

Parish Plan 2008 Accomplishments

In December 2006, we published our first Parish Plan. It was the result of many months of work and prayerfully bringing together the collective wisdom and expertise of staff and parishioners in identification of the issues and challenges that impact successful achievement of the parish mission and the Pastor's vision during the next 3 to 5 years. There are a total of eight goals within the plan, each with several objectives, and all goals are aligned to the key elements within our Mission Statement. The Parish Plan is available on the Parish website.

While the Parish Council is the driving force behind the plan's success, it is the responsibility of all parishioners, to unreservedly support the process by contributing as responsible stewards to the on-going success of this plan. The Parish Council looks forward to working with the Saint Anselm community to achieve the goals and objectives outlined in this Parish Plan. Your comments/recommendations are welcome and may be submitted to any member of our Parish Council.

Our Parish Plan was designed to be implemented over the course of 3-5 years, beginning in 2007. We published a report of our 2007 accomplishments against the plan in December 2007.

The intent of this report is to provide our community with the accomplishments realized in the 2008 Calendar Year.

Foster Personal and Spiritual Growth

Goal 1 - Enhance St. Anselm's program for Personal and Spiritual Growth. *St. Anselm's religious education program through confirmation age is very strong with active participation. However, there needs to be additional opportunities, increased awareness and coordination of existing programs and ministries that provide for continued growth and support.*

Accomplishments:

- We continue to provide flexibility in our religious education program. We again successfully conducted Summer Religious Educations Sessions, which were well received by parents as well as the children. We began conducting a monthly Saturday program, which is conducted from 2:30-5:15 and encourages family attendance at 5:30 mass.
- All meetings are opened with participative faith sharing. We publish a monthly flier containing church, ministry and liturgy information. We provide prayer meditation materials (Lent & Advent Daily Reflection books and Living Faith with Daily Reflections distributed quarterly).
- Our Parish Retreat was conducted Oct 17-18. We began with an exceptional Taize Prayer Service. The group welcomed Fr. Pat Connor as our Guest Speaker.
- We continue to offer opportunities for Faith Sharing. Our small faith sharing groups continue to meet during the Lent & Advent season for 6 weeks. Our Young Christian Moms Group meet twice a month. Their Clothing & Toy Swap provided an opportunity to recycle gently used cloths & toys. We have continued our successful Christian Yoga Program in the spring and fall of this year. We began quarterly Body, Mind & Spirit Reflection mornings. We will host Fr. Padovani - Lent 2009, and are conducting an Advent video series by Fr. Michael Himes.

- Our RCIA Team now consists of 10 members of the Parish. We currently have four candidates in our RCIA program.
- Our Young at Heart Group conducted their Annual Retreat at San Alfonso Retreat House on November 11th.

Foster Justice and Peace

Goal 2 - Improve the ability of individual parishioners and the parish at large to take actions that will foster justice and peace in the community at large. *Fostering justice and peace is a significant action component of the Parish's mission statement that defines the way the church of St. Anselm will live the Gospel. The current Parish environment needs to be improved to encourage and allow parishioners to express their concerns about issues limiting justice and peace in the community at large.*

Accomplishments:

- Our Human Concerns and Social Justice Committee (HC&SJ) continues to identify and address current social justice issues. A flier was issued in Church Bulletin on the Suchitoto 13 and the privatization of water in El Salvador. A water project was undertaken, and educational fliers were placed in the bulletins; a collection for OXFAM (African water projects) was conducted; and the committee began selling water bottles to offset carbon imprint. There was a collection for detainees at the Elizabeth Detention Center and a Prayer vigil was conducted at the Elizabeth Detention Center (on Ash Wednesday and in early September).
- Our Human Concerns and Social Justice Committee (HC&SJ) continues to identify and address current social justice issues. A flier was issued in Church Bulletin on the Suchitoto 13 and the privatization of war in El Salvador. A water project was undertaken, and educational fliers were placed in the bulletins; a collection for OXFAM (African water projects) was conducted; and the committee began selling water bottles to offset carbon imprint. There was a collection for detainees at the Elizabeth Detention Center and a Prayer vigil was conducted at the Elizabeth Detention Center (on Ash Wednesday).
- 90 Second Letters were written to protest Path to Peace Award given to Saca Gonzalez, president of El Salvador; Address affordable housing at Fort Monmouth to FMERPA; and a letter was signed by the committee and sent to Senators Obama and McCain to address the poverty in America in their primetime speech. Post Cards were sent to President Elect Obama urging him as President to close the School of the Americas with a Presidential Order.
- The committee has continued the period Blood Drives; the Annual Birthright Baby Shower; The Center Dinner; Sock & Undie/School Supply Collection; Thanksgiving Food Drive; International Craft Fair; Giving Tree (Nov.22-Dec.14); Monthly Coffee Sales in support of Equal Exchange; Monthly Cooking by Parishioners for Center.
- Our annual Peace Mass was successfully conducted on Oct 29th of this year.
- The committee continues it's active involvement in the Jamaica Twinning project.
- The HC&SJ Committee also successfully engaged our youth in supporting and assisting the International Craft Fair and Giving Tree as well as sorting food for the Thanksgiving Baskets and helping to deliver the Baskets.
- A Christmas visit was made to the Wayside Retirement Center along with Mike Zorner and members of the St. Anselm's Choir and Brownie Troop 535. We distributed individual presents and cards and sang songs.

Preaching the Word

Goal 3 - Continue to provide liturgies that encourage living the Gospel, invite participation and strengthen Parishioner's abilities to live their daily lives. *Liturgies at St. Anselm are an important part of the lives of most of the parishioners. Careful consideration needs to be given to their structure and conduct.*

Accomplishments:

- Established the Interior Environment Ministry and actively recruited members, led by Deb LaGattuta. The team has revamped many aspects of the environment including new altar cloths, new candles, refurbishing old altar candleholders, reusable decorative vases along with innovative new ideas to make our Home of worship reverent and current.
- Liturgy Planning of Intercessions have been streamlined and are managed by the Administrative staff, where the Pastoral Associate (Sandy) seeks assistance from various teams.
- Responded to the feedback that the music for special feasts and well-attended Holy Days should be well-known pieces.
- Church etiquette brochures have been included in the Welcome Package. Going forward in 2009, the Liturgy team will find other creative ways of sharing standards of etiquette via weekly bulletins, articles in Illumination, and possibly on the weekly worship pamphlets.
- Assistive Listening devices have been purchased and integrated with the sound system. Individuals requiring the use of the devices can request a unit from a Minister of Hospitality. These units are stored in the Sacristy.
- Leaders of the Liturgy Ministries "teamed" with the Education committee to provide instruction to parents of children newly baptized
- The Christophers provided a tutorial for 1-2, 3-4, and 5-6th graders in religious education programs, reminding the 3-4th graders that their card crafts are made as special gifts to the individuals the Christophers meet.
- Continue to train new and returning Liturgical Ministers (planned for mid Jan 2009) to educate and to keep current the best practices for each ministry.

Celebrating the Sacraments

Goal 4 - Refresh the way St. Anselm's parish implements the tenets established by Vatican II.

Over a period of time and with the addition of new parishioners there is a tendency to lose understanding of why St. Anselm's does things the way it does. Therefore, there is a need to reexamine and refresh the culture that exists at St. Anselm's.

Accomplishments:

- Efforts related to this goal are underway for the year 2009.

Serving the Parish and the Community

Goal 5 - Improve service to parishioners and the community. *To take the parish to a higher level of service to its parishioners and the community, improvements are needed to make the parish more "user-friendly".*

Accomplishments:

- Efforts related to this goal were moved to 2009 as our needs may change contingent on the outcome of the Deanery Study.

Goal 6 - Expand internal and external participation in parish. *With less than 50% of the families participating in parish activities and with minimal parish growth there is a need to establish methods and programs that will encourage active participation of those within the parish and the community.*

Accomplishments:

- Efforts related to this goal are planned for 2009. The Communications Committee conducted a survey of the Parish in November 2008 and plans to utilize the results of that survey to develop a path ahead.

Goal 7 - Revitalize the financial aspects of being a stewardship parish. *St. Anselm has a strong volunteer base that gives its time and talents to operating the parish. As a stewardship parish with minimal requests for funds or discussion of finances, it appears that the increasing cost of parish operations is not being adequately being met by the collections.*

Accomplishments:

- A focus was placed on recruiting additional members for the Stewardship Committee this year. The revitalized committee is now developing a comprehensive plan for next year, which will include a focus on providing a consistent message as part of the Registration Process.

Celebrating our Community Spirit

Goal 8 - Continue to find ways to retain St. Anselm's reputation as a welcoming and friendly community. *Saint Anselm's is known as a welcoming and non-judgmental community that takes pride in its spirituality and service. Retaining this community spirit requires regular recognition and awareness throughout the year.*

Accomplishments:

- We continue to conduct bi-monthly Welcoming Parties for our new parishioners.
- The Parish Life Committee hosted the following events during the 2008 calendar year: Jan - Parish Brunch; Feb - Blessed Sacrament Choir; St. Michael's Choir; 2nd Annual Valentine's Dance; Mar - St. Pat's Party; Belmar Parade; Seder Meal; Easter Vigil Reception; Easter Pageant/Fashion Show; May - Cinco de Mayo Party; Jun - Fr. Gene's 15th Anniversary Celebration; Sep - Parish Picnic; Oct - International Dinner; Bonfire Mass & Campout; Nov - Wine Tasting; Dec - St. Nick Party; Sing-A-Long; Care/Feeding of the Manger Animals.
- We continued our tradition of conducting Monthly Coffee & Donuts
- Our Parish Nurses continued to care for our community by offering blood pressure screening during Monthly Coffee & donuts.