

## **Appendix A: Parishioners Recounting St. Basil's At Its Best**

The following inspiring words, phrases, and sentences reflect the experiences and insights of parishioners with St. Basil's at its best, presented verbatim. From this was composed the Statement of the Positive Core of St. Basil's presented on page 9.

Welcoming Supportive Caring Social Open. In giving, you receive. Spiritual peacefulness and commitment to foster it in parish. Appreciate the simple inclusiveness of the round church. Awareness of the prayerful dedicated parishioners amongst us.

Inspiring dedication to Veterans, Remembrance Day Mass, supportive, accommodating. Core value = Service. Accommodating and helpful, inclusive priests are to parishioners and welcoming people. Inclusive warm and welcoming community.

Quality liturgy, Reconciliation and general absolution with spiritual experience. Continuation of social action and Continued support. Faith lived out in relationships. Good stewards – time, talent, funds. Volunteers recognized. Joyful faith community. Open and non-judgmental communication. Embracing Community: Coffee Sunday, Baptisms, Prayer Shawl, Seniors Cards, Refugee Family, Game nights.

Responding to social justice issues. Preparing youth for the future. Welcoming – acceptance of people in life conditions, ages, situations, backgrounds.

Giving people a chance to apply skills in the community: music. Accept where people are. Effort to create community – put themselves out to welcome. Appreciation of spiritual life: homilies, liturgy, music.

Person to person interactions (forms of worship. Strong human connection. Ties to community: social action, refugee support, food bank, collecting seeds, stamps, do this for others. Experience of kindness/friendship, inclusion (round).

Non-judgmental re: people who are different. Community support for activities. Others are teaching me and letting me shine. Small mass ~ community Sunday mass – sing together. Homily -> God is in me.

Work for parish makes us feel valued. Weddings, baptisms; Low – funerals -> lead to a high point. Caring between parishioners – words to actions. Member of community – leads to happiness.

Community – outreach; welcoming and caring. Liturgy are considered NB. To promote and nourish faith for all people . Homilies that were positive relevant and thought provoking. Have the resources and personnel to support the formation. Spiritual. Intellectual = of the whole person. Emotional.

Welcoming community – life experiences in baptism, illness, funerals, social groups. Sense of belonging – recovering from illnesses, aligned to personal interests. Good liturgy – depth of sermons, over the years.

Resilient, creative community. Real sense of social justice. Thoughtfulness and caring of people. Here, there is more to being Catholic than the mass.

Welcoming community: Supportive. Community Hub. Progressive yet respectful.

Attentive to history. Contributing – learning about the job, desire to do things well, eg. Liturgy. Familiar faces who care and remember (willingness to help). Homilies. Welcome from both parish and clergy. Social life that supports everyone.

Many volunteers particularly social action. Homilies – high quality. A very welcoming community. Invited to participate. Encouraged by the participation of others. Refugee committee allows to continue with interests

Gives a fulfilling feeling of being a Christian. Embracing effect of the round church. Pastoral care outreach to include all including those who cannot come.

Openness to suggestions – new programs. Community has a lot of initiatives. Parishioners reach out to each other. Enabling Christian activities – refugees. Social activities encourage inclusion. Generosity and Welcoming. Acceptance of Diversity.

Meaningful liturgies including reflections by non-clergy. Faith development geared to adults / women. Common journey approach with RCIA. Leadership of Pastoral Council

Commitment to Social Justice in Parish. Physical space and ambience / artwork.

Dynamic children's liturgy / involvement. Evening prayer / reflections. Music is well done / commitment to music. Welcoming, caring community.

Physical space – light, shape, focus on altar. Music - > peace, sense of positivity, Easter Vigil. Social justice component – active involved. Fr. Ruth – father figure – homilies of Fr. Corbin Eddy, Fr. Bill Burke. Sense of belonging. Being personally invited to join.

Becoming involved. Scope to be involved. Community support in grieving. Opportunity for exchange and dialogue: full mature Catholics. Architecture welcoming. Special events: Wedding Anniversaries.

Interfaith prayer service for peace. Involvement in ministries. Friendliness / inclusive = all welcome. Involvement in greater community e.g. food bank, social action. Sunday worship. Pastor's invitation for involvement.

A sense of community = welcoming, prayer shawl, coffee Sunday, K. of C., social events. Inviting people to participate: ministries, activities, discussions.

Strong social justice element. Faith: homilies, liturgy, sacraments, involvement of laity. Music ministry. Architecture esthetics.

## **Appendix B: Dreams in Themes**

### **FAITH FORMATION MINISTRY**

#### **Spiritual & Faith Development**

Parishioners participate in and grow from adult education. Parishioners desire to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the Faith.

More spiritual programs and devotional programs like Walking with Purpose, Stations of the Cross every Friday during lent, such as on Jubilee Year of Mercy, and how it may involve the entire church (annual buying program).

Parishioners young and old receive solid formation in their Catholic faith and how it shapes our interactions with other Christians, other faiths and other Canadians.

Emphasis on adult education (androgogy) where the parishioner is the self-directed learner and the clergy are there to journey alongside, to nurture, to mentor and to inspire.

Bible studies for children, youth and adults. Monthly faith development and worship for adults.

St. Basil's is a centre of teaching and learning, focussed on the resources and contacts of parishioners; engaging many parishioners of diverse ages.

More spiritual development or devotional activities (workshops, retreats, and bible studies) offered to further faith formation.

We would like to see messages are 'heard' by parishioners, more parishioners participating in different kinds of activities (words to actions, worship and serve each other).

We'd also like to see positive dialogues between different groups, discussion of our faith among parishioners and enrich each other.

Sometimes, we may also like to see non-parishioners, faithful or non-believers to join in discussion, as they might be potential parishioners.

More homilies (learning/teaching sessions) on the real understanding of the Mass. Provide catechetical evenings on matters of faith, Church teachings; for adults and not just the unbaptised

Marriage preparation offered to couples one-on-one; other parishes come here; highly regarded approach; educate the parish on what we do; recruit more couples to teach it; hope couples will stay.

#### **Young Families**

More families becoming involved in parish ministries so that children will grow up in a deep rooted feeling for their faith

Vibrant children's liturgy. More functions for children. A church filled with new young families. Educating parishioners about the family ministry. Recruiting young couples to the parish.

Keep our children more involved now at all that masses, let them read, take up collections, greet, serve, etc. Children in liturgy will continue to be active in 2021 due to the experiences they have been accustomed to.

More family activities. Weekly family night, dinner, catechism, faith development, evening prayers

Fabulous Family Fridays; Danish concept and tradition; 1 night per week, families gather to have supper together; have catechesis; explore Bible stories; growing by sharing experiences (sounded like a campfire circle).

Activities which can include everyone and families, such as camping, picnics. Increased congregational singing, especially the children – a lot of children love to sing A team approach to music ministry where everyone involved is committed to bringing different types of music to the Masses

Parishioners young and old receive solid formation in their Catholic faith and how it shapes our interactions with other Christians; other faiths, and Canadian society. Bible studies for children, youth and adults Organize temporal support. Christians helping each other; eg. Baby sitters; we can offer to do grocery shopping for seniors; bulletin board where people can ask for help, offer help

Communicate well with each other; we can be support for each other. There is a space and time for families to come, be together, receive encouragement, and the opportunity to reflect, pray, and grow; and take back the peace of the parish into their homes

St. Basils is a centre of teaching and learning, focussed on the resources and contacts of parishioners and engaging many parishioners of diverse ages. Extra effort by laity are engaged. Families from across Ottawa West come to St. Basils to drink from the source and parents are equipped to pass on their faith to their children.

How do we get younger people to help out; so much on their plates, more young families in more ministries; they have so much to offer; will get mentoring from the old guard; new vigorous community; we want the keep stepping up

## **Youth**

A parish that attracts young people because we are relevant. Youth Minister. Hire a youth minister who cultivates the talents of young people in getting closer to God through interaction with each other and communal praise. Youth ministry to focus on dialogue with youth and outreach to them. Youth director who goes out into the community, ie., schools recreation centres, etc. and engages with youth to become more involved in the church community. Youth Minister with a salary. Youth director in community life –he/she goes to recreation centres – invites them to come to church.

Catholic Schools; make better use of our church's space; we will have to get them to come; hire a youth minister; pay for this, how do we get them; have more school involvement; altar servers – healing to be done.

An engaged youth group that gathers at Masses; in the church hall at other times outside of Mass, that goes on excursions, that gets involved in the Mass and other parish initiatives. Large youth group with kids from St. Daniels and Notre Dame and other parish initiatives. Youth group for Mass and beyond; excursions, social, activities. A strong youth leadership team. Have a young people's choir. I see more youth participating in altar serving, and joining ministries. I see more youth participating in music. The gifts of all: young, middle aged and older are drawn upon.

Activism: High school kids are motivated to activism: fossil fuels, engineers without borders; small projects in underdeveloped countries, like building bridges in Guatemala (link to Social Action and Social Justice).

Lots of altar servers. Opportunity for youth to speak and share their perspectives on living with their faith. Invite students from Notre Dame to speak about what they are doing in their school. The younger people have lots to offer. They are the leaders of the future. A young person (adolescent probably) engages a parish group with his/her questions, fears, experiences, and hopes. Working with high schools – community service in their curriculum – cooking a meal here once a week. Post volunteer opportunities in the community and schools. Adults (non-seniors). Parish seen as a leader in marriage preparation ministry . More celebrations around marriage, anniversary, milestones.

Parish celebrations of the passages we go through our lives; more than Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage, sickness and Death. Recruit couples of varying years of marriage to the family ministry

The gifts of all: young, middle aged and older are drawn upon. Church ministries with representation from all age groups. We can build small groups among parishioners. Each group consisting of a few families and having its own leader. Each group has its own activities and regular meetings. The groups could be formed according to their age, interests, geography, etc. The group members support each other. The groups, as a unit, can provide supports to existing ministries or create new activities in St. Basil's. The group members can invite their friends, neighbours, etc. to join their events and, therefore, the Gospel is spread out.

Communicate well with each other; we can be a support to one another. Christians helping one another; e.g. Baby Sitters, we can offer to do grocery shopping for others, bulletin board where people can ask for help, offer help.

## **WORSHIP MINISTRY**

### **Worship**

Liturgies that manifest an evolved understanding of the Divine reality, God, in language that speaks to our time and reflects what science has taught about the essence of all creation.

Use the design of the Church liturgically. Liturgical and sacramental celebrations that are personal, passionate, and reflect the beliefs of the Church that we are celebrating with the angels and saints in heaven. Liturgical and sacramental preparation; personal, passionate that reflects the angels and saints in heaven; constant worship of God; in heaven the Communion of Saints have a devotion to the teachings of St. Basil the spiritual life, our patron saint.

Parishioners will be more practical in our awareness of the transforming effect of the words of the consecration "This is my Body; this is my blood; Do this in commemoration of Me. A place where people come to connect to Jesus Christ; Triduum; work inside our faith; find Christ within; in our parish setting and personal lives; in sacramental preparation. This is a serious thing that is going on here.

There is a space and time for families to come, be together, receive encouragement and the opportunity to reflect, pray and grow; and take back the peace of their parish into their homes. Families from across Ottawa West come to St. Basil's to drink from the source; parents are equipped to pass their faith on to their children. Good liturgies including non-Sunday masses with good attendance e.g. Evening Prayer.

Full masses with dynamic music, liturgy. I see special services for 1st Friday devotions, retreats, - especially during lent.

## **OUTREACH MINISTRY**

### **Social Action**

An ecologically active community. Recycling. Garden with many volunteers. Independently solar powered Rectory.

5 new refugee families sponsored and integrated into the parish community. St. Basil's serves and is shown in Ottawa for its work as a "field hospital" for its geographic community and some marginalized people across the city. The creation of programs and services that serve those hurting and in need

Dedication to care of others re: their physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. Better plugged into the resources of the community. Work with others identifies community needs. Continue to reach out to help others in the community (neighbourhood to the world) but attach our name (parish) to the activity so that our actions influence others

Church ministries that engage the broader community with practical and inspiring acts of charity and sacrifice. Parishioners activities supported by adequate complement of staff. Caring community. The gifts of all young, middle aged and older are drawn upon. Those who carry out social action and those who receive social action are joined together in song.

### **Social Justice**

An exemplary GREEN church following Pope Francis' words in Laudato Si. St. Basils is an exemplary Green Church. Parishioners knowledgeable about climate change issues.

Prison outreach. A HUB for activism and social justice. Activism: High School kids are motivated to activism; Fossil fuels, Engineers without borders; Small projects in underdeveloped countries. like building bridges in Guatemala. St. Basils provides leadership for the archdiocese in social justice issues

Parishioners are devoted to St Basil, his teachings on Social Justice, and the Christian message. We grow in our involvement in social justice issues, some communications and education.

## **PARISH VITALITY**

### **Communications**

Everyone knows what's going on. Continue to articulate our most inspiring, meaningful, mission statement. Promulgate mission statement so that people know it. Have platform for people to talk about the good things, experience, feedback, witness. What happens to them who help - share their stories. Effective communication.

Restructure our communication method, organizations, and ministrations. Electronic and media savvy. Taking Mass to shut-ins. Facetime or Skype broadcasts of the Mass. Mass – Homily podcasts. Parish priest personal messages, or video clips to be recorded on I-Phone or I-Pad or other devices and taken with the Eucharistic ministers to share with parishioners in nursing homes and other home visits

Stronger partnerships with other groups and churches. Exchange ideas with other parishes, churches, learn from others. St. Basil's live on the WEB-DIGITAL HUB. WiFi in the building.

Marketing through West End Newspaper: News West. Communicate well with each other; we can be support to each other. Need communication, Education, Awareness.

Music. Increased congregational singing, especially the children – a lot of children love to sing. A 'Gareth Malone' style of choral ministry to bring our social action community into song every year; A team approach to music ministry where everyone involved is committed to bringing different types of music to the Masses. Those who carry out social action and those who receive social action are joined together in song. I see more youth participation in music. Lots of members of choirs.

Different genres of music is played at Masses using many different presentation methods: Video, Choirs, Live bands, Christian rock, Solo artists. Music groups with different instruments. Fabulous acoustics; Have more concerts to raise money; we have a big advantage over downtown churches who raise money through music; we have ample free parking next to the Queensway; need to use the gift of the building to benefit the entire parish.

### **Access**

St. Basil's is seen as a parish that brings persons (aged and invalids) unable to attend mass into the church by means of technology. Screens that show people in the church that are unable to attend in person. Connecting and participating – possibly delivering the readings and prayers of the faithful via skype, or similar, from their retirement homes.

Our church will be more accessible – physically, better ramps, full entrance to the basement, clear sound. Technically, those at a distance, re: nursing homes, etc., and at home can access our mass or have parishioners visit them. Better sound system in Church

### **Older Parishioners**

Church Ministries with representation from all age groups. The gifts of all: young, middle aged and older are drawn upon. Inclusiveness of others: elderly, youth, disadvantaged, in our faith community. Taking Mass to shut-ins. St. Basil's is seen as a parish that brings persons (aged and invalids) unable to attend mass into the church by means of technology. Screens that show people in the church that are unable to attend in person. Connecting and participating – possibly delivering the readings and prayers of the faithful via skype, or similar, from their retirement homes

Facetime or Skype broadcasts of Masses. Homily podcasts. Organized temporal support for one another, elderly, young families, sick members, etc. Christians helping each other; e.g. can offer to do grocery shopping for seniors; bulletin board where people can ask for help, offer help. Communicate well with each other; we can be support for each other. Constant reference in

Ministry to keep in touch and visit parishioners who move to senior residents and nursing home. Parish priest personal messages or video clips taken with the Eucharistic ministers to share with parishioners in nursing homes or other home visits. More emphasis placed on remembering our seniors who have given time to so many of our ministries, in a way that they know they are not forgotten, especially those in nursing homes who may feel alone, forgotten or abandoned.

Our church will be more accessible – physically, better ramps, full entrance to the basement, clear sound. Technically, those at a distance, re: nursing homes, etc., and at home can access our mass or have parishioners visited them. To be more accessible; physically, better ramps; to be technologically connected; plus mass in people's homes; send someone to home bound with I-pad when communion is brought to their home; bring mass to the homebound.

### **Design, Art & Architecture**

The church building will be in better shape, the physical environment will be beautiful, well kept, furnace working, air-conditioning. Physical environment. Beautiful, warm, great configuration, we must take care of our building; hot and cold temp managed; expensive but important to take care of it; when renovations done, bring community to see it.

To achieve this, work is being done in 2016 on renovations. There could be more visibility to the community that things are happening here. Venue with community. A real home purchased nearby to accommodate our parish priest to live a normal existence as another resident in the parish neighbourhood. Purchase nearby home for a real community residence for our priest.

It's healthier and humane to separate working in one's office from living in one's home. Follow the example of Pope Francis when he was Bishop of Buenos Aires.

Rectory converted into a multi-purpose meeting and activity HUB. The grounds will be open to gardens, barbecues, picnics, etc. The space inside will be better used for retreats, concerts, family events, anniversaries, weddings, funerals. Coordinated use of the hall; Lots of space for meetings and gatherings.

Diocesan de-centralization of one diocesan function such as refugee services is housed in St. Basils in 22021. This connects St. Basils to other parishes and non-Catholic groups and elicits more commitment by our parishioners. Plus its good use of surplus space. Fabulous acoustics; have more concerts to raise money; we have a big advantage over downtown churches who raise money through music; we have ample free parking next to the Queensway; need to use the gift of the building to benefit the entire parish. Newcomers. When newcomers enter church they are aware of all that is done, visual in large in the Narthex

Follows up newcomers, contacts with visitors. Continue this gift of welcoming people into a new life with the security of an open-hearted sponsoring parish community. Welcoming Committee

It is said of St. Basils: These people really listened to Pope Francis. We are at a turning point.

## **Welcoming**

Welcoming team: before and after masses to greet newcomers or visitors and followers. persons who greet and welcome visitors and parishioners at each worship service. Follows up newcomers, contacts with visitors. Continue this gift of welcoming people into a new life with the security of an open-hearted sponsoring parish community.

Welcoming Committee. Welcoming and inclusiveness. Most parishioners know each other by name, no one feels isolated or ignored or spurned, there is not enmity or pettiness, rather Joy and Fun together. Parishioners sitting in different pews each week for a different perspective and saying hello to different parishioners. Parishioners know one another event from different Masses; tell personal stories after masses every Sunday, relaxing piano music, relaxing time.

We can build some small groups among parishioners. Each group consisting of a few families and having its own leader. Each group has its own activities and regular meetings. The groups could be formed according to their age, interests, geography, etc. The group members support each other. The groups, as a unit, can provide supports to existing ministries or create new activities in St. Basil's. The group members can invite their friends, neighbours, etc. to join their events and, therefore, the Gospel is spread out.

The Narthex crammed with people at coffee time. On-lookers are interest. People enjoy gathering.

Full of people of all ages. Witness happiness and the joy of being involved with each other, families are attracted. We continue to sponsor refugee families which bolster our numbers

Inclusiveness of others elderly, youth, disadvantaged, in our faith community. Equality and deeper involvement of the laity. Lay people involved with planning and executing the liturgy. A lay woman has been selected by the parish to preach the word in the homily.

Extra effort by laity is engaged. Increase the number of Embrace the changes in diversity-homosexuality, etc. As a parish we embrace the changes which are moving so quickly in our society as a whole – diversities such as divorced singles, homosexuality. Acceptance and tolerance by our children and grandchildren.

Centre for Ottawa West. HUB. A vibrant community gathered together – of all ages – communicative – active – loud – social – happy. Diverse and inclusive community. Mixed groups. Activities which can include everyone and families, such as camping, picnics. Restructure organization; modern communication methods, welcoming team, follow up activities, a picnic

Use gifts of all our community; young, old and middle age. Love our neighbour. Develop our positive core. Buy-in from clergy and Pastoral Council to be able to offer programs. Intentional orientation of priests and pastors; welcoming to the community good for parish priest, visiting priests and assistant priests.

## **Ministry**

Every parishioner makes a link between faith and action, and manifests this by participating in at least one ministry. Larger group of parishioners volunteering or actively participating in ministries. Or event – specific volunteer opportunities - Volunteer to lead sessions. Almost every parishioner involved in one (or more) ministries.

Involve everyone in different groups. People actively involved in ministries. Church ministries with representation from all age groups. Links between faith and action. Every person involved in a ministry. I see more youth participating in alter serving, and joining ministries. Marry Ministries.

When newcomers enter church they are aware of all that is done, visual in large in the Narthex. Marketing through West End newspaper: News West. Buy-in from clergy and Pastoral Council to be able to offer programs.

Parishioners activities supported by adequate complement of staff. Message via homilies and learning opportunities. Constant inviting of volunteers, individuals. Recruiting people to ministries. Enrich people by telling them how we can recruit. Develop a recruitment strategy.

A listing of ministries and opportunities. Look at committees for different times of the year or events to better recruit involvement. Post volunteer opportunities in the community and schools. Link different ministries, Such as linking social action with CWL and KofC.

Link our parishioners better, more people participating rather than just same ones all the time; see people on a different platform

## Appendix C: Imagine St. Basils....

### Why We Started The Project?

On November 3rd, 2015, St. Basil's parish hall was filled to near capacity. Parishioners responded to the Pastoral Council's invitation to consider the focus question: "Why chart the path for St. Basil's into the future?"



Why indeed! The focus of the evening was on the laity of the parish, specifically whether parishioners were committed to planning a path forward for St. Basil's over the coming years. *Did the idea of charting the way ahead resonate with parishioners? What was it about planning the way forward that echoed the mindset of parishioners? Why did it resonate?* The reasons to proceed were diverse; the decision unambiguous.

Parishioners sat in small groups of four or five. In the first few minutes, each person wrote down a few personal words to describe why charting a course for St. Basil's resonated with them. Next, they shared their thoughts. Why did they feel the way they did? In a spirit of dialogue with participants suspending judgement and persuasion in favour of respectful probing and listening, we gained a deep understanding and appreciation of the depth of care and concern we shared for the parish and its community.

Next, groups drew from these dialogues and combined these views into one or two statements. They then presented their results to the full assembly. In the weeks that followed the November 3rd Parish Dialogue, our views were posted on the interior walls of the church for fellow parishioners to read and comment on using Post-It Notes. What resonated with parishioners who attended and with those who added their comments later? The reasons follow.

#### **Presented below verbatim, we agreed to chart the path of St. Basil's into the future:**

- In order to build the congregation, we need to draw youth and young families into the parish with meaningful activities. We need to serve those who live in our geographic area. Charting a course would ensure we involve all members of the parish and the community.
- Recognition of being an aging congregation: how do we continue to be a vibrant community?
- How do we attract families to become parishioners?
- How do we engage with the culture? How do we open doors (community, hearts, and attitudes)?

- How can we continue to nurture our post-Vatican II identity as well-formed, adult Catholics?
- Diminishing attendance.
- Need common vision. Need to attract people of all ages. Why go to church?
- Personal commitment to saviour. A place where you are loved. Plan – Shared purpose founded on and in our spirituality.
- Foster – a community that is adaptable, forgiving, inclusive, flexible, and enduring. Nourish – belonging and engagement with each other. Openness. Charting a course gives us a chance to think about it. Thinking engages our feelings and goals. Charting a course builds community. Discern and respond to: needs of all different parts of our parish; our neighbours around St. Basil's. Find ways to communicate the "Good News". Network, collaborate, engage.
- The importance lies in being a welcoming and inclusive community. The importance of sharing our faith (evangelizing), and that we want to maintain our existing programs and cohesiveness.
- We want to enhance and grow the parish as a welcoming, inclusive community with our positive energetic people, recognizing that our leadership is aging and that we have to engage younger parishioners.
- Will we have a St. Basil's in 5 years? How do we keep our parish community alive and welcoming so that people want to stay in the parish and feel enriched spiritually. Two needs.
- There is need for us all to come together as a community (all three masses). There is need to involve the youth of our parish in meaningful ways.
- We have the responsibility, to maintain the strong spirit of community at St. Basil's and to grow increasingly towards Pope Francis' vision of a renewed church, caring for each other and those outside our community.
- To do things differently. To attract people to be more involved. Two fold. Preserving what we have enjoyed as a community of faith, and any organization needs to plan.
- Hope is not a strategy. It is important for the parish to respond to the spiritual needs of its members and to enable them to overcome physical and age-related difficulties in practicing their faith.
- Greater effort should be made to interact with young people to meet their spiritual and social needs.

## Why Choose Appreciative Inquiry?

In May of 2015, the Pastoral Council approved the project, in November lent their support, after which the Finance Council included the costs in the Parish budget for 2016. The project was now referred to as "*Imagine St. Basil's...*". Mr. Raphael Amato was recommended to lead us. Raphael was interviewed and his credentials thoroughly examined. An expert in Appreciative Inquiry who successfully applied the method in several faith-based organizations, Raphael took on the role of our teacher, mentor, and guide. In an Appreciative Inquiry, the obligation to chart the future of the organization rests in the hands of the people in the organization.

Raphael is also no stranger to St. Basil's. For many years, he served as Community Leader of L'Arche Ottawa when that community and St. Basil's parish grew together spiritually and physically.

L'Arche occupied the former Basilian Father's Residence next to St. Joseph's High School, and its core members and assistants were themselves parishioners at St. Basil's. He felt a special calling to assist St. Basil's, a fact reflected in the time he generously gave beyond that which he was contracted to provide.

## **Why Conduct an Appreciative Inquiry?**

This approach to planning was the subject of great interest, particularly to several of us with a business or government background more familiar with strategic planning processes that begin with looking for problems to solve.

As Raphael explained, focussing on problems leads to fault finding. The antithesis to Appreciative Inquiry is to plan by looking for the gaps, the problems, the deficiencies, the weaknesses of the organization and its people and finally to fix the organization. Often this means fixing people. Management and staff live a negative, demoralizing downhill trajectory before they reach a point where the plan ahead declared at the base of a mountain to climb.

The Appreciative Inquiry method is a planning process filled with positivity and possibility. Instead, as Raphael explained, to chart a path to the future of any organization is to build on what the organization has done well. What is life-giving and energizing to an organization is found in the people of the organization. A respect for the dignity of the human person, collaboration, participation, and a sense of community and mutual encouragement and support are inherent values of Appreciative Inquiry. Values we share as Christians.

Appreciative Inquiry begins with us exploring our experiences with St. Basil's, with drawing forward instances that "most gave us life, health, vitality, and excellence." As with all Appreciative Inquiry projects, ours was a success-affirming process based on expressing and reaffirming what was "St. Basil's at its very best."

If our St. Basil's were a tree, parishioners would describe the trunk of that tree using words drawn from their personal experiences of St. Basil's at its best.

## **Who Participated in the Inquiry?**

Imagine St. Basil's... is a bottom up, inside out, life-giving planning process empowering the Spirit-guided voices of parishioners to carry the parish forward.

In January 2016, the Pastoral Council 2016 budget approved, we obtained the services of Raphael Amato to implement an Appreciative inquiry. Elizabeth Elliot, Co-Chair of the Pastoral Council and Gerard Lewis co-managed the "Imagine St. Basil's..." initiative.

Fifteen parishioners agreed to serve on the "Design Team" - an enabling group dedicated to facilitating dialogues, reflecting without interpreting the words and phrases of parishioners, then communicating the thoughts of participants to parishioners at large.

At the Saturday and Sunday Masses of March 5th and 6th, 2016, Father Dan Hawkins and Fr. Peter Cody placed into mission members of the Design Team and the entire assembly of parishioners. Design Team members stood at the base of Altar before parishioners present. The presider bestowed the certain roles and responsibilities on each member of the Design team and on parishioners as a whole.

### **Commissioning of Members of the Design Team**

*“Members of the Design Team*, as facilitators of the Appreciative Inquiry process, your role is to help the parishioners of St. Basil’s to enter into dialogue with one another. Your role is to facilitate the sharing and recording of the knowledge, experience and positive feelings that parishioners have for St. Basil’s. You will forsake your own opinions while in this role; set aside any judgement and desire to persuade and enable the very words spoken by parishioners to be heard as they were said.”

### **Commissioning of Parishioners**

*“Parishioners of St. Basil’s*, as members of the St. Basil’s parish community you are responsible for the vitality of the parish. The success of the “Imagine St. Basil’s ...” Appreciative Inquiry therefore rests entirely on your participation. Your knowledge, experience, and feelings for St. Basil’s combined with your Faith are vital for sustaining, charting and propelling the parish forward.”

“Are you prepared to play your part in the Imagine St. Basil’s... Appreciative Inquiry process; share your experiences, knowledge and feelings in a positive and appreciative manner; listen attentively in dialogue with one another; and attend parish dialogues and provide feedback?”

With our affirmative reply, our Commissioning was complete.

The Imagine St. Basils... Design Team obtained the guidance Raphael Amato in carrying out their roles and responsibilities. Training and days of reflection took place in the L’Arche Ottawa Community Centre, generously provided at no expense by the L’Arche Ottawa Community.

### **Parishioner Engagement**

Parishioners contributed very generously of their time at sessions held in the Parish Hall. Each session lasted at least 2 hours. On more than one of these occasions, parishioners willingly continued beyond the time asked of them.

All totalled approximately 600 parishioner-hours and Design Team effort were generously given to the process. This is a remarkable reflection of the commitment and love parishioners have for St. Basil’s parish, its well-being, now and into the future.

Parishioners, active in every aspect of Parish life, involved themselves from the beginning to the close of the planning process. The results of each phase were posted on panels in the church proper or on the Website so that all parishioners had occasion to examine the fruits of each dialogue session and phase. The Pastor attended sessions, observed, and contributed to the process as it unfolded.

## **How did the Inquiry Unfold?**

A Positive Method of Sowing the Seeds of Change is the process of appreciative inquiry.

The Appreciative Inquiry method ran for 14 months in four phases. The first 7 sessions of Phase 1 took place between March 9th and March 20th, 2016. The final plenary session took place on January 28th 2017 from 10 am to 3:00 pm. In this Summit of parishioners and ministry leaders, the path forward readily became evident. Every planning process is a method for managing change. The Appreciative Inquiry (AI) method is a positive method of sowing the seeds of change.

The focus of Appreciative Inquiry is on leveraging a parish's "positive core" of strengths to design and redesign the systems within the organization to achieve a more effective and sustainable future. Appreciative Inquiry invites parishioners to look at what is going well, build on these successes, adapt to shifting situations, and change the underlying conditions accordingly. What is unique to Appreciative Inquiry is change that is deeper, more meaningful, and sustainable at the core of the organization, in our case, at the core of St. Basil's Parish community.

The Appreciative Inquiry process is disruptive in a positive sense. As it unfolded at St. Basil's, it drew interesting comments. In the beginning, Appreciative Inquiry seemed a little "fluffy" to many of us at first; then it grew on us as we gave ourselves over to one another in dialogue. Appreciative Inquiry is not obviously, nor is it taking us to a single destination. Drawn to express our dreams, we soon realized that the realization of dreams in the future lies in the underlying conditions of today. The final recommendations have less to do with what dreams we hope to achieve, and more to do with how we go about it. If we work well together, respect the positive core of St. Basil's, and nurture our roots, we will achieve much in due time along our path ahead of us. First is how!

### **Phase I – Discovery – Sharing our stories and hopes for our parish**

Appreciative Inquiry brings people in organizations together to study the fundamental changes they must make to succeed as we have thus far. In Phase I, the process became a deeply moving experience as we shared the life-giving feelings people had for the parish. Accounts came forward such as when a pastor or parishioner, or the architecture or a homily, a sacrament or a singular moment of reflection became personally inspiring. The unexpected and deeply personal stories enabled us to express the Positive Core of St. Basil's at its Best. Like a tree trunk, our core is strong.

### **Phase II – Dream – Shared Imagining**

Phase II seemed easy at first, then it became challenging, and ended being provocative. Imagine the Positive Core to be the trunk of a tree. Visualize the Dreams we have for St. Basil's in the future to be the leaves on that tree. We easily came up with Dreams; so many that we had to group them in 15 themes, listed in the table below. That was easy.

➤ **Dreams in Themes**

Music	Social Justice	Design, Art & Architecture	Communications	Access	Spirituality &
Faith Development		Social Action	Worship	Older Parishioners	Young Families
Adults (non-Senior)		Newcomers	Welcoming	Ministry	Youth

\* See [Appendix B](#) for a full record of the Dreams in Themes

➤ **Underlying Conditions**

However, we also considered the underlying conditions necessary to maintain the health of the tree and bring forth the vibrant leaves. That was not so easy.

We prevailed. To achieve any of the dreams we had for St. Basil’s we needed to look below the surface, to the roots of our imaginary tree of a life-giving St. Basil’s.

We came up with a Provocative Possibility Statement that made its way to become the focus of the January 28th 2017 summit. Fundamental changes in how we operate are essential for us to make our dreams come true. Fundamental changes, not necessarily major changes, are recommended and presented later in this report.

The Provocative Possibility Statement describes how St. Basil’s parish must operate in the future for us to move forward together. It speaks to the underlying conditions we address in our recommendations. With this statement, a shift ensued in our Appreciative Inquiry, from charting the path forward to laying the stepping-stones.

All planning processes bring about change. Small changes can yield big results. If left unattended, the roots of our tree lying beneath the surface can yield withered leaves and dry branches. Attending to the underlying conditions, a little more water for instance, can result in a flourish of new growth.

**Phase III – Design – Imaging Possibilities**

In Phase III, parish Ministry committees met separately or collectively. For instance, the Catholic Women’s League members met on their own. The Worship ministry committees met as a collective. First, the relationship between ministry committee and the fifteen Dreams in Themes was considered. What relationship did the CWL or the Worship group have with music, communications, access, and so forth? Then we asked participants to consider the relationship one ministry had to other ministries; for example, the CWL to other ministry committees like the Knights of Columbus, Social Justice, Music Ministry, and so on. The Worship group did the same, first by looking at the ministries operating under the Worship umbrella, then the relationship of Worship ministries beyond their immediate circle.

The impetus for holding these dialogues is in the second line of the Provocative Possibility Statement, where it states:

“Our leadership is flexible, open and facilitates dialogue through intentional communication and collaboration among ministries.”

These Phase III dialogues provoked a reflection on intentional communication and collaboration within and across ministries, as well as between ministries and the Pastoral Council, Finance Council, and the Pastor. How was the state of communication? What is the state of any collaboration among ministries?

Appreciative Inquiry – as a planning process - is an agent of positive change. All ministries expressed the need for some improvements to their communication and collaboration internally, across ministries, and with Pastoral Council. The norm within some ministries has been effective collaboration. Other ministries began to wonder what the positive benefits would be of greater collaboration across ministries, especially to ministries they had heretofore believed they had little in common. Was there a willingness to hold a dialogue with another ministry to examine how they might support one another, or do things together? In fact, these conversations sparked change immediately in some cases. Flexibility, openness, dialogue, intentional communication and collaborate among ministries took root in Phase III, well before we held the summit in Phase IV.

#### **Phase IV – Destiny – Making it Happen**

The Design Team and Raphael Amato met in early January and concluded that a Summit of parish ministry leaders and parishioners-at-large was in order. The Summit was held on Saturday, January 28th, 2017 in the parish hall from 9:30 am to 3:00 pm, with a short break for lunch.

#### **Conclusion**

The Design Team reviewed all the material gathered as we charted our way from the Positive Core to the Provocative Statement to the Summit. Based on all that we heard, we are proposing a series of recommendations intended to guide Parish leaders as we move into the future. The recommendations along with an Implementation Plan are in the next section of this report.

## Appendix D: Implementation Plan / Milestones for 2017 to 2018

The operational theme for 2017-2018 is *“Laying the Path...Moving Forward Together”* and the priorities are *“Accessibility, Intentional Communication, and Collaboration.”*

### April 2017

- i** Present the final recommendations on *“St. Basils Imagined!”* to Pastoral Council, Finance Council, and the Pastor
- i** Disseminate the *“Report of the Appreciative Inquiry to Chart the Path of St. Basil’s Parish into the Future”* to parishioners; in print and online
- i** Establish Transition Committee for the arrival of new Pastor in August

### May 2017

- i** Implementation of new 4 Ministry Framework
- i** Pastoral Council will ask each Ministry to hold an initial meeting before the end of June 2017. The purpose of the meeting will be to familiarize members with the role of the Ministry and begin to work on the theme and priorities;
- i** Pastoral Council members will call the meetings for their former Commissions, now referred to as Ministries.
- i** Recruit new Pastoral Council members:
- i** The Liturgy and Outreach Ministries will be asked to each name a member to PC by mid-June;
- i** Parishioners will be asked to serve on Pastoral Council as members-at-large.

### June 2017

- i** Appointments to Pastoral Council
- i** Orientation package ready for new Pastor

### August 2017

- i** Orientation of the new Pastor – Welcome to St. Basils

### September 2017

- i** Initiate the natural cycle of parish life / start of school, etc.
- i** A time for parishioners to reconnect after the summer holidays – a traditional event
- i** Ministries and Committees resume activities focussing on the Theme and Priorities.

### October/November 2017

- i** Ministries and Committees prepare budget requests for 2018.

## **January 2018**

- i** Annual budget is finalized

## **May / June 2018**

- i** Close the natural cycle of parish life /graduations, summer holidays;
- i** Hold the Annual Assembly of Parishioners to take stock of what is working well, what needs help;
- i** Discern and announce the new theme to guide and teach us throughout the next 12 months.

