



St. Monica and Sacred Heart (Parish Family 26) Listening Session Synthesis – Challenges and Opportunities

The Parish Family Advisory Council would like to thank everyone who participated and for sharing so openly at our listening sessions held in January. Your voices paint a clear picture of the wider community challenges, parish struggles, and future opportunities.

In our wider community we see real struggles:

The high cost of living that pushes single income families away, a more secularized and self-centered culture, and our parish family's lack of connection. Many in our wider community feel over scheduled, and self-sufficient or distant from God, while our youth often lack faith formation and our elderly neighbors face limited mobility and support. Participants feel a barrier because of stereotypes geared towards our parishes. Others feel isolated and long for more events and activities to foster connection.

Inside our own parishes we face similar challenges:

Parishioners expressed a need for more prayer, encouraging others to pray more often for the parish and wider community. Too few of us are actively engaged in parish life including attending Sunday Mass, volunteering, and participating in events or activities. There seems to be a disconnect between our Catholic schools and our parishes. Parishioners feel we must better encourage evangelization of our school families, young adults, and the wider community. Many feel we need more reverence before, during, and after Mass as well as a desire for continued faith formation for all ages and levels of catechesis. Transportation was identified as a barrier to attending Mass, events, and parish activities, especially for our elderly. Finally, communication between our campuses needs improvement, and we must strengthen our communication with parishioners regarding resources and opportunities.

Your suggestions and feedback point to the rich opportunities we have before us:

To start, we can deepen our faith by offering more opportunities for community prayer: adoration, rosary groups, retreats, Bible study, and parish family novenas. We can improve engagement with personal invitations to small groups, shared meals, face-to-face events, and full parish family gatherings. We must investigate how to invest boldly in youth and young adult ministry and faith formation to improve catechesis of all parishioners as well as wider community outreach. Finally, we can bring our two parishes together more visibly by offering more cross-parish events at both locations, working on clearer communication between our campuses, and ensuring all parishioners feel a sense of welcome, involvement, and community.

Look Ahead:

As we move forward with the One Parish Plan, the next step is to thoughtfully consider the question: *"Who do we want to become?"* We invite every parishioner to take part in this essential conversation at one of two upcoming Listening Sessions:

- Saturday, May 2nd at St. Monica at 10 AM in the Gym/Family Center
- Thursday, May 7th at Sacred Heart at 6 PM in the Parish Hall

Again, we thank you for your feedback and look forward to hearing your continued input as we develop our vision for who we are called to become as a parish family.

Wednesday, April 23, 2026