

CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION

LONG RANGE PLAN

GOALS & OBJECTIVES April 2007



Dear People of Ascension Parish,

Can you feel the excitement? With your help, the Long Range Planning Committee has completed its work on the development of a Long Range Plan. The Committee actively sought Parishioner input via a survey and two Parish forums. The input received was combined with feedback from representatives from each of the Parish's councils, committees, staff, and deacons. The Long Range Plan contained within is the result of all of our efforts in union with each other.

It is important for any organization to take a look at itself and ask questions such as, "What are we doing well?", "What can we do better?" and "What should we be doing that we are not doing?" This Long Range Plan is a framework for our Parish as we move forward. The Plan lays out Goals and Objectives for the coming years. While goals and objectives may vary from year to year as the needs of the Parish evolve, we remain true to our Mission.

Please take time to read the Plan. Look for yourself. No one is excluded. Discuss the Plan with your friends and neighbors. It will take action from all of us to accomplish these goals. Each of us has an opportunity. Ask yourself, "What role will I play in making our Church a vibrant and viable Parish?"

The best is yet to come as we look forward to implementing the Plan. You will see visible signs as the Plan is put into action. Please take the time to consider your particular talents and become active in our Parish.

We wish to thank all of you for participating in this process. May God bless you and may He bless all of us as we strive to implement the goals set before us.

Rev. Marvin J. Klemmer, Pastor

Mike Kraft, Chairperson

To help us achieve these goals and objectives, please contact Father or the Parish staff. Contact Jan Sitter, Parish Administrator, at 223-3606 if you have any questions or concerns.

<http://ascensionbismarck.org>

MISSION STATEMENT

**As a people of God, of
Ascension Catholic Parish,
we are united by Baptism and
committed to meeting the
needs of our faith community.
In union with the whole Church,
we will build the Kingdom of God
by proclaiming the Good News,
worshipping God,
creating community and
promoting social justice.**

GOALS

- 1. BUILD A STRONG SENSE OF PARISH COMMUNITY.**
- 2. ENHANCE AND CREATE FAITH FORMATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL MEMBERS OF THE PARISH.**
- 3. IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE PARISH COMMUNITY AT LARGE.**
- 4. MAINTAIN FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE STABILITY (INCLUDES FACILITIES).**
- 5. REACH OUT TO PEOPLE IN THE LARGER COMMUNITY.**
- 6. PROVIDE FAITH-FILLED, PRAYERFUL, VIBRANT LITURGICAL EXPERIENCES.**

GOAL #1

**BUILD A
STRONG SENSE OF
PARISH COMMUNITY**

Objectives:

1. In March and October of each year, newcomers will be welcomed as follows: a photo in the foyer and/or introduction at weekend Masses and acknowledged in the parish newsletter.
2. By July 2007, “You are Welcome” statement will be read prior to all Masses the third weekend of the month.
3. Annual Open House at the Rectory beginning September 2007.
4. Beginning July 2007, name tags will be used at all parish events.
5. By March 2008, we will have greeters at all doors at all Masses.
6. Beginning May 2008, we will implement a process of recognizing visitors and special events in people’s lives at weekend Masses.
7. By October 2007, a group of volunteers will begin visiting new members within 30 days of registration.

GOAL #2

**ENHANCE AND CREATE
FAITH FORMATION
OPPORTUNITIES
FOR ALL MEMBERS OF
THE PARISH**

Objectives

1. A committee will be established to address parish faith formation on all levels including Catholic school education.
A report will be submitted to the Pastoral Council by March 2008.
2. By May 2008, a speaker to promote Lifelong Faith Formation will be brought in.
3. Publicize formation of Why Catholic? groups to increase participants to 150 by October 2007 and to 175 by February 2008.
4. Have a parish mission/retreat by March 2008 and one every two years thereafter.

GOAL #3

**IMPROVE
COMMUNICATIONS
WITH THE
PARISH COMMUNITY
AT LARGE**

Objectives

1. In September 2007, begin a process of obtaining a parish census to be completed by March 2009.
2. By July 2007, we will redesign the parish news letter and evaluate it annually.
3. By July 2007, the website will be revised and enhanced.
4. Establish a parish visitation program by June 2009.
5. Develop a communication plan for special events by September 2007.

GOAL #4

**MAINTAIN FINANCIAL
AND ADMINISTRATIVE
STABILITY
(INCLUDES FACILITIES)**

Objectives

1. Prepare an orientation packet for new members by May 2008 for Parish Pastoral Council, Finance Council and Trustees.
2. Become a full stewardship parish by June 2010.
3. Using the diocesan guidelines review compensation and benefits for staff by March 2008 and annually thereafter.
4. Create a professional development plan for each staff position by February 2008 and review annually at employee evaluations.
5. Establish a ministry of coordinating volunteers by March 2008.
6. Prepare a long term facilities plan by June 2008 with emphasis on improving the parking lot and lighting, redoing the landscaping, redoing the exterior of the church, attaching the education building to the church and expanding and upgrading the kitchen.
(note: include some type of signage by church.)

GOAL #5

**REACH OUT TO PEOPLE
IN THE
LARGER COMMUNITY**

Objectives

1. By September 2007, compile and publish in every newsletter a listing of programs the parish currently supports ie. financially, volunteering etc.
2. The Social Concerns Committee will research the needs of the community and make recommendations to the Parish Pastoral Council by March 2008.

GOAL #6

**PROVIDE
FAITH-FILLED,
PRAYERFUL,
VIBRANT
LITURGICAL
EXPERIENCES**

Objectives

1. By January 2008, there will be a process to evaluate parish liturgies.
2. By September of 2007, there will be a Mass at least monthly featuring contemporary music to be evaluated in September 2008.
3. By October of 2007 a parish youth choir will be established.
4. By July 2007, there will be a clearly-defined parish budget for music/liturgy.
5. By September 2008, there will be a structure in place for having Masses specifically geared toward the youth of the parish.
6. By November 2007, a focus group will be established to explore ways to make our liturgies and involvement of youth in parish life more inviting and relevant to youth and young adults. The Focus group will report and make recommendations to Parish Administration by April 2008.
7. By December 2008, we will expand the pool of liturgical ministers by 25%. (Lectors-from 18 to 23; Ushers-from 56 to 70; Eucharistic Ministers-from 78 to 98; Altar Servers-from 33 to 41; Music Ministers-from 33 to 41.)

LONG RANGE PLANNING Who are We?

HISTORY OF ASCENSION CHURCH:

The Church of the Ascension was established in 1974. Until the church was built in 1979, Sunday masses were offered in the twin theaters at Kirkwood Mall. Daily mass during the week was offered in the basement of the rectory at 320 Reno Avenue. The present rectory and education building were built in 1984. Fr. E. J. Becwar was the first pastor of the Church of the Ascension. Under his leadership, the church, education building and rectory were built. Father Becwar retired in July of 1988. Fr. Marvin Klemmer is the current pastor. He became pastor on July 1, 1988. In 1999, Ascension celebrated their 25th Anniversary as a parish. To celebrate this anniversary a major renovation was done in the church which was completed in May of 2000. Elementary and secondary Catholic school education is available to all parishioners. The parish has grown from 340 families in 1974 to over 1,300 registered households in 2006.

Fast Facts	
Year Established:	1974
Age of Parish:	32
Year Church Built:	1979
Year Rectory/Ed. Bldg Built	1984
Year of Church Renovation:	2000
Church Seating Capacity:	750
Community Room Capacity:	152
Total Registered Households (HH):	1,304
Membership - Total Parishioners	3,494
Pastors:	
Fr. E. J. Becwar (1974-1988)	
Fr. Marvin Klemmer (1988-current)	

Registered Households (HH)	Total	% Parish
HH in Parish Boundaries	1,069	82%
HH Outside Parish Boundaries	235	18%
Total Registered HH	1,304	100%

Snapshot of Registered Households (HH)	Total	% Parish
HH w/ Children Registered	425	33%
HH Over Age 65	189	14%
Other: Empty Nesters, Single Adults	690	53%
Total Registered HH	1,304	100%

Membership by Age	Totals	% Parish
Parish Children Age 12 & Under	509	15%
Parish Children Ages 13-17	341	10%
Parish Adults Ages 18-26	685	20%
Parish Adults Ages 27-36	256	7%
Parish Adults Ages 37-45	469	13%
Parish Adults Ages 45-65	985	28%
Parish Adults Ages 65+	249	7%
Total Parishioners	3,494	100%

Snapshot of Membership by Age	Totals	% Parish
Post-Vatican II -- Millennial (1980-)	1535	45%
Post-Vatican II -- Gen X (1960 - 1979)	725	20%
Vatican II (1941 - 1960)	985	28%
Pre-Vatican II (Born on or before 1940)	249	7%
Total Parishioners	3494	100%

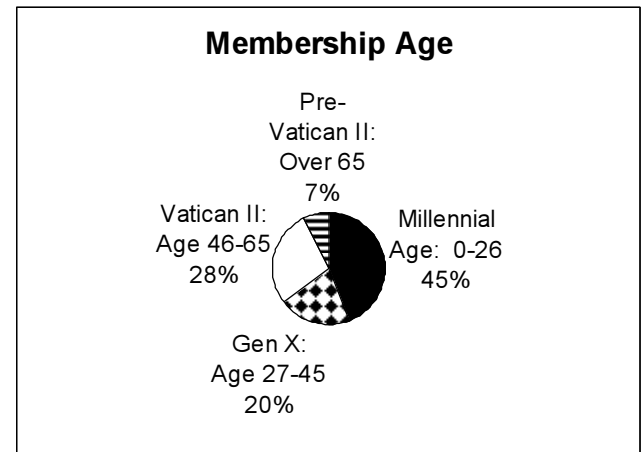
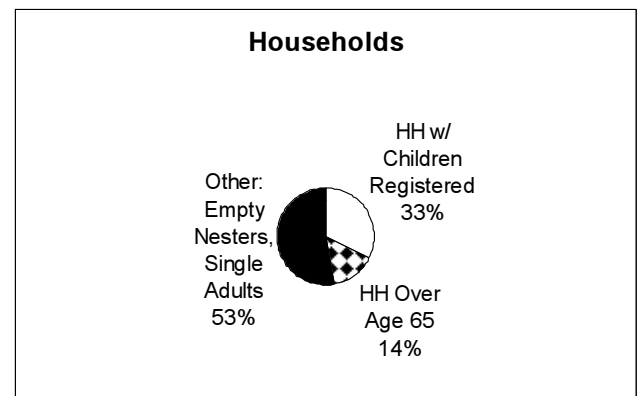
BOUNDARIES:

NORTH: Those living on the South side of Bismarck Expressway.

EAST: Those living on the West and South side of the AMTRAK tracks
until the tracks meet the section line which is the beginning of the Menoken Parish.

WEST: Those living on the South side of Bismarck Expressway until that Avenue stops at the Missouri River on the West

SOUTH: Those living south of Bismarck Expressway to the Missouri River on the South.



SOUTH BISMARCK AREA GROWTH:

There are 5 major new developments within the Parish Boundaries. They are either approved, just starting to develop, or are still in the approval process. The five are:

1. Southbay 1st Addition - 157 housing units - located west of Washington St. & south of Burleigh Ave.
2. Southbay 2nd Addition - 338 housing units - same location
3. Southland Addition - 95 housing units - located east of Washington St. & south of the storm water ditch
4. Whispering Waters Addition - 70 housing units - located east & south of the Fox Island boat ramp
5. Copper Ridge 2nd Subdivision - 300 housing units - located 1 1/2 miles south of the City of Lincoln

LONG RANGE PLANNING
Who are We?

Liturgical Ministers

Greeters/Ushers (56):

Parishioners greet those who come to participate in the Sunday and Holy Day Masses. They assist parishioners to find a seat, collect the offerings and distribute the bulletin. They are available to meet the needs of any person attending Mass.

Lectors (18): Parishioners proclaim the Word at the Sunday Mass and Holy Days.

Ministers of the Eucharist (84): Parishioners assist with distributing the Eucharist at Sunday Mass and Holy Days.

Music Ministers (35): Parishioners lead the congregation with the music during the weekend and Holy Day Masses. They also assist at other liturgical functions.

Committees

After Mass Hospitality - Coffee and Rolls (74): Parishioners prepare and serve coffee and donuts after Sunday Masses twice a month.

Environment Committee (10): This committee decorates the church for the various feast days and seasons.

Faith Formation Committee (6): This group is an advisory board for the Faith Formation Director.

Liturgy Committee (9): They study and plan the liturgical events of the parish.

Parish and Community Concerns (10): This group is responsible for social justice concerns of our parish. Projects include: serving The Banquet, the Giving Tree, Fill the Crib, Prayer Blanket ministry etc.

Parish Activities Committee (13):

They are responsible for planning parish social events such as the Pumpkin Contest, parish picnic, Birthday potluck etc.

Stewardship Committee (3):

This newly formed committee is responsible to obtain an understanding of stewardship and provide stewardship education to the parish.

Vocations Committee (3):

This newly formed committee is responsible for information, prayer and activities to promote vocations.

Councils

Parish Finance Council (5):

Members act as an advisory board to the Pastor on church activities and programs. Membership includes five members appointed by the Pastor, the Pastor, a liaison from the Parish Pastoral Council, Parish Administrator and Bookkeeper.

Parish Pastoral Council (7):

Members act as an advisory board to the Pastor. The council includes seven elected and/or appointed members, the Pastor, the Parish Administrator and a recording secretary.

Organizations

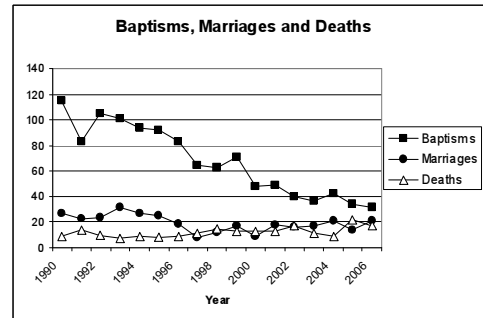
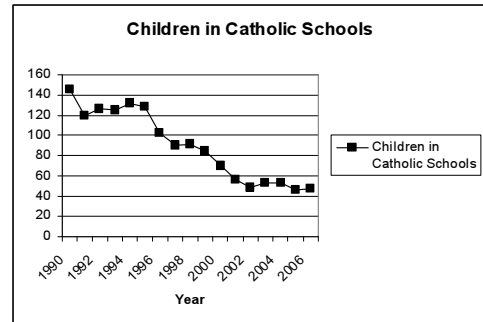
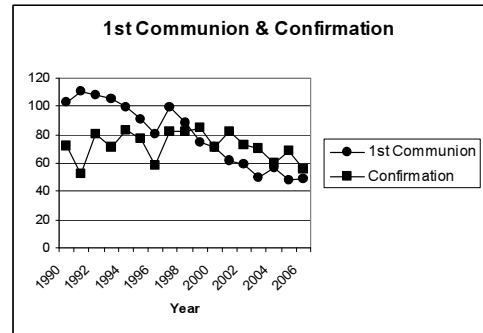
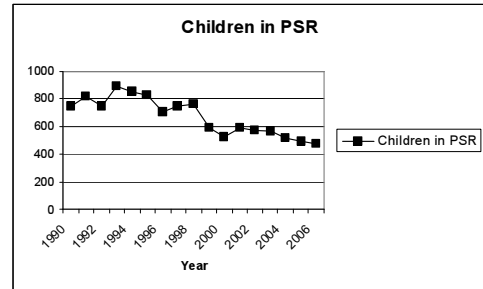
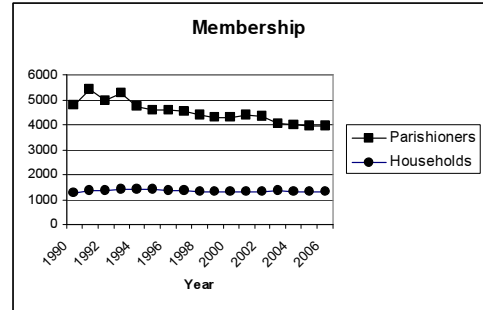
Knights of Columbus:

All men, college age and older are invited to become members of the Knights of Columbus. This group holds breakfasts the 1st Sunday of the Month, September-May, has fish fry's during Lent. They promote vocations, pro life and support the parish and community.

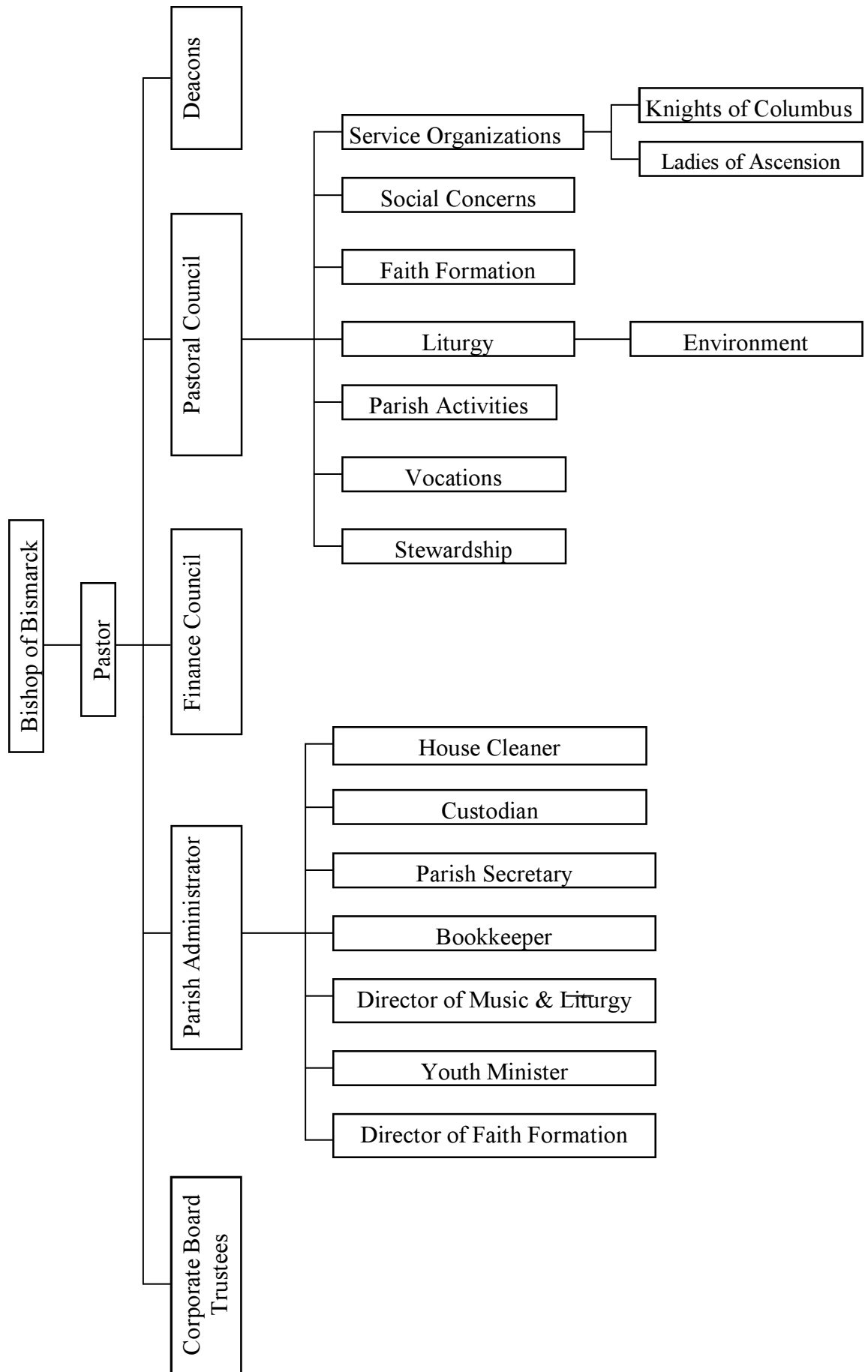
Ladies of Ascension (10 active):

All women of the parish are members of Ladies of Ascension. This group primarily serves luncheons for funerals, holds bake sales and assists with the needs of the parish.

Statistics



CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE
 April 2007



Method

The Long Range Planning Committee studied various planning models, reviewed the Parish Mission statement, gathered data about who we are as a Parish, conducted a survey, held two open Parish forums, drafted goals and objectives, prepared a long range planning document for the Pastoral Council, and received approval of the Long Range Plan from the Parish Pastoral Council.

The Committee actively sought Parishioner input via a survey and two Parish forums. The input received was combined with feedback from representatives from each of the Parish's councils, committees, staff, deacons and Father Klemmer.

Brief Chronology of Events

November 2005	The Parish Pastoral Council starts exploring demographic information.
April 2006	The Council has an in-service on planning and discusses the need for a plan.
May 2006	The Council has an in-service on planning models. The Council creates a Long Range Planning Core Committee.
Summer 2006	The Core Committee studies planning models and develops a framework for planning.
August 2006	The Long Range Planning Committee is formed with representatives from existing parish committees, Councils, Deacons, and anyone else that was interested in participating.
Fall 2006	The Long Range Planning Committee meets with the facilitator Mike Fladeland, develops a schedule, studies more detailed demographic information, develops the Who Are We document and creates a survey.
November-December 2006	The survey is sent to each registered household. The Who Are We document is distributed to Parishioners
January 2007	Survey responses are tabulated. First Parish Forum held. Initial goals and objectives created.
February 2007	Second Parish Forum is held to present initial goals and objectives.
March 2007	The Long Range Plan is adopted by the Parish Pastoral Council in a joint meeting with the Finance Council.
April 2007	The Long Range Plan is presented to the People of Ascension Parish.

Committee

We owe a debt of gratitude to the Core Committee of the Long Range Planning Committee, the members of the Long Range Planning Committee and our consultant, Mike Fladeland.

CORE COMMITTEE:

Fr. Marvin Klemmer
Mike Kraft, Chairperson
Bernie Vetter
Doug Wolf
Jan Sitter

LARGER COMMITTEE:

Tom Trousdale-Finance Council
Carl Ness-Parish Activities Committee
Michelle Sweeney-Social Concerns Committee
Dennis Blasl-Liturgy Committee
Judy Ness-Environment Committee
Val & Marge Frank-Why Catholic? Groups
Monica Hoynes-Ladies of Ascension
Morgan Vercimak-Knights of Columbus
Cheryle Gagner-Staff, Director of Faith Formation
Josh Schaan-Staff, Youth Minister
Keven Wanner-Staff, Director of Music & Liturgy
Ray Grabar-Deacon
Tony Finneman-Deacon
Doyle Schulz-Deacon
Neal Kalberer-Trustee
Paul Patera-Trustee

FACILITATOR:

Mike Fladeland