



Saint Raphael the Archangel Catholic Church

To See as Christ Sees and Love as Christ Loves

Long Range Plan

Summer 2011

*Revised Fall 2012 & 2013
(Revisions in italics)*



St. Raphael the Archangel Parish is a diverse community of Catholic believers called by baptism to share in the Christian mission of evangelization, worship and service. As stewards of this community, we commit our time, talent and treasure to building the Body of Christ together.



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Summer 2011

Dear Parishioners:

It is with great pleasure that I present to you this Long Range Plan for our parish. This plan was developed under the guidance of our Pastoral Council with input from many people in our parish. I hope that this plan will help focus our efforts in the years to come to improve the ministry of our parish and also inspire us to commit ourselves more deeply to the great mission we share as St. Raphael Catholic Church.

This Long Range Plan follows the parish survey we conducted in April of 2010. From that survey we heard that most parishioners are pleased with their overall experience of St. Raphael, but of course there are ways in which we can grow. Responses to the survey led us to formulate four strategic initiatives that capture the primary areas in which parishioners indicated we could strengthen our ministry:

- Invest in Our Youth
- Foster a Culture of Stewardship
- Enhance Faith Formation for All Ages
- Build Community, Making St. Raphael a Welcoming Home for All

This Long Range Plan specifies the particular ways we will strive to implement these initiatives.

In receiving input from parishioners, we heard many great suggestions for improving the ministry of our parish. While not every one of those ideas could be recounted in the broad roadmap that we lay out here, I am confident that the central themes we heard have been incorporated in the objectives described in the following pages. I am very grateful to all of you who offered feedback during this process.

There are many who contributed countless hours and great patience and creativity in constructing this Long Range Plan. I would like to thank particularly the members of the Pastoral Council who directed our survey and developed this Plan.

May God bless and guide us in the years to come as we seek to grow more fully into loving and serving God and God's people together as the Body of Christ.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Bob Hussey, S.J.
Pastor

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. Purpose

At the request of the Pastor, the Long Range Planning Committee of the St. Raphael Pastoral Council has spent the past eight months developing a long-range plan for the parish. The purpose of the long-range plan is to take feedback from parishioners, lay ministers and staff to chart a course for the parish for the next four to five years and to bring focus to the considerable and diverse stewardship efforts underway across the parish. It is the goal of the Long Range Planning Committee to see that the plan is communicated effectively to the parish, and that the plan will serve as a broad guideline for the annual planning process.

B. Overview of the Long Range Planning Process

The long range planning process began in 2010 with the development and implementation of an extensive parish survey. Feedback was gathered from parishioners over a two-week period and approximately 1,800 parishioners responded. There were more responses from women (57%) than men (43%). We received responses from all age groups and economic backgrounds and attendees at all the Masses. Eighty-eight percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their overall experience at St. Raphael is positive. Nearly 600 respondents took the opportunity to provide comments, in addition to responding to the survey questions. This feedback enabled the Long Range Planning Committee to identify what is working well, and the areas in need of focus.

The Long Range Planning Committee collated and analyzed the feedback from the survey. The Pastoral Council conducted a Leadership Conference in August 2010 in which nearly all parish staff and heads of lay ministries participated. The purpose of the Leadership Conference was to evaluate the survey feedback and identify several key strategic initiatives on which the parish would focus. The parish, through the survey and Leadership Conference, identified four strategic initiatives:

- ❑ Invest in Our Youth, the future of our parish
- ❑ Foster a Culture of Stewardship
- ❑ Enhance Faith Formation for All Ages
- ❑ Build Community; make St. Raphael a welcoming home for all

A summary of the survey results and the resulting strategic initiatives were communicated to the parish using the Sunday bulletin and the parish web site. Beginning in November 2010 the Long Range Planning Committee met approximately every two weeks to formulate an approach to long range plan development, which included discussing its relationship to the annual plan, identifying constituents relevant to each strategic initiative, preparing questions and interviewing constituents, and preparing a parish-wide communication plan.

The Committee met with staff, ministry leaders and parishioner-participants including both those who provide various stewardship services and those who are recipients. Interviewees were asked to share their vision for particular areas of the parish and its services as well as their thoughts on how to attain the vision, what resources would be required and what obstacles we might encounter. In addition to parish-based feedback, the Committee sought input from other parishes around the Diocese and other non-Catholic church communities and non-profit organizations. Finally, a draft copy of the plan was made available on the parish web site and the Committee held three town hall meetings, inviting all parishioners to provide input and feedback on a draft of the plan.

The resulting Long Range Plan is built around the four strategic initiatives identified from the parish survey, as codified at the Leadership Conference. The plan for each strategic initiative highlights the actions already undertaken by the parish in response to the survey and incorporates near term (upcoming one to three years) and longer term (upcoming four to five years) goals. The Committee will monitor progress toward each goal and will revisit and revise the plan on an on-going basis.

II. STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

The strategic initiatives, which were identified at the Leadership Conference following the parish survey, are listed below. No strategic initiative is more important than another; instead, each initiative serves as one of the four corners on which we will build up our parish together. The initiatives are interrelated, and success in one area will foster success in other areas. Each strategic initiative below has additional detail that further describes the overall vision for our parish.

Invest in our Youth, the future of our parish

- Support faith development
- Encourage fellowship
- Provide meaningful outreach projects
- Integrate youth programs among cultures and within the broader community

Foster a Culture of Stewardship

- Embrace stewardship as a way of life
- Elicit involvement through personal and collective ownership
- Create links between individual talents and community needs
- Provide an inviting environment focusing on personal invitation
- Make the offertory more universally supported, bolstered by clear communication of needs and plans

Enhance Faith Formation for all Ages

- Expand opportunities for learning at all stages of life
- Support spiritual growth and development
- Promote Jesuit charism and Ignatian spirituality
- Insure that all we do is rooted in prayer

Build Community; make St. Raphael a welcoming home for all

- Focus on building one family, unified in purpose and resolve
- Embrace people of all cultures and backgrounds
- Foster culturally integrated community
- Structure ministries and organizations for inclusiveness
- Encourage welcoming, warm, nurturing environment
- Provide more social opportunities of interest to a broad audience
- Promote St. Raphael as my home

In the following pages, you will find the long-term goals for each strategic initiative. Those goals will serve as the road map for achieving our parish vision together.

III. INVEST IN OUR YOUTH

Completed or In Progress (2010-13)

- ❑ *Funded and hired a full time Youth Minister*
- ❑ *Increased staff hours to support Hispanic Youth Ministry*
- ❑ *Completed Ignatius Hall, which facilitates youth and school events*
- ❑ *Established an Early Childhood Center advisory committee of parents and parishioners to generate enrollment ideas and assist with financial planning*
- ❑ *The ECC, now known as the St. Raphael Preschool, extended its day and is working closely with the St. Raphael Catholic School on marketing*

Near term (2013-15)

- ❑ *Increase budget for support of Youth Ministry activities*
- ❑ *Strengthen youth presence at all Masses/all roles (readers, choirs, ushers, sacristans)*
- ❑ *Expand youth presence in social service and community building events to complement Faith Formation classes*
- ❑ *Increase visibility of youth in parish – youth fully embraced*
- ❑ *Move toward one program for Anglo and Hispanic youths*
- ❑ *Increase youth participation in Diocesan events*
- ❑ *Develop youth leaders to (i) provide input into programming and (ii) work with other ministry leaders to expand participation of youth across the parish*
- ❑ *Increase use of social media to support youth involvement in the parish*
- ❑ *Increase enrollment in the St. Raphael Preschool and St. Raphael Catholic School and develop a plan that ensures long-term, financial stability for both*
 - *Promote importance of Catholic education to the health of the overall church*
 - *Promote special value that each offers*
 - *Increase percentage of children coming from parish families*
 - *Identify alternative revenue sources*
- ❑ *Build key volunteer adult leaders to facilitate and support youth events*
- ❑ *Increase the number of young people who participate in youth ministry programs each year*
- ❑ *Have parish “known” for its level of youth participation in parish and community programs*
- ❑ *Increase family involvement in youth ministry events*
- ❑ *Develop strategies and accompanying activities that would keep high school students engaged in parish life after Confirmation*

The long-range goals relating to Invest in our Youth arise out of a widely held opinion among parishioners that the parish can and should direct greater focus and effort toward involving and embracing our young people as an integral part of our parish community. We believe that our youth are the future of our parish and the future of our Church. Parishioners generally agree that it is the responsibility of the community to pass along our faith by teaching and through example of how to live a Christian life of stewardship and ongoing spiritual development.

As a result, the parish will invest in our parishioners who are under 18 by hiring staff to focus on developing our youth ministry program, which is designed for both school and non-school families, and providing increased opportunities for social service and participation in the building of our community of youth. We will invite youth to become more involved in parish ministries, and

become more invested in the parish themselves. We will use facilities and programs to create an environment in which our youth feel at home and want to be involved.

IV. FOSTER A CULTURE OF STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship is the grateful response of a Christian disciple who recognizes and receives God's gifts and shares those gifts in love of God and neighbor.

A. Stewardship of Time and Talent

Completed or In Progress (2010-13)

- ❑ Increase funding for Stewardship Committee
- ❑ *Held ministry recognition events in 2012 and 2013 to thank volunteers in our many ministries*
- ❑ *Formation of a Ministry Development Committee, under the Pastoral Council*

Near term (2013-15)

- ❑ *Hire a Lay Ministry Support Coordinator, whose duties will include:*
 - *Establishing and implementing a plan that will encourage parishioners to embrace the spirituality of stewardship and to make stewardship of time and talent a personal priority as an integral component of practicing one's faith*
 - *Supporting the leaders of our 60+ ministries and groups across the parish; developing additional leaders; and expanding parishioner involvement*
 - *Collaborating on the welcoming activities of the parish*
- ❑ *Evaluate the mission and role of the Stewardship Committee*
 - *Outline how the Lay Ministry Support Coordinator will interface with the Stewardship Committee*
- ❑ *Evaluate the role of the Welcoming Committee to identify how it can best plan and execute its mission, including new emphasis on evangelization among fallen away Catholics and non-Catholics*
- ❑ *Work with the Hispanic community leadership to foster a culture of stewardship and increase parishioner involvement in existing ministries*
- ❑ *Evaluate the parish's level of community outreach and determine how this can be expanded*
 - *Evaluate the mission and role of the Social Concerns ministry*
- ❑ *Develop a mechanism to help parishioners identify their strengths and talents and link them to opportunities for participation in parish ministry*

B. Stewardship of Treasure

Completed or In Progress (2010-13)

- ❑ *Conducted successful financial stewardship appeals*
- ❑ *Established an annual offertory commitment process*
- ❑ *Communicating clearly to parishioners about parish financial needs and how additional offertory funds were or will be used*

- ❑ *Ensuring that parish capital and operating reserves continue increasing toward targeted levels to achieve and maintain financial stability*

Near term (2013-15)

- ❑ Expand the percentage of identifiable givers among parish membership
- ❑ Successfully fund parish priorities and expansion of ministries through increased offertory

A key finding of the parish survey relates to parishioners' views on stewardship. While 88% of the 1,800 respondents believe that stewardship is important to the quality of their parish experience, only 43% of respondents are involved in any form of ministry in the parish. Since stewardship of time, talent and treasure is a key element of our parish mission, we have identified the need to find more effective ways to educate parishioners about the spirituality of stewardship and to engage all parishioners in the regular practice of stewardship.

We will foster a culture of stewardship by communicating its importance as central to who we are as a Catholic people, serving both within the parish and the community at large. We will seek ways to best support the lay ministries of the parish by: (i) assisting parishioners in the discernment of their talents and inviting participation; (ii) matching parishioners with community needs; and (iii) facilitating ways in which lay ministries work together. Finally, we will financially support the work of our lay ministries by seeking to have our offertory adequately fund the work of the parish.

V. ENHANCE FAITH FORMATION for ALL AGES

Completed or In Progress (2010-13)

- ❑ *Funded and hired a full time Director of Lifelong Faith Formation*
- ❑ *Evaluate and reconfigure current facility space to better support Faith Formation initiatives and programming*
- ❑ *Ensure that Faith Formation programs are affordable for all*

Near term (2013-15)

- ❑ Evaluate the quality of the overall youth Faith Formation program by developing evaluation criteria and establishing a *formal* plan for evaluation and feedback
 - Expand recruiting of catechists, including bilingual catechists; and reduce the size of Hispanic Faith Formation classes
 - Expand spiritual development and support for catechists and utilize Diocesan training resources
 - Ensure that the youth Faith Formation programs are engaging and relevant so that families make the program a priority for all ages and not only for sacramental preparation
 - Create opportunities for parent faith development that complements and supports their children's Faith Formation
- ❑ *Increase participation in and funding for Lifelong Faith Formation among youth and adults*
- ❑ *Develop a comprehensive model of Lifelong Faith Formation and expand programming for adults*
 - Effectively articulate to parishioners the various spiritual resources that are available within and outside the parish
 - *Invest in staff development and utilizing external resources for Faith Formation among adults*

- *Explore flexible new models of delivering faith development resources – e.g., distance learning.*
- *Increase access to Ignatian spirituality with opportunities for spiritual direction*
- ❑ *Encourage families whose children attend Catholic schools to increase participation in parish-based activities*
- ❑ *Increase funding at St. Raphael Catholic School for Faith Formation activities, both in and out of the classroom, allowing for more service and retreat activities*
- ❑ *Include Spirituality in the five-year plan of the St. Raphael Catholic School and be overt in showcasing the school's Catholic identity*
- ❑ *Evaluate the Rite of Christian Initiation program for children to determine where it best fits under Faith Formation and consider ways that it can be expanded and better promoted*

As we, the body of Christ, embark on our mission of evangelization, we must understand our faith. Faith development is a lifelong journey, and thus we have identified formation of faith for all ages, integrated with Ignatian spirituality, as a key initiative for our future. Our parish has numerous opportunities for faith development; however, our goal is to ensure that these opportunities are expanded into a comprehensive program, inviting increased participation from all parishioners.

Therefore, the parish will engage a full time Director of Faith Development to oversee the Faith Formation, youth ministry and RCIA programs and to create a structured program of adult Faith Formation that has broad appeal. We will also seek to expand the number of parishioners who minister as catechists and provide increased support for our catechists through training and other resources.

VI. BUILD COMMUNITY; Make St. Raphael a Welcoming Home for All

Completed or In Progress (2010-13)

- ❑ *Completed Ignatius Hall, which facilitates parish-wide events*
- ❑ *Eliminated facility use fees for parish ministry-sponsored events*
- ❑ *Establish collaboration between the Pastoral Council Diversity Committee and the Early Childhood Center and SRCS to promote diversity*
- ❑ *Formed a parish chapter of AAMEN, African Ancestry Ministry and Evangelization*
- ❑ *Annually marking Diversity Awareness Month in October with a wide range of activities honoring different cultures and exposing others to them*

Near term (2013-15)

- ❑ *Evaluate and enhance parish-wide communication methods to ensure information is disseminated in a timely, inclusive and effective manner*
 - *Focus on both internal and external communication*
 - *Increase utilization by parishioners of parish web site*
- ❑ *Identify and actively promote ways for the Hispanic community to participate in more parish-wide activities, beyond those organized by the Hispanic Ministry*
 - *Include Hispanic Ministry leaders in the planning process of all major parish events*
- ❑ *Build awareness among all ministry leaders of the importance of including a diverse group of participants, and share ways to do so effectively*
- ❑ *Increase funding for ministries which facilitate building community*

- ❑ Support development of a strong social and spiritual program for young adults (ages 18 – 30)
- ❑ Develop opportunities to celebrate our parish family life and our shared commitment to ministry
- ❑ Expand the Spanish version of the parish web site to facilitate broader communication with the Hispanic community
- ❑ Foster formation of small groups within the parish for social, faith sharing and service activities
- ❑ Increase parishioner involvement in supporting the needs of our elder parishioners
- ❑ Invite greater cross-participation between school and parish-based events

We have identified an ongoing need to create a single church community while celebrating and supporting the rich heritage and experience of our parishioners. St. Raphael is a diverse parish and our survey reveals that this quality is highly valued among parishioners. We come from over eighty-three countries and have members of all ages, races and socio-economic backgrounds. Looking ahead, parishioners agree that we should celebrate our uniqueness as individuals and as a community as we work toward a common mission and share our common faith.

St. Raphael is also one of the largest parishes in the Raleigh Diocese and this presents a challenge to promoting a sense of community. In order to build and strengthen our sense of family, we will encourage parishioners to get to know one another through participation in one or more ministries and small group events.

We will seek more effective means of communication within the parish and create new opportunities to gather, recognize, include and appreciate fellow parishioners and celebrate our parish family in all that we do.

VII. COMMUNICATION PLAN

- A. To facilitate ongoing incorporation of the strategic initiatives into regular parish communication, we will:
 - i. Use the bulletin to communicate updates on one or more strategic initiatives at least monthly;
 - ii. Frame announcements at the end of Mass, where possible, as being in support of one of the strategic initiatives and use consistent wording so that the message is reinforced;
 - iii. Incorporate one or more strategic initiatives in some way into the prayers of the faithful regularly at Mass;
 - iv. Organize the bulletin around the four strategic initiatives;
 - v. Provide periodic summaries of the status of the four strategic initiatives via the bulletin and/or email or mailings.
- B. Make a focused effort to collect parishioner's email addresses.
- C. Conduct periodic town hall meetings to provide an open forum to present information, gather input and answer questions about the strategic initiatives.
- D. Use regular parish events of the year to highlight the strategic initiatives including the Stewardship Fair, the BAA Appeal, the parish fair, an annual renewal of financial commitment by parishioners and possibly an annual letter from the Pastor.
- E. Ensure that we find ways to communicate our successes and express our appreciation of the gifts we share.

- F. Publish information on the parish web site and expand utilization by all parishioners.
Mention the parish web site in the Mass closing announcements.
- G. Establish an annual Leadership Conference to evaluate and revise the long-range plan.

VIII. CONCLUSION

This Long Range Plan is intended to be a living document, and will be updated at least annually as the parish expands its commitment to the ministry and mission of building the Body of Christ together. It is the result of a parish-wide conversation that began with the parish survey and will continue as we seek ways to invest in our youth, enhance faith formation opportunities, cultivate our commitment to stewardship and build our community. The plan will serve as a guideline for staff and ministry leaders during the annual planning and budget processes each spring, and as a map to help us chart a course for the future of our parish.