

Feasibility Study Report

for



St. John The Apostle Catholic Church

Lincoln, NE

August 2023



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August 2, 2023

Rev. Lyle M. Johnson,
St. John The Apostle Catholic Church
7601 Vine Street
Lincoln, NE 68505

Dear Fr. Johnson,

Serving St. John The Apostle Catholic Church through this Feasibility Study has been a privilege. A total of twenty-seven (27) households participated in personal interviews (representing 50 individuals) and 417 households completed an online or paper survey (representing 467 individuals) for a total of 454 households in the study (representing 530 individuals). This represents 33% of the total parish households (1,345) in the church which is an excellent level of participation (normal Feasibility Study participation level is 10%+).

We learned a great deal about the parish in the study. Most encouraging is that a high percentage of parishioners feel their spiritual and social needs are being met and there is a high level of confidence in the Pastor, parish leaders and parish staff. It is apparent that parishioners have great affection for St. John The Apostle Catholic Church, their spiritual home, and want to take care of these facilities as a part of their ministry and stewardship to God.

Based on the data we received from the study and its parishioners, the parish will support a three-year Capital Campaign to fund the most urgent needs of the parish. Given the information gathered and received in the study, the church's annual unrestricted giving of **\$1,600,000** and our work with 100 similar parishes, we project that St. John The Apostle Catholic Church could raise between **\$3,200,000** and **\$5,000,000** through a well conducted, three-year Capital Campaign based on parishioner engagement, clear communication, stewardship education, and prayerful discernment.

Enclosed is a complete review of the information and data we gathered through the Feasibility Study. We have also provided you with concerns, recommendations, and a proposed calendar for a Capital Campaign. All of this is provided to assist the parish leadership to better understand the parishioners and the direction God is moving the parish. If you have questions, please feel free to contact us at any time.

Thank you for allowing Church Development to spend time with your fellow parishioners and learn more about the great things St. John The Apostle Catholic Church is doing in our Lord's name.

Respectfully,

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St. John The Apostle Catholic Church

In July 2023, five-hundred seventeen (530) individuals participated in the Feasibility Study, representing four-hundred forty-four (454) households of the parish. This is a 33% level of participation (based on 1,345 total households in the parish). This is an excellent level of participation (normal Feasibility Study participation level is 10%).

Executive Summary

1. Our parishioners in the study agreed or strongly agreed that St. John The Apostle Catholic Church is effectively meeting their spiritual needs. The average percent positive collected from past Church Development Feasibility Studies for this question is 81%.

	% Positive	% Neutral	% Negative
Spiritual Need.	96%	3%	1%
Music	83%	13%	4%
Caregiving	54%	45%	1%
Ministry	74%	25%	1%

2. Ninety-one percent (91%) of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that St. John The Apostle Catholic Church is providing me with opportunities for community / fellowship. The average percent positive collected from past Church Development Feasibility Studies for this question is 80%.
3. Ninety-six percent (96%) in the study have a high level of confidence in the Pastor, parish leaders and parish staff to make wise decisions regarding the future of the church. The average percent positive collected from past Church Development Feasibility Studies for this question is 79%.
4. Parishioners of St. John The Apostle Catholic Church rated the importance of the following building projects:

Project	% Positive	% Neutral	% Negative
Maintenance Projects Underway: New roof on church and school. Replace lighting system in the church. School pod maintenance	99%	1%	0%
Future Construction: build new multi-purpose facility, such as parish center / hall.	73%	21%	6%

5. Eighty-two percent (82%) of the respondents rated the “rest of the church’ would be very supportive or supportive of this endeavor if St. John The Apostle Catholic Church conducted a Capital Campaign.

6. Are there any barriers that you are aware of that would prevent us from having a successful Capital Campaign? (see comments)
7. Eighty-five percent (85%) of the respondents strongly agree or agree that it is urgent for St. John The Apostle Catholic Church to conduct a Capital Campaign now.
8. Ninety-one percent (91%) of the respondents (347 individuals) in the study said they " would be willing to support a Capital Campaign financially at some level." The readiness to give is an indicator of potential success.
9. Fifty-three percent (53%) of individuals said they were very supportive or supportive to "As a way to encourage greater stewardship and to establish some basic giving guidelines, how supportive would you be of a Capital Campaign that asks each church family to prayerfully consider giving 3% of their annual household income for each year of a three-year Capital Campaign or a one-time gift of 3% of assets? (This is over and above regular giving to the church.)"
10. Sixty-four percent (64%) of households in the study said if a three-year Capital Campaign began tomorrow, they would consider committing \$1,679,931 over the next three years (the average gift is \$5,744). This would be over and above their regular giving to the church.
11. 1.69 percent (1.69%) in the study (6 households) said their gift would be given through an appreciated investment such as stock, mutual fund shares, bonds, or real estate?
12. Thirty percent (30%) or 136 households in the study said they would remember St. John The Apostle Catholic Church in their estate plans. (37 have already done this, and 33 households need more information). The total therefore, is 37% of survey households would consider remembering the parish in their estate plans. The industry norm is 3%.
13. Eleven percent (11%) of individuals (57) expressed interest in serving on a campaign team (Prayer, Events, Thanks, Youth, Ambassador, Communications). An additional 64 individuals responded "Maybe" for a potential total of 121 individuals or 23% of individuals surveyed.
14. Fifty-seven (57) individuals were suggested to be Team Leaders / Volunteers (see volunteer list)

Barriers:

- Concern about how the church will be able to support a Capital Campaign with the state of the economy and with many members stretched with multiple campaigns.
- Fixed incomes, and the high \$ amount of campaign.

Concerns:

- Parishioners want more detail on new multi-purpose facility, with options.
- Getting a better participation rate of parishioners to help as volunteers.
- Parishioners unable to contribute 3% of income.

Financial Forecast

Based on the church's annual unrestricted giving of **\$1,600,000** and the results of the Feasibility Study, Church Development forecasts the following for St. John The Apostle Catholic Church.

- **90% probability of raising \$3,200,000**
- **70% probability of raising \$4,000,000**
- **50% probability of raising \$5,000,000**

This financial forecast is based on a professionally run, three-year capital campaign that includes parishioner engagement, clear communication, stewardship education, and prayerful discernment.

Summary of Recommendations

1. Begin capital campaign activity immediately with a Commitment Sunday in late fall 2023.
2. Focus the campaign on prayer.
3. Engage all parishioners in serving short-term on a capital campaign team.
4. Involve all parishioners in the dialogue about the vision of the parish.
5. Commit to a high level of information sharing each week of the campaign.
6. Encourage gifts of appreciated assets throughout the campaign (e.g., property, stocks, IRAs, and mutual funds).
7. Approach potential major givers during the campaign.
8. Emphasize the sacrifices that have been made in the past by parishioners.

FOREWORD AND THE ASSIGNMENT

Church Development's purpose is to serve churches through planning and capital campaign management. Church Development is based on two concepts:

- A) Stewardship is a gateway virtue to living a Christian life. Once individuals discover the experience of acting as a conduit to God's will, they are forever changed. A prayerful approach to seeking God's will is at the center of all our activities. Proverbs 29:18 states, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." This Biblical text could be a modern management bestseller. When a church has a powerful vision in which all are involved in creating, God will bless and use their efforts.
- B) Building the strength of each church we serve is more important than money. If we can successfully increase the connections between people seeking to do God's will, the church will grow in very measurable terms. After our capital campaign is completed, churches often experience increases in attendance, annual giving, volunteerism, and evangelism.

The Assignment:

In July 2023, Church Development was engaged to conduct a Church Feasibility Study to determine the readiness of the parish for a capital campaign.

In July 2023, Church Development conducted **50** total interviews, representing **27** church households. Online and paper surveys were available for all other parishioners to complete.

A total of 454 church households and **530** individuals participated in the study.

SUMMARY OF INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

2022 Annual Unrestricted Giving

Out of **1,345** total church households, **696** households financially supported the 2022 church operating budget. The church's annual unrestricted giving, which includes the offering plate and online offerings, totals **\$1,600,000**.

Case Statement for Capital Campaign St. John The Apostle Parish 2023

Our Immediate Challenge

Our church and school roof must be replaced this summer. We have no choice but to act immediately. In addition, we must replace the lighting system in the church as the parts are no longer available to keep repairing the 40-year-old lights. The three 1958 school pods have delayed maintenance issues that are critical for our continued use. These repair and replacement issues will cost approximately \$1,500,000.

Our Vision

The parish wide Strategic Plan Survey in 2022 helped us clarify our shared vision for the church and the school. Clearly, we all want an additional gathering/meeting/ministry/social space. We definitely need the space, and many people have already made contributions towards the new building. A location has not yet been selected on our campus. It has been a long time since we conducted a capital campaign, and our parishioners have always been generous, so these improvements seem like a realistic vision. We estimate that a new building will cost approximately \$4 – 5 Million and the total cost of maintenance and a new building is \$5.5 - 6.5 Million.

Our Plans

- 1) St. John's has engaged Church Development from Kansas City to conduct a church-wide Feasibility Study. The purpose of the Feasibility Study is to determine the readiness of the parishioners for a single campaign with three-year pledges to implement both the much-needed maintenance and the new building. The study will give us insight into parishioner views and allow us to create a financial plan.
- 2) Replace our roof on the church and school and replace lighting in the church in the summer of 2023, and address maintenance issues in three school pods in the summer of 2024.
- 3) Replace 20-year-old HVAC (heating and air conditioning) for our church.
- 4) Develop a plan for a new multi-purpose building.

We need your input. Whether you participate through a personal interview, an online survey, or a paper survey, your feedback will be *vitaly important* for Father Johnson and parish leaders in determining how God is leading us into the future.

Urgency

We have no choice - we must repair the roof and replace the church lights immediately. The other delayed maintenance will become urgent matters in the near future. We have to spend money on those issues this summer, which means that we will need contributions by the end of the year to cover those costs. The new facility is not a crisis need, but the Strategic Plan Survey helped us understand that it is very important to members of the parish. Your input on the feasibility study survey will help us create a financial plan.

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the feedback received in the study, Church Development recommends the following actions for St. John The Apostle Catholic Church.

1. St. John The Apostle Catholic Church should begin immediately a three-year capital campaign with a Commitment Sunday in late fall 2023.
2. The campaign should focus on prayer and discernment and be an implementation of God's will.
3. Encourage estate planning gifts during the capital campaign. It is projected that an additional **\$10.9M** (based on average intention of \$80K) could be raised in estate gifts.
4. Concerns that arose during the Feasibility Study should be addressed thoroughly during the campaign communication and included in opportunities for dialogue.
5. Engage all parishioners in serving short-term on a capital campaign team.
6. A high level of parishioner involvement should guide the process. All should be encouraged to serve on a campaign team (Prayer, Events, Thanks, Youth, Ambassadors, and Communications), each team meeting 3-4 times during the campaign.
7. A high level of information sharing should be available to parishioners weekly through e-Newsletters, videos, newsletters, bulletins, text messages, websites, poster boards, e-mails, social media, and verbal announcements.
8. The donation of appreciated assets (e.g., property, stocks, IRAs, and mutual funds) should be part of the campaign effort.
9. Potential top donors should be approached during the campaign.
10. Emphasize the sacrifices that have been made in the past by parishioners.
11. In order to meet the needs of the parish, the campaign should follow the proposed calendar in this report.
12. Years 2023 to 2026: Fulfilling pledges, tracking pledges, and inviting new parishioners and school parents to participate. Church Development assists with the Annual Stewardship Campaign and Planned Giving effort during the three years of follow-up.

PROPOSED CAPITAL CAMPAIGN CALENDAR
ST. JOHN THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC CHURCH
(calendar dates subject to change)

Summer – Fall 2023 as of 8/17

AUGUST

- **Aug 2nd** FS Results report in-person
- **Aug 3rd: E-blast** Feasibility Results announcement, next steps,
- **Aug 3rd – 6th:** Completion of Team Leader recruiting
- **Aug 6th – 19th** Train Team Leaders (CD)
- **Aug 9th** Send out eNewsletter #1 - publicize Parish Council's decision regarding the capital campaign; summary of the Feasibility Study report; save-the-date for the Capital Campaign Kick-off Meeting that will highlight Church Vision, FS Results and Volunteer Team Formation.
- **Aug 9th** begin weekly Capital Campaign Leadership (CCL) meetings
- **Aug 19th & 20th** – Church-wide Capital Campaign kickoff meeting: Church Vision, FS results, project plan, Volunteer Team Formation.
- **Aug 23rd** eNewsletter #2 recap of Kickoff Mtg, save the date for Events.
- Selection of a contractor Liaison?
- Consider recruiting at-large Advisory Committee members.
- Set date for Advisory Committee Meetings throughout campaign.

SEPTEMBER

- **Sept 6th:** Communications Team submits Campaign Slogan and Logo to Management Team.
- **Sept 8th:** Prayer Team submits Campaign Prayer to Fr. Johnson for approval.
- Recruit additional lay leaders to serve on the Management Team
- **Sept 10th:** In-person Advisory Committee Meeting #1 - campaign prayer and Campaign logo/slogan approved.
- **Sept 9th & 10th Event #1** Detailed project list and plans for social hall.
- **Sept 13th** eNewsletter #3 recap of Event #1, team accomplishments
- **Sept 19th** CCL Committee begin list of Lay Speaker candidates for selection and approval.
- **Sept 27th:** In-person Advisory Committee Meeting #1

OCTOBER

- PETYAC Teams continue meeting individually to accomplish their tasks.
- **Oct 11th:** Zoom Advisory Committee Meeting #2
- **Oct 16th:** St. John's provides CD an Excel file mailing list (first name, last name, address, and cover letter) for Commitment packet mail merge.
- Begin emphasizing gifts of assets.
- **Oct 18th:** Send out eNewsletter #4 – recap Event #2, highlight what teams have accomplished to date; encourage PETYAC Team and event participation; begin publishing campaign FAQs.
- **Oct 23rd:** Communication Team completes final review of Commitment Packet components.
- **Oct 28th & 29th: Event #2.** Project plans and costs update.
- **Oct 30th:** CD provides training video, script, and call disposition worksheet to Ambassador team
- **Oct 30th:** Communications Team sends all Commitment Packet components to the printer.
- **Oct 30th:** Ambassadors review church roster in preparation for parish-wide phone calls to answer questions.

NOVEMBER

- **Nov 1st:** Thanks team send Thank- you card to printer
- **Nov 1st:** Thanks team 1st draft of Gift distribution plan
- Youth activity hosted by Youth Team
- **Nov 5th:** Lay speakers in all services through November 26th.
- **Nov 5th:** Ambassador team sends call list, training video, and script to callers (CD to provide).
- **Nov 5th:** Announce Commitment packet pick-up next Sunday 12th.
- **Nov 6th** Start of Commitment Packet assembly **by Communications team.**
- **Nov 12th:** Commitment packet pick-up at church
- **Nov 13th:** Commitment Packets not picked up get mailed 1st class.
- **Nov 19th:** Prayer and Discernment announcement by Fr. Johnson at Sunday service.
- **Nov 19th: Dec 2nd:** Prayer and Discernment begins.
- **Nov 19th – Dec 2nd:** Ambassadors begin commitment packet information calls
- **Nov 23rd:** Thanksgiving
- **Nov 26th:** Stewardship homily from Fr. Johnson
- **Nov 29th** Send out Fr. Johnson's video about making a prayerful decision

DECEMBER

- **Dec 3rd:** Host Commitment Sunday
- **Dec 7th:** e-blast: Campaign update on # of pledges, and pledged \$'s, encourage others to give
Celebrate early success
- **Dec 10th:** Celebrate early success from the pulpit, encourage others to make a pledge
- **Dec 11th:** Thanks Team sends thank you notes to donors
- **Dec 11th:** Ambassadors make a second round of phone calls encouraging campaign participation.
- **Dec 13th:** Send follow-up letter to those who have not submitted a pledge card
- **Dec 20th:** send eNewsletter #6 financial update, next steps, introduce follow-up team

Years 2023 to 2026: Fulfilling pledges, tracking pledges, and inviting new households to participate in the capital campaign. Church Development assists with the Annual Church Stewardship Campaign and Planned Giving effort during the three years of follow-up.