

Holy Cross Parish

Strategic Plan - Synopsis

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DARE TO DREAM

This Strategic Plan for Holy Cross Parish in the Mt. Airy community of Philadelphia was prepared with gratitude and appreciation for parishioners who dared to dream, to seek an expansive future – with hope.

We have weathered the COVID crisis and have chosen to act now, hence the need for a plan to bring together all that we have started to realize as our vision. Over one half of our parishioners gave direct inputs to this plan resulting in goals that address growth, spirituality, and community. Pope Francis' book, Let Us Dream: The Path to a Better Future has guided us during this process.

We engaged representatives from our Ministries that have grown significantly since 2017 and from all parishioners including, joyfully, young adults and children. Other resources include a 2019 architect's renderings to improve church accessibility along with a high five-figure pro bono Philadelphia 2020 Community Design Collaborative study that will serve our campus for the 21st century. Public and private grants that require a parish strategic plan are being pursued to carry us into the future.

What we learned has been summed up from:

30+ parishioners who joined 7 weekly Zoom planning meetings,
89 parishioners who answered our 2021 engagement survey,
and over 100 who selected our new **Mission Statement**.

**We are courageous in empowering change,
Compassionate in valuing people, and
Catholic in the way we seek to go in love as Jesus does.
Come as you are. All are welcome.**

Followed by our new **Vision Statement**:

An engaged community that radiates the abundant love of God

Both the Mission and Vision Statements serve as a guide and focus from which all strategic goals and objectives in this document are derived.

CHURCH HISTORY

We have kept in mind Holy Cross's history in Mt. Airy, with its unique, culturally diverse tradition. "We were diverse and inclusive before it was trending," says a parishioner when reflecting on what makes our parish unique and welcoming. Where are we? Where do we want to go? Both were ever on our minds as we planned.

When Philadelphia immigration swelled in Mt. Airy, Holy Cross was established 131 years ago with European, and later, African American migration. Our grade school, long supported by the Sisters of St. Joseph, was built in 1910 and has become a top Archdiocese college prep school, embracing all faiths and races in Northwest Philadelphia.

We have endured the fallout of mistrust in the Church, and subsequent closings as a result of a loss of - commitment to religious practice. Through a painful healing process, we have decommissioned and then combined the parishes of Holy Cross, St. Thérèse, and St. Madeleine Sophie to create a vibrant, sustainable Holy Cross Parish, growing ever more diverse and positioned for the future.

Financial contributions are up 5.1% year-to-year with an Annual Appeal increased from \$32K to \$50K. We continue to shrink our deficit with a plan to break even within two years. Our Gothic church roofing, lighting and more have been updated with revenues generated from sale of underutilized properties.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Today's Mt. Airy population was a first to reject redlining in the 1960s with a Jewish Center proclamation, "What if we all just stayed?" Our racial mix mirrors the nation in one neighborhood, street by street and home by home. Today Mt. Airy's proud citizens are a diaspora from the U.S. including Native Americans, Europeans, Asians, South Americans, and Africans.

Population growth, according to the 2020 census, from 29,000 is upward and younger, the average age now 29.7 years-old compared with 39.4 years-old ten years ago. Neighborhood turnover, with more Catholics arriving, is high with unusually attractive job opportunities predicted this year at above 25%. Are we concerned about crime and peace overall? You bet. Yet, crime rates have steadily decreased since 2015, with an uptick during COVID.

PATH TO A BETTER FUTURE

Our strategic Goals and Objectives follow the SMART format: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-based. General goals along with survey details, actions indicated, and demographics are included in the Appendix.

A SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis was examined across categories of Service, Worship, Evangelism, Education, Pastoral Care and Stewardship. Three goal sets were developed, all of which tie back to the mission and vision of our parish.

In the spirit of the Universal Catholic church who serves all people regardless of religious affiliation, Holy Cross too serves all of our neighbors far and wide, Catholic and non-Catholic. Our ministries serve members as well as non-members equally with the abundant love of God.

SUMMARY OF GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Mission Statement Relation: Courageous in Empowering Change. Come as You Are. All Are Welcome

1st GOAL: Move Our Ministries from Good to Great (Oct 2021- Sept 2023)

- **Objective 1** - Create Engaging Faith Formation Opportunities for Parishioners of All Ages
- **Objective 2** - Strengthen, Grow & Enrich the Worship Life of Our Parish
- **Objective 3** - Nurture a Positive Culture of Leadership & Discipleship

Mission Statement Relation: Compassionate in Valuing People. Come as You Are. All are Welcome.

2nd GOAL: Reach Out in Service to Parish and Community (Apr 2022 – Mar 2025)

- **Objective 1** - Empower young people to be active in their faith
- **Objective 2** - Provide Opportunities for Parishioners to Know One Another More Deeply
- **Objective 3** - Cultivate a Climate of Hospitality to Permeate Every Facet of Parish Life
- **Objective 4** - Be a More Visible and Welcoming Presence in the Community Through Service

Mission Statement Relation: Catholic in the way we seek to go in love as Jesus does. All are Welcome.

3rd GOAL: Improve Efficiency and Effectiveness of Church Operations (Oct 2021 – Dec 2026)

- **Objective 1** - Achieve Financial Sustainability through Membership Growth
- **Objective 2** - Refresh Marketing, Messaging, and Segmented Communication Strategy
- **Objective 3** - Optimize Use of Current Facilities and Adopt a Sustainable Campus Model
- **Objective 4** - Financially Support Operations, Ministry Programs, and Future Developments

****Please Note:** the Strategic Planning Report – Extended Version, which itemized Action Steps to be taken under each objective, is available upon request. Email Veronica at holycrossdev140@gmail.com.