

Introduction to **The Parish Strategic Pastoral Plan**

The Parish Strategic Pastoral Plan that was adopted by the Parish Pastoral Council in January 2007 was the result of many months of work by a representative team of forty-one people. The current plan followed a strategic plan that was adopted in January 2001 which may have been the first parish strategic plan ever promulgated at OLA.

One of the major achievements of the 2001 plan was the development of our parish leadership structure under the guidance of Fr. Tom Sweetser and Sr. Peg Bishop of the Parish Evaluation Project. The foundation on which the current strategic plan was built is our parish leadership structure.

We take our Parish Strategic Pastoral Plan very seriously. It is not a document that gathers dust on a shelf in the pastor's office. We consider it to be a living document that serves as a navigational system for the future of OLA—a GPS of sorts for the parish community. The Parish Pastoral Council is charged with the responsibility of parish planning.

A professional planning facilitator (Elizabeth Guss of Cohesion) was engaged to lead the Core Planning Team in the planning process which included a parish mission-driven survey of the entire parish.

Having a Parish Strategic Pastoral Plan as a guide serves to keep us on track following the priorities set forth by representative leaders of our faith community.

Strategic Plan for Our Lady of the Assumption Parish

(finalized 1-18-07 by the OLA Pastoral Council)

Mission

We, the People of God, under the patronage of Our Lady of the Assumption are called to be disciples of Jesus Christ. As members of the Body of Christ, gathering for worship around the Table of Word and Sacrament, we commit ourselves to love and support one another in faith, hope, and love. We are sent forth as apostles, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to make the Good News of Jesus Christ present and alive in our world through evangelization and hospitality, healing and service, education and the establishment of justice.

Vision

In seven years, we will

- build a new parish home,
- share leadership widely among the People of God, and
- live our mission in the larger community.

Values

Our Lady of the Assumption, a community of believers, holds as our core values:

- commitment to celebrating liturgies that invite people to be active participants, transformed and empowered to go forth, proclaiming and living the Gospel;
- hospitality and welcoming that builds and fosters a sense of community;
- collaborative leadership that encourages initiative and an environment within which new ideas can emerge and be supported;
- embodiment of our Gospel values through healing and service to our sisters and brothers;
- diversity within our multicultural parish, always striving to be more inclusive while celebrating our differences;
- grateful reception of God's blessings and commitment to the responsible use and generous sharing of God's gifts;
- commitment to life-long formation and evangelization, the re-evangelization of inactive Catholics and to the development of new models of formation for children and youth;
- pursuit of social justice through empowerment, advocacy and education.

Updated 3-27-08. [Text in blue indicates progress made on goals.](#)

Strategic goals and objectives

Goal #1 – OLA will develop a facilities master plan for and construct a new parish home.

- Review existing master plan (by Jan 2007)
 - i. Update [Facilities Master Plan reviews options; new drawings 3/07](#)
 - ii. Bring in stakeholder representation. [FMP expanded, expansion on-going](#)
 - iii. Begin school dialogue – (short/long term) [Ongoing conversations with school administration & PFA](#)
 - 1. Investigate short term options [All-day Kindergarten to start 8/08; enrollment plans formulated based on current footprint](#)
 - 2. Initiate regional school dialogue. [Deanery conversations begun; Inter-diocesan conversations planned](#)
- Share the plan (by July 2007)
 - i. Communicate to the entire parish [bulletin presentation with charts 4/07](#)
 - ii. Receive and incorporate feedback [ongoing...](#)
 - iii. Resolve parking issues [Parking study begun 9/07; report received 2/08 – no significant traffic problems anticipated](#)
 - iv. Meet with the City of Claremont [file opened; 4 informal meetings held fall, 2007](#)
- Begin fundraising (a five year process from 2007-2012)
 - i. Obtain fundraising counsel [Retained RSI for Feasibility study](#)
 - ii. Conduct feasibility [analysis conducted Nov- Dec, 2007; results processed by Finance Council/Pastoral Council jointly 2/08](#)
 - iii. Begin pledge period [delayed, based on feasibility study](#)
- Design new plan (July 2007 – July 2008)
- Build Phase One – the church (probably take 2+ years)

Goal #2 – OLA will strengthen and sustain our leadership structure.

- Develop a plan to communicate information about the leadership structure and activities to the parish (by Jan 2007). [Leadership Sunday in Fall.](#)
 - i. Post monthly pastoral council meeting minutes throughout the parish. [Resurrect regular reporting to parish at large.](#)
 - ii. Publish coordinating council agendas prior to meetings – website
 - iii. Publish names & contact information of coordinating council co-chairs in bulletin weekly
 - iv. Create information center that communicates leadership structure
- Develop a plan for comprehensive training for new and continuing leaders (both staff and volunteers) by May 2007
 - i. Refresh/deepen current leaders with retreats, etc. [Teens Christian Leadership. Twice a year Catechist training. Weekend retreat for U-Turn leaders.](#)
 - ii. Commitment to professional development opportunities jointly available to all leaders. [Pastoral Team membership. Attendance at PLN-LA Mgmt Team \(Tom, Sharon, MJ\) to meet w/Sweetser @ Congress.](#)
 - iii. Develop a plan for training of new coordinating council members by July 2006. [Began annual Leadership Councils' training.](#)
- Identify, foster, and form new leadership (ongoing goal with target date of June 2007 for initial plan)
 - i. Develop a task force to investigate and plan forming of small communities (interest based, neighborhood, online, ministry, etc)
 - ii. Develop an ongoing list of leadership potential candidates. [In progress.](#)
 - iii. Develop a mechanism to keep track of, bring forward, develop nurture, call forth possible new leaders. [Gifts discernment workshops. Planning for leadership training for rank & File ministry, org members & leaders.](#)
- Develop a way to evaluate the effectiveness of the leadership structure. [Observation that term limits of leadership is seeping into Parish culture.](#)
- Develop ongoing feedback mechanism (Listening Post proposal) by August 2006. [Accomplished.](#)
- Develop an ongoing, annual planning process for strategic goals. [John T & Sharon H Task Group.](#)

- Assess the effectiveness of the current council meeting schedule in order to provide adequate time for leadership structure to function effectively by Dec 2006

Goal #3 – Our new pastor will support the vision, mission, and values of the strategic Pastoral Plan.

- Form a committee to focus on new pastor appointment (October 2006)
Accomplished
 - i. Pastoral Council to discern the core members of this committee (July 2006)
Accomplished
 - ii. Determine representation, size, etc for committee.
 - iii. Committee is charged to
 1. Learn/understand the process of clergy placement
Met with Vicar for Clergy 7/07
 2. Meet the clergy placement group.
Arranging meeting, spring 2008
 3. Follow the process and results of the 2006-2007 clergy placements to gain insight into the process
Informal meeting held with Regional Deacon and calendared for Archdiocesan Chancellor
 4. Identify list of sought-after characteristics of the new pastor.
Parish-wide survey drafted and tested on Leadership Councils 2/08
 5. Develop and implement a program for ongoing public information about the work at OLA
- Begin to identify potential candidates (by Jan 2008)
 - i. Plan possible informal contacts
- Complete parish profile packet (history, demographics, strategic plan, etc) by June 2008
In progress, spring 2008
- Plan an orientation process and develop some materials (September/October 2008)
- Invite prospective pastors to meet with leadership governing councils (October 2008)

- Determine best method to communicate with clergy placement committee to express preferences in potential appointment (December 2008)
- Discern members of transition team (January 2009)
- Develop transition strategy (February/March 2009)
- Welcome new pastor (July 2009)

Goal # 4 – OLA will promote and increase service and advocacy for the poor and marginalized.

- Support and extend OLA's outreach ministries
 - i. Investigate the possibilities for staff-level coordination and support for all outreach ministries [2 new staff liaisons for Outreach Coordinating Council](#)
 - ii. Update OLA survey of ministry activities and needs, including contact information
 - iii. Disseminate updated survey to all the ministries (through the identified contact person)
- Form a team to conduct an outreach needs assessment for the parish. [Re-organization of St Vincent de Paul Society.](#)
 - i. Evaluate current ministries* and make recommendations to strengthen as needed
 - ii. Identify under-served populations and new opportunities, including pastoral care of the sick, elderly, and disabled [Pastoral Care to the Sick ministry in process of evaluation and reformation to invite, train, and support ministers, spring, 2008](#)
 - iii. Investigate the possibility of adopting a sister parish. [Holy Name of Jesus Parish speaking at Together in Mission.](#)
 1. Define the roles in a "sister" relationship
 2. Develop a list of potential parishes with a focus on nearby communities
 3. Discern OLA's readiness and resources for such a project
- Improve education and communication with the parish community about outreach services

- i. Ask Side-by-Side to update community services manual
 - ii. Begin collaboration with Faith Formation, RCIA, and social justice ministries. [Just Faith, Peace Service \(Pathways to Peace\), Interfaith Service.](#)
 - iii. Pursue media recognition opportunities for OLA ministries
 - iv. Increase presence and visibility of outreach ministries through the parish bulletin, Welcome Cart, and other creative means. [Bulletin Coverage.](#)
- Assure that compensation practices at OLA parish reflect our values of fairness and justice
 - i. Form a task group with a representative from the Finance Council
 - ii. Review compensation packages from Catholic and non-Catholic schools/churches, and non-profit organizations in the local area
 - iii. Examine the cost of living in this area and consider alternative models such as volunteer/staff combinations
 - iv. If appropriate, make recommendations to the Finance Council about possible compensation changes

*** [List of current outreach ministries and activities:](#) Bags in Benches, Angel Tree, Adopt-a-Family, Alternative Christmas, Holy Childhood, Food collection at school, School Adopt-a-Family, Support of Damien HS Tijuana Mission, Grade level outreach, efforts around various holidays throughout the year, Undies Sunday, Olivewood carving sales, School recycling, School Shoes that Fit, Goodwill clothes collection, School financial aid, Rice Bowl Program, Uncommon Good, ongoing food collection through food trailer, monthly Meals for Homeless, Rwanda/Uganda aid through John Bosco, Walk for Hungry, Hope Partners, Respect Life activities, Stephen Ministry, Thanksgiving Meal, Pastoral Care to the sick, Bereavement Support Group, St Camillus, Ministry at Lanterman State Hospital, Juvenile Detention Ministry, Singles in Transition, Vietnamese Social Services Network (home visits, financial support, prayer, visits to sick), Croix de Bouquet (Haitian community), Hispanic Round Table, Lenten Soup Meals, 12-Step Support Groups, City Council candidates forum, Foster Parent Information Nights, Health Fair, Blood Drives.**

Goal # 5 – OLA will establish and implement a collaborative process to provide liturgical celebrations that form and nurture us as a diverse community and empower us to live our discipleship.

- Develop a process for collaborative liturgy planning

- i. Form a homiletics committee, with lay and clergy members, to reflect and share on the Gospel and readings from a scriptural a practical standpoint. [Clerity group \(presiders, deacons and other key staff\) formed, meets bi-weekly; Pastoral Team prayer.](#)
 - ii. Encourage the homiletics committee and other liturgical ministries to incorporate the Gospel call for social justice, evangelization and stewardship into homilies and sermons. [Clerity group.](#)
 - iii. Continue to develop processes for feedback and dialogue with parishioners regarding liturgy. [Listening Post, Gospel Reflection tri-fold evaluation.](#)
 - iv. Review and assess the current liturgy planning process, initiating any needed changes. [Hiring of School Liturgy Coordinator, pre-planning for Advent, U-Turn Liturgy Planning Team.](#)
 - v. Foster artistic expressions in liturgical celebrations such as dramatic presentations, Gospel reflections, liturgical dance, innovative use of music, etc. [Teen gospel reflections, lay adult gospel reflections, Three Kings gifts, Music Ministry Team, Jesse Tree painting, Sycamore tree, Trevor Thomson's music @ school masses.](#)
- Form a task group to assess the need for increased staff-level liturgical coordination with special attention to the unique challenges of being a tri-lingual community. [Liturgy Team, Clerity group, full-time Liturgy Coordinator hired.](#)
 - Enlarge and develop the Art and Environment Committee. [New leadership has arisen – Mary Lou Butler.](#)
 - i. Create a focus on environment that reflects the cultural diversity of the parish
 - ii. Establish an educational component from this committee to help the assembly grow in appreciation of the liturgical calendar
 - Continue and increase programs of and opportunities for formation and education for liturgical ministers. [Confirmation prep elective – on Liturgical ministries.](#)

Goal # 6 – OLA will articulate and implement a broad-based, comprehensive vision for Whole Community Catechesis that is liturgy based.

- Develop a vision and supporting framework for WCC that is collaborative and liturgy-based

- i. Write and disseminate a definition of WCC that is clear and concise
- ii. Identify the various constituencies and the roles of all parish ministers
- iii. Develop structures to assure collaboration of FF staff, FF council, liturgist(s), and presiders. [Clarity group is beginning of this structure.](#)
- Develop an intentional educational strategy that includes all ages. [U-Turn Word-Up studying upcoming Sunday scriptures.](#)
 - i. Conduct a needs assessment to determine which populations are to be served
 - ii. Investigate various models as a means of promoting WCC, including small faith communities
 - iii. Identify underserved populations, including older parishioners
- Develop and form a pool of lay ministers – lay preachers, master catechists, facilitators – to help implement WCC

(Note: Do not lose suggestions that Confirmation preparation classes be scheduled Sunday afternoon before the Teen Mass, and that Safeguard the Children Committee be consulted for mixed-group models.)

[Clarity group, Gospel Reflection tri-fold, Blessing kits for peoples' homes, Advent Confirmation Mass, Confirmation meetings leading into Teen Mass, Adoration – Benediction, Jerusalem Marketplace, Vacation Bible School, Adult Option VBS, Parish Mission upcoming "intentional discipleship", School All Saints Mass, World Youth Day, Emphasis on holistic ministry to Pastoral Care to the Sick.](#)

Goal # 7 – OLA will spiritually and financially support a regular program for the discernment of gifts among all parishioners.

- In collaboration with the Coordinator of Lay Ministries, form a team to plan, implement, and evaluate an ongoing gifts discernment program. [Task group has met to evaluate & brainstorm.](#)
- Working collaboratively with WCC, integrate spirituality of gifts discernment into all of parish life – intercessions, homilies, bulletin, banners, tables on patio, website, etc.
 - i. Work with pastoral staff to provide support for ongoing efforts to encourage and facilitate discernment of gifts
 - ii. Engage current volunteer ministers to develop an understanding of gifts discernment

- iii. Invite and encourage all newcomers to attend a gifts discernment workshop
- Develop gifts discernment workshops for “special” populations – youth, newly-confirmed, new converts, the elderly, etc.

[Gift discernment Workshops \(adults, 7th grade at OLA school, Confirmation prep, FCCW\). Bulletin Time & Talent section, Plan for Parish/School staff day on gifts.](#)

Goal # 8 – OLA will develop a plan to insure that all aspects of our parish life reflect, honor, and celebrate our diverse ethnicity.

- Invite and encourage the participation of all OLA’s ethnic communities in our monthly Leadership Night. [Simultaneous interpretation for Leadership Workshop, OLA Patronal Feast, OL Guadalupe, Vietnamese New Year, Vietnamese OL of Rosary.](#)
 - i. Develop an instrument to survey and identify the ethnic mix currently at OLA
 - ii. Increase availability of simultaneous translation in all parish activities, especially Leadership Night
- Continue to develop new strategies to take advantage of our ethnic diversity, regularly celebrating our diverse ethnic saints/feast days with food, music, dance, and liturgy
 - i. Develop an annual schedule for cultural sharing interaction to be matched with the liturgical and school calendars as much as possible
 - ii. Design a faith formation event on cultural diversity such as a WCC large-group event, a multi-cultural retreat and/or school assembly

Goal #9 – OLA will improve its overall communications function with particular emphasis on the progress and activities of the parish leadership structure.

- Develop a parish communications network and process for both internal and external communications
 - i. Form a standing committee of individuals (parish members and others) with expertise in communications. Areas of expertise might include marketing, print journalism, video production, related computer programs, public relations, and networking
 - ii. Conduct a parish communications assessment with the help of parish staff and members of the standing committee

- iii. Develop recommendations based on the assessment
- iv. Create a timeline for implementation of the recommendations
- Develop the parish website to make it more inter-active and user-friendly
 - i. Initiate a collaborative project to re-design the current website with help from parish staff, volunteers, and professional consultants. This may involve customizing a good model provided by the parish software company. [\(Until this can happen, parallel website at **www.parishesonline.com** being used for current bulletins and basic information to supplement **www.olaclaremont.org**\)](#)
 - ii. Train parish staff and volunteers to maintain the OLA website and keep the information current [**software purchased and installed, 2006**](#)
 - iii. Develop a process for gathering and utilizing feedback from parishioners and other website users
- Expand communication of the activities of the parish leadership structure.
 - i. Commit to some form of regular communication with the parish about the leadership structure and activities. In addition to the parish bulletin, this would include other creative modes of communication [**monthly council spotlight begun 1/08**](#)
 - ii. Charge the Administration Council with developing a communications plan each year (just as other groups do; see Objective No. 4), and gather feedback from the other coordinating councils on a regular basis
- Improve communication of the goals/needs/activities of parish ministries
 - i. Invite representatives of parish organizations and ministries to a “workshop” to develop individualized plans for improving their communications with help from Jean McKenna and Ann Brown
 - ii. Consider Sunday morning “meet and greet” events for parish organizations and ministries
 - iii. Encourage parish ministries and organizations to develop an annual “timeline” for their communications needs with Jean McKenna