

Answers to FAQs from the October 2016 Town Hall . . .

Funding -

What is the church using to make up the weekly/monthly/annual deficit?

We are using existing parish savings, one-time unrestricted gifts and bequests, grants and as allowed, restricted endowments for specific projects. While this has, in the past, allowed Holy Trinity to cover its monthly operating expenses, as the saving account declines, it is not prudent to rely solely upon unplanned future unrestricted gifts and bequests to cover these expenses.

Holy Trinity's mission of serving the spiritual and economic needs of its community can only be fully realized with all parishioners participating in monthly stewardship through volunteering and financial contribution.

What are all the ways the church receives revenue/funding?

We receive funding through weekly and monthly contributions, one-time unrestricted gifts and bequests, grants and as allowed, restricted endowments for specific projects.

Why don't we do Bingo or other fundraisers to raise money?

While Holy Trinity is not currently licensed to operating as a bingo parlor, Holy Trinity School is the charitable beneficiary of a bingo operation in Garland which contributes thousands of dollars annually to the operation of the school.

Do you need any help with grant writing?

We are always in need of qualified volunteers to assist in grant writing. Inquiries should be directed to HTinfo@htccd.org, or please call the Parish Office at 214-526-8555.

Why do we do the collection the way we do? (the questioner noted that they have a hard time getting 8 ushers and sometimes they have to wake up people to pass the baskets down.)

We switched from the pole baskets to the hand-to-hand baskets in order to engage more parishioners in the Offertory. We are working on recruiting more ushers, as you may have noticed by the announcements at recent Masses. In the past few weeks, Stewardship Task Force members have been participating in the collection at different Masses to gauge how well the process is working. Early reports indicate that the passing of baskets hand-to-hand is very effective at engaging each congregant personally, getting their attention and allowing to either place a gift in the basket, use a Holy Trinity Giving Card (indicating that they are already giving via ACH or online) or they may choose to open a hymnal and use the QR Code with their smartphone.

How diverse is the Task Force?

The Task Force's current team is made up of 14 parishioners active in multiple ministries, who regularly attend Mass on Saturday evening, Sunday at 8:30 a.m., 11 a.m., or 5 p.m. Parishioners who attend the Sunday 12:30 p.m. Spanish-language Mass are currently engaged in stewardship issues with specific leaders and Father Mike.

Will there be a Town Hall for the Hispanic congregation? Why were they not at the October Town Hall?

The opportunity for a Town Hall (or similar meeting) for our Hispanic congregation is being explored by Father Mike with 12:30 Sunday Mass leadership.

Holy Trinity Catholic School

Is there a plan to increase enrollment?

Is there thought being given to merging HTCS with another school (example: CTK)?

How does diocese plan to support the school – what are the options being explored?

A plan for increasing enrollment has been developed by the principal, teachers and Advisory Board, with input from the Diocese, and it was presented at the HTCS-focused Town Hall held on January 26, 2017.

At present, and throughout the School's history, HTCS has never received financial support from the Diocese; it is a critical mission of Holy Trinity Catholic Church and the Vincentian Fathers, and is funded through tuition, grants and parish contributions.

Recruitment

What is our parish program to bring in and welcome newcomers?

Do we reach out to new housing construction to leave welcome packets, etc. in lobbies?

A new parishioner welcome package is being prepared and a distribution plan is being discussed. The Hospitality Committee is exploring various options to recruit, welcome and educate new parishioners regarding spiritual, volunteer and social opportunities at Holy Trinity.

Did annual ministry fair result in an increase in volunteers? Why were so many tables not manned?

One of our most visible volunteer recruitment events is the Annual Ministry Fair. This event has been regarded as generally successful, and its success has been enhanced by the participation of engaged parishioners and by personal introductions and invitations to join lay ministries.

Generally this event is conducted outside and volunteer participation will vary among the masses and based upon the weather.

Outreach/Programming

Why are there no programs for:

- LGBT
- Sex Workers
- Homeless
- Substance abusers
- Senior Citizens
- Divorced/Widowed/Separated Catholics
- Evening Scripture classes
- Respect Life
- Inclusion
- Young Adult Ministry with part-time or full-time minister?
- Children's Choir (even if only at Christmas)
- Once-a-month Children's Mass, using children's lectionary and music
- Book Club for Catholic Moms in evenings or on weekends
- Breakfasts after Mass once-a-month
- Retreats
- Monthly Fish Frys
- Other programs offering spiritual growth

These are all terrific ideas for outreach and engagement programming for any Catholic parish! Like most parishes, though, Holy Trinity must rely on the creativity and generosity of its parish volunteers for program organization, recruitment and staffing. Your ideas and plans for implementing programming are always welcome. If you are interested in starting a particular program or ministry, please contact the Parish Office at 214-526-8555 or email general@htccd.org.

There are a few things on this list that already exist at Holy Trinity, at least in some form. The Holy Trinity Sanctuary Choir holds Friday Fish Fry events during Lent and the Beyond Sunday group hosts Friday Soup Suppers during the same time period (see the Sunday bulletin for dates). Although we have no paid Young Adult Minister, we do have a vibrant, active Young Adult group known as "Beyond Sunday." And the "Grateful Fed" already exists as a social group for parishioners aged 40+. And although there is not currently an organized children's choir, there is a Christmas Eve Children's Celebration on December 24th each year, featuring a dramatized gospel, singing and many, many parish children. Watch for sign-ups as Christmas approaches each year.

Campus –

What's the new construction over the breezeway?

The enclosed patio over the breezeway was constructed to address on-going drainage and leakage issues in the Pastor's residence and to increase the functional use of the space during the summer and winter seasons.

Restricted Funds from the Saner Endowment were used for the construction and the project did not increase the operating deficit of the parish.

What happened to the paver/driveway idea in front of HTCS?

This project was placed on a temporary hold pending the increased effort to increase parish operating reserves. Once this has been achieved, the paver project will proceed.

Why don't we have more handicapped parking for the disabled/elderly?

We have allotted more than the number of handicapped and senior parking spaces required by zoning requirements. A further review of parking configuration is anticipated.

Do we open our campus to secular programming (offering the gym, basement, other spaces)?

Unfortunately, IRS, Diocesan, and insurance underwriting requirements limit our ability to make our facilities available to "For Profit" Activities.

Why is the altar so bare?

We are so pleased with the success of the altar decoration initiative that grew out of the October Town Hall! Since the suggestion was made to invite volunteers to donate and dedicate altar floral decorations in memory of loved ones, our altar has been beautifully adorned nearly every week since the program began! We regularly promote this program in the weekly bulletin if you are interested in dedicating altar decorations.

What is the plan for the empty room by the sacristy?

The room, formerly housing the Tabernacle and used for Adoration, was not accessible to worshipers who could not navigate the steps, either from the sanctuary side or from the outside of the church through the Sacristy door. There are no current plans (or resources) for its re-purposing, although suggestions may be submitted to general@htccd.org.

What parishioner input was sought on the tabernacle project other than the small group of people who made the access decision?

The accessibility issue necessitated the re-location of the Tabernacle and we were blessed with the generosity of the individual parishioners who simultaneously donated the beautiful new altar and furnishings to our parish, making the re-location possible, as approved by the Parish Leadership Assembly.

Miscellaneous --

Distribution at Communion is confusing and people bump into each other – do we need a new process?

We checked with ushers and EMs as well as with choir members (who can see the Communion procession easily from the choir loft). The consensus was that confusion and congestion at Communion would be dramatically reduced if people would remain alert to the fact that there are other worshipers behind, in front of, and around them during the Communion procession. The flow of congregants will work well if everyone is patient and aware of others who are also participating in the celebration of the Eucharist.

Add more weekday evening Masses?

Currently, in addition to Saturday and Sunday Masses, there are weekday Masses every day (M-F) at 12:10 pm and an evening Mass on Wednesdays at 7:30 pm (preceded by Adoration at 6:30 pm). We simply don't have the human resources to add more weekday evening Masses at this time. For interested parishioners, there is also a Friday morning Mass for Holy Trinity Catholic School that begins at 8:10 am – only when school is in session. Parishioners are more than welcome to attend!

Why don't we send out notices when a HTCC parishioner dies?

The sad occasion of the death of one of our HTCC parishioners is handled with the utmost sensitivity to the desires of the deceased person's loved ones. Accordingly, we do not make it a practice to publicize the occasion. For further information about Pastoral Care matters, please contact our Pastoral Associate Elia Meyers through the Parish Office (214-526-8555).

Why don't we have a Q&A section in the bulletin – could be called “Trinity Talks”?

Actually, there is already a function on the Holy Trinity website called “Trinity Talk,” where parishioners may submit suggestions and questions. It may be found at htccd.org under the “About” menu. Alternatively, questions and suggestions may be directed to HTinfo@htccd.org.

How many students are enrolled in the Sunday Faith Formation program?

We offer Sunday Morning faith formation classes with over 400 students total in both class sessions.

Why is there no uniform or unified dress color for the ushers? (Other parishes have them dress in the same color pants to be identifiable.)

This is an interesting idea. Currently, our ushers form a dedicated, independent ministry and perform some of the hardest most valuable tasks in our community. We honor their autonomy and current practice to wear their own church-appropriate attire while they perform their duties. They do wear badges so that they are easily identifiable.

Why did the Town Hall not include updates from other ministries such as Adult Education, Liturgy, Music, RCIA, StVdP Society, etc?

All of these ministries provide updates and announcements frequently via our Sunday bulletin and the church website. If we had asked each ministry (or even just a few of them) to add to the important programs at the October or the January Town Halls, we would never have had time to focus on the current stewardship challenges facing our parish.

Music

Why are we not encouraged to join in the singing at “English Mass”? We don’t know the songs.

St. Augustine is credited with the saying: “He who sings, prays twice.” Holy Trinity is proud of its century-long dedication to beautiful, meaningful liturgical music; currently, there is a choir or coro assigned to each weekend Mass. And even on the occasion when the choir or coro is not present, there is a cantor (songleader) to lead the congregation in song, accompanied by organ or piano. The hymns and communion songs sung by the people in our congregation are announced by the cantor right before each song so that each congregant can follow along with the words and music. Unless there is a special worship aid, the songs are found by number in the hymnal or missal being used at that particular Mass, located in the pew rack. The other liturgical music (e.g. the “Gloria,” the “Sanctus”) is also found in the hymnals/missals, and the cantor announces those numbers, usually at the beginning of Mass. The cantor also invites the congregation to begin or join in the singing with a raised-arm gesture. Occasionally, the choir proclaims God’s word through a special song, offered while the congregation is engaging in quiet, contemplative prayer. The cantors and music groups of Holy Trinity practice during the week and also usually right before each Mass to ensure that liturgical music is of the highest quality. For the singers and musicians, hearing the congregation join in the singing is the sweetest sound!

3 of 4 masses have the same traditional music – why don’t we have another mass with contemporary music to attract younger people?

There is a wide variety of liturgical music offered by Holy Trinity's volunteer music groups, ranging from ancient Gregorian chants and Renaissance motets to traditional Spanish and English hymns to classical works in multiple languages, to the most contemporary literature. There is a choral group assigned to serve each of the five weekend Masses.

Saturday 5 pm -- The Schola Cantorum, a small group of dedicated choristers, sing once a month.

Sunday 8:30 am -- The St. Vincent Men's Schola sings a cappella liturgical music.

Sunday 11:00 am -- The Holy Trinity Sanctuary Choir (SATB) sings a wide mix of ancient, traditional and contemporary choral music.

Sunday 12:30 pm -- The Coro presents Spanish-language liturgical music backed by a group of instrumentalists.

Sunday 5 pm -- The singing is led by the Contemporary Band, playing and singing exclusively contemporary music.

Anyone interested in joining these groups may find more information on the church website (under "Ministries - Music Ministry") and contact their directors.