

St. Mary Catholic Church

Strategic Plan 2011-2015

A Plan For Our Future

**St. Mary Catholic Church Strategic Plan
2011-2015**

I. Mission Statement

We, the people of St. Mary Church, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, are inspired to be a hospitable Catholic community in downtown Evansville, Indiana. We are dedicated to celebrating God's presence in our lives through sharing the Eucharist and proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We are committed, as disciples of Jesus, to seek out and serve the needs of the hungry, the hurting, and the homeless. We hold sacred all family life through the nurturing of marriage, the engagement process, and the single life. We are entrusted to pass on our faith through Catholic education, evangelization, and ongoing Christian formation. We are challenged to be stewards of God's abundance, stewards of prayer, of one another, and the Earth. We are called to be people of justice.

Core Values:

- Worship is the central focus of our lives.
- We are dedicated to outreach to the poor.
- We are committed to personal and collective spiritual growth.
- We strive to be a vibrant and welcoming presence to all.

II. Vision Statement & Prologue

To become a model parish for the 21st century—led by lay ministers, supported by ordained clergy, diverse in the broadest sense, outreach driven, justice oriented—in which all parishioners challenge themselves to walk more closely with God.

This Strategic Plan is primarily a spiritual document. While it is created with the best practices from the fields of planning, management, and leadership, its chief aim is to provide a navigational guide on the spiritual journey of our parish family for the next several years. To that end, this plan explains the journey that we are guided to continue on and the temporal concerns we must address to be successful on our journey.

III. Current Environment

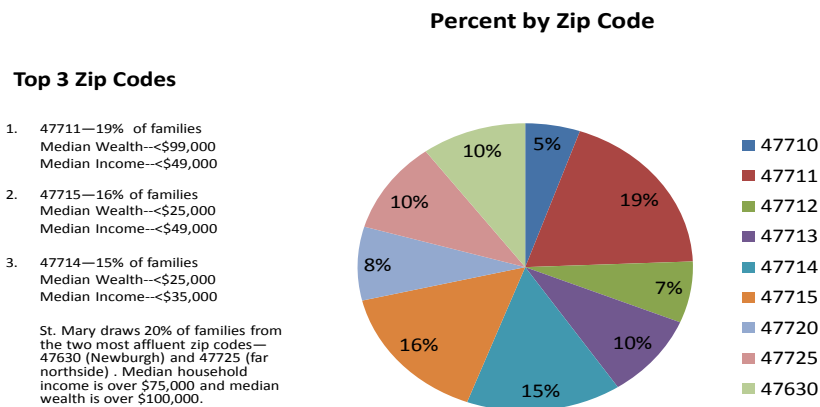
St. Mary Church is located in Evansville, Indiana and draws 90% of its membership from Vanderburgh County. As of July, 2009, there were 175,434 residents in the county. The vast majority of the residents are Caucasian, with only 12% classified as people of color. The median income is \$41,084, slightly below the state average. The average household size is 2.3 persons, with a median age of 37. The unemployment rate is 9.5%, the highest in ten years. Over 17% of the population lives in poverty. (City-Data.com)

Approximately 50.6% of area residents are affiliated with a church. Of those, the largest denomination is Roman Catholic, with 36% of the affiliated population. The next largest is “other” at 25%, followed by Southern Baptist at 22%. There are 161 congregations in the Evansville area. (City-Data.com). The fastest growing denomination is evangelical Protestantism as evidenced by the expansion of non-denominational “mega-churches,” such as Christian Fellowship Church and Crossroads Christian Church.

IV. Situation Analysis

A. St. Mary Church Congregation Demographics

1. The 464 registered households at St. Mary Church are drawn from nine zip codes with the following topline demographic breakdowns.



Observations: St. Mary parish is composed of a spectrum of people from the “haves” to the “have nots.” While 31% of St. Mary households come from areas where the median wealth is below \$25,000, St. Mary draws 20% of households from the two most affluent zip codes-47630 (Newburgh) and 47725 (far northside)- with 47725 being the most affluent. Median household income is over \$75,000 and median wealth is over \$100,000 in both of these areas. These households reside a significant distance from the catchment area, and are willing to accept the investment of time and travel to worship at St. Mary.

2. 36 new parishioners joined St. Mary in the past year:
 - 7 from other area Catholic Churches
 - 6 from RCIA
 - Remaining coming in from out of town
3. 20 new Catholics were received into the Church via St. Mary in the last 12 mos.

Observations: While St. Mary is on a slight growth trajectory in terms of household memberships, total parishioners have dropped by approximately 100 over the last ten years. This is likely due to a decrease in family size and an increase in the number of single-person households. The estimated optimal size of the parish, based on physical and staff limitations is 500 families, or approximately 1150 parish members.

B. St. Mary Ministries Appeal

Recent surveys, discussions, anecdotal observations and exit interviews indicate the following reasons for St. Mary's appeal and why parishioners leave the church:

1. Reasons most frequently cited for attracting people to St. Mary:
 - Welcoming/Openness/Hospitality
 - Liturgy
 - Music
 - Outreach/Opportunity to Serve
 - Fr. Steve
2. Reasons cited for staying at St. Mary:
 - People
 - Fr. Steve
 - Liturgy
3. Reasons cited for leaving St. Mary:
 - Moving out of town
 - Moving to parish where children attend school
 - Sacramental reasons

Observation: The success (attracting new members/retaining current members) of the parish is tied to the church culture and, in particular, the church leadership. Unlike, many churches, St. Mary does not generally draw households primarily interested Catholic school education. This often causes a family exodus when children come of school age and households become involved in the parish aligned with their child's school.

C. St. Mary Church Participation:

	2008	2009	Change
Number of active members at year end	831	921	+10%
Average weekly worship attendance	605	564	-6.75%

Observation: St. Mary membership has grown in the past few years, but members are worshipping less frequently. This is consistent with national trends of attending church 2-3Xs per month.

D. St. Mary Stewardship

	2009 (401 hh)	2010 (447 hh)	Change
Stewardship Commitments	216/40%	237/53%	+8%
Stewardship Completed	128/60%	137/58%	+6%
Average Contribution	\$3708.62	\$3492.08	-5%
Total Contributions	\$801,062*	\$827,623*	+4%

*Includes tuition payments

Observation: Approximately 53% of St. Mary households made a commitment in 2009. However, only about 60% of commitments were fulfilled, reducing completed stewardship to 32% of parish households.

Weekly and monthly donations are most frequent. Monthly and quarterly donations result in the highest contributions. 9% of households participate in the automatic deduction program.

Total giving increased by 4%, failing to keep pace with the 10% increase in active membership.

E. St. Mary Debt Burden

St. Mary carries a current debt burden of \$1,016,088.61 at 5% interest for the recent parish restoration. Payments are \$55,000 quarterly.

Observation: In July 2010, St. Mary was unable to meet its quarterly obligation to the Diocese, although current plans call for retiring the debt in October 2015.

V. Strategic Framework

SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong culture of hospitality • Dedicated, charismatic staff and leadership • Inspiring liturgy, worship, music • Highly regarded outreach programs • Membership growth • Better than average stewardship participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of parish school leads to church migration; high cost to serve current school families • Buildings sizes and configurations limit activities and interaction • Weekly attendance decline • Parish relies heavily on unplanned giving, making budgeting difficult and income uncertain
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase development of 47630 and 47725 parish families • Optimize parish size by increasing membership to 500 families • Increase weekly attendance • Focus on households with children • Develop formal donor cultivation/recognition program • Revitalize restoration commitments and contributions through a formalized major gifts campaign • Develop revenue stream outside charitable giving • Seek non-member financial support for social service programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in leadership/key staff due to retirement, reassignment, or resignation could disrupt culture and cause an exodus of members • Current economic pressures could reduce income substantially • Current economic pressures placing increased demands on outreach programs • Clergy sex-abuse scandal

Key Issues:

1. St. Mary is operating at a suboptimal membership and participation level, with 464 households attending mass 2-3 times per month.
2. St. Mary does not have a concrete financial plan for meeting current debt obligations and growing services and ministries over the next 3-5 years.
3. The current economic environment is placing greater demands on St. Mary's ministries to the poor.
4. St. Mary does not have a formal plan to transition key responsibilities and leadership to lay ministers over the next 5 years.
5. St. Mary growth is constrained by the limitations of its physical footprint and building configurations.

Strategic Imperatives:

1. Develop and sustain a membership of 500 or more households actively participating in worship, stewardship, and parish life.
2. Ensure church financial viability and ongoing service to the poor by reducing debt, controlling operating expenses, and increasing income.
3. Develop and implement a formal succession plan to transition to lay leadership over the next 5 years.
4. Develop a prioritized campus expansion plan and adjust annually based on economic climate and membership levels.

Goals and Objectives by Strategic Imperative:

1. Develop and sustain a membership of 500 or more households actively participating in worship, stewardship, and parish life.

Ownership: Liturgy, Marketing, Outreach, Parish Life

2. Ensure church financial viability and ongoing service to the poor by reducing debt, controlling operating expenses, and increasing income.

Ownership: Marketing, Finance, Executive Management

3. Develop and implement a formal succession plan to transition to lay leadership over the next 5 years.

Ownership: Executive Management, Parish Council

4. Develop a scenario-based campus expansion plan and adjust annually based on economic climate and membership levels.

Ownership: Executive Management, Parish Council, Buildings and Grounds, Marketing, Parish Life, Finance.

VI. Measurement and Evaluation

Success Statement- *to be developed after Town Hall meetings*

Plan Review Schedule- *to be developed after Town Hall meetings*

Town Hall Meeting Schedule (1 hour)	
Thursday, January 20, 2011	11AM
Thursday, January 20, 2011	6:30 PM
Saturday, January 22, 2011	5:15PM
Sunday, January 23, 2011	10:45AM
Sunday, January 23, 2011	5:15PM

Agenda	
Opening Prayer	
Overview of Plan	(20 minutes)
Open Comments	(10 minutes)
Q&A	(20 minutes)