

# St. Matthew Catholic Church

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Pastoral Plan for 2008 - 2011



## Plan Summary

### Introduction

St. Matthew Catholic Church will celebrate its silver jubilee in September of 2011. The Pastoral Plan presented here celebrates the amazing success of a dynamic, vibrant parish. Any successful parish that is growing and maturing must look to the past to keep close and celebrate those traditions that made it successful. However, in order to keep progressing on our faith journey, both individually and as a parish, one must have the courage to challenge the status quo. This plan is meant to challenge the status quo.

### Opportunities

The Pastoral Plan Committee was formed in July 2007 to reassess and review the functioning of St. Matthew in order to write a new Pastoral Plan. The committee identified four areas which it felt needed attention. These were: spiritual development, communication, welcoming, and leadership development.

The committee was then charged with the prime directive as follows: St. Matthew Parish needed to focus, first and foremost, on significantly raising the overall level of spiritual development and engagement of all parishioners.

To that end, the committee began its extensive research which involved identifying other Catholic parishes that had instituted an effective spiritual development program. It was during this research that the committee contacted the Gallup organization. Gallup had developed a survey known as the Member Engagement Survey 25 (ME<sup>25</sup>), which would help to measure the two primary indicators of spiritual health – spiritual commitment and congregational engagement. These two indicators would become centerpieces to the new Pastoral Plan.

In December 2007, St. Matthew participated in the ME<sup>25</sup> survey. In addition to implementing the ME<sup>25</sup> survey, the committee researched Gallup's Living Your Strengths program. The Living Your Strengths program is designed as a small group program that will help parishioners identify their unique God-given talents. It is surmised that once people become familiar with their strengths, we will see an increase in their parish engagement and spiritual development will occur.

## Plan Summary CONTINUED

### The Pastoral Plan

The new Pastoral Plan is a four year plan with special emphasis on improving spirituality and engagement. The plan will also attempt to promote positive change that will enhance spiritual development, welcoming, communication, and leadership development.

Each year of the plan has a theme:

Year One	Prepare the Soil
Year Two	Plant the Seeds
Year Three	Water the Crop
Year Four	Reap the Harvest

The overview of each of these years is contained in this document beginning on page 21.

To help introduce and implement the four year plan, the Committee has established a vision statement and updated the parish mission statement.

The vision statement was designed as a short, concise statement that is easily remembered by all in the parish. St. Matthew's new vision statement is:

*Connected in Christ! Moved by the Spirit!*

The revised mission statement is as follows:

“The Eucharistic Catholic community of St. Matthew loves Christ above all things and our neighbor as ourselves. In our faith journey, our parish family will be engaged and spiritually committed; fulfilling our vision through shared Gospel values, prayer, fellowship, service, outreach, and teaching.”

Another important piece of the plan is parish expectations. It was realized through the December 2007 ME25 survey results that most parishioners did not know what was expected of them as a member of St. Matthew. Many felt that their opinions did not matter, and that the spiritual leaders did not care about them individually.

As a result, two broad areas of expectations were addressed in May 2008.

- What is expected of you if you are a parishioner at St. Matthew
- What should a parishioner expect of the clergy, staff, and leadership of St. Matthew?

The responses were reviewed and evaluated with the idea that they should reflect the uniqueness of St. Matthew. The list was submitted for approval to Monsignor McSweeney in June of 2008. Pending his approval, additional steps will be made to increase the understanding of our expectations as it relates to the successful future of St. Matthew.

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# History

## Introduction

St. Matthew Catholic Church was officially established on the feast of St. Matthew, Patron Saint of banking, September 21, 1986. Under the guidance of Monsignor Joseph Kerin, 200 Catholics celebrated Mass on November 2 to officially launch what is now the largest Catholic parish in the Southeast. Those 200 members have now become 7,000 families. The parish that originally celebrated Mass in a movie theater and then built a gymnasium now utilizes a 36,000 square foot sanctuary, along with a 62,500 square foot education building, and a 27,000 square foot ministry building.

As the parish has grown in membership and physical size, so has the faith and outreach of St. Matthew. A myriad of ministries have been established to meet the spiritual, personal, and communal needs of the parish.

St. Matthew Catholic Church has a reputation as a vibrant faith community with a “can do” attitude. Despite its size, it is a warm, friendly place for parishioners of all ages. It is a place of reverent celebration of the Eucharist and one in which we can live our Catholic faith with like-minded individuals.

## Pastoral Plan History Summary

In order to minister to the spiritual needs of the parish, a Pastoral Plan was developed. The first St. Matthew Pastoral Plan was signed by Monsignor McSweeney and implemented in March 2001. This plan was formulated with input from clergy, staff, and ministry leaders under the guidance of the Pastoral Council. It established six Pastoral Committees: Worship, Word, Service, Community, Evangelization, and Stewardship.

The ministries of the parish were placed under the appropriate committee. Each Pastoral Committee was led by a volunteer convener and a liaison from the Pastoral Council was assigned to provide help and guidance. Each Committee formulated yearly goals and objectives for itself and assisted in goal setting and objectives for each of its ministries. The goals and objectives were to be aligned with the liturgical and spiritual needs of the parish. Goal achievement was to be measured each year and reported to the Pastor and the Pastoral Council.

## **Pastoral Plan History Summary** CONTINUED

The Plan has been updated on two occasions in 2003 and in 2005. Before each revision, the plans were critically reviewed and changes were made. A change in the 2003-2006 Pastoral Plan made goal setting more specific and measurable. A change in the 2005-2008 Pastoral Plan focused on the U.S. Catholic Bishops Letter, “Go and Make Disciples” and our “baptismal call to evangelize” (Pastoral Plan 2005-2008, p. 5). Each convener was instructed to include at least one evangelization based goal and objectives into this plan.

In this plan, the unique nature of the Evangelization and Stewardship Committees was recognized. These Committees do not have specific ministries, per say, associated with them. They “were intricately threaded throughout each ministry and touch each parishioner within the St. Matthew Faith Community” (2005-2008, p. 6).

“The Pastoral Plan was created to become our personal covenant with God. It was a framework by which we could consummate a heartfelt commitment to Jesus Christ and deepen our relationship with God and to each other within the St. Matthew Community” (2005-2008, p. 4).

## **Pastoral Plan Assessment 2001 – Present**

The St. Matthew Pastoral Plan has been reviewed and updated on three different occasions and improvements made with each. With the growth of the parish, administering to the thousands of families and multitude of ministries listed under various Committees has become increasingly difficult.

Problems noted in each of the three plans include but were not limited to:

- Insufficient time for conveners to effectively keep track of all ministries under their Committee,
- Difficulty coordinating communication among and between Pastoral Committees,
- Difficulty coordinating communication among and between ministries,
- Difficulty providing adequate ministry leader training,
- Difficulty adequately placing new volunteers into ministries that met their talents,
- Difficulty coordinating goals across committees that meet the needs of the parish,
- Difficulty adequately and appropriately setting goals and objectives and implementing a measurement process,
- Difficulty coordinating activities with St. Matthew staff, and
- Implementing a convener succession plan that worked.

## **Pastoral Plan Assessment 2001 – Present** CONTINUED

These problems were first identified in the second plan revision (2003-2006) and it was then suggested by the revision committee that eventually there would be a need for all committees to be run by paid staff with volunteer assistance from parishioners. Convener “burnout”, poor communication, and lack of time for the size of the job were noted as the reasons for the difficulties that the conveners were having in managing their committees.

Measuring the success of the Pastoral Plan was more problematic. Each year, the goals and objectives of each of the committees were reviewed. The relative success of meeting the goals for the proceeding year was recorded and reported to Monsignor McSweeney and the Pastoral Council. In some cases, goals for the next year were modified in response to previous year’s failures. However, there was little objective evidence that the Pastoral Plans were effectively consummating “a heartfelt commitment to Jesus Christ and deepening our relationship to God and to each other within the St. Matthew Parish Community” (2005-2008, p. 4). In other words, were we really increasing the spiritual commitment or engagement of the parishioners of St. Matthew Catholic Church?

## **Parish Life Survey 2006**

Recognizing the difficulty in obtaining objective measurements as to the “health” of the parish, Monsignor McSweeney commissioned the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate from Georgetown University to perform a survey of the Parish. Better known as the CARA study, this was compared to a similar study done in 1999. The study measured all facets of parish life: sense of community, worship, evangelization, spiritual formation, stewardship, parish priorities, communication, and leadership.

There were 3,596 respondents. Results were compared to the study from 1999. From this survey, strengths and weaknesses of the parish were identified.

Pertinent improvements in parish life from 1999 were noted in the following areas:

- Overall parishioner satisfaction with the parish,
- Commitment to social justice and religious education,
- Outreach to teens,
- Liturgies,
- Spiritual formation,
- Pastor leadership, and
- Pastoral Council.

## Parish Life Survey 2006 CONTINUED

Pertinent problem areas identified included:

- Outreach to inactive Catholics, young adults, new parishioners, and single parents,
- Parish efforts to help the practice of gospel values in daily life,
- Communication,
- Parishioner role in decision-making,
- Adult religious education, and
- Utilization of the sacrament of reconciliation.

Additional analysis of the CARA revealed some interesting findings regarding spiritual commitment and parish engagement. In the summary of findings in the CARA report (p. 75-81), specific mention was made regarding those parishioners involved in “more than one parish ministry or activity”. Members that were more engaged at St. Matthew (i.e.: involved in more than one parish ministry) were more likely to report higher satisfaction than non-engaged members with regards to:

- Overall parish satisfaction,
- Quality of preaching,
- Sense of community,
- Parish community is important to them,
- Inclusion in parish life,
- Quality of masses,
- Mass importance in their life and need for communion/Eucharist,
- Quality of homilies,
- Parish helps them develop their spiritual life,
- Parish meets their spiritual needs,
- Those that consider themselves practicing Catholics,
- Importance of faith sharing,
- Importance of stewardship,
- Satisfaction with spending priorities,
- Promotion of responsible stewardship,
- Do not use “too busy” to cite why they do not volunteer,

## **Parish Life Survey 2006** CONTINUED

- Parish leader vision,
- They need to develop a parish sense of community, and
- How well informed they are.

In summary, the CARA report did demonstrate overall improvements in parish life from 1999 to 2006. This would suggest that, at least in some part, the Pastoral Plans were helping to develop a “commitment to Jesus Christ and deepening our relationship with God and to each other within the St. Matthew Parish Community”. This effect, however, seemed to be most profound on those already actively engaged in the parish and was not as prevalent in those less engaged or not engaged. At St. Matthew, only 49 percent of respondents attended Mass every week and 55 percent of respondents reported no involvement in any parish ministry or activity. The actual percentages are likely worse because the sample size only reflected those likely to fill out the survey and, therefore, represented only a portion of registered parishioners.

## **Pastoral Plan 2008 – 2011 Committee**

In the summer of 2007, Monsignor McSweeney commissioned a separate committee to review the present state of health of St. Matthew. The purpose of this Pastoral Plan Committee was to reassess in a top to bottom review the functioning of the parish and how well it is meeting the goals as outlined by our mission statement. This committee was to review and make recommendations across any and all areas regarding the functioning of St. Matthew ultimately culminating in the adoption of a new Pastoral Plan. This committee was encouraged to think “revolutionary” in order to take St. Matthew “to the next level” in terms of administering to the parishioners as well as to the greater Charlotte community, and to increase spiritual commitment.

The committee chosen represented a cross section of parish leaders. Members from the clergy, present and past Pastoral Council, Finance Council, and parish staff accepted the invitation for the review.

Initial meetings were held with parish staff managers and Sister Jeanne Marie Kienast. Pastoral Council meetings were attended and input solicited. An extensive review of the CARA study was performed. There was distribution and scoring of a Parish Vitality Survey to the committee, key parish staff and clergy members. An extensive SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis was performed by the committee and also by the staff managers. The results were reviewed and discussed with the committee as well as with the staff.

Initial review and discussion led to the conclusion that there were four areas of opportunity for betterment of the parish: spiritual development, communication, welcoming, and leadership development.

## **Pastoral Plan 2008 – 2011 Committee** CONTINUED

Additional areas that needed review included the structure and role of the Pastoral committees, the role of Pastoral Council, the future of Emmaus groups, Pastoral care and counseling, facilities, ecumenism, vocations, and future expansion.

### **Spiritual Development**

The general perception of clergy, staff members, and the Pastoral Committee was that, like many Catholic parishes in the United States, there were a significant number of parishioners that were not actively involved in their faith and in their church. They are “part-time participants”. They represent the majority, not minority, of the parish. The committee felt this was an area where a tremendous positive impact could be made by developing processes to engage those non-engaged parishioners and enhance spiritual development opportunities currently available for those already engaged.

### **Communication**

Based on detailed interviews, it was concluded that communication efforts at the staff level, convener level, ministry level, and to the parish as a whole, were poor. There were questions regarding the ability of the parish to utilize appropriate technology to reach the large number of parishioners and the most effective means to do this. There was universal disappointment in the web site. By improving these areas, great improvements in parish communication across the board would be expected.

### **Leadership Development**

The committee believed that the large number of ministries and leaders/volunteers provided a unique opportunity for enhanced leadership development. By implementing a plan stressing spiritual development and leadership training for all ministry leaders, it is believed that these “point people” could become facilitators of spiritual growth and parish engagement for the entire parish.

### **Welcoming**

With the explosive growth of the parish, the importance of trying to keep St. Matthew as a place where all, especially new parishioners, feel welcome was of paramount importance. Unique opportunities exist to significantly enhance the welcoming of all new parishioners. Additionally, by pursuing aggressive follow-up contact, this will maximize successful long-term engagement of new parishioners and enhance spirituality.

## The Prime Directive

The initial findings listed above were presented to Monsignor McSweeney and to the staff. With Monsignor taking the lead, all agreed that St. Matthew Parish needed to focus, first and foremost, on significantly raising the overall level of spirituality and engagement of all parishioners. This would be the prime directive. All other areas of opportunity would be addressed within the context of improving the spirituality and engagement of the parish.

## Researching the Prime Directive

The Pastoral Planning Committee commenced extensive research. The goal was to identify other Catholic parishes that instituted effective spiritual development programs. Publications were reviewed, interviews held, and web searches were made. Parishes that appeared to be welcoming and spiritual were contacted for information and advice.

Two Catholic parishes, Immaculate Heart of Mary in Cincinnati and St. Gerard Majella in Long Island were two of the first Catholic parishes in the United States that utilized a unique program of parish engagement from the Gallup organization. These parishes were highly enthusiastic regarding the program in terms of its effectiveness, functionality, and ability to objectively measure outcomes in spiritual commitment and parish engagement.

The Gallup organization was contracted and additional research led to the purchasing of two books: Growing an Engaged Church: How to Stop “Doing Church” and Start Being the Church Again and Living Your Strengths: Discovering Your God-Given Talents and Inspiring Your Community. The first of these books, Growing an Engaged Church, discussed the root causes of poor spirituality and poor parish engagement. Objective research was performed involving thousands of Christians across many denominations. A comprehensive questionnaire was developed to measure the spiritual commitment and engagement of parishioners. This objective measure, the Member Engagement Survey 25 (ME<sup>25</sup>), was used as a baseline measurement. Each year, a repeat ME<sup>25</sup> measurement is performed to see if the parish was making progress in its spiritual commitment and parish engagement.

The Living Your Strengths program will help an individual discover his/her unique God given talents. These are used for individual growth and discernment and, in many cases, lead to spiritual development and assists in ministry placement based upon the person's strengths.

## Researching the Prime Directive CONTINUED

Key points from Gallup include:

1. The two primary indicators of spiritual health are:
  - a. Spiritual commitment
  - b. Congregational engagement (Winseman, p. 44)
2. Contrary to what one would expect, spiritual commitment does not necessarily lead to parishioner engagement. The key points are:
  - a. Engaged belonging is more likely to lead to enhanced believing. The extent to which members feel engaged in their faith communities has a profound effect on their personal spiritual commitment.
  - b. Individuals who are highly engaged in their parish also tend to have high levels of personal spiritual commitment.
  - c. Parish leaders who focus their efforts on increasing a member's sense of belonging end up, not only increasing the member's engagement but also increasing their spiritual commitment.
  - d. Just being active in your church does not mean that you will be engaged. Engagement should match the individual's strengths.
    - i. Those "not engaged" in their church often are completely satisfied with their church, and they are not negative. However, they feel no significant emotional bond to their parish and thus do not center their life around their parish and have been shown to:
      1. Give less in contributions
      2. Volunteer less for ministries
      3. Be less inviting
      4. Be less spiritually committed
    - ii. Successful engagement depends upon many factors but the most important appear to be:
      1. A "rich soil" onto which the seed will fall. Such as:
        - a. Welcoming
        - b. Sustained, meaningful engagement
        - c. Small groups
        - d. A clear mission statement and clear expectations of membership to that parish.
      2. Parishioners discovering their unique talents that are given to them by God.

## **Researching the Prime Directive** CONTINUED

3. “The key characteristic for the engaged member is they organize their life around their Church” (Winseman, p. 67).

This statement is clearly in line with the stated goals of Monsignor McSweeney to make St. Matthew a Catholic spiritual oasis for all parishioners.

From this research, it was believed that spiritual development would be enhanced significantly if there were a strong emphasis on parishioner engagement. The engagement must occur in a rich and fertile soil of spiritually committed and engaged individuals. Engagement should focus on an individual’s God given talents as a human being and be guided by the Holy Spirit. With these factors in mind, the Pastoral Plan has been revised and presented herein.

# St. Matthew Catholic Church – Pastoral Plan 2008 – 2011

## Introduction

St. Matthew Catholic Church is approaching its silver jubilee in September of 2011. The Pastoral Plan presented here celebrates the amazing success of a dynamic, vibrant parish and faith community. Any successful parish that is growing and maturing must look to the past to keep close and celebrate those traditions that made it successful. However, in order to keep progressing on our faith journey, both individually and as a parish, one must have the courage to challenge the status quo. This plan is meant to challenge the status quo.

“The Pastoral Plan was created to become our personal covenant with God. The Pastoral Plan is a framework by which we can consummate a heartfelt commitment to Jesus Christ and deepen our relationship with God and to each other within the St. Matthew Parish Community” (2005-2008, p4.). This plan recognizes that the prime directive of our parish is to foster an environment that promotes spiritual development and engagement. St. Matthew should be a spiritual oasis for all parishioners. All liturgies, activities, ministries, and initiatives at St. Matthew should keep this prime directive as the beacon of light that we follow.

With this in mind, certain changes are recommended in this, the fourth Pastoral Plan of St. Matthew Catholic Church. The goal of these changes is to significantly increase the spiritual commitment and engagement of all parishioners at St. Matthew. Special emphasis will be placed on improving the spirituality and engagement of those parishioners that are not engaged in their faith. This plan will attempt to promote positive changes that will enhance spiritual development, welcoming, communication, and leadership development.

This is a four-year plan:

Year One	Year Two	Year Three	Year Four
Prepare the Soil	Plant the Seeds	Water the Crop	Reap the Harvest

Our goal, by September 2011, our silver jubilee, is to have one of the most dynamic, spiritually committed, and engaged Catholic Churches in the United States.

## Summary of Changes

This Pastoral Plan will differ from previous plans in several ways. The scope of the plan will go beyond the goals and objectives of the Pastoral Committee. Recommendations will be made regarding:

- Establishing a parish vision statement,
- Revising the parish mission statement,
- Establishing expectations for the parishioners, clergy, staff, and leadership at St. Matthew,
- Establishing a plan for regular measurement of parish spiritual commitment and engagement,
- Establishing a four-year plan to promote enhanced spiritual development, communication, leadership development, and welcoming,
- Implementing a Living Your Strengths engagement program,
- The role of the Pastoral Council,
- The role of the Finance Council,
- Pastoral committees/commissions,
- Establishment of an Engagement Committee,
- Emmaus groups,
- Homelessness,
- Young Adults,
- Vocations,
- Ecumenical activities,
- Pastoral care and counseling,
- Facilities, and
- Future growth and expansion of St. Matthew.

## Parish Vision Statement

The Pastoral Plan Committee and the Living Your Strengths Implementation Committee felt that St. Matthew should adopt a Vision Statement. This was to be a short, concise statement that would be easily remembered and memorized by all parishioners and would brand us as a parish and to the community. After much discussion, and consultation with the Pastoral Council and Clergy, the following was adopted as the St. Matthew Vision Statement:

***“Connected in Christ! Moved by the Spirit!”***

“*Connected in Christ*” was chosen because it reflects that our parish community is interconnected to each other but, most importantly, through our savior Jesus Christ. “*Moved by the Spirit*”, reflects the historical importance St. Matthew’s has placed on the guiding role of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is reflected in the stained glass window situated above the Corpus on the altar in the sanctuary. It is the Holy Spirit that bestows upon us God’s grace and guides us on our collective and individual faith journey. As we all sit in the sanctuary, above the altar is Christ on the cross and the dove of the Holy Spirit constantly in sight as a reminder of this vision statement.

It is recommended that wherever possible, the vision statement be incorporated into the activities and fabric of parish life. It should be prominently displayed on banners, posters, the bulletin, website, and correspondence from the parish. We would recommend that the dove, reflective of the Holy Spirit and present above our altar be the symbol prominently displayed on official St. Matthew documents, letterhead, correspondence, website, etc. to serve as a reflection of this new, exciting vision statement.

## Parish Mission Statement

The Pastoral Plan Committee and the Engagement Implementation Committee also felt that the present mission statement should be modified. It needed to reflect our desire to be an engaged and spiritually committed parish, yet still maintain the original meaning of the mission statement adopted upon founding the parish. This recommendation was accepted and the parish mission statement was revised to the following:

***The Eucharistic Catholic community of Saint Matthew loves Christ above all things and our neighbors as ourselves. In our faith journey, our parish family will be engaged and spiritually committed; fulfilling our vision through shared Gospel values, prayer, fellowship, service, outreach, and teaching.***

This revised mission statement retains the two great commandments and focuses on prayer and service found in our original mission statement. It also espouses the themes of engagement and spiritual commitment vital for spiritual growth as part of our prime directive for this Pastoral Plan. In addition, it reflects the desire promoted by Monsignor McSweeney of shared Gospel values and commitment to teaching.

We recommend that official correspondence, the website, etc. reflect the new mission statement upon adoption of this Pastoral Plan.

## Parish Expectations

Why establish expectations? Expectations provide an unequivocal statement of what it means to be a parishioner at St. Matthew. “Members need to know what is expected of them if they are to develop a strong sense of belonging within their congregation...clear expectations lay the foundation for everything else your congregation is called to do and be” (Winseman, p. 84). The scriptural basis for the importance of covenants is found in 2 Corinthians 3:4-6.

The initial Member Engagement Survey 25 (ME<sup>25</sup>) measurement demonstrated that most parishioners did not know what was expected of them. In addition, many parishioners believed that their opinions did not matter and spiritual leaders did not seem to care about them as a person. These findings suggest that parishioners do not have adequate opportunities to express their opinions or that these opinions are discounted.

In order to help improve parishioner involvement, it was decided to solicit from the parish their thoughts on expectations. In May of 2008, such a solicitation was obtained from the parishioners, clergy, lay leadership, and staff of St. Matthew.

There were two broad areas addressed:

1. What is expected of you as a parishioner at St. Matthew?
2. What should a parishioner expect of the clergy, staff, and leadership of St. Matthew?

This solicitation was done and culminated in “Expectation Sunday” in which all parishioners were invited to specifically give their opinion on these two questions. Many ideas and suggestions came from the parishioners.

The responses were reviewed. Expectations received were evaluated with specific attention as to whether they were in accordance with Canon Law and the Catholic Catechism. The expectations were also reviewed with the idea that they should reflect the uniqueness of St. Matthew. The list of expectations were then reviewed and submitted for approval to the Pastor in June of 2008.

## **Parish Expectations** CONTINUED

Clergy, staff, and ministry leaders will:

- Inspire spirituality
- Teach the Catholic faith
- Cultivate an open and welcoming atmosphere
- Be good stewards of parishioners' gifts of time, talent, and treasure

Parishioners will:

- Attend and participate in Sunday mass and Holy Days of Obligation
- Grow in faith and spirituality
- Share time, talent, and treasure
- Be welcoming to fellow parishioners

It is recommended that there be a yearly Expectation Validation Sunday in which the expectations listed above are presented to and validated by the parish. We recommend that after year one of this Pastoral Plan, a Covenant Sunday should be held in which parishioners have the option to sign a covenant indicating their willingness to live the expectations established.

## **Parish Spirituality Measurement**

We believe it is important to objectively measure the parish level of spirituality and engagement. We recommend that the parish continue to utilize the Member Engagement Survey (ME<sup>25</sup>) that was first administered to the Parish in December. The ME<sup>25</sup> has the advantage of ease of administration and is designed and researched specifically as a spirituality and engagement measuring instrument.

The ME<sup>25</sup> should be administered at least every other year and consideration should be made for yearly measurements depending on cost.

## **The Four Year Plan for Spiritual Development, Communication, Leadership Development, and Welcoming**

The Pastoral Plan Committee identified the following as critical areas that the next Pastoral Plan needed to address: Spiritual Development, Communication, Leadership Development, and Welcoming.

Previous Pastoral Plans have been three years. This plan is more ambitious and far reaching. An additional year will be necessary for successful implementation.

## The Four Year Plan for Spiritual Development, Communication, Leadership Development, and Welcoming CONTINUED

We propose that the four year plan be considered in the following way:

Year 1 – Prepare the Soil



Year 2 – Plant the Seeds



Year 3 – Water the Crops



Year 4 – Reap the Harvest



We believe the critical areas identified could be positively impacted in four years. The goal would be to make substantial improvements so that by our silver jubilee, the parish will be well on its way to being fully engaged and spiritually vibrant.

### **Prepare the Soil Overview – Year 1**

Year one will be a critical year because from this year, each succeeding year must build. It will involve the most work in terms of process implementation and program development. The Pastoral Council will comprehensively review ministries and Pastoral Committees. Recommendations will then be made to the Pastor regarding the Pastoral Committees and ministry placement for the respective committees. Full implementation of the Pastoral Council recommendations should be completed before the end of year one. Likewise, communication consultants from UNCC will complete their communication audit and make recommendations for the present and future communication needs of the parish. Implementation of an engagement program, Living Your Strengths, and a welcoming and leadership development program will be completed in year one. These will lay the foundation for enhanced spiritual development of the parish and nurturing programs already in place like *Why Catholic?* that has been especially successful in fostering spiritual growth.

Just like a farmer that tills the ground, unless the soil is rich, there will be no harvest regardless of the seeds or watering. No one area will be considered more important than the other. A seamless garment of engagement, spiritual development, communication, welcoming, and leadership development must be woven. This will then provide the fertile soil in which the parishioners, when properly engaged, will grow spiritually.

### **Plant the Seed Overview – Year 2**

Year two will see planting of the seeds in earnest. If year one is successful, we will have the first evidence of enhanced spiritual development, communication, welcoming, and leadership development. Parishioners, both new and old, will then be integrated more fully into the parish. New parishioners will not only be engaged from the outset but there will be continuous follow-up throughout the year.

Appropriate discernment of one's God-given talents will be enhanced for willing parishioners, both new and current. More appropriate ministry placement should occur based upon the strengths of the member, not on the need of the parish. Additionally, each ministry will stress a common program of spiritual development taught by the ministry leaders who have been appropriately trained. Those already engaged members of the parish should take full advantage of the enhanced spiritual development programs.

### **Water the Crop Overview – Year 3**

Year three will see program enhancements and improvements. In the third year, more palpable improvements in the spiritual and engagement should be seen. The initial uncertainty of the parish towards the plan should be replaced by excitement to be a part of a vibrant community. Just like crops emerging from the ground with the spring rains, the spirituality of the individual and the parish should rise. More substantial increases in the ME<sup>25</sup> scores should be noted as programs and process improvements take full effect in year three.

### **Reap the Harvest Overview – Year 4**

At this point, further program enhancements should be performed but the parish should see the full fruits of the preceding three years of hard work. The goal would be a 40 percent engagement score as measured by Gallup on the ME<sup>25</sup>. The parish will hopefully be in a position to celebrate its silver jubilee knowing that it is one of the most engaged Catholic Churches in the United States.

## **Specific Areas to be addressed: Spiritual Development, Communication, Welcoming, and Leadership Development**

### **Spiritual Development**

For spiritual development to occur both individually and as a parish, there must be recognition that no one particular program or ministry will provide the key for all members of the parish. Spiritual development occurs in different ways for different people at different times in their life. Spiritual growth is a complex process, dependent on many factors and guided by the Holy Spirit.

The role of St. Matthew is to provide a varied and rich “fertile soil” so that as one lives out their individual faith journey, there is ample opportunity to grow in this soil both individually and as a faith community.

The main driver for spiritual development is through engagement. The engaged parishioner will grow spiritually. At St. Matthew, 84 percent of the parish is not engaged based upon our initial ME<sup>25</sup> results. The same ME<sup>25</sup> survey, however, found that parishioners of St. Matthew were somewhat spiritually committed if not necessarily engaged. This provides an opportunity for the average parishioner to grow spiritually, if properly engaged.

It is recommended that an effective way to improve parish spiritual growth would be continued full implementation on the Living Your Strengths program with a commitment to continue this program on an ongoing basis. Details are listed under the Living Your Strengths Program of this Pastoral Plan. This program will serve as a conduit to the many varied spiritual enhancing programs already in place like *Why Catholic?*.

## **Spiritual Development** CONTINUED

*Why Catholic?* is an example of the “fertile soil” in which the engaged parishioner must be planted. St. Matthew presently has many ministries and educational opportunities that represent fertile ground for the engaged parishioner. We believe with a sustained engagement program, a significant number of parishioners will gravitate toward some type of service or ministry within the parish. They will be more likely to attend seminars, parish education opportunities, and missions. Like-minded and talented individuals working and volunteering together will provide the impetus for remarkable growth in spirituality.

It is also noted in the appropriate sections of this Pastoral Plan, that a properly implemented Communication, Welcoming, and Leadership Development plans will facilitate spiritual development through a “seamless garment” of engagement.

The recommendations for the Pastoral Committees will allow for a common thread of spirituality, service, and social interaction that make ministries “good soil” for any parishioner desiring to become engaged. We anticipate growth in new ministries and better coordination and cooperation with community resources to direct a parishioner if his or her strengths better match an outside engagement opportunity. Such community outreach will facilitate spiritual development.

In summary, all aspects of this Pastoral Plan facilitate, in one-way or another, spiritual development. The key is proper implementation and execution of the plan with yearly monitoring and revision.

## **Communication**

A successful, integrated communication plan is vital. This plan outlines what is believed to be the necessary ingredients for effective communication at St. Matthew. This includes technological considerations as well as human considerations. A separate communication plan has been developed and submitted to the Pastor. This plan is outlined in Appendix A.

A communication audit and consultation is being performed through the communication department at UNCC. At the time this Pastoral Plan was submitted, this audit was still ongoing. The audit included interviewing of staff and clergy, focus group discussions with groups of parishioners, and meeting with the Pastoral Plan committee.

We recommend review of the communication audit prepared by UNCC. Implementation of relevant recommendations should occur during the first year consistent with the basic principles as outlined in the communication plan in Appendix A.

## **Welcoming**

Successful engagement must start with the very first encounter for any new parishioner. There needs to be a comprehensive plan of engagement for new members of the parish as well as a plan for sustained engagement after that person becomes a parishioner.

The Pastoral Planning Committee felt a comprehensive program for Welcoming was in order. The plan is fully delineated in Appendix B. As outlined, it will provide seamless integration of new members into the parish community and maximize successful engagement.

## **Leadership Development**

Leadership Development is critically important because it not only “Prepares the Soil” to ensure effective engagement, but also deepens the soil for long-term viability of newly engaged parishioners. Consistent communication to all parish leaders should provide the impetus for spiritual growth and development.

All parish leaders need to be familiar with the parish vision and mission statement. All parish activities need to keep these in mind and all leaders should be aware of the prime directive as outlined by this plan to enhance spiritual development and engagement of parishioners.

The Leadership Development plan recommended by the Pastoral Planning Committee is outlined in Appendix C. The highlights of this plan include integration and coordination of efforts between the Living Your Strengths program, the present Evangelization Committee spiritual development efforts, and the establishment of a Leadership Development Steering Team that would work with the Coordinator of Volunteers.

If properly implemented, lay leadership at St. Matthew will be more effective, not only in facilitating enhanced spiritual development for parishioners, but they will also become more effective ministry and community leaders.

## Engagement and Living Your Strengths Program

“People are most likely to be fully engaged when they are doing what they do best...members who strongly agreed that they have the opportunity to do what they do best are more than 2 ½ times as likely as the average member to be engaged and 38 times as likely to be engaged as they were to be actively disengaged” (Winseman, p. 132-133).

The key characteristic for engaged parishioners is that they will “organize their life around their church” (Winseman, p. 67). A large part of effective engagement is proper gift discernment, which helps each individual understand those unique talents given to him or her by God. The Living Your Strengths program is not the source of spiritual development itself, per se, but helps the individual become engaged. Once, engaged parishioners will become more involved in ministry or one of the many programs already available at St. Matthew. Once planted in this fertile soil, then spiritual growth will be more likely to occur.

St. Matthew Catholic Church has already begun implementing the Engagement and Living Your Strengths. An Implementation Committee that oversees all aspects of the Engagement Program has been established. Specifics are noted in Appendix D.

## Pastoral Council

In November of 2007, Bishop Jugis released a comprehensive guideline for Parish Pastoral Councils for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Charlotte.

The role of the Pastoral Council is to bring concerns that affect the whole of the parish to the attention of the Pastor. ‘Parish level concerns’ are key to the Council’s success. The only items that should be discussed at the council level are parish wide issues or those items the Pastor chooses to bring to the council. The Pastoral Council’s chief concern is the implementation of the Pastoral Plan and its maintenance. St. Matthew reviewed all the recommendations made by Bishop Jugis. The present selection process for Pastoral Council members, Pastoral Plan development and implementation, Pastoral Planning cycles, and Pastoral commission (committee) review are all in compliance except the recommendation of Bishop Jugis that the Pastoral Council review commission (committee) budgets before submission to the parish Finance Council for action by the Pastor.

## **Pastoral Council** CONTINUED

It would be our recommendation that the present system in place at St. Matthew is functioning adequately, and we do not recommend that the Pastoral Council review all commission/committee budgets before submission to the Pastor and the Finance Council. The reason for this is that each commission (committee) has a delegated staff member that is responsible for budget requests as part of their job, and they report directly to the Pastor and the Finance Council. In addition, a delegate of the Pastoral Council attends Finance Council meetings. This arrangement insures appropriate input and communication between the Pastor, Pastoral and Finance committees.

### **Finance Council Recommendation**

The role of the Finance Council is to advise the Pastor in matters pertaining to the financial affairs of the parish. We have no specific recommendations for the Finance Council except to encourage them to go through the Living Your Strengths Program.

The Finance Council should assist in tracking the contributions, before and after, of those who have been through the Living Your Strengths Program, as a way to assess the program's effectiveness. In addition, Finance Council should understand the overall spirit of the Pastoral Plan and assist in providing the funds necessary for those components of the plan that need financial support for success. This would be under the direction of the Pastor and must be fiscally responsible to the parish as a whole. In addition, a facilities advisory committee will be established under the direction of the Finance Council.

### **Pastoral Committee Recommendation**

The present Pastoral Plan recognizes six separate Pastoral Committees: Word, Worship, Community, Service, Evangelization, and Stewardship. Traditionally, the Pastoral Committees were formed to ensure the parish mission statement was being fulfilled and the committees were considered as an extension of the Pastoral Council. Each committee was expected to create specific goals and objectives annually to meet the liturgical and community needs of the parish.

In previous Pastoral Plans, a volunteer convener led each committee. These conveners were to form a committee of volunteer parishioners to assist in running the committee. Each committee was to have a staff member assigned to assist in the functioning. In practice, however, there was inconsistent coordination and oversight for some of the committees. At any one time, up to half of the committees lacked a convener. In addition, convener burnout and succession became a problem.

## **Pastoral Committee Recommendation** CONTINUED

Over time, because of these problems, paid staff have assumed operational running of most committee functions. This includes the yearly goal development and assessment previously performed under the guidance of the Pastoral Council.

With the present Pastoral Plan, we believe that a systematic review of all six committees should occur. The reason for this review should be to try and identify the cause of the problems enumerated above as well as to try and make recommendations for a long-term solution. Committee structure as well as assessment of each individual ministry listed for each respective committee should be performed. Ministry review should be conducted from a Living Your Strengths perspective. Specifically, each ministry and its respective ministry leader should be geared towards appropriate engagement to facilitate spiritual development and growth. The specifics can be found in the Living Your Strengths and Leadership Development portions of this plan.

This assessment and recommendation process has already been started under the direction of the Pastoral Council. We believe that this review should be given one year to be completed and recommend that the appropriate Pastoral Council committee report findings and recommendations to the Pastor by June of 2009. This time frame is consistent with the stated theme of year one of this Pastoral Plan, "Preparing the Soil". Proper committee and ministry function will be vital to a successful engagement program and subsequent spiritual growth for the parish and its members.

We believe the goal at the end of this review should be the reinstatement of the Committee structure initially developed by the original Pastoral Plans and presently recommended by Bishop Jugis in the Diocese Guide for Pastoral Councils. This would include volunteer conveners with parishioner committee members working with staff liaisons. We hope that a Living Your Strengths approach will lead to better recruitment and placement of parishioners in the convener and committee roles, thus resolving many of the problems previously seen in some committees. We also believe implementation of an appropriate communication policy and leadership development program will facilitate improvement in committee functioning.

Until the review process has been performed, the present committee structure and functioning should be maintained. We are recommending that the ad hoc Engagement Committee, established in December 2007, become a seventh Pastoral Committee. These committees and ministries are as listed:

### **Worship Committee**

Recognizing that the Sunday Eucharistic celebration is the very heart of our Catholic Christian spirituality and strengthened by the word and nourished by the Eucharist, the St. Matthew faith community is sent forth into the world to boldly proclaim the good news of God's Kingdom.

**Worship Committee** CONTINUED

Public Worship Ministries:

- Altar Guild
- Arts & Environment (Seams of Faith)
- Mass Coordinators
- Sacristans
- Ministers of the Word
- Ministers of Hospitality (Ushers)
- Altar Servers
- Children's Liturgy
- Extraordinary Ministers of Communion
- Welcome Center (Including Greeters)
- Ministers of Music
- Sound Technicians

Private Worship Ministries:

- Charismatic Prayer Group
- Prayer Line
- Healing Prayer Group
- Our Lady's Rosary Makers
- Eucharistic Adoration
- Cursillo
- Military Prayer Line

**Word Committee**

Spiritual formation is the ongoing process of maturation and growth. This occurs in many formal and informal ways within the parish for adults, youth, and children.

The Word Committee has the vital role of educating parishioners of all ages. It is recommended that special emphasis be made to facilitate additional input from varied parishioners regarding all aspects of faith formation. A strong convener and committee structure to assist in this critical committee is recommended.

Sacramental Ministries:

- Baptism
- First Eucharist
- Pre-Cana
- Special Sacraments
- First Reconciliation
- Confirmation
- RCIA

**Word Committee** CONTINUED

Youth Faith Formation:

- Preschool
- Middle School
- Life Teen
- Peer Ministry
- Elementary
- Edge
- S.P.R.E.D. / Ann's Angels
- Vacation Bible School

Adult Faith Formation:

- SM yoU
- Back to the Basics
- Catholicism 101
- Teams of Our Lady
- MOMS
- Called to be Mom
- Little Rock Bible Study
- Share the Word
- Catechist Recognition Process (CRP)
- Family Enrichment
- First Friday Retreats

Others:

- Youth Sports Ministry
- Parish Library

### **Service Committee**

There can be no fidelity to Christ, His teaching, or His Church without the element of service to others.

Ministries:

- A Childs Place
- Blood Give-In
- Disaster Relief
- Family Assist
- Friendship Trays
- H.E.L.P.
- Mel's Diner
- Haiti, Jamaica, and Kentucky Mission
- Refugee Resettlement
- RAIN
- Sandwich Programs
- Angel Tree
- Crop Walk
- Donated Goods
- Food Pantry
- Habitat for Humanity
- Lunch to go
- Muffin Ministry
- Men's Winter Shelter
- Peace and Justice Ministry
- Respect Life
- Uptown Men's Shelter

## Community Committee

Responding to the baptismal call to holiness in family, church, and society, the community ministries will provide resources, guidance, and support that will deepen the spiritual and social needs of all parishioners and raise the awareness to live the gift and choice of faith through active membership in the church.

Ministries:

- Young Adult Life
- Bowling
- Emmaus Group
- Knights of Columbus
- Christians in Career Transition
- STAR
- WelcomeMatt
- Newcomers Group
- Bridge Group
- Columbiettes
- Christian Coffeehouse
- Columbian Squires
- Boy Scouts of America
- St. Matthew Area Catholic Singles
- Women's Guild
- Girl Scouts USA

## Stewardship Committee

Stewardship as a way of life is carrying the spirit of gratitude from our Eucharistic Liturgy into our daily lives by sharing our individual time, talent, and treasure for the fulfillment of our parish mission, and to benefit our community.

We would recommend close coordination of the activities of the Stewardship Committee with the Evangelization and Engagement Committees to help increase the overall spirituality within the parish.

## Evangelization Committee

The proclamation of the message of Christ is the fundamental mission of the church and every parish. The mission of all members of the church is to practice their faith with enthusiasm, to invite others to share their faith, and to transform society.

This committee has a direct effect on the present and future spiritual growth of the parish through programs that stress Worship, Faith Formation, and Evangelization. Training for parish leaders is ongoing. Emphasis is placed on the critical importance of small groups. The *Why Catholic?* program is helpful for spiritual development and its small group structure should improve engagement for many parishioners. This should continue under Evangelization.

## **Engagement Committee**

The Growing an Engaged Church program is presently being implemented at St. Matthew. As outlined previously, this engagement program becomes the driver for spiritual development by effectively planting the non-engaged into the “Fertile Soil” being prepared at St. Matthew. We believe this will be an ongoing program for years to come at St. Matthew. It is our recommendation that a new Pastoral Committee be established as the Engagement Committee.

This committee would be responsible for oversight of all components of engagement including the Living Your Strengths program, the ME<sup>25</sup> survey, etc. It will take part in “Impact Planning Sessions” after each future survey and adjust our engagement plan accordingly. It should have a staff liaison, a convener, and committee members from the parish. This committee would work closely with the Evangelization and Stewardship Committees and will have a significant role in the implementation of the Welcoming Plan.

The objective for the parish is to increase Engagement as measured by the Gallup Member Engagement 25 survey (ME<sup>25</sup>) from 16 percent in December 2007 to 40 percent by the end of 2011.

## **Emmaus Group Recommendation**

Emmaus groups have served their purpose of helping parishioners connect with other neighborhood Catholics. We recommend the Pastoral Council address in an expedited fashion the present Emmaus group situation. We believe that an opportunity may exist to utilize certain Emmaus group leaders who are excellent coordinators, for the proposed Welcoming changes listed in this Pastoral Plan. The ultimate plan for the Emmaus groups should be finalized after the comprehensive ministry review is completed by the Pastoral Council. The recommendations should be made no later than June 2009.

## **Homelessness**

The issue of chronic homelessness, especially affecting mothers and young children, has become a crisis in the Charlotte region. There is presently a task force in place at St. Matthew reviewing this issue. It would be our recommendation to fully support a unique Catholic response to this issue. Consideration should be given to potential collaborative efforts with other Catholic parishes to combat this devastating problem.

## **Young Adults**

St. Matthew has a particularly young population, many of whom are married with children. There has, however, been a consistent plea from the substantial number of young parishioners that are adults between the ages of 20 and 40 that are searching for activities and spiritual guidance through the church. We recommend that there be special attention directed to the young adults of the parish through the establishment of a Young Adults Ministry to administer to the needs of this group of parishioners.

## **Vocations**

Vocation encouragement needs to be a greater part of the fabric of St. Matthew parish. The new Vocations Awareness Apostolate Ministry is an excellent idea and should receive the full support of the parish. In addition, we recommend the following:

1. At least twice a year, clergy and Pastoral associates can be incorporated into some type of Life Teen event or discussion with the specific intent of educating the teens on the potential calling to the religious life.
2. Work with the Living Your Strengths small group facilitators and coaches as well as with the Gift Discernment coordinators to identify potential men and women who may be especially motivated to consider the priesthood, diaconate, or religious life.
3. Try to incorporate into the Confirmation program some type of vocation education.
4. Regular prayers at mass for vocations.
5. Guest speakers specifically on vocation awareness.

## **Ecumenical Activities**

St. Matthew has a rich tradition of ecumenical spirit. This needs to be further developed. We believe the establishment of an Ecumenical Ministry with the goal of promoting and fostering ecumenical activities is needed. Activities could include but would not be limited to:

1. Regular discussion and talks from other religious denominations on topics of interest that would be open to all.
  - a. Videotaping and then placing on the internet for downloading should be considered.
2. Coordination of outreach activities between congregations.
3. Ambassador programs where parishioners attend the services of other churches and then report on the experience and make it available on our website.

The new ministry would likely be placed under Service.

## **Pastoral Care and Counseling**

The committee has no specific recommendations regarding these areas at the present time. We are collectively concerned that the time demands placed upon the clergy to cover Pastoral Care restrict their availability to assist in other areas of need, especially youth programs. We do not see any easy answer to this problem.

## **Pastoral Care and Counseling** CONTINUED

Counseling is self contained at the present time, and we have no specific recommendations other than to encourage utilization of the Living Your Strengths program for appropriate clients who may benefit greatly from this program. Counselors should consider participating in the engagement program. They may also be excellent individuals to undergo coach training.

In addition, there are numerous support groups that utilize the facilities at St. Matthew Catholic Church that are not specifically associated with the parish. Examples include Al-Anon, CODA, Depression/Mood Disorders, Narcotics Anonymous, etc. The groups that use our facilities should be reviewed on an annual basis to make sure that their function is consistent with the mission statement of the parish and the beliefs of the Catholic Church in general.

## **Facilities**

Present facilities management is in excellent hands. An ad hoc committee under the direction of the Finance Council and including the Facilities Manager should be established to decide the best utilization of the campus. We believe whatever is decided regarding the campus should utilize “green” materials and preservation techniques to minimize disruption of the present natural environment.

## **Growth and Expansion of St. Matthew**

The growth of St. Matthew has been nothing short of astounding and will likely continue with the residential and business development that is occurring most notably to the south and east of the present campus.

Recent excellent parishioner utilization of St. Margaret’s Episcopal Church as a satellite for the main campus has allowed St. Matthew to test the principal of a “branch campus” of the main parish building.

We recommend that St. Matthew aggressively pursue further development and expansion of our parish services (masses, education classes, faith formation, etc.) to the south and east of the present campus. We believe that this will better serve those individuals who are in the territory of our present parish. We also believe that this satellite model should stay under the present clergy and staff of St. Matthew for several reasons. First, we are already demonstrating the success of this model and it should continue. Second, this model allows for efficiency and appropriate utilization of clergy time and prevents duplication of staff services in any potential new parish that may be considered. Third, those parishioners served by this arrangement are particularly loyal to the unique environment we have established at St. Matthew and have expressed a desire to stay a part of our overall parish community but just in a more convenient location to where they work and live.

# Appendix A

## Pastoral Plan 2008 – 2011 Communication Plan

### Vision

St. Matthew Catholic Church will grow spiritually as a community by utilizing an effective, comprehensive communication plan.

### Goal

1. St. Matthew will incorporate the appropriate technology to allow effective communication between:
  - a. Clergy and staff
  - b. Clergy and parishioners
  - c. Staff and parishioners
  - d. Staff members
  - e. Staff and ministries
  - f. Ministries
2. St. Matthew will invest in the appropriate technology to accomplish the communication goals.
3. St. Matthew will be able to expand present communication technologies to meet future growth and demand.
4. St. Matthew will provide adequate and ongoing training for clergy, staff, and selected parishioners in the appropriate and effective utilization of communication technologies.
5. St. Matthew will make every effort to foster open and regular communication at the Clergy and staff level to enhance cooperation and efficiency between and among all members of the staff.
6. St. Matthew will make every effort to enhance effective communication for those unable to access electronic means of communication.

## **Effective Communication to the Parish and Between and Among Ministries**

With over 7,000 registered families and greater than 100 ongoing ministries, the communication needs for St. Matthew are overwhelming. In order to develop spiritually as a faith community as well as effectively interact outside the parish, a comprehensive communication strategy is needed. This includes the appropriate electronic and non-electronic communication devices and most importantly a dedicated core of clergy, staff, and volunteers willing to implement and then support the communication infrastructure.

Any changes to the communication infrastructure should occur over a four year time frame. Appropriate funding must be secured and professional guidance sought where needed. It would be imprudent to utilize anything but high quality companies/consultants where appropriate due to the critical nature of this decision-making.

### **Electronic Communication**

A consultant has already reviewed the present communication infrastructure and planned server purchases. The present technology plan and technical support appears to be adequate for the planned electronic and website enhancements.

There is presently, in place a communication plan with limited scope. It provides a policy on the appropriate utilization of electronic communication (i.e.: email). It dictates who has the authority to send generalized parishioner emails, how email groups are to be used, and recommendations for electronic communication between and among ministries, Pastoral committees/conveners, staff, and clergy. This St. Matthew policy will need to be expanded as communication methods expand.

The following should be considered as it relates to electronic communication:

1. Email/Computer hardware and software/phones
  - a. Appropriate software and hardware should be fully utilized to establish user groups including but not limited to
  - b. The system should maximize efficiency, speed, and ease of utilization. This should include the ability to send and receive digital faxes, possibly video conferencing.
  - c. Ease of expandability and reliability.
  - d. Appropriate email “pushes” and the ability of parishioners to subscribe and unsubscribe to regular messages.

**Electronic Communication** CONTINUED

2. Website
  - a. Appropriate hardware/servers and software should be fully utilized to establish a comprehensive, fully functioning website including but not limited to the following functions:
    - i. St. Matthew calendar
    - ii. Email links for groups listed in 1.a.
    - iii. Online registration forms (fill out online, not simply downloadable)
    - iv. Online curriculum
    - v. Service opportunities
  - b. Web pages
    - i. Each individual ministry should have their specific web page that is linked off the main website.
  - c. Web casts
    - i. An online archive of downloadable web casts including digitally recorded
  - d. Electronic Contributions
  - e. Online St. Matthew Store
  - f. Miscellaneous
3. Video Production
  - a. Present video screens and projectors installed in the church may provide additional communication opportunities.
4. Miscellaneous Issues
  - a. Professional guidance would be recommended for any issues surrounding security, large-scale equipment purchases or major computer upgrades.

### **Non-electronic Communication**

St. Matthew will increasingly rely on electronic methods for the dissemination of information to parishioners but there will always be a need for more traditional forms of communication.

1. Bulletin
  - a. The present bulletin is somewhat cumbersome. Review graphic layout to see if improvements can be made. Possibly a redesign may be in order.
2. Mail
  - a. With increasing postage, minimize direct mailings to save money. Encourage internet utilization.
3. St. Matthew newspaper or magazine
  - a. This may have merit and should be discussed by communication committee.
4. Outside posters and flyers
  - a. Should continue as adjunct communication aide.

### **Future Considerations**

Consideration for a St. Matthew magazine, over air broadcasting (radio/television) among other ideas is possible in 5 – 10 years.

Developing of a joint use ecumenical/evangelization center with state-of-the-art digital recording studios and amphitheater has been suggested as a possible use for the corner lot. This would allow a one of a kind center emphasizing faith development and ecumenical activities at the same time maximizing communication through mass media for distribution to the parish and the region via the website.

# Appendix B

## Welcoming Plan

### Vision

To help create a sense of belonging, the parish of St. Matthew will be welcoming to all.

### Responsibility

Welcoming is the responsibility of every parishioner. It will start from the pulpit and extend into the pews, the parish offices, and into our neighborhoods. Although parish leaders, staff, and the Welcoming Committee should be models of a welcoming attitude, all parishioners share this responsibility as well.

### Welcoming Committee

A new Welcoming Committee will be established in 2008. It will continue indefinitely at the discretion of the Pastor. Asked to serve on this committee will be the ministry heads of WelcomeMatt, Welcome Desk, Greeters, Newcomers Group, Ministry of Hospitality, Emmaus Group Leaders, the office Reception Desk, and others as the Spirit leads. This committee will reassess our current welcoming efforts and make recommendations to improve WELCOMING at St. Matthew. Welcoming, along with Spiritual Development, Leadership Development, and Communications, was deemed an area of focus by the Pastoral Planning Committee and Monsignor McSweeney for the 2008-2011 Pastoral Plan. Recommendations should be made by the end of 2008 with implementation by the end of 2009.

### Considerations for Review Process

- The Welcoming Committee should first start with a complete review of current practices for Welcoming at St. Matthew.
- Conduct interviews with a representative sample of new parishioners registered over the past two years. The sample should include youth and be ethnically and economically diverse. Focus groups can be used as appropriate.
- Interview sample of non-registered mass attendees.
- Research Welcoming best practices at other parishes or churches.

## **Welcoming Plan** CONTINUED

### **Possible Improvement Areas**

- Revised Welcome Packet.
- Formal new member orientation.
- Dedicated “Welcoming Rooms”.
- Parish Website Welcoming improvements.
- Increased Welcoming role for Emmaus groups.
- Welcome baskets containing appropriate symbolic gifts.
- Tie-in with gifts discernment (Living Your Strengths).
- New Member follow-up ministry.

# Appendix C

## Leadership Development Plan

### Vision

St. Matthew will develop a comprehensive leadership development program for its clergy, staff, and lay leadership.

### Goal

1. St. Matthew will establish yearly education/training requirements for all ministry leaders including:
  - a. Quarterly training opportunities,
  - b. Living Your Strengths program for ministry leaders, and
  - c. Evangelizing Committee training requirements.
2. St. Matthew will promote spiritual development training as part of all leadership-training activities.
3. St. Matthew will develop a leadership development manual for lay leadership.
4. St. Matthew will provide ongoing training opportunities for clergy, staff, and lay leadership beyond those training opportunities initiated or available in the parish.

We propose that leadership development be facilitated and promoted in several ways. Presently the Evangelization Committee has an ongoing initiative promoting spiritual development and concentrates on individual worship, faith formation, and outreach. This program should be offered quarterly at St. Matthew and all parish leaders (Parish Council, Finance Council, ministry leader, etc.) should be required to attend one of these sessions per year. The goal of this program is to instill in each ministry leader the importance of ongoing personal spiritual development balancing between worship/prayer experiences, formation of our minds in the faith and sharing our faith by reaching out to others, and the expectation to foster the spiritual development of all ministry volunteers in these same areas.

**Goal CONTINUED**

Secondly, we propose the institution of a Leadership Development Steering Team. This would include the Coordinator of Volunteers and five to six current or past proven parish leaders. This team would develop a new Leadership Training Program that would, among other things, delineate and then communicate expectations to ministry leaders. This Leadership Development Team would create a ministry leader handbook and training process to develop a successful coordinator. The Team would develop ministry and leader evaluation forms and plan Leadership workshops. These should and could be carefully coordinated with the Evangelization Committee training program and could likely be done in one day to minimize time commitments for the leaders and maximize attendance and efficiency of training.

Thirdly, we propose that all ministry leaders go through the Living Your Strengths program. This will allow leaders to understand the importance of recognizing God-given talents in others and themselves. It would promote proper discernment of prospective ministry volunteers based on the particular talents of those individuals. If a good match is not there, that individual could be moved to a different ministry or recommended for individual coaching session with a Strength Coach.

Finally, St. Matthew has always promoted leadership development opportunities for the staff and clergy. This should continue. Consideration should be made for associate clergy to attend the Gallup Leadership Program. St. Matthew should also attempt to become a regional center of excellence for the Living Your Strengths training for the Southeast. This could include coach training and facilitator training opportunities. These leadership development opportunities could position St. Matthew as a recognized regional and national authority in leadership training programs.

# Appendix D

## Engagement and Living Your Strengths Program

One of the main drivers for spiritual development is engagement in one's parish. This engagement becomes the seed, and when placed in good soil, will grow. Research from the Gallup Faith Division also indicates that engagement is most successful when it matches most closely those God-given talents for each individual.

Starting in the winter of 2007, St. Matthew began the implementation of the engagement program called Living Your Strengths. The goal of this program is to systematically help individual parishioners discover their God-given talents and then better utilize those in all aspects of their life. The hope is that this will allow an individual to become more engaged in the parish and with the good soil found at St. Matthew, enhance the spirituality of the individual and the parish collectively.

The program has three components:

1. Identifying each person's God-given talents, using Gallup's Clifton StrengthsFinder,
2. Opportunity for additional discernment/discourse regarding these talents through participation in a small group session Living Your Strengths, and
3. Nurturing your strengths.

### Talent Measurement

The Gallup organization has produced a book entitled Living Your Strengths. This "manual" of talent and strength discernment offers a comprehensive discussion of the 34 unique themes of strengths that all individuals can possess. Through an online questionnaire, an individual can discover his or her God-given top five themes unique to them. The text describes in detail these themes and is meant to assist an individual in understanding that one is at their best when one does what they do best. Rather than trying to correct our deficiencies, we are better to focus and improve upon our natural talents.

St. Matthew will offer basic instruction and the opportunity to purchase the Living Your Strengths text which includes the necessary information to take the Strengths assessment test online. For some, this may be all that they may wish to do. Individual faith journeys will dictate how far an individual will go with this program. It is hoped that most individuals will wish to investigate their God-given talents further, which will potentially lead to an overall increase in parish engagement.

## **Discernment Opportunities**

### *Small Group Sessions*

At St. Matthew, this program is being modified to include a more Catholic focused version. Beta testing versions are being developed at St. Matthew and a facilitator-training manual has been produced to ensure consistency of small group sessions.

The full parish roll out of the Living Your Strengths program will occur in September of 2008. This will be a continuous program offered to all parishioners; especially those who are new (see Welcoming Plan).

The goal of the small group sessions is to educate individuals on their God-given talents but also, via the group setting, learn to appreciate others' talents. By recognizing that these talents are God's gift to us and utilizing the small group curriculum, we believe that many individuals will want to enhance these talents and interact with others in our Parish community. They will become engaged and via the good soil we are preparing, this will lead to spiritual enhancement.

### *Nurturing Your Strengths*

The third component of the Living Your Strengths program is an opportunity for continued growth in understanding and utilization of each person's strengths. A small percentage of individuals that take the StrengthsFinder survey and/or participate in a small group may want a more focused or individualized strengths discernment. Facilitators are encouraged to identify individuals that may benefit from coaching. A Strengths Coach is an individual who has completed training requirements through Gallup and is trained to provide more formal discernment aid on an individual basis. This coaching can be invaluable. It is never required.

Gift coordinators and facilitators will also be available to assist each member on a one-on-one basis with the appropriate support and education as they seek to find the "right fit" for themselves in the St. Matthew parish community. Opportunities will be available to explore the Sacraments, develop their own spirituality, study the Scriptures, work on self esteem issues, participate in social activities at the parish, or consider service/stewardship at St. Matthew. More engagement leads to enhanced spirituality.

Additionally, the plan is to develop a more extensive social network throughout the Charlotte area. This will provide a wide range of volunteer opportunities in the community that may be a better fit for a particular person's talents.

# Resources

Pastoral Plan, 2003 – 2006

Pastoral Plan 2005 – 2008

Winseman, Al. Growing An Engaged Church: How to Stop “Doing Church” and Start Being the Church Again. New York: Gallup Press, 2006.

Winsemen, Al., et al. Living Your Strengths: Discovering Your God-Given Talents and Inspire Your Community. New York: Gallup Press, 2003-2004.