

**Parish Plan
2009 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 following 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.

Our Parish Plan was designed to be implemented over the course of 3-5 years, beginning in 2007. We published reports of our 2007 and 2008 accomplishments and this is the 2009 report of the accomplishments our church community has achieved to meet the goals of this Plan. Since the Diocese has now published a Diocesan Pastoral Plan and all churches within the Diocese must draw up a similar Plan, this report will complete our first Parish Plan. It is noteworthy that we were in the forefront of parish planning within our Diocese.

Fr. Gene and the Parish Council are developing a new plan to meet the requirements of the Diocese which will be issued later this year. Your input is valued and may be given to any member of the Parish Council.

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 also conduct a monthly Saturday program, from 2:30-5:15 which encourages family attendance at 5:30 mass. Plans are ready to establish a monthly intergenerational program called Growing in Faith Together (GIFT) which will provide learning for all ages.
- Bible study for adults began and a showing of a film on the life of Angelo Roncali, Pope John XXIII, was publicized and open to all parishioners.

- We held a film series featuring Fr. Himes with discussion on the four Sundays in March: What is Temptation Really, Danger and Desire, God Sees into the Heart, and Endless Possibilities.
- Children in confirmation classes are being exposed to ministries in the church by choosing to donate their time to a project, such as the Thanksgiving food drive, as part of the confirmation process.
- 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 16-17. Fr. Pat Connor was our director. Workshops on prayer, meditation, and instruction were also provided. This experience provided an opportunity to achieve an inner calm so we could be open to new and creative ways of finding God in our everyday hectic lives.
- We continue to offer opportunities for Faith Sharing. Our small faith sharing groups conducted during Lent as well in as our Companions Groups in the Fall. Our Young Moms Faith Sharing Group continued this year as well. We have continued our successful Christian Yoga Program in the spring this year. We have quarterly Body, Mind & Spirit Reflection mornings and attendance at these sessions is growing. Our RCIA Team gathers with our candidates seeking full initiation into the church each Sunday after the 11 a.m. mass. Adult confirmation class gathers when needed. Two team members attended the RCIA Forum workshop in June.
- Taize prayer services were held on March 11, May 13, and during the Parish Retreat.
- We continued providing a simple meal and Stations of the Cross on the Fridays during Lent to enhance our Lenten experience.
- Several Pastoral Care Ministers attended a Pastoral Care Conference at Georgian Court University on May 8th. A workshop was given for the Christopher ministers in October. Four parishioners attended the Diocese of Trenton Pastoral Care Certification Program, and three of the four completed the program this year. Spiritual Directors attended a professional day sponsored by the Upper Room in November. St Anselm's "Ministry Day" took place on Sunday, August 16th. Fr. Sam Siriani was the speaker.
- The monthly "Did You Know" flyer is provided the first of each month. This is a refresher in basic tenets of the Church.
- A spiritual presentation was given to the Young at Heart Group in March.
- We maintained our Book of Remembrance for all those wishing to remember loved ones and to pray for special intentions. Intentions in the book are prayed for at all masses.
- We read and discussed two books this year: "Two Cups of Tea" by Greg Mortensen (May) and "The Shack" by William P. Young (Sep/Oct).

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. Several activities were advertized to highlight the plight of immigrants and asylum seekers, including publishing an article on the movie, "The Visitor" and purchasing the movie itself for our library; a collection of domestic and international stamps was held in November and June for detainees at the Elizabeth Detention Center to send their letters home. We participated in a Prayer vigil conducted at the Elizabeth Detention Center on Ash Wednesday and Columbus Day. We published an article on Earth Hour, "Lights Out", a nationwide campaign to save electricity and water bottles are sold throughout the year to highlight the need for clean water for all and to offset our carbon footprint as part of our environmental efforts.
- 90 Second Postcards were sent to President Obama to close the School of the Americas in February and to ban production, sale and use of cluster bombs in March.
- The committee continued the periodic 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); Winter Hat/Hygiene collection; Monthly Coffee Sales in support of Equal Exchange; Monthly Cooking by Parishioners for Center.
- The committee continues its active involvement in the Jamaica Twinning project with St Anthony's parish and its two mission churches. A presentation was made to the parish in April; St Anselm's website was updated with information and pictures and photos are displayed on the bulletin board in the back of the church of our ongoing projects in Jamaica; Fr Francis visited our parish in August; a "Taste of Jamaica", was held to welcome him sponsored by several committees/ministries. Four parishioners traveled to Jamaica in November and worked side by side with our Jamaican partners building a chicken coop that will provide income and a self sustaining business raising and selling chickens for three single parent families.
- Two of our parishioners monitored elections in El Salvador and spoke to the committee about the trip; one member spoke to the parish about the effort.

- The HC&SJ Committee also successfully engaged our youth in supporting and assisting the International Craft Fair as well as sorting food for the Thanksgiving Baskets and helping set up the Giving Tree and sorting gifts.
- We continue to provide financial and other assistance to those less fortunate in our community and the surrounding environs through Family Promise and COR and Brother to Brother.

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;

- The Interior Environment Ministry actively recruited members with success. A complete seasonal schedule for the team was created and maintained to ensure a welcoming and inspiring indoor environment. We purchased new banners for the worship area bringing an overwhelmingly positive response from parishioners.
- We instituted 10-15 second pauses after the readings and responsorial psalms at Sunday masses to allow each attendee to have time for personal reflection.
- "Dear Liturgical Lil", a "Dear Abby" of Catholicism was introduced to address issues regarding reverence, etiquette, and catechesis of the Mass. "Lil" is published weekly in the bulletin and posted on the parish website.
- The Music Ministry has increased membership in all of its choirs, including several levels of children's groups. Michael Zorner chooses music appropriate to the liturgy and works with the Liturgy Committee as well as others to enhance all spiritual activities through beautiful music choices.
- A summer choir program encouraged participation from seasonal singers.
- Sandy Mullarkey and Michael Zorner planned a "Remembrance Mass" for all those who passed away during the year.
- We partnered with the Religious Education committee and its 1st and 2nd graders to create "thank you" posters for the caregivers at Wayside Residence which were presented to the staff by the Christophers. We also presented "Who are the Christophers" to 3rd and 4th graders reminding them of the importance of the cards they make for Pastoral Care visits.
- The Liturgy team offered assistance in special liturgical events including tailoring the indoor environment and music for Fr Francis' visit.
- We have provided ongoing education throughout the year for the various liturgical ministries through onsite training and newsletters to insure consistency and appropriateness of responsibilities.

Celebrating the Sacraments

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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:

- An educational series on the tenets of Vatican II began with a movie on the life of Angelo Roncali which portrayed his development and the people and events that influenced him and gave rise to his greatest accomplishment as Pope, Vatican II.
- The Education Committee in collaboration with Spiritual Life Committee is working on a video program to celebrate and educate the parish on Vatican II.

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:

- All Sacraments are regularly scheduled and published on the monthly calendar.
- A greater variety of spiritual and other activities have been scheduled and announced to the parish.
- New parishioner registration is under review to be more welcoming and to more thoroughly educate people on the St Anselm tradition of stewardship and the need for their time, talent, and treasure.
- Welcoming parties for new parishioners are held every other month.

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:

- The results of a survey conducted by the Communications Committee in November 2008 were analyzed and distributed to the Parish Council in early 2009. The result is that more and different ways of communicating to parishioners were necessary.
- The Parish website, www.stanselm.com, was enhanced to promote events, committees, and meetings to everyone.
- The Parish Council approved a plan to make use of blast email/telephone calls as reminders of upcoming events. Identification cards for this purpose have been printed and will be distributed in early 2010.

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:

- The entire stewardship program is under review by the pastor and the Parish Council.
- Parish Pay continues to grow in numbers of parishioners utilizing this service.

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 2009 calendar year: Jan: St Michael's, (Vermont) choir with dinner following; Feb: Blessed Sacrament Choir with potluck dinner; Mar: St. Pat's Party; Belmar Parade with float representing St Anselm's; April: Seder Meal; tea party with the Easter Bunny; May: Champagne and Ice, a benefit for the Petrillo family; Jun: Flag Day Brunch; July: trip to a Blue Claws game; Aug: A Taste of Jamaica for Fr Francis; Sep: Parish Picnic; sightseeing cruise of New York harbor; Parish campout/bonfire mass; Nov: International Dinner; Dec: St. Nick Party; Sing-A-Long; Care/Feeding of the Manger Animals; New Year's Eve party.
- 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.