

# the Beacon of Hope: Light it Up!

The Vision Planning Process for the parishes of St. Gabriel and St. Bridget

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## THE PLAN: A FIVE-YEAR FOCUS

THE VISION: TO BE THE BRIGHTEST BEACON OF HOPE IN OUR COUNTIES

### THE FIRST GOAL: EMPOWER PARISHIONERS

#### Objective 1: Catechesis/Faith Formation

If we want to be as Christ and His Beacon of Hope within our counties, we should simultaneously seek to deepen our life within and our knowledge of Christ. This can be achieved in a way that empowers parishioners to engage on their own.

##### Task 1: FORMED

Our parishes will subscribe to an online platform that enables parishioners to engage faith formation more intentionally and at their convenience. Small, home groups will be especially encouraged

##### Task 2: Increase Training Opportunities

*The Big Survey* indicated that parishioners would become empowered and more willing to teach and lead fellow parishioners if more training were available.

#### Objective 2: Money Where Our Mouth Is

Develop a grant program that empowers Spirit-filled, motivated parishioners to engage the wider community as Christ would have us do.

##### Task 1: “Go” Fund/Good Samaritan Fund

Develop a simple system through which parishioners can go do something on their own, without needless approval-wait times, and can utilize financial resources of the parish rather than personal resources.

#### Objective 3: Replace Pastoral Council

##### Task 1: Town Hall Meetings

Develop a format and establish quarterly town hall meetings in order to promote wider parish engagement, better communication, and freer exchange of ideas.

##### Task 2: Combined Oversight Committee

Create a small, permanent group of rotating membership from both parishes that meets regularly in order to set agendas for and guide town hall meetings.

#### Objective 4: Develop Tools...YOURSELF!

This objective challenges parishioners to identify and creatively use what God has given to them to establish opportunities where they can assist the impoverished. During Town Hall discussions, much conversation was directed toward the different forms of poverty in which our parishes are situated. Parishioners acknowledged the responsibility to assist the impoverished. They voiced a desire to act as Christ would by offering tools that could enable others to lift themselves out of a situation of poverty, be it financial, parental, or spiritual poverty. A wealth of expertise and experience already exists within our parishioner base that is not being utilized.

##### Task 1: Gifts/Expertise Inventory

Identify and use a standard inventory that lends itself to helping parishioners better understand their charisms/gifts.

### THE SECOND GOAL: BEFRIEND OUR NEIGHBORS

#### Objective 1: Evangelization

During Town Hall meetings, it became apparent that parishioners wanted to evangelize but did not know how to go about it. It is easier than most think. It simply begins by capitalizing on the great spirit and desire among parishioners to invite people into the life of our parishes.

##### Task 1: Small Community Events

Offer a series of family-friendly movie nights, simple game nights, open gatherings at parishioner’s homes, etc.

##### Task 2: R.A.K. (Random Acts of Kindness)

Encourage parishioners to initiate and complete acts of kindness to a stranger, but especially a stranger not affiliated with our parishes. For example: snow shoveling, mowing grass, raking leaves, small repairs, etc.

#### Objective 2: Seeking the Lost Sheep of Our Parishes

There are many known stories of formerly practicing Catholics who have (for one reason or another) stopped coming to Mass. As Catholics, we ought to be zealous in reaching out to them.

##### Task 1: Identify, Write & Invite

There will not be a centrally compiled list. Rather, parishioners know best who is missing from our “ranks.” Individuals or groups of parishioners should compile their own list of names. Send hand written notes periodically to those on that list, and

invite them to dinner, lunch, social engagements, etc. Eventually, invite them to attend Mass with you.

##### Task 2: Ready to Welcome

Develop resources that invite them to participate in Spiritual, Catechetical and Service opportunities.

#### Objective 3: A Shared Parish Life

Through the results of the Vision Survey and as both parishes gathered together for Town Hall discussions, a desire clearly emerged to work toward a common life between both parishes.

##### Task 1: Holy Parties of Obligation

##### Task 2: Ministerial Mobs: Doing Ministry Together

#### Objective 4: Our Demographic Winter: Young Adults

Both parishes lack in numbers young adults that worship with us and participate in the life of our parishes. Our parishes offer engagement opportunities for children, youth, parents, empty nesters, and retired. Nothing is offered specifically to young adults who range from high school graduates to newly married.

##### Task 1: Identify the Young Adults

##### Task 2: Task Force

The purpose will be to reach out and conduct interviews with young adults to determine what their needs/desires are.

##### Task 3: Engagement, Catechesis & Socializing