

Ss. Constantine & Helen Greek Orthodox Church Special Study

Improving Parishioner Engagement In Our Parish Ministries & Activities

Introduction

During the Fall, 2018 General Assembly meeting, parishioners approved the undertaking of a research project that is intended to examine ways for improving parishioner engagement in our ministries and activities.

Parish member participation in church events and interest in its administration, such as attendance at General Assembly meetings, and engagement with the various ministries that comprise healthy fellowship and stewardship programs, have declined over recent years. If this decline in the rate of participation is not addressed and corrected, it has the potential for threatening our parish's future as a congregation, or even its long term existence. Declining participation by individuals and families in our parish runs counter to the Church's mission of promoting the Orthodox faith through fellowship and community service. The goals of the project are as follows:

- 1) Examine all aspects of parishioner engagement by identifying the root causes for the less than desired rate of participation in the ministries that comprise stewardship and make recommendations for improvement;
- 2) Make recommendations for increasing participation and volunteerism in parish activities, particularly fund raising events;
- 3) Provide a roadmap for stabilizing the parish's future.

It is interesting to note that preliminary research appears to indicate that the issues that have been cited, and the underlying issues related to our project goals are not unique to our community, and appear to be systemic within many churches regardless of denomination or geographic location.

The project involves research with other Orthodox parishes as well as churches which are part of other Christian church denominations. This research is designed to look at issues such as parishioner involvement with governance activities and stewardship, parishioner engagement in various church and community events, and to solicit ideas as to how we may not only improve participation in these activities, but make participation more rewarding. The project will also involve outreach within our Parish, through personal contacts and questionnaires for our parishioners.

Once the research is concluded, the results will be communicated to our parishioners, and recommendations made to the Parish Council.

It is hoped that the research and resulting recommendations will provide a new context, a new window of opportunity for the parish community to improve engagement with the Church, and increase involvement in church activities.

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Study Coordinator