. Aging of our most active members.

### Financial Needs

- Finances - for structural improvements and salaries
- Lack of willingness to support church financially
- Future large expenditures not related to maintenance of church that are not reflective of realistic needs to draw new members and financial support.
- Our loss of membership and financial support that follows.
- Multiple relief agency requests outside of Catholic Church

### Competition

- Other non-denominational faith-based churches
- Secularism
- Other denominations having stronger youth programs
- 8 am Mass at St. Joseph's is a huge threat and has drawn away many of our parishioners who used to worship at 7:30 am
- Appeal of other churches (Catholic and others) because of activities and charisma/inspiration of leaders

### Church Scandals

- Negative Catholic news
- Church scandals
- Scandals and bad press decrease mass attendance
- State of church due to past mistakes in leadership.

### Negativism

- Negative attitude towards diocese
- Grumbling parishioners
- Confusion/anger over campaign money raised and not being used. Too many campaigns not being communicated/understood/feeling transparent. Listed SMS, DOW, and SH campaigns.
- Diocesan negativity and separation

### Physical Space

- Aging interior/exterior of our church
- Physical attraction of our church comparable to current and future trends for worship.
- St. Joseph's has better, more attractive facilities
- Security at church during services.

### Priest Shortage

- Priest shortage
- Priest availability across the Diocese
- Limited priests/resources

### Sports/Events Scheduling

- Sunday sports for youth and busy family schedules - less time for church activities.
- Athletics turned into false idols
- Scheduling Youth Sports (scheduled on Sundays)

### Knowledge of Faith

- Catholic faith and doctrine seem rigid – some of this is lack of knowledge/understanding or what the Church actually teaches.
- Poor education of church's teaching