St Martha Catholic Church
Parish Strategy

September 2013
Revision 5
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* Rev 5 – Evangelization incorporated into other applicable Elements to coincide with Archdiocesis rollout of “Framework for Lifelong Faith Formation”.
Mission Statement

The principles of St. Martha’s mission statement guided the strategic development

St. Martha Catholic Church Mission Statement

We, the community of St. Martha, Mary and Lazarus, Friends of Jesus Catholic Parish, are committed to our baptismal covenant with Jesus Christ. This covenant is manifested in our worship, evangelization, education, stewardship, service and our commitment to live as a community of faith.

- We center our parish life on Christ, Scripture and the celebration of the Sacraments in joyous worship and prayerful reflection of His love and mercy.
- We come together as a community of faith, in a spirit of hospitality and loving care, to serve one another in times of need and to share in the joys and struggles of everyday life in Christ.
- We provide all members of our diverse community the opportunity for spiritual growth through faith formation and the sharing of the richness of our Catholic tradition.
- We, as stewards of God’s gifts, share generously of our time, talent and treasure within our community and extend that care to others in fulfilling the mission of the Church in the world.
Background

• In 2004, the Pastoral Council was asked by Msgr. Borski to develop a parish strategy and vision
  – One of the Pastoral Council’s basic duties is parish-wide strategic visioning
  – A 1.5 year study of the various elements of parish life has been conducted
  – St. Martha School was considered out of scope due to a concurrent strategic development project conducted by its Board
  – Initial Strategic Plan document was finalized and released in April 2006

• The strategy has a 3-year time horizon with recommendations broken into near-term and long-term components
  – Near-term components: ~1 year timeframe
  – Long-term components: ~3 year time frame

• The six element framework of the strategy is based upon the parish model developed by Mary Ann Gubish & Susan Jenny in *Revisioning the Parish Pastoral Council*
  – Worship
  – Word
  – Community
  – Service
  – Stewardship
  – Leadership

• The Strategic Plan will serve as the basis for guiding the activities and initiatives of the Parish and will be updated on a periodic basis by the Parish Pastoral Council

* Rev 5 – Evangelization Element incorporated into other applicable Elements to coincide with Archdioceses rollout of “Framework for Lifelong Faith Formation”.*
Scope: Six Parish Elements *

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* Rev 5 – Evangelization Element bullet points incorporated into other applicable Elements to coincide with Archdioceses rollout of "Framework for Lifelong Faith Formation".
Worship

**St Martha Worship**

- Saint Martha’s parishioners are prayerful, active and generous.

- Liturgical ministries are led by dedicated volunteers, and staffed by motivated parishioners.

- Improvements in the area of liturgy can be considered more fine-tuning than necessary overhauls.

**Strengths**

- Pastor, Parochial vicar and Deacons
- Dedicated staff of lay volunteers to head various liturgical ministries
- Music ministry
- Faith formation, RCIA, and ACTS ministry
- Growing participation of a diverse community
- Training opportunities and workshops for liturgical ministers

**Opportunities/Issues**

- Greater emphasis on welcoming and hospitality.
- Ability to meet demands of growing diversity in the community.
- Taking better advantage of training opportunities for liturgical ministries
Worship

**Objective**
To provide the parish with a worship experience that strengthens the bonds of the parishioners with Christ, the Church and each other.

**Responsible Ministries/Groups**
- Liturgy Planning Team
- Building Committee
- Pastoral Council
- Parish Priests and Deacons

**Strategic Components**

**Near Term (~1 Year)**
- Develop organizational structure and ongoing training for technology and sound ministry so as to enhance the overall worship.
- Better utilize the parish website for ministry schedules and membership.
- Evaluate all ministries during each liturgical season to determine if needs of parish community are being met.
- Add an assistant Liturgy and Music Coordinator.

**Long Term (~3 Year)**
- Maintain all ministries at sufficient levels to meet parish needs.
- Maintain and update training programs for all ministries.
- Develop guidelines for all ministries, outlining responsibilities and expectations.
- Continue to research and develop the use of technology in Liturgy.

**Complexity**
- Low (Near Term) – Requires coordination and commitment of individuals.
- High (Long Term) – Monitor worship at both campuses to ensure that parish worships as one.

**Benefits**
- Improvement of worship experience.
- Lighten the burden on priests.
- Better trained and committed liturgical ministers

**Assumptions**
- Commitment from all ministry leaders to implement changes.
- Finances available to continue developing Master Plan.
**St Martha Word**

- Adult faith formation & youth ministries have greatly improved with addition of Faith Formation staff
- Budgetary constraints and space limitations have affected scope of activities conducted
- Current programs conduct regular missions and retreats for adults and youth
- Catechesis in Spanish provides support for the surrounding area.

**Strengths**

- Vastly expanded adult faith formation programs & Website over the past few years
- High quality of education from pre K- 8th grade
- Life Teen program for youth ministry has been a success

**Opportunities/Issues**

- Young adults are an underserved demographic that presents unique challenges for structuring a faith formation program. Reinitiate efforts to form Core Team of young adults (18-35ish) that will develop a plan that reflects their concerns
- Continue faith formation programs in the parish that address the diversity of the parishioners
- Continue to find opportunities for increased adult catechesis of parents connected to sacramental events and children’s programs.
- In many cases parents are not the primary educators of the faith in their children requiring a robust catechesis for children.
- Online and traditional libraries can be enhanced
- Evangelization is recognized as an improvement opportunity for the entire parish
| **Objective** | Provide a faith formation program to help a diverse parish family grow in their faith and enhance their relationship with God, their families, and fellow parishioners. Such program would attract others through personal and communal sharing of faith and the spreading of the Good News of Jesus Christ. |
| **Responsible Ministries/Groups** | • Faith Formation  
• School  
• Youth Ministry  
• Parish Priests and Deacons |

### Strategic Components

#### Near Term (~1 Year)
- Continue to develop faith formation activities for teens and young adults with existing and new programs
- Develop intergenerational faith formation for children & adults
- Continue to expand/enhance online access to faith formation activities
- Continue Catholics Returning Home Program
- Further develop social media ministry

#### Long Term (~3 Year)
- Continue to expand Adult Education classes to include various age groups and backgrounds
- Continue to work with St. Martha School to collaborate on faith formation activities
- Assist parents in their own faith formation by providing resources in prayer, catechesis, and service to nurture the spiritual development of their children
- Continue to develop Spanish language opportunities for faith formation
- Develop/enhance online & traditional libraries
- Implement educational and developmental opportunities for parish staff

### Complexity
- Near Term – Requires schedule modifications and lay commitment to individual events
- Long Term - Budget & staff must be adequate to pursue this endeavor
- Maintain & modify as challenges occur
- Evangelization is a challenging issue with broad subject matter

### Benefits
- Reaches young adults to maintain connection to the Catholic church
- Increases connection of family activities with the Church
- Reduces the disconnect of youth after Confirmation
- Reinforces the importance of faith formation with youth when parents are involved (catechize parents)

### Assumptions
- Adequate number of parishioners willing to participate in events
- Budget constraints and space limitations will continue to limit the scope of conducted activities
- Current level of evangelization in parish needs to be increased in all aspects of parish life
- Increased effort must be made to evangelize the parish and community at large
**Community**

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**St Martha Community**

- The Community Life element has evolved in the past year with an expanding focus on welcoming, communicating, networking with other elements, and reaching out to the community.
- Our ministries/organizations include but are not limited to: ACTS retreat volunteers, Baptism Volunteers, Caring Cooks, Catholic Daughters of America, Catholic Home School Group, Cursillo, Hispanic Ministry, Homebound Errand Committee, Knights of Columbus, Marriage Preparation, Mothers Day Out, Mom’s Prayer Group, Natural Family Planning, Northeast Catholic Singles, Parish Festival, Prayer Quilt Ministry, St. Anne’s Society, Sunday Nursery, Senior Citizen Luncheon & Transportation Committee, Sunshine Senior Citizen Club, Teams of Our Lady, Vocations Committee, Welcoming Committee, Women’s Club

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**Strengths**

- Large number of active organizations and volunteers in the parish
- Good mixture of large-group and smaller-group experiences
- Organizations address a broad range of demographics and interests
- Communications have been improving (e.g., Parish newsletter, announcements during Mass using PowerPoint, etc.)
- Existence of parish-wide events (e.g. Our Lady of Guadalupe Celebration, School Christmas Journey, Lenten Fish Fry, ACTS retreats, Parish Festival, etc.)
- Deanery/Archdiocesan and ecumenical activities are participated in by staff and clergy as well as the senior citizen group, youth ministry, etc.

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**Opportunities/Issues**

- Facility scheduling – limited space to accommodate all requests.
- Requests for marriage preparation has increased greatly.
- Pastoral needs: requests for spiritual direction and those seeking a declaration of nullity have also increased.
- Sacramental moments – additional effort needed to focus on events in the life of the parish.
- Need to address cultural diversity of parish.
## Community

### Objective

To draw parishioners together in celebration, prayer, activity, mutual support, and growth to form a Christian community where life is shared and nurtured and where everyone belongs.

### Responsible Ministries/Groups

- Parish Priests & Deacons
- Director of Community Life and Community Life Staff.
- Pastoral Council
- Ministries leaders

### Strategic Components

#### Near Term (~1 Year)

- Continue to improve marriage preparation and seek ways of reaching out to those needing convalidation, especially for Spanish-speaking couples.
- Invite and welcome families celebrating sacraments, specifically Baptism and marriage, to become integrated into parish community.
- ACTS retreats – continue to support the parish ACTS retreat ministries (near & long term)
- Pastoral Needs - Continue to assist those seeking Spiritual Direction, Annulments, Enrichment, etc.
- Develop improved communication with and among community life parish ministries
- Continue to improve welcoming approach to the parish
- Establish ad hoc committee to develop a sense of community with special emphasis on cultural diversity
- Expand and enhance website to become more user friendly and informative

#### Long Term (~3 Year)

- Marriage enrichment – seek ways to reach out to married couples, especially the newly married.
- Expand the ministry of Baptism Preparation to minister to families who may be away from the Church or who are struggling with the transition to parenthood.
- Communication and Hospitality – develop a strategy for these ministries to satisfy the near and long-term needs of the parish

### Complexity

- Medium (Near Term) – Scheduling events is limited to space availability.
- Medium (Near Term) – Maintaining communication between two campuses.
- High (Long Term) – Process of expanding ministry needs significant planning.

### Benefits

- Stronger faith community and view of St Martha’s as “extended family” by parishioners
- Additional opportunities for parishioners to become connected to or involved in their parish community.
- Continues St. Martha presence in the Archdiocesan Catholic community and increases its presence in the Kingwood community

### Assumptions

- Parishioners will continue participation in parish-wide and inter-parish activities
Service

**St Martha Service**
- Dedication to Service is encompassed in the Mission Statement and has always been an integral element of Parish life. There are many ministries dedicated to serving the needs of the parish and surrounding community with committed volunteers.
- Services include Saint Vincent de Paul Society, Interfaith Care Partners, Prison Ministry, Hospital Ministry are now well established to help with the practical needs of the local community.
- Interfaith involvement has increased with greater numbers serving at HAAM.
- Outreach in the Houston area centers of Martha’s Kitchen and the S.V.d P. Further outreach to local and surrounding community is envisioned.
- Limited space in the current facility allows for office space. A multi-service on-site social ministry center could be developed when relocation to new campus takes place.

**Strengths**
- Martha’s Kitchen: a significant social service built by St Martha with well-established volunteer/funding processes
- Eucharist-based services for homebound, elderly, and sick are available
- An active St. Vincent de Paul Society
- A well structured outreach ministry with a committed director of social Services, a Social Justice Committee and dedicated leaders in each outreach ministry

**Opportunities/Issues**
- Increased social service opportunities in the local area (Kingwood, Humble, NE Houston, etc.)
- More integration of youth ministries, St Martha School, and CCE into social outreach
- Demand for services often outpaces resources available
- Study future options for a local single wrap-around services facility
## Service

### Objective
Seek and reach out to those in need with the love and mercy of Jesus Christ, by providing and promoting service opportunities, and fostering and inspiring a service culture throughout the parish.

### Responsible Ministries/Groups
- Director of Social Services
- Social Justice Committee
- Faith Formation Staff
- Outreach Ministries

### Strategic Components

#### Near Term (~1 Year)
- Grow outreach ministry:
  - Expand the number of social services provided, including an immigration ministry
  - Continue to focus on local area for near-term growth
  - Increase the integration of youth ministries, CCE, and School
  - Continue to develop the social justice committee to ensure a consistent parish-wide approach
  - Cont’d participation in Archdiocesan pastoral care ministry program

- Communications:
  - Create and distribute parish-wide a video on soc. outreach ministries
  - Continue regular comm. to parish, include. reporting of finances, but enhanced to include man-hours of service and service coverage.
  - Put more ministry specific soc. outreach info. onto the parish’s website, incl. info. on what types of volunteer opportunities exist, to allow parishioners to find areas that would utilize their talents.

#### Long Term (~3 Year)
- Conduct a feasibility study for a single physical facility that would house and facilitate coordination of all social services ministries to offer full wrap-around services, including a meal services component (eg. Matha’s kitchen, Meals on Wheels), for those in need within the community.
- Increase the number of joint social service efforts and activities with other churches in the NE Houston area.
- Develop a disaster relief plan and establish a communication network to ensure effective coordination within parish and across area

### Complexity
- Medium (Near Term) – Increasing involvement in services beginning to tax existing staff
- High (Long Term) – Maintaining a multi-faceted service organization needs ever more significant planning and resource development

### Benefits
- Increased social services provided by the parish to the those in need within the St. Martha and surrounding community
- Fosters deepening and enrichment of faith life within the parish by providing opportunities for all parishioners to use their gifts to serve as Jesus teaches. “Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.” Mt 25:40

### Assumptions
- Social ministries will focus on basic needs of the community as well as social justice concerns.
- Social outreach planning will be considered in the new building and facilities planning
Stewardship

**St Martha Stewardship**

- St. Martha stewardship began a stewardship program in 2003 and has emphasized a comprehensive approach to stewardship with a focus on the spirituality of stewardship, not just its financial component.
- Stewardship helps parishioners understand their baptismal responsibility to share their gifts of faith.
- The result has been an increase of contributed time, talent and treasure within the parish.
- A Stewardship Committee exists to support and coordinate the efforts.
- Efforts to enhance stewardship are underway on multiple fronts including developing leadership retreat, annual stewardship commitment, parish survey and quarterly newsletters.

**Strengths**

- Steady growth in the numbers of lay ministers and funds through stewardship renewal over the past few years
- Stewardship committee is inclusive of key stewardship ministries
- Stewardship message is an integral part of parish communication
- Annual report of time, talent and treasure

**Opportunities/Issues**

- Increase integration of stewardship themes into faith formation and educational activities.
- Establish meaningful measures of stewardship performance
- Establish and encourage communities of interest to help all parishioners feel welcome and connected to the broader parish
- Help parishioners understand that the capital campaign is an element of our responsibility to steward our life in the Church
## Stewardship

### Objective

Provide a nurturing atmosphere for parishioners that encourages a generous sharing of time, talent and treasure in all parish activities. Focus of stewardship should be on the need to give, not giving to a need.

### Responsible Ministries/Groups

- Parish Priests & Deacons
- Parish Staff
- Lay Ministers
- Stewardship and Capital Campaign Committees

### Strategic Components

#### Near Term (~1 Year)

- Share and communicate the financial shape of the parish, while maintaining adequate payment of debt.
- Develop a “Fruits of your Labor” monthly reporting metric for all ministries. Move from using the term volunteer to that of lay minister so as to give greater ownership in ministry.
- Make regular effort to discover and share parishioners’ talents and invite their use in parish service through expanded use of the “Living your Strengths” model (include youth).

#### Long Term (~3 Year)

- Integrate the principles of stewardship into all aspects of faith formation and education.
- Provide adequate training and encouragement to parishioners who offer their gifts to the mission of the parish through workshops and days of reflection.
- Increase by 10% the number of parishioners who participate in the ministries and activities of the parish. (Estimated current percentage in order to make this goal measurable).
- Conduct a parish survey to identify ways for parishioner engagement.

### Complexity

- Growing Parish family.
- Increasing population of Latino parishioners: historical participation has been limited and ongoing effort to focus on inclusion.
- Multigenerational parish dynamics.
- Ongoing long term capital campaign.

### Benefits

- Diverse set of talents.
- Opportunity for a more vibrant community.
- More material resources from which to draw.
- Increasing sense of ownership in parish.

### Assumptions

- As parish grows, participation in lay ministry grows.
- Strong, active stewardship commitment.
- Capital campaign will be seen as an extension of a stewardship way of life.
Leadership

St Martha Leadership

- Evaluation of current leadership roles promotes growth, communication and cross group interaction
- Effective leadership puts in place the tools to guide the talents of the leaders in administering their current programs and personnel
- Leadership helps identify additional needs of the staff which aids in the future growth of all elements in the parish community.
- Enhancement of our leadership allows for building upon our already strong foundations as the parish continues to grow and more ministries, councils and staff become engaged with each other

Strengths

- Current leadership has successfully provided for the strength and growth of the parish
- Leadership groups have been established for the majority of the parish elements.
- Capable leaders have successfully been recruited for the various groups

Opportunities/Issues

- More structure for roles (organizational chart & job descriptions, etc.) and clarification of responsibilities of parish staff
- Parish leadership groups operate independently, but have interdependent areas of responsibility - more collaboration or integration would be useful
- Demands on leadership from the growth of the parish and its activities may require additional full-time support
# Leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Provide effective pastoral leadership within and across all areas of parish life with a caring and spiritual nature so we can worship as one and reach out to all.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Responsible Ministries/Groups | • Parish Priests and Deacons  
• Parish and School Staff  
• Ministry Leaders  
• Pastoral Council and School Advisory Board  
• Parish Committees |

## Strategic Components

### Near Term (~ 1 Year)
- Execute several operational improvements with the assistance of outside consultant
  - Update & publish org charts for Departments & Parish Staff
  - Review workload & update job descriptions
  - Administer annual performance evaluations based on job descriptions
  - Develop crosstraining plan within each department
- Develop a Parish Policy Manual for dept. heads & staff delineating roles, procedures, and matters of internal control
- Maintain continuing education for parish staff & leaders
- Recognize challenge of two campus location & create means to monitor the cohesiveness of parish

### Long Term (~ 3 Years)
- Establish & maintain the process of developing an annual budget with collaboration among pastoral council, finance council, business manager & parish staff
  - Integrate strategic planning process with annual budget
  - Improve communication and working relationship among groups
- Develop opportunities for lay leadership within the parish
  - Formation Toward Christian Ministry (FTCM)
  - Parish Retreats
  - Workshops
  - Parish Mission
- Enhance communication & interface within Parish Family (Clergy, councils, staff, ministries, volunteers, parishioners)
  - Listening Sessions
  - Media (bulletins, website, flyers, posterboards)

## Complexity
- **Medium (Near Term)** – Recommendations are to be focused on roles, tasks & responsibilities
- **Medium (Long Term)** – Develop process which integrates strategic planning with annual budget planning. Develop lay leaders

## Benefits
- Improved staff performance through better understanding of roles & responsibilities
- Stronger parish ministries & programs through integrated decision making across ministries
- Maximize role of ordained leaders within parish
- Greater ownership of the Parish Vision Statement
- Increased participation of the Parish Family
- Parish budget better aligned with strategic plan

## Assumptions
- Current parish leaders are continually identifying & recruiting qualified leaders for future roles
  - Parish budget will provide strategically targeted resources
  - Increased engagement in the ministry of the parish
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<th>Rev</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Updated by</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<td>0</td>
<td>4/20/06</td>
<td>SMCC Pastoral Council</td>
<td>G. Braden</td>
<td>Initial release of Strategic Plan</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>6/6/07</td>
<td>SMCC Pastoral Council</td>
<td>G. Braden</td>
<td>Updated Word, Worship, Service and Community elements</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>8/19/2012</td>
<td>SMCC Pastoral Council</td>
<td>M. Jeansonne</td>
<td>Added 2011 Leadership and 2012 Stewardship elements updates.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Sept 2013</td>
<td>SMCC Pastoral Council</td>
<td>T. DeBoise</td>
<td>Combined Evangelization Element into other Elements pg 4, and reviewed/updated Word Element. Will temporarily maintain detailed Evangelization Element pages as unofficial addendum until review of Community and Leadership Elements reviewed and incorporated as found to be appropriate.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### St Martha Evangelization

- **Fundamental mission of the Church and parish is evangelization**
- **Encompasses the way in which the parish spreads the Good News of Jesus ... through personal and communal sharing of faith**
- **Involves all elements of parish life**
- **Progress has been made in several areas over the past few years by numerous ministries but there is still a lot to be done**
- **Often receive comment that people find it difficult to “break in” to St. Martha**
- **Welcoming and involving families in parish life at St. Martha are a high priority**

### Strengths

- Clearly recognized as an improvement opportunity for St. Martha parish
- Recent improvements in other elements (e.g., adult education, social services, liturgy, & etc.)
- Large parishioner base willing to assist in ministry if asked and given some direction

### Opportunities/Issues

- Minimal organized effort in the parish that is focused solely on evangelization
- Welcoming of newcomers can be improved (e.g., process, physical area during Mass)
- Welcoming returning Catholics—by developing a program using existing models
- The link between Evangelization and the other Elements needs to be defined within the context of St. Martha and steps identified and taken to make improvements

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Revision 1-2008

Addendum pg 1
## Evangelization (Merged into other elements R5)

### Objective
Initiate a formal Evangelization program at St. Martha Church that focuses on four groups: a) the unchurched in the area; b) fallen-away Catholics; c) parishioners only attending weekend Mass; and d) active parishioners. Seek to increase the inclusion of evangelization principles in other areas of parish life.

### Responsible Ministries/Groups
- Parish Priests & Deacons
- Parish Staff
- Ministry Leaders
- Pastoral Council
- Parish Committees

### Strategic Components

#### Near Term (~1 Year)
- Select person to coordinate parish evangelization efforts
- Educate parish staff, ministry leaders and organizations about evangelization efforts
- Establish an Evangelization Committee to:
  - Study Pope Paul VI’s Evangelii Nuntiandi and USCCB’s Go Make Disciples (1992) and their application to the parish
  - Identify specific evangelization needs of the parish
  - Plan and coordinate evangelization strategy
  - Work with parish staff/leadership to integrate evangelization into their areas of ministry
- Continue to improve “Welcoming Ministry” for the Parish:
  - Maintain quarterly welcoming dinners
  - Consider helpful handouts for newcomers

#### Long Term (~3 Year)
- Welcome Back Program for “fallen-away” Catholics:
  - Evaluate and select from program models available through the archdiocese and other sources
  - Focus on assistance for divorced & separated people and recent departures from the parish
- Home Visit Program:
  - Visit current parishioners by trained lay persons to provide a personalized forum to discuss and re-energize Catholic faith and St Martha Parish
  - Integrate this program with Welcome Back

### Complexity
- **Medium (Near Term)** — Building new, on-going programs is challenging, especially with broad subject matter of evangelization
- **High (Long Term)** — Requires training resources and significant time commitment by participants

### Benefits
- **Stronger faith community**
- **Increased and broader more diverse parishioner base**
- **More active parishioner participation in liturgies, education programs and other various ministries**
- **More welcoming community to newcomers of all backgrounds and diversity**
- **Increased spiritual growth and well-being of individuals benefiting from outreach ministries**

### Assumptions
- **Current level of evangelization in the parish needs to be increased**
- **Evangelization needs are currently not being fulfilled through other parish activities, such as education, faith formation, stewardship, etc.**