

# **Feasibility Study Report**

**for**

**St. Paul of the Cross Catholic Church  
Atlanta, Georgia**

**March 2017**





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March 31, 2017

Reverend Jerome McKenna  
St. Paul of the Cross Catholic Church  
551 Harwell Road  
Atlanta, Georgia 30318

Dear Father McKenna,

Serving St. Paul of the Cross Catholic Church through this Feasibility Study has been an honor. One hundred thirty-one (131) individuals, representing 112 households, participated in the English language study. Twenty (20) of the households participated in English language personal interviews. In addition, we received five (5) Spanish surveys.

We learned a great deal about the church in the study. It is highly encouraging that a large percentage of responding parishioners feel their spiritual and social needs are being met. Parishioners also feel that the church is their family and the people are caring and supportive of one another. The study shows that parishioners would support moving ahead with a three-year capital campaign to address the needed repairs and upgrades.

Given the information provided for us from the church and its parishioners, we project that St. Paul of the Cross parish could raise between **\$500,000 and \$700,000** through a well-conducted, three-year capital campaign that includes member involvement, clear communication and prayerful discernment.

Enclosed is a complete review of the information and data we gathered through the Feasibility Study. We have also provided you with concerns, observations, recommendations and a proposed calendar. All of this is provided to you and the leadership for a better understanding the parishioners and the direction God is moving the church. If you have questions, please feel free to contact us at any time.

Thank you for allowing Church Development to spend time with your fellow parishioners and learn more about the great things St. Paul of the Cross parish is doing in our Lord's name.

Respectfully,

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## **St Paul of the Cross Catholic Church Feasibility Study**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

During March, 2017, 131 individuals, representing 112 households, participated in the Feasibility Study. Twenty (20) of the households participated in personal interviews. This is a 23% level of participation (based on 488 English-speaking households in the church), which is above our normal response rate. The average Church Development Feasibility Study response rate is 15% to 20%.

Below is the Executive Summary of the Feasibility Study.

#### **Executive Summary:**

1. Eighty six percent (86%) of those in the study agreed or strongly agreed that the church is effective in meeting their spiritual needs. *The average percent positive collected from past client feasibility studies for this question is 81%.*
2. Eighty-eight percent (88%) of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the church is effective in providing opportunities for activities with other parishioners and within the larger community. *The average percent positive collected from past client feasibility studies for this question is 80%.*
3. Eighteen percent (18%) agreed the financial condition of the parish is strong; 21% were neutral and 62% disagreed.
4. Eighty-four percent (84%) indicated they were aware of the five projects that had been identified as needing immediate attention.
5. Eighty percent (80%) agreed that the church should move ahead with a capital campaign to fund these immediate needs. *The average percent positive collected from past client feasibility studies for this question is 73%.*
6. Seventy eight (78%) of respondents in the study said they would be willing to financially support a capital campaign at some level. Three percent (3%) said no, and the others were unsure at this time or needed more information.

7. Seventy-four (74) households in the study said if a capital campaign were held now, they would consider committing **\$242,830** over the next three years. This is over and above their regular offertory giving to the church.
8. Fifty (50) individuals in the study said they would be willing to join one of the capital campaign teams, and 23 said maybe.
9. Sixteen (16) respondents in the study said they would consider including the church in their estate plans, and two households said they have already done so. Another 31 indicated some interest in doing so.

### **Concerns:**

1. Most of the respondents agreed the financial condition of the parish is not strong.
2. Many are concerned about parishioners on fixed incomes and their ability to financially support a campaign.
3. There is concern about multiple fundraising activities during the three-year pledge period.

### **Financial Forecast:**

Based on the church's annual unrestricted giving of \$484,093, and the results of the Feasibility Study, Church Development forecasts that St. Paul of the Cross Catholic Church has a

- **90% probability of raising \$500,000**
- **70% probability of raising \$600,000**
- **50% probability of raising \$700,000**

This financial forecast is based on a professionally run, three-year capital campaign that includes parishioner engagement, clear communication, stewardship education, and prayerful discernment.

### **Responses from the Spanish Language Surveys**

We received five (5) Spanish Language surveys. The responses were largely positive both about the role St. Paul of the Cross plays in their life and about supporting a capital campaign.

*See Appendix C.*

## **FOREWARD AND THE ASSIGNMENT**

Church Development's purpose is to serve churches through planning and capital campaign management. Church Development is based on two concepts:

- A) Stewardship is a gateway virtue to living a Christian life. Once individuals discover the experience of acting as a conduit for God's will, they are forever changed. A prayerful approach to seeking God's will is at the center of all our activities. Proverbs 29:18 states, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." This Biblical text could be a modern management bestseller. When a church has a powerful vision in which all are involved in creating, God will bless and use their efforts.
  
- B) Building the strength of each church we serve is more important than money. If we can successfully increase the connections between people seeking to do God's will, the church will grow in very measurable terms. After our capital campaign is completed, churches often experience increases in attendance, annual giving, volunteerism and evangelism.

### **The Assignment:**

In March, 2017, Church Development was engaged by St. Paul of the Cross Catholic Church to conduct a Feasibility Study to determine the readiness of the parish for a capital campaign.

Between March 16<sup>th</sup> and March 25<sup>th</sup>, Church Development interviewed 20 households. An online survey and paper survey were available for parishioners to complete.

A total of 131 individuals participated in the study, representing 112 households (out of 445 (English-speaking total households), representing a 25% level of participation.

## **SUMMARY OF INTERNAL ASSESSMENT**

**Current membership**—889 households.

½ half are African-American and ½ are Hispanic

**Current Annual Giving**

Unrestricted giving for last budget year—\$484,093

Number of households who gave to the offertory—386

**Current debt**

\$8,495 owed to Marlin Bank

**Previous Capital Campaign—2009**

Goal \$900,000

Pledged \$626,700

Fulfilled \$577,918

**St. Paul of the Cross Catholic Church**  
**Case Statement**  
March 2017

**History**

St. Paul of the Cross Catholic Church was established in 1955 by the Passionist Order at the request of the Bishop of Savannah. Masses were celebrated at the temporary rectory and a rented house until completion of the current church. Most of the parishioners came from Our Lady of Lourdes, the only African-American Catholic Church in North Georgia. The school served the community from 1957 until 1990 when it was closed due to low enrollment. The building has been renovated by the Archdiocese. Today St. Paul of the Cross Church continues to serve the African-American community and a growing Spanish-speaking population.

**Capital Campaign—2009**

In 2006, we began the process of planning the first capital campaign in the history of the church with a feasibility study. Subsequent changes in the pastoral leadership led to a delay in implementing a capital campaign. In 2009, following another feasibility study, we conducted a campaign for the new addition to our administrative center that was completed and dedicated in 2016.

At the time of the 2009 campaign, we envisioned a subsequent campaign for a parish hall. That is no longer needed because the Archdiocese has renovated the school building to use two Saturdays each month for diaconate training. The rest of the time we will be able to use the school building for our parish hall, classrooms and meeting rooms.

**Method**

For the feasibility study, we have contracted with Church Development (as we did in 2009). They will share the results of the study with leadership, who will then make the determination on how to proceed. The Archdiocesan Office of Stewardship strongly recommends hiring a professional firm to manage and staff a capital campaign.

We followed the Archdiocese's advice on our 2009 capital campaign when we hired Church Development. The campaign raised \$525,000, which included \$35,000 for their time and expertise. Since then, our annual budget has grown from \$400,000 to \$500,000. And so, we expect both our capital campaign potential and the management fee to increase accordingly.

All of this, however, is subject to the findings of the feasibility study. Church Development has worked with more than 100 other parishes over twenty years, and will bring that experience to bear on their work with us. Their report back to our parish leadership will be critical to determining our next steps. Your input is key to making that report as accurate as possible.

## **Current Requirements and Needs**

We can now concentrate on upgrades and repairs that are required to keep our facilities in good condition and prevent further deterioration to our buildings.

We have five items that demand our immediate attention:

1. Replace and/or repair flat roofs on courtyard, rectory, and school so as to allow for correct drainage and eliminate future leaks—**Estimated cost \$80,000**
2. Repair and/or upgrade 60-year old heating/cooling (HVAC) system for rectory and church, which breaks down several times yearly and is expensive to repair—**Estimated cost \$300,000**
3. Replace rectory, chapel, and sacristy windows with double glass windows to maximize the effectiveness of new HVAC system—**Estimated cost \$160,000**
4. Install new HVAC units in three classrooms in the school. **Estimated cost \$30,000**
5. Repair corroded base and cross as required by our insurance company. This would include painting whole tower—**Estimated cost \$6,000**

In addition to these, we have identified other needs to be considered, possibly for a future campaign.

- Pave gravel lot behind the school to add 60 parking spaces to campus – **\$50,000**
- Refinish/replace church pews and kneelers – **\$110,000**
- Repave front entrance and exits to upper and lower parking lots, and repair curbing – **\$10,000**
- Upgrade exterior lighting with dusk-to-dawn lighting to provide safe environment for evening events – **\$5,000**
- Protect stained glass windows in church from damage by the weather elements – **\$50,000**
- Repaint interior of church – **\$140,000**
- Upgrade church lighting – **\$120,000**
- Replacement of sanctuary doors (main and side) – **\$25,000**

We are also aware that our Spiritual Center is in need of extensive repair. While we do not have construction estimates for the necessary renovations, we know that we will eventually need to address its deterioration.

## **The Time is Now**

The purpose of this feasibility study is to determine the level of support for a capital campaign to address our very old HVAC system, deteriorated roofs, and address other urgent needs. We can no longer wait until problems become critical and more expensive.

If the results of the study are affirmative, then each parish family would be asked to make a commitment in June of 2017. Your most candid and thoughtful responses to the feasibility study survey are needed as we discern what we should do to be good stewards of this parish with which God has blessed us. Thank you!



## DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

1. St. Paul of the Cross Catholic Church should immediately begin work on a three-year capital campaign with a Commitment Sunday in June, 2017.
2. The campaign should focus on prayer and be a discerning implementation of God's will.
3. There should be emphasis on the sacrifices made in the past by parishioners to build and maintain the church.
4. Concerns that arose during the Feasibility Study should be addressed thoroughly through the campaign communication and opportunities for dialogue.
5. A high level of parish involvement should guide the process including member involvement on the Campaign Management Team, Steering Committee, \*PET YAC Teams and parishioners attending the campaign events.
6. Hispanic parishioners should be part of the campaign in all aspects. Building community among all who call St. Paul of the Cross their spiritual home should be part of the campaign.
7. A high level of information sharing should flow through the campaign via newsletters, bulletins, text messages, website, e-mails, social media and announcements.
8. Weekly communication on every aspect of the campaign should be planned.
9. The donation of property, stocks and bonds should be part of the campaign effort.
10. In order to meet the needs of the church, the campaign should follow the proposed calendar in this report.
11. Years 2017 to 2020 should be spent fulfilling pledges, tracking pledges and inviting new parishioners to participate.
12. Planned Giving Program should be developed during 2018 to inform parishioners how they can include the church in their estate plans.

\*PET YAC: Acronym for Prayer, Events, Thanks, Youth/Children, Ambassadors and Communications Teams.

## PROPOSED CAPITAL CAMPAIGN CALENDAR: 2017

- April** Mail newsletter with feasibility summary and timeline for fall campaign  
Select and train leaders for the Campaign Teams  
Send out communications—e-blasts, newsletter/postcards announcing campaign kick-off on \_\_\_\_\_  
Capital Campaign Kick-off – every church member encouraged to attend - light lunch served – overview of the feasibility study report – explanation of the teams and introduction of campaign leadership – teams breakout and begin work  
Campaign teams begin meeting regularly with consultant guidance
- May** Campaign Events begin (every church family encouraged to attend one event)  
Church-wide Prayer & Discernment process begins (continues through Commitment Sunday)
- June** Campaign Events conclude  
Mail Commitment packet to every church household  
Ambassadors make 1st Round of phone call/contacts (Commitment Sunday reminder and answer questions about the campaign)
- June 24-25** Commitment Sunday - **parishioners submit pledge cards at Mass**
- July-Sept.** Wrap up process begins (gather the remaining pledges)  
Mail follow up letter to families who have not submitted a commitment card  
End of campaign (although new commitments are always welcome)  
Mail final campaign newsletter
- 2017-2020** Follow-up

### **Additional Calendar Items:**

- Campaign Management Team – meets with consultant every two weeks during campaign.
- Campaign Steering Committee – meets three times during the campaign.
- Approximately four campaign newsletters will be mailed during campaign.