



**WALSH &
ASSOCIATES**

Church Capital Campaign Specialists®



Fundraising Planning Study Report

Presented To
Saint Mary
Catholic Parish
Vermilion, Ohio

Helping churches reach new heights in their capital campaignsSM

Fundraising Planning Study Report

Presented To

St. Mary Parish
Vermilion, OH



Walsh & Associates
Church Capital Campaign Specialists®

Confidential

May 12, 2025

St. Mary Parish
Rev. Paul Schreiner
731 Exchange Street
Vermilion, Ohio 44809

Dear Father Paul:

I am pleased to submit this report of our fundraising feasibility and planning analysis for St. Mary Parish.

The study indicates the potential to raise a minimum of \$1,500,000 in a highly hands-on, professionally run campaign over a three-year period for your proposed fundraising campaign.

The study results, together with our conclusions and recommendations, are found on the following pages.

This report would not be complete without a word of thanks to you and your church leadership for inviting our firm to conduct this study, which we believe is an important, if not critical, first step to a successful capital campaign. Our special thanks to Ed for providing helpful background information and to Kevin Hales for coordinating our interviews.

We look forward to working with you as you implement a successful campaign.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph Sangl
President

"Helping Churches Reach New Heights in Their Capital Campaigns"

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION A	STUDY PURPOSES & PROCESS
SECTION B	SURVEY RESPONDENTS
SECTION C	SUMMARY OF RESPONSES
SECTION D	CONCLUSIONS
SECTION E.....	RECOMMENDATIONS

SECTION A

Study Purposes & Process

STUDY PURPOSES & PROCESS

The primary purposes of the fundraising planning study were to determine:

1. The **climate for fundraising** in the church and local community, which involved assessing satisfaction with the church, awareness of and acceptance for your planned project and campaign, and the competitive environment for philanthropic funds at this time.
2. Your **volunteer and volunteer leadership potential** and the names of prospective key leaders.
3. Your **financial potential** and the names and estimated gift potential of prospective key donors.
4. The **best way** to prepare for and/or proceed with, package, and promote your project and campaign effort in order to achieve optimal results and ultimate success.



The study process involved four phases or steps:

1. **Preparation.** During this initial phase of the study process, an overall study strategy and schedule was developed; relevant information about your project and campaign was gathered; a preliminary case statement outlining your needs and plans was prepared; survey questionnaires were developed; candidates for confidential interviews were selected; a phone script to be used to invite them to participate in the study was outlined; and interviews were scheduled.
2. **Individual Interviews.** We sought to interview up to 45 of your most active and generous members, who are the most important people to listen to and hear from because they have the greatest influence on any church campaign's success. During this phase of the study, a total of 32 confidential interviews involving 42 individuals were conducted. The primary purpose of the interview discussion was to inform people about the proposed project and campaign, to assess their awareness and acceptance of it as well as their willingness to support it, and to record their feelings about how others might react and respond.
3. **Data Compilation, Analysis, and Report Preparation.** During this phase of the study, all of the information gathered was compiled and analyzed, and a written report of the study results and our recommendations was prepared.



4. **Presentation of the Report.** The final phase of the study process involves presenting our findings and recommendations to the persons who authorized the study, answering any questions that might arise, and deciding how to best proceed with a campaign effort that will ultimately meet your needs.

The conclusions reached and recommendations made in this report are based on our analysis of all the information gathered, responses to our interview questions, and our firm's experience conducting similar fundraising campaigns.

SECTION B

Survey Respondents

INTERVIEW RESPONDENTS

Eileen Adams	Ed Klimczak
Lynn Allegretto	Marcella Lamont
Jim & Jacquie Batchelder	Tracie Lochart
David & Michelle Boardwine	James Matheson
Pete Bonner	Jeanne McCale
Kevin Coughlin	Lynn Miggins
Joe DeMarco	Ray & Kathy Murphy
Russ & Jan Dickerhoff	Nancy Ostrander
James & Meghan DuBois	Julie Scheiders
Ken Esper	Father Paul Schreiner
Joe & Philomena Ferut	Ed Shubeck
Jim & Ellen Francisco	Michael & Anthea Simpson
Linda Gross	Jim St. Clair
Kevin Hales & Donna Longville	Doris Stwan
Lee & Joann Howley	Gary Taylor
Mary Beth Jeager	Dale Terschak



SECTION C

Summary Of Responses

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

A total of 32 individual interviews were conducted, involving 42 individuals. When couples were interviewed or completed surveys together, individual responses were encouraged, and many times received. Sometimes too, two answers were given by an individual to a single question. For example, some may have responded that they felt acceptance for a campaign would be "fair" to "good." In this and similar instances, two answers were recorded. In addition, there were times when a person was not able to answer or, if not appropriate or applicable, was not asked certain questions. This explains why the total number of responses does not always equal the total number of individuals interviewed or responses received. In addition, percentages may not add up to 100% due to minor differences in rounding.

1. How satisfied are you with St. Mary Parish and the programs and services the church provides?

	No.	Percent
Very Satisfied	21	47%
Satisfied	20	44%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	3	7%
Dissatisfied	1	2%



2. How well informed would you say that you've been about the church's needs and plans to address our capital improvement needs?

	No.	Percent
Well Informed	19	48%
Have General Knowledge	12	30%
Know Very Little	6	15%
Uninformed	3	8%

3. Overall, how important do you think it is to address these needs?

	No.	Percent
Very Important	22	50%
Important	9	20%
Nice to Do	10	23%
Not Needed	3	7%

4. Individually, how would you rate addressing each of these needs and the proposed project's major parts in terms of importance?

Need	Very Important	Important	Nice to Have/Do	Not Important
1. Worship space improvements	22 / 59%	7 / 19%	5 / 14%	3 / 8%
2. Support Spaces improvements	21 / 64%	6 / 18%	5 / 15%	1 / 3%
3. Exterior improvements	22 / 63%	6 / 17%	4 / 11%	3 / 9%



5. Were you aware that the church was considering a major fundraising campaign to address these needs?

	No.	Percent
Yes	32	80%
No	8	20%

6. In your opinion, what would be the acceptance level among members for a fundraising campaign that would address these needs?

	No.	Percent
Excellent	2	4%
Good	22	44%
Fair	20	40%
Poor	6	12%

7. The cost of the project is estimated to be in the \$3,000,000 range. How much money do you think can realistically be raised from all members and select others in pledges payable over a minimum of three years?

	No.	Percent
\$3,000,000 or More	4	12%
\$2,500,000 - 2,999,999	0	0%
\$2,000,000 - 2,499,999	1	3%
\$1,500,000 - 1,999,999	9	26%
\$1,000,000 - 1,499,999	9	26%
\$500,000 - 999,999	10	29%
Less than \$500,000	1	3%



8. In your opinion, who would be the best people to lead a fundraising campaign for St. Mary Parish if we could get them?

(Names provided under separate cover.)

9. In your opinion, who are the members who might be capable of making the largest gifts if they were so inclined?

(Names provided under separate cover.)



10. In your opinion, what individuals and institutions outside of the church community (e.g., former members, businesses, organizations, etc.) might have the potential and willingness to make significant gifts?

(Names provided under separate cover.)

11. If a campaign is conducted, do you think you might consider or accept a campaign leadership position if asked?

	No.	Percent
Yes	10	25%
Maybe	6	15%
No	24	60%

12. If not a leadership position, would you work on the campaign in some other capacity?

	No.	Percent
Yes	21	51%
Maybe	8	20%
No	12	29%



13. If a campaign is conducted, do you think you might make a gift?

	No.	Percent
Yes	29	91%
Maybe	0	0%
No	1	3%

14. If you were to make a gift, what range gift do you think you might consider over a three-year timeframe?

Of the 29 individuals or couples who were interviewed and said they would make or would consider making gifts, 23 mentioned specific amounts or a gift range they might consider. The highest gift or range gift that any one individual or couple said they would make or consider was in the \$60,000 range. One individual or couple said they would make or consider such a gift. Specified gifts ranged from a low total of \$295,800 to a high total of \$370,000.

15. Are you aware of any other campaigns that are in progress or being planned that might conflict with a campaign for St. Mary Parish?

	No.	Percent
Yes	11	37%
No	19	63%

16. Do you have any other comments or suggestions that you think might be important or helpful to this study or in planning a campaign?

CHURCH SATISFACTION

1. Easter was packed.
2. There is always room for improvements to be made.
3. I am seeing more people come back to church.



4. We are a small church, and sometimes we try to do too much. The same people always help, and sometimes get burned out.
5. I am happy that we are exceeding our pre-COVID numbers. I am impressed with Father Paul and his vision. I know he has our best interests at heart, and he listens and allows us to share our opinions.
6. Great parish, great parishioners. Lots of opportunities for fun involvement. Father Paul is great, and so is our Deacon & staff, too.
7. Father Paul is outstanding. There are many activities to participate in.
8. They have lots of activities/speakers here. There is nothing for divorce support.
9. Sometimes we try to do too many things. Maybe we should do few things that are bigger and do them well. Participation is lacking in this church. We love this church, and many of our friends are here. We love Father Paul.
10. I so appreciate Father Paul and his reverence. I like his postures for prayer.
11. Our church has become very conservative, and we have lost some people. Mothers weren't even recognized on Mother's Day last year.
12. For a small church, they do a lot to keep people active and well informed.
13. I am not happy with Father Paul and the changes he has made and wants to make.
14. We have quality programs. They have done a great job getting people back in church.
15. I am sad that we had to close the school. A lot of people are still hurt by that, but it was a decision that had to be made.
16. Father always makes himself available. I wish we had more children here. The children's teaching is good.
17. Father Paul and Deacon John are awesome. So much more is being offered here. I'm discouraged because our attendance has gone down since COVID and the school closing.
18. Recently, they have changed things that were working. I wish we had more children involved - altar servers, etc.
19. When we lost a family member, the church surrounded us and gave us the support we needed. It was awesome.
20. We offer a lot of great programs. Sometimes it is hard to get volunteers to help with our events, and that is discouraging.
21. It is heartbreaking that the school closed. This church means a lot to us.



22. I think for a small church they do a great job.

PROJECT AWARENESS AND ACCEPTANCE

23. The audiovisual is so bad, I am almost ready to pay for it right now so it can happen.
24. I thought more of the money from the Diocesan campaign would come here for our project.
25. Having an accessible church means we are welcoming. I'm surprised the Diocese isn't requiring us to make the accessibility improvements.
26. The statues are not my vibe.
27. I think a lot of people were alarmed when Father bought the statues. They have been sitting around and it is a bit irritating honestly. It is time to move them and get them placed.
28. People need to understand that this is much more than just beautification.
29. We need to maintain what we have better. We need some updating, but not major renovations.
30. I'm not sure everyone loves the ornate look of the statues. We need to be sure to listen to the long-time parishioners about what they want. They've been here and will continue to be here. We have a lot of new parishioners who may want our church to look like their previous church. And priests come and go.
31. I have not been coming to church since COVID, but I watch online.
32. Our church feels so dark. And we need Jesus in the middle.
33. With recent family medical issues, I see the importance of a ramp and accessibility for all. People don't like using the lift.
34. We must remove the candles we now have. It is dangerous - we should not have people climbing on chairs and leaning over rails to light candles.
35. Will there be a ramp to the altar area?
36. I'm surprised there are no improvements for the school building included.
37. The current cry room/bathroom set up is horrible. Parents would much rather use the gathering space. But it is ok for them to be in church too.
38. Let's get going. People have been wondering ever since the listening sessions. And the statues are sitting everywhere and have been for years. They know something will happen, and they have questions.



39. Our church doesn't look like a church. The environment for worship helps, helps shape our faith. We need a more reverent space. We come to pray and worship. Having the tabernacle on the side is bad. Will we be losing seats? How many? I don't like thinking that the back of the church is a good place to socialize; it should be a place to prepare ourselves for worship.
40. Let's do the basics first.
41. The balcony gets so hot. If we move the choir up there, we must ensure the climate is comfortable. Can all our choir members do the stairs up to the balcony?
42. The 'new' pews are small and uncomfortable. They were built for people of typical size a long time ago and people are much bigger now. They are not an improvement from what we have. We need to get rid of them immediately and not keep letting them clutter up our hallways and our building.
43. There a lot of improvements needed that will be made that we don't see. It's not just about cosmetic changes.
44. The stations of the cross are beautiful.
45. The spacing of the pews is very important.
46. Our church is extremely outdated and not suitable for a parishioner of today.
47. I didn't attend the meetings, so I didn't know the statues were being purchased.
48. We need to update the church restrooms too, with updated fixtures.
49. We want to be intentional and make our worship space more reverent and beautiful. I think that is a good thing.
50. These improvements have been planned for a while. The statues are waiting. It's time to act.
51. Have we considered tearing all the buildings down and building new in the middle of the property? I think we could do that for the same amount of money and get a building that would meet our needs. There is no property in Vermilion that is worth \$3 million. Why are we putting that into an old building?
52. If we remove the wall in front of the first pew, it's not usable because how will people kneel?
53. I am informed and ready to give now. We all are.
54. I think it is great that we have repurposed the statues.
55. Everything in our church is outdated. We will never grow if we don't make improvements and updates. We need to have a vision for the future.
56. The church is ours to care for. It's our responsibility, and we need to do it. There are many areas of disrepair.



57. We need to do this for our viability. People need to see the big picture.
58. I don't need fancy. When I come here to worship, it feels like home.
59. I'm concerned we are not doing enough for young families.
60. If our space is not accessible, it discourages people from coming. I would like for our church to look pretty and feel nice. Can we do a ramp in the gathering space and eliminate the lift?
61. Not having our facility be handicapped accessible is not welcoming. We need to be welcoming to all, both in our message and our facility.
62. We need to address the accessibility issues. Much of the rest is not needed.
63. The extent of these improvements is not needed.
64. People need to be sure to understand that there are improvements that must be made, HVAC, lighting, etc. People don't see them, but we must make them. So let's work to make our church beautiful at the same time.
65. Accessibility is critical. The steps are difficult for many.
66. Our worship space looks very sterile now. I think the new plans look fantastic. Moving the pews forward is good. It will all make it look like a sacred space.
67. We need to get rid of the pews that are all over our church. I don't like them, and they are not better than what we have. They are a sore sight week after week. The stations of the cross are really beautiful. Will Father stand with his back to the people with this new layout in front? We need to do little bits of this at a time and pay for it as we go along.
68. We need improvements made, but we don't need a cathedral; we are a country church. What if the next priest doesn't like these changes? We need better maintenance of what we have.
69. The 'new' pews that we bought are older than what we have. They are not ergonomic and they are uncomfortable. Ours are fine, we just need better spacing.
70. We desperately need upgraded audio, lighting and HVAC. The balcony gets so hot. We also must address our accessibility issues.
71. Could we add windows on the sides of the church? That would help make it brighter. It's so dark now. The improvements would help, but so would windows. The pews we purchased do not all match, why would we use those? I like the pews we have now just fine. We should add security as part of our plans. Key cards or security codes with time allowances would be great, instead of having to walk around and lock each door. We need to do a better job with the facilities that we currently have. Taking care of the Gardens and outdoor statues too. Will we get a larger front door? One that self-closes would be great. We can hear it slam closed during church now. Having a ramp is important.

72. The new plans are beautiful. The carpet needs to go. We need new decorations too.
73. We must make our spaces more accessible. Our church looks protestant on the outside, I would love to have it look more Catholic.
74. Something needs to be done to the school restrooms too. Why are they not included in the project?
75. I think the new ramp will look nice. A handicapped restroom is critical.
76. We have people who do not come because of the accessibility difficulties. The ramp is very important. Our mission statement says we are welcoming, and we need to be in all ways.
77. The ramp is very important.
78. I don't like the design of the ramp. We are going to lose some very mature trees. I think it can be done more simply and probably cheaper. Also, will the ramp be safe in the winter? Will people be hesitant to use it? Will the handicapped parking spaces be moved? Some people like the ritual of the casket coming up the front steps and through the front door. I think we will need a larger space outside of the confessional. There is no separate door for Father to use.
79. The restroom is necessary and the ramp is a must do.
80. Our worship space is very 1970's and should be updated. We keep our homes updated.
81. The new plans look beautiful. The statues and stations are beautiful and will look magnificent in the updated space. We need to thin out the columns and make them faux marble. We need a traditional crucifix that should be updated in the drawing. Spiffing up the sacristy is a good idea. I don't like the idea of taking children out of Mass, they need to grow up in the church and learn reverence. No trickling water in the baptismal font, please.
82. Can we remove the poles?
83. This project is a total package. There are some must-dos like HVAC & Lighting, and some nice-to-dos like the front of the church. Then there are the accessibility pieces, which are doing the right thing by making our parish more welcoming for all. It's a package that will be good for all, for our current parishioners and for the future parishioners. We must do this for the well-being of all. To not, would be neglectful.
84. While I agree the improvements need to be made, I do not think now is the time. We just had the Diocesan campaign, COVID, and school closed, it's all too close.
85. I especially like all that we are doing for accessibility - from the ramp to better lighting, its all more welcoming.
86. We need to do everything environmental - air, sound, lighting etc., first. I like the area in the back for people to congregate and fellowship.



87. Why are we not improving the school bathrooms? They need updated. Could we do a ramp inside near the lift?
88. I think young people are more open to the traditional church now. I think they like the symbols and statues. I know of someone who is attending elsewhere because it is too hard for them to handle the steps here.
89. I like that we are getting more babies in church; some people think it is irritating, I think it is invigorating. We are having more baptisms and weddings too.
90. How many funerals do we have in a year? We are a greying population. Many people are choosing cremation nowadays. Is there an option for a ramp near the lift? How much new air handling will still be in the ceiling? Is there enough room with the new style ceiling?
91. Handicapped restroom is a must. Additional lighting outside is great for safety.
92. I like how they are making wheelchair seating available so they can sit with their family and not have to be in front or back, they can choose. The sound system is horrible.
93. We need to do heating and air first. We don't want to have to redo any walls or other cosmetic things. Lighting and sound are important. Is HVAC for the school being considered? The gathering space temperature is not always good.
94. If we put the choir upstairs, we will lose some of our older choir members. Can we install a lift chair? I think improving our church will encourage more people to come, both our parishioners and new parishioners.
95. Funerals are very difficult here. We must make improvements for those. Carrying a casket up those stairs and through the narrow door is hard to watch. Many times, I am worried they might drop it.

CAMPAIGN AWARENESS AND ACCEPTANCE

96. Father Paul is loved. If people see his passion for and love of this plan, we will be successful.
97. I thought the Living Christ campaign covered this project with the money that comes back to us. I supported that generously.
98. We have a potential for growth if people will give up their resistance to change.
99. I thought the Living Christ campaign was for this renovation. I didn't know we would be doing one. I wouldn't have given as much to that one.
100. I think not having a cry room discourages families from attending. They don't want to be in the hall watching on a monitor. Have they considered putting the cry room on the front/side so they can see better? Where will Father sit?

101. People have been asking me what I know. I had to go get some answers so that I could tell people. It's been in the talks for so long, people want to get moving on this.
102. If we want to capitalize on the summer season, we need to get started right away. People have been asking, they are ready. They have seen the statues. Once they see the beautiful drawings, they will love it. People got excited when we did the listening session, and then nothing happened. It has been too long of a gap.
103. We are an older/aging congregation. Can young families afford to support this?
104. I say fair because we have so many retirees on fixed incomes.
105. I say fair because many Catholic organizations are not transparent with their funds. Also, did our budget go up when we closed the school? It didn't seem like we had more money then. Did we lose families when we closed the school? The finances in the bulletin each week do not make sense, and sometimes they don't include the online giving, and we know we give weekly online.
106. I think some believe everything is fine, and they won't want the changes made. Some people are still a little upset that the school closed.
107. I say good to fair because of the economy right now and the fact that some of us are in the middle of the Living Christ campaign payments.
108. We have not made improvements for over 50 years, but some people may still not be for this. But we improve our home, we should make improvements to our church home too. We took care of the school for so long with our money, and now it is time to take care of our church.
109. We are a generous church, but the economy isn't great right now.
110. I say fair because we just had a Diocese campaign, and people are still obligated to that.
111. We are not a wealthy parish.
112. I have been seeing more young families recently.
113. Instead of a campaign now, let's take better care of and maintain what we have now.
114. I'm not sure how many people will want to participate. All should be tithing, but they don't.
115. People here don't like change. Father Paul has had to deal with a lot of pushback for improvements he has wanted to make. I think it's been tough. This might be too.
116. I say fair because so many people are struggling now.
117. I'm not sure what the acceptance will be with our current political climate and our economy. But I know we have some loyal parishioners, and they will probably be willing to give to make this happen.



118. I know we received a legacy gift. Can we use that for this campaign or has that money already been spent?

COMPETITION FOR FUNDS

119. Why did the Diocese make us do their campaign when they know we needed a big one?

VOLUNTEER AND VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL

120. Having the right people as leaders is important.

121. Some of the people in Knights of Columbus or the Women of Faith groups would be good leaders.

122. We need to have a leader who is a long-time member. Who can encourage other long-time members to be open and receptive to the improvements, and not just have them want to keep the church as-is?

123. I have another full-time ministry commitment so I could not volunteer.

124. I can't ask people for money. I helped with the Living Christ campaign.

125. I am for the project, but I cannot volunteer because of my other involvements.

126. I can't volunteer because I can't drive at night.

FINANCIAL POTENTIAL

127. Can get a short-term loan with a low rate from the Diocese? Can we start the project at the end of summer?

128. Will some of our endowment funds be used for this?

129. I'm not sure how much the younger families can afford. I'm happy to see new babies/baptisms here.

130. Having this after the Diocese campaign makes it very hard for people to be excited to give money again.

131. I wish this had been before the Living Christ campaign. I was confused about what that one was for.

132. How long is the Diocesan campaign for? Are people still paying those pledges?

133. It is hard to put money into the church when there is so much need in the world.

134. It is hard to comprehend that we are going to spend \$3 million but not get a bigger building. Everything is inside.
135. Too many people are still paying their Living Christ Diocese pledge, and markets are down.
136. I thought the Living Christ campaign was for this project.
137. Doing this campaign after the Living Christ campaign will make things much harder for us.
138. I know our people are generous. They came through for the diocese campaign and this campaign is just for us. We can do it.
139. The deep pockets that our church had have either passed away or left the church.
140. I will make a gift after my Living Christ commitment if fulfilled.
141. We gave to the Diocese campaign.
142. I have two more years to give to the Living Christ campaign before I can add a gift to this campaign.
143. We cannot make a gift until our pledge is completed for the Diocesan campaign.

OTHER

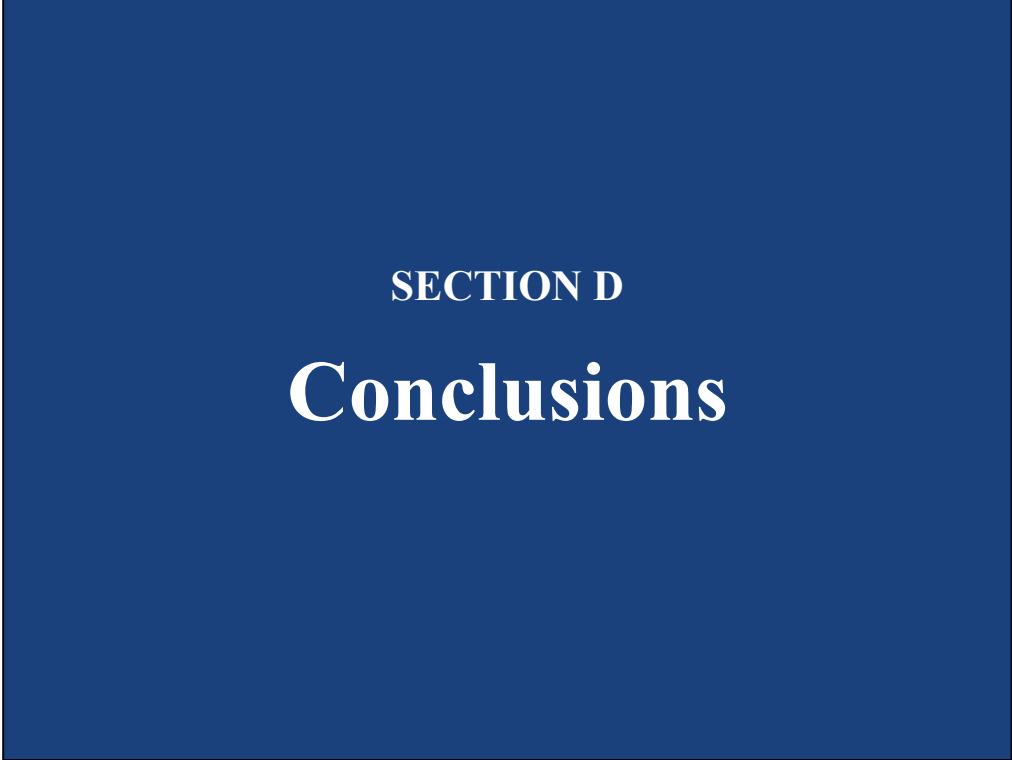
144. We had a fundraiser at a restaurant, but I never heard how that went and what was raised.
145. I wish we would see Father Paul at more events like Men's breakfasts and Knights of Columbus.
146. First question - what are we trying to accomplish? Then make plans based on that.
147. Have we considered an extra offering each week for the building plans?
148. Is our building up to code now?
149. Be gentle, some people are fearful right now.
150. Good luck.
151. What are we doing to be more kid-friendly and welcoming for families?
152. We need to be committed to sticking to the budget. We might need to strike some things if unforeseen items are uncovered that come up once we start working with the foundation and walls of our old building.



153. We should have already started this months ago. The statues were purchased around two years ago and have just been sitting around - we should have had a campaign and started the project then.
154. We need to be able to capture our summer attendance.
155. We are going to have to do a good and thorough sales job.
156. We need to move the candles. One must climb on the railing to light them. We don't want anyone to get hurt.
157. We should do estate planning services for our members.
158. How can we increase attendance? What is our current attendance? What is our current giving?
159. We must have consistent messaging and we must be transparent. We can't communicate too much.
160. We must give lots of information at the beginning, be open, and transparent.
161. I think we need to be transparent. Do people think this is a done deal? Some felt uninformed when the statues were purchased, and then nothing happened yet.
162. What can we do to bring people back to church? Let's have everyone ask those they know who haven't come back yet. Maybe we could do a retreat to bring people back together and fellowship.
163. Leadership for this campaign is very important. We must have strong leadership to get the messaging out. It should not just be Father Paul because he is our shepherd, not our fundraiser.
164. Can we use some of our foundation funds for this campaign?
165. We have a lot of baptisms, but then never see the families at church. How do we attract and keep them?
166. Our church has stuff everywhere. Let's get things cleaned up right away. Let's make what we have more inviting right now.
167. Will we be doing any smaller fundraisers like plant sales?
168. We need to be sure to keep people updated. People have wondered since the statues were purchased about when something would happen. We need to get moving.
169. We need to spiff up the main entrance. Make the doors wider and grander, with self-opening for those who need it.



170. There are a few areas of water seepage/damage that need to be repaired. The front near the elevators is damaged and has wood rot, and the side entrance in the front left has water seeping and mold.
171. I wish we had an outreach ministry to help people in need.
172. Closing the school was an error, it helps keep and bring young families.
173. I would like us not to be extreme with our decisions. Yes, we need to update - but \$3 million worth? I don't think so.
174. Father has been there for us when we have needed him.



SECTION D

Conclusions

CONCLUSIONS

A. SATISFACTION WITH THE CHURCH

The level of satisfaction with St. Mary Parish is very high at the present time. In fact, 91% of survey respondents said that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the church and the programs and services that you currently provide. This is obviously conducive to a successful campaign.

People are especially appreciative and thankful for Father Paul, who is frequently praised for his leadership, reverence, and openness. Many comment positively on the increase in attendance post-COVID, the range of programs and activities offered, and the supportive nature of the parish.

This very high level of satisfaction with the church will be helpful for your campaign.

B. PROJECT AWARENESS AND ACCEPTANCE

Seventy-eight percent (78%) of survey respondents felt that they were either well informed or had a general knowledge of your needs and plans. Consequently, we view the level of awareness for your project to be fairly high at the present time.

In addition, 70% of survey respondents felt that addressing your needs as expressed was either important or very important. This is a fairly high level of acceptance for the proposed project overall, which is obviously conducive to a successful campaign.



During the conduct of our study, we also assessed acceptance for all of the proposed project's major parts and found that all received majority acceptance among survey respondents.

Rated the highest priority among survey respondents was your expressed needs and proposed plans for the **support spaces improvements**, which include the narthex, confessional, cry room, and restroom. 82% of survey respondents rated this as important or very important to do. The handicapped accessible restroom on the same level as the worship space was a necessary improvement for most people.

Your proposed plans for **exterior improvements** were rated as your second highest priority, with 80% of survey respondents indicating this was important or very important to address. The accessible entrance ramp was mentioned many times as a must-do because of the difficulty of the steps, especially during a funeral. Also included in the exterior improvements are the steeple repair, façade enhancements, lighting, and landscaping.

Rated the third highest priority among survey respondents was your expressed needs and proposed plans for your **worship space improvements**. 78% of survey respondents rated this component as important or very important to do. While updates that include the placement of the previously purchased statues are appreciated by many, there's a clear call for balanced, transparent planning that honors both tradition and practicality.

Your members recognize the lack of accessibility that comes with the age of a building like yours, and they realize that to be welcoming to all, these improvements must be made, and that without them, it could contribute to a decline in attendance.



So, in summary, your overall plan was well received and supported, and people clearly do understand the importance of the various components. The positive perception of your proposed project and its parts will be quite conducive to the success of your planned campaign.

C. CAMPAIGN AWARENESS AND ACCEPTANCE

Awareness of a fundraising effort designed to address your expressed needs is high at the present time with 80% of survey participants saying that they knew a campaign was being considered or planned.

Acceptance for such an effort is viewed to be somewhat low at the present time with 48% of survey respondents saying that they felt that acceptance for such an effort would be “good” or “excellent.” Many mentioned the current economy as a concern. Others mentioned the recent conduct of the Diocesan campaign as a factor that might affect the acceptance of this campaign.

Finally, it was also especially encouraging to note that 98% of survey respondents said that they would either make or consider making a gift to the campaign. This further demonstrates that a high level of supportiveness for your project and campaign effort already exists, which underscores the importance of moving forward relatively immediately to address what most clearly see as critically important needs.

D. COMPETITION FOR FUNDS

Competition for philanthropic funds may be somewhat of an issue for you at the present time. In fact, 37% of survey respondents said they knew of potentially conflicting campaigns that might adversely affect your campaign plans.

Mentioned multiple times as a potentially competing effort was the recent Living Christ campaign for the Diocese.

While this could have somewhat of a detrimental effect on your campaign's success and affect some people's willingness or ability to support your proposed project or campaign at the current time, it should not adversely impact most people's ability or desire to respond positively and to the best of their abilities in support of your church's campaign effort. In fact, those who supported the Living Christ campaign are mostly willing to support this campaign too, it likely will just lessen or delay their financial support for this effort.

E. VOLUNTEER AND VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL

Campaigns of this nature are not only volunteer-intensive; they're volunteer-dependent. Consequently, it is essential to have ample, able, and willing volunteers and volunteer leadership for a successful campaign.

Ideally, you should have one volunteer for every ten households that contributes at least \$1,000 annually to your church. In your case, with roughly 169 annually contributing households at this



level, this translates into having up to 17 people actively involved in the campaign as volunteers, at least ideally. At least 30% of these, or 5 people and ideally couples, would be needed to serve in key leadership capacities enlisting, soliciting, and supervising other volunteers and volunteer leaders. And, as a general rule of thumb, you should have at least two candidates for every volunteer leadership position that needs to be filled. For your church, this means you should have a pool of at least 10 key leadership candidates to ensure that these critical positions are filled. During the course of our interviews, 30 different individuals or couples were named among the best possible leaders for a campaign. This is greater than the ideal pool of quality candidates that we would need, which indicates that you should have no problem attaining the quality and quantity of volunteers and volunteer leaders that we would ideally need and like to see for your campaign.

Willingness to work on the campaign, especially in a leadership role, is also critical to your success and something that we also assessed. And the study shows that 40% of those interviewed (who are presumably some of the most active and generous people to your church now) indicated a willingness to consider leadership positions in the campaign if offered or asked. This is higher than the typical one-out-of-three willingness-to-lead response that we ideally like to see, which indicates that you should have no problem attracting the quantity of leaders you would need for an optimally successful campaign.

On an even more positive note, is the fact that willingness to get involved in key leadership roles actually increased among those recommended most to us as the best possible leaders for your campaign. In fact, of the 16 individuals or couples recommended to us multiple times as being among the most capable leaders for your campaign, we interviewed 7 of them, and 5 of the 7, or 71% indicated a willingness to get involved in a leadership role if offered or asked. Furthermore, of the 4 individuals or couples that were suggested five or more times as being the best to lead your campaign,



we interviewed 4 of them, and 3 of the 4, or 75% said that they would or might accept a leadership role in your campaign if it were offered to them. This willingness to get involved as key leaders among those mentioned most as the best to lead your campaign is significant in that campaigns of this nature tend to have somewhat of a bandwagon effect, with most people waiting to get involved until those they know and respect most already have.

Additionally, it was encouraging to note that 71% of survey respondents said that they would or might work on the campaign in some capacity if asked, which is far higher than the one-out-of-two willingness to work response that we typically and ideally like to see.

So, in summary, your prospects for getting both the quality and quantity of volunteers and volunteer leaders that you would need for a successful campaign look to be promising at the present time.

F. FINANCIAL POTENTIAL

A variety of considerations are used to determine financial potential. All the previously discussed criteria – satisfaction with the church, acceptance of the proposed project and campaign, competition for funds, and leadership potential – are all major considerations.

Another important criterion in estimating financial potential is the opinion of the church members themselves, since experience, for the most part, shows that people tend to perform at the level they think they are capable of, and rarely above. And the study shows that a majority of those interviewed (67%) believe that at least \$1,000,000 can realistically be raised over a three-year pledge period for your proposed campaign.

We also look at prospects for pacesetting gifts in evaluating a church's financial potential. To reach your capability in a fundraising effort of any significance, you would normally need and ideally receive at least one gift equal to 10% or more of your goal. Furthermore, you should have at least three prospective contributors rated as capable of making the top gift that you need. In your case, the top three rated prospects for gifts were consistently rated as capable of contributing an average of \$135,000 if they were so inclined. This would indicate a potential for raising at least \$1,350,000 under this financial formula.

We also looked at the top gifts that your people expressed a willingness to consider or make in evaluating your financial potential. And during our study, the top gift(s) that any one person said they would be willing to consider or make was \$60,000. This would indicate a potential to raise \$600,000 under this financial formula.

Finally, one of the best barometers of financial potential is current giving. Normally, a church should be able to raise at least three to four times its annual offerings in a well-run and received campaign for a project of this type. And according to the information provided to us, approximately \$500,000 in such income was received over the past 12 months. This would indicate a potential for raising at least \$1,500,000 - \$2,000,000 in your campaign.

The average of the aforementioned indicators amounts to \$1,112,500. Consequently, we believe that you have the potential to raise a minimum of \$1,500,000 over a three-year period in your planned, highly hands-on, professionally run campaign in addition to the other funds that you may already or eventually have available for this project and campaign.

SECTION E

Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That you consider completing the project and/or the fundraising for it in multiple phases, based on what people want, will support, and to what extent, as well as what seems to make the most practical sense. What seems to make the most practical sense to us is this: that you have one fundraising phase to raise as much money as you can, and also, because much of the project lends itself to one construction phase, and that you complete the renovation in one phase too. Then, once complete, you determine if a debt reduction fundraising campaign is needed.
2. That you begin the planning and organizational work for your capital campaign as soon as possible, ideally right away, so that your campaign can be conducted over the summer when attendance is up, and will enable it to be completed before Christmas or the end of December. This will allow you to take advantage of the high levels of satisfaction with the church, the high level of awareness of and acceptance for the proposed project and its components, the high level of awareness of and acceptance for the proposed capital campaign, and the minimal level of competition for philanthropic funds that currently exists. Finally, it will also allow you to capitalize on the momentum gained for the project and campaign through the conduct of this study before enthusiasm starts to wane.
3. That you establish a “minimum goal” of \$1,500,000 for the initial phase of the campaign effort, which is in line with what we believe you can realistically expect to minimally raise. We also suggest that an additional, higher or “challenge goal” of \$2,250,000 be set, which will enable you to complete more of the project and/or to minimize debt. And finally, to set an “ultimate goal” of \$3,000,000 (or the final cost of the project). This tier type of goal



setting strategy with a reaching but reachable minimum goal will all but assure your progress and success and the satisfaction and continued motivation that will accompany it. Yet it will also showcase to people the higher and ultimate goals of your project and your ultimate vision and, as such, will keep people from becoming complacent once the minimum goal is met. This can have a profoundly positive effect on your project, your campaign and your parish in various respects.

4. That you secure or begin to finalize plans and secure concrete cost estimates for the proposed project.
5. That you begin to develop responses to some of the other most commonly raised questions, concerns, and suggestions that surfaced as a part of this study, which will then need to be incorporated into the final case statement and various other communication mediums that will be used throughout the campaign.
6. That you develop with our assistance, 'giving opportunities' that give people an idea of what their gifts at various levels will enable the church to do. Such opportunities inspire people's generosity and will help you to stimulate substantially larger gifts than you otherwise might get without them.
7. That you recognize all donors to your campaign in some special and significant way such as a donor book or wall to be dedicated and placed in a very visible part of your facilities.



8. That you educate people about and promote planned or creative gifts to the campaign and your church with our assistance. Such gifts may enable your members to make better and more beneficial gifts to the campaign and your church which will be helpful to both you and to them.
9. That as part of the preparation process for your campaign, you have us help organize and conduct a 'member census' to gather more extensive contact and other information, where needed, for your members, which will help you not only during, but after your campaign as well. There is no additional fee to have us coordinate this census, and it would have as its purpose gathering multiple phone numbers, email, and mail addresses for your members to make communicating with them more efficient and effective. This special census can easily be taken as part of your scheduled services over successive weekends by having cards available in people's seats or pews that they can complete, and you could then collect.
10. That you initiate and implement within three to nine months after the campaign ends, a more formal and holistic stewardship program at your church. Such a program should have at its core a strong initial and ongoing educational component emphasizing what it means to be a Christian steward in every sense; it should be led by a sound and well-rounded, standing stewardship committee that will assure that the program is ongoing and holistic in nature; it should have a strong volunteer stewardship component that seeks to get more deeply involved in the life of your church; and it should have a strong financial stewardship component that seeks not only to expand regular weekly giving, but also special and substantial short and long-term gifts to your church. This may help you to support any interim, short-term debt and increased operating expenses that you may incur as a result of this project and/or may enable you to finish your proposed project sooner than might otherwise be possible without it.

