

Subcommittee Report

Recommendations for SMOS Strategic Plan

Subcommittee: Celebrating God's Presence and Action

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Scope:

- Examine how we celebrate God's presence in personal prayer and liturgy
 - Are there visible and/or unmet needs?
- Identify process for education about the sacraments
- Identify methods to enhance the liturgy
- Catalog sacramental events (Standard Operating Procedures / Contacts)
- Identify how parishioners learn about prayer.
- Identify the opportunities provided for prayer.
- Recommend a standard regarding incorporation of prayer into various aspects of parish life.

Data Utilized:

- Parishioner Surveys
- Demographic Information from the SLU GIS Lab
- SMOS Demographic Five-Year Trends
 - Sacramental Records
 - Age, Race Distributions
- General, Incredible Knowledge of Committee Members

Summary of Findings:

The St. Margaret of Scotland Community is strong and vibrant. People are drawn to SMOS because they experience a strong, welcoming community and a vibrant Sunday Liturgy with full, conscious, and active participation in a beautiful space. In our liturgy, where our private prayer intersects with the prayer of the community, our strengths greatly outnumber our weaknesses. However, there is room for improvement; as our parish grows in population and our boundaries increase, new needs must be met. We must challenge ourselves to share our time and talent in order to effectively celebrate God's presence and action.

Strengths:

- Beautiful church space
- Variety & Diversity of Congregation and prayer
- Small enough community to pray personally for others
- The SMOS personality of intense commitment
- Our book of intentions helps to link the prayer chain
- Leadership within the congregation
 - Religious Women
 - Teachers
 - Those holding Ministry Degrees
 - Pastoral Leaders
- Retreat Opportunities
 - Women's Retreat
 - Confirmation Luke 18
- Parish Patroness is a great model for our community
- Small Church Groups
- Funeral participation / Resurrection Choir
- Living stations
- Catechesis of the Good Shepherd
- Weekly Lenten Vespers
- Eucharistic Adoration
- Liturgy
 - Music
 - Vibrant Adult choir
 - Handbell choir
 - Excellent Musicians
 - Competent, Creative, Compassionate Conductors (Leadership)
 - RCIA
 - Preparation
 - Parish Participation
 - Leadership
 - Liturgical Ministers
 - Good numbers
 - Ministry Day
 - Confirmation on-site (Instead of the Cathedral)
 - Traditions
 - Triduum
 - Washing of the feet
 - Easter Vigil Gloria (Ringling of the Bells)
 - 1st Communion
 - Banners
 - Children around the altar

- Sunday Liturgy
 - Blessing of the Children
 - Infant Baptism during Sunday Liturgy
 - Personal Announcements following Communion
- Liturgy of the Word for Children
- School Liturgies
 - School children are greatly involved

Weaknesses:

- No programming for youth and young adults
- Prayer Chain
 - Lack of knowledge of existence
 - Communication breakdowns
- Lack of Funeral Notification throughout the parish
- Weekly notifications of intentions & community announcements (i.e., marriages, births, deaths, etc.)
- Having/Not having children's nursery during liturgy (?)
- Lack of defined leadership for all liturgical ministries
- Speaker system in church
 - More listening devices needed
 - Occasional malfunctions
- Lack of parish liaison during weddings
- Liturgical Ministries
 - Lack of defined leadership
 - Servers
 - Small numbers
 - Little appreciation shown to them
 - Need more leadership / training
 - Greater Greeter Ministry
 - Limited numbers
 - Lack of a universal spirit of hospitality

Opportunities:

- Growing parish
 - New families with new perspectives and ideas
- New housing in botanical heights
- We are growing in diversity
- Having a new pastor with a new perspective
- Organ transplant
- New liturgy room/chapel at the school
- More ecumenical prayer (i.e., Week of Christian Unity)

Threats:

- Heresy
- Loss of faith

Challenges:¹

- The struggle between formalism and exaggerated individualism
- Strong willed individuals
- Loosing youth / young adults
- Many transitions
 - Leadership
 - Parish
 - School
 - Diocesan
 - Universal
 - Parish Boundaries
 - Growing congregations

Recommendations:

- Define Strong leadership in:
 - Youth Program (Need a youth minister)
 - Liturgical Ministries
 - Server program
 - Greeter Systems
- Liturgies and programs designed with youth / young adults in mind
- Website development
 - Events and communication
 - Weekly Sunday readings
- Provide opportunities for lay prayer and liturgical leadership
- Provide a sacristan/wedding/special liturgy coordinator
- More retreat opportunities
- To gain a better understanding and sense of direction for our sacramental life, we suggest holding interviews with recent recipients of sacraments.

¹ Due to the relational sense of liturgy and prayer, the subcommittee believes that the term “challenges” is more effective than “threats.”

Other affected subcommittees:

- Financial Resources
- Facilities
- Parish Structure
- Formation for Faith and Life
- Evangelization
- Social Activities
- Faith & Spiritual Development

Final Comments:

(none)