

# Urban Parish Summit Survey Responses

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## Key Challenges – In Your Own Words

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1) finances/stewardship  
maintaining older property

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- 1) Beginning to publicize.
- 2) Help with incorporation/ guidelines?
- 3) Strategies for/ experiences of others dealing with university.

"Membership"-Transient parishioners due to the increasingly high cost of living in Chicago.

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Orthodox Lifestyle is a "hard sell", even among baptized Orthodox Christians within an increasingly liberal society that embraces relativism and political correctness.

Majority do not support the parish with first fruits, but rather with token giving

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Trend of new members to live farther away from the parish's location.

- \* Overall sense of "distraction" from "churchly things" caused by society's "busyness."
  - \* Need to find strategies to counteract the loss of young adults after high school graduation.
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With so many families moving farther away from the city, how do we bring them all the way back home to us?

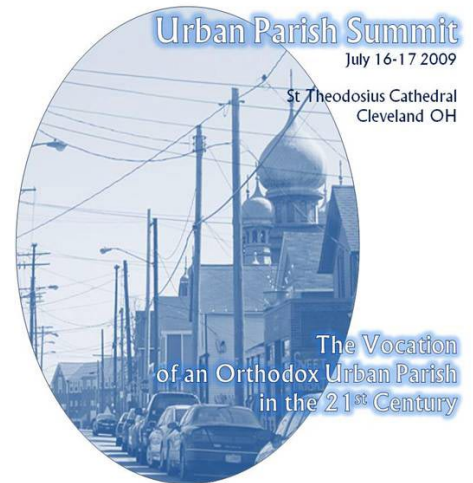
- 2) With the community changing (ethnicity) how do we acclimate our lives and Faith with theirs?
  - 3) In our desperate economy in Detroit, how do we raise the needed money that we need to initially offset our costs, and to plan our future?
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How to engage "the poor" as persons and not as "the needy" or projects.

- How to engage people who live in a culture of poverty about Orthodoxy from fundamentalist

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backgrounds.

- What have people learned about dealing with the "professional beggar": what process of discernment do we use to tell who really should be helped?

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1. Establishing a Mercy Group to more actively engage lay people in the ministry to the sick, shut-ins, and others in need of fellowship, contact, etc.
  2. Making sure that existing programs get the attention they need.
  3. Setting parameters for ourselves so that too few get too overextended
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1. Location, many people have moved out of the area
  2. Fear of attending evening services.
  3. Lack of parking space.
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1. Aging Facility
  2. Aging Congregation
  3. Lacking Full Multi-Generational Representation
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1. Getting the people to come to Church
  2. Maintenance and accessibility issues
  3. Assimilating the community
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## What is Working Well?

- Finances/stewardship
  - greater & greater youth participation
  - wider participation in outreach programs
  - more inflow of new people/conversions/baptisms
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We just began last summer. So I suppose more vibrant would be our existence at all.

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A parish can only be as vibrant as its parishioners are. We have many services and a handful of people who always participate.

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- \* Formation of Parish Life Committee has helped develop new parish activities.
  - \* Constant addition of new converts, although small in number annually.
  - \* Parish Council has become more diversified, with excellent collegial attitude.
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- We had to "re-identify" ourselves to us, our Lost Sheep, & our neighbors/community.
  - Realizing & keeping GOD first, we began a series of events/activities to promote our Faith & to develop social relationships that would help get us noticed and to keep folks interested.
  - We also stressed our own fellowship & Christian Education for adults and kids.
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Collaborating with neighborhood organizations who may have access to greater resources.  
- Teaching series aimed at "catechism for the catechized."

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1. Religious Education has taken an even more professional stature. New teachers, new programs help build interest and support.
  2. Our Outreach program. Under fine leadership service projects involve our neighbors in increasingly useful ways.
  3. Congregational response has become more spirited. Visitors take note and are favorably impressed.
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- All the parishioners are involved in welcoming guest and bring friend to the services.  
I tell my parishioners in the sermons that this Church will only grow if we all bring people. It's a call which we must all answer.
  - Team work.
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- Ministries, service and fellowship opportunities
  - Parish Administration
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- Liturgical life, preaching and teaching are said to be more vibrant
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- More Frequent (5-6 per week)/Vibrant Worship
  - Effective Collaborative Leadership
  - The Ministry of the Spiritual Life Center
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## Neighborhood Ministries in Your Parish

- After School Arts Program (arts in schools suffering cuts or elimination)
  - Annual free Block Party
  - Involvement with neighborhood issues & upkeep
  - Small public playground provided in parish property
  - participation in city-wide interfaith organization addressing urban social/economic issues - impacts neighborhood
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Still working on developing them.

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Deborah's Place- Serving meals to at a homeless women's shelter  
Pacific Garden Mission- Clothing drive for the homeless

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- \* Contributions to local food bank located at nearby church.
  - \* Invitations extended to attend parish's annual food festival as free guests.
  - \* Open-house held on a Saturday recently
  - \* Opened church as refuge when nearby housing unit caught on fire.
  - \* Assist food needs to legitimate people with restaurant certificates
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- 1) Feeding off a successful campaign to feed the poor at holidays, we have continued collecting & distributing food/items to the poor.
- 2) We have created events that fill needs of the area (including: Santa Claus photos and cookies, designing Easter Eggs, Internet cafe in our hall, after school programs to tutor, talking to the neighbors, etc)

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Participating in neighborhood events and organizations

- Governor's Advisory Board for Faith-based and Community based Initiatives.
- Habitat for Humanity
- Food Voucher program
- Nursing home visits
- Blood drive
- trash day
- Partnering with food pantry
- helping with meals for school age children
- partnering with "Life Centers"

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1. Saturday Lunch Program
  2. Outdoor beautification projects, including making graffiti disappear.
  3. Growing involvement with the local commissions

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food bank.

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Informal networking

Art-A-Whirl

Neighborhood Nite Out

Parishioner Helping Parishioners Program

Ecuadorean Volley-Ball group

Church School and Youth Group service projects

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1. Food card distribution to area hungry
  2. Enabling gardens with fresh produce for local shelter.
  3. Occasional emergency referral drop-ins at the Spiritual Life Center.

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## Which Issues Are Important To Your Parish

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
How can we get more from our lay persons in this parish? Leadership? Effort? Energy?			<a href="#">10</a>	90.9%
How can we build a willingness to undertake ministry to others?			<a href="#">8</a>	72.7%
What new ministries should we be doing and how can we do them better?			<a href="#">8</a>	72.7%
Should the parish stay in this location or relocate?			<a href="#">1</a>	9.0%
How to build hope in our future? We've been declining for so long that our mentality is survival. How to feel good about our potential.			<a href="#">3</a>	27.2%
How to wake up our sleeping parish and get out of ruts; change and adapt.			<a href="#">2</a>	18.1%
How to build a parishioner base near the parish -- as opposed to in the 'burbs.			<a href="#">7</a>	63.6%
How to offer something more than Sunday AM. People live far away - few children			<a href="#">4</a>	36.3%
Building an identity for our parish unique from suburban parish experience.			<a href="#">3</a>	27.2%
Lack of \$ to take care of our aging expensive building.			<a href="#">6</a>	54.5%
<b>Totals</b>			<b>11</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Comments

- We're a new urban mission. I don't know if our concerns match up with many of the above.
- Many aspects of the plan we formed have been working, and there is a lot of excitement in our future, however we need to attract more attention and participation from our people, but just as important is to identify ourselves to our ever changing neighborhood. We need to be community oriented, and be the answers to the many questions where we are needed. We need to be a leader in our community, as well.
- OCA involvement in OCF and to some degree is lacking. In truth two of our officers for the coming year are Coptics. Not one OCA student could be found to be in the running. Home parishes might want to find ways to engage and encourage college students.