

# SMALL PARISH FORUM



HELP, HOPE, STABILITY AND IDENTITY  
CHRIST THE SAVIOUR CHURCH  
BYESVILLE, OH JULY 10-12, 2014

# Greetings and Welcome

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- From all of us involved



And...from my new grandson!  
Jacob William Kormos

# Thank You!

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- Your time this week
- Your past labors
- Your willingness to consider new approaches

**To Our Hosts!**



# ...and the Supporting Dioceses

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Archdiocese of Pittsburgh  
and Western Pennsylvania



Diocese of Chicago  
and the Midwest

# Faculty & Staff

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## Clergy

- **Fr. Daniel Rentel**
- Fr John Reeves
- Fr Jonathan Proctor
- **Fr. Stephen Frase**

**Bold= core team**

## Laypersons

- David Drillock
- **AnnMarie Mecera**
- **Joseph Kormos**
- **Cathy Vrugitz**
- **John Fedorko**
- Kim Krajci

# Forum Goals

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## **1. Stimulate Commitment**

Stimulate small parishes to renew and fulfill their founding commitment to be a viable Orthodox community into perpetuity.

## **2. Offer Worship Tools**

Offer tools that enrich and beautify worship as the expression of the best each parish can offer up.

## **3. Deliver Parish Tools**

Provide clergy serving small communities with materials that promote stewardship, governance, education and outreach.

## **4. Encourage Community Contact**

Explore ways that will allow each parish to become involved with the larger community so as to have that community become involved with the parish.

## **5. Establish Communication Networks**

Establish lines of communication networks between parishes that will enable the exchange of useful information.

## **6. Reduce Stresses**

Collaborate to explore stresses faced by small parishes in the hope of lessening and resolving them to the benefit of the parish.

# Agenda

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- Presentations
- Discussions
- Workshops
- Panels

## Small Parish Forum Agenda

July 10-12 2014 Christ the Savior Orthodox Church, Byesville OH

Time/Date	Title & Speaker	Overview	Key Points
<b>Thursday June 10</b>			
3:00 PM	<b>Welcome</b> <b>Introduction:</b> <i>A Foundation for the Forum</i> <b>Joseph Kormos</b> <i>Parish Development Ministry Leader, Archdiocese of Western PA, OCA</i>	Introduce attendees to one another and the ground we will cover over the next two days.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Forum objectives &amp; intro faculty</li> <li>• Summarize attendees &amp; their parishes</li> <li>• Review agenda &amp; describe opportunities for interaction</li> <li>• Summarize qualities of small churches – the good and bad</li> <li>• Icebreaker exercise</li> </ul>
3:45 PM	<b>Keynote</b> <i>State Rt. 53 and Me</i> <b>Archpriest Daniel Rentel</b> <i>Pastor Emeritus, St Gregory of Nyssa Church Columbus OH</i>	My early personal and pastoral experiences were in small parishes in small towns – & mostly positive. Today many of the social, cultural & economic supports that allowed these churches to survive & thrive have disappeared – leading to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reinvigorating small parishes, requires our outlook, perspective &amp; actions to change... while still maintaining the tenets of our Orthodox Faith.</li> <li><i>During your time at this Forum attendees should...</i></li> <li>• <i>Become aware</i> of your community's strengths &amp; weaknesses;</li> </ul>

# Any Parish Can Become Vibrant

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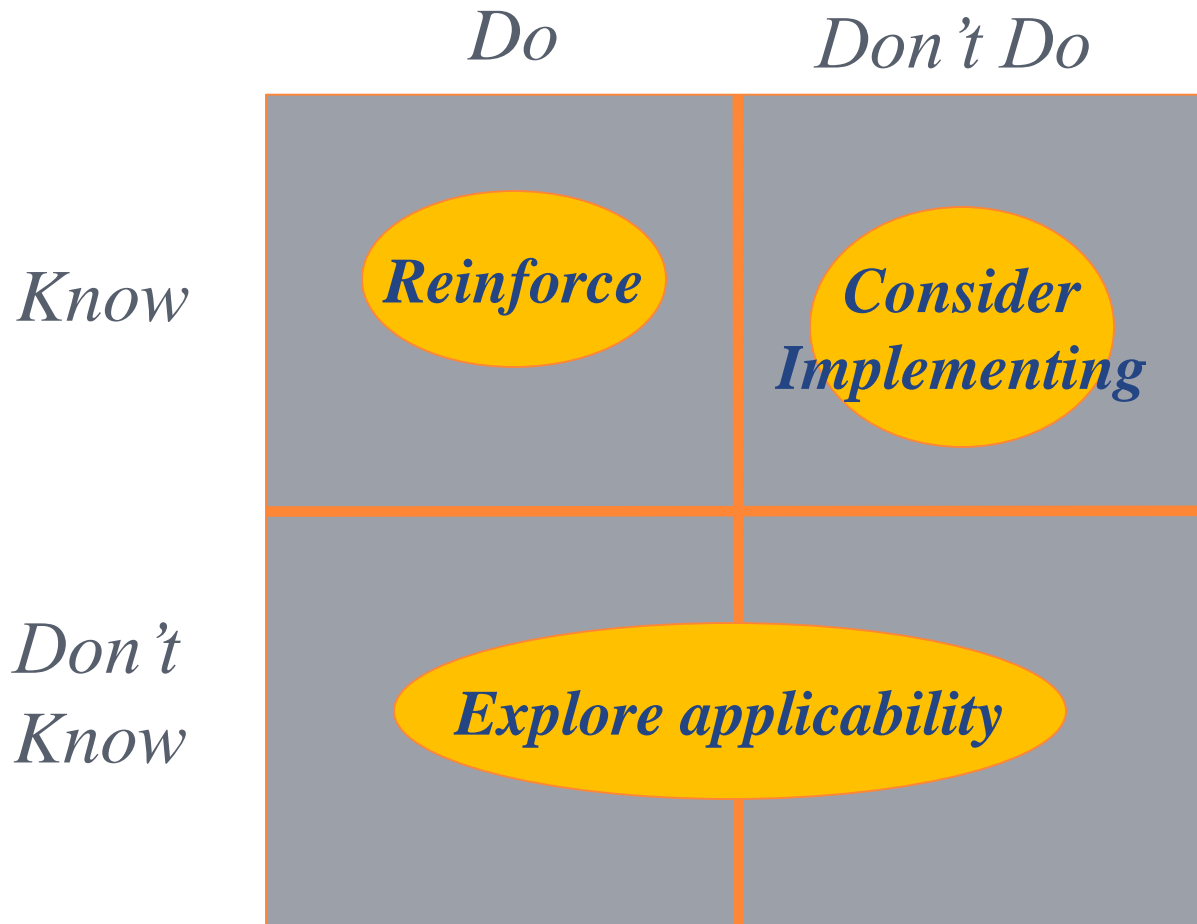
“All that is required is that its members, beginning with its leaders, be firmly resolved to have it so.”

*Fr. Thomas Hopko*

When you don't know  
what to do,  
you do what you know.

# The Joharry Window

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# Learning from the Forum's White Space

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- AnnMarie Mecera...

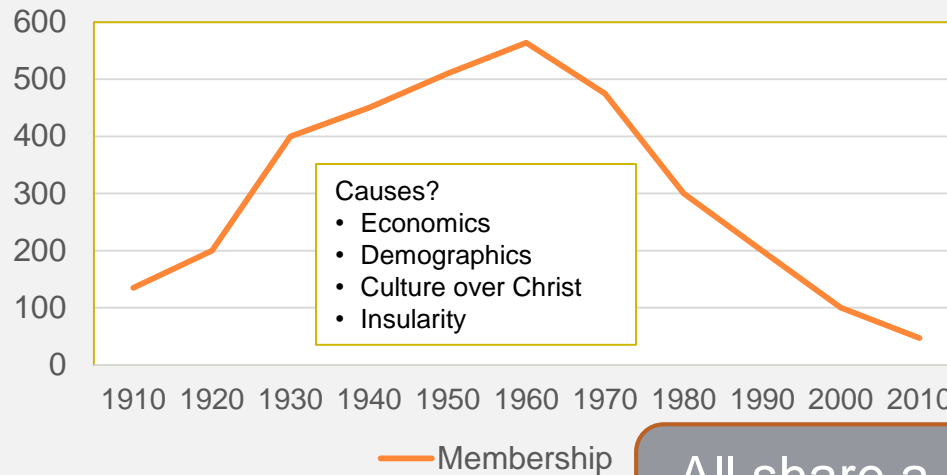


*Breaks & meals are important*

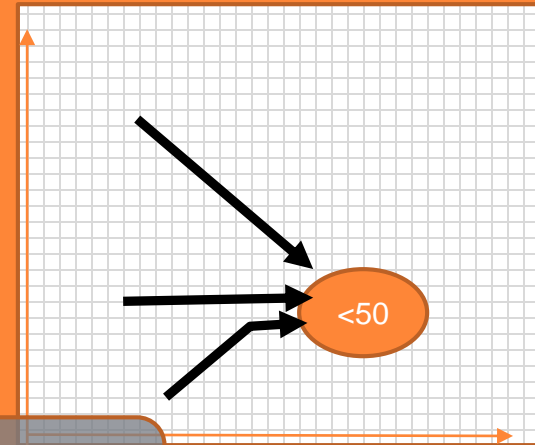
# Not All Small Parishes are the Same

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## 1. Heritage Parish in Long Decline

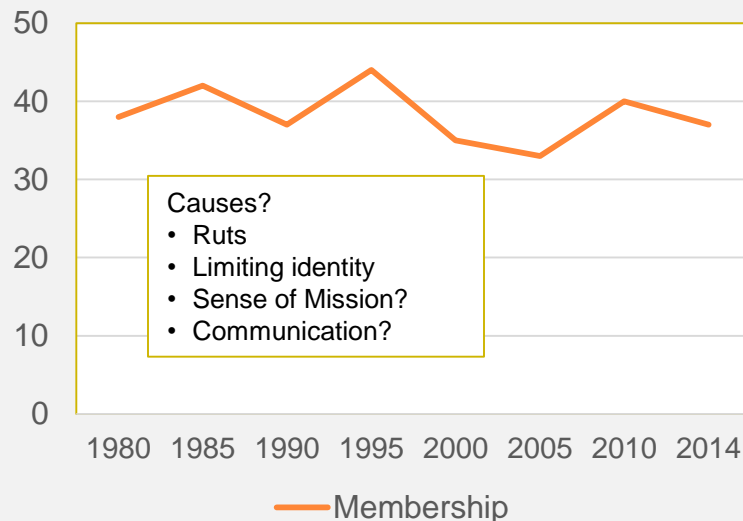


## Three Paths to Small

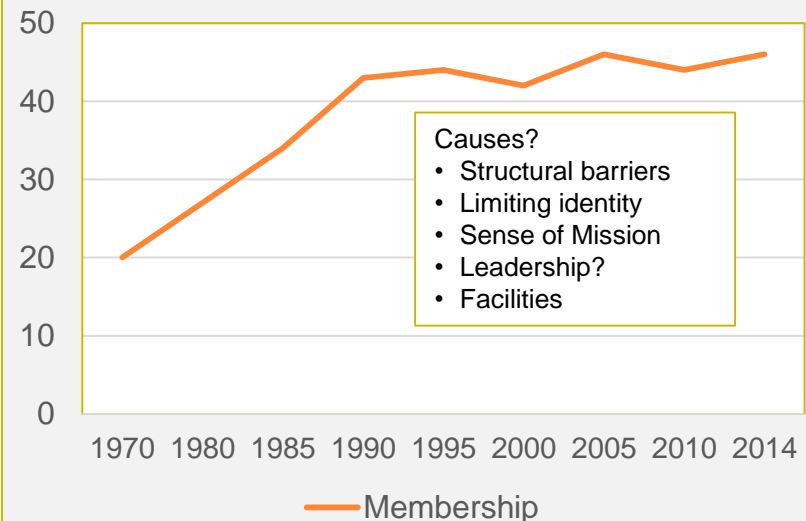


All share a need to be able to change.

## 2. Trading Water – Always Small



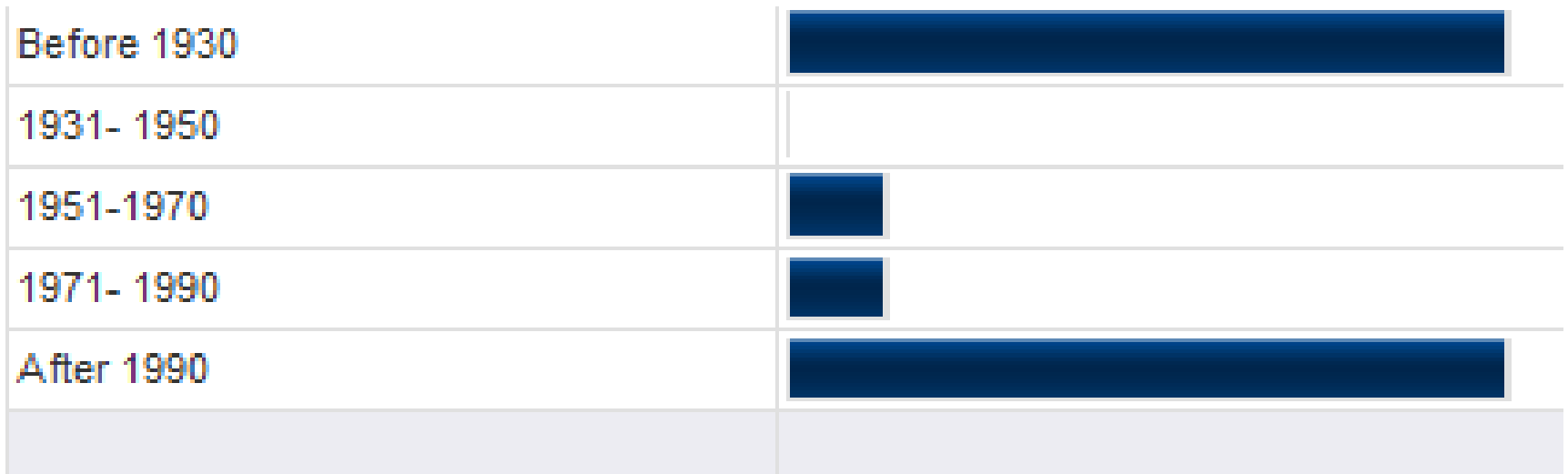
## 3. Plateau



# Not All Small Parishes are the Same

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## When Was Your Parish Founded



# Not All Small Parishes are the Same

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What % of parishioners are over 70?

- Some say virtually none
- Others say ~25%
- Others say 70-95%

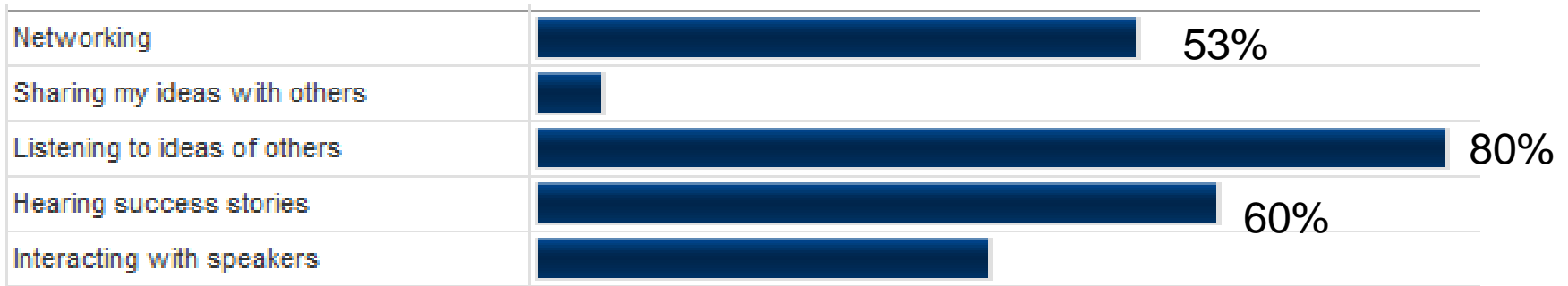
Which best describes your parish location?



# Others Are Here to Learn from YOU

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What are you most interested in while at the Forum?

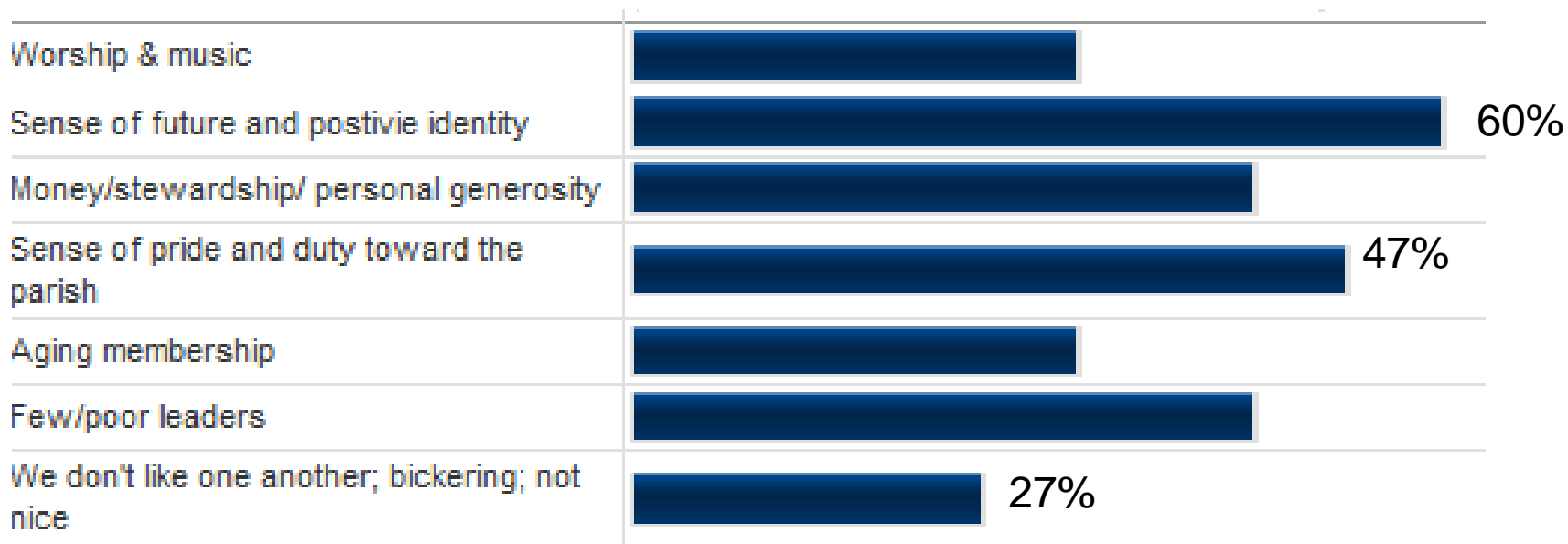


*“Finding help for stubborn minds”*

# Variety of Issues & Needs

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What are the most important qualities, attributes or characteristics of your parish in need of improvement?



# Some Questions to be Explored

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- Do small parishes need to grow?
- We used to be big. Now we're small. How should we feel about that?
- What are the important positive qualities of small parishes?
- Must clergy be 'full time'? Role of tent makers?
- What is a viable parish?
- If you learn something valuable here –what will you do with it? How will you plant seeds back home?

# Opening Exercise

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- What are the important positive qualities of small parishes.
  - ▣ What can small parishes do/deliver that larger, seemingly more 'valuable', parishes cannot

# Positive Qualities of Small Churches

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- Know everyone by name (intimate)
- Care about everyone
- Provide assistance spontaneously w/o need for elaborate structure
- Accept and affirm people who may be rejected elsewhere.
- Strong adult male image to children.
- Really love each other
- Intergenerational
- Can celebrate everyone's victories; bear burdens
- Respond when faced with a crisis

# Small vs. Large

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**The small church** places a higher priority on:

- relationships
- the importance of everyone's being able to call all other members by name.
- the rights and privileges of each individual.
- making sure the bills are paid.

**The larger church** places higher priority on:

- functional aspects of ministry.
- a carefully administered organizational structure.
- the smooth operation of the institution.
- systematic approach to fund raising & stewardship.

# Strengths Can Be Weaknesses

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“The strong commitment of members to one another, to kinfolk’s ties, to the meeting place and concept of one big family with modest program emphasis **tend to reinforce the single cell nature of the church.** When combined with the intergenerational nature of a small church these forces tend to enhance the caring nature of fellowship *at the cost of potential growth.* These unifying principles tend to make the small church exclusionary. This tends to make it hard for small church to reach, attract and assimilate new members (unless they have kin). The more closely knit the fellowship the more difficult it is to achieve growth.”

Lyle Shaller

*The Small Church is Different*

1982

# Parish Health Inventory Model

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# What is the Limiting Factor (Constraint) for Your Parish?

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- ❑ Money?
- ❑ People? People committed to parish life? Sense of duty/responsibility?
- ❑ Passivity? People committed to Jesus Christ?
- ❑ Travel distance/geography?
- ❑ Demographics - Population in our town/area? Economy?
- ❑ Time? Burnout?
- ❑ Morale? Organization?
- ❑ A sense of purpose?
- ❑ An understanding of the unchurched and how to reach them?
- ❑ Parking? Facilities?
- ❑ Creativity/ Imagination?
- ❑ Other?