

Parish Family 52 – PARTNERS IN THE GOSPEL

Synthesis – Challenges and Opportunities Listening Sessions



Parishioners of Parish Family 52 met in small group Partners in the Gospel Listening Sessions across our three parish campuses in March 2026 to discuss the **Challenges and Opportunities** that exist for Parish Family 52. Participants shared important information for our parish family.

Parish Family 52 covers over 400 square miles in Pierce, Kitsap, and Mason counties. It takes over 1 1/2 hours to drive from one end of our parish boundary to another. We have 8,900 registered members in almost 3,000 registered households/families. Our parishioners reflect a diversity of cultures and speak several languages.

Three questions were discussed during each session. They were:

- What challenges do you see that exist in the wider community?
- What challenges do you see that exist in the parish?
- Having heard information from the community demographics report, what opportunities do you see (in our parish and in the wider community) to more effectively serve and accompany others? Is there anybody that we can do a better job of reaching?

CHALLENGES IN THE WIDER COMMUNITY

Parishioners identified the **geographic size** of our parish boundary, the distance between campuses and rural isolation as a major barrier. They noted **limited priest availability** will make serving this geographic area especially challenging. All groups said there are people in each community struggling with **homelessness, food insecurity, and economic hardship**, noting it is “more prevalent than we see.” There is a large immigrant population in our parish with many unique and diverse needs. **Demographic shifts** such as an aging population, lack of young families, and the lack of young adults participating in parish liturgy were identified as challenges. **The cultural and language diversity** of our parishioners, identified as an asset, highlights a need for bilingual programs as well as a desire for intentional multicultural integration. Finally, participants noted the **secular culture and religious apathy** of Western Washington present a significant challenge to evangelizing our local communities.

CHALLENGES EXISTING IN OUR PARISHES

The challenges identified by participants can be grouped into several themes. The single most repeated challenge was **Communication and Transparency**. Lack of communication, perceived lack of respect, and decisions made and implemented without explanation were all identified as issues needing to be addressed.

Pastoral Visibility and Leadership Concerns were highlighted, including lack of visibility of our Pastor (particularly at St. Gabriel and Prince of Peace), and a desire for our priests to attend social events, funerals, ministry meetings and similar parish events. Prince of Peace parishioners expressed fear of losing a Spanish speaking priest.

Cultural Division, specifically tension between English and Spanish speaking communities was discussed, including a perception of imbalance in ministry offerings for Guatemalan and English-speaking parishioners.

In addition to the above, parishioners identified **Training and Formation** for ministry leaders, Adult Faith Formation and Bilingual Catechesis as a challenge. **Youth and Young Adult Engagement** is a concern, as is **Volunteer Shortages and Staffing Limitations**. **Facilities and Logistics** challenges were also raised, especially regarding church capacity at Prince of Peace

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and signage needs at St. Nicholas. Participants also expressed a concern that accessibility and transportation needs of parishioners need to be reviewed and addressed.

OPPORTUNITIES TO MORE EFFECTIVELY SERVE AND ACCOMPANY OTHERS

Many opportunities for parish family growth and service were identified. Here is a list of the most mentioned opportunities.

1. **Communication & Transparency.** Establish clear, consistent, and respectful communication across all campuses and all levels of ministry.
2. **Unity Across Cultures and Campuses.** Build one parish family across languages and locations. This can include bilingual programs, shared events and ministries, shared prayer, and addressing English and Spanish speaking community tensions.
3. **Pastoral Visibility and Leadership.** Parishioners desire more direct engagement from priests in liturgy, sacraments, ministries, and community life.
4. **Youth and Young Adult Engagement.** Parishioners identified the need to welcome young families into our Parish Family and the need for programs that form, mentor, and involve youth.
5. **Outreach and Evangelization.** Opportunities include serving the immigrant community, homeless, homebound, elderly, military families, those in prison and lapsed Catholics.
6. **Training and Formation.** Liturgical Ministry training, bilingual catechesis, and adult faith formation are needed to strengthen ministry.
7. **Transportation & Accessibility.** Distance between campuses and lack of transportation options create barriers for seniors, youth, and families.

This completes our information gathering for Phase II of Partners in the Gospel – Who Are We? The information we have collected will be used in future planning for Parish Family 52. Thank you to all who participated. Your feedback is important in helping build our new Parish Family!

Next up is Phase III – answering the question of “WHO DO WE WANT TO BECOME?”. This phase will help us determine who God is calling us to be as a new parish. In Phase III we will create a vision statement for our new Parish Family. You will be hearing more about Listening Sessions and other opportunities for community input. We encourage you to participate. Your voice is critical to building a strong foundation for our new parish!

Our process will begin with Listening Sessions for initial input around the question, “Who do we want to become?” The Parish Family Advisory Council (PFAC) will review and synthesize input from the listening sessions. We will create a draft parish vision statement based on the synthesis and develop proposed initiatives for fulfilling the vision. A second round of community consultations will be held to review and respond to the drafted vision statement and initiatives prepared by the PFAC. The feedback will again go to the PFAC to be reviewed and synthesized. The PFAC will use this feedback to draft a vision statement and a list of initiatives to submit to Fr. Mark. Working with Fr. Mark, the PFAC will produce a final version, endorsed by Fr. Mark, of the finalized **parish vision statement and list of initiatives**.

Prepared by Parish Family 52 PFAC (Parish Family Advisory Council)