

Saint Ann Town Hall Meeting

Do you have any suggestions as to how to eliminate the deficit?	
Answer Options	Response Count
	44
<i>answered question</i>	44
<i>skipped question</i>	14

- I'm not sure that we should have more smaller venues to bring people together and spend a little money.
Maybe reinstate the monthly 50/50 raffle.
People do spend money to go out and to gamble a little so why not have them do this within the church instead of elsewhere.
Maybe a monthly coffee house with some music might draw people in. I know South Cong. in Pittsfield does this.
- Set a target, announce a new initiative to close the gap and ask people to do their part. Be direct.
- Right now I do not have any suggestions. I would need more information .
- No
- Ask folks who use envelopes or parish pay to double their contributions.
Try to encourage more folks to use Parish pay.
- The best responses to a financial request are usually when there is a clear "need" -- donations for the Parish Center, donations for the organ repair, etc. Also, there might be some parish expenses that could be offset by "talent" donations from parishioners, but the need must be communicated to the parish (clerical, cleaning, etc.).
- This is minute, but why do we have so many envelopes in our packets? One a week for the parish should be enough... with one a year, maybe for the cemetery, Peter's Pence..., etc. Monthly grounds and building maintenance seems superfluous. I'd like my weekly offering to go to whatever you need... church salaries, maintenance, etc. I think you could cut that envelope bill in 1/2.
- See Above!!!
- We need to consider reaching out to new members of the community on a consistent basis.
- No
- People do love to volunteer. Looking at what we bring in in at each benefit, are there ways to increase the revenue? More Benefit occasions? Cut some out?
Form a group of volunteers to really think about this and come up with recommendations
- Since we continue to show a deficit, I think we need to look at all our expenses and reassess effectiveness, are we getting what we think we are getting, etc.
Just like everyone's budget. Where do they spend their money - essentials, and discretionary? One needs to balance cash flow, save some for a rainy day, etc.
- Spend within the budget.
Find new and younger members for the Finance Council: new thoughts, ideas and perspectives on raising revenue.

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- It is hard to know how much to give weekly or for monthly collections, e.g. grounds, etc.. I think it would be helpful to have the finance group share how many families we have and what the weekly requirements are and from that what the average giving should be. That would help me know if what I am giving is working. I feel that it can be expressed that from that number families can give a range, of course. It was helpful when the finance council spoke last year about the deficit because it made me realize that perhaps I needed to give \$5 more per week but I still did not have a sense based off our registered parishioners what we as a family needed to be giving to meet the budget.
- See Above
Also-
How about asking congregants to add percent to weekly donations-I would do that.
- Some churches have tried to 50/50 chance approach; not sure how much this will generate. (People do love to gamble.)
Postpone some annual expenses for things that are not really needed to be done or do them less frequently.
Increase any fees charged by a small amount. (Cost of living goes up almost annually so why should not the fees also.)
- Stop overspending. If we do not have the cash in hand to do a project do not do it. Live without.
- More small fund raising activities throughout the year.
More financial transparency, particularly with regards to unnecessary discretionary spending.
Proactive maintenance of campus and facilities.
Encourage rental use of the Family Center to outside groups.
- I don't
- Have a "funds commitment campaign" where every active parish household is visited and asked to pledge a monthly contribution amount for the next 3 years (say), and if possible have them contribute via direct withdrawal from their checking account or credit card, so it happens automatically. Track the total annual commitments and publicize the progress so people can see it.
Based on whatever each family has contributed in the past year (say), figure out how much more they would need to contribute for us to close the deficit (assuming most - but not all - families were able to contribute the same increased percentage) - and then publicize this! People won't give more unless they see what it would take to make a difference.
Leave some lights off, turn heat way down (in winter), etc., as clear signs that we need to

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cut spending, to help eliminate the deficit. Why would people take away from other spending priorities if they don't see the need at St. Ann's?

- Perhaps an off season cash raffle
- Perhaps Parishioners could be encouraged to increase their weekly collection contribution.

The deficit needs to be explained.

- It is my understanding that each Parish gives a certain amount of money to the Diocese and that if needed the Parish can draw on this money when they are in need. I think the need is there for all parishes so maybe the pastors have to get together and speak with the Bishop. First let each parish be able to draw on this money and slowly eliminate their deficit. Let each parish determine when or when they are not able to make this contribution to the Diocese.

I think this whole Policy has to be studied in order to address contemporary needs of both Parish and Diocese.

- It's got to be a mix of cost reduction (find efficiencies in how we operate: lower the a/c in the summer, lower the heat in the winter, put lights on motion sensors, if we haven't already have MASS Save - WMECO come out to the Rectory and do an Energy Survey), increased revenue (charge for or charge more for events in the parish hall, maybe we do a few more fundraisers throughout the year), get people motivated/excited to come to mass, and make sure people know how important it is (and maybe what will happen if we don't) to give during the collection each week.
- See above.
- First, a Finance Director would make simple / clear presentations at all Masses describing;
 - (1) The current financial condition of the Parish, e.g. 10% deficit
 - (2) What services / activities will be curtailed, if the deficit is not corrected
 - (3) Show the metrics of the parishioners' current contributions
 - (4) Ask all parishioners to register using a short data form
 - (5) Once you have the contribution metrics and a listing of all parishioners, it will form the basis for defining a corrective action plan to increase contributions.
- No
- It may help to encourage more families to use the weekly Parish pay system combined with a clear explanation of the contribution of weekly donations to the overall parish budget.
- We would hope that the annual Summer Festival raises sufficient funds to cover the deficit. Note that the 'underwriting' donations appear to raise the bulk of all the return gained by the fair. These are direct contributions with no costs attached. Otherwise the

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fair seems to be a break-even but socially valuable event. Would another scheduled fund raiser (donor request) be appropriate?

- Could the fees be increased for using the Church and Parish Center to people that are not parishioners?
Could a suggested donation schedule be established for parishioners using the Parish Center?
- I think we need a capital campaign to fund needs such as organ repair - stonework - anything major - rather than relying on weekly contributions.
- Years ago in NY if you weren't on the list of contributors in your parish you paid much more to be buried in the Church cemetery. If the cost of services increased or a parish has to close because of lack of funding that could be a wake-up call. I know that's tough for Fr. Bonz to lower the hammer in the beginning of his stewardship but fire & brim stone may be needed. I know that's easy for me to say...
- Answer as above encourage estate planning, take advantage of tourist by having week night New England supper, EG. hot dogs & Beans, molasses bread and apple pie
- Not really, I struggle to eliminate my own.
- The Yearly Festival is clearly one way but we need to envision some creative options that allow individuals to be more involved and recognize this responsibility that we have to care for our parish.
This might be a topic for discussions at the meeting. Maybe there are opportunities that parish members could volunteer for instead of hiring someone to perform the needed action....
- No, sorry
- Outlining the privileges and obligations of parish membership.
Utilizing parish pay more
- Establish support groups for those that are hurting in our community, ie- separated, divorced, bereaved support groups. For those that want to learn how to grow in faith, ie- men's, women's, young mother's faith building groups. Start parish retreats for a weekend at some off site retreat locations. This is a great way for people to get to know each other and be drawn into our community. The support groups should be held at St. Ann's, not having to drive somewhere else in the diocese, because no one will go to these.

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We have to get back to being part of a christian faith community, not strangers who you see occasionally.

- The parish is going to have to recognize that the income picture is not going to improve unless it starts to attract younger members on a regular basis.
- Have a frank talk about finances. If people don't contribute, they won't have a church. You get what you pay for.
- No, it's all over the areas very hard today
- Personally, I prefer to give to the church, I.e., the parish, and not to the many funds and special appeals. Other than holiday flowers and holy days, I budget my giving monthly. I think the many envelopes and appeals confuse people and dilute their gifts to St. Ann's and they would respond better with a simpler appeal based on the needs of the parish first. Of course the parish needs to support the diocese and other appeals but these should come after the parish and I would prefer to leave those gifts to the decision of the pastor.
- Evangelize more. Do not equate Catholicism as just another form of Christianity. Show what we believe and why we believe it. We need a bigger presence in the community at various events in the town. We could also rent out the parish hall for functions.
- It needs to be spoken about at Mass, with a vivid explanation of what will happen to St. Ann Parish if the funding doesn't come in. Asking everyone to pray about their tithing and see if they could increase it by a few dollars a week. If everyone gives just a little bit more, no one has to give a lot more.

Some of the churches around the county bring in special speakers or choirs - a feeling of an event happening - maybe that would peek some interest to come see what that is about.

Maybe we should get our very young involved in the giving process - it will help them understand the concept of giving to their church that hopefully they will take into adulthood.

I've noticed that each generation passes down less and less of the traditions of our church.