THRIVING CONGREGATIONS INITIATIVE

Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Boston

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What is a Thriving Congregation?

Methods

- Understand cultural and social context
- Develop and adopt clear mission and vision
- Cultivate authentic Orthodox Christian spiritual practices
- Sustain their own efforts

Outcomes

- Stronger ministries
- Deeper relationships with God
- Enhanced community connection
- Contributing to the flourishing of their communities and the world

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Everybody's Struggle

- How do we get more people (especially young people & families) attending and engaged?

- Budget deficits from higher expenses and lower financial stewardship

- The same few people are doing the majority of the work a majority of the time

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Everybody's Struggle

- ~~How do we get more people (especially young people & families) attending and engaged?~~ **Our parishioners' values are not aligned with the ministries and activities we've chosen.**
- ~~Budget deficits from higher expenses and lower financial stewardship~~ **Our parishioners are disengaged.**
- ~~The same few people are doing the majority of the work a majority of the time~~ **Our leaders are not effectively building a team.**

Root causes

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Understanding Context

- Parish self-assessment
- Demographic understanding
- Track real data
- Conduct needs assessments (real conversations with real people)

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Vision and Mission

- "Why" discovery
- Mission statements
- Strategic Planning (Vision Setting)
- Parish-wide engagement, ministry-level implementation

These first two elements of "Thriving" answer: where are we, where do we want to be, how will we get there.

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Cultivating Spiritual Practices

The beginning and end of all of it!

- Nurture the religious lives of parishioners
- Teach them how to express their faith
- Practice hospitality & welcoming
- Reach and support communities
- Care for congregants
- Help others experience belonging
- Teach a shared vocabulary
- Foster engagement in liturgy and sacramental life
- Teach personal prayer
- Fasting as a tool to grow closer to Christ