

# Parish Development Conference Call *March 2020*

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HEALTHY ORTHODOX PARISH IN 21ST CENTURY  
AMERICA – WHAT DOES IT LOOK AND FEEL LIKE?

# Past Calls... Any action?

- Have you tried or planned anything new regarding stewardship?
- Did you implement or attempt to apply some of the practices we explored together?
- Did anyone encounter any of the obstacles we discussed in January/December?
  - *Give in other ways; We spend too much; Always talk about \$ etc.*
- Anyone failed miserably at anything?!

# Corona Thoughts...Filling the Void

- Possibly opportunity for leadership in new ways
  - New thinking
  - Engage with new questions
  - Discover talents
- Technology... beyond streaming services?
- Article on [oca.org](https://oca.org)



# Parish Development Forum

3:00 PM Thursday July 9 thru Noon Saturday July 11

St John the Baptist Church

Warren OH

Theme: *Cultivating a Healthy Loving Parish Culture*



# Healthy Orthodox Parish – Starter points

- Healthy Parish
  - Not about growth ...it's about health.
  - But healthy parishes almost always grow.
  - No quick fixes...not a list
  - Never one thing
  - Every parish different
  - Continuum – never done
- Not
  - More money/ people
  - Specific programs and ministries
  - Preserving heritage and past

# Just as with Stewardship...

- Base principles are more important than individual practices
  - Abundance not scarcity
  - Leaders lead ...and change... first
  - Hard work
  - God gives increase

# Vibrant Parish Models

- Scriptural Acts 2:42-47; Col 3:12-16
- “Not Vibrant” model
- Orthodox Natural Church Development
- Fr Thomas Hopko Orlando All American Council
- Diocese of Midwest Inventory
- “20 Practices”
- “Which Parish Do You Prefer”
- Recent video

# “Not Vibrant”



Weak, stifling leadership

Hide bad news

Purposeless

Maintaining Mindset

About me

Denial

Humorless

Trusteeism

cheap

Control Freaks

Unwilling to receive help

Risk Averse

Self Satisfied

Fear especially of  
Failure or change

Exclusive

Judging

Unadaptive  
(Culture/ Rubrics)

One-Man Show

Passive

Insular

visionless

Isolationism  
-Congregational

Gate  
keeping

Mediocrity

Spiritually Immature

Conformity/Rigid

Pseudo Harmony

Takers/Consumers

Self-Righteous

Competitive/Turf Protectors/Clingy

untouchable issues

Traditionalism  
(Prefer Orthodoxy to Christ)

Liturgically Unprepared

Liturgically Disengaged



# Informal “Model” from a recent presentation...”

1. Help people to meet Jesus... good news of gospel
2. Connect Christ and gospel in everyday life
3. Interconnected social interactions
4. Excellence in leadership, administration, organizational ...the fundamentals

# Which Parish Model Do You Prefer? Which Will Be Blessed with Growth?

## Burying Our Talents

What would it take?

## A Model of Vibrancy & Hope Providing a Return to the Master

For us and our needs

*Serve all in our locale. Proclaim Christ;  
Do His work in the world*

Complacent & comfortable

*Seeking/ Reaching*

Stern; sober

*Cheerful*

Seek to attract people "like us"

*Welcome to all; reflect locale*

Imagined Recreation of Old World Orthodoxy

*Bring Orthodoxy to N. America*

Ancient

*Apostolic, Authentic, Alive*

Primarily Sunday Liturgy

*Active Weekly/Annual Worship Cycle*

Control & Power

*Teamwork & Community*

No risk; conserving; protecting; maintaining

*Hopeful risk taking "investing"; reaching*

Rules & Battles

*Discernment & Dialogue*

"Ownership"

*"Stewardship"*

Voting; majority; "Robert's Rules"

*Consensus; conciliarity*

Dues, minimum equal share, compulsory, fund raising, special appeals

*Proportional, personal generosity, meaningful amounts,  
from the heart*

Free agents; sovereign; autonomy; independence  
Optional participation & responsibility

*Constitutive element of Diocese  
Shared responsibility*

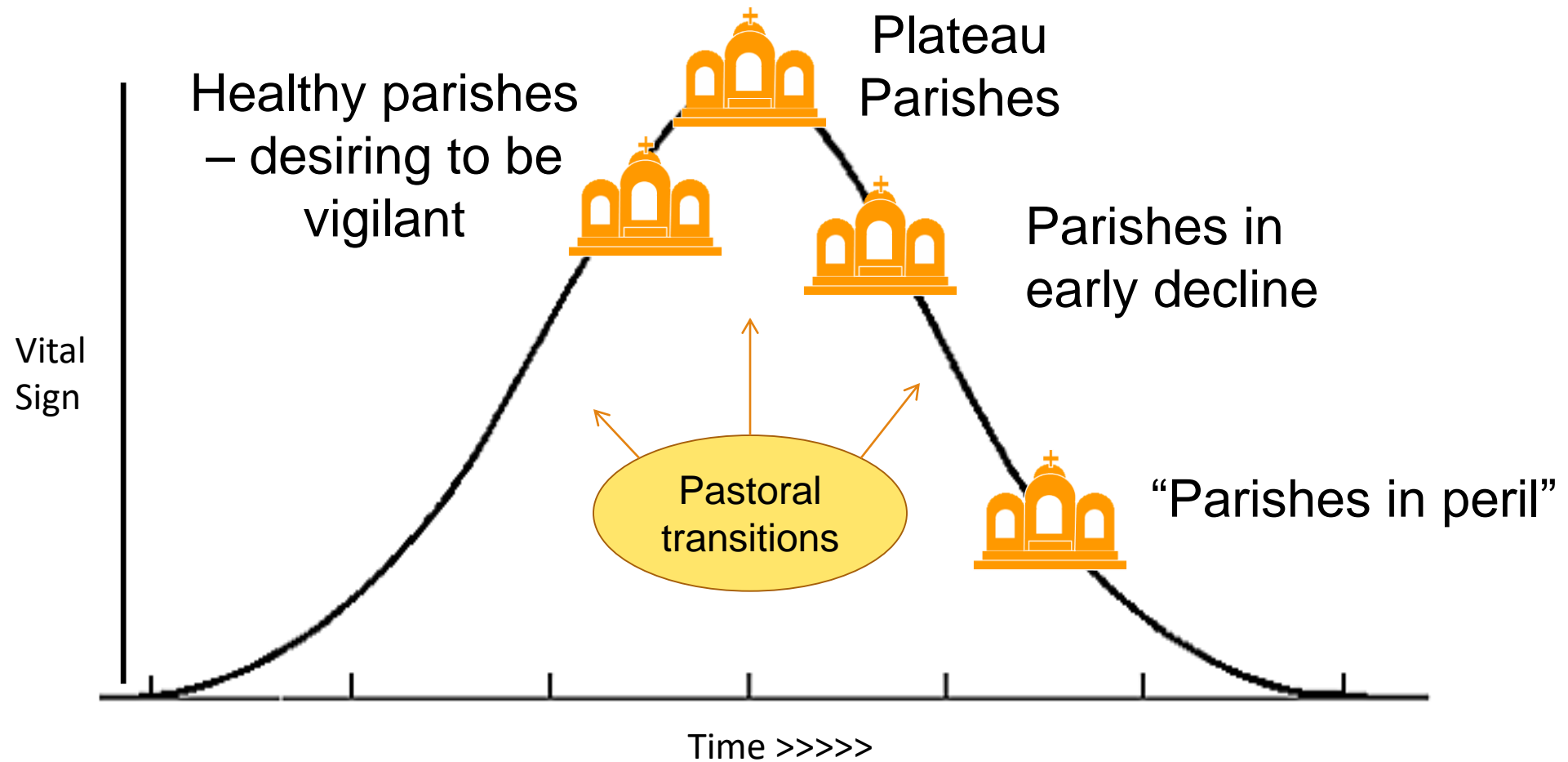
**A discussion tool**  
As opposed to  
hearing about  
positive or  
negative models it  
can be valuable to  
see them  
juxtaposed.

# *Diocese of Midwest* Parish Health Inventory Model



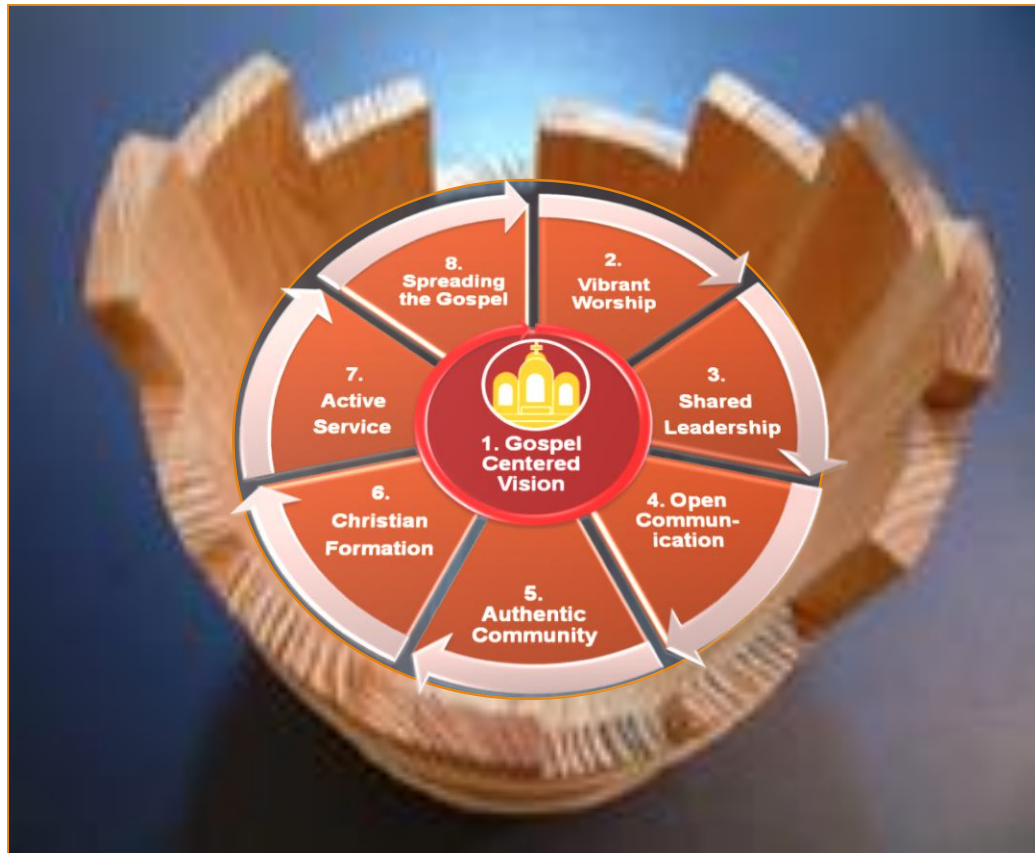
# Parish Applicability

*Life Stage*

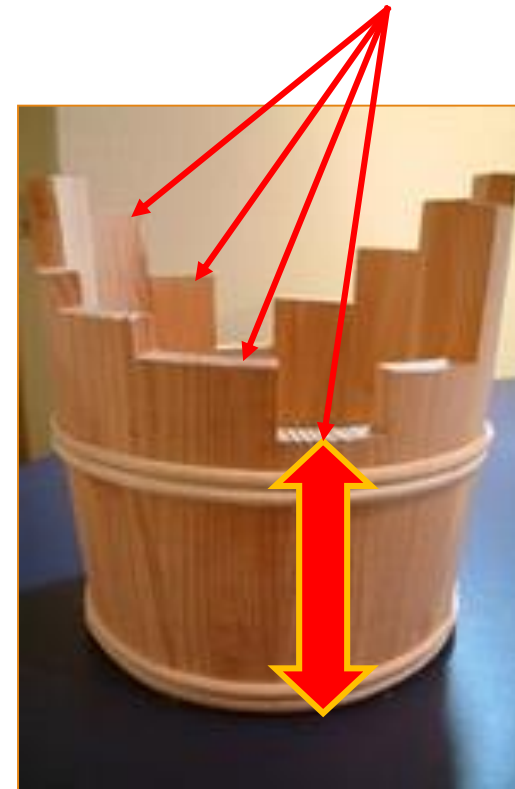


# Focus Your Efforts

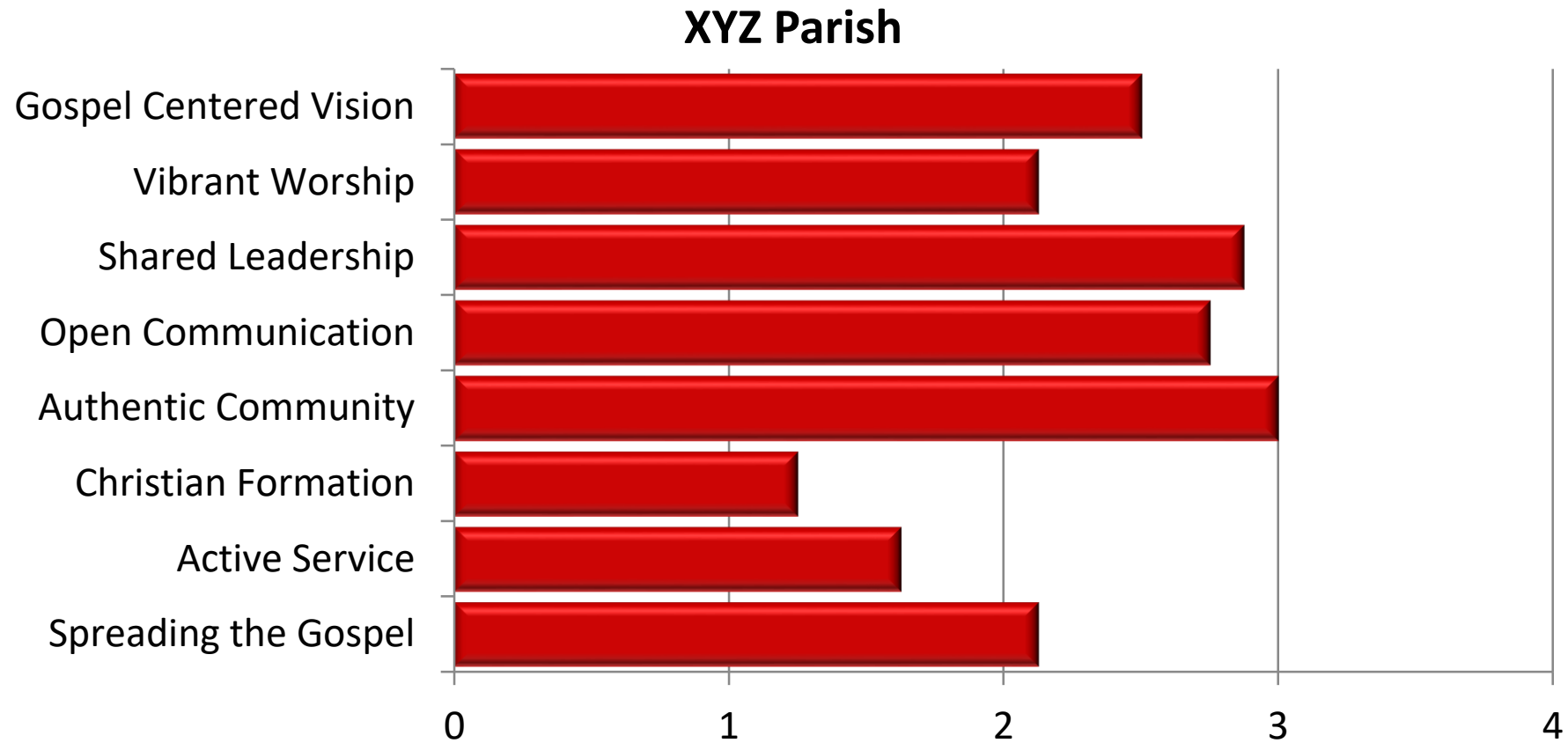
## The Minimum Barrel



*Staves equate to essential parish health focus areas*

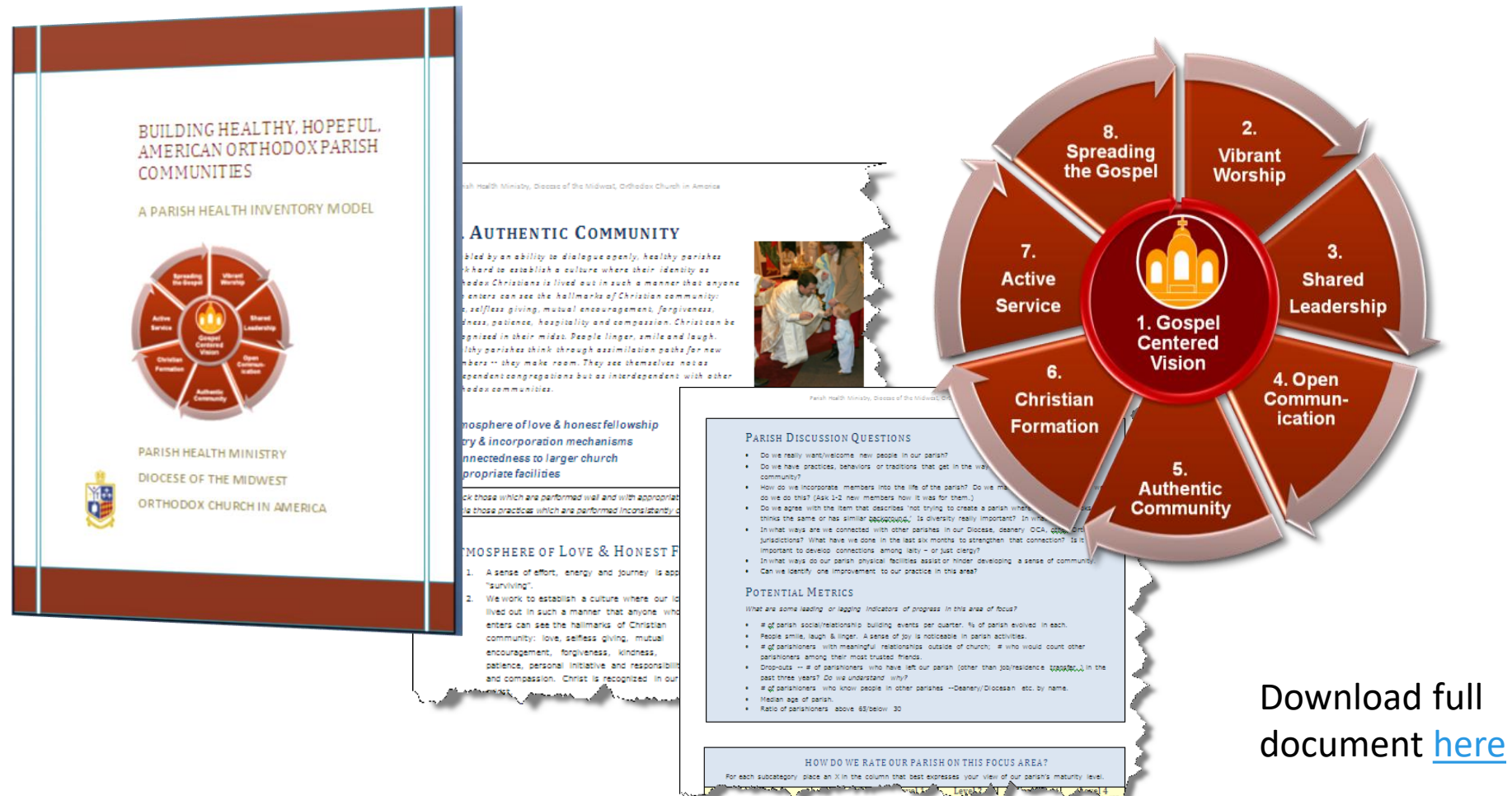


# High Level Inventory Summary for a Parish





# Parish Health Inventory Model



Download full document [here](#)

# Vibrant Worship

- *Liturgical preparedness*
- *Congregational participation & vibrancy*
- *Effective preaching*

What does our parish do well in this area?  
What are our best experiences in this area?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Where do we see improvement  
opportunities? When have we fallen short?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



## Shared Leadership

- *Delegating responsibility*
- *Leading and effecting change*
- *Functional structures*
- *Open financial practice*

- What does our parish do well in this area? What are our best experiences in this area?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Where do we see improvement opportunities? When have we fallen short?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Open Communication

- *Consensus & dialogue*
- *Dealing with conflict*
- *Internal communication methods*

What does our parish do well in this area? What are our best experiences in this area?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Where do we see improvement opportunities? When have we fallen short?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

# Authentic Community

- *Atmosphere of love*
- *Incorporation mechanisms*
- *Connectedness to larger church*
- *Appropriate facilities*



What does our parish do well in this area? What are our best experiences in this area?

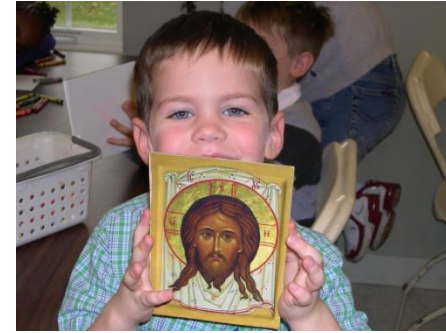
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Where do we see improvement opportunities? When have we fallen short?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
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- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

# Christian Formation

- *Orthodox spirituality*
- *Whole parish education*
- *Financial generosity*



What does our parish do well in this area? What are our best experiences in this area?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Where do we see improvement opportunities? When have we fallen short?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

# Active Service

- *Discernment of gifts*
- *Effective ministries*

What does our parish do well in this area? What are our best experiences in this area?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Where do we see improvement opportunities? When have we fallen short?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

# Spreading the Gospel

- *Evangelization atmosphere*
- *Evangelization practice*
- *Sensitivity to needs of others*
- *External communication*

What does our parish do well in this area? What are our best experiences in this area?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Where do we see improvement opportunities? When have we fallen short?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

# On Line Survey Version

## Parish Health Inventory Survey

\*Required Question(s)

### First, a few questions about you!

\* 1.

**Your age:**

- ☐ Under 20 years old
- ☐ 20-29
- ☐ 30-39
- ☐ 40-49
- ☐ 50-59
- ☐ 60-69
- ☐ 70-79
- ☐ 80-89
- ☐ 90 or over

\* 2.

**On average how often do you attend Su**

15. Our parish has a defined concept of the parish's future. Written or unwritten, this "vision" expresses what we as a community want to be/look like in the reasonable future.

- ☐ Very great extent
- ☐ Great extent
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ Very Little
- ☐ Not at all

16. We have clear, broadly communicated priorities and goals that we intend to pursue in the coming years.

- ☐ Very great extent
- ☐ Great extent
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ Very Little
- ☐ Not at all

17. Our parish vision is made concrete with a set of specific tailored ministries (formal or informal) that bring our vision to life.

- ☐ Very great extent
- ☐ Great extent
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ Very Little

# Prerequisites for Change

People must believe:

1. The parish has (an important) problem or opportunity.
2. The problem can be solved.
  - We have the resources/capability/commitment to tackle it (*“Lil Engine that could”*)
  - Others have done something similar.
3. We have a clear agreed upon vision of what we’re trying to do.
4. We trust our leaders



# Discussion Questions

- What do you see as the biggest issue in motivating a parish to put forth effort to become healthier?
  - Sacred cows? Denial? DKWYDK? TNO? (“That’s Not Orthodox”)
- What are the roles of:
  - Priest? Laypersons?
- Is it reasonable/proper to believe that a healthy Orthodox parish looks/feels different:
  - In 21st century than previous epochs?
  - In America than other countries?