

ST. JOSEPH PARISH
Seven South Broad Mountain Avenue
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September 4, 2015

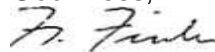
Dear Parishioners,

In July of 2013, we merged to form a single parish community and at the time I said we needed a period for adjustment and then we had to begin the important task of pastoral planning. In June of 2014, I asked Benesch engineering to carry out engineering studies of our parish buildings as part of our planning process. Over the course of this past year I have met periodically with our Finance Committee and Pastoral Advisory Committee to begin working on a parish planning process and I have kept the diocese apprised of our progress. In June, we participated in a Parish Life Survey in cooperation with the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown in order to gain insight into the direction planning should take. Over the past two weeks, finalized engineering reports have arrived and the results of our parish survey have arrived as well. I have included a copy of the survey's Executive Summary as a starting point for your perusal and we will work to post the entire document on our parish website soon (it is over 120 pages in length). Also, I have provided a summary directly from the engineering reports of the estimated cost of repairs and work on our various parish buildings that will need to be done either immediately or within the next few years. Once again, we will work to get more detailed engineering reports uploaded to the website but there are hundreds of pages of reports to work through.

Presently, our most recent Parish Spiritual Report indicates that we are a parish of 1394 parishioners of which on any given Sunday approximately 550 attend Mass. This past year we had 14 Baptisms, 6 Weddings, 18 Confirmations, 18 First Communions, and 51 Deaths. We had 130 children participate in CCD, 19 Children in Catholic Grade School, and 17 in Catholic High School. Also, we continue to run yearly operating deficits and, as I write this, we owe just under \$250,000.00 to the diocese in unpaid bills, insurance, assessments, etc. and we project an operating deficit of at least \$50,000.00 this fiscal year. Finally, the 44 year old boiler in Saint Joseph Church failed its inspection in June and we have received word that no state operating certificate will be issued. The estimated replacement cost for the boiler is \$45,900.00.

The information provided is not meant to shock, scare, or discourage anyone. This is simply a quantifying of the fiscal and physical reality of our parish. I am providing it because you deserve to know the situation so we can work together to plan accordingly for our future. I will work on organizing the information and getting more detail to you and plan some meetings so we can discuss these reports to understand them better. However, it would be disingenuous of me not to admit that the engineering studies and our deteriorating fiscal position demand that difficult but necessary decisions be made soon for the long term good of the parish. I ask for your prayers for Wisdom and the guidance of the Holy Spirit in making those decisions.

God Bless,



Fr. Robert Finlan, Pastor

RF:tdk
Attachments

Preliminary Cost Estimates - Total - \$1,567,767.82

Saint Ann Campus - Total - \$188,686.00

1) Structural	\$ 78,711.00
2) Mechanical	\$ 34,302.00
3) Electrical	\$ 16,550.00
4) Stained Glass	\$ 7,742.00
Church – Total	\$ 137,305.00

1) Structural	\$ 29,814.00
2) Mechanical	\$ 21,567.00
3) Electrical	\$ N/A
Rectory – Total	\$ 51,381.00

Annunciation BVM Campus - Total - \$519,355.21

1) Structural	\$ 82,280.00
2) Mechanical	\$ N/A
3) Electrical	\$ 19,515.00
4) Stained Glass	\$ N/A
Church – Total	\$ 101,795.00

1) Structural	\$ 39,870.00
2) Mechanical	\$ N/A
3) Electrical	\$ N/A
Convent – Total	\$ 39,870.00

1) Structural	\$ 40,838.00
2) Mechanical	\$ 14,668.00
3) Electrical	\$ N/A
Rectory – Total	\$ 55,506.00

1) Structural	\$ 54,450.00
2) Mechanical	\$ 23,641.66
3) Electrical	\$ N/A
Hall – Total	\$ 78,091.66

1) Structural	\$ 198,851.00
2) Mechanical	\$ 15,821.55
3) Electrical	\$ 29,420.00
School – Total	\$ 244,092.55

Saint Joseph Campus - Total - \$859,727.61

1) Structural	\$ 615,225.00
2) Mechanical	\$ 62,341.61
3) Electrical	\$ 21,100.00
4) Stained Glass	\$ 89,436.00
Church – Total	\$ 788,102.61

1) Structural	\$ 51,425.00
2) Mechanical	\$ 20,200.00
3) Electrical	\$ N/A
Rectory – Total	\$ 71,625.00

Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate

Parish Life Survey for Saint Joseph Parish Frackville, Pennsylvania

Executive Summary

The St. Joseph Parish Life Survey was designed by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University. The questions were derived from CARA's database of nationally tested questions. The parish distributed the questionnaire to those attending its liturgies over one weekend in June, 2015. In all, there were 502 valid responses, with two respondents under age 16 not included in the analysis.

Major findings can be summarized as follows:

Respondent Demographics

- The average age of St. Joseph respondents overall is 60 years old. Half of all respondents are age 63 or younger.
- CARA divides Catholics into four generations, reflective of the age categories used by many other Catholic researchers. The most common generation at St. Joseph is the Vatican II Generation, ages 55 to 72.
- Six in ten are female and four in ten are male. About six in ten respondents to the survey are currently married or remarried. One in six has never married, one in ten is divorced or separated, and just over one in ten is widowed. Four in ten report having at least one child or stepchild under age 18 living with them.
- Four in ten have attained a high school diploma or less, two in ten have completed a trade or technical school or have an associate's degree. One in ten has attended some college and a quarter have a bachelor's or graduate degree. The generations differ educationally. Six in ten of those of the oldest generation have a high school degree or less, compared to a quarter of the youngest generation.
- Slightly less than half report being employed (employed full time or part time or self-employed). Four in ten identify as retired or semi-retired and one in 20 identifies as a homemaker or student.
- Half of respondents report total household annual incomes of \$60,000 or more. On the lower end of the scale, one in seven reports a household income of less than \$20,000. On the higher end, one in ten reports an income of \$100,000 or more. Eight in ten of those of the oldest generation report annual household incomes of less than \$60,000, compared to half of those of the youngest generation.
- Eight in ten respondents report that they have Internet access. Almost all of those of the two youngest generations have Internet access, compared to almost six in ten of those of the oldest generation.

Religious Characteristics of Respondents

- On average, respondents have attended the parish for 35 years, half have attended 35 years or less.
- Seven in ten respondents say they currently attend Mass at least once a week, with about another three in ten saying they attend almost every week or once or twice a month. One in twenty attends less frequently than that. Those of the oldest two generations are most likely to attend at least once a week.
- When asked what Mass they usually attend, those most commonly reported are the 11:15 a.m. Sunday Mass and the 4:00 p.m. Saturday Mass, both celebrated at St. Joseph Parish.
- On average, respondents have nine years of formal Catholic religious education, with half having nine years or less. A third of the oldest generation has five years or less, compared to one in 20 of the youngest generation.
- Nearly nine in ten say they have been active Catholics since birth, one in 20 is a convert to Catholicism, and one in 20 identifies as a returned Catholic. Two percent identify as inactive Catholics and 2 percent as non-Catholics.
- Among those currently married, more than nine in ten say their spouse is Catholic and almost nine in ten say their marriage was blessed by the Catholic Church.
- On average, respondents have participated in two ministries or activities during the past year. Slightly less than half have not participated in any ministries or activities, two in ten have participated in one, and a little more than a third have participated in two or more.

Parish and Catholic Life

-Nine in ten respondents give St. Joseph Parish overall a positive evaluation, with almost half rating it as “excellent.” A little more than half rate efforts to meet people’s spiritual needs as “excellent.”

-Efforts to invite participation in parish life receive an “excellent” evaluation from over half of respondents. A little more than a quarter “strongly” agree that they want to be more involved in parish life.

-About four in ten say the programs and activities of the parish are “very” important to them. Nearly half report being “very” likely to attend a parish activity or function besides Mass in the next year. The more involved with parish ministries or activities respondents currently are, the more likely they are to see the programs and activities as “very” important and to report being “very” likely to attend a parish function besides Mass.

-Half of parishioners are regularly most available to participate in parish activities during weekday evenings. One in four respondents are available during the weekend and one in four are available during weekday mornings or weekday afternoons. Those employed (either self-employed, employed full time or employed part time) and those retired or semi-retired report being regularly most available to participate during weekday evenings. Homemakers indicate being regularly most available during the day on weekdays, with students indicating that Sunday evenings are when they are regularly most available.

-Between two-thirds and three-quarters of St. Joseph respondents give “high” priority to these parish needs: visitation of the sick and homebound, children’s religious education or CCD, upkeep of parish facilities, nursing home ministry, welcoming persons with disabilities, and ministry to those grieving.

-Respondents were asked to choose their top three priorities from a list of parish ministries and programs. The three most commonly mentioned are upkeep of parish facilities, children’s religious education or CCD, and developing a parish sense of community.

-Respondents were asked to comment on the most important need for St. Joseph Parish to focus on in the next three to five years. They are most likely to mention consolidating parishioners into one parish, meeting the parish’s financial needs, maintenance and renovation of current parish properties, and better outreach to the people of the area.

-Asked to write in what the greatest challenge facing the parish is, respondents are particularly likely to mention the facilities-related needs of maintaining current facilities and renovating buildings so they are accessible for those with disabilities, better consolidating the parish and uniting the people as one parish, and meeting the parish’s financial needs.

-Almost nine in ten say being Catholic is “very” important to them and eight in ten state that living their faith in their daily life is “very” important. Members of the youngest generation are least likely to say these are “very” important.

-Fostering priestly or religious vocations receives “high” priority from half of respondents.

Sense of Community

-The sense of community within the parish receives a positive evaluation from eight in ten respondents, with just over a third rating it as “excellent.” The more involved with parish ministries or activities, the less likely respondents are to rate the sense of community as “excellent,” however.

-Half “strongly” agree that they feel included in parish life. The more involved respondents are in parish ministries and activities, the more likely they are to “strongly” agree that they feel included.

-Parish efforts to provide social activities receive an “excellent” rating from just over four in ten respondents.

-About six in ten state that being a part of a parish community is “very” important to them. Moreover, six in ten “strongly” agree that their parish community is important in their lives. The younger respondents are, the less likely they are to “strongly” agree that their parish community is important in their lives.

-Developing a parish sense of community is given “high” priority by nearly two in three respondents. The more involved with parish ministries or activities respondents are, the more likely they are to place “high” priority on developing a sense of community.

Worship Life

-Weekend Masses in general receive a positive evaluation from almost all respondents. Two-thirds give them an “excellent” rating.

-Almost two-thirds rate the homilies in general as “excellent,” with half giving as high a rating to the music in general.

- Almost eight in ten state that attending Mass is “very” important to them.
- Nearly nine in ten report that they are “very” likely to attend Mass at least once a week in the next year. Two-thirds of those of the youngest generation report being “very” likely to attend Mass weekly in the next year, compared to about nine in ten of those of the other generations.
- Almost half report being “very” likely to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation or Confession in the next year. The older respondents are, the more likely they are to report being “very” likely to go to Confession in the next year.
- Four in ten give “high” priority to the parish providing more opportunities for devotions such as rosaries and Eucharistic Adoration. The older respondents are, the more likely they are to give such opportunities “high” priority.
- Ministry and Worship in a Time of Fewer Priests
- Respondents were asked how much they support three different ways of providing ministry and worship in a time of fewer priests. Half “very much” support consolidating parishes so that better programs can be provided.
- To provide for ministry or worship in a time of fewer priests, about four in ten each “very much” support sharing a priest with another parish and sharing paid staff with neighboring parishes.
- Just over four in ten “strongly” agree that the parish should collaborate with other parishes in programs and activities. A third “strongly” agree that they would travel to a neighboring parish for a shared program or activity.

Parish Leadership

- Almost all respondents give a positive evaluation to the vision provided by the pastor. Seven in ten rate that vision as “excellent.”
- Parish efforts to consult with parishioners before making important decisions receive an “excellent” rating from nearly half of respondents. Six in ten “strongly” agree that parishioners are encouraged to have a role in decision making at the parish.
- Seven in ten “strongly” agree that they would feel comfortable talking with the pastor.
- A third agree “strongly” that there is sufficient qualified parish staff (paid and volunteer) to meet the parish's needs. Efforts to provide helpful office services receive an “excellent” evaluation from just over four in ten respondents. Slightly more than half rate efforts to communicate with parishioners as “excellent.”
- Parish efforts to explain parish finances are rated as “excellent” by just under half of respondents.

Faith Formation

- Efforts to educate parishioners in the faith receive a positive evaluation from nine in ten respondents, with six in ten rating these efforts as “excellent.” The more involved with parish ministries or activities respondents are, the less likely they are to rate these efforts as “excellent” though
- Learning more about the Catholic faith is “very” important to just over half of respondents.
- Six in ten respondents give the parish’s efforts to nurture their relationship with Jesus Christ an “excellent” evaluation. Just under half give as high a rating to efforts to foster spiritual growth.
- Seven in ten give “high” priority to children’s religious education/CCD, with six in ten giving as much priority to youth ministry.
- Trinity Academy receives “high” priority from four in ten respondents.
- Four in ten give “high” priority to adult faith formation. Members of the youngest generation are less than half as likely as other respondents to give “high” priority to adult faith formation.
- Just over a quarter report being “very” likely to spend time learning more about the faith in the next year.

Stewardship

- Encouragement to share one’s time and talents with the parish receives a positive evaluation from more than nine in ten. Just over half give the parish an “excellent” rating in this area.
- Nearly four in ten “strongly” agree that the parish should ask people to do more than simply come to Mass.
- Three in ten “strongly” agree that the parish should give priority to helping parishioners discern their gifts and talents.

-Almost a quarter report being “very” likely to offer their time and talent in volunteer opportunities. Those of the youngest generation are most likely to report being at least “somewhat” likely to do so.

-Just over one in ten says she or he is “very” likely to volunteer for a parish ministry in the next year.

-When asked what prevents them from volunteering more for the parish, nearly four in ten cite their busy schedule or lack of time as “very much” preventing them from doing so. About one in ten cites the impediments of not having been personally invited and not being aware of parish needs.

-Respondents were asked what prevents them from contributing more financially to the parish. More than half say that already contributing all they can afford “very much” prevents them from doing so. About one in ten cites the impediments of not being aware of how the parish spends its money and their lack of awareness of the parish’s financial needs.

Evangelization

-More than eight in ten evaluate parish efforts to spread the Gospel or evangelize positively. Almost half rate these efforts as “excellent.”

-Parish efforts to reach out to inactive Catholics in the area receive an “excellent” rating from three in ten respondents. The more involved respondents are with parish ministries or activities, the less likely they are to give these efforts an “excellent” rating.

-Nearly half place “high” priority on outreach to inactive Catholics.

-Welcoming persons with disabilities is given “high” priority by seven in ten respondents.

-Young adult ministry and senior citizen programs receive “high” priority from about half of respondents.

-However, a third of those ages 18 to 35 give “high” priority to young adult ministry, compared to more than half of other respondents.

-Nearly half give “high” priority to ministry to the divorced and separated.

-Parish efforts to cooperate with non-Catholic churches are rated as “excellent” by almost half of respondents.

Social Justice

-More than eight in ten give a positive evaluation to the parish’s outreach to and advocacy for those in need. A little more than four in ten rate these efforts as “excellent.” The younger respondents are, the more likely they are to rate this aspect of parish life as “excellent.”

-Providing opportunities for parishioners to help the needy receive “high” priority from six in ten respondents.

-About three in four give “high” priority to visitation of the sick and homebound and to nursing home ministry.