

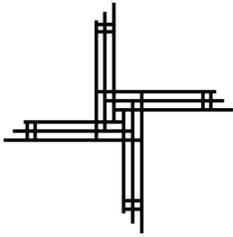
# St. Bridget Church Strategic Plan

*Prepared for the parishioners of St. Bridget Church — River Falls, Wisconsin*



**St. Bridget Church and School  
211 East Division Street  
River Falls WI 54022  
[www.saintbridgets.org](http://www.saintbridgets.org)  
715.425.1870**

*Church is not something you go to... It's a family you belong to.*



## ST. BRIDGET CATHOLIC CHURCH

211 E Division Street PO BOX 86  
River Falls, WI 54022

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Dear Friends in Christ,

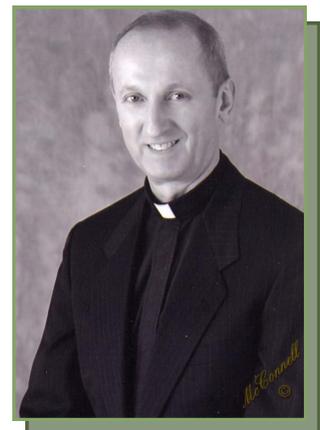
A strategic plan allows us to assess the best our parish has to offer and to acknowledge areas for growth. Using that information, we will move forward together to achieve our goals and plan for our future as a strong and vibrant parish community.

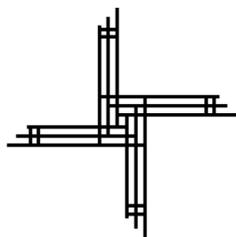
I am truly grateful for all of the people that have worked on this groundbreaking project for the benefit of St. Bridget Parish. I would like to acknowledge and thank all of the parishioners who gave so much of their time: Scott Lindall (chair), Tom Westerhaus (chair), Kristina Andahazy, Dan Cernohous, Sandy DeCoux, Jesse Gilles, Tim Iehl, Carolyn Johnson, Jerry Liddell, Joe Radlinger, Rob Scott, Gary Senn, Sue Steckbauer and Esther Sykora plus nearly 60 parishioners who served on Idea Teams.

The enthusiasm surrounding this project makes me proud to lead this great parish, and I am excited for what lies ahead. Our goal is to make everyone a minister — providing opportunities for everyone to be involved, to feel welcome, to grow spirituality, and to work together to go out and make disciples. Please take the time to review the plan and look for ways that you and members of your family can get involved and help our church family continue to grow in faith, love, and service.

With Gratitude,

Father Jerry Harris  
Pastor





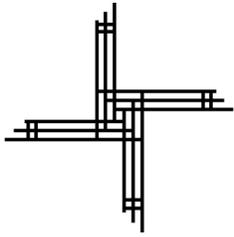
## THE PROCESS AND PEOPLE BEHIND THE PLAN



In the fall of 2014, the St. Bridget Parish Pastoral Council approved a motion to form a committee to create a strategic plan for the parish. A group of 15 dedicated and diverse parishioners came together. Over the course of the next eighteen months, this group created a strategic planning mission statement; developed belief statements, parameters and objectives; examined our parish strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats; established six overall initiatives; initiated idea teams to formulate action plans; and finally, proposed strategies for each area of need.

The plan is the result of a strong collective effort by committed parishioners representing St. Bridget Church and it will need to be embraced and implemented by all to make this great parish of ours even greater!

WE WILL NEVER CHANGE THE  
WORLD BY GOING TO CHURCH.  
WE WILL ONLY CHANGE THE  
WORLD BY BEING THE CHURCH.



## THE PLANNING PROCESS



### **MISSION**

Why do we exist?

### **BELIEF STATEMENTS**

Values that guide our decision-making

### **PARAMETERS**

Unbending principles to which we will adhere

### **OBJECTIVES**

Results needed to support our vision and mission

### **SWOT ANALYSIS**

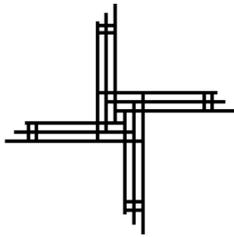
Identification of the **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities, and **T**hreats

### **INITIATIVES**

Major priorities that will lead to achievement of the objectives

### **ACTION PLANS**

Specific action steps that specify supporting plans for each initiative and define accountability, timelines, resources (fiscal and human) necessary, and measurement of achievement



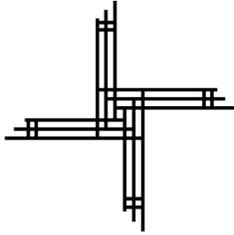
### **Strategic Planning Mission Statement:**

Jesus Christ commissions us to live the gospel by loving God, loving others, and making disciples.



### **The St. Bridget Catholic Community of Faith believes that....**

1. As members of the world wide Body of Christ, we are called to serve, in prayer and action, those suffering and less fortunate.
2. We must welcome, assist, and reach out to the stranger, the marginalized, and the un-churched in our local community and spread the gospel of Jesus Christ.
3. The best way to lead is by example.
4. Strong programs for sacramental preparation and mentoring are necessary for building disciples.
5. Effective communication and active participation among all groups and ministries in our parish is necessary to grow in unity, have a joint vision, and a sense of serving together as one body.
6. A vibrant worship experience with strong liturgy and inspiring music keeps people engaged in our parish.
7. Building the strength of our parish is the shared responsibility of the pastor, parish staff, and all parishioners.
8. All members, regardless of age, should receive spiritual nourishment and guidance.
9. The parish school must remain vibrant, spiritually healthy, academically strong and a leader in the community.
10. The parish Faith Formation program must remain welcoming to all ages, fervent in teaching the Catholic faith and its relevancy, and encouraging of personal encounters with Jesus.
11. It is important to establish and maintain strong relationships with other churches and organizations within our local community.
12. All members should share their abundant gifts and talents to grow our parish ministries.
13. We strive to practice healthy financial stewardship with all members contributing time, talent, and treasure, as they are able.



## PARAMETERS & OBJECTIVES

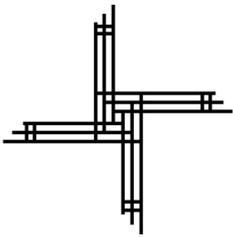


### Parameters

We will take a fresh look at all we are doing as a parish and nothing will be exempt as long as it follows the teaching of the Church.

### Strategic Planning Objectives

1. Provide our pastor with sufficient support from staff and member volunteers so together we may minister to the spiritual health of the parish.
2. Make effective communication a priority so that parish life is shared among all members.
3. Make available and encourage involvement by all members in sacramental preparation and spiritual guidance.
4. Welcome all guests and invite them to share in parish life and mission.
5. Provide sacramental preparation and spiritual guidance to all members.
6. Maintain strong relationships with the community outside our parish especially with neighboring churches.
7. Deliver a weekend worship experience that is vibrant, inspiring and challenging.
8. Encourage all members to support the parish with time, talent, and treasure, as they are able.
9. Communicate the Catholic Church's long history and rich traditions of advancing human spiritual growth and well-being.
10. Make evangelization part of our parish life.
11. Develop a shared leadership structure among pastor, staff, and members to address the current and future needs of our parish.



## SWOT ANALYSIS SUMMARY



**STRENGTHS:** Positive attributes internal to the organization or situation that are within your control

- Strong effective liturgy especially sermons, children's sermons, music participation, broadcast of Sunday Mass, funerals.
- Easter and Triduum liturgy are especially powerful.
- Sunday experience is a welcoming worship experience.
- Sacramental preparation and spiritual development programs including RCIA, confirmation, first Communion, K-5 religious formation program, women's retreat, discipleship, are inclusive and educational.
- Social and community outreach programs including Tuesday banquets and other community meals, donuts, facilities, Martin Luther King breakfast, service and tithing to larger community.
- We are an inclusive and united Catholic parish.

**WEAKNESSES:** Internal factors within your control that may impede your ability to meet your objectives

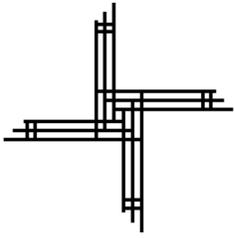
- Not every active member sees himself or herself as a minister
- Shortage of volunteer leadership within ministries
- We need to reach out to youth and new members to include them in ministries utilizing their talents
- Lack of parish-wide fun events and social opportunities
- Music ministry needs more musical volunteers

**OPPORTUNITIES:** External factors that the organization or project should (or could) develop

- Our good relationship with the community
- Youth energy and generosity
- Positive culture of our parish
- Growth in music choices with more musical volunteers

**THREATS:** External factors beyond your control that could place the organization at risk

- Lack of value of church/religion in general – Catholicism in particular
- Increased secularization of society



## OUR SIX INITIATIVES



Accountability, Measurement and Communication

Ministry Involvement, Music,  
and Volunteer Leadership

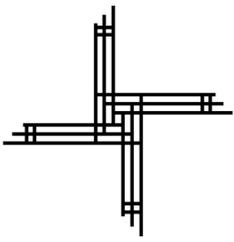
Parish Life Experience and  
Parish-Wide Fun Events

Discipleship and Spiritual Growth

Evangelization: Outreach for New Members, Youth,  
Un-Churched and De-Churched

Leadership Transition

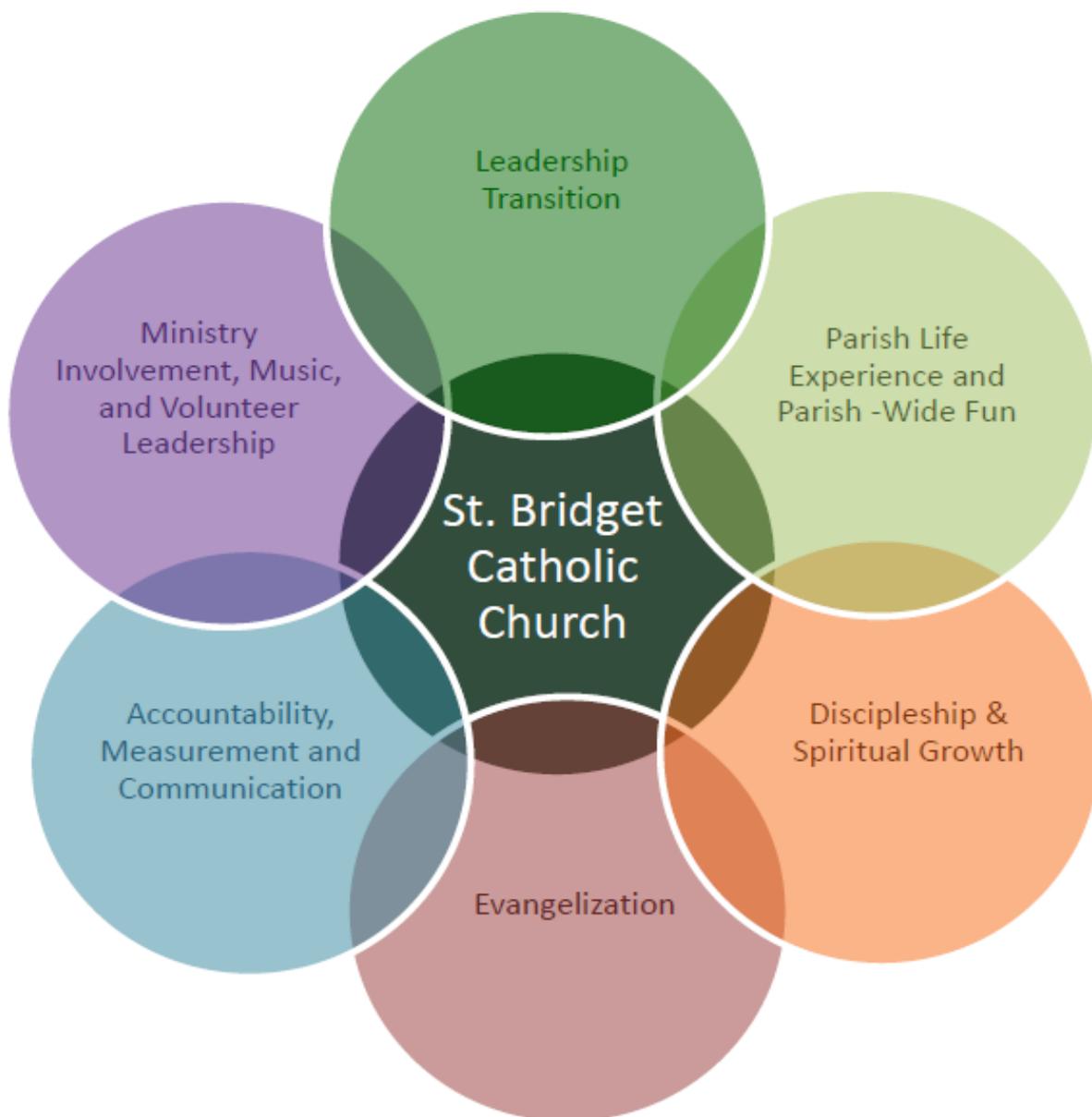


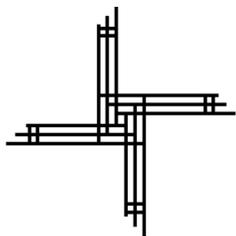


# St. Bridget Catholic Church

## Strategic Plan Outline

*So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth.*





## Accountability, Measurement and Communication

### **OBJECTIVE 1 — To establish parameters to ensure the parish is planning for the future and to foster a parish community that is collaborative and mutually supportive.**

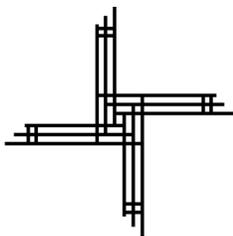
- 1.1 - Create an annual strategic review process which speaks to all activities in the parish (financial, ministries, evangelization, etc.) that becomes the basis for goal and objective setting for parish employees and ministries.*
- 1.2 - Establish an employee performance management review process which includes job descriptions, annual goals, objectives and regular performance reviews.*
- 1.3 - Develop position descriptions for the parish pastoral and finance councils, ministry leaders, and volunteers.*
- 1.4 - Develop a capital improvement plan to identify immediate and long range maintenance needs and costs as well as a plan to pay for those improvements.*
- 1.5 - Develop a parishioner commitment statement which defines what it means to be a member of the parish that includes expectations for adults and youth with respect to fellowship, participation, ministries and financial obligations.*
- 1.6 - Develop a process for reviewing and identifying ministry needs.*
- 1.7 - Develop an accountability statement to the people of River Falls and beyond to show our commitment to be part of the broader community.*

### **OBJECTIVE 2 — To develop consistent standards for reviewing, monitoring and accessing vital parish information.**

- 2.1 - Develop and distribute an annual parish-wide survey to gather parishioner input and to measure progress on our strategic objectives.*
- 2.2 - Establish metrics for monitoring and comparing to other parishes our membership, attendance, communication, giving, ministry participation, youth participation and fellowship trends.*
- 2.3 - Develop a web based parish portal to allow parishioners to access their records on-line to include contact information, giving, and ministry involvement with options available for non-internet users.*
- 2.4 - Review current parish record keeping processes and procedures and update as needed - particularly those records that are paper based.*

### **OBJECTIVE 3 — To foster a parish community that is well educated about parish life so that all parishioners feel welcome, informed and invested.**

- 3.1 - Establish effective quarterly communication of parish finances with an annual stewardship weekend to provide transparency and encourage all members to support the parish financially as they are able.*
- 3.2 - Improve the communication about the Catholic Services Appeal (CSA) that explains the importance of the Diocese to our parish.*
- 3.3 - Develop alternative communication channels such as, but not limited to, town hall meetings, an “Ask Father” space in the bulletin, and a comment box that allows for parishioners to provide feedback to the parish.*
- 3.4 - Develop a comprehensive communication strategy that improves and coordinates communication to parishioners, the parish school, and the broader community.*
- 3.5 - Improve the user-friendliness of our parish communication.*
- 3.6 - Evaluate current and future use of social media, website, and other available technology.*



## Ministry Involvement, Music, and Volunteer Leadership

**OBJECTIVE 4 — To provide opportunities for all parishioners to realize that we are ALL ministers by creating an environment that recognizes the need for lay involvement and promotes and nurtures active participation.**

- 4.1 - Survey the parish to evaluate the weekend experience(s) and make improvements where needed.
- 4.2 - Revitalize and improve the current welcome center to improve communication, promote volunteer opportunities, and provide parish information to new and existing members.
- 4.3 - Establish a lay group to meet with new parish members once per month.
- 4.4 - Produce brochures for each of the ministries explaining what is done including time commitment and expectations.
- 4.5 - Promote an ongoing "Invitation to Ministry" for all parishioners.
- 4.6 - Explore opportunities for new ministries.

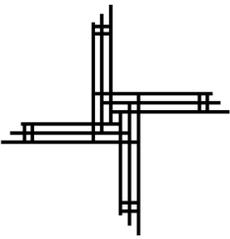
**OBJECTIVE 5 — To identify and implement strategies to encourage more music involvement and active participation by members of the parish.**

- 5.1 - Explore new ways to grow our music ministry and increase participation.
- 5.2 - Evaluate and improve the microphone system of the choirs to promote quality musical sound for the whole congregation.
- 5.3 - Explore lighting needs for the choirs and add new lights to ensure adequate lighting to read music.
- 5.4 - Provide an opportunity for music ministry collaboration amongst all choirs.

**OBJECTIVE 6 — To support opportunities for parishioners to become involved in ministry and to feel valued, appreciated and well-informed of responsibilities.**

- 6.1 - Create a paid position to coordinate and manage volunteers for activities and special events, provide training and supervision of volunteers, and manage the welcome center and kitchen.





## Parish Life Experience and Parish-Wide Fun Events



**OBJECTIVE 7 — To create a parish community that is vibrant, social, welcoming, and active so all parishioners want to be involved.**

*7.1 - Conduct an annual parish-wide event each fall that is open to the community with activities for all ages.*

*7.2 - Implement an active and dynamic youth group that is led by youth leaders with guidance from a youth ministry leader to develop and implement activities that appeal to middle school and high school youth.*

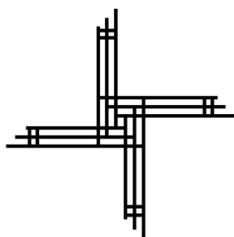
*7.3 - Provide a framework for parishioners to start their own small group activities based on various interests with an emphasis on enjoying time together and forming and deepening connections to the church.*

*7.4 - Conduct an annual outdoor celebration of Mass accompanied by a parish-wide picnic.*

*7.5 - Establish a series of learning Masses four times per year to provide additional context and understanding of each Mass segment to better inform the parish of the meaning behind the celebration.*

*7.6 - Create a social committee to explore a variety of activities to address multiple parish needs and interests.*



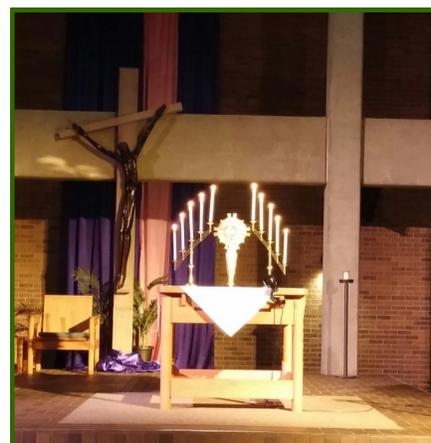


## Discipleship and Spiritual Growth

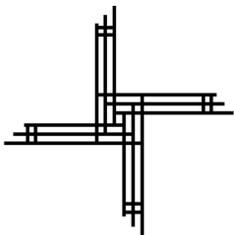


**OBJECTIVE 8 — To establish the parish as a focal point of Christian discipleship and provide opportunities for continued spiritual growth.**

- 8.1 - Support family church life by nurturing the family faith journey.
- 8.2 - Leverage strong sacramental preparation programs that encourage youth and adults to continue spiritual growth.
- 8.3 - Expand adult faith formation to provide continual learning opportunities through small groups, retreats, Bible study, catechism, and ecumenical initiatives.
- 8.4 - Create an ongoing challenge to parishioners to foster spirituality and discipleship growth.
- 8.5 - Offer a variety of prayer experiences beyond the Mass to nurture personal and communal prayer.
- 8.6 - Foster service groups to promote the corporal works of mercy as Church such as Habitat for Humanity, Feed My Starving Children, pregnancy helpline, prison ministry, visiting nursing homes and the homebound, and a pro-life education/action group.
- 8.7 - Enrich the welcoming environment of the Sunday Mass experience from parking to departure and incorporate the sharing of personal testimonies.
- 8.8 - Determine the spiritual and social needs of young adults as well as the aging and develop ministries specifically for these groups.
- 8.9 - Evaluate our current faith formation program and revise as needed.



We aren't called to fill the pews with **bodies**; we are called to fill the world with **disciples**.



## Evangelization: Outreach for New Members, Youth, Un-Churched and De-Churched

### **OBJECTIVE 9 — To create a faith-filled parish community that is welcoming and accepting to new members, visitors and guests.**

- 9.1 - Utilize the welcome center to provide essential parish information and to provide information for new members, visitors and guests.
- 9.2 - Develop strategies for registering, welcoming, identifying and recognizing new parish members.
- 9.3 - Expand or create a greeters' training program with special focus on making guests and new members feel welcomed and part of our parish family.
- 9.4 - Develop a mentor program where active members are paired with new members to help the new members become part of our parish family.
- 9.5 - Create an "Invite a Guest Sunday" where individuals or families are encouraged to invite a guest to Mass.

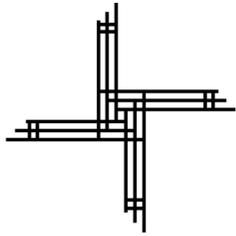
### **OBJECTIVE 10 — To provide an environment in which youth feel connected and are eager to deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ.**

- 10.1 - Create and actively promote youth organizations around relevant topics, issues, or appropriate activities.
- 10.2 - Improve and increase access to teen activities through additional funding and opportunities for transportation.
- 10.3 - Establish an annual Mass to honor the relationship between children and their parents/caregivers.
- 10.4 - Provide additional opportunities for faith and spiritual growth for youth during the summer months.

### **OBJECTIVE 11 — To provide ministry to welcome back those who have separated from the Catholic church and those without a church home.**

- 11.1 - Develop a program to reach out to the de-churched and un-churched in our community and beyond.
- 11.2 - Make evangelization a priority and provide adequate training for members so each is comfortable and willing to encourage others to become new members of the St. Bridget Parish Family.
- 11.3 - Initiate opportunities for parishioners to meet the needs of the deprived, disadvantaged, homeless and marginalized.
- 11.4 - Start a "Random Acts of Kindness" week initiative in which every parish member is asked to do a random act of kindness for a stranger.
- 11.5 - Explore opportunities for individuals to hear Catholic topics presented in neutral locations.

**BE THE CHURCH:** Everyone. Everywhere. Every day.



## Leadership Transition



### **OBJECTIVE 12 — To plan for the retirement of our current pastor, to be prepared for pastoral change, and to encourage parishioners to lead through service and involvement.**

- 12.1 - Establish a St Bridget pastoral transition team to prepare the parish for a pastor change.*
- 12.2 - Empower parishioners to assume their role as pastoral ministers within the parish and the extended community.*
- 12.3 - Provide the pastor with the resources and time to be pastoral and to focus on those responsibilities only a pastor can do while the staff and/or parishioners fulfill duties that are not limited to the pastor alone.*
- 12.4 - Develop, under the guidance of the pastor, prayers for parishioners to pray individually or collectively for*
  - 1) inspiration/encouragement of each parish member to be an active minister in our parish and community,*
  - 2) for the effective transition to a new pastor and*
  - 3) for the Holy Spirit to inspire all our church leaders to courageously, creatively and passionately encourage us to live out our faith as ministers in service to others.*
- 12.5 - Define and assess community involvement of our current pastor and be prepared to provide pertinent information to our incoming pastor.*

### **OBJECTIVE 13 — To empower parishioners, councils, and staff to prepare for new leadership.**

- 13.1 - Review and update our parish mission statement and develop a corresponding vision statement that accurately reflects who we currently are as a church community.*
- 13.2 - Ensure that the parish pastoral council and finance council are aligned with the parish mission statement and strategic plan and that the finance council supports the work of the parish pastoral council.*
- 13.3 - Educate the parishioners on their role as ministers to fellow parishioners and the extended community by educating on the parish mission, strategic plan, the parish pastoral council's administrative structure, functions and committees, the parish staff positions and personnel and volunteer positions.*
- 13.4 - Determine and maintain a well-defined parish pastoral council committee structure.*
- 13.5 - Ensure that the parish pastoral council and finance councils have transparent, comprehensive and open communication through frequent updates that keep parishioners informed on the progress of goals and prepares for effective leadership changes.*
- 13.6 - Establish annual SMART parish pastoral council goals that are consistent with the mission statement (SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound).*
- 13.7 - Hold timely parish pastoral council elections according to Diocesan bylaws that foster broad and diverse representation of the parishioners.*
- 13.8 - Ensure that the Pastor and parish administrator - with input from the parish pastoral council - work together to develop an open and thorough hiring process for all staff positions to ensure that the best candidate is secured.*
- 13.9 - Provide resources to assist staff on leadership changes.*
- 13.10 - Develop a policy of identifying and addressing which positions, committees, and subcommittees require an orientation program.*

Good and gracious God,  
We thank You for the many gifts  
You have given to St. Bridget Catholic Church.  
We thank You for accompanying us in our  
planning process and for guiding our direction.  
Thank You for providing the knowledge and  
wisdom to respond to Your call.

Help us to enact this plan with courage  
and commitment so that Your will be done  
and that we Your people are strengthened  
in our discipleship and guided in stewardship  
with the Gospel message of love  
proclaimed in word and in deed  
ever more clearly.

We ask these things through Christ our Lord.  
Amen

