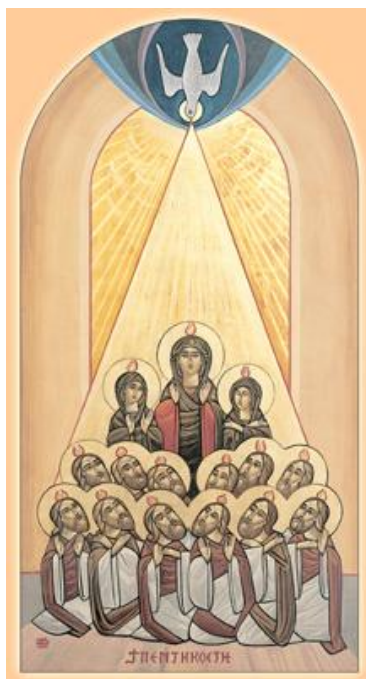


PARISH PASTORAL PLAN 2008



**QUEEN OF THE APOSTLES CATHOLIC CHURCH
503 North Main Street
BELMONT, NORTH CAROLINA 28012**

2008

The PARISH OF QUEEN OF THE APOSTLES

A Roman Catholic Community

**503 North Main Street
Belmont, North Carolina 28012**

Since the last effort of the parish to shape its goals and objectives in 2003 until this re-examination of our pastoral life and goals, we have experienced God's Grace in a variety of ways. Since 2003 there have been significant changes to the parish community. Substantial growth has affected us as it has the entire Charlotte metropolitan region. The taxing use of our current facilities, the aging of our buildings, the growth in and more solid foundation of our financial base have all contributed to the need to re-examine and articulate once more the goals and objectives we see as important for our parish community.

As we stand at the beginning of this new year, we are also challenged by the community in which we live. We seek answers to questions about how we can shape a close knit community in a growing suburban area. We are challenged to reclaim our connections with the African – American community where our property is located as well as a re-examination of how we will nurture those we serve in this community. We are confronted with the need to turn ourselves outward to the growing Hispanic population within our parish boundaries and identify our place with these brothers and sisters and their specific needs.

I am grateful to all who have participated in this planning process for the last two years. It presents us with a focused way to look to our immediate and long term future. I am confident that as we continue to journey together we will unfold the mission of Jesus Christ with the Catholic community throughout the Diocese of Charlotte.

Reverend Francis T Cancro, Pastor
February 2008

Parish of Queen of the Apostles:

Mission Statement

With the Blessed Virgin Mary, the first disciple of Jesus Christ, as our example and patron, the mission of Queen of the Apostles Catholic Church is to proclaim and share the Gospel entrusted to us. We do this by celebrating our oneness with the Risen Christ, with each other and the whole Church, through the sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist, and our common life together. We accept the direction given us by the Second Vatican Council and are committed to our life of worship, formation, fellowship, and outreach to all those in need.

Vision Statement

We use our discernment, our efforts at planning and our call to community building in order to:

- create a vibrant and diverse Catholic community actively proclaiming and sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- engage in a life of worship and weekend Eucharist that utilizes our best gifts to praise God, celebrate the sacraments and uplift the worshipping community.
- exercise good stewardship of time, talent and treasure in such a way that we support our internal programs and have (people and financial) resources to work in the broader, external community where we live.
- develop a church home with adequate facilities that allows us to best cultivate our formation and social programs as well as provide a base for parish and community members to find solace, support and active ministry.
- create a welcoming spirit among all church members so we can embrace each other, all other believers and the whole area we serve in the love of Christ that gathers us as one.

I. HISTORY

The Church of Mary, Queen of the Apostles can trace its origins to the small group of Irish immigrants who came to work the newly discovered gold mines along the Catawba River and later established the church of St. Joseph and St. Mary in Mount Holly, North Carolina, the oldest standing Catholic church in North Carolina today and the first Catholic church built west of the Catawba River. The first Mass was said at St. Joseph's in 1843. The parish also finds a beginning in the African-American community that worked in the area in various aspects of the textile industry and who with the Civil War found themselves more permanently fixed in this area. The establishment of the Benedictine presence at Mary Help Abbey and the development of the school and (later) college saw another opportunity in the 1860's for pastoral care to Catholics in this region. In 1877, Fr. Joseph Keller, OSB arrived at the Benedictine monastery in Belmont, North Carolina (now known as Mary Help of Christians Abbey) and began missionary activities in the surrounding area of Gaston County, supporting the mining families in Mount Holly and bringing some of the African-American community to Catholic faith as well.

The development of St. Benedict's School in the Reid Park section of the city to serve the educational needs of African-American Catholics is further testament to the work of the Benedictine community in the Nullius. The building sits on current parish property and has variously been used for education and social gatherings until the condition of the building caused it to be closed in 2007.

Until its incorporation into the Diocese of Raleigh in 1960, the Catholic community of Gaston County comprised the "nullius" of Belmont Abbey and was served by its Benedictine priests. In 1963, more than eight acres of land in Belmont, along with buildings on the property that constituted the St. Leo Military School, were purchased from the Sisters of Mercy. One of these buildings, the large, new gymnasium, was converted into a church. Named the Church of Mary, Queen of the Apostles, it was dedicated in March of 1965 by the Most Reverend Vincent S. Walters, Bishop of Raleigh. Since that time it has had the responsibility of the pastoral care of individuals in eastern Gaston County and the area west of the city of Charlotte as well.

The following pastors have served our parish community:

1960-1963	Fr. Gabriel Stupasky, OSB	1982-1983	Fr. Richard Hanson
1964-1969	Fr. James Keenan	1983-1985	Msgr. Joseph Showferty
1969-1971	Msgr. John Roueche	1985-1994	Msgr. Anthony Kovacic
1971-1973	Fr. John Reagan	1994-1996	Msgr. Thomas Burke
1973-1975	Fr. James Noonan	1996-1997	Fr. Peter Jugis
1975-1977	Fr. Vincent Stokes	1997 to 2003	Fr. Richard P. Hokanson
1977-1980	Fr. Edward Malloy	2003 to 2007	Fr. Joseph Zuschmidt
1980-1982	Msgr. John McSweeney and Fr. John Parsons	2007 to Present	Fr. Frank Cancro

The following commissions were established after the first Parish Needs Assessment Survey on April 8 & 9, 2000:

Administration
Community Life
Education and Formation

Outreach and Ecumenism
Worship and Spiritual Life
Finance Council

In addition to the original commissions, by 2003, a Communications Commission was added and a Stewardship Committee was initiated to help serve the needs of all commissions.

II. SUMMARY OF THE PRESENT SITUATION

The Church of Mary, Queen of Apostles is a growing parish. In the past our parish had been challenged financially and the shortage of funding had been instrumental in the difficulties our parish had faced in providing for the maintenance of our buildings. The finances have steadily improved since 2003 and our financial picture is stable and much brighter. As noted above, the parish was created from a relationship with the Belmont Abbey and the Sisters of Mercy in their earlier work with area populations. While Queen of the Apostles is now the juridic person in eastern Gaston County, there is still a cooperative spirit with the Sisters of Mercy and their institutions as well as the Belmont Abbey, its church, and the campus ministry of its college. The monks of the Abbey remain available to the activities of the parish as they are able.

Growth is having the greatest impact upon our parish at this time. Growth in the Charlotte metro area is occurring at a staggering rate. Much of this growth is occurring in the western part of Mecklenburg County and the eastern part of Gaston County. Our parish is located in this growth area and the growth forecast shows no signs of abating. At a time when growth is straining the capacity of our facilities, we are also faced with a crisis in our facilities. The age of the St. Benedict building has allowed moisture intrusion to create significant structural and health related problems. Given the projected expense to correct the problems at St. Benedict's and the critical need to define our future plans, the decision was made to stop all activities in St. Benedict's until our planning efforts could identify the optimal direction for our future. This loss in the usage of one of our facilities has burdened our other facilities to the maximum.

Our church hall, the Monsignor Anthony Kovacic Center, is used creatively and to capacity. Unfortunately this means that as many as three meetings may occur at the same time in the main space, with two additional meetings in the two meeting rooms on site. When this occurs it is not optimal for faith formation, fellowship or other parish business. Our worship space is also restrictive. This is the case not just regarding the number of seats available to worshipers but also regarding access to toilet facilities, appropriate entrance, egress and gathering space, as well as those spaces that make us child and family friendly.

All of this has been central to the deliberations that have helped compose this document.

III. Community Demographics Profile

The boundaries for The Church of Mary, Queen of the Apostles Parish encompass the planning jurisdictions for the cities of Belmont and Mount Holly, the eastern portion of the city of Gastonia, and the westernmost portion of Mecklenburg County (see Figure 1).

According to the Office of Planning for the Diocese of Charlotte, the populations of the areas represented by the Parish have seen moderate, but steady, growth over the past ten years. In 2000 there was a total population of 73,711 people in 28,975 households. In 2007 there was a total population of 80,606 people in 32,358 households. The projection for 2010 is a population over 85,000 and approximately 34,255 households. The mean age of the area is 39 years. The mean age of the parish is 37.4 years.

The overwhelming majority of the population is Caucasian (69,870 in 2007) with 6,364 listed as “Black” and just over 1,300 “Asian” households. There are also 2,847 persons listed as “two or more race” population. In 2007 the Hispanic population of the area is 2,629.

In 1990, the numbers of registered households at The Church of Mary, Queen of the Apostles totaled 326. In 2003 – 2004, the number of families was 480. In 2007 that number was 556 registered families. The parish breaks down further:

Total males in parish	746	(Average age: 34)
Total females in parish	787	(Average age: 37)
Total Catholics	1413	
Total non-Catholics	156	

Fifty-five percent of the parish has lived in the parish for five years or longer. Twenty-eight percent of the parish has lived here two years or less.

Our Faith Formation programs have grown as well. In 2000, 163 students were identified in our elementary program (grades K – 8) and 45 in our high school program for a total of 208. Between 2002 and 2004, there is great variance in the program that seems to be related to the change in catechetical leadership, the change in Confirmation age, and the illness of and subsequent absence of the pastor for a long period of time due to ill health. By 2006 - 2007, these figures seem to be evened out. There were 150 individuals in the elementary program and 16 in the high school program for a total of 166 individuals. The 2007 – 2008 formation year started with just over 200 students in the program.

We are able to identify a total of 15 students in Catholic schools. Ten (10) students at St. Michael School in Gastonia (elementary) and five (5) students in the MACS system (three in elementary school and two in middle school).

Sacramentally, the parish continues to grow as well. Picking up from the statistics of the last pastoral plan, we note the following shifts:

2004	Total baptisms	18
2007	Total baptisms	34

2004	Total weddings	8	(5 Catholic couples, 2 mixed)
2007	Total weddings	14	(6 Catholic couples, 8 mixed)
2004	Total deaths	7	
2007	Total deaths	12	

The projected population growth includes the extensive new home construction, and subsequent population increase, occurring along Mount Holly/Huntersville Road and its surrounding areas. According to the Office of Planning for the Diocese of Charlotte, the projected population figures cited include this area, which lies within the Parish boundaries. The growth in this area and potential impact on The Church of Mary, Queen of the Apostles Parish must be closely monitored as construction continues.

The parish seems to have a population that is stable in employment and whose average salary settles in the mean for the area: over \$50,000.00 per year.

At the same time, like many parts of our Diocese, the Hispanic population is growing. This population group, often under-identified presents special challenges in relationship to services that need to be provided, language, and attention to cultural sensitivities in worship and parish life. Because we are not currently outreaching to this population, we have little data on their pastoral needs. However, we are aware of large pockets of this population within parish boundaries and are beginning to address a plan that will shape what action would be appropriate on our part.

While it is certain that growth generated by new home construction within the Parish boundaries will continue, other influences will also have an impact on growth in the Parish. The I-485 Outerbelt and the US 321/74 Bypass will have some impact on the amount of traffic in the area of The Church of Mary, Queen of the Apostles. According to the Gaston County Planning Department, much will depend on the type of land use approved along the 321/74 Bypass corridor. A traffic modeling study conducted by the North Carolina Department of Transportation determined that approximately 50,000 vehicles will cross the bridge where 321/74 will intersect I-485. Additionally, the implementation of planned public transportation between Belmont and Cramerton could also impact traffic flow, and subsequently, the number of people traveling and working near or within the current Parish boundaries.

Lastly, property owned by Belmont Abbey, located between I-85 and Wilkinson Boulevard, is being leased for retail development. An increase in residential building is planned and will also occur within the next 5-7 years.

In sum, The Church of Mary, Queen of the Apostles Parish has experienced moderate, steady growth over the past decade. This trend is likely to continue and will be affected by the completion of the US 321/74 Bypass and I-485. Retail development, coupled with strong residential construction, will also add to the population growth within the Parish boundaries.

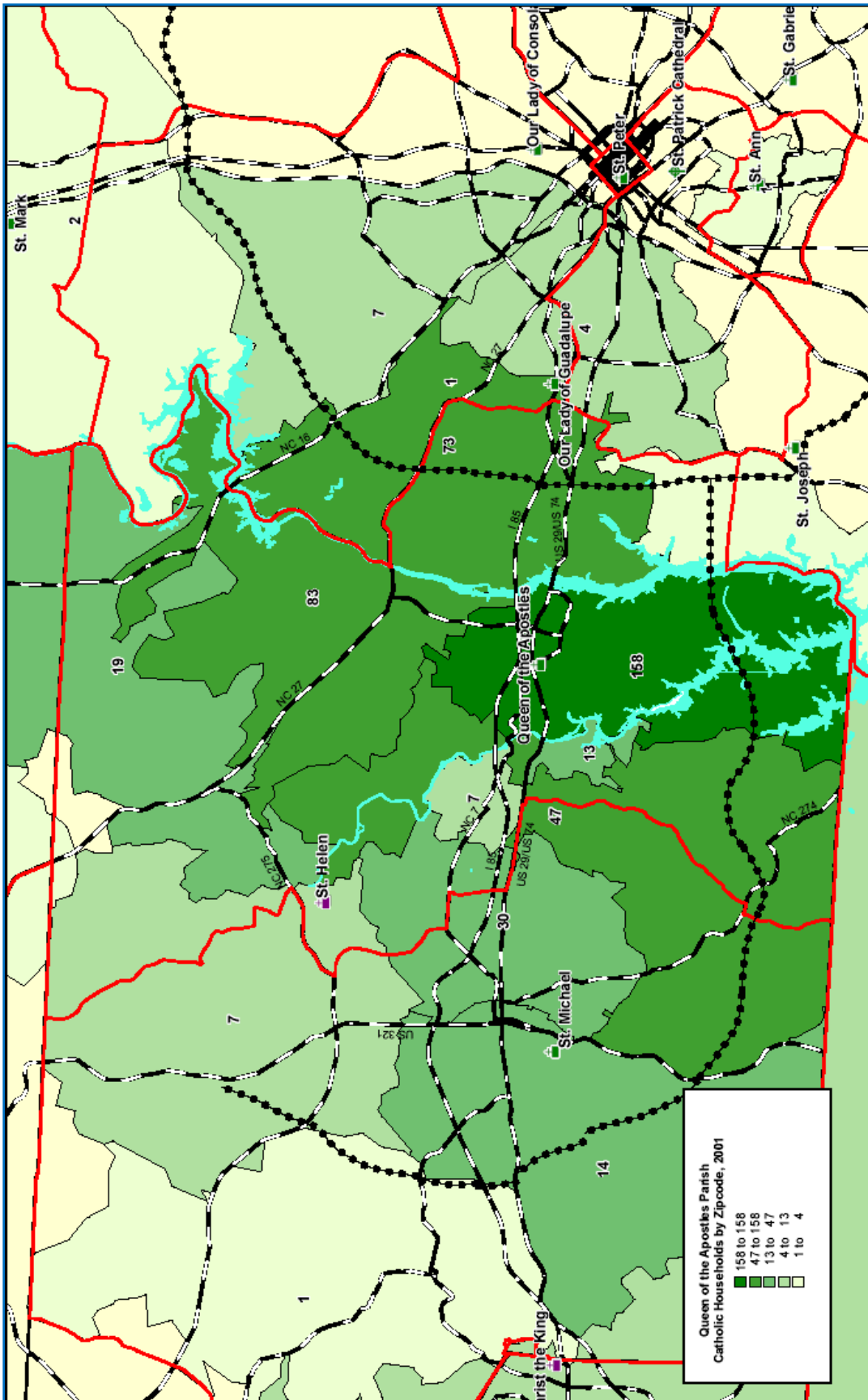
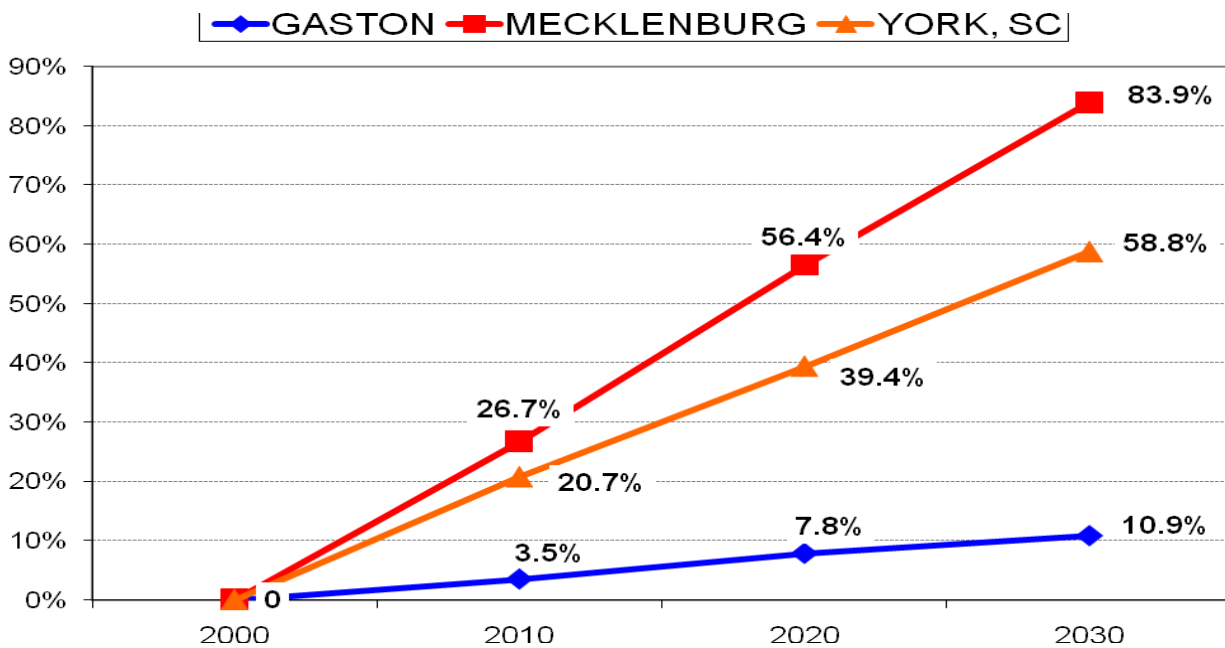


Figure 1

Much of the growth forecasted in the 2003 parish Profile has been realized. Highway projects continue to open arteries into Gaston County and the Belmont area has realized strong growth. Data sources reflecting growth are frequently difficult to understand and interpret. On the surface, data from the North Carolina state government shows a slow growth in Gaston County in comparison to neighboring counties. The data below are from NC and SC state sources and reflect growth projections by county from the year 2000.

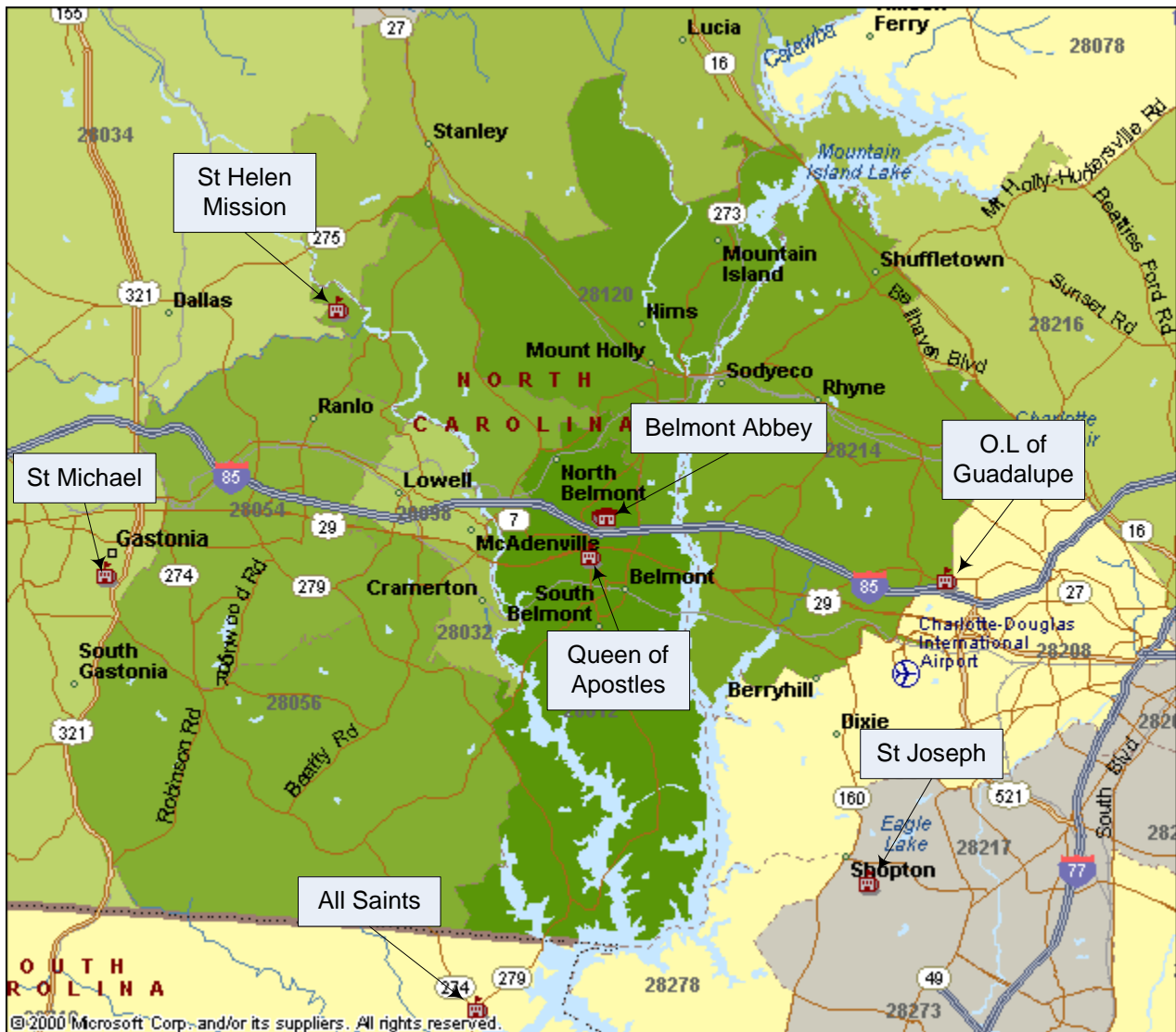
	2000	2010	2020	2030
GASTON	Base	3.5%	7.8%	10.9%
MECKLENBURG	Base	26.7%	56.4%	83.9%
YORK, SC	Base	20.7%	39.4%	58.8%

This data is easier understood when charted as below.

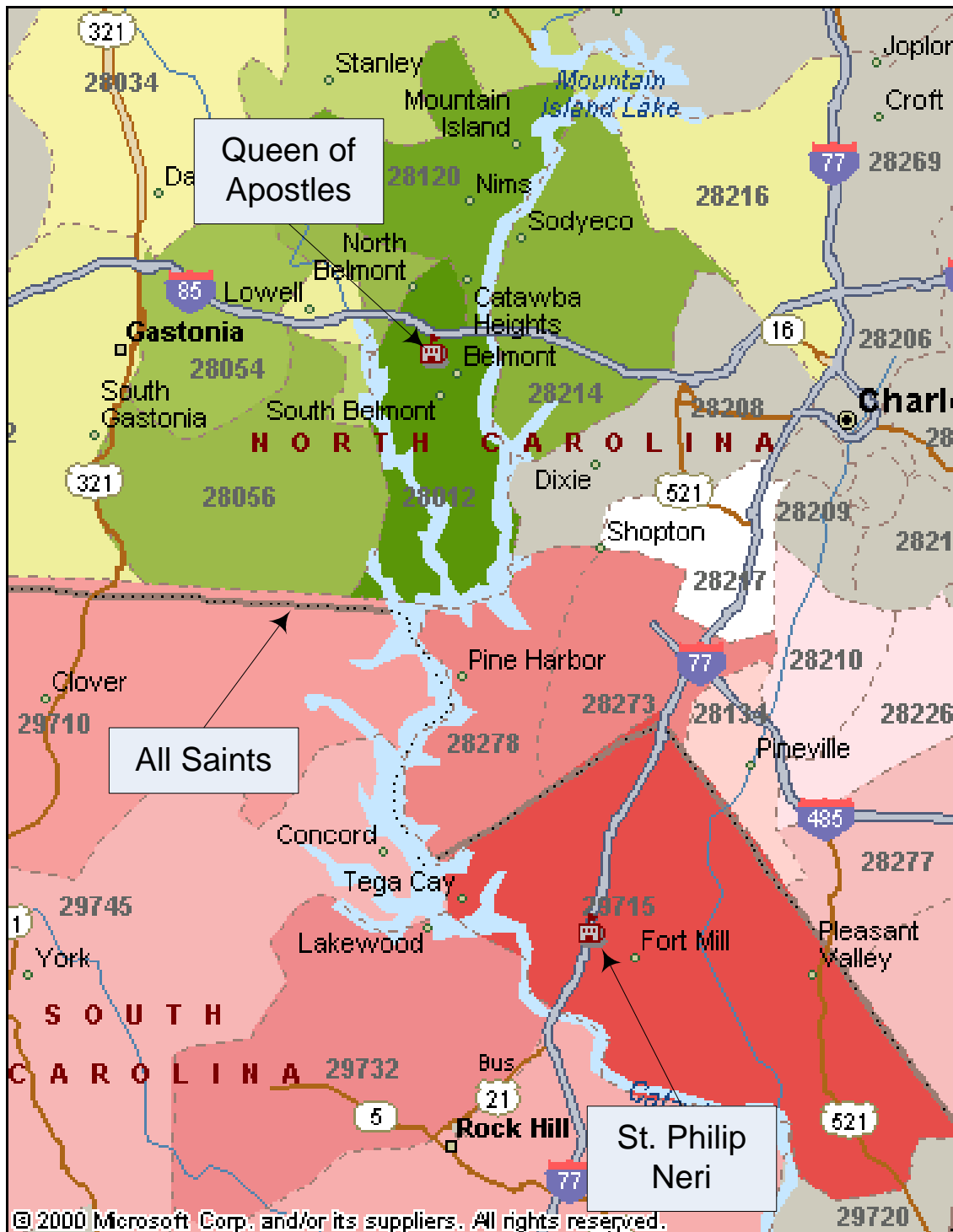


While Gaston County projections are significantly lower than Mecklenburg and York, we must consider the actual growth hot spots within the counties. Much of the growth in Gaston County is occurring in the eastern side of the county – around Belmont and Mt. Holly. Much of Mecklenburg’s growth is occurring on the western side of the county, right across the river and either within or adjacent to our Parish boundaries. North Carolina data sources estimate that over 15% of the growth is migration into North Carolina from other states. Many of these transplants are arriving from northern cities that have traditionally higher Catholic populations than southern cities. As a result, the growth of Catholics in the area is not linear but is proportionately higher than in years past. This portends a greater strain on facilities already burdened with growth.

The map below shows the distribution of Queen of the Apostles Parishioners by zip code and the locations of other area Parishes. The dark green indicates the highest concentration of Parishioners. The map clearly shows that the greatest concentration of Parishioners is in the Belmont – Mt. Holly area with substantial numbers in the western area of Mecklenburg County. Our Parishioners come from a variety of zip codes in the surrounding area including York County in South Carolina. The tan color indicates a lower concentration of Parishioners but, as the map indicates, there are some Parishioners living in the Steele Creek area of Mecklenburg County. The Steele Creek area falls within Queen of the Apostles boundaries as set by the Diocese and is an area of concern for the Diocese.



Looking at a composite map made up of Parishioners from Queen of the Apostles and Parishioners of St. Philip Neri in Fort Mill, SC, it is clear that St. Philip Neri draws a substantial number of Parishioners from the Steele Creek area. The map on the next page is an overlay of both sets of data. Queen of the Apostles Parishioners are indicated by the green and tan areas. St. Philip Neri Parishioners are indicated by the red and pink areas. The location of All Saints Parish is shown on the map for reference but their data was not available for mapping.



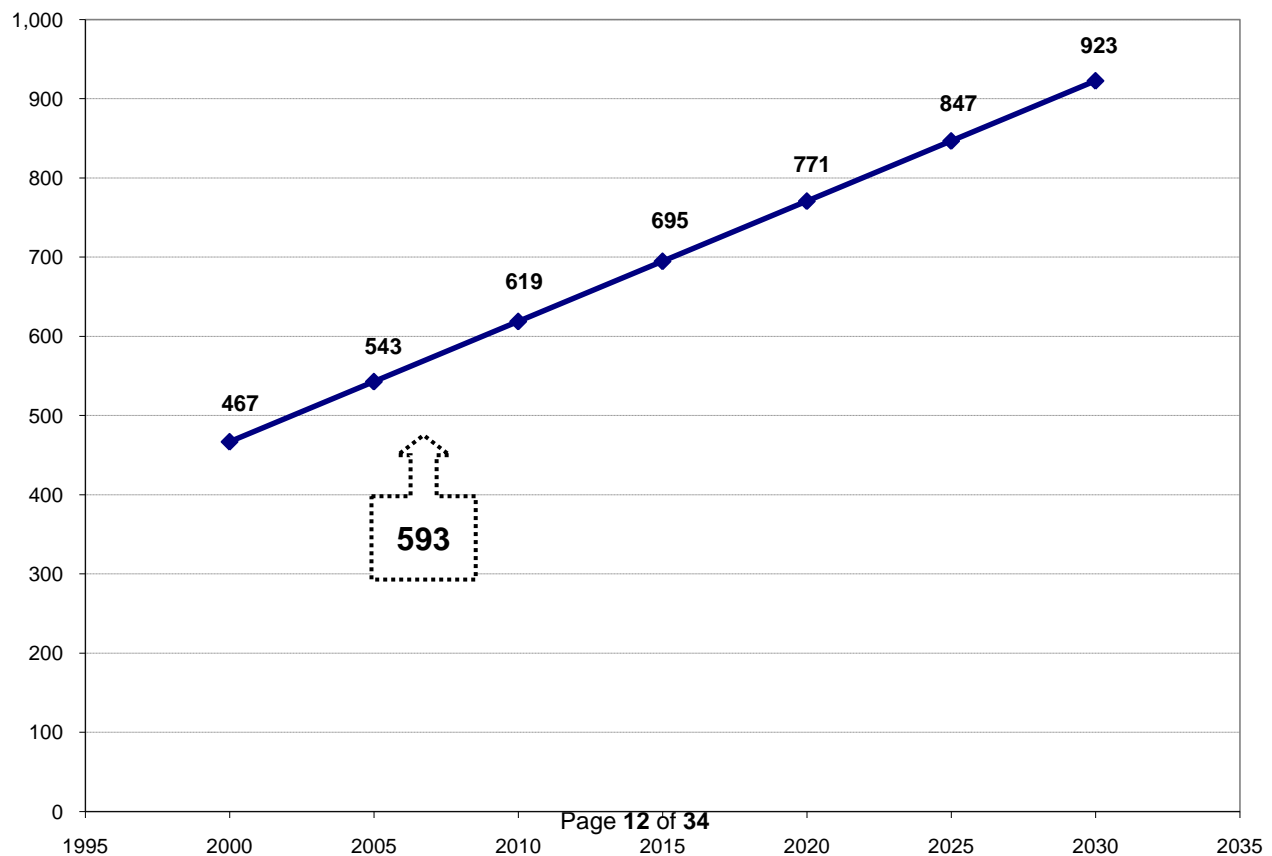
The area surrounding zip code 28208 is very sparse due to the fact that it is comprised almost entirely of the Charlotte Douglas Airport. St. Philip Neri has over 1,700 families registered. Queen of the Apostles has just under 600. Eventual highway construction may make Queen of the Apostles a desirable alternative for families in the Steele Creek area but that construction won't be realized for at least 15 years.

While all of the data points certainly indicate a high rate of growth in our area, they don't help answer the fundamental question – How much growth are we experiencing? To fully comprehend that issue we must have data sources that more accurately reflect our actual situation. One source of comparative data that should be a good indicator of Parish growth is the October Mass Counts taken for the Diocese. Ever weekend in October our ushers count the number of people in the pews at each Mass. That data is sent to the Diocese where they maintain a record. The Diocese was able to provide historical Mass count data but it was flawed. Unfortunately, for reasons not completely understood, the numbers for some years were highly inaccurate – such as over 1,000 per Mass for each weekend. We know that it may well be physically impossible to put over 1,000 people in our Church at one time. Since the errors in the Diocesan data were spotted and not back to back years, the data was reconstructed to yield a realistic growth pattern. The table below shows the October weekend total and average per Mass counts since year 2000.

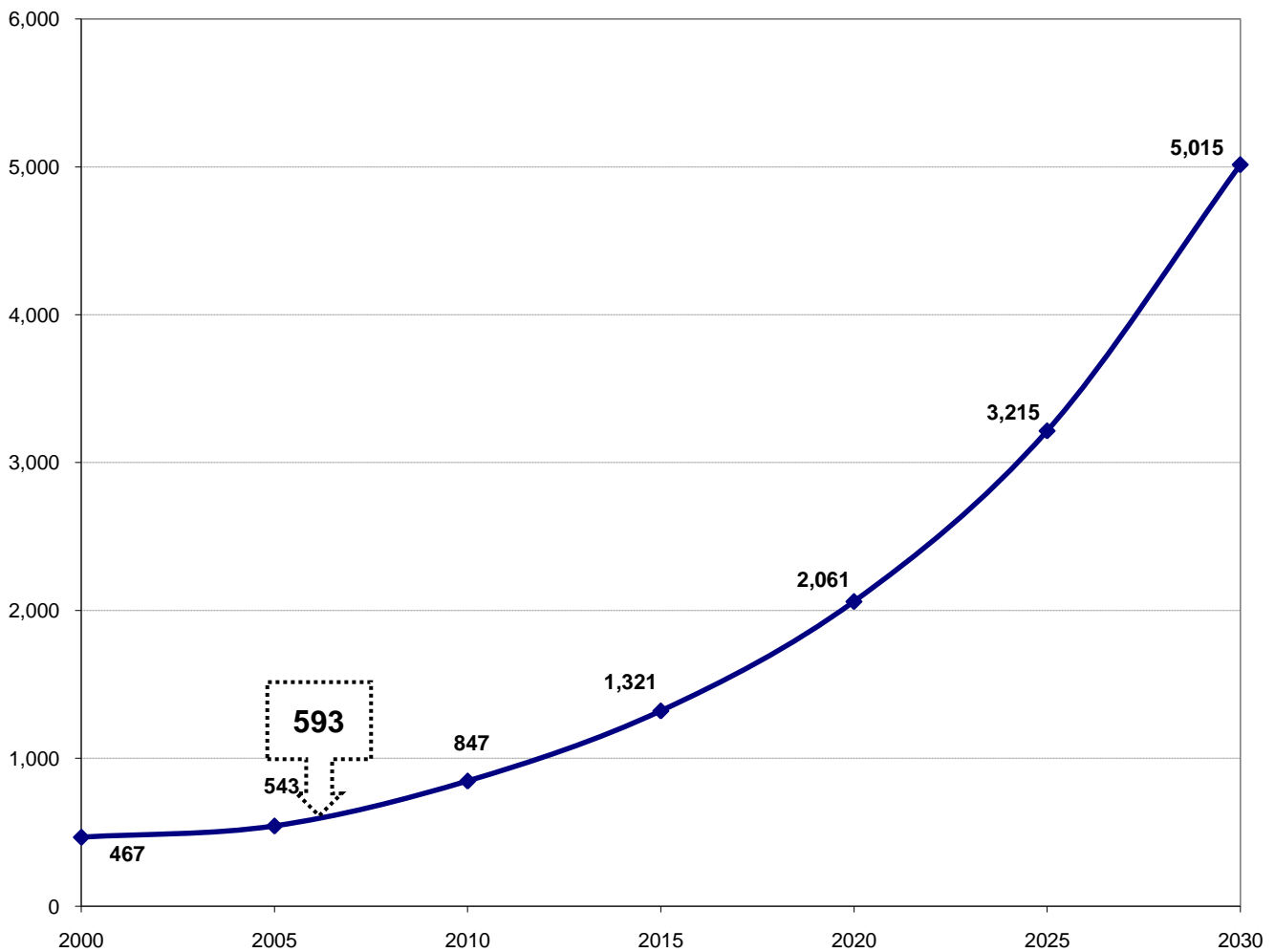
Year	Weekly	Per Mass
2000	467	156
2001	543	181
2002	524	175
2003	505	168
2004	577	192
2005	543	181
2006	593	198

In **2007** the average weekly Mass attendance was 633 with an average of 224 people per Mass.

The chart below plots the average October weekly Mass attendance and forecasts growth based upon the growth rate in attendance using the growth rate from year 2000 to 2005.



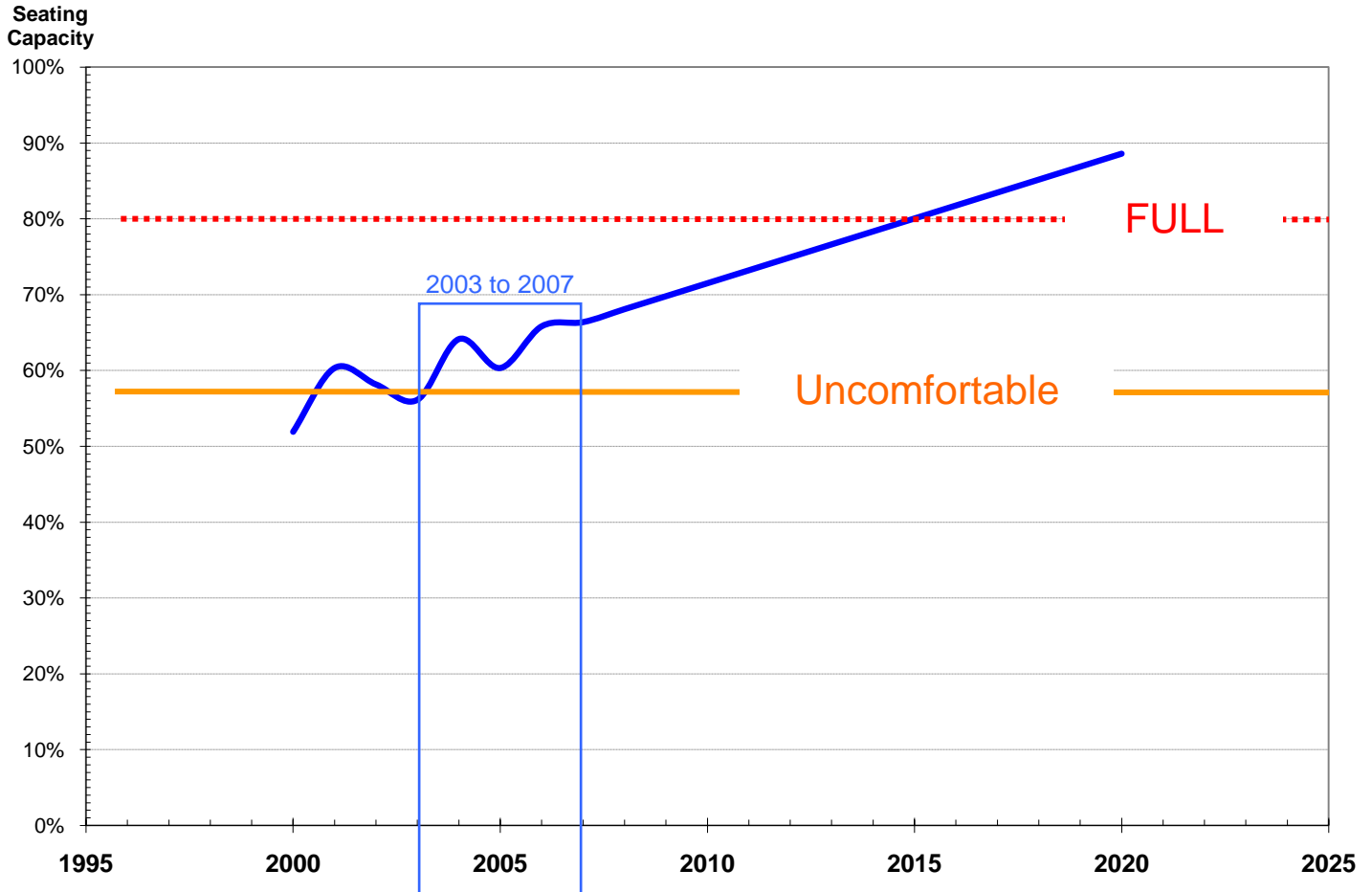
The preceding chart shows an average October weekly Mass count of 593 in 2006. That number reflects an increase of almost 10% over the previous year. The same is true for 2007 (9.7% increase). If the growth rate from 2005 to 2007 is used to forecast future attendance, a very different forecast results as shown in the chart below.



Using the 2005 to 2007 growth rate, we project an average weekly Mass attendance of 847 people by the year 2010. The first chart, which projected growth based upon the 2000 to 2005 growth rate, did not project 847 people until the year 2025. This illustrates how volatile growth rates can be and how rapidly they can change. It also shows how radically different plans must be depending upon sustained growth. The October 2007 Mass counts validate the present rate of growth.

The 2000 to 2005 growth rate projection shows an attendance figure of 923 people by year 2030. The projection model using the 2005 to 2006 growth rate shows a figure of 3,215 by year 2030. Both numbers are far above our present number of 643 people.

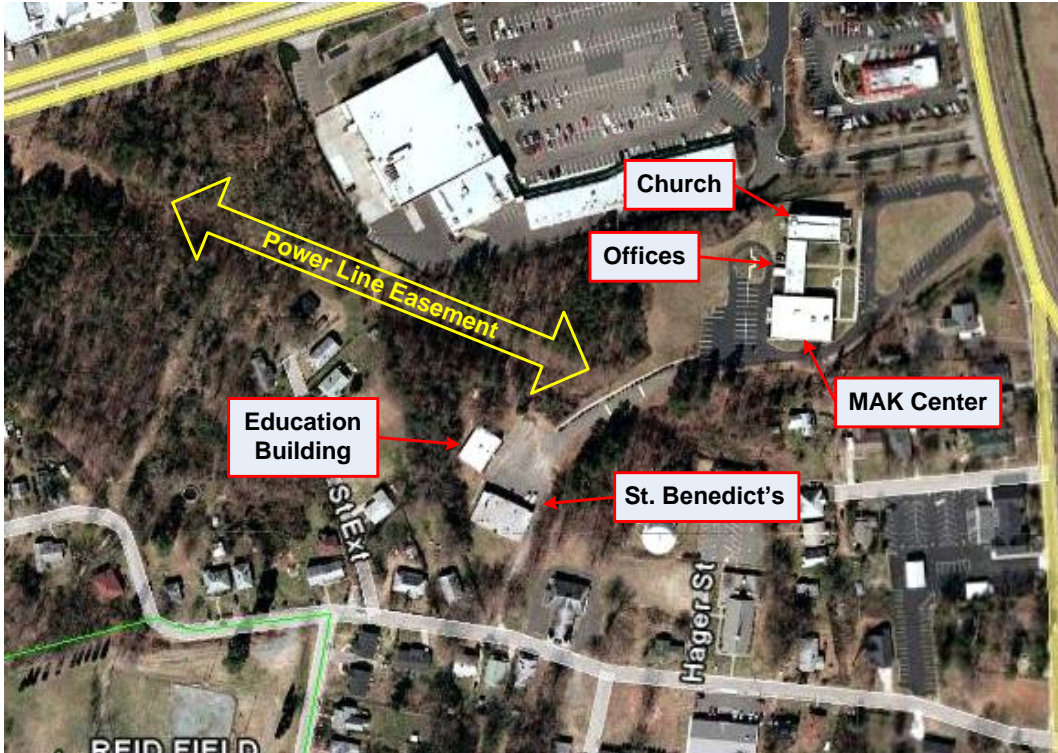
Our Church has a designed capacity of 300 seats. Church design experts tell us that we start to be “uncomfortable” when about 58% of the capacity is reached. We perceive the Church as “full” when 80% of the capacity is reached. The chart below plots our attendance against capacity and projects it into the future.



As the chart illustrates, our Church has been in the “uncomfortable” range most of the time since the year 2000. The chart also shows that the trend has been moving upward and is rapidly approaching “full”.

IV. Grounds and Facilities Profile

Queen of Apostles is located upon an 8.29 acre tract in Belmont, NC in Gaston County. The county tax value of the property is \$1,306,899. The land slopes at varying rates across the tract and there is an electrical power line easement dissecting the property. The picture below shows the Parish property and buildings.



There are five buildings which comprise the Parish campus. The buildings are listed below with their approximate age and condition. A summary of issues with each building follows.

FACILITY	AGE (years)	CONDITION
Church	~ 46	Good
Offices	~ 46	Adequate
MAK Family Center	~16	Good
Education Building	~16	Good
St. Benedict's	~ 66	Terrible

Church – the Church building, while in relatively good structural condition, has issues related to its functionality as a space for worship. The building which houses our Church was initially used as a gymnasium before being converted to our worship space. There are limitations imposed by the layout that impede and intrude on effective worship. There are no restroom facilities attached to the worship space. The only access to toilet facilities is gained by walking across the front of the church and through the sacristy area, a distraction during services. The church is linear with bad sight lines, inadequate space for an appropriate music ministry and little concern for optimal handicap seating. The liturgical furniture is out of proportion to the building and the baptismal area is spacially and structurally inadequate. There is no appropriate space for gathering. The narthex is limited and there is only one set of doors into the building. There is little storage space, vesting space and the shrine and reconciliation spaces are far from adequate. Acoustics need improving and the HVAC system while adequate is not optimal. Little space for child care (cry room, nursery or even changing tables in rest room facilities) is provided and little can be developed because of the current architecture of the space. The Church was designed with a seating capacity of 300 and, as previously shown, we exceed that capacity.

Offices (Pastoral Center) – the office space is small but maintained in fair condition. The current offices occupy the former residential space for the priest. There is no direct relationship between the secretarial space and the other offices and there is no space for future growth. There is not adequate storage space and no meeting space for staff or small groups. Corridors and doorways do not meet ADA standards. All the offices currently flank a hallway that leads from the church to the parish hall.

MAK Family Center – the MAK Family Center is in good condition but it is barely able to provide enough space for Parish activities. Many events virtually fill the MAK Center to capacity. As stated earlier, up to three events at a time are scheduled in the space because of a lack of other spaces. The kitchen space is small but adequate even though it makes it difficult to effectively support Parish functions.

There are two meeting rooms in the MAK Center. One serves as a conference room, faith formation classroom, adult bible study room and parish library. It is “overstocked” with furniture and supplies because of its many uses. The other is designated as a Pre-K classroom. Its furniture is designed for small children and it serves no other but this limited function.

Education Building – the Education building is in relatively good condition but the classrooms are small and they are limited in number. Currently it serves our elementary classes (grades one through five) as well as our scouting programs (we have three) and our Youth group, one weekly adult bible study group that is quite large and a community based Twelve Step Program. The building is also located in the rear of the property, far away from the central action of the parish campus. As the Parish grows this building will not be able to support the demand for classrooms but it would be suitable for other functions.

St. Benedict Hall – St. Benedict’s is the oldest of the parish buildings and it is in terrible condition. The building has suffered from poor maintenance that was aggravated by vandalism and water intrusion from both the roof and foundation. Inspections of the building confirmed the substantial presence of mold. Cost estimates for mold remediation are uncertain because the extent of the intrusion won’t be known until a remediation project is started. The entire roof must first be replaced. There is physical deterioration of the structure both internally and externally. Some asbestos has been identified in the building. The cost to bring the building up

to present building codes has not been evaluated. The bathroom and spaces in the building are not up to ADA code. Estimates for needed repairs are over \$75,000 for mold remediation and waterproofing. This does not include any costs for bringing the building up to code and reconfiguration to improve building functionality. As the risks and costs associated with the building became clear, Fr. Zuschmidt decided the prudent course of action was to close the building. The closing of St. Benedict's has put additional strain on our other facilities as we endeavor to accommodate all parish activities. St. Benedict's has some historical and sentimental value to some of our parish family. Since it was the first African-American school in Belmont, some of our parishioners have a special concern for St. Benedict's. This connection must be considered and responded to appropriately as the parish plans for the future.

Parking Lots – Parking is at a premium currently at the parish. The “front” lot is inadequate, but has room for expansion. In the rear of the building, there is more space for expansion as well. Currently we use almost every free inch of space on our property as well as adjacent property at a local doctor's office. A large, undeveloped piece of our property stands in the way of “contiguous” parking in the rear of the building. The front lot was resurfaced in 2006. The back lots are in need of attention. There is adequate handicapped parking in the front of the building.

Parking spaces:	Front lot	42 spaces (5 handicapped)
	Immediate back lot	30 spaces
	Education Bldg lot	16 spaces (2 handicapped)

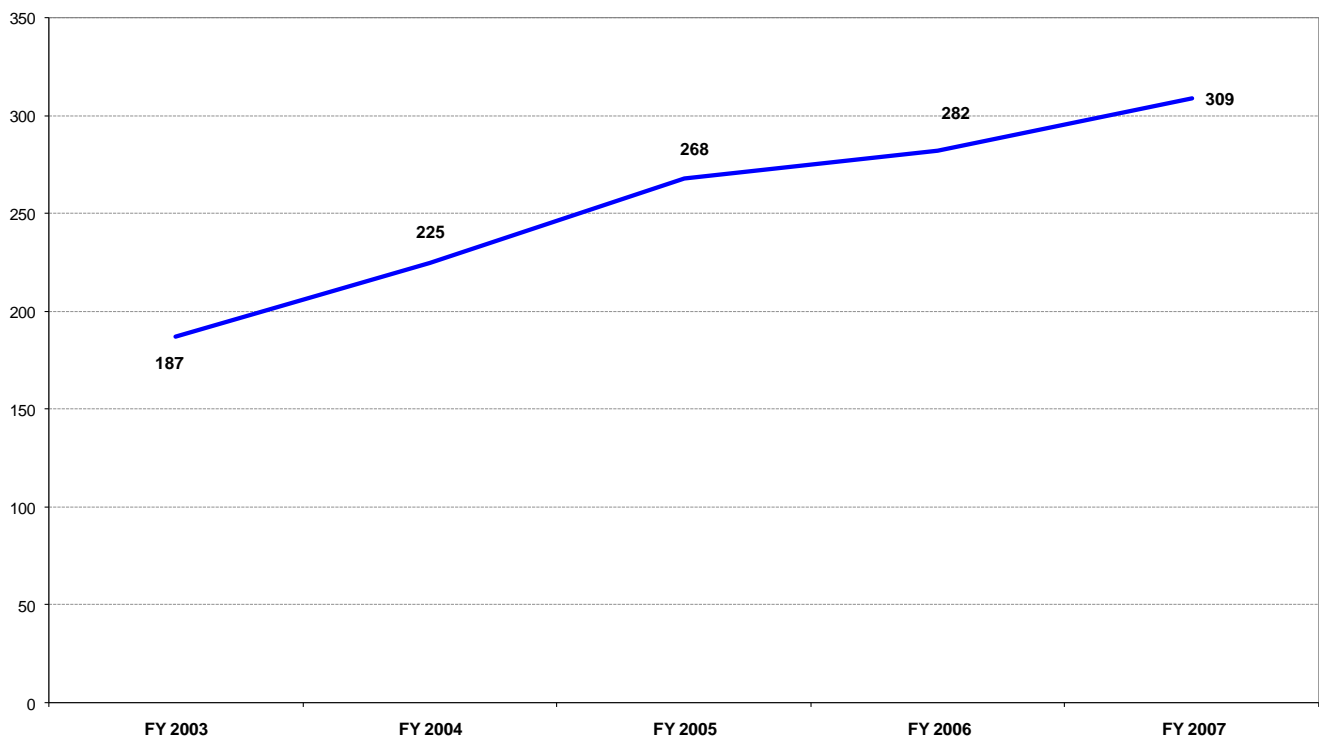
Rectory – currently located about two miles from the parish plant, the residence is adequate in size and well furnished. The building is about ten years old and was purchased by the parish approximately eight years ago. With one priest assigned to the parish the rectory meets the space needs of our clergy quite well. It also accommodates occasional meetings of the Council and other parish groups for social and spiritual occasions. It is maintained by a group of diligent individuals in the parish who troubleshoot potential problems.

V. Parish Financial Profile

Queen of the Apostles has historically been a Parish that has struggled financially. The lack of funds is the main reason buildings have fallen into disrepair. Upon his arrival in 2003, Fr. Zuschmidt embarked upon a program to get the Parish into sound financial condition. Through increased collections and good fiscal management, the Parish is presently in stable shape. The debt on the rectory was paid off and the only long-term obligation remaining was approximately \$29,000 owed to the Diocese. The entire debt was retired in December 2007.

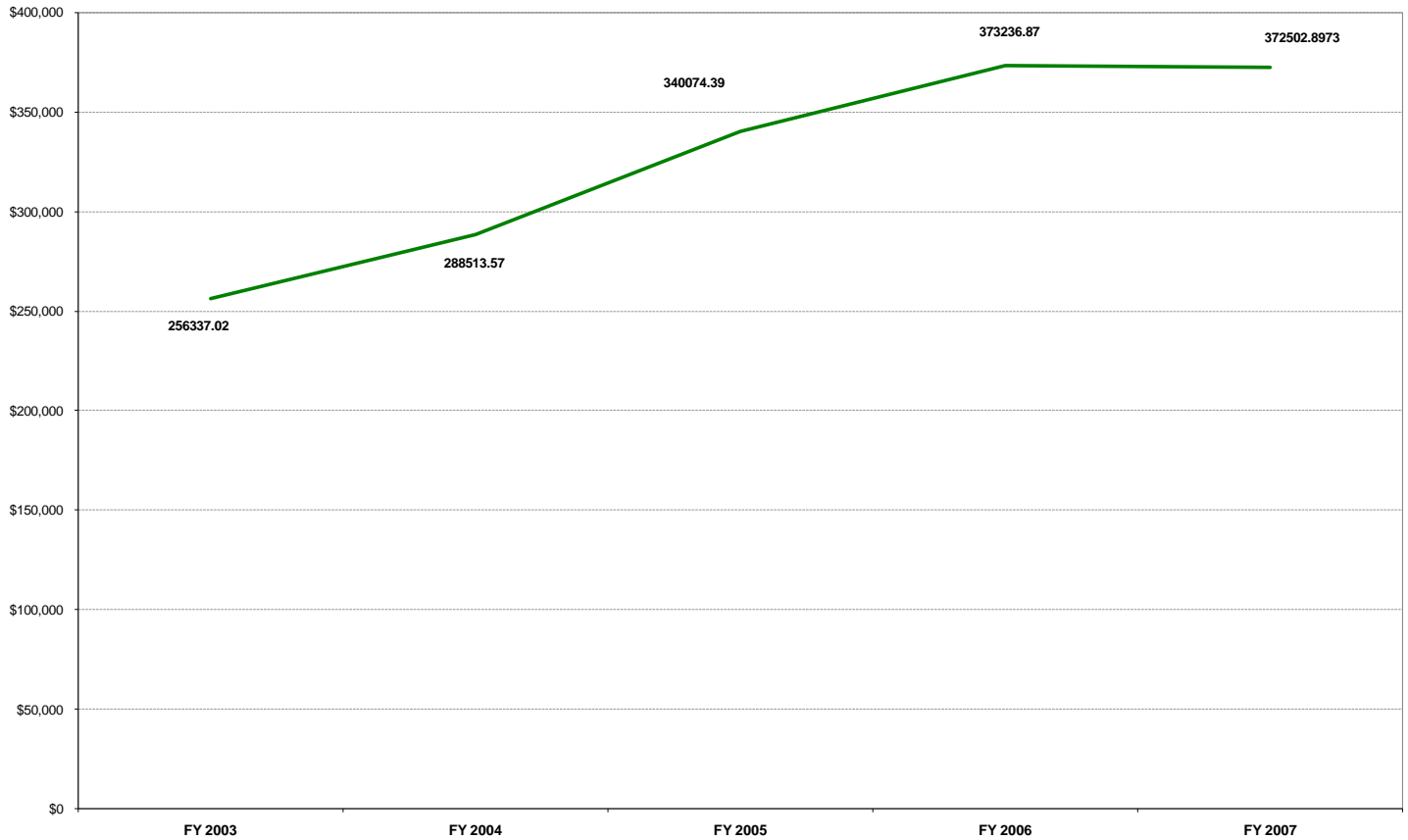
The improvement in the Parish financial situation is clear from several data points. The chart below shows how the number of Parishioners contributing more than \$100 per year has increased since 2003. As the chart illustrates, the number of contributing Parishioners has steadily increased.

Contributing Parishioners (>\$100 per year)



The next chart illustrates the increase in contributions over the same time period. Contributions increased steadily from FY 2003 to FY 2006 but they leveled off through FY2007.

Contributions



With the arrival of a new pastor in July, 2007, plans were made to initiate a stewardship drive to increase offertory and educate the parish on the use of its time, talent, and treasure. Beginning in the fall of 2007, this project was undertaken. By the mid year point in our fiscal year (December 31, 2007) we have seen the following increases in our parish finances:

We had \$196,000.00 in cash and savings on December 31, 2007 which is an increase of almost \$50,000.00 from year-end 2006. We have paid off our loan to the Diocese so that we are now debt free for the first time in five years.

During the first half of fiscal 2007 (July – December) we collected \$272,000.00 and spent \$203,000.00 resulting in a surplus of \$69,000.00. Our income averages \$7,500.00 per week versus a budget of \$6,500.00.

A bit over half of all expenses cover salaries (\$64,000.00) and utilities and janitorial services and upkeep totals \$33,000.00. Rectory expenses are \$9,000.00.

Twenty percent (\$40,000.00) went to support parish programs and commission work and charitable outreach. \$40,000.00 (20 percent) went to the Diocese and the final 8 percent (\$16,000.00) covered books, supplies, telephones, postage and miscellaneous expenses.

Since January 2008 it appears that our Offertory has increased even more. This will be analyzed in the two remaining quarters of the fiscal year.

VI. PARISH GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

In 2003, the Parish completed a detailed survey of Parishioner needs, wants, and desires. The survey included a wealth of demographic data that was analyzed and published in a Parish Profile report to the Diocese. Parish commissions utilized the data as a basis for forming their goals and objectives and implemented many of the ideas into their commission activities. The data was also used to conduct an updating of the Parish database which resulted in a reduction of the number of families viewed as Parishioners. Much of that data still has relevance. To help the parish look toward the future, however, another survey of a more general nature was conducted at the end of 2006. The main intent of this survey was to gauge the growth of the parish, its programs, its parishioners (joined since 2003), and to ask questions that allowed both evaluation and comment in areas of parish life. The survey questionnaire and detailed responses are included in Appendix A. The Pastoral Council and each commission reviewed the survey responses for items to be included in commission planning. From this information these groups discerned a series of goals and objectives that help them fulfill the mission that has been identified for them.

WORSHIP & SPIRITUAL LIFE COMMISSION

Mission Statement:

The mission of the Worship & Spiritual Life Commission of Queen of the Apostles Catholic Church is to work in close collaboration with the pastor to provide the parish with well-planned, meaningful, and spiritually uplifting liturgical seasons, experiences as well as other opportunities for the spiritual growth of the parish.

Vision Statement:

The vision of the Worship and Spiritual Life Commission of Queen of the Apostles Catholic Church is to have an adequate worship space that is conducive to good liturgy and opportunities for spiritual growth. We envision more opportunities for Spiritual development as well as opportunities for group and personal prayer. We would like to see more of our faith community actively involved as Liturgical Ministers and provide them with the necessary spiritual formation.

History and Analysis:

The Worship and Spiritual Life Commission was formed approximately 10 years ago. At the beginning a layout of a new church was discussed, the documents of Vatican II were studied, and at present we spend our time preparing the liturgy for various feast days of the Church. God has called us to provide our parish with well planned, meaningful and spiritually uplifting liturgical experiences and other opportunities for spiritual growth. Everything that we do flows from the Eucharist (worship, fellowship etc.). We recruit and train Lectors, Extraordinary Ministers of Communion, Ministers of Hospitality, Musicians, Cantors, and Altar Servers. The Art and Environment committee falls under our commission. They provide the parish with decorations that enhance our liturgies. Liturgies for Advent, Christmas, Triduum, and many other special feasts and celebrations are planned in our commission. We plan a yearly retreat for the liturgical ministers and also the parish mission. Currently the commission recruits and oversees the training of liturgical ministers, as well as art and environmental concerns for the church seasons. It creates an opportunity for dialogue and

coordination between the various facets of the liturgy. It also supports the planning and execution of special seasons and feasts as well as the planning for an annual Lenten retreat and communal reconciliation services.

In 2006 – 2007, parish members identified the following gifts and challenges with regard to the liturgical life of the parish:

Gifts:

- 1) participation in ministry
- 2) decent music
- 3) good participation at Mass
- 4) “Vatican II” experience

Challenges:

- 1) a new and larger church/more masses
- 2) better sound system
- 3) children’s programs & facilities
- 4) deacons
- 5) handicapped seating
- 6) better restroom, storage facilities

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

Based on a collaborative effort of parish members, commission members and Pastoral Council members, the following have been articulated (L= at least five years, I = short term):

Goal One: To assist the parish in visioning and creating new worship space that will meet our spiritual and technical needs. (L)

Objectives:

- 1) Participate in the planning process to see this come to fruition (2007 through early 2008)
- 2) Assess what can be accommodated in seating and hospitality in order to make increased numbers comfortable and welcome. Meet with Administration before end of calendar year 2007.

Goal Two: Hire a full time staff person to direct music and liturgical formation in the parish (I)

Objectives:

- 1) Plan for appropriate budget for the 2008 fiscal year.
- 2) Support a search for personnel

Goal Three: Re-establish Children’s Liturgy of the Word and explore the possibility of initiating a Sunday nursery program. (I)

Objectives:

- 1) Meet with Community Building Commission to brainstorm potential nursery possibilities (ideal to start after summer of 2008).
- 2) Recruit leadership, volunteers and equipment necessary to begin “Children’s Church” at 11:00 A.M. Mass by mid 2008.

Goal Four: Recruit new ministers for the liturgy and retrain existing ministers (I).

Objectives:

- 1) Participate in Stewardship talent survey in Fall 2007 and follow-up with training sessions for ministers.
- 2) Initiate spiritual reflection for ministers in Advent and Lent as an opportunity for fellowship and support, beginning in Advent 2007.

Goal Five: Re-establish annual parish retreat in Lent of each year. (I)

Objectives:

- 1) Start in early 2008 to plan for Lent 2009 for parish mission. Use resources

other than the OSFS community.

OUTREACH COMMISSION

Mission Statement:

We act as an organization in the parish, responding to God's will, that identifies and assesses community needs and community outreach. We oversee the peace and justice programs of the parish and connect the parish to resources in the community, the diocese, and elsewhere.

Vision Statement:

The vision of our commission is to expand our resources and our outreach in the community by joining with other churches and civic organizations to identify and address major social problems. We will educate the parish community in the ministry of justice and charity in an ongoing way.

History and Analysis:

Prior to 2000, social justice and service programs operated independently. A decision was made to combine appropriate programs under one commission in 2000.

How have we grown? Funding for programs came through donations from parishioners and fundraising activities. As of Jan. 2006, the second collection once a month is designated for the outreach programs. The generosity of the parish has allowed us to increase our donations to local organizations (12 in all). In 2008 this second collection is being replaced with a tithe of our regular offertory as part of our developing stewardship program. It will give the commission more revenue to use for outreach to the broader community.

Parish ministries that we oversee include:

Monthly food collections	Parish Nurse Program	Respect Life
Shut-in Tape Ministry	Angel Tree	Coat collection
Peace and Justice Issues	Project Heifer	Food Baskets
Community walks (AIDS, Crop Walk, etc)		Rosary makers
Meal program for Boys and Girls Club		

Leadership; Jennifer Church 2000-2005; Tricia Vasil 2005 to Present.

The most recent survey of parish members identified the following:

<u>Gifts</u>	<u>Challenges</u>
1) we support those in need	1) need space for programs
2) inform parish of issues	2) need more volunteers
3) provide opportunities to participate	3) better educational programs

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

Based on a collaboration of commission, council, and parish members we have prioritized the following long term (L) and short term (I) goals and objectives:

Goal One: Schedule one Justice program with area churches annually. (I)

Objectives:

1) Meet with local pastors to discern needs for 2008.

- 2) Pay special attention to the African-American and Latino communities in 2008.

Goal Two: Provide outreach ministries tailored to (new) young families in the parish. (L)

Objectives:

- 1) Meet with Faith Formation by mid 2008 to see what needs might surface for the Fall of 2008.
- 2) Recruit families as volunteers and members in the 2007 Stewardship campaign.

Goal Three: Devise a way to have a more solid connection to other church communities for prayer and for fellowship and along with them work to enhance our service to the broader community. (L)

Objectives:

- 1) Ask about a commission member as part of ministers fellowship in Belmont in Fall 2007.
- 2) Maybe we can help sponsor the Community Seder in March 2008?

COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Mission Statement:

Our mission is to provide assistance to Queen of the Apostles staff and parishioners in communicating information to the church and local community, including the local media, regarding special events and other items of interest.

Vision Statement:

We are a connecting point that helps people unravel the many opportunities and programs available at the parish. Their heightened participation is a sign of our success.

History and Analysis:

The commission is responsible for the quarterly parish newsletter as well as the development and maintenance of the parish web site. We assist with other printed materials and special events. It is our responsibility to issue press releases for the parish.

In the most recent survey of the parish, the following gifts and challenges were identified:

Gifts

- 1) Queen's Herald
- 2) "New" web site

Challenges

- 1) Need for monthly calendar
- 2) Add sound and other data to the web, including devotional material
- 3) possibility of an "info" kiosk on site?

Goals and Objectives:

Goal One: Electronically e-mail the Queen's Herald newsletter to all active parish addresses. (I)

Objectives:

- 1) By December 2007, redevelop Registration Form to include e-mail address.
- 2) Target electronic version in conjunction with bulk mail by Spring 2008
- 3) Evaluate over the summer?

Goal Two: Hire part-time staff assistant to manage the parish web site. (L)

Objectives:

- 1) Discuss possibility with Finance Council this year.
- 2) Shape job description in relationship to the monitored uses of the web site currently.

Goal Three: Assist with all printed material that would disseminate information about or for Queen of the Apostles and its parishioners. (L/I)

Objective:

- 1) Offer electronic e-mail blasts to all parishioners who sign up for the service via the web site.

STEWARDSHIP COMMISSION

Mission Statement

The Stewardship Commission of Queen of the Apostles Catholic Church endeavors to infuse the theology and practice of stewardship into the life of the Parish and identify opportunities for parishioners to share their time, talent, and treasure for the good of others, the good of the Parish, and the good of the Church.

Vision Statement

As a Commission, we seek to become a vibrant conduit for the time, talent, and treasure of the members of Queen of the Apostles Parish.

History and Analysis

After a number of off-and-on attempts, a permanent Stewardship Commission was established in 2003. It has recently completed the first phase of a Stewardship program in the parish. This Fall (2007) we conducted stewardship education, provided a time, talent, and treasure survey and worked in conjunction with the diocesan office to undertake a stewardship campaign. God has called us to increase the number of parishioners who embrace stewardship as a way of life, which would include an increase in the number of parishioners active in the various ministries, both in the Parish and the community. We currently offer the Parish an annual Newcomers' Dinner, a weekly list of stewardship opportunities published in the bulletin, and an annual Stewardship Fair. The Parish has indicated that it desires a number of ministries – some of which are already being offered and others which are not. What we need to change is the passive approach that many parishioners have toward these ministries. We must do a better job of informing parishioners of the stewardship opportunities already available in the Parish and of nurturing an environment in which parishioners would be encouraged to take the lead in establishing new ministries.

The following gifts and challenges were identified in 2006:

Gifts:

Challenges:

- 1) more active role
- 2) ongoing, annual program
- 3) closer collaboration with Pastoral Council and Communications Commission

Goals and Objectives:

The following have been discerned by the commission in collaboration with the Pastoral council. Long term goals are indicated by (L) and short term goals by (I).

Goal One: Follow-up on the time and talent surveys so that people can be thanked for their ministry and approached for their participation in a timely manner. (I)

Objective:

- 1) Assign various commissions and ministries to members of the Stewardship Committee so they can follow-up through January 2008.

Goal Two: Initiate an annual stewardship opportunity and ministry fair for the parish. (L/I)

Objective:

- 1) Annual parish picnic for whole community with ministry fair.

Goal Three: Revise new member handbook and devise a better way of distribution. (I)

Objectives:

- 1) Work with parish office to establish a means of communicating new member info.
- 2) Revise booklet by December 2007 for distribution (new text and pictures).

Goal Four: Welcome new parish members (I)

Objective:

- 1) Lynn Spada will call each new family beginning in October to welcome them.

Goal Five: Work with Faith Formation to provide stewardship education for children and for youth on an annual basis.

Objective:

- 1) Envelopes for children in Fall 2007.

Goal Six: Work with Community Building Commission to further develop and sustain an annual newcomer's dinner.

EDUCATION COMMISSION

Mission Statement:

The Education Commission will provide for the educational needs of the whole parish community.

Vision Statement:

This commission creates the environment and provides the tools for our brothers and sisters in Christ to grow in the Faith. We make Scripture, church teachings, spiritual formation, and sacramental preparation an integral part of the parish life.

History and Analysis:

Currently we offer two regular Bible Study opportunities. One is on Sunday mornings, which is parish based, the other is on Sunday evenings, which is facilitated by members of the parish but is sourced from Catholic Scripture Study. Other opportunities are provided throughout the year, offering scripture and spirituality studies.

Our main focus in religious education remains the Faith Formation classes for elementary, middle, and high school youth. A “traditional” structure is maintained from pre-k through 6th grade on Sunday mornings, with seventh and eighth grade and high school youth being served on Sunday evenings. Currently our sacramental preparation programs are not distinct from our Sunday School programming. A change was initiated in July 2007 to have this process re-shaped by the Fall of 2008.

We are also looking toward developing new programs, including intergenerational learning styles and family based catechetical programs.

The following gifts and challenges are the result of collaboration by the Pastoral Council, the commission and the parish survey:

<u>Gifts</u>	<u>Challenges</u>
1) Why Catholic program	1) Inadequate and uncomfortable space
2) Father’s sermons	2) No resource center
	3) Program split Sunday AM and PM for kids
	4) Adult Ed. Is “spotty”

Goals and Objectives:

Educationally speaking, our present setup leaves much to be desired. A parish center, not only encompassing a kitchen and large multipurpose room, but containing a proper library, meeting rooms, media center, and an area designed as a coffee shop/café would be a means to our becoming a center that people would look to as a matter of course, and not during times of special social or religious significance.

- Library. Our current library is used mostly for meetings and classroom space. We should be encouraging our parish family to use its resources, and we should expand the selection and quality of the materials we offer. If we can promote the musical and art components of our educational efforts, we will need to add more music and art resources to our existing collection.
- Meeting rooms. Dedicated meeting rooms, not only multipurpose rooms that also host classes and often are heavily used by children are needed. How we look to visitors is very important, how we look to prospective parishioners is very important, we host visiting instructors, clerics, and community groups. We need to afford them and ourselves appropriate space and surroundings to affect efficient and productive meetings.
- Media Center. We should be hosting Catholic films and other media events that will engage our parishioners, as well as attract interested members of the surrounding community to come in and get to know us. We can teach and evangelize through film and music, but for the most part we are not. We have creative and talented youth in our parish that can be put to good efforts in this, some of whom are continuing in colleges in related fields. We should act to make it happen and share our faith in yet another way.
- Coffee Shop/Café. We poach a bit on Community building here, in that we are going to suggest food and drink as a means to evangelize and educate. Right now we use a large multipurpose room in the Parish Center. We could use a dedicated café area adjacent to the large Community room. In a coffee shop setting we could still host Coffee and Doughnuts on a Sunday, but could also formulate programs for singles and young adults that could have faith based components in a more congenial atmosphere, along

with music and other activities aimed at those groups. We can arrange age appropriate mixers, dances, and other events for our parishioners and guests. Bible studies, surveys of church history, informal musical appreciation sessions could all be based in such a venue.

Our lack of facilities engenders a lack of educational programming. Education is not simply a classroom function, it encompasses many facets. To do this we will have to provide the space, the teachers and materials, and above all the leadership to continue to study the process, improve the process, and continue to push this all forward and renew it from year to year.

COMMUNITY BUILDING COMMISSION

Mission Statement:

The mission of the Community Building Commission is to provide opportunities for the parish to come together, to grow together, and to grow into a community.

Vision Statement:

Our vision is to provide fellowship opportunities and entertainment for the Parish through care, service, friendliness, and fellowship.

History and Analysis:

Prior to 1999 there was an organization filling the place of the present Community Building Commission. The Commission began to take its present form in 1999-2000. By 2002 the Commission began in earnest with the renewal of the monthly breakfast. This breakfast was started with a gift of \$100 by Mr. Gwiadinski, assisted by Walter Baranowski. The parishioners paid for the simple pancakes and sausage breakfast and it was a self-sustaining initiative; the breakfast receipts paid for the next breakfast. Surplus funds go to Scouts, Catherine's House, youth groups, etc.

The breakfasts have served to attract some folks to serve on commissions, and on Community Building, but not in great numbers, and all in all, the response has not been what we wish it could be.

We have a number of special theme breakfasts, regular breakfasts, Bingo, Fall Festival, the Shrove Tuesday (Mardi Gras) dinner, Labor Day Picnic, Thanksgiving Dinner, and Halloween and Easter Egg hunts.

Our staffing looks like this:

Breakfast	6-8	
Bingo	10-12	
Thanksgiving	10-12	
Fall Festival	30-50	(With EXTRA effort to attract folks)

Coffee and doughnuts are provided by rotating teams after the Sunday Masses.

Parish members have identified the following gifts and challenges:

<u>Gifts</u>	<u>Challenges</u>
1) Thanksgiving dinner	1) Dances and mixers
2) Fr Joe's farewell	2) Opportunities for singles
3) Trick or trunk program	3) Sports team activities
4) Great volunteers	4) Activities for young adults and young families.
5) Coffee & doughnuts	5) Better facilities for above, for Scouts, retreats and for meetings.
	6) A gym
	7) Transportation (buses and vans)
	8) Better commercial kitchen

Goals and Objectives:

Goal One: Recruit more volunteers to support the programs we currently have.

Objective:

- 1) Rely on Stewardship campaign in Fall 2007 and follow up.

Goal Two: Develop one activity in 2008 specifically for the 18 – 30 age group.

Objective:

- 1) Recruit young people onto commission this year.
- 2) Poll age group about fellowship needs. Plan for 2008.

Goal Three: Plan for bigger and modernized facilities.

ADMINISTRATION COMMISSION

Mission and Vision statement:

Provides for a long range maintenance plan and work with the pastor to provide appropriately for parish mechanics, roofs, painting, and general scheduling. Oversee the maintenance and housekeeping of the parish plant.

Goals and Objectives:

Goal One: Provide the MAK Center with divisible spaces – more flexible use. (I)

Goal Two: Provide for improvements to our current parking situation (increase spaces). (I)

Goal Three: Hire a full time custodian for the parish plant. (L)

Objective:

- 1) Work with Finance Council to plan for costs and transition in next two years.

The team discussed the fact that a lot of what we do is based upon the need from other commissions. Our input may come later in the process.

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

In accord with the vision of the Second Vatican Council and at the direction of the Bishop of the Diocese of Charlotte, the parish of Queen of the Apostles established a Pastoral Council. In doing so, the members of the council seek to contribute their talents and leadership skills to support the ministry of the pastor and the growth of our spiritual lives.

Mission Statement:

The Pastoral Council seeks to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ entrusted to us through a process of collaborative ministry with the pastor. We commit ourselves to the use of our time and talent to assist the pastor and the members of the parish as we celebrate our oneness in Christ, as we build our community of faith, and as we seek to serve others, especially the least among us.

Vision Statement:

We seek to promote pastoral activity as well as the overall good of the parish, its resources and its mission. To do so, we commit ourselves to honesty, to ethnic and cultural diversity that reflects the parish, and to a collaborative effort that supports the vision of our pastor.

Three Overriding Issues:

Our discernment over this last year has led us, in dialogue with commissions and with other members of the parish, to identify three important issues that the parish must respond to if it is to effectively plan for the future.

1. Space and Facilities: A cursory reading of this document makes it clear that one of the main issues facing the various ministries of this parish is the lack of adequate space for programs. What space we do have is overused and much of it does not adequately serve the groups who use it. For example, on a typical Sunday morning in the east corner of the parish hall the fifth and sixth grades will gather for Faith Formation while adults who have been present at the 8:00 AM celebration of the Eucharist are gathered in the central section of the same hall. In the south west corner of this same space, a pot luck is being set up and some thirty to forty individuals will sit at tables there for a gathering of our more senior members. It is possible that the kitchen in this same facility may have a group of children working with adults to prepare cookies for shut-in members. There are no partitions and the din is distracting to every one. We do a disservice to all of these groups by not providing adequate and appropriate space for them. In the church at the 11:00 AM celebration of the Eucharist, additional seating for more than 50 people has to be provided in the side aisles, in the main aisle, and in the small narthex by the main doors. It is inadequate, uncomfortable, and distracting to worship in this kind of environment. Add to this the lack of proximate toilet facilities, no adequate service space for infants and children, no music rehearsal space, no vesting space for servers, and very little

liturgical storage space. There is a lack of storage space overall, and some of our facilities are not accessible to wheelchair bound or disabled members of our community.

The offices are poorly located, not contiguous, and lack adequate storage space and meeting space for staff members. There is a lack of privacy manifested especially by the fact that the office hallway also forms the only interior path from the church to the hall.

It is clear that this problem will grow as our community grows. We cannot face the challenge of more members, adequate additional ministry to the Latino community, and development of our Faith Formation programs without more meeting and worship space, designed and supported by adequate parking and support facilities.

After obtaining permission from the diocese, the council developed a planning group that has polled and dialogued with the parish community over the past two years. It addressed our needs and sought input on possible solutions. This process has produced some clear desires on the part of the parish:

1. The parish desires the upkeep and optimal use of our current facilities and the development of additional space for our programs.

2. The parish wishes to utilize the eight acres we currently occupy rather than move to a new location. There is an openness that over time our current footprint can be expanded by the purchase of adjacent properties.

3. The parish realizes that in the short-term we may need to seek temporary solutions to assist us as we shape a long-term plan. We are currently in dialogue with Belmont Abbey College to share some space for our Sunday School program under one roof and in one time frame for all students. While details have not yet been resolved, there appears to be excitement on the part of the parish and the college administration to share resources in this kind of way.

4. The parish is on stable financial ground, with no debt, and with recent growth that will be beneficial to the development of a capital campaign.

The council believes that the ability to enter into a master planning process will help us shape these challenges in relationship to our goals and our vision.

2. Hispanic Ministry: Up to this point the parish has been inadequate in its care for Hispanics living in parish boundaries. Current statistics show us that this population is officially over 2,000 individuals (and unofficially is probably much more). At the present time we see little participation from members of the Hispanic Community because, we believe, we have not been able to address issues of pastoral life, formation, and worship in Spanish. Within the context of the planning process, we identified Latino communities in the Mount Holly area and in North Belmont. Contact with this community by the parish nurse and by the pastor reveals that a large number in the Hispanic community in this area appear to be of Mexican origin (communities closer to Gastonia seem to represent a broader spectrum of Latin American countries), and it can be presumed that Catholicism would be the predominant religion. In the northern part of Gaston County that we serve, there is clearly the development of small Pentecostal

communities whose primary language is Spanish. A few mainstream churches also seem to have reached out with Spanish language programs. The Catholic community in eastern Gaston County has done little to identify and respond to the religious needs of this community. The council has begun a process of self-education so that it can pray and reflect on this important pastoral issue. At the outset, though, there are some clear challenges that we see which must be part of a preliminary plan to serve this community:

1. The parish is currently developing a task force under the leadership of the pastor which is made up of a broad spectrum of parish members who will prioritize our commitment to and development of a relationship with Hispanic Catholics. We believe this task force will have to look at basic issues including (a) the possible development of ESL programs on our site or in communities within the parish; (b) an assessment of the need for faith formation and sacramental preparation for children and adults in English speaking and in Spanish speaking programs, and the development of people and program resources to do so; (c) The development of a Spanish language Eucharistic liturgy and other sacramental celebrations as the community develops; and (d) the education of the English-speaking faith community especially around issues of language, immigration issues, and culture. We will do this by utilizing resources available to us from the Diocese of Charlotte as well as local non profit organizations.

2. The council believes that the service to the Hispanic community is one important reason to remain on our current site. While it is clear that there will be residential development to our south and west, there is also growth to the north, especially in the Hispanic community. From this perspective, our campus remains somewhat central to all the populations within the parish.

3. Our outreach ministries will have to develop an understanding of what services are already available and what other services we might advocate as we develop a relationship with this part of our community. This may also challenge our Peace and Justice ministry in shaping educational programming.

We have already established initial meetings with diocesan officials as well as dialogue on the level of parish staff and outreach ministry to heighten our sensitivity to our service in this part of our community. We believe we are making important first steps.

3. Reshaping the Heart of the Community: The parish community in Belmont is unique in that it is the territorial parish of the Mary Help of Christians Abbey and of the Belmont Abbey College as well as the motherhouse and administration of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas (the entire Southeastern region by the end of 2008) and the specific Mercy ministries housed on the campus there. Unfortunately, for whatever reasons, these various Catholic institutions have become individual, parochial islands floating together in Gaston County. At the same time, the historic African-American community of Reid Park has a long connection to the parish which has waned over the years as families moved on from Belmont to other parts of the country or otherwise disaffiliated from the church. It is significant that what we currently identify as our “back driveway” which has fallen into disrepair is actually the “front driveway” to the old Saint Benedict School and our presence in the Reid Park neighborhood. The disrepair of the driveway is a statement about our dislocation from the African-American community there. We believe that the Queen of the Apostles Parish has a unique role and opportunity in rekindling cooperative relationships between these varied Catholic organizations and with the residential

community that has been a vital part of our life as a church. The council believes this can be accomplished by a program that supports the following:

1. Re-establishing a relationship with the Reid Park neighborhood by reclaiming and redeveloping our driveway and placing the old parish sign at that end of the property. To do so establishes our presence once again in this neighborhood.

2. Develop a relationship with the two churches that border our property and that currently serve a large portion of the Reid Park area. We already support the annual Unity Celebration on Martin Luther King Day. We could develop paraliturgical opportunities for our communities to share together. At the same time, in cooperation with the Parish Nurse program, we should begin to participate in social programs and outreach that specifically serve the neighborhood community. Our monthly food collections might occasionally reflect our commitment to this neighborhood.

3. A visual history of the Black Catholic community and its place in the unfolding of Catholic life in Gaston County would be an important addition to our "History Wall." Beginning in 2008, re-establish the "Harumbe Mass" and create a "homecoming" opportunity for families on an annual basis. This is a key issue since we have made a determination in 2006 that the old St. Benedict's building with its current problems is no longer usable by the parish.

4. We have begun to cooperate with the Campus Ministry at the college in their service programs and in some outreach programs. At the same time, we are cooperating with the Bradley Center in educational programs around pastoral and cultural issues (Immigration, specifically). We are looking at resource sharing as the Adult Learning Program moves to the old Sacred Heart College campus. We hope to share classroom space and meeting space there at the invitation of the college to assist the challenges presented by our current facility and our Faith Formation programs. We want to encourage our Faith Formation program to continue to utilize BAC students in our Sunday School programs.

5. We have established a relationship with Holy Angels wherein our Knights of Columbus and their families have been involved for some time. Currently we are also offering our facilities for use by patient's families especially for funerals and funeral receptions. We are also supportive of the programs at House of Mercy and Catherine's House. We are making our parish educational programs and Adult Educational opportunities available to the sisters residing across the street. We have had great success in this regard.

6. The monks of the Abbey are a welcome presence at parish functions. They assist us regularly with Penance Services and as supply for some weekend liturgies. The council hopes we may utilize them more in the areas of Spiritual Direction and in occasional programs around spiritual themes. We are cooperating with the Abbey and the college in the building of the new adoration chapel and hope to be able to shift one of our weekday Masses each week to the new chapel (summer 2008) so that we are connected to the mission of the Perpetual Adoration Chapel.

We hope to establish a Catholic presence that is cooperative and supportive. We believe the parish is the best catalyst for this activity and can be a beneficiary of such cooperation.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

Given the imminent growth in our area as previously detailed, and Parish facilities that are beyond maximum capacity now, it is clear that Queen of the Apostles must embark on a building project in order to provide adequate space for the present and the future.

With the submission of this document we are also asking for permission to begin a Master Planning Process so that we can address our short term and long term needs. Such a Master Planning Process will allow us to fuse the goals and objectives of our commissions and committees with the kind of adequate facilities and other support that will allow us to continue to serve eastern Gaston and western Mecklenburg counties.

The face of Queen of the Apostles is changing. As we grow in numbers, as we respond to the ethnic and cultural realities that our parish territory presents to us, and as we see ourselves in relationship to other Catholic entities in eastern Gaston County, we hope to be sensitive to the worship, education, and social needs of this community. We want to maintain the “values” of family and closeness that so many people identify as important aspects of the parish. At the same time, we want to remain open to the people we need to welcome for worship or outreach as we move into the future.

The parish is much more secure than just five years ago. We believe we are ready, and it is time to move forward.

Mary, present at the great Pentecost when the fire of God's Spirit enlivened the church, pray that we will be afire with that same Spirit as we serve the Gospel here in this place. Amen.