

# *March Strategic Plan*

*Connect • Engage • Grow*

## *Parish Assembly*

The Spring Parish Assembly will be held on Sunday, March 10th after the Divine Liturgy. Please attend to be updated on Parish Financials and our wonderful ministries. Stewards who have submitted their Stewardship Form at least 30 days before the Assembly will be eligible to vote.

## *Strategic Planning: The Future of Nativity of Christ*

The Parish Council voted at its meeting on February 12th to institute a Strategic Planning process to help us set a course for our Church's future. Parishioner Anthony Scott has a background in professional, non-profit planning and is excited to begin communicating with all of you during this process.

On March 3rd, Anthony will present a powerpoint presentation during the Fellowship Hour describing the steps for the Strategic Planning process, eventually leading to goals and objectives that can improve Nativity of Christ.



**NATIVITY OF CHRIST**  
**GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH**

✦ faith ✦ love ✦ community ✦

## *Why am I involved in the Strategic Planning Process?*

*By Vicki Kalabokes*

As I continue my personal relationship with God, I continue to try to help people and improve the experience everyone has at our religious campus. I am very visual and spiritual so I am conscious of how people enter God's House and other areas of the campus. We need to be inviting people to the joy of worshipping Jesus Christ by having a warm welcoming environment for all who want to worship or engage in Fellowship. I feel we need to have healthy Ministries to engage more people with Jesus Christ and Orthodoxy. Having the youth comfortable and engaged in our faith is high on my list.

Strategic Planning was an integral part of my professional career so it was only natural that I could share my professional knowledge to benefit our Church. I know from experience that developing a strategic plan at our Church can achieve success. I have seen many organizations not implement successful plans and I know those pitfalls. I have learned that we have to have specific attainable and realistic goals that we can complete in a timely manner and that can be measured.

We also need to dream and have a clear vision by ALL in our parish to be successful. I hope all of you will, join me and the entire Parish in developing our vision for the future of our Church.

**Every Dream Begins with Dreamers**

## **Parish Strategic Planning Workshop**

**Come and give input on this very important plan for our church.**

**Saturday, April 13  
10am-2pm**

## **Strategic Plan**

As we commemorate our past, we should also be excited to dream towards our future through the **Strategic Plan**. The Strategic Planning process started as we were working on several projects and decided to stop, step back, and look at all Parish needs; both ministries and facilities. The purpose of the Strategic Plan is to set priorities and focus energy and resources as the entire Parish works for a common goal. Many parishioners have suggested over 20 different projects or ministries they would like to see at Nativity. The Strategic Plan is necessary to see what we are going to do, what it costs and what we can raise to not incur any debt and continue a healthy and spiritual Parish. We encourage ALL parishioners to give their input one on one with Strategic Planning Committee and Parish Council members, to attend the Saturday, April 13 Workshop, to participate in the Confidential Survey and to attend the Special Parish Assembly on the Strategic Plan. "Every Great Dream Begins with Dreamers." We want to encourage the entire Parish to "Dream" together.

**We need YOU to Please complete the Strategic Planning Survey by April 5, and attend the Saturday, April 13 Workshop from 10-2. Please contact Spiro Stratigos (spirostratigos@gmail.com) to ask any questions.**

# *May Strategic Plan*

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## *A message from our Parish Council President*

Christos Anesti! Christ has Risen!

We ended April with the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Pascha Picnic that brought together over 450 faithful to our campus. What an amazing show of love and thankfulness for what God has given us. In 50 years, the Nativity of Christ Church has become a good neighbor to our community spanning all the North Bay. This year we pause to look at our past, present and future.

For me it is a special time to remember those that molded the person I am today. As I turn 49 years old this year, I take the time to thank God for so many blessings this parish has brought to me and my family. As we celebrate 50 years as a Parish I give special thanks to the many members of the parish who taught me so many lessons and taught me the love of God and of my neighbor. I have great appreciation for the philotimo I was taught. What does philotimo mean to each of us may be different, but it is the honor and pride to do what you do just because you feel responsible to do it without expecting anything in return and in simple terms doing good.

How do we honor our past but with philotimo. I am so proud of the Parish this year as we work to create a Strategic Plan that brings all of us together to express our hopes and dreams for the future of our Parish. Each of us working toward the same goal of honoring God's House. By creating a plan that welcomes all with open arms, grows our ministries, maintains our present Church/campus and looks at infrastructure that will help our ministries thrive.

What does the Strategic Plan mean to me? It continues the bright future of our parish into the future. It reminds me of the blessings we have and how we can always do better. It reminds me of the time, talents and treasures that God gave me. It reminds me of my grandparents, parents, godparents and family that gave me the life of the Church. It reminds me again of all those of the Church that have been my grandparents, parents and friends in God. It reminds me how important Nativity of Christ Greek Orthodox Parish is to my family. It reminds me how important supporting and honoring God's house is today and into the future.

I would like to personally thank each of you for supporting the Strategic Plan. These efforts will create a plan that can be implemented with all our support. Each of us are the body of the Church. Let's let our philotimo move us into the future continuing our love of God without fear but rather faith.

Should you have questions or comments regarding our bright future please take the time to talk with me, call me at 415-225-6412 or e-mail at [spirostratigos@gmail.com](mailto:spirostratigos@gmail.com)

With Much Love,

Spiro Stratigos  
Parish Council President

## *June 9 Special Parish Assembly*

Following the Divine Liturgy on June 9th there will be a Special Parish Assembly to approve the proposed Strategic Plan. The Plan will be paper mailed and emailed near the end of May. The Plan will also be posted on the Parish Website as soon as it is available for distribution. Those who have comments on the plan must submit them to Fr. John by June 4 in order to be considered for inclusion in the plan.

# *July-August Strategic Plan*

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We continue to celebrate our Parish's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and these past six months have been full of thoughtful prayer and commitment to our Church, our Parish and the community that surrounds us. We want to take a moment to first thank each of you for being a part of our continued journey in faith and love.

## *Strategic Plan*

Many of us will take time to reflect on life and enjoy a little time away during these next few summer months. As you recharge your mind and body take a moment to think about how you can support each of the Nativity of Christ Strategic Plan Goals that were approved unanimously at the June 9 Parish Assembly.

- Initiate New Church Membership Growth Strategies
- Expand and Increase Support for Existing Parish Ministries
- Expand and Continue Service to the Poor and Needy
- Enhance and Improve Internal Operations
- Develop and Increase Financial Resources
- Enhance and Improve Facilities

These 6 Goals are set forth for us to grow our faith in God and as the liturgical calendar year is just around the corner, it is a great time for us to consider our involvement.

## *How You Can Help*

A few ways each of us can contribute to the Church, its ministries and surrounding community.

1. Decide which goal is important to you and volunteer this summer to develop strategies to complete this goal. Contact the Church Office to volunteer.
2. Share community non-profits or causes that the parish can support with time, talents and treasures as a Parish. Please discuss with Father John, Parish Council member, or Strategic Planning committee member.
3. Be a role model, mentor and give support to a member of our parish or community.

## *Timeline for Strategic Plan Implementation*

- **June 9, 2019:** Midpoint Strategic Plan Presentation to Parish Assembly and Parish voted unanimously to approve the Strategic Plan Goals
- **August 25, 2019:** Final Strategic Plan presented for approval with detailed action plans, including costs and resources needed
- **August/September 2019:** Fundraising Feasibility Study Conducted
- **September 2019:** Review fundraising feasibility study and approve Capital Campaign
- **September/October 2019:** Capital Campaign initiated
- **2020 – 2024:** Implementation of Five Year Strategic Plan

Contact any Strategic Planning Committee member for more information and how you can get involved. Spiro Stratigos, Vicki Kalabokes, Anthony Scott, Steve Rouman, Christ Kamages, Father John Kocolas.

# *July-August Strategic Plan*

*Connect • Engage • Grow*

## *What the Strategic Planning Process Means to Me and Why I'm Involved*

*By Steve Rouman*

I feel very blessed to be part of the Nativity of Christ community. My family and I have always felt welcomed, loved, and spiritually nourished by this parish. As a result, I have tried to give back in as many ways as possible. My involvement in the strategic planning process is yet another way for me to do just that and to express my deep gratitude to this church. There are, however, even more personal reasons for my direct participation.

By most measures, Nativity is a healthy parish. We have a vibrant, young priest, well-established facilities, strong and growing ministries, and a positive financial standing. However, in spite of all of its seeming success and wonderful features, I am concerned about the future of our church (not to mention the greater Church overall). There are forces at work, both in and out of our control, that present significant, future challenges. My children, despite being raised in a Christ-centered home, are growing up in a largely "un-churched" world – a world that is continually drifting further and further away from our Christian values of love, generosity, and kindness. Making our parish as strong as possible to adequately face this and other challenges is important to me. I'm hopeful that by strengthening our church, and my children's ties to it, it will allow them to pass that foundation down to their children and beyond. And having a thoughtful, well-articulated, and achievable long-range plan is critical for that purpose.

I often think to myself, what would the founders of our church have done differently if they were to do it over again, especially with the knowledge and resources we have today? I'm not sure we can ever truly know that answer, but I choose to believe that they would have made the church the most beautiful and inviting building that it could be. Caring for the church in a physical, tangible way pays great dividends. It's the best way to show people that you care. And fifty years is a long time to go without a "remodel!" I will most likely never be a "founder" of a church. Thank God for that! However, this is my chance to have a lasting impact on my community.

Lastly, every great organization endeavors to have a vision that provides a framework for their decisions and guides their actions. A church should be no different. We, of course, have the gospels as our first and greatest guide, but having a strategic plan that reflects the community's wants and needs, will help us to filter what is worthy to pursue and, equally as important, what we should disregard. As a Parish Council member, I feel a great responsibility to leave the church in a better place and to always be making progress. However, it shouldn't be progress dictated by a sitting Parish Council or some committee, but rather a Parish Council carrying out the plans and wishes of the community. To me, there is no such thing as "good enough." If we're not moving forward, then we're moving backwards and that's not a legacy we want to be a part of.

May God continue to bless you and your families always.



## A Quiet Transfiguration is Underway at Nativity

*"And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another."*

(II Corinthians 3:18)

More than 35 parish members have worked for months to apply their love, faith and creativity in reimagining the ministries of the parish, and have also brought forth entirely new ministries as well. Those who are cheerfully undertaking this task are *themselves* being transfigured, as we always are, when we give ourselves in service to the Lord. The reimagined ministries will serve to assist others to be transfigured in glory. Focusing on just one of many ministries, **Initiating new Church membership growth Strategies**, we see:

- Expand and Enhance the Narthex to better serve visitors, newcomers and new members.
- Provide an elevator and improve ADA Access for all with limited mobility.
- Host receptions hosted at the home of a parishioner for newcomers and seekers.
- Explore ways to be more engaged with Marin charities to the poor and needy.
- Follow-up on the names of all those who have signed our visitor book in the Narthex.
- Engage in a traditional Christian Book Club at Nativity open to Marin County.
- Create welcome baskets for new members with helpful parish orientation material.
- Make a greater effort to speak with people we do not know at the Fellowship Hour.
- Build a collection of helpful materials beyond brochures to be freely distributed to seekers.

~ Anthony Scott

## Special Parish Assembly August 25, 2019



## *Beyond 50* *Strategic Plan* *Connect • Engage • Grow*

The Strategic Plan was unanimously approved by the Parish Assembly on August 25. It is an overall plan for ALL aspects of the Parish. The Strategic Plan enabled us to create overlapping action plans for all ministries and capital projects; to focus energy and resources; and to make sure that everyone in the Parish is working towards and together on common goals. Everyone must always remember the key words of the Plan: Connect, Engage, and Grow. If all of us constantly remember these three words we will be successful. Whenever someone gets an idea for an activity or project at the Church in the next five years, they must assess if the project is incorporating the key words. This will keep us all focused and working together.

We are currently conducting a fundraising feasibility study to determine how much we can raise from a Capital Campaign to fund all parts of the plan.

There are many highlights of the plan. Here is one example:

The renovations to the school building and offices intertwined with the Goals of Enhancing Ministries and Improving Internal Operations. The 17 ministries need a clean, modern and warm environment to be successful. All of the ministries have specific actions to improve and increase involvement in the ministries. But they need a facility that helps them do that. The physical improvements to help them do that would be to

completely remodel the the building which includes: a ministry workstation with computer printer etc. for heads of ministries, Sunday school teachers, etc. Right now there is no place we have for these volunteers to be creative and productive.

Additions of televisions and IT enhancement to be able to have workshops, seminars, productive meetings, ministry activities, and better Sunday School and Greek school classes. Also adding IT items like ZOOM meetings will allow Parishioners who cannot leave their homes to participate to be involved with an activity at Church. We want to include EVERYONE and make it easier for people to engage in these activities.

We also are going to use mobile messaging and texts to alert parishioners and the community to activities at Church. Having a Parish Ministries Director is essential to the success of the ministries and internal and external communication at our Church. This actually also overlaps with the Improving Membership Growth Goal as it allows us to offer several opportunities for parishioners and others to become more involved in the activities of the Church.

Next month we will highlight another exciting segment of the Strategic Plan involving Increased Membership Growth.

# *November Beyond 50*

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## *Beyond 50*

### *Strategic Plan*

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We welcome new people to our Church, which results in increased membership.

Last month we wrote about the ministries and improving the facilities and environment, in addition to the specific action plans of the ministries.

This month, we are writing about another highlight of the plan: The Increase Membership Growth Goal that involves making our Church a welcoming environment for all those seeking the faith. The Welcome Ministry will be hosting more receptions with new members. New stewards will be receiving a welcome basket from the Church. The Narthex Greeters will be more involved in greeting guests and making sure they are welcomed by all by providing them with a sticker that identifies them as a visitor. The Spread the Word ministry will be reaching out to those who are searching for God.

As part of this we need to have the Narthex and Entry be welcoming to all who want to enter God's House in faith and love.

### *The Spirituality of the Entrance of the Church*

The Narthex is the Gateway to The Kingdom of Heaven. A Narthex helps to aesthetically soften the transition from the outside to the inside. The Narthex is the area where the faithful make an offering, receive a candle, and light it before an encounter with the deeper mysteries of the faith, which are experienced in the nave. Within the Orthodox tradition, sacred space in church architecture not only represents but also actually nourishes, the relationship between the community and God, providing a way in which the people of God encounter Him and each other in the course of worship, prayer, and sacrament.

"Let the Christian consider well when he enters the church that he is entering another heaven. That same majesty of God which is in heaven is also in his church, and on this account, the Christian must enter with reverence and awe."



# *December Beyond 50*

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*Connect • Engage • Grow*

## *Connect • Engage • Grow*

Last month and this month, we continue to discuss another highlight of the Strategic Plan. The Increase Membership Growth Goal that involves making our Church a welcoming environment for all those seeking the faith. This includes the Narthex Greeters, Community Outreach, Welcome, Spread the Word, and Stewardship Ministries.

As part of this goal, we need to have the narthex and entry be welcoming to all who want to enter God's House in faith and love.

### **The Practicality and Spirituality of the Entrance to the Church**

The narthex is the gateway to The Kingdom of Heaven. A narthex helps to aesthetically soften the transition from the outside to the inside.

We should always be looking to enhance the ability to worship in our Church. Right now, people with different and various medical conditions and other physical disabilities are not able to fully engage in the church because of the facility's structure and lack of certain facilities, such as restrooms.

Many of the processions are supposed to be in the nave and process at the back of the nave. Right now, we go into the narthex, which creates many issues both practical (for those entering the Church) and spiritual. Many of our sacraments should be able to be conducted without challenges. For instance, having a private room where one can change and dress a baby instead of on a card table in the narthex under a staircase. Additionally, brides and grooms should be able to have private rooms to prepare for their sacrament instead of downstairs in a bathroom.

During funerals, the grieving family should be able to have a private place to pray and prepare for their final moments with their loved one.

We need a drop-off that is flat and close to the entrance of the Church to allow those with disabilities easy access to the Church to pray.

We need to allow people to fully understand where to enter the Church and to be able to fully feel the Holy Spirit in an ascetically spiritual and practical place, always in an effort to worship Jesus Christ.