



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH LISTENING SESSION

September 12, 2016

LISTENING SESSION REPORT

A report of St. John the Baptist Listening Session designed to share parishioner perception of the state of the parish with its new pastor and co-parishioners.

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Session Facilitator.

St. John the Baptist Parish
Listening Session
Monday, September 12, 2016, 7:30 P.M.

Purpose: To allow parishioners to share their perceptions of the state of the parish with the new pastor, Msgr. Francis Schneider, and with each other.

Methodology: The Listening Session would be facilitated by Dr. Jeffrey Pedersen of Suffolk County Community College. Two parallel activities would be employed to gauge parishioner perception of the state of the parish. Parishioners were seated at tables with parishioner facilitators who would take notes of the conversations at each table. Dr. Pedersen led the group through a traditional environmental scan, including a SWOT analysis, which would identify parishioner perceptions of parish strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Parishioner facilitators would write down the main points of the conversation regarding each area of the analysis. Participants were asked to refrain from giving specific actions (a laundry list) of things they wanted done, but to express their experience of the parish that could lead to future discernment of directions in which the parish might go.

To provide an opportunity for those who may not have had a chance to speak at the table, or who were disinclined to speak, Dr. Pedersen invited parishioners to write one reaction to each area on a “sticky” note and post those reactions on a wall. By reviewing the parish facilitator notes and the “sticky” notes placed on the wall, trends or themes could be ascertained. At the end of the session, parishioners were invited to share anything that resonated with them during the process. Refreshments and fellowship followed the session.

Outcomes: Over 160 parishioners took part in the Listening Session, an extraordinary response to such a session held on a Monday evening in September – 60% more participants than expected.

Complete notes appear in the attached appendices (verbatim, unedited) and a summary of most common reactions gathered is below:

Strengths: *Those things parishioners would identify as positive at St. John the Baptist parish. These are internal characteristics that people identify as strong, beneficial to the parish’s mission, that they are proud of.*

Participants were asked to discuss what they believed to be the strengths of St. John the Baptist parish, to identify those things that are most positive, that the parish does well, and that they are most proud of.

1. In both the Facilitator’s Notes and the “Sticky” Notes, the most repeated strength was the people of the parish and their generous spirit. It is clear that the parish identifies with generosity as a central value. Volunteers and ministries of “helping” are mentioned very frequently. The parishioners’ warmth and welcoming
2. The church and grounds are mentioned repeatedly as strengths.
3. Many in the parish are clearly excited about the arrival of the new pastor and remark about his warmth, connectedness, his homilies, and his openness and approachability. Many see this change in leadership as a fresh start, giving a renewed hope to the parish.

Weaknesses: *Those internal things that parishioners believe as negative, or problematic, or in need of improvement or enhancement.*

1. Overwhelmingly, the need to reach out to youth is the most repeated weakness. The lack of young people attending mass, and the small number of young families are pointed out multiple times. Sports being in competition with Sunday mass was repeatedly mentioned.
2. Parish finances are also seen as a significant weakness, with it being pointed out that the parish spends more each week than it takes in. Some saw this as a result of a drop in mass attendance over the last few years and others a lack of support in the collections.
3. Two weakness were repeated regarding liturgy: music at liturgies and worship aids.

Threats: *Those external factors that parishioners see as potentially undermining the ability of the parish to achieve its mission. (In a traditional SWOT analysis, threats come last, but this facilitator believe threats often present opportunities.)*

1. The most frequently mentioned threat had to do with a decline in values (Catholic values, family values, societal values). Contemporary society is seen at odds with traditional Catholic values. Many point out the effect of technology and media, both in promoting values counter to Catholic teaching, and as an impediment from healthy personal interaction.
2. The many burdens placed on families, especially the demands on time was mentioned repeatedly. Sunday sports echoed the sentiment expressed in the “weaknesses” section – creating a conflict between participation in sports and mass attendance/spending time with family.

Opportunities: *Taking into consideration the strengths, weaknesses, and threats articulated, what opportunities exist to build on strengths, address weakness, and answer threats?*

1. The most mentioned opportunity is the opportunity to help parishioners grow through adult faith-centered educational programs and programs designed to develop spiritually.
2. Reaching out to youth, perhaps through a youth minister and providing more programs/activities and opportunities to get involved, was suggested.
3. Promoting stewardship, both in enhancing giving to support the parish financially and volunteering time to parish needs, was repeated many times.
4. Reaching out to parishioners who stopped coming, and seeking ways to encourage new parishioners to join, were suggested repeatedly.

The above represents just a summary of the most frequent comments. Every voice, however, is important, and so all comments gathered are posted in the Appendix to the report. The comments can be mined for further understanding of parishioners’ perceptions of the state of St. John the Baptist parish. The contents of this report provide information that can be used to give direction as the parish moves forward from this time of transition. Focus groups, town halls, and survey instruments all can be helpful to follow up or “drill down” on some of the material found through this process.

Facilitator's note: While enhancing communication was mentioned by several parishioners, throughout the Listening Session it was clear that opportunities to learn more about what happens in the parish and to share experiences with other parishioners would be well-received. The sheer number of responses under "Strengths" demonstrates that St. John the Baptist Parish is an **optimistic** community, which will serve it well as the community looks to the future. It should be pointed out that the unexpectedly large number of parishioners that attended the Listening Session and the palpable enthusiasm at the event are strong indicators that the parish sees the current transition in leadership an opportunity to "breathe new life" into the parish. This may provide an opportunity for the parish to build on its generosity of spirit to become an even more vibrant, life-giving faith community.

Appendices

Parish Facilitator's Notes:

Strengths

Weaknesses

Threats

Opportunities

"Sticky" Notes:

Strengths

Weaknesses

Threats

Opportunities

STRENGTHS (Facilitators' Notes):

- Music
- Building Church – flexible use
- Intimate Face to Face
- Warm & Friendly People
- Community supportive of each other
- Generosity of parish (especially outreach)
- Community spirit – warmth – good feeling
- Pastoral team is a real plus
- Coffee hours very social
- Volunteers are so dedicated
- Younger people
- Facebook page – probably Father Frank website – updated and timely
- Keeping in touch – homilies are good listed?
- Information for sacraments is good
- Core People in ministries
- Monsignor Schneider – easy to understand
- Great religious Ed program
- Children becoming more involved since Father Frank
- Strong ministries
- Dedicated parishioners – with strong faith
- Aesthetically pleasing environment
- Strong Deacons
- People who volunteer
- Food Pantry
- Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets and gifts, outreach rides, etc.
- EM that make home visits
- EM's many who volunteer
- Volunteer dinner crew
- Father Frank – (2 people at the table came back because of him)
- Eucharistic Adoration on Wednesday
- Depth of care and support in parish and community (example Tom Cutinella's death)
- Deacon Vinny – down to earth and real sermons
- ???? ????? are great
- Father Martin
- People are warm and welcoming
- Pride in church – the people, the connectedness and the church building too
- Nursery school
- Our ministries are not just from our parish, but extend beyond
- Our ministries are numerous
- Parish welcoming
- Volunteers are multi-volunteers
- Very generous of time and talents
- Compassionate – see others concerns – look out for others
- Tonight's turnout shows how interested we are in building up our church community
- Small group sharing offered (ARISE) (Men's Group)(LIFT)
- Participation in inter-denominational activities
- Beautiful prayer space
- Beautiful church grounds
- Adoration available
- Generous – school supplies, Christmas gifts, Peggy's pantry, Thanksgiving
- Always willing to help those in need
- Welcoming – by parishioners and staff
- Religious Education – "Top Notch"
- Mass is a celebration
- We feel a part of the church
- Deacons always there for us
- Very diverse
- Knights of Columbus is here
- Great Outreach – contributions for poor (needy)
- All ministries work together
- Wonderful pre-school
- Great, dynamic priest
- Beautiful church – structurally
- Likes the times of the masses
- Likes that the priest comes off of the altar
- Commitment of parishioners to help build the church (generosity)
- Likes the statues (Stations of the Cross)
- Father Frank makes things very personal
- Loves the continuing care ministry
- Music is awesome, chorus
- Attention to children and details that were here?
- Food at our functions is plentiful and delicious
- Coffee hour enforces community
- Generosity
- Knights of Columbus
- Dedicated Deacons
- New pastor who is willing to reach out to all
- Young families are needed!
- CCD teachers are very positive and pre-school
- Volunteers are strong and dedicated
- Facilities are in great shape
- Pantry is excellent outreach

- Pastor is up to date with social media
- Homilies are now understandable
- New bulletin is very good
- Outreach program
- Music ministry
- Religious education – enthusiastic children
- Sunday Religious Ed – younger kids do well with Sunday
- Father talks to everyone relates readings to everyone
- Deacons reach out – very involved
- Parish outreach
- Reach out to Boy/Girl scouts
- Community service
- Bulletin well written – reads the ads
- Teenagers need youth group (Kids are the resource but we do nothing after confirmation)
- Mass for youth
- Get them involved
- Sports Sundays? ☺
- Pastor needs to relate?
- Art programs express God through art is what makes kids tick
- People volunteer and work together
- Generosity of the parish
- Peggy's pantry
- Very caring, people grew up here. We all work together to support each other.
- We are generous to other parishes (Thanksgiving and Christmas packages)
- The contributions that everyone makes at Christmas and Thanksgiving
- Delivering packages to the farm workers
- Workers buildings are well kept up
- People from Father Frank's parish followed him
- Volunteer for religious education – generosity and faith filled
- The Council (Knights of Columbus) has one mission to help the community
- Continuing care ministries (funeral masses)
- ARISE program is a good spiritual opportunity
- Gathering Inn – wonderful food for families that can't afford otherwise
- Holiday pies on sale are great and convenient
- Love the architecture of the church (for those here long enough)
- Father Frank knows everyone's name – warm and friendly
- The youth (altar servers/ and the EM program has enough people supporting it)
- Renting out the hall for functions (Boy Scouts)
- Father Martin visiting during the summer
- Two wonderful deacons – connect with parishioners (relate with us)
- Music ministry is great
- All ministries: Ushers, Bereavement, EM, outreach
- Pete –recruiting youth to ushers
- Liz – recruiting for youth choir
- Parish cares for each other
- Love & Concern
- Time of bereavement parish reached out
- Parishioners tend to connect by just attending mass together. Form one community.
- Extraordinary worship space
- Preschool is outstanding
- Knights of Columbus
- Outreach/giving
- Strong willingness to volunteer (devoted – those involved)
- Long time, committed parishioners
- Strong base of regular parishioners
- No bad times?
- Beautiful church/hall
- Outreach – Thanksgiving, Christmas, Back to School,
- Fellowship – the volunteers who make this possible monthly collection
- People who shop for outreach
- People who clean the church
- Music ministry
- Rich parish with potential?
- Bereavement is excellent
- Preschool/Pre-K
- Beautiful worship space
- New pastor who will hopefully attract our former parishioners
- Understandable homilies
- New beginning
- Sharp with names
- Sense of excitement in church
- Optimistic
- Fresh hope
- People care
- More people will want to come
- The pall has lifted?
- Dedicated deacons

WEAKNESSES (Facilitators' Notes):

- 4A- Ministry into 20's
- Youth Mass – as a start
- Children's xmas
- All Kids on altar
- More attention to teen youth age appropriate programs
- Parental Involvement is lacking
- Youth involvement outside of mass
- Christmas pageant – bring it back
- Not enough opportunities to invite to join ministries
- Sports on Sunday AM ??
- Money income is very low per capita
- Liturgies need work – so as to celebrate as a community connects with music?
- Adult education – needs work
- Attendance of families/children in church when religious Ed not in session
- No greeting/welcome for new parishioners
- No real bible study
- Youth group non existent
- Mass has to be attractive to kids/families – expand to include community/parish not just religion
- Parking
- Lack of recognition of accomplishments of individuals/parishioners – makes community aware and proud
- Eucharistic adoration – not available in evening (1x/month would be appreciated)
- Lack of communication – bulletin only source of information
- Website – poor
- Stronger participation in Eucharistic Adoration, Divine Mercy?, Rosary and Choir
- Lack of programs for teens after 8th grade
- Need youth minister who can speak to them not at them
- Older kids who will be role models for younger kids ~ mentor – opportunities to volunteer and also be peer leaders
- Younger families not coming to Mass – don't feel welcome
- Need more people to teach religion
- Children's room for parents to hear Mass while kids play
- Priest to be involved with children
- Program for seniors to socialize
- HS teacher mentioned that National Honor Society students need volunteer focus
- Contact HS or let them know about opportunities here – could also put notice in bulletin that volunteers needed to meet with seniors and or younger students
- Lack of youth programs
- Need to reach youth through their parents
- Lack of parent involvement
- "Senior" activities
- Lack of Young adult activities
- Lack of friendly visits to the homebound – possibly intergenerational
- Communication breakdown
- Lack of ministry meetings (EM, Liturgy for children, etc.)
- Need for parish council
- People don't really know what's going on during Mass
- Parish office should be open on Mass times (Sunday) to get Mass cards, etc.
- Lack of Youth/Teen Group
- Folk Mass
- Youth choir
- Fund Raising!! (We have many ideas (Bingo, Feast)
- List of Volunteer maintenance people to help with church repairs
- Lack of couple's retreats
- Parish Offerings
- Needs a youth offering and social groups
- Limited social events
- Renew a sense of community
- Limited ministries
- Limited children's participation (no recruitment of altar servers)
- Not attracting young families
- No missal in the church pews
- Parking is difficult
- 90% of work is done by 10% of parish members
- No social media web page for St John's (needs communications)
- Lack of opportunity for youth!
- Summer program bible school
- Looking to fairs?
- Music needs improvement choir!
- Christmas pageant at Mass – want back
- Young children – 3 year olds need flexibility at Mass

- Communion time a blessing for young kids who can't receive yet
- Need young parents to stay when kids get dropped off for CCD
- Hall should be open to use bathroom on Sunday's
- Handicap needs are not being addressed
- No programs for youth after confirmation
- Adult instruction – Requirements confirmation – God Parents
- Not a once a year youth program – need hours for school
- Disconnect between two school districts
- Guest speakers for kids to speak about life down to earth speakers to motivate teens
- Both parents work – kids dependent upon parents
- Felt that Gathering Inn was only for the poor (communication)
- Adequate safety signs in the two parking lots
- More friendly way of absolution
- Need for a youth minister
- After confirmation there is no mechanism for involvement
- More traditional sacred music
- Youth attendance during the summer
- A program for younger parents
- Need for more ministries
- No involvement of youth to volunteer (congregational church has vital youth program)
- Lack of money in the collections
- Disbanded youth group long time ago
- Locked church during times when people wanted to enter
- Sponsor a Boy Scout, Cub Scouts, and Girl Scouts
- Don't want to support the parish financially
- Liturgy more relevant
- Parishioners only come at Christmas and Easter
- Not enough people on Faith Direct
- We lost our focus on the youth – kids on altar during "Our Father," Santa Claus visiting church
- Coffee hour not able to bring in young families
- Kid's nativity
- Reaching out to young families
- Parking
- Lack of volunteers
- Speakers in the back of church
- Money
- More Parishioners
- Attendance down
- Families don't stay after Religious Ed is done
- Older parishioners
- No youth ministries
- Large paid staff
- Parishioners have left for better pastors
- No Mass on Friday
- Nothing for teens and pre-teens
- No Santa's at Christmas
- No activities, no movies for kids
- Music needs improvement
- Public school sports

THREATS (Facilitators' Notes):

- Church's non acceptance of LGBT
- Turning away those who seek mercy
- Big discussion here – we want to be open and not threatening
- Peer pressure for children to maintain Catholic lifestyle
- Social media – children too involved
- Sports on Sat/Sun – pulling children families away from church/religion
- Decline in social values
- People's behavior doesn't seem to respect sacraments
- Peer influence is so strong
- Addicted to their phones
- Sex used to sell everything
- Influence of media
- Lack of family gatherings
- Kids have to choose between church and game sports teams on Sundays – some go to Mass on Saturday evening but problem for others – think district should never schedule sports on Sunday AM
- Lack of moral values
- Educate people on Eucharistic Adoration, Mass, and why we do what we do and what our religion is about (knowing your faith)
- Women priests – we need them!
- Program for parents of teens – how to talk to your kids
- Educational programs for teens and for their parents (separate)
- Support group for parents
- "Safe homes" program: parents sign that they will be home and don't allow alcohol or drug use in their home – then teens are visiting their teen. Other parents can check list and see who is on list
- Suggestion box
- Person didn't understand that Naming Ceremony at Mass was and thought it replaced Baptism ceremony – people need to be educated (don't know what it is)
- One person commented on statue of St John the Baptist in Fellowship area – she said kids see it as scary and suggested it be moved or given away as a gift to someone
- Sports and school activities
- Computer
- Morals
- Sacraments are more "social" (get the hall or relatives come before the sacrament itself)
- People leave the Catholic Church to go to "Christian" churches because the music is more vibrant, etc.
- There is not enough understanding for divorced or gay Catholics to know where they stand in the Catholic church
- Health Care provided by government
- Facebook (Internet)
- Children leaving Catholicism by other churches offering things we are not!
- TV commercials and shows being immoral
- Drugs
- Terrorism/World Safety
- Family Values
- Abortion
- Political correctness, views
- Sexuality
- Foul Language
- Dress codes are not existent
- Secularism of holidays (commercialism)
- Media – lack of respect
- Exclusion of society differences
- Lack of importance of religion (sports more important)
- Stores open every day/all days
- Phones in church – technology
- Persecutions – ISIS
- Secondary to beliefs
- Peer pressure
- Violence
- No sacrifice
- Entitlement
- Economical threats day to day
- Sports take away from church
- Prioritizing activities
- Today's cultures: divorce, alcohol, parties, etc. drugs, single parenting
- Young family pressures
- What is the financial status of our parish? Need more transparency
- Sports on Sunday travel
- Sunday not devoted to family
- Family does not sit down for dinner
- Social media
- Smart?
- Drugs

- Alcohol
- Bizarre behavior kids are growing up in
- Good vs Evil – kids don't have moral conference
- Role models
- Internet
- Intolerance
- Single parent families need additional support
- Pressure to be politically correct
- Soccer on Sunday and Saturday
- Media vs church's attitude on morals (TV shows indecent)
- Electronics (ban phones in church)
- Dress code (not decent for church)
- Peer pressure to follow friends
- Worldwide persecution of Catholics and Christians
- Lack of vocations to the priesthood
- Female altar servers inhibit vocations
- Parent's not baptizing, communion, confirmation of children
- Not enough support for nuns
- Liberal education threatens church values
- Hate crimes
- Outside world vs church values
- Bullying
- Divorce and separated people not feeling welcome
- Don't study Bible
- Antiquated idea by clergy – help push people away. Need to be more Franciscan.
- Follow rules rather than the spirit (or Pope Francis)
- Hectic schedules that take people away from church
- The image in the world because of scandals
- The media and American society
- Youth pulled by sports
- Parents not valuing their faith
- Faith not a priority
- Too many outside influences
- Catholics not returning after confirmation
- Social media
- Lack of respect
- Lack of attention span

OPPORTUNITIES (Facilitators' Notes):

- Welcome everybody to church from the altar
- Spirit of hospitality – ushers – they have the opportunity to bring
- 100th Birthday – opportunity
- Father Frank – our biggest opportunity for growth
- Time Talent Treasure
- Stewardship!
- Opportunity to reach out to parishioners who have left and new parishioners to bring them into parish community
- Facility availability to host functions
- People willing to contribute
- Large school population who could benefit from activities with church as center
- Other churches locally to share with
- Reach out to parishioners who have left by a letter introducing our new pastor
- A survey that would ask what you would want to return to St John's
- We have to express to others what our "new" pastor and church is like
- More informed focus groups
- Ministry Fair again
- Babysitting available during meeting (community service by Religious Ed children)
- Bring people "in" that use the pantry and Gathering In (Give Mass time info) to really become a parish family
- Encourage participation
- Reaching out to children through social media in a positive Catholic way
- Reaching out to parish people to join ministries
- Engage children move through volunteering
- Bridge to communities that have different age groups and people of all economic levels
- Young people to work in outreach programs for increased awareness
- Involve seniors more with different ministries and make them aware of what's available
- Opportunity to become more welcoming and less exclusive
- This forum is a very positive step forward
- Lighthouse Catholic media
- Groups for different situations (divorcees, single parents)
- CCD kids small groups with parents (flyers to parents, meetings with parents)
- Drop in by priest to classes so youth see him
- Football same presence?
- CCD in service non punishment
- Art projects for confirmation? No!
- Music ministry
- Boy Scout projects
- Bingo for seniors by youth
- Create a youth minister position
- Make resources available for all ages
- Men's and Women's retreats
- Men's prayer group
- Women's prayer LIFT
- Youth mass
- Fundraising
- Donation letters
- Enhance programs to retain youth (religious Ed in summer?)
- Youth Minister position/program
- Get other people to volunteer (not the same old folks)
- Parent education program
- Reach out to media; paper; radio; get message out – services, hot line number
- Reach out to retirement communities (??? Nobody came for last rites?)
- Entice young people to get married in the church
- Educating the people on the faith – many don't know some basics
- Vary subjects to educate (sermon, bulletin, and other ways)
- Pay it forward (have youth volunteer)
- Bible study groups
- Discuss tithing and emphasize lessons in the Bible
- Youth section in the bulletin
- Web site for youths
- More traditional hymnals (no one sings)
- There is a whole segment of young families that are not here, so we have a lot of people we can tap into.
- The number of people here at this meeting
- Publicity is always helpful (20th anniversary of the new church)
- Youth programs
- Chance to get families back
- Chance to reach out to children
- Chance for population to explode
- Opportunity for parish to heal
- Opportunities for parishioners to grow spiritually
- Educational opportunities

Strengths (Sticky Notes):

- Friendly, warm, caring people
- Community outreach
- Small Parish
- Outreach research
- Fr. Frank's relatable homilies AND creating a dialog dynamic during mass
- Religious ed.
- The bulletin is very well-written. I like the homily summary.
- Strong religious ed. program
- Outreach: concern at holidays, back to school, etc. Food pantry
- Amazing generosity
- Fr. Frank's openness, spirituality, sermons that touch us
- Little Flower Sisters
- Generosity
- Compassion shown in time of need
- Outreach
- Our outreach extends beyond parish boundaries – ecumenical, bringing in for meals & camaraderie, meals going out, school supplies, etc.
- Caring community
- Welcomeness
- Parish youth
- I love the generosity of our parish
- Father Frank
- Outreach
- Generosity of time and talent
- Good communication
- Deacons are caring and approachable always
- The wonderful pre-school program
- Twenty years of open arms welcoming!
- The parish makes you feel welcomed & you feel you have made new friends for life. Your new pastor is wonderful, the best, funny too.
- Deacons & their ability to reach parishioners w/their message.
- Preschool
- Effectiveness of ministries due to programs and people working in them
- Getting young families involved in the parish!
- The people who help others in need –small things mean a lot
- Gathering Inn
- Dedicated Deacons
- Caring people in the parish
- Dedicated deacons
- Our new pastor's homilies
- Church building that can add to liturgies, flexibility
- Loyal parish
- Outreach volunteers
- Sense of excitement (with our new pastor now here)
- Knights of Columbus
- Ministries/volunteers
- Love
- People volunteer & work together/we share with other communities
- Small community/very caring people always there to support each other
- Community spirit
- Parish outreach
- Knights of Columbus Fr. Crawley Council 5817
- Having an active K of C associated with the parish that supports the parish
- Our parish diversity – young and old together
- Parishioners commitment to church when need arises
- Strong deacons
- Core people in ministries
- Generosity between communities outside parish
- Pre-school
- Our Eucharistic Adoration on Wednesdays
- We are here for each other
- We have many volunteers
- Beautiful place to pray
- Opportunities for growth from ARISE
- Buying school supplies
- Generosity of people
- Father Frank
- Coffee Hour because we get a chance to talk to our parish family
- Our new pastor
- Pride in Parish – many volunteers
- Parishioners feel more welcome
- The homily from last Sunday posted in the next week bulletin
- Children's programs – (Christmas) (Thanksgiving)
- Knights of Columbus
- Friendly, holy people
- Good volunteers
- 6th/7th/8th Religious Education
- Music and artistic banner are strengths
- Generosity of time, talent, spirit

- The many hard working volunteers – ushers, EM's, lectors, bereavement, (*undecipherable*) ministry, outreach
- Extraordinary working space
- Great pre-school
- Continuing Care Ministry
- The generosity of the people when ask for donation other than weekly contribution
- A giving community in time of good and bad
- Our new pastor
- Reaching out to the congregation through social media
- Generosity of parish
- The people really care about each other. They are anxious to help others & make the church stronger.
- Increase the hours of Adoration to extend into the evening on Wed.; Bring the missals back to the pews so the parishioners can follow along and meditate on them.
- Please have a children's mass! I am very angry at having my mass interrupted by crying babies!
- What we could do to generate the youth to help the parish. Youth is the future back bone of the parish.

Weaknesses (Sticky Notes):

- Youth and young adults – more attention- Future of the Church
- Parking
- Programs and activities for older parishioners
- We don't have a certified music coordinator
- Parish offerings need to increase
- Lack of a folk mass
- Be more inclusive of those who have left the church because they feel unwanted if divorced, etc.
- Missalettes
- Not enough money in collections. We run short every week by \$1500 to \$3000 for many years. People have to step up. \$1 to \$5 doesn't do it. Sugg: 30% of cable bill./Youth group was disbanded several years ago.
- Celebrate community success, sports, academic, etc.
- No retreats
- Lack of communication (poor website)
- Parking
- More children participation
- No Bible study
- No Greeting/Welcoming Committee
- Lack of Parish Council
- Missalettes would help during mass
- More youth programs age appropriate
- Extend the hours of adoration/bring missals back to pews
- We need to get parents back into the church & they will bring their children.
- Teen programs
- Needs a renewed sense of community
- No youth group – We need youth group 9-12
- No real Bible Study
- Programs for teens
- Weak music ministry
- There is no list volunteers to do work at the church
- Youth ministry
- Increased community service opportunity awareness for high school students
- Weekly prayer books to follow along w/readings
- We need adult faith raising opportunities at every level to reach people where they are so they can grow in faith.
- Fundraise
- Poor youth involvement
- \$
- Fund Raising
- No regular Youth Group/activities
- Lack of involvement with the kids and teens
- Lack of youth ministry for teens/young adults
- 90% of the work is done by 10% of the people
- Get youth involved
- Welcoming new families. We have been coming for 6 months every Sunday. We have introduced ourselves but weren't reached out to with a, "Hi! Are you new? Welcome!"
- Lack of folk mass and youth group
- Sometimes there is a communication gap or breakdown.
- Youth participation
- Let the people know about the Blessed Sacrament and Adoration on Wed.
- Music
- No young families!
- Sunday Nite Dinner should be pushed from the pulpit that it is for entire community
- No youth groups
- Youth programs
- The need for larger and stronger participation in: Eucharistic Adoration, Divine Mercy devotion, Rosary groups, choir.
- Homily could be more about our everyday living & also for children would be more focused and interested in coming to Church.
- Youth Minister – we need to bring our young back
- Lack of youth programs
- Need a youth club program possibly combine w/successful program at WR Congregational Church
- More relatable music for teens
- Something for support for new families, raising kids, etc.
- Keep the hall open on Sunday so people can use the bathrooms
- Not enough activities or opportunities for youth of parish to be involved outside of mass or rel. ed.
- Traditional scared music – none of it here
- Making families with young children feel welcomed & tolerated during mass.
- Involving teenagers
- Church is locked up too early
- No LGBT program
- We must explore the reasons young people no longer find Church relevant
- Deacon Vinny's earthy homilies.
- 50s+ Group

Threats (Sticky Notes):

- Media, Internet, sports instead of church
- Religious freedom issues. People are labeled by others for just disagreeing. No true exchange of ideas. Example – if you say you believe marriage is between man & woman – you are labeled a “homophobic”
- Sacramental life is affected by social aspect (family celebrations following taking forefront)
- Lack of moral or ethical values
- The maltreatment and investigation of our Religious Nuns by Rome Vatican
- Secularism invading religion
- Media interpretation of the Catholic Church
- Sports conflicts with mass/religious ed.
- Social media as distraction
- We must not be narrow-minded & confined too strictly by rules. We must be open and welcoming.
- Antiquated ideas by clerical inconsistent with Pope Francis
- No sports or games before 1:00 on Sundays
- Breakdown of family Values
- Better use of our music at masses
- Sports and school activities
- Lack of inclusion
- Drugs
- Family values
- Priest scandal scaring people away from church
- Not enough young families with young children coming to church
- Outside activities, the distractions of current technology – phones, TV, press, hate crimes, Sacred Heart in Southampton 24 tombs desecrated, St. Joseph Hewlett
- Electronics, social media
- Lack of reaching out to divorced people
- Lack of more lively music and singing, more vibrant relevant, moving homilies
- Young people living together without marriage is so widely accepted now, even among Catholics.
- The desire to be too comfortable as a group of individuals both in church and out.
- Family values not coinciding with catholic faith.
- Sexual preference
- Single families need more support
- Disconnect between issues young families face & church
- We don't teach Good vs Evil
- Family values
- Attack on family values
- Sports/families busy on weekends
- Teen/youth group
- No role models
- We don't teach respect
- People's hectic schedules and sports taking priority
- Are some feeling put out?/not feeling the Lord's love and faith in church?
- Lack of role models
- Safety – soft target???
- Church is not a priority for many young families with hectic schedules. Selfish, self-entitled non-sacrificing society
- Liberal policies of school and media
- Religious persecution, ISIS
- Allure of other religions
- Sunday morning sports, youth mass evening
- Soccer (Sports)
- Sunday sports participation

Opportunities (Sticky Notes):

- Ministry to new moms → meals, “Elizabeth Ministry” Attract through service
- Illegal immigrants
- Change daily mass back to 9AM
- Missal purchase
- Renewed hope for the future
- More scheduled focus groups
- Fellowship fair – with all organizations of parishes represented
- Increase youth involvement
- Activate the bells at every mass
- Reaching out to parishioners to join ministries
- Bring people back
- Closer link to Little Flower
- Saturday Youth Mass @ 5:00 once a month
- Tap into people skills to help less fortunate (clean up, home repair)
- Reach out to senior residences 1. Leisure Glen 2. Leisure Village 3. Leisure Knolls
- Develop sense of community across social strata young to old
- Generate opportunities for families as a whole be involved: choir, usher, altar server, lector, etc.
- Adult faith formation education, liturgical formation for ministers
- Have a family picnic
- Bridge different aspects of W.R. Catholic community
- Opportunity to reach out to parishioners who have left, new parishioners to bring them into parish
- Children more involved during mass
- The priest should talk to the schools about having no sports on Sunday mornings (the people will pick sports over mass)
- Fr. Frank will bring more children attending mass
- Large senior community who could benefit from use of church
- Facility available to host functions
- Promoting stewardship
- Youth mass once a month for kids
- Reach out to inform members of new pastor
- Use the bulletin to educate parish community about different aspects of our religious customs and laws
- Create youth minister position
- Make resources available for all ages
- Men’s prayer group, women’s prayer group
- Increase fundraising, donation letters
- Men’s and women’s retreats
- Facility available to host functions
- Involve children/youth, youth groups, volunteer opportunities, etc.
- Family ministry
- Provide discussion of church policy & practices that non-participating Catholics can hear & air ideas.
- Groups, ministries, welcoming, positive church experience for folks who may feel they aren’t having them.
- Christmas & Easter masses bring them back on Sundays
- Inclusion and service to those less fortunate come to mass to bridge the gap between needy and us & not just hand out monetary gifts, service, invite them to us (for us to serve them)
- Reaching out to the community more
- Large population in the parish is currently untapped
- Ministry committees
- Lectors to be the first for welcoming – open doors and greet people.
- Youth minister? More volunteers, secular couples come back to church
- Expand our faith to the world using media/Internet, Facebook, etc.
- Include young people in Outreach