



***Shaping Our Future:
2013-2015***

***A Strategic Pastoral Plan
Good Shepherd Parish***

Serving Wayland, Natick, and Surrounding Communities

December 1, 2013
First Sunday of Advent

“So too, you must also be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come.” (Matthew 24:44)

My dear friends in Christ,

What a wonderful community of faith we have! Despite the challenges, I have never been happier in my twenty-two years of priesthood. It is a joy to serve you and walk life’s journey with you. I am so proud of our parishioners involved in countless service activities. Our music and singing congregation is without equal in greater Boston. Our professional staff, from our Pastoral Associate to our music director to our religious education and youth ministry staff are highly qualified professionals who provide an excellence in ministry that other parishes can only dream of.

As we begin a new year of grace in the church calendar, we are reminded by the Scriptures that we live in a time of preparation for the coming of Jesus. We do this as a parish by a deliberate effort ever more faithfully to live our mission statement to “be a living sign of Christ’s love in and for the world.”

Jesus’ call for us to “be prepared” is significant in the life of our parish. We cannot simply take the future of our parish for granted. With openness to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we have to plan to assure that Good Shepherd Parish continues to fulfill its mission. To this end, our Parish Pastoral Council has been working for the past year on a comprehensive pastoral plan to assure that our ministries will not only thrive but grow and expand.

Please give this plan your careful attention. The Parish Council has put much prayer, thought and analysis into its crafting. Our desire is to invite every parishioner to take a more active role in the life of our parish so that we may be a beacon of Christ’s light to our community and our world.

Yours in Christ Jesus,

Fr. Jim

Reverend James J. Laughlin

Table of Contents

	PAGE
<i>Part I: Our Vision for the Future of Good Shepherd Parish</i>	3
<i>Part II: What Do We Propose to Do?</i>	
Area I: Communication	7
Area II: Evangelization	8
Area III: Service	9
Area IV: Finance	10
Pastoral Plan Timeline	11
<i>Part III: Appendices</i>	12

Part I: Our Vision for the Future of Good Shepherd Parish

Narrative History *of the Pastoral Planning Process* *of* **Good Shepherd Parish Pastoral Council** *March 2012-June 2013*

In early March 2012, the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) began developing a pastoral plan to shape the future of Good Shepherd Parish. Under the direction of Dr. Bernie Swain, who has worked with Natick/Wayland-area parishes since the mid-1990s, the council first focused on establishing a vision for Good Shepherd Parish as it moves forward during the next three years.

After some initial context-setting, the council spent three sessions discerning **a vision for a proposed future**. The PPC brainstormed basic **trends** that are likely to affect the parish over the next three years; listed **assumptions** about the kind of parish that would result if these trends continued unchecked; and, finally they named some **essential priorities** for a better future. The result was a rough listing of the basic ingredients that a pastoral plan would develop. [see page 5]

Next the PPC developed **a vision statement and other supporting materials** with which to communicate their work to the parish at large. These materials were completed early in the fall. [see page 6]

The PPC then extracted from the Vision Statement those areas which would form the main priorities for the pastoral plan. These priorities included the following:

- A major emphasis on **evangelization**
- A broad effort in **communication**
- A commitment to **service**
- A commitment to **financial health** and well maintained **properties**
- The development of a broader, deeper **leadership** core
- A desire for **growth** in both parish membership and spiritual development
- The maintenance of **vibrancy in worship** and spiritual life
- An emphasis on personal **formation** and spirituality

The PPC then embarked on **two main tracks**: (1) **communication** with and involvement of the wider parish in the planning process; (2) the drafting of **concrete goals and objectives** to

address the areas listed above. The aim was to finish drafting the plan by spring 2013 and then devote the remaining two years to its implementation.

Thus, the PPC planned and conducted open parish meetings during October and November to share progress with parishioners and gather feedback. [see Appendices A,B,C for a transcript of feedback from those meetings].

During the autumn sessions, the PPC selected three basic goal-areas from the list of priorities above and formed committees to develop each goal. They began their work in December and continued into the winter and spring. That work resulted in the goals for Parish Communication, Evangelization, and Service as seen on pages 7-9.

In January 2013 the Pastoral Council received the results of the completed capital campaign survey, which had been conducted during the fall months. This led to a February planning meeting devoted solely to the question of parish finances, and resulted in a set of talking points that could be used to update parishioners about a potential capital campaign and future financial options. [see Appendix D]

The same topic of parish finances shared agenda space with the council's review of proposed pastoral plan goals at both the March and April meetings. By the May meeting, the working goals had been revised and approved. Also by May, the focus on finances had clearly shifted from either a capital campaign or short-term fundraising to a process of long-term development which would be guided by a newly-formed development committee. In this light, a decision was made to add a fourth goal focused on parish finances [see page 10.

As summer 2013 approached, the PPC aimed to complete the goal-review process and launch this pastoral plan by September. The plan includes action steps for implementation during the next two parish years: 2013-2014 and 2014-2015. The PPC will oversee this implementation and is prepared to review all goals and objectives on a regular basis. The PPC also intends to revisit the parish vision in spring 2015.

A timeline for the Implementation of our goals is on page 11.

The Parish Pastoral Council needs your help to accomplish our Parish Pastoral Plan. **We look forward to engaging you in a creative and effective collaboration with us over the next two years!**

TRENDS

“Our Observations”

Our Parish

- Declining numbers of priests
- Shrinking Mass attendance
- Parish population: stable or slight decline
- Increasing parish alienation from archdiocese
- Growing liturgical enthusiasm in the parish
- Strengthening faith (e.g.: Arise)
- Increasing outreach (sock exchange)
- Stabilizing but fragile (post-turmoil)
- Growing sensitivity to environmental issues (we are stewards)
- Prospect of fewer Masses.
- Growing vibrancy in liturgy, music, participation
- More visible emphasis on social justice
- Sacramental numbers: weddings down; baptisms down; funerals stable
- Parish population shrinking?
- Fewer young people involved (16—older)

Our Church

- More parishes competing for people
- Gap between “analog” hierarchy and “digital” people (especially young adults)
- Hierarchy: Loss of moral authority, credibility
- Exodus of young people (scandal = excuses)
- Increasing exodus to “easier” denominations
- Growing consumerist attitudes of worshipers (Mass as optional leisure activity)
- Growing clericalism, traditionalism among younger clergy
- Declining memory /allegiance to Vatican II
- Increased tensions over church teachings

Our Community

- Socio-economic diversity: continues low
- Yet: increasing cultural diversity
- Smaller percentage of Catholics here
- Increasing Sunday morning athletics
- Community population down
- Community demographics: stable?
- Aging population (locally/Parish?)

Our Country

- Evolving social mores
- Increasing complexity of life
- General accelerations of life-patterns
- Spreading leisure famine
- Increasing media leads to decreasing diversity of input (people view selectively)
- Increasing polarization at all levels
- Stable, mutually-respected pluralism (both Wayland and nationally)
- Tension, polarization on economics
- Conflicting priorities in culture & church

Our World

- Increasing use of technology
- Increasing distractions for attention and \$\$
- Increasing cultural diversity, immigration
- Declining, volatile economic conditions

ASSUMPTIONS

“Our Likely Future if Trends continue”

Our Parish

- Greater vibrancy (especially liturgical)
- Financial problems diverting attention
- Issues with facilities
- Deferred maintenance catches up
- Stable Mass attendance?
- Secularism: more impact on us.
- GSP “coasting” on “good enough”
- A demographic “hole” (fewer, older volunteers)
- Generation gap (25-35)
- Risk of “institutional alienation”:
 - Older Catholics who have “retired”
 - Younger Catholics who remain un-involved
- Not a parish-friendly community environment
- Parish population: exclusively families and empty-nesters
- An “extroverted” parish (engaged outside the walls)
- Unfulfilled technological potential
- Weakened communication
- Families under stress
- Labor shortage
 - volunteer pool aging
- Stewardship: an unmet challenge

OUR VISION

“Of a Better Future by 2015 – GSP will reflect these qualities”

Physical Environment

- Financially healthy
- Two updated well-maintained properties

Communications

- Broader participation by all ages
- Well-coordinated system of parish communications
- Cyber-savvy systems
- Technologically state of the art

Evangelization

- A place for help
- Caring, helpful, “there” for our people
- More parish-centered families
- Catholic pride
- Embodying the ideal aspects of the Roman Catholic Church
- A full-service, destination parish: activities every day
- Actively warmly welcoming to people
- Lots of small groups
- Parish diversity reflects the community
- A model of service and outreach
- 20% increase in Mass attendance
- Hospitality and welcoming to engage marginal parishioners

Service

- A place for help
- Caring, helpful, “there” for our people
- Broader volunteerism by all ages
- Commitment to stewardship
- Leaders in social justice (locally/ regionally)

Growth (both numbers and spiritual)

- 20% increase in Mass attendance
- Lots of small groups
- Always striving to be better

Leadership

- Trained/supervised leaders corps/core

Worship and spiritual life

- Vibrant liturgies

Formation and spirituality

- Open to new ideas and ways to grow
- Whole community catechesis



VISION STATEMENT

Good Shepherd Parish is committed to being a living sign of Christ's love in and for the world as we

- ❖ **FOSTER** an environment that is warm, welcoming, and supportive and engenders a sense of community and belonging;
- ❖ **CULTIVATE** growth in the spiritual life of our community through vibrant liturgies and other opportunities for spiritual enrichment;
- ❖ **INSPIRE** active participation in parish life through a commitment to stewardship, service and outreach to our brothers and sisters in need;
- ❖ **EVANGELIZE** in the Catholic tradition of living and proclaiming God's word within our parish and beyond;
- ❖ **ADVANCE** our mission through the continuing development of lay parish leadership, effective communication and strong financial health.

In living out our vision, we will seek to see the face of Christ in one another and serve him with love and compassion as each member of our community carries out the mission he has entrusted to us.

Part II: What Do We Propose to Do?

AREA I: Communication

Goal:

By June 2015, to improve by 40% the awareness among those who attend Mass, of what is happening within our parish.

1. The Pastor, staff, committee heads, and sub-committee on communication will create a Communication Committee by 7/15/13.
2. The Communication Committee will develop a tool to survey parishioners regarding the effectiveness of communication to get a baseline, and administer the survey and compile the data by 11/30/13. PPC will hold the committee accountable.
3. Based on survey results, the Communication Committee will identify and implement various communication methods (including but not limited to creating a list serve, newspaper articles, sandwich boards, website, and the like) by 3/15/14 and report to the PPC (cost \$300-\$1000).
4. The Communication Committee will resurvey those who attend Mass with the tool used in Step #2 at an appropriate interval (TBD by the Communication Committee). The Communication Committee will update its findings in quarterly reports to the PPC beginning no later than June, 2015.

AREA II: Evangelization

Evangelization Goal #1:

Form an Evangelization Committee of 6 to 8 people to build an evangelization program by October 2014.

1. The Evangelization sub-committee of the PPC will identify potential members and create an Evangelization Committee by September 30, 2013 and report to the pastoral associate.
2. The Evangelization Committee will study “Disciples Called to Witness” by 11/30/13 and report to the pastoral associate.
3. The Evangelization Committee will study program alternatives—e.g. *Alpha for Catholics*—and recommend its choice by 3/31/14 (cost: none to modest) and report to pastoral associate.
4. The Evangelization Committee will initiate and complete a program of outreach to inactive parishioners and other inactive Catholics (cost TBD) by 9/30/14 and report to the pastor.

Evangelization Goal #2:

To increase by 25% evangelization and faith activity in the entire parish by November 2014.

1. The Evangelization Committee will create and administer a questionnaire to determine the current level of parishioner participation in the areas of prayer, worship, and faith formation opportunities by March 15, 2014 and report to the PPC.
2. The Evangelization Committee will explore and discuss ways of outreach in order to increase participation in the areas of prayer, worship, and faith formation opportunities.
3. The Evangelization Committee will work with the Adult Faith Formation Committee to determine ways to increase evangelization and faith activity in the parish and report to the pastor by June 1, 2014.
4. The Evangelization Committee and/or the Adult Faith Formation Committee will initiate a new activity/program in the fall of 2014 and report to the PPC at its November 2014 meeting.

5. The Evangelization Committee will re-administer a questionnaire by spring 2015 to measure any increase in participation.

AREA III: Service

Service Goal #1:

To increase the number of parishioners (encompassing all cross-sections: families, singles, youth, young and old) who are identified as participants in a “service ministry” by 50% over the next two years.*

1. Current ministry leaders will be asked to create a baseline of current participants in a service ministry by 12/1/13. Each leader will identify a volunteer to oversee the process and report to a PPC liaison.
2. The PPC service sub-committee will gather with the current ministry leaders to form a steering committee to grow that baseline figure in accordance with the goal by 1/15/14. The same volunteers will report to the PPC liaison.
3. Steering committee will recommend activities to expand baseline of current participants in a service ministry by 4/15/14.
4. Steering committee will implement new service ministry activities to meet service goal and report to a PPC liaison by 6/1/15.

**For purposes of this plan, "service ministry" is defined as non-sacramental, non-liturgical, and non-catechetical activity with the sole purpose of reaching out to those in need within our parish community and beyond, providing material, emotional, and spiritual assistance. Examples of service ministries include ministries to the homeless and needy (Family Promises Metro west Hospitality, Boston Sock Exchange, Giving Tree), to the grieving (Ministry of Care), to the sick (Prayer Shawl Ministry), and to the hungry (weekly food pantry donations, parish-wide food drives, holiday meal ministry). These service ministries can and often do have an element of evangelization as the services are provided.*

Note: Although many ministries at Good Shepherd Parish have a service component, (e.g. religious education and youth ministry students completing service projects, and liturgical ministers and pastoral visitors reaching out to the homebound and those in health facilities) these educational and liturgical ministries are excluded from this definition.

AREA IV: Finance

Finance Goal #1:

To establish a long-term financial plan that provides the resources necessary for our desired future financial health by January 1, 2014.

1. Pastor, staff, PPC, and Pastoral Finance Council (PFC) will identify and recruit 6-8 capable parishioners to be members of a new Development Committee by July 1, 2013, and will report progress to the PPC/PFC in September 2013.
2. The Development Committee will (a) prepare its plans during summer 2013 and (b) launch a parish-wide development process in fall 2013, including a “commitment weekend” in November, 2013, and report to the PPC/PFC on or before January 30, 2014.
3. The Development Committee will take responsibility for implementation and oversight of the Parish Development Strategy and report quarterly to the PPC/PFC (or more frequently as needed) beginning April 1, 2014.

APPENDIX A

AGENDA PARISH MEETINGS October/November 2012 Good Shepherd Parish

- 7:30 Welcome and Opening Prayer
- 7:35 Overview Of the Vision Process
- 7:40 Summary of the Results So far & Questions for
clarification
- 8:25 Small Groups: “Simple Sharing”
- 9:05 Record summaries; “What have we heard?”
- 9:15 Summarizing the results
- 9:25 Next Steps?
- 9:30 Last Words; Closing Prayer

APPENDIX B.

SMALL GROUP REFLECTION QUESTIONS FOR PARISH MEETINGS

**1) What is your impression of the overview you have just heard?
What is your own reaction to this data? Is there something YOU
would like to add to it?**

2) There are two different futures here:

- **Future #1 is “THE LIKELY FUTURE” described in the middle column.**
- **Future #2 “A BETTER FUTURE” in the right column.**

When you read down the middle column, how does it make you feel about the future?

When you read down the right column, how does that make you feel about the future?

3) Suppose Future #1 is practically free (all we have to do is wait for it), but Future #2 will require more effort, money, maybe even sacrifice. What should we do?

APPENDIX C

Transcripts from Small group Work Parish Meetings The Good Shepherd Parish Wayland/Natick, Massachusetts Fall 2102

What have we heard? Group: 1, 2, 3 / Wednesday, October 24, 2012

- The goals in the third column sound great, though there are many. They should be prioritized.
- Work should be done to make inroads into the many families whose activities are driven by their children's activities to encourage them to make involvement in the church a priority.
- A strong core leadership is needed. Along with that there should be a mentorship program so that as people give up their leadership roles, there is a person ready to take over from them.
- There are currently social activities (the senior dinner, the Italian night dinner) that originated when we were two separate parishes. New social activities that originate from the Good Shepherd Parish should be created to encourage people to come together.
- More opportunities for small groups should be created. The Arise groups have been so successful that other types of groups could be created to involve more people.
- With the economy the way it is, a networking group to help people whose lives have been affected was suggested. When someone in the group said a group already existed in the parish, it was thought it should be better publicized.

What have we heard? / Groups 4,5, and 6

- Although worthwhile, the goals may not be realistic.
- How do we create a vision with realistic goals?
- Identifying what trends might interfere with our vision.
- How do we get people to come back to church?
- There are some real strengths in our parish such as the liturgies and the religious

education program.

- We need to be financially realistic.
- How do we compete with other attractions for leisure time?
- It is encouraging that there is an increase in vocations to the diaconate.

"What have we heard" ...1st Night Parish Meeting

- First Column (Trends) was a very thorough summary and honestly expressed
 - "Trends" were all something that members had thought of over the past few years
 - Future 2 is great, but want to be cautious not to lose people who are already marginal - don't want to scare them off -- it is a bit aggressive
 - Likely future - some of it - is already happening
 - We are already doing some great things that are in our vision
 - Very important to continually stop and re-assess along the way
 - Key is getting younger families involved - how do you address that?
 - Engage parents of small children to small groups - building their faith
 - Focus on small groups for all ages
-

Facilitator Summary Sheets / 2nd Night Parish Meeting / Monday, November 19, 2012

- Should consider doing vision focus group with parents during cluster
- One comment that "activities" appear more staff led as opposed to parishioner driven. Most of group did not agree
- Vision should more directly specify and speak about how to address youth (teens).
- Communication is lacking especially use of newer tech that would reach youth
- Group consensus that the Vision looks very much like what St. Zepherin was about 8 – 10 years ago. Skeptical that it might be too ambitious.
- Lack of participation (outside Mass) has always been a challenge – vision does not appear to address how we will improve
- To engage youth get them out of the classroom and give opportunities to get involved in the community
- Big worries about finance. There are many competing philanthropic causes – the church is not the only place touching hearts and looking for money
- Worry that our plan will mean nothing if archdiocese overrides – need to have a contingency
- Strong sentiment in the group that as long as we continue to have two worship sites we will never fully unite as a parish and thus be unable to reach goals spelled out by the vision.

"What have we heard?"

- There is still a divide by towns - example of the bulletin front page and the 3 column notes showing only Wayland on each. "We need to stop that"

- Community is important
- We can't afford not to go forward
- Must gather in the people and get them involved - simply ask them
- Church must be first choice over other activities - pull people back in
- Work done so far (PPC) is very well done
- Communication issues should be addressed first.
- Worry that the work will be "un-done" with the news of the "Collaboratives"
- We need "Adult Education"

"What have we heard?"

- 1. Need to focus on intergenerational and socialization activities
- 2. We need to recognize the diversity of family structures not only in our society in general but also within the Parish Community
- 3. How to we increase participation of understanding the Parish Vision?
 - a. Need to 'take the show on the road'
 - b. Need to overcome the perception that this is a 'bring your pocketbook'
- 4. Evangelization of the groups we are trying to reach--activities geared towards young adults.

APPENDIX D.

Very Rough Draft of Talking Points

1. **CAPITAL CAMPAIGN.** The results of the capital campaign survey (based on private interviews, focus groups, and written questionnaires) has convinced us that there's not enough support at this time for the capital campaign we had in mind.
2. **FINANCIAL PLANNING.** We need a comprehensive plan for the financial future of the parish. So Instead of focusing on the capital campaign, we intend to devote our main energy to the establishment of a plan that will cover (a) our *revenue requirements*, (b) our *spending priorities*, and (c) a *development process* that will promote the giving rates we need for a secure future.
3. **PARISH PROPERTIES.** As a result of the capital campaign surveys, we realize that many people are concerned about the future of our two parish properties, especially the costs of maintaining two churches. We're looking into all our options for the future. In particular, we are reviewing specific numbers about the costs of maintenance and renovation in order to determine which options are most feasible and most desirable.
4. **PARISH "CLUSTERING."** We also realize that many parishioners are concerned about the impact of the Archdiocese's plan to create multi-parish collaboratives. Such collaboratives would leave each parish's identity in place (including its own budget), but under the umbrella of a single leadership team. For Good Shepherd Parish, this eventually means that there will be a changing of the guard—but not a change in our financial situation. *Thus, any planning we do now will remain relevant when the new collaborative is finally established.*
5. **PASTORAL PLANNING.** Since March of 2012, we have also been developing a comprehensive **Pastoral Plan** to shape the future life of the Good Shepherd community. We expect this plan to be published in late spring or early summer 2013. Together with the comprehensive **Financial Plan**, this will give us **two essential blueprints** for meeting the material as well as the spiritual needs of Good Shepherd Parish.

