



Nurturing a Healthy Parish: *12 Core Attributes*



Webinar Series

2025

Monday, July 21st
6:30-7:45 p.m. PDT



The Orthodox Parish Leadership ministry of the Metropolis of San Francisco is offering a webinar on **"Nurturing a Healthy Parish: 12 Core Attributes."**

Steve Pappas is leading this engaging discussion on Monday, July 21, 2025.





Tonight's Agenda

1. Welcome, Agenda, and Opening Prayer
 2. Guest Speaker Introductions
 3. What is a Healthy Parish?
 4. The 12 Core Attributes of a Healthy Parish
 5. Practical Steps for Parish Leaders
 6. Discussion and Closing Prayer
- APPENDIX: Additional Resources



Guest Speaker Introductions

Kati Adams



St. Lawrence Orthodox Christian Church Felton, CA

Parish Council Past President and Vice President
St. Lawrence Academy School Board Chair
Parish Strategic Planning Committee Co-Chair
2x2 Program Alumna

Kristina Reynolds



St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Cathedral Concord, CA

Current: Parish Council Treasurer, Sunday School Director/Teacher, Ushering Team, Philoptochos, RISE Prayer Ministry, Chanter/Reader, and lead various other committees
Past: Greek Dance Instructor, Youth Group Director, Festival Chairperson, and more.
2x2 Program Alumna



Nurturing a Healthy Parish: *12 Core Attributes*

*"We, though
many, are one
body in Christ,
and individually
members one of
another."*

Romans 12:5

What is a Healthy Parish?



The Virtuous Circle of Healthy Parishes

*Healthy Behaviors Create
a Healthy Parish*



*A Healthy Parish Creates
Healthy Outcomes*



The Parish as a Flourishing Garden



Soil – faith & tradition

Seeds – individuals

Plants – variety of parishioners

Gardeners – Christ, Holy Spirit, Clergy



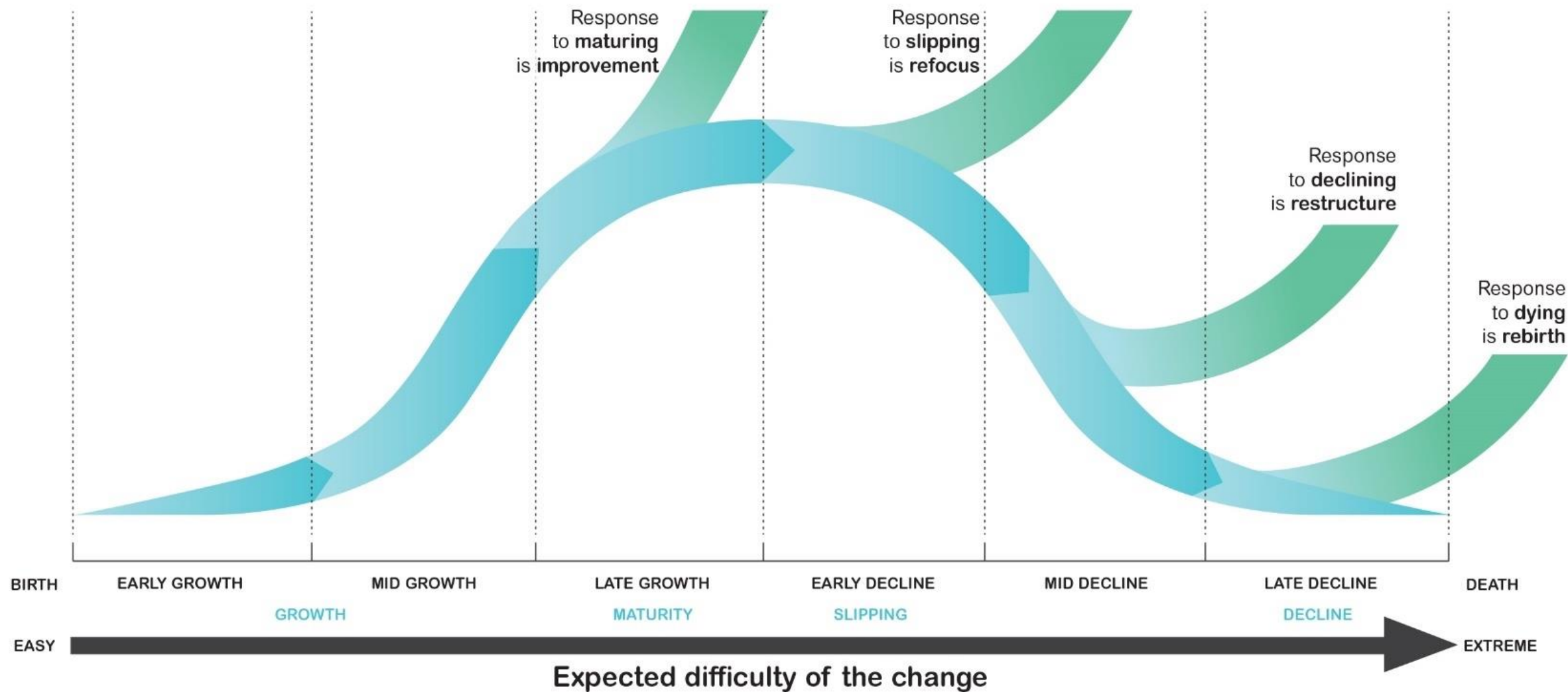
A Flourishing Parish

Flourishing is a state where people experience ***positive*** emotions, spiritual connection, psychological functioning and social interaction.





Self Reflection: Parish Lifecycle





2024-2025 Parish Health Survey Results

		Yes x2 Green	Somewhat x1 Yellow	No x0 Red
	Total Score			
Is loving.	705	333	39	8
Centers itself around a cycle of worship and spiritual growth.	689	315	59	6
Is welcoming and friendly to visitors.	688	316	56	8
Is trustworthy.	678	312	54	14
Embraces diversity—building bridges with people of different backgrounds.	669	303	63	14
Is financially responsible.	665	300	65	15
Sees the good in people and assumes the best in others.	660	294	72	14
Recognizes the essential task of caring for one another.	623	260	103	17
Implements programs that serve others outside of the parish.	556	222	112	46
Has a clear vision and mission.	532	202	128	50
Empowers parishioners to effect change as decision-making and power are shared.	516	190	136	54
Continually develops great leaders.	492	165	162	53
	Scoring 7473	6424	1049	0



Survey Findings and Insights



Strong to Very Good Attributes

- Is loving.
- Center itself around a cycle of worship and spiritual growth.
- Is welcoming and friendly to visitors.

Improvement Attributes

- Has a clear vision and mission.
- Empowers parishioners to effect change as decision-making and power are shared.
- Continually develop great leaders.



The 12 Core Attributes of a Healthy Parish

Spiritual Vitality

1. Centers itself around a cycle of worship and spiritual growth.

Communal Strength

2. Implements programs that serve others outside the parish.
3. Embraces diversity – building bridges with people of different backgrounds.
4. Is welcoming and friendly to visitors.
5. Recognizes the essential task of caring for one another.
6. Sees the good in people and assumes the best in others.

Operational Effectiveness

7. Is trustworthy.
8. Has a clear vision and mission.
9. Empowers parishioners to effect change as decision-making and power is shared.
10. Continually develops great leaders.
11. Is financially responsible.

Foundational

12. Is loving.



Nurturing a Healthy Parish: *12 Core Attributes*

*"By this all will
know that you
are My
disciples, if you
have love for
one another."*

John 13:35

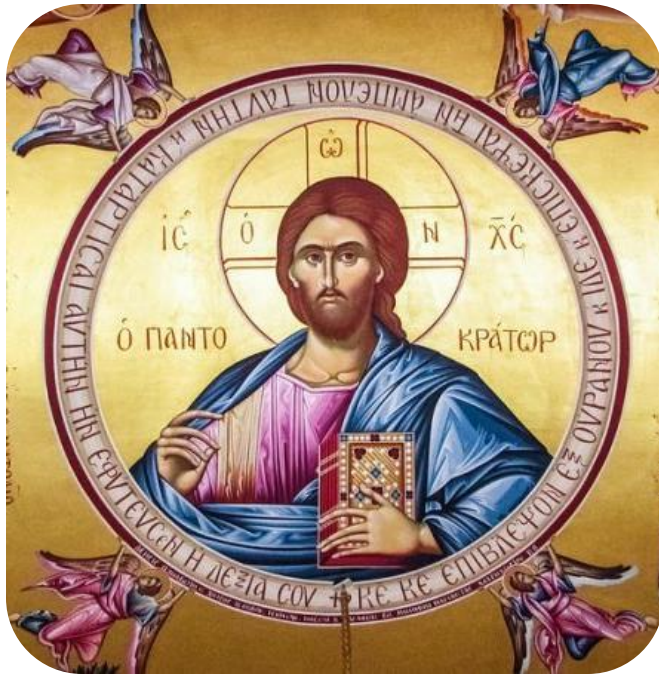
The 12 Core Attributes of a Healthy Parish



1. Centers itself around a cycle of worship and spiritual growth.

Spiritual
Vitality

"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."
Matthew 6:33



- The Divine Liturgy is the heartbeat.
- Personal prayer, scripture, fasting, sacraments, and confession.
- Ongoing spiritual education and formation.

Reflection: Does your parish actively encourage and provide accessible resources for both corporate worship and individual spiritual development for all ages?



2. Implements programs that serve others outside the parish.

Communal
Strength

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."

Matthew 5:16

- Outreach, charity, and community engagement.
- Living our faith through tangible acts of love.
- Being a light in the world.



Reflection: How well does your parish identify and address the needs of your local community, extending your service beyond your own parishioners?



3. Embraces diversity – building bridges with people of different backgrounds.

Communal
Strength

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”
Galatians 3:28



- Welcoming all God’s children.
- Cultural sensitivity, inclusivity, and valuing unique gifts.
- The Church is Catholic (universal).

Reflection: How intentional is your parish about welcoming and integrating people from diverse backgrounds into the full life and leadership of your parish?



4. Is welcoming and friendly to visitors.

"Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels."

Hebrews 13:2

- First impressions matter.
- Genuine hospitality (philoxenia), making people feel at home.
- From stranger to friend.



Reflection: Do visitors to your parish consistently feel a warm, genuine welcome that encourages them to return and explore further?



5. Recognizes the essential task of caring for one another.

Communal
Strength

"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

Galatians 6:2



- Pastoral care, fellowship, compassion, and support.
- Living out the command to love one another.
- A true spiritual family.

Reflection: Do your parishioners consistently experience a sense of genuine care, support, and fellowship from their fellow parishioners and clergy?



6. Sees the good in people and assumes the best in others.

Communal
Strength

"Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves."

Romans 12:10

- Charity, forgiveness, and a positive outlook.
- Avoiding gossip, while focusing on solutions.
- Cultivating a culture of grace.



Reflection: Is your parish culture characterized by a spirit of generosity, understanding, and a willingness to see the best in each other, even when disagreements arise?



7. Is trustworthy.

"Therefore, putting away lying, 'Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,' for we are members of one another."

Ephesians 4:25



- Integrity, transparency, consistency, and honesty.
- Building confidence in leadership and operations.

Reflection: Do parishioners feel confident in the integrity and transparency of our parish leadership and its financial and operational dealings?



8. Has a clear vision and mission.

Operational
Effectiveness

"Where there is no vision, the people perish."

Proverbs 29:18

- Knowing who we are, what we're called to do, and where we're going.
- Provides direction, unity, and purpose.
- A compass for all activities.



Reflection: Can your parishioners articulate the parish's core mission and where we are striving to go as a community in the coming years?



9. Empowers parishioners to effect change as decision-making and power is shared.

Operational
Effectiveness

"As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."
1 Peter 4:10



- Collaborative leadership, delegation, and valuing input.
- Utilizing the diverse gifts of the faithful.
- Servant leadership model.

Reflection: Do your parishioners feel their voices are heard, and do they have meaningful opportunities to contribute to the parish's decisions and initiatives?



10. Continually develops great leaders.

Operational
Effectiveness

"And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."

2 Timothy 2:2

- Mentorship, training, and succession planning.
- Identifying and nurturing potential future leaders.
- Ensuring continuity and vitality.



Reflection: Are you actively identifying and nurturing potential leaders within your parish, providing them with the tools, training, and support they need to serve effectively?



11. Is financially responsible..

Operational
Effectiveness

” Moreover, it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.”

1 Corinthians 4:2



- Transparency, stewardship, budgeting, and fiscal integrity.
- Ensuring sustainability and supporting the mission.
- Good stewards of God’s gifts.

Reflection: Is your parish managing its finances with transparency, prudence, and a clear plan for long-term sustainability and mission support?



12. Is loving.

Foundational

"Love suffers long and is kind: love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil."

1 Corinthians 13:4-5

- Agape: Christ-centered, sacrificial love.
- Unconditional acceptance, compassion, and forgiveness.
- The sum and foundation of all core attributes.



Reflection: Is love, as demonstrated by Christ, the defining characteristic of your parish community and the driving force behind all we do?



Nurturing a Healthy Parish: *12 Core Attributes*

*"And the things that
you^{xxx} have heard
from me among
many witnesses,^{xxx}
commit these to
faithful men who
will be able to
teach others also."*

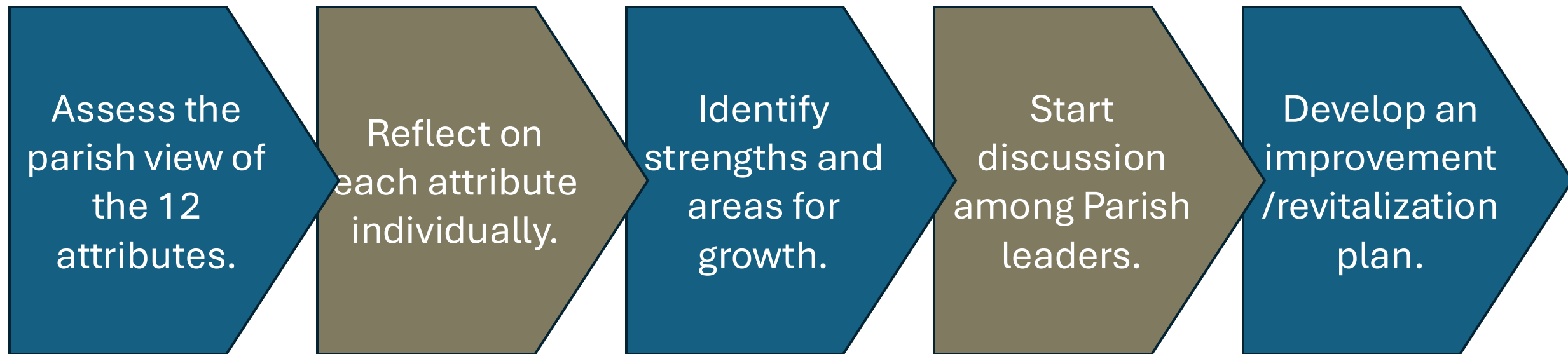
2 Timothy 2:2

Practical Steps for Parish Leaders



From Assessment to Reflection to Action

The 12 attributes should be used as a framework to begin a dialogue and develop a plan.



- *Which attributes are your parish's greatest strengths?*
- *Which represents the greatest opportunity for growth in the coming year?*
- *What concrete action steps can you take to improve just one of these areas?*
- *How can you involve more parishioners in strengthening these attributes?*



Parish Health Assessment

Attribute	Yes	Somewhat	No
1. Centers itself around a cycle of worship and spiritual growth.			
2. Implements programs that serve others outside the parish.			
3. Embraces diversity – building bridges with people of different backgrounds.			
4. Is welcoming and friendly to visitors.			
5. Recognizes the essential task of caring for one another.			
6. See the good in people and assumes the best in others.			
7. Is trustworthy.			
8. Has a clear vision and mission.			
9. Empowers parishioners to effect change as decision-make and power is shared.			
10. Continually develops great leaders.			
11. Is financially responsible.			
12. Is loving.			

Click on the link below to access the web-based Parish Health Assessment:

Take the Parish Health Assessment



The Revitalization Plan

Focused plan to improve or develop key areas within the parish.

Typical plan duration: 12 - 18 months (vs. strategic plan of 3 + years)

Tips and Steps:

1. Recognize the Discomfort
2. Ask for Help to Define & Refine the Issue
3. Form Parish Revitalization Team (~ 6 members)
4. Understand the Context / Gather Information
 - Parish Life Cycle (core)
 - Parish Health Index (core)
 - Operational Effectiveness Index (core)
 - Additional Analysis (pertinent to the issue)
5. Design & Communicate Plan
6. Implement Plan
7. Report Status / Progress



Our Journey to Theosis

Help make your parish the living manifestation of Christ it should be.

- Start small, be consistent.
- Collaborate with clergy and lay leadership.
- Engage all parishioners.
- Pray!





Nurturing a Healthy Parish: *12 Core Attributes*

*"Let all things be
done decently
and in order."*

1 Corinthians 14:40

Discussion and Closing Prayer



Nurturing a Healthy Parish: *12 Core Attributes*

*"To whom much
is given, from him
much will be
required."*

Luke 12:48

APPENDIX

Additional Resources



Links to Parish Health Related Websites

- ❖ Orthodox Parish Leadership
www.sfparishleader.net
- ❖ Orthodox Ministry Services
www.orthodoxministry.org
- ❖ Smart Church Management
www.smartchurchmanagement.com
- ❖ The Elemental Group – Church & Non-Profit Strategic Planning
www.elementalgroup.org
- ❖ OCA Orthodox Parish Health Inventory Model
<https://www.ocadwpa.org/inventory>



Books on Parish Health and Vitality

- “Reclaiming the Great Commission” Fr. Evan Armatas
- “Purpose Driven Church” Rick Warren
- “Autopsy of a Deceased Church” Thom Rainer
- “Being a Healthy Church” Steve Macchia
- “Healthy Congregations - A Systems Approach” Peter L. Steinke

Orthodox

PARISH LEADERSHIP



Our Overriding Purpose

Support a parish's efforts in bringing people to Christ and fostering their connection with His Church.

Our Focus

"Parish Health and Effectiveness"

How We Will Do This

Offer consulting support, materials, tools and best practices directly to parishes and ministries

Our Aim

Provide "easy-to-use tools in an easy-to-get manner"



METROPOLIS OF
SAN FRANCISCO

Our Focus For 2025

- ❖ Parish Consulting Support
- ❖ "2x2" Leadership Development Program
- ❖ Metropolis of San Francisco Monthly Webinars

OPL Team & Core Offerings



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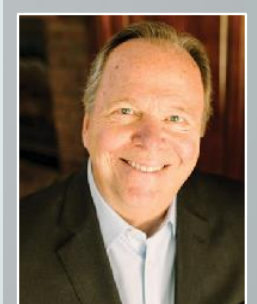
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