

Welcome to this issue of the Messenger. The St. John XXIII Stewardship Commission works to highlight some of the many ways people are actively living out Christ's message of love and service in our faith community. This month we are pleased to publish information concerning the recent meetings exploring our identity as St. John XXIII Parish and School.

Stewardship Commission

In Search of an Identity: Who Are We as St. John XXIII?

Driven primarily by a shortage of priests, the parishes of Immaculate Conception, St. Mary's and St. Peter of Alcantara, along with Port Catholic School, merged to become St. John XXIII Parish on July 1, 2016. Despite having an effective parish cluster in place prior to this time, the merger was nonetheless a profound change for the Port Washington/Saukville Catholic faith community. Our initial focus was on establishing a new organizational structure that would allow for the continuation of day to day operations in support of our many parish ministries. In addition, the *Gather & Grow* capital campaign was initiated as part of plan to consolidate and upgrade our parish facilities.

Through our first three years of existence as St. John XXIII, it was all we could do to manage the challenges associated with being a new parish and conducting a multi-million-dollar capital improvement campaign. During the third year, however, there was a growing interest in becoming more strategic in our planning. In response, our Pastoral Council called for initial strategic planning steps to be taken this fiscal year.

A typical strategic planning starting point is to articulate a mission (what is our purpose, why do we exist) and corresponding vision statement (what do we hope to become/achieve). Before embarking on mission/vision development, however, the Parish Leadership Team (Fr. Pat, other parish staff, parishioner representative) decided our strategic planning efforts would be best supported if we first took the time to establish our identity as St. John XXIII. Indeed, while considerable time was spent prior to our merger on determining the name of our new parish, once St. John XXIII was chosen we never took the time to consider what that meant for our newly merged Catholic faith community.

Responding to the Parish Leadership Team direction, we secured the services of Michael Taylor, a Cardinal Stritch University faculty member and consultant, to facilitate a parish identity focused retreat this past September for our Pastoral Council and other leading parish and staff members. We then reconvened with Michael in October to allow him to share his insights and suggest next steps toward forming our parish identity.

While we could have limited this process to the thoughts shared by our parish leadership group, we decided it would be better to seek input from our parishioners at large. Consequently, in November, we presented a parish identity survey as comprehensively as we could, seeking answers to the following four questions: What words would you use to describe St. John XXIII today? What do you need St. John XXIII to be? What does the community at large need St. John XXIII to be? Which words (among a list provided or others) do you believe ought to be most central to our identity?

After allowing time to focus our attention on the Advent and Christmas seasons, a compilation of the survey responses gathered was shared via a bulletin insert in January. The purpose in doing so was to show that the thoughts of our parishioners had been duly noted and to enable them see the broad range of perspective corresponding to this feedback. Given the diversity of viewpoints expressed, we invited Rich Harter, Director of Missionary Planning with the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, to meet with our Pastoral Council on January 21 to offer his advice on how we may best proceed in forming our parish identity.

The presentation made by Rich centered on a detailed process for how we may move from our substantial body of identity feedback to a core identity that is "big, bold, and inspiring" along with "discipleship behaviors" for how to live it out. This process was well received by the Pastoral Council and now steps are being taken to engage in it. The Council is firmly committed to keeping all parties concerned well informed of progress being made on this important front, so stay tuned for further updates!

Thank you to all who gave so generously of your time, talent and treasure

Thanks to the Mission Trip Youth who made delicious soup and sold it after the Masses last week and in February. Please support them. Thanks to all who celebrated Catholic Schools Week at St. John XXIII for raising our awareness of this prized educational jewel we have so close to home.

Upcoming Events

Saturday, February 22 and Sunday, February 23, - Fair Trade Coffee and Chocolate Sale, before and after Masses at St. Peter's
Sunday, February 23, - Mission Trip Soup Sale, before and after Masses at Immaculate Conception and St. Mary's
Friday, February 28, - 5:00 pm – 8:00 pm Men's Society Fish Fry
Saturday, February 29, - A Night Under the Big Top at Country Inn and Suites

Please see the bulletin or Parish website at www.stjohn23rd.org for more information on this event and to see a full listing of events