



St. Michael THE ARCHANGEL
Catholic Church

St. Michael the Archangel, Parish Self-Assessment Report
We Walk by Faith
January, 2010

I. Introduction

Vision Statement

Accepting God's call, we seek to reflect Christ in all that we do.

Mission Statement

Rooted in our Catholic heritage, and in the Spirit of Vatican II, we, the community of St. Michael Catholic Church, gather in faith to celebrate the transformative presence of God in our lives.

Within the liturgy and beyond it, we bind ourselves to Jesus Christ through scripture, sacrament, and prayer, and share in the reign of God as his disciples.

As Catholic Christians, we live our faith in the midst of the world.

Inspired by God's deep love for us, we seek spiritual growth. Through the power of the Holy Spirit we strive to deepen our commitment to love and care for all people, to embrace the growing diversity of our community, and to advocate and promote justice and peace.

Our History

Members from the parishes of Our Lady of Lourdes and St. Mary were drawn together by the dream of creating an intentional Catholic parish. When St. Michael the Archangel Catholic Church celebrated its first liturgy on the weekend of May 30/31 1992, it began with the understanding that church is not a building, but rather, a community. The founding pastor frequently proclaimed Christ as present in the Word and Eucharist as well as in the community of people.

Without a physical home of their own, these strangers met in schools and other churches. The parish grew rapidly and by 1996, the Phase I building effort was completed. By 2002, the Phase II building effort was completed. These undertakings were challenging for a parish less than ten years old, but the parish accepted the challenges and boldly moved forward. The founding pastor frequently proclaimed Christ as present in the Word and Eucharist as well as in the community of people. That summer St. Michael's parishioners began one of many traditions emphasizing that communal spirit: creating community by introducing themselves to each other before liturgy and wearing name badges.

In the 17 years since its founding, St. Michael has been blessed with three charismatic pastors. Five parishioners have been ordained as permanent deacons, and three parishioners are in the current diocesan deacon formation program. Liturgy remains an inspiring and welcoming experience to an increasingly diverse parish population. Parishioners participate in more than 60 liturgical, formation, pastoral care, parish life, and outreach ministries.

Currently the parish has reached a point where expansion is necessary. A needs assessment was recently conducted and concluded that staff offices and religious education space were the two most critical needs of the parish. A committee has formed to develop a strategy to begin the parish's third building expansion since its beginning in 1992. Future phases of building will include a family life and retreat centers to provide space for larger portions of the community to gather.

Demographics *(as of October, 2009)*

The St. Michael community embraces 7,673 individuals. In our community, there are 2,559 families. Our community is represented by the following demographics.

Age	Men	Women
18-30	582	593
31-59	1321	1720
60 & Over	269	350
age unknown	78	110
Total	2250	2773

Age	Children
Under 1	41
1-5	634
6-12	1204
13-17	768
age unknown	8
Total	2650

Ethnicity	Individuals
Asian	212
Black	53
Hispanic	214
Native American	2
White	4334
Other	2875

II. Word

Strengths *(Please list some of the strengths of the parish concerning Christian formation [children, youth, and adult] and the presentation of the teachings of the Church)*

- 1) Our parishioners feel that the Word of God is proclaimed in a way that helps them to know and love Jesus.
- 2) Our parish effectively supports parents in the responsibility to be “teachers” of the faith to their children.
- 3) Our parish encourages personal reflection on the Scriptures, most effectively in distributing *Reading God’s Word* and other materials.
- 4) The parish library provides resources for parishioners to deepen their understanding of the faith.
- 5) Our parish offers a strong bible study program and daily prayer services.

Needs *(Please indicate areas under the category of Word that need strengthening)*

- 1) More space for youth education.
- 2) A more effective faith formation for teens and middle schoolers.
- 3) Programs geared toward single parents and young adults.

- 4) Engagement of parents and the community in leading, participating and working with faith formation.
- 5) More effective use of the parish web site to offer online faith formation and links to other communities.
- 6) More effective use of social media engaging teens and young adults in faith formation and adult education to the greatest extent possible.
- 7) More DVD and other forms of modern media available in the parish library.
- 8) Heavier recruitment and training for volunteer catechists.
- 9) Strengthening of our House Church program

III. Worship

Strengths *(Please list some of the strengths of the parish concerning Worship and the celebration of the Sacraments)*

- 1) Our parishioners overwhelmingly value the homilies.
- 2) Our parishioners overwhelmingly appreciate the music, and actively participate. The music is Lectionary based, tying Word and Worship. Children and teens are also involved in our music ministry.
- 3) Our parish has a well-trained, dedicated group of ministers at its liturgies.
- 4) There is a welcoming, joyous spirit amidst the community during worship.
- 5) Our parish emphasizes communal celebration of the sacraments.

Needs *(Please indicate areas under the category of Worship that need strengthening)*

- 1) A means to discover how we can best serve the various ethnic groups represented in our parish community at liturgies.
- 2) Increased cooperation and dialogue with neighboring parishes regarding liturgical goals.
- 3) While our parishioners overwhelmingly appreciate the music, there has been a call for more variety in the music.
- 4) Ecumenical celebrations to enhance relationship with our non-Catholic brothers and sisters.

IV. Community *(Please list some of the strengths of the parish concerning community and fellowship)*

Strengths

- 1) Our parish community is open and welcoming to ethnic minorities, gays and lesbians, and newcomers of all ages and faith-backgrounds.
- 2) Our parish provides community-building activities such as parish picnics, special dinners, special faith formation events, and fellowship following Masses.
- 3) Our parish's means of communication work well and are well distributed. The parish bulletin and announcements at liturgy are sufficient in providing information about parish activities.
- 4) Our parish has utilized the Internet to provide information about Church services and programs, to schedule volunteers, and to handle process and administration.
- 5) Many parishioners have embraced CRHP which builds a closer knit community.
- 6) Many of our sacraments are celebrated in the communal context during weekend liturgies.
- 7) Programs such as JAM, Boy Scouts, CARITAS, AA, and Food Drive Ministries are well collaborated with other area churches and parishes.
- 8) Our parish is recognized by a large number of community organizations for its support and assistance with a variety of community initiatives.

Needs *(Please indicate areas under the category of Community that need strengthening)*

- 1) More space for administration, supporting those ministries serving the community.
- 2) Increased participation in and communication of inter-faith programs to better proclaim and witness that we are an ecumenical community; this might include common prayer services to strengthen our bonds with other communities.
- 3) Involvement with neighboring parishes through raised awareness of their needs.
- 4) More activities and ministries encouraging young adults to take an active role in the parish community.
- 5) More activities and ministries for single parents and young adults.
- 6) A formal program welcoming fallen-away Catholics back to the Church.
- 7) A better way to welcome immigrants and people from different cultures; this would include events and liturgies for Spanish-speaking and other ethnic minority members. There is also a need for staff or dedicated volunteers who are bilingual and available on an as-needed basis.
- 8) More effective integration of volunteers into staff functions, relieving the burden of a quickly growing community.
- 9) An effective means to evaluate parish staff.
- 10) Training of the community to recognize and thank volunteers.
- 11) Training for church staff and ministry leaders in managing and motivating volunteers.

V. Service

Strengths *(Please list some of the strengths of the parish concerning Service to others)*

- 1) Our parishioners feel encouraged to live their faith in the secular community. Many of our parishioners are involved in civic organizations. Our education programs involve outreach at least once a semester encouraging our youth to be involved in the community.
- 2) Our parish supports the surrounding community by offering our facilities for programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Job Assistance Ministry, and bereavement groups.
- 3) Our Human Concerns department invests itself heavily in the needs of varying communities. For instance, on the local level, our parish has initiated a Neighbor-to-Neighbor ministry by which it assesses the needs of individuals in our community, shares what resources it can, and plugs those individuals into available resources; on the international level, our parish has a strong twinning relationship with St. Jean Batis Parish in Dos Palais, Haiti.
- 4) Our parish supports vocations to the priesthood and religious life through finance and prayer; our parish has hosted two seminarians over the last three years.
- 5) Our Pastoral Care department has an emphasis on care to the homebound, elderly and the sick.

Needs *(Please indicate areas under the category of Service that need strengthening)*

- 1) Increased education regarding the Catholic teachings on human life issues.
- 2) Formal involvement with inter-faith and civic organizations to enhance the efficacy of our programs.
- 3) Increased cooperation between Human Concerns and Pastoral Care to meet the social, emotional, and spiritual needs of those to whom we minister.
- 4) Better service to persons with disabilities. We have met all ADA guidelines, but are seeking to implement reasonable accommodation above and beyond.

VI. Plans for renewal and meeting parish needs

For the next year

- 1) Implement Life-Teen and Edge in the next year to achieve effective faith formation for teens.
- 2) Establish a Faith Formation Advisory Committee to engage parents and the community in leading, participating in, and working with faith formation.
- 3) Calendar the efforts of the departments more effectively, namely Faith Formation and Liturgy. This year, our “whole community events” will focus on the parables in conjunction with the Lectionary to more closely tie together Word and Worship.
- 4) Involve pre-confirmation youth serving at the altar over the next year.
- 5) Integrate more symbolism of justice and peace in the liturgy. For instance, collected food will be brought forward during the offertory.
- 6) Begin a conversation with those of other cultures to see how our parish can best incorporate various cultures into the liturgy.
- 7) Using the Impact 100 model (reaching out to many sources for collaborative fundraising), our Human Concerns department will initiate formal involvement with inter-faith and civic organizations to raise awareness and finances for Boaz and Ruth in Highland Park.
- 8) Emphasize the spirituality of social outreach by focusing on prayer during volunteer gatherings.
- 9) Assess the current responsibilities of staff in relation to the growth needs of the parish.
- 10) Continue to implement the building plan “Growing our Faith: It’s our Tradition,” seeking to increase space for education, administration, and community easily accessible to all.

For the next five years

- 1) Improve upon LifeTeen and Edge to see them flourish in the years to come.
- 2) Use the Internet to facilitate the registration process for Religious Education.
- 3) Receive and implement the new recommendations being developed by the Christian Formation Commission, most especially to enhance our adult education programs; further, we hope they will help us cater to single parents and young adults.
- 4) Reach out to other denominations to participate in more ecumenical liturgical events.
- 5) Implement the knowledge gained from inter-cultural dialogue to meet the needs of those cultures represented in our community.
- 6) Increase dialogue with neighboring parishes, assessing other programs to avoid duplication of effort. This would involve regular meetings between ministry heads from each parish.
- 7) With the relationships gained through formal initiatives with inter-faith and civic organizations over the next year, the Human Concerns department will continue to spearhead programs in the community incorporating those organizations so as to maximize our effectiveness in the community and continue to build relationships..
- 8) Incorporate tele-seminars and webisodes on our web-site for education on current social issues.
- 9) Help the Pastoral Care department reach the needs of which our parish is unaware by:
 - a. raising parishioner awareness of the purpose of the department.
 - b. integrating sub-groups (like CRHP and House Church) into the department’s line of communication so that Pastoral Care is aware of all situations of concern.
- 10) Complete Phase III of our building project to alleviate our current needs for educational and administrative space. Continue to look ahead and plan for a family life and retreat center to meet the needs of a growing community.

VII. Diocesan support

The support the diocese can provide to help our parish meet its stated goals is as follows:

- 1) Our parish would ask that the Christian Formation Commission keep on track with their work to formulate recommendations and materials for Christian education. Our parish is most eager to implement new forms of adult education. When the recommendations and materials are formulated our parish hopes the diocese will effectively communicate expectations and suggestions.
- 2) The diocese can lead the way in providing cultural/bilingual materials (not only Spanish, but other cultures present in our diocese – Filipino, Indian, etc.)
- 3) The diocese can network liturgical ministers more effectively by setting up meetings/discussions between ministers, especially within the particular LPA's.
- 4) The diocese can help us educate our parishioners on Church teaching regarding social issues. As we look toward the use of Internet media to do so (webisodes and tele-seminars), the diocese could help to plan the organization of such endeavors by its experience with such forms of media.
- 5) The diocese should establish a position at the Pastoral Center dedicated to pastoral care issues. That position would:
 - a. provide ministers with an active, continually updated list of real references.
 - b. follow-up and assess experiences of those referred so that the list be continually refined.

VIII. Conclusion

This report represents many voices. It was formulated by Parish Council, with the input of parish staff and parishioners through the *We Walk by Faith* survey. We hope that it conveys the Spirit of community which has dwelt in our parish since its inception; more importantly, we hope that the direction this report provides will continue to foster that Spirit, drawing us more fully into the unity of the Father through his Son, Jesus Christ.