CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF
Saint Thomas Becket

A welcoming, Spirit-led Catholic Community where each is called
to **love,**
 to **serve** and
 to be **hope**.

 "Your Spiritual home, where each is called by name."

Long-Range Strategic Plan
June 2019

Contents

Introduction

In the spring of 2018, the St. Thomas Becket Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) and Pastor Fr. Tim Wozniak assembled a Strategic Planning Taskforce to explore and document parish leadership, parish spirituality, parish ministries, points of pride, and areas of concern in order to put forward the second of a continuing three-year strategic plan from which to direct the activities of all parish ministries. The team, known as GEM 2.0, comprised six parishioners representing several of St. Thomas Becket's (STB's) many demographics. The team was joined by the Parish Administrator, Pastor and a faith-based strategy consultant, Jerry Roth, engaged to facilitate the process.

GEM 2.0's scope included the review and update of STB's mission statement and the creation of values statements and overarching goals to guide the coming three-year period. GEM 2.0 also considered how to best structure ministry leadership to support the execution of the mission and achievement of the goals. Furthermore, GEM 2.0 worked to understand and document factors that might positively and/or negatively affect STB's success in these endeavors. The taskforce convened for 11 months and this document represents the primary output to the PPC.

Of the many lessons learned by the GEM 2.0 taskforce, the key take-away was that this is not your parents' church. Dramatic and subtle shifts are occurring that require churches update the way they communicate with and attract parishioners and relate to the community in which they reside. <u>Church must be taken to the people; people will no longer flock to the church</u>. Adjusting to these changes is the only way to ensure the long-term viability of STB because "old ways won't open new doors."

Process

GEM 2.0 completed a series of research projects and obtained input from a cross-section of current and past parishioners. Research projects included:
- Understanding demographic changes within Eagan and the surrounding communities, including factors such as population changes and expected trends related to aging and diversity;
- Understanding the historical & current state of STB across all functional areas: financial status, staff demographics & satisfaction, mass attendance, faith formation program enrollment, sacramental preparation enrollment, physical space analysis, and ministry area participation estimates;
- Understanding the perceptions of religion in an increasingly secular society; and
- Understanding trends in religious practices by people of all generations.

In addition, GEM 2.0 obtained input from a cross-section of STB parishioners (current and past, new and long-time) through a series of "Listening Sessions" and online surveys. Members from diverse groups were asked to identify the **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities and **C**oncerns (SWOC) at STB via a process called a 'SWOC Analysis'. Significantly, and reflective of the times, the GEM 2.0 group also interviewed non-participating Catholics.

This method was highly successful as it provided many parishioners a forum to communicate their love, pride and concerns for the St. Thomas Becket Catholic Community. The report that follows is based on their heartfelt beliefs, perceptions and experiences gained while in service to our community.

The gathered information was analyzed and grouped into broad categories that evolved from the collected data. These were further condensed into Topics of Discernment. Specific values and characteristics of our faith community were then identified in order to discern our mission, values and overarching goals going forward. Over the next three years, parish leadership's focus should be to direct the mission to be woven into the fabric of all parish ministries in order to reach those specified goals.

Taskforce Members

Maureen Bartz

Kevin Magyar

Mark McGinty

Mike Meuwissen

Kadee Ruhland

Michelle Sharp

Karen Maza, Business Administrator

Fr. Tim Wozniak, Pastor

Jerry Roth, Consultant

Mission Statement

The GEM 2.0 taskforce was asked to review the existing STB mission statement and recommend updates to ensure the written mission of the parish is a current reflection of the spirit of the parish and to provide guidance as the parish moves into the future. The mission statement needed to be short but memorable and had to align with STB values so that it could be used to actively guide future planning and decision-making. Most importantly, STB's missions statement needed to support the requirement that 'church' be taken to the people because the people will no longer automatically come to the 'church'.

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to **love,**
to **serve** and
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"Your Spiritual home, where each is called by name."

Values

| Welcome | Jesus' commandment is to "Love one another as I have loved you." Diverse human characteristics and life circumstances strengthen our church family as we respect the dignity of each individual. All are welcome. |

| Service | Jesus reminds us that He did not come to be served, but to serve. We do ministry **with** those who suffer hardship or injustice. Reaching within our church family and beyond, we become disciples of Christ using our gifts that God has given us. |

| Hope | Jesus challenges us, "You are the light of the world." Through the Spirit within, we share the light of hope with all people by showing them love. Hope allows one to anticipate the future with joy. We listen, we pray, we serve each other as people of hope. |

| Worship | Jesus says, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in their midst." We worship God through Word, music, and in relationships that inspire each of us to respond to God's love. We go forth from our relevant, engaging Spirit-led liturgies to love and serve the needs of one another. For we believe that the Mass is never ended, it must be lived. |

| Learning | Jesus says, "The seed that falls on good ground will produce much fruit." Our faith must be tended and nourished through prayer, study and action. We recognize how praying and learning, in community and in the silence of our hearts, shapes our believing and deepens our formation in faith. Growing deeper in our faith brings about action in everyday life. |

Overarching Goals

The purpose of the overarching goals is two-fold. First, the goals provide direction regarding priorities in daily operations. Second, the goals provide a measurement of progress as STB takes steps to refine the ever-important mission of taking the church 'Beyond our Doors'. Every action, every activity and every use of STB resources should support our mission both inside and beyond our doors.

Where each is called . . .

By June 2020, St. Thomas Becket will implement a strategic marketing plan that communicates who we are as a parish.

General Description	Indicators of Success
Using current strategies in marketing, communication and technology, we will consistently and effectively convey our message and information through parish, local and social media channels. An effective marketing and communication plan will directly enhance our other overarching goals: • To love (outreach and engagement) • To serve (stewardship) • To be hope (lifelong faith formation) This plan will allow us to clearly explain why St. Thomas Becket is a unique Catholic Community and our spiritual home, where each is called by name.	• Increase participation in ministries • Increase financial giving • Increase satisfaction with internal and external communication • Increase new parishioner registrations • Increase diversity of parishioners People in Dakota County will know about St. Thomas Becket and who we are. Reference: Topics of Discernment • Marketing and Communication • Mass Attendance and Parish Registration • Demographic Changes

To love . . .

By 2021, St. Thomas Becket will develop specific, unified opportunities to address immediate needs of our parish and community, and social justice issues.

General Description	Indicators of Success
We are called to love and serve one another by focusing our outreach experiences to the needs of parishioners and the greater community. These opportunities will build relationships with God and each other and connect in faith with those in need. Parishioners will respond to events as they occur in the greater community. Educating a common understanding of social justice issues will focus our efforts to create change. Opportunities are provided for all ages to listen, pray and serve each other as people of hope.	• More engaged membership which leads to greater stewardship support • Increase membership of young adults in the 20-35 year-old age range • Raise the participation rate of parishioners in all ministries Reference: Topics of Discernment • Mass Attendance and Parish Registration • Demographic Changes • Ministries

To serve . . .

By 2021, St. Thomas Becket will intentionally focus on Stewardship.

General Description	Indicators of Success
Stewardship is part of discipleship. As disciples we are called to follow Jesus and imitate His way of life. Each member of the Church shares in responsibility for its mission; each is called to practice stewardship of the Church. We will broaden our financial conversations and talk to parishioners about the meaning of their life and work, and the talents and strengths they bring into the world. St. Thomas Becket will use its resources to give intentional attention toward stewardship in order that each member contributes to our mission to love, to serve and to be hope.	• Increase participation in ministries • Increase financial giving • Increase new parishioner registrations • Improved financial stability Updated parishioner data bank of talents and strengths. Reference: Topics of Discernment • Mass Attendance and Parish Registration • Financial Stability • Ministries • Demographic Changes • Reconciling Catholic Teaching with Modern Society • Leadership Structure & Succession Planning

To be hope . . .

By 2021, St. Thomas Becket will develop lifelong faith formation programs that renew enthusiasm for the Catholic faith at every stage of a person's faith journey.

| General Description	Indicators of Success
Our life long faith formation will bring the scriptures to life by providing learning through service and theology-based opportunities that renew enthusiasm for the Catholic faith. Our programs must be engaging, create a sense of belonging and encourage each to have a relationship with God. Increasing our knowledge and passion for our Catholic faith, will lead us to be people of hope.	• Increase engagement of parish and community members • Increase participation of all ages in our faith formation opportunities • Increase parishioners via learning through service Reference: Topics of Discernment • Mass Attendance and Parish Registration • Lifelong Faith Formation • Ministries

Ministry Leadership Organization Structure

A component of the GEM 2.0 scope included a review of the existing ministry leadership structure. Over the course of the GEM 2.0 listening sessions and information gathering process, commission and council members indicated issues related to the general purpose of the commissions, communication issues between commissions and with the Parish Pastoral Council and tension between action-oriented activities and looking to the future (visioning).

GEM 2.0 identified several changes across all parts of the STB leadership structure to address and mitigate these issues, but further collaboration between all leadership areas is required to finalize the optimal go-forward structure. Independent of the group names chosen, staff representation on the leadership teams and methods of communication, all groups must work together to achieve STB's mission.
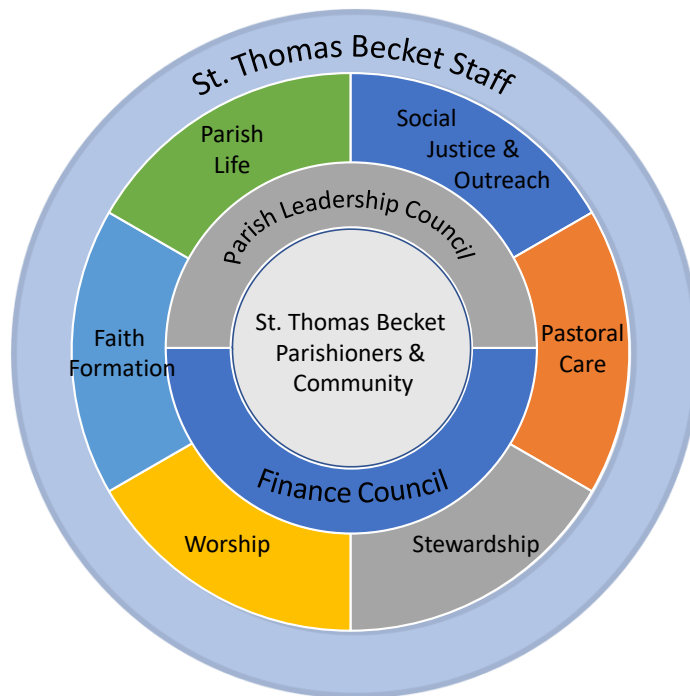
Minimally, GEM 2.0 recommends:

- To add clarity of purpose, the term commission should be replaced with ministry area council (MAC) and the Parish Pastoral Council should be renamed to the Parish Leadership Council (PLC).
- A new ministry area council should be created to provide on-going focus on stewardship of all types, the Stewardship MAC. The Stewardship MAC should grow from the existing Stewardship Committee whose work is already underway.

MACs will be comprised of 6 parishioners and 1 staff person, as with previous commissions. Terms will be 3 years, staggered so that in any given year 2 parishioners will complete their service. Each MAC will

provide 1 representative to the PLC who will be a full, voting member of the PLC. Organizational suggestions for the MACs include being receptive to members who knowingly cannot commit to a three-year team. To encourage participation by parishioners of all ages, some flexibility may be required in the area of term length and thoughtful consideration should be given to term requests less than three years. Additionally, when nominating a MAC member for PLC membership (see details below), it is critical to select a member who can commit to regular attendance for a year at a time. Having to review discussion materials and decisions from previous PLC meetings before current business may be addressed is in direct conflict with the sense of urgency and efficiency in which the PLC must operate.

The PLC will be comprised of 2 at-large members, a chairperson, the STB pastor, the STB business administrator and a representative from the Board of Trustees. In addition, there are 5 PLC members each representing the MAC to which they are also a member. Terms on the PLC, outside MAC representatives, are 3 years.

GEM 2.0 recommends that the PLC and each MAC dedicate time to updating the mission of each MAC and drafting new individual MAC goals that directly support STB's new Mission Statement and Overarching Goals. Without dedication to and support of the mission and overarching goals by all MACs, there is limited opportunity for overall success.

The PLC will be tasked with facilitating and enhancing communication across MACs. Clear and consistent communication is essential to enact changes in a timely manner and ensure consistency of mission.

Editor's Note: Given the level of leadership review during the process of drafting the GEM 2.0 deliverables, ministry area leaders had notice of the findings and recommendations well in advance of the delivery of the final report, this document. As a result, some leadership groups embraced the task of redefining their ministries and providing clarity of purpose. Assuming the PLC adopts GEM 2.0's recommended mission, values and overarching goals, the ministry areas will continue down this path. Discussion points included changing the names of several ministry areas. For example, Social Justice & Outreach discussed changing the name of that ministry area to Faith in Action and Pastoral Care discussed the name Caring Ministry. As the leadership groups for each ministry area become ensconced in the task of incorporating GEM 2.0's recommendations, more changes will likely occur and should be encouraged. Making GEM 2.0's work products part of the foundation of each ministry area is essential and there's no better way than to modify the recommendations to allow best fit for STB and each ministry area.

Topics of Discernment

Purpose

In conjunction with updating St. Thomas Becket's (STB) Mission and Values statements and setting Overarching Goals, a component of the GEM 2.0 strategic planning task was to understand factors that might positively and/or negatively affect the execution of the mission and the achievement of those goals. Furthermore, GEM 2.0 was tasked with summarizing those factors in a way that allows the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) to easily manage the on-going monitoring of the factors and allows the PPC to stay abreast of each and apply real-time operational adjustments as appropriate, instead of responding to the factors after missed opportunities or negative impacts to STB. To accomplish this, GEM 2.0 drafted a list of 'Topics of Discernment' to highlight the factors, provided information regarding the current state of each factor and provided guidance regarding how the PPC might think about each area in the future. These Topics of Discernment are detailed in this document.

> If a parish proves capable of self-renewal and constant adaptivity, it continues to be the Church living in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters.
>
> -Pope Francis

Topics of Discernment Process

To define its recommended 'Topics of Discernment', GEM 2.0 completed a series of research projects and obtained input from current and past parishioners. Research projects included:

- Understanding demographic changes within Eagan and the surrounding communities, including factors such as population changes and expected trends related to aging and diversity;
- Understanding the historical & current state of STB across all functional areas: financial status, staff demographics & satisfaction, mass attendance, faith formation program enrollment, sacramental preparation enrollment, physical space analysis, and ministry area participation estimates;
- Understanding the perceptions of religion in an increasingly secular society; and
- Understanding trends in religious practices by people of all generations.

In addition, GEM 2.0 obtained input from a cross-section of STB parishioners (current and past, new and long-time) through a series of "Listening Sessions" and online surveys. Members from diverse groups were asked to identify the **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities and **C**oncerns of STB via a process called a 'SWOC Analysis'. Significantly, and reflective of the times, the GEM 2.0 group also interviewed non-participating Catholics. Parishioner groups surveyed (in-person or online) include:

- Choir, Bell Choir & Soundboard Technicians
- Eucharistic Ministers, Lectors & Mass Coordinators
- Commission Members
- Confirmation Program Participants
- Parish Pastoral Council
- Preschool Program Participants

- Staff

Note: Although not specifically surveyed for the Fall 2018 GEM 2.0 effort, survey results from a Spring 2018 survey of all youth Faith Formation participants were also reviewed.

A summary of the SWOC Analysis is included in Appendix 1.

Topics of Discernment Summary

As the GEM 2.0 team analyzed the collected data, several critical '*Topics of Discernment*' emerged. GEM 2.0 considered these areas to be challenges and/or opportunities the parish may encounter in the short-term that are not necessarily reflected in one of the 'Overarching Goals', but which should be monitored by leadership and staff in the coming years. As the data was analyzed, certain commonalities were revealed, and the *Topics of Discernment* were categorized in three overarching groupings or categories:

discernment noun
dis·cern·ment | \di-ˈsərn-mənt, 🔊 -ˈzərn-\
Definition of *discernment*
1 : the quality of being able to grasp and comprehend what is obscure : skill in discerning
2 : an act of perceiving or discerning something

"discernment." *Merriam-Webster.com.* Merriam-Webster, 2018. Web. 29 November 2018.

- Beyond our Doors
- Within Our Community
- Stewardship

The three overarching groups or 'Discernment Categories' allowed GEM 2.0 to take a worldview: what's happening outside STB's walls (*Beyond our Doors*), what's happening within our walls (*Within our Community*), and the care and feeding of STB (*Stewardship*). Individual factors to monitor were then grouped within each Discernment Category. In some cases, factors applied to multiple Discernment Categories. When this occurred, a factor was assigned to a discernment category for the purposes of inclusion in this document.

Beyond our Doors represents publicly preaching the Gospel with the intention of spreading the message and teachings of Jesus Christ and doing the work Jesus asked of his followers. STB was built on the ideal of making a difference in the community. To bring life to this ideal of making a difference, STB must demonstrably bring life to the Gospel in the community. The "attractional" model for building

Attractional ⟹ If you build it, they will come

membership is no longer valid; we must reach beyond our doors – and beyond our comfort – to remain relevant. We must courageously love, serve and bring hope to the unchurched, those who have fallen away from the Church, and those who may have never known God's love.

Beyond our Doors includes several factors: the Abuse Crisis, Demographic Changes, Marketing & Communication, Attracting and Retaining, and Reconciling Catholic Teaching with Modern Society.

As opposed to looking beyond STB's walls and parishioners, *Within our Community* represents the continued development and strengthening of parishioners' faith and their relationship with our God and

Savior. STB must explore creative and effective means to engage parishioners of all ages, demographics and levels of religious commitment. STB was founded on the concept of community. It has been community-led with volunteer, lay ministries filling many key roles. STB's community is revealed through full participation in worship. It is built through Liturgies and music which are engaging and, perhaps most importantly, through ministries that bring purpose and fulfillment.
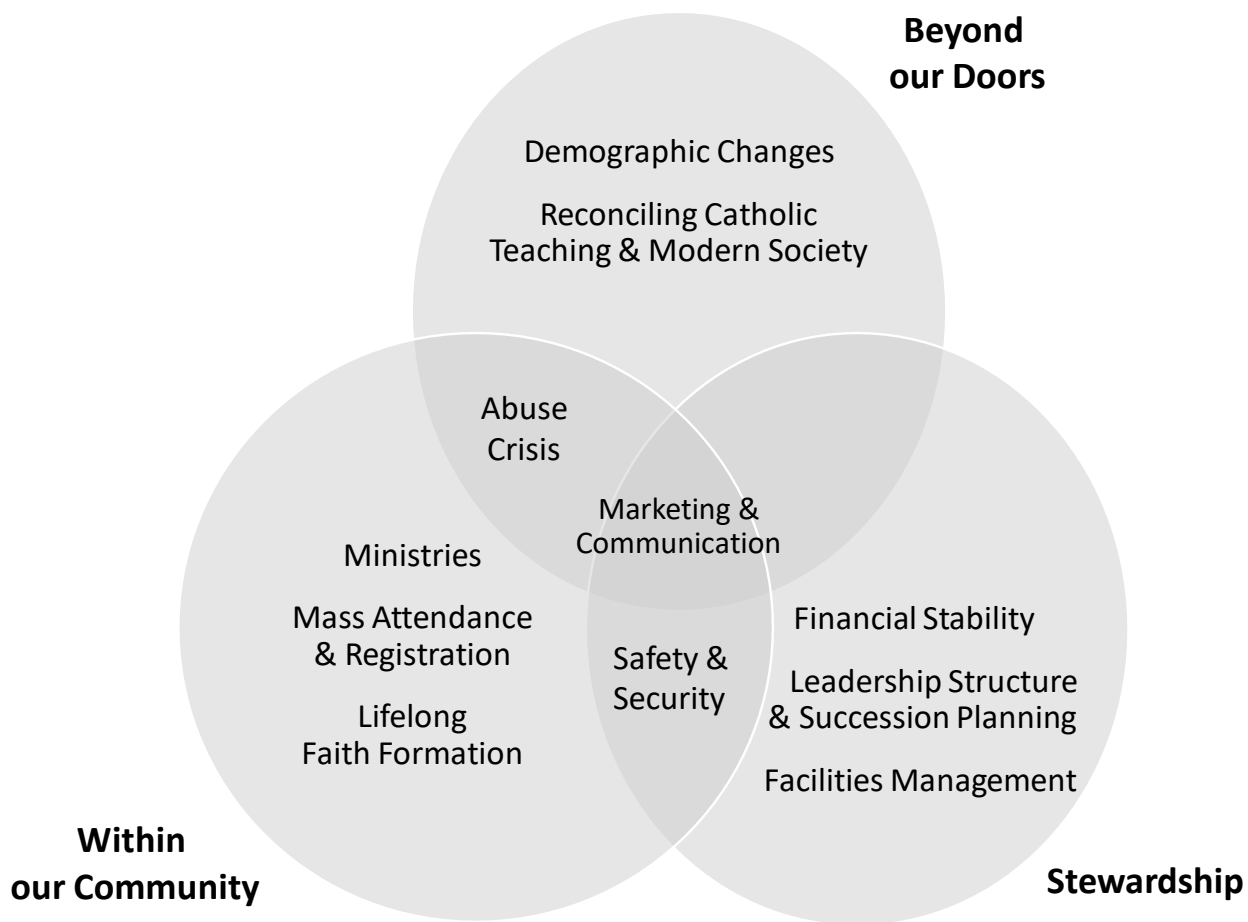
Beyond our Doors

Demographic Changes

Reconciling Catholic Teaching & Modern Society

Abuse Crisis

Marketing & Communication

Ministries

Mass Attendance & Registration

Lifelong Faith Formation

Safety & Security

Financial Stability

Leadership Structure & Succession Planning

Facilities Management

Within our Community

Stewardship

Figure 1

Within our Community includes several factors: Mass Attendance & Parish Registration, Ministries, and Lifelong Faith Formation.

Although parish debt is an unavoidable topic when considering *Stewardship*, STB looks at stewardship in more general terms. Our debt remains a significant challenge. Although prudent and thoughtful, Parish financial decisions are greatly influenced by attention to debt. However, Stewardship is more than the management of financial resources and parishioner talent, it also speaks to foresight in succession planning, safety and security and care for our physical environment.

stewardship noun
stew·ard·ship | \ˈstü-ərd-ˌship, ˈstyü-;ˈst(y)ürd-\

Definition of *stewardship*

1 : the office, duties, and obligations of a steward

2 : the conducting, supervising, or managing of something
   especially : the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care
   // *stewardship* of natural resources

"stewardship." *Merriam-Webster.com*. Merriam-Webster, 2018. Web. 29 November 2018.

Stewardship includes several factors: Leadership Structure & Succession Planning, Financial Stability, Facilities Management, and Safety & Security.

Beyond our Doors

Beyond our Doors represents publicly preaching the Gospel with the intention of spreading the message and teachings of Jesus Christ and doing the work Jesus asked of his followers. STB was built on the ideal of making a difference in the community and that culture must continue into future. The "attractional" model for building membership is no longer valid; we must reach beyond our doors – and beyond our comfort – to remain relevant. We must courageously love, serve and bring hope to the unchurched, those who have fallen away from the Church, and those who may have never known God's love.

Abuse Crisis

The sexual abuse crisis continues to be an issue for the church on a regional, national and international level. Although new instances of abuse have decreased dramatically since 2000, one case of abuse is too many. The church's perceived inability to address the abuse crisis is exacerbating the tension in church leadership.

The fallout has consequences in many areas that will affect the church for the foreseeable future:
* The victims & their families face the lasting effects;
* Pew Research reports approximately 27% of former Catholics who no longer identify with any religion cite the abuse scandals as a reason for leaving the church;
* The financial burden from lawsuits has caused many dioceses (including STB's) to file for bankruptcy which negatively affects the programs and people served;
* Pope Francis recognized that young Catholics are scandalized by the crisis leading it to be a major, unofficial topic of discussion at the Synod of Bishops; and
* The impact of the abuse scandal is currently being felt in declining membership, youth and young adult participation in the church and the financial health & security of the parish.

Verification
  o The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) statistics show 8,694 new abuse allegations reported since 2004 for abuse committed 1970-2017. Of those allegations, 302 incidents of abuse (.2%) occurred after the year 2000. Although one case is too many, the rules that have been put in place are having an impact. In an opinion piece, Thomas Reese writes "The continuing problem, in other words, is not that the precautions aren't working. It's that the bishops have forfeited their credibility. People don't believe a thing the bishops say, and people are not going to let the church move on." The credibility issue has come about because of the number of people in leadership positions in the church that covered up the abuse for many years.
  o There is significant literature on this topic. A couple examples include:
      * [Why the Catholic Church Can't Move On From The Sex Abuse Crisis](#)
      * [The Catholic Church's Biggest Crisis Since the Reformation](#)
      * https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2018-11-30/pope-francis-and-catholic-crisis
      * https://leadershiproundtable.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/LeadershipRoundtable_PressRelease_November2018.pdf

Reflection
  o How will STB be able to grow, thrive and make a positive impact in the community at large while tackling this issue on a local level?

- How does STB positively impact Church positions on this issue within the diocese and beyond?
- How does STB demonstrate to victims and the community at-large that we support those who have been abused?
- How can STB reconnect with those who have left the church because of abuse issues?
- What can STB do to inspire confidence in the church and retain those who may leave the church due to lack of response by church leadership?
- What are the short- and long-term financial impacts on STB?

Demographic Changes

Saint Thomas Becket faces opportunities and challenges amidst a variety of changing demographics. The population of St. Thomas Becket and the City of Eagan is aging for several reasons: residents are remaining in their homes longer, there is limited land for new development and the high price of housing is a barrier to younger households. Furthermore, the population growth in younger households in surrounding areas is not engaging in religious practices in historically typical ways. Today's young adults are demonstrating an increased desire to practice their spirituality outside church walls or not at all. They are delaying life milestones that typically bring young adults back to the church such as marriage and having children. In addition, households led by young adults are increasingly non-typical and may find participation in the Catholic Church unwelcoming and are generally producing smaller households.

Verification
- Eagan home values remain higher than both Dakota County and the metropolitan region. (City of Eagan's 2040 Comprehensive Plan)
- By 2035, Minnesota's age 65+ group is expected to eclipse the under 18 population for the first time in state history (Minnesota State Demographic Center, Projections, Key Findings)
- The religious beliefs and practices of people of all ages are quickly changing. The percentage of teens who identify as atheist is double that of the general population (13% vs. 6% of all adults). The proportion that identifies as Christian likewise drops from generation to generation. Three out of four Boomers are Protestant or Catholic Christians (75%), while just three in five 13- to 18-year-olds say they are some kind of Christian (59%). (*Gen Z*, Barna)
- Traditional milestones of adulthood are occurring later in life or not at all for younger generations. 'Accomplishments' once ubiquitous of those in their 20s are not commonplace for many young adults until their 30s - a trend that some demographers describe as a new stage between childhood and adulthood. They call it "emerging adulthood." Young people may delay marriage, but most still eventually tie the knot. In the 1970s, 8 in 10 married by the time they turned 30. Today, not until the age of 45 have 8 in 10 people married. (The Changing Economics and Demographics of Young Adulthood: 1975-2016, US Census Bureau)

Reflection
- How does STB appeal to non-typical households? Can it do so without risk of alienating existing parishioners?
- How can STB leverage its strong social justice programming to meet the 'unchurched' outside church walls?
- How can STB minister to our aging parishioners?
- How do we simultaneously serve multiple generations with differing interests and needs?

- o How can STB welcome the growing cultural diversity while balancing the practices of the existing membership?

Marketing & Communication

Effective communication and marketing strategies are critical components to STB's success as a "destination parish". These activities affect all aspects of our interactions and operations: Beyond our Doors, Within our Community and our Stewardship. Without successful Marketing & Communication, we cannot:

- reach those in need,
- engage those actively seeking a Catholic community and those interested in serving others,
- identify and coordinate ministry volunteers,
- operate the STB business, or
- raise operational and expansion funds.

Maintaining timely and effective communication is an issue in most organizations and STB is no exception. The issue is how to market ourselves as a unique, spirit-filled community to people with widespread communication preferences and to people religiously ambivalent or with a significant distrust in the church hierarchy while continuing to engage and inform parishioners. Good communication requires intentionality and persistence amid cluttered communications. (Eric Seiberling)

Verification
- o Social media plays an increasingly important role in STB's future. In "The New New Evangelization", Father Jay Finelli says, "Social media is the next step in modern Catholic evangelization. ...it is another tool to reach our goal of extending the Gospel message to all the world." He also makes a point about Jesus telling his disciples to proclaim the Gospel to all people and that Jesus did not say "Come to church and stay there, hidden away until I return in glory." Social media is one way of getting the word out to many people. Even Pope Francis is aware of the importance of social media. Although not the first pope to use social media, he understands the power behind it and currently has over 10 million followers on Twitter. (*The New New Evangelization*, Jay Finelli)
- o Poor communication currently hinders effective STB operations. Commission member feedback indicated communication between commissions could be improved to avoid duplication of effort, maximize efficiencies and give all commissions a better understanding of areas of responsibility. (SWOC and Listening Sessions)
- o There is significant literature around church marketing and communication:
  - 8 Simple Ways to Improve Church Communication
  - Connecting with the 'Plugged In' at Your Church
  - The Importance of Social Media on Evangelization
  - Social Media Should Be Used to Evangelize
  - The Top 10 Marketing Strategies to Retain and Attract New Members

Reflection
- o Does STB have a consistent marketing and communication plan? Do staff and leadership know it and implement it in a consistent manner?
- o Does STB maintain sufficient parishioner/contact information to adequately target communications? Can staff and leadership easily access the information?

- What role does social media have in communicating with current parishioners? Attracting new members? Connecting with those interested in learning more about STB?
- Should the parish consider utilizing a third-party contact management company or product to maintain a consistent message across different platforms (keeping generations in mind, see Appendix 2) and to contain costs?
- What steps can we take to make St. Thomas Becket a "brand" in the community at large?
- Do STB's communication platforms (i.e. website, communication tools, social media presence) adequately support the needs of the church?

Reconciling Catholic Teaching with Modern Society

> "We know – and you have told us – that many young people do not turn to us for anything because they don't feel we have anything meaningful to say to them."
>
> Pope Francis

An array of divisive social issues confronts Church leadership today. The Church has drawn criticism for its position on these issues from several corners, perhaps most importantly, from our youth. In some ways mirroring society, there are divisions within the Church and among parishioners on subjects such as:

- Marriage and Divorce
- Sexuality, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identification
- Equality for Women & Minorities
- Immigration
- Income Distribution
- Right to Life

While resolution of these issues may be beyond the reach of STB, leaders must find effective paths to guide our parish through these issues while remaining true to our Catholic identity.

Verification
- Young Catholics "want an authentic Church." One that is... "transparent, welcoming, honest, attractive, communicative, accessible, joyful and interactive...". (*Synod of Bishops Instrumentum Laboris*, Vatican, June 19, 2018.)
- Recognition of Marriage Solely Between One Man and One Woman – Minnesota Amendment 1 – defeated 52.56% to 47.44% November 7, 2012.
- Pope Francis and women's ordination.   (National Catholic Reporter, September 13, 2016)
- Why are we at each other's throats? Healing polarization in our church (National Catholic Reporter, November 30, 2018)

Reflection
- Through fear of alienating a few, do we risk appearing disingenuous to many?
- Are we prepared to conduct uncomfortable conversations boldly, in a loving way?
- To what extent do we intend that the identity of STB is tied to a position on these issues?
- Are we prepared to explain how we can bring solace in a divisive, fractious world?

Within our Community

 Of central importance to our Community of St. Thomas Becket is the continued development and strengthening of our member's faith and their relationship with our God and Savior. We must explore creative and effective means to engage parishioners of all ages and demographics. St. Thomas Becket was founded on the concept of community. It has been community-led, with volunteer lay ministries filling many key needs since inception. Our community is revealed through full participation in worship. It is reinforced by engaging Liturgies and music. Perhaps most of all, it is witnessed in purpose-filled ministries.

Mass Attendance and Parish Registration

STB faces opportunities and challenges amidst a variety of demographic and societal forces which directly impact *Mass Attendance and Parish Registration*. While nationally, participation rates have fallen for Mass attendance, Saint Thomas Becket has been blessed with relatively stable participation rates, although the impact of the cancellation of 5:00 pm Sunday Mass is not yet clear. Significant opportunities exist in planned developments to the north (Viking Lakes, Eagan) and south (UMore, Rosemount) to increase Mass attendance and grow the number of registered parishioners.

Verification
- o Our Mass counts have moved around a 5-year average of 4,075 per month, peaking in 2013, then recovering from a decline in 2015, followed by a sharp decrease in 2018. See Appendix 3.
- o In contrast to the relatively stable rates at Saint Thomas Becket, nationally, a Gallup Poll published April 9, 2018 showed a decline of 6 percentage points in reported Mass attendance for the period 2014 to 2017 compared to the period of 2005 to 2008. **Since 1955, the decline has been 48%.** See Appendix 4.

Reflection
- o What factors have led to our better than average results in attraction and retention?
- o How do we best preserve and build upon our successes?
- o What is the right size for our parish?
- o How do we prepare for the opportunities and challenges presented by the significant residential development planned near our parish?
- o Will Parish Registration and Mass Attendance remain relevant measures of engagement in a rapidly changing environment?
- o What does it mean to belong? Are there emerging, nontraditional ways and means to connect with us and belong?

Ministries

The word ministry comes from the Greek word diakonia which is translated as service. All are called to participate in proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ. This can take many forms including serving others as Jesus did. STB has taken this responsibility seriously which is evidenced by the number and scope of ministries available. Many of these are conceived, implemented and led by parishioners. One of the questions that has come up through the SWOC analysis is ministry growth vs. volunteer growth given both the aging and declining numbers of parishioners. It is difficult to fill all the positions in some of the "day-to-day" ministries (lawn mowing, preparing the worship space, hospitality). Some masses, especially during the summer, do not offer hospitality after mass because there isn't anyone willing to

do the work. Participating in ministry is a calling, but unfortunately one not being heeded by enough people. Most people seem to think that a calling is only something that happens to those who serve as priests, deacons, nuns or other lay people that work in the church. One of the challenges will be for the parish to make it clear that we are all called to serve in some capacity.

Verification
- o [Lay Ministry Information & Resources](#), (John Paul II Center for the New Evangelization)
- o [Towards a Compelling Theology of Lay Ministry](#), (Leading Ideas, Lewis Center for Church Leadership)
- o [Synergy: A Leadership Guide for Church Staff & Volunteers](#), (Leading Ideas, Lewis Center for Church Leadership)
- o [People too Busy to Serve? Teach Them to Steward Their Time](#), (Leading Ideas, Lewis Center for Church Leadership)
- o SWOC Analysis

Reflection
- o When founded, STB focused on serving Northern Dakota County. Over the years, the focus of the ministries has expanded beyond the immediate area to also include parts of Hennepin County, Ramsey County and beyond the US border. Does this expansion align with STB's vision?
- o What is the optimal number of ministries that the parish can sustain?
- o What criteria is used to determine when a ministry should be added or removed? Do budget constraints play a role in determining ministry areas?
- o What steps should the parish take to invite parishioners to participate in ministry as part of their stewardship?
- o What is the process used to train new people in specific ministries & train leaders in the best utilization of volunteers?
- o Should STB consider collaborating with other parishes in shared ministry?
- o Does 'Ministry' include enhancing the social connection between youth and adults to each other? If so, does STB sufficiently meet the needs of youth, young adults, adults?

Lifelong Faith Formation

Traditional faith formation programs have not adapted to modern times. Although the world has changed, and the Internet and digital technology is transforming our lives, many churches, including STB, are using program models and educational approaches they inherited from earlier generations and are expecting them to address the lives of twenty-first century children, adolescents and their families.

Youth programs are under attack from multiple sides. School, sports and arts commitments are encroaching on the historically unscheduled Wednesday nights. Parental religious commitment is declining and therefore so is their commitment to having their children attend faith formation programs. Furthermore, parents whose children participate in faith formation programs have completely 'outsourced' the religious education of their children to the church. The role of technology in youth learning is also increasing allowing young people to choose how to learn, what to learn and when to learn, something faith formation programs do not typically include.

Adult interest in faith formation programs also faces challenges. Programming needs vary widely between those new to the faith and those desiring to deepen a life-long faith. Religious commitment is

declining, and complex schedules make it difficult to consistently attend in-person faith formation programs.

Verification
- o "We need a new vision and approach for engaging the new generation in growing as disciples and maturing in faith. Far too many churches are guided by a vision and approach that is not responsive to the needs of young people and their families and is woefully out of date in our contemporary world." (Roberto, John, Et Al. Faith Formation with a New Generation. Lifelong Faith Publications. 2018. Print.)
- o A joint study by the McGrath Institute for Church Life at the University of Notre Dame and the Center for the Study of Religion and Society found that, "The crucial location where youth's religious outcomes are largely decided is not the congregation or the parish, but the home." This study concluded that the 'outsourcing' of faith formation to church youth programs is ineffective and will not lead to lasting faith. (A Report on American Catholic Religion Parenting)

Reflection
- o How can STB change to accommodate today's on-demand, micro-learning tendencies for faith formation programming for all ages, especially teens and young adults?
- o How can STB leverage its strong social justice programming for the intergenerational faith formation?
- o Does STB offer the right programming to engage post-Confirmation youth? Are those programs a function of faith formation or another ministry area?
- o What is STB's commitment to re-inventing lifelong faith formation?
- o What does the idea presented in this section that religious formation comes from the home say about adult faith formation?

Stewardship

STB takes a broader view of Stewardship than merely the management of financial resources; it also speaks to foresight in leadership & succession planning, safety & security, and care of our physical environment. Additionally and significantly, Stewardship includes gifts of time and talent. Having said that, parish debt is an unavoidable topic when considering *Stewardship*. STB's debt remains a significant challenge. Although prudent and thoughtful, parish financial decisions are greatly influenced by attention to debt.

Leadership Structure & Succession Planning

STB's present Commission structure was implemented in 2012 as a recommendation of the first Growing Engaged Members (GEM) taskforce. A strength of this structure was that it created a parishioner-led structure focused on the Vision and responsive to the needs of parishioners. Commission members have been passionate and committed, but there are opportunities and challenges to continued execution of the Commission structure to ensure a proper balance between day-to-day operations and ministry execution and forward-looking visioning activities.

As St. Thomas Becket's population is aging, so is the leadership of the church. To address key departures in the coming years, STB needs to identify a succession plan for critical roles. This succession planning for our priests will be complicated by the fact that, generally speaking, US seminaries are experiencing an extended period of decreasing or all-time low enrollment. Those seminaries

Overall Seminary Enrollment Trends, 1968-2016
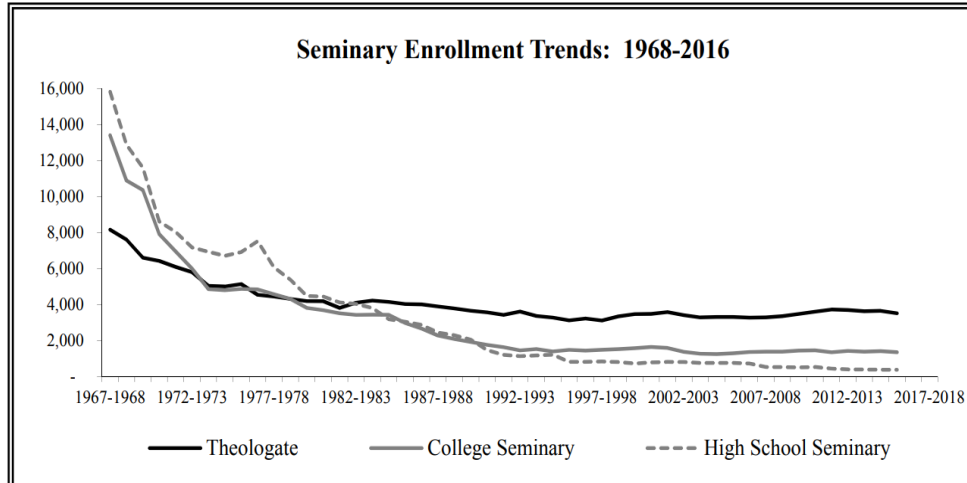
experiencing modest growth tend to adhere to more conservative orthodox curriculum which is inconsistent with the culture at STB. The challenge will be identifying and recruiting 'Pope Francis-style priests' that complement the culture of STB. Additionally, some paid staff are also approaching retirement age which may lead to one or more staff members announcing their retirement in the short-term. Backfilling these positions will be complicated by several factors: declining enrollment in theology programs, hybrid job descriptions including traditional responsibilities and technological proficiency, and low unemployment. These factors converge to make it more difficult to find the right employees and will likely increase payroll costs. These increases come at a time of predicted decreased giving and may require STB to consider alternative staffing solutions.

Verification

- o Some Commissions expressed a tension between the desire for the Commission to be visionary, and the need for its members to be task-oriented. (SWOC and Listening Sessions)
- o Communication was an indicated opportunity for improvement among STB leadership groups. Although some deficiencies with vertical communication were noted, the bulk of the feedback concerned opportunities and challenges with horizontal communication and the feeling of being "siloed" (SWOC and Listening Sessions).
- o Seminary enrollment is near an all-time low. (Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), Catholic Ministry Formation Enrollment: Statistical Overview for 2015-2016)
- o St. Thomas Becket incurred a 10% reduction in financial giving after Fr. Kommers' departure and a 16% reduction in financial giving after Fr. Brioschi became ill. (St. Thomas Becket Financial Report, 2018)
- o The average age of priests in the United States has risen from 35 in 1970 to 63 in 2009. (Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, CARA)

Reflection

- o What's the optimal leadership structure to accomplish the right balance between looking to the future and meeting the demands of today?
- o For the go-forward leadership structure, how can communication effortlessly flow to allow the upward, downward and horizontal exchange of information?
- o What are the training requirements to support the leadership structure & how does STB quickly and effectively train leadership to ensure smooth member transitions & effective use of volunteers?
- o How do we identify and recruit a Pope Francis-style priest to ensure continuity of STB's culture?
- o Given historical dips in financial giving after priests leave STB, what steps may be taken to minimize the impact this practice may have on our future financial commitments?
- o How do we retain our existing staff or replace those that depart?
- o How can we leverage our position as a 'social justice' church to attract and retain younger workers when we hire?

Financial Stability

Parish debt remains a significant challenge. Although prudent and thoughtful, parish financial decisions are influenced by attention to debt. STB's ability to invest in staff, facilities, liturgies and ministries is impacted. As the parishioners who currently provide the base of our monetary support age into and past retirement, questions arise about their ability to continue that support and about the financial commitment of succeeding generations.

Verification

- o By early 2020 STB will need to raise an additional $200,000 annually, which represents a 27% increase over 2018 total contributions. (*October 2018 Letter from Parish Finance Council*)
- o A reserve of almost six months giving has been set aside for unexpected facility costs. (*October 2018 letter from Parish Finance Council)*
- o Average giving per registered household declined in the period 2010 to 2018 compared to 2000 to 2009, in both real dollars and especially when adjusted for inflation.
- o Our completed 2013 Capital Campaign successfully enabled us to reduce our building debt from $4.1 million to $2.5 million.
- o STB contributes $112,000 annually to Faithful Shepherd Catholic School.

Reflection
- o To what degree do our financial limitations impact our ability to attract and retain parishioners?
- o Is our financial reserve sufficient to meet reasonably foreseeable contingencies?
- o How can we inspire all parishioners, young and old, to be more financially committed to the parish?
- o Are future capital campaigns effective mechanisms for the retirement of parish debt?
- o Are there nontraditional ways to inspire and facilitate increased giving?

Facilities Management

For the purposes of GEM 2.0, facilities management includes caring for the existing STB campus, planning for future technology & expansion needs and minimizing the impact of the facility and its uses on the environment. In caring for the existing building, attention must be paid to the fact that the STB campus is approaching its 25-year anniversary. Buildings of this age require significant maintenance, upkeep and renovation. In addition, STB may want to invest in expansion. STB's original construction plan included multiple phases. Phase 1 was completed in 1994. Phase 2 included completion of the upstairs classroom and office space. Later planned phases included a chapel, large gathering space and expanded kitchen. Parishioners are interested in the expansion. Additionally, great strides have been made in technology since construction and should be explored, including energy efficiency, sound system improvements and technology. Although these may save money, enhance parishioner experience or increase efficiencies, improvements may be costly. All maintenance and expansion projects should balance safety, appearance and functionality of the campus.

Verification
- o Staff and parishioners note that the sanctuary sound quality is poor and may not meet the needs of the music ministry and hearing-impaired parishioners. (SWOC and Listening Sessions) The number of hearing-impaired parishioners is growing: approximately one in three people in the United States between the ages of 65 and 74 has hearing loss, and nearly half of those older than 75 have difficulty hearing (National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, NIH); and 25% of incoming college freshman already suffer from hearing loss (Beloit College, The Mindset List, 2016).
- o There is insufficient kitchen and open space for large parish gatherings & to support the growing funeral ministry (SWOC and Listening Sessions).

Reflection
- o Does STB maintain sufficient replacement reserves to maintain the existing building and functionality?
- o How will questions of prioritization be answered when approving maintenance, upgrade and expansion projects?

Safety & Security

Although church shootings have become a reality in the last few years, this is just one area for churches to look at in the realm of "Church Security." Another term that could be used is risk management because it covers a broader area for St. Thomas Becket to consider. This includes:
- Fire safety

- Severe weather
- Active shooter plan
- Video surveillance
- Emergency communication planning
- Medical emergency
- Data breach

Many churches face resistance to security measures because "…it goes counter to the biblical truth of trust in God" (The New Normal for Church Security, thomrainer.com). Rainer suggests this will pass just as the resistance to doing background checks for those working with children did a few years ago. Communication, education, regular training for key personnel and regular maintenance & testing of equipment & procedures will be the key to any successful implementation of a thorough security plan.

Verification
- o Church shootings are on the rise. Prior to 1963 there had never been a mass murder associated with a faith-based property in the United States. Recent examples include: 6/17/05, 9 killed at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, SC; 11/5/17, 26 killed at First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, TX; and 10/27/18, 11 killed at Tree of Life Congregation in Pittsburgh, PA.
- o There is considerable literature available to help guide churches:
    - Church Security: How Do We Keep Our Churches Safe in a World Where Evil Is Present?, by Ed Stetzen, 11/7/17.
    - 3 Most Crucial Needs of a Church Security Team, by Timothy Fancher, 6/14/18.
    - 21 Security, Safety Best Practices for Places of Worship (Churches, Mosques etc.) LinkedIn by Don Okereke 12/23/15
    - Parish Risk Management Manual, Catholic Diocese of Wichita.
    - Shootings Galvanize Interest in Church Security, by Peter Feuerherd, 12/7/17.
    - The New Normal for Church Security, 2018.

Reflection
- o What steps should be considered or implemented for a security team, either internal or contract?
- o What type of training would be needed to implement any security plan?
- o What are the minimum standards that should be in place to ensure the safety of all children under our care?
- o How do we balance the need to keep everyone on site safe from harm with being open and welcoming to all?
- o What is the financial impact on the parish if new procedures are implemented?

Appendices

Appendix 1: Summary of SWOC Analysis

A summary of the findings of the SWOC Analysis is below:

STB SWOC ANALYSIS SUMMARY

Strengths
- Experienced & engaging leadership: Priests / Deacon / Staff
- Congruous liturgies, homilies, music, physical environment
- Welcoming community, including greeters & hospitality
- Culture of Social Justice & volunteerism
- Social Gatherings

Weaknesses
- Attracting new members & volunteers
- Gathering space & technology limitations, including sound system
- Lack of teen & young adult engagement & programming
- Slow adoption of technology to inform, educate & engage

Opportunities
- Youth & young adult engagement
- Collaboration w/ other churches
- Volunteer recruiting & ministry expansion
- Implementation of technology
- Welcome & inclusive culture
- Population growth in surrounding cities
- Financial stewardship

Concerns
- Volunteer recruitment & utilization
- Parishioner recruitment
- Pastor & staff continuity
- Reconciling STB message, Catholic message & modern society
- Short- and long-term impact of abuse scandal
- Financial commitments / stability

Appendix 2: Generations

Silent Generation	Baby Boomers	Gen X	Gen Y (Millennials)	Gen Z
Born **1930 - 1946**	Born **1947 - 1964**	Born **1965 - 1984**	Born **1985 - 1994**	Born **1995 - 2012**
Current Age **70 - 86**	Current Age **52 - 69**	Current Age **32 - 51**	Current Age **22 - 31**	Current Age **4 - 21**
10% of Population	28% of Population	25% of Population	28% of Population	9% of Population
Internet at Age **49 - 65**	Internet at Age **31 - 48**	Internet at Age **11 - 30**	Internet at Age **1 - 10**	Internet at Age **0**
Messaging should be **familiar** and **simple**. Email campaigns and straightforward web pages are the best way to engage this group.	Messaging should be **optimistic** and contain **rich content**. This group can be best reached through social media (Facebook and LinkedIn) through posts that show intrinsic value.	Messaging should be **authentic** and **concise**. Facebook and LinkedIn are great ways to reach this group. Keep it short, and keep it real.	Messaging should contain **imaging** and should be **short**. Facebook and Twitter are most effective when targeting this group. Make sure your content is relevant and informative.	Messaging should be **entertaining** and preferably on **social media**. Keep it light, quick, and full of imaging. And when in doubt, Snapchat Snapchat Snapchat.

Harrell, Brittany. "How to Curate Content for All Generations." *MetroStar Systems*, 12 Jan. 2017, www.metrostarsystems.com/digital/curating-content-generations/.

Appendix 3: STB October Mass Counts by Year

Year	Weekend 1	Weekend 2	Weekend 3	Weekend 4	Monthly Total	% Change from Previous Year
2012	1,011	1,021	982	1,100	4,114	
2013	1,201	1,067	1,155	1,111	4,534	10%
2014	1,009	1,007	901	1,048	3,965	-13%
2015	982	1,054	800	903	3,739	-6%
2016					-	
2017	1,060	1,100	842	1,021	4,023	
2018					3,323	-17%

Appendix 4: Trends in Weekly Church Attendance by GALLUP

Trends in Weekly Church Attendance
% Attended church in past seven days

■ Protestants   ■ Catholics

75	67	54	50	46	46	45
42	38	40	40	43	45	39

| 1955 | 1965-1966 | 1975 | 1995-1996 | 1983-1986 | 2005-2008 | 2014-2017 |

Note: Protestants for 2005-2008 and 2014-2017 are defined as Protestants + Christians (nonspecific)

GALLUP

Church Attendance Among Catholics, by Age
% Attended church in past seven days

■ 21-29   ■ 30-39   ■ 40-49   ■ 50-59   ■ 60+

77
76
74
73

64
57
49
48
37

49
43
40
31
25

| 1955 | 1965-1966 | 1975 | 1983-1986 | 1995-1996 | 2005-2008 | 2014-2017 |

GALLUP