

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

St. Bridget in Pleasant Hill, MO

Sixty (64) parishioners representing 48 households either returned the written surveys or completed the online survey. A total of 56 parishioners participated in confidential interviews with Church Development personnel representing 34 households.

A total of 82 households are represented in the study which reflects 25% of the total 326 parish households. This is an excellent representation for a feasibility study response for a parish of your size.

Below is a summary of the findings. The complete text of the data collected can be found in accompanying attachments.

The Good News: (Note: The percentages represent a combined percentage of persons who agree or strongly agree with the statement on the survey and in the interviews.)

1. There is a positive attitude toward the church right now with many parishioners expressing great pride in what they have been able to do in ten short years including building a new church, classrooms, offices and purchasing a rectory.
2. Eighty-eight percent (88%) of parishioners surveyed say that St. Bridget is meeting their spiritual needs.
3. Ninety-two percent (92%) believe that St. Bridget is providing ample opportunity for community and fellowship.
4. Nearly half (47%) of all participants volunteer at least 1-2 hours a week. Four individuals volunteer over 5 hours and 18 volunteer over 3 hours a week. For many, the reason they don't volunteer more is work and family considerations.
5. Eighty-six percent (86%) expressed confidence in the pastor, parish staff and lay leaders to make the right decisions regarding the future of the parish. Thirteen percent (13%) responded with "neutral" to this statement leaving one person who disagreed with this statement.
6. Eighty-eight (88%) percent said they were aware of the debt with 49% expressing being uncomfortable with it. Many people remarked that having a debt like the one St. Bridget has is typical for churches that have been in a construction mode.
7. A majority (68%) prefer a 5-year campaign versus a 3-year campaign to pay off the debt. The main reason was the economy. Some thought the longer campaign would give people a longer timeframe to fulfill their commitments.
8. Seventy-six percent (76%) of all respondents believe it is urgent that St. Bridget conduct a capital campaign now to raise money to pay down the debt.
9. If St. Bridget raises more than enough money to pay off the debt, parishioners preferred the extra money go toward finishing Ledwidge Hall (58%) then hire a part-time youth minister (38%).
10. A large majority (92%) believe prayer is important to the success of a campaign.
11. Survey respondents want a lot more information. Overall, respondents most want information regarding the general financial health of St. Bridget (49%), how the unpaid debt impacts the future direction of the church (49%), fundraising plans costs (45%) and levels of support among other members for paying down the debt now (44%).
12. Respondents prefer to receive information via Mass (49%), email updates (48%) and through newsletters (47%).
13. Eighty-seven percent (87%) said they would be willing to make a financial commitment to a campaign. Sixty-eight (68) households (83% of total) offered

- \$84,000 per year if the campaign was held today. This translates into offerings totaling \$252,000 for a 3-year campaign and \$420,000 for a 5-year campaign.
14. In addition to making a financial offering, 27 parishioners (23% of total respondents) said they are willing to volunteer on a capital campaign committee, sharing their time and talents with St. Bridget.
 15. There is considerable interest in learning more about planned giving for the parish.

Primary Concerns:

1. The number one concern mentioned among most parishioners was the weakness in the economy and its impact on employment, household income and investments. Generally people are concerned about their own financial security.
2. Participants believe Msgr. Murphy and Tim Long are doing a great job for the parish but feel that having a part-time pastor is detrimental to the overall parish life and Tim is over extended.
3. There are signs of campaign fatigue.
4. Even though we had a large number of households offer money if the campaign were held today, missing were the larger offerings that we like to see presented in a feasibility study.
5. There are many parishioners who are on limited or fixed incomes and may not be in a position to make a cash commitment to a campaign.
6. There is concern on the part of some parishioners regarding the parish's ability to finance a capital campaign and the impact the campaign would have on regular giving.

Current Parish Financial Condition:

- There are currently 326 households in St. Bridget.
- St. Bridget's unrestricted income for FY 09-10 was \$263,000.*
- The parish does not conduct annual appeals for parishioners to make a yearly financial commitment to fund the operating budget.
- A total of 221 households contributed to the parish in last total FY.
- The contributing household contributed an average of \$1,190 to the parish in last total FY. This reflects 2% of annual household income of \$58,600** for the Pleasant Hill, MO area.
- The average family contribution of all parish households (326) is \$807 or 1.3% of Pleasant Hill's average annual household income.

Parish Debt/Savings:

The parish currently has a debt of \$700,000 resulting from the construction of the Education and Office building and paying off the remaining debt on the church. The parish is paying approximately \$6,500 toward principal and \$3,500 in interest each month.

Past Parish Construction History and Capital Campaigns:

1. St. Bridget started a capital campaign in 1996 to build a new church on 10 acres of land donated by Mary Margaret Ledwidge. The cost of the new church with furnishings was \$1.6 million. With a cash donation from the estate of Mary Margaret Ledwidge of approximately \$795,000 and parishioners' capital campaign contributions of approximately \$570,000, we reduced our debt to \$235,000 by April, 2003. (During this time, we paid interest on our debt as well as principal.)
2. The parish purchased and furnished a rectory for \$165,000 in May of 2003 increasing the debt to \$400,000. In March of 2004, we started a second five-year campaign to build our education and office building which totaled \$1.1 million. The campaign was extended to seven years and it netted approximately \$850,000, leaving us with a debt of \$1.1 million after interest payments.
3. Recently, Nelson Gipson of our parish made a cash donation of \$367,000 and two properties. We are selling the residential property and anticipate receiving \$107,000. We plan to hold onto the undeveloped commercial property until the market improves. The commercial property worth is estimated to be \$150,000 to \$250,000.

Recommendations:

1. St. Bridget is ready to go forward with a capital campaign to pay down the debt.
2. The campaign should be a combination of an annual appeal and a capital appeal.
3. The campaign should be five years with commitment weekend in late May or early June, 2011.
4. Acknowledge that these are difficult financial times, emphasizing that extra sacrifice will be needed. The Feasibility Study did not give any indication that St. Bridget should not do a campaign; however, expectations may need to be lowered because of the economy.
5. The campaign should be engaging and fun to offset possible campaign fatigue.
6. An effort to approach potential larger donors should be implemented at the beginning of the campaign.
7. Parishioners should be provided opportunities to meet with church leaders to ask questions and to express their concerns throughout the campaign. Questions that arose during the Feasibility Study should be addressed thoroughly during the campaign, especially the general financial health of St. Bridget, how the unpaid debt impacts the future direction of the church, fundraising plans and costs and levels of support among other members for paying down the debt now.
8. A campaign should be designed in such a way that it invites new and less active members of the parish to get involved.
9. St. Bridget has a large number of older parishioners who are on limited or fixed incomes. When the campaign is conducted, it should respect the concerns of those on fixed incomes and find ways that are acceptable for this group to participate in a campaign.
10. A campaign should utilize the 27 parishioners who said in the Feasibility Study they would be willing to help with the campaign. They should be specifically invited to participate in the campaign.
11. Donations of property, stocks and bonds should be encouraged throughout the campaign.
12. Estate planning efforts should begin at the conclusion of the solicitation phase of the capital campaign to take advantage of the people who expressed an interest in this option.

Parish Growth in Households:

The chart below shows an annual average growth rate of 8.4%. The parish grew 58% in the last 10 years. If we project out the next 10 year, St. Bridget can anticipate being 520 households.

Year	Households	Annual % Change
2000	136	
2001	158	13.9%
2002	176	10.2%
2003	192	8.3%
2004	218	11.9%
2005	234	6.8%
2006	247	5.3%
2007	273	9.5%
2008	284	3.9%
2009	312	9.0%
2010	328	4.9%
Average Annual Growth		8.4%
Growth over 11 years		58.5%

Financial Forecast:

There is support for conducting a capital campaign to pay down the debt. Based on our analysis of the giving history of the church, the giving capacity of parishioners, the responses from the Feasibility Study, and our experiences with churches with similar opportunities and challenges, we believe the following:

In a quality **five-year campaign** focused on principles of good stewardship and large parishioner involvement, St. Bridget has:

- a **90 percent** chance of raising **\$600,000**,
- a **70 percent** chance of raising **\$700,000**,
- and a **50 percent** chance of raising **\$800,000 in commitments in a five-year campaign**.

If donors are cultivated with respect, given the opportunity to interact with their peers and church leaders, invited to join in the process, and are well-informed about the vision for the future of the church and how this effort will advance that vision, we believe that St. Bridget will achieve great success in its campaign.

*Unrestricted income is money received that is not committed to other items. Money raised that is earmarked for purposes such as the Diocese or missions would not be considered as unrestricted.

**As reported by city-data.com

FINDINGS

St. Bridget Feasibility Survey

The following **Findings** are a summary of the data from the written surveys and interviews. In December 2010, approximately 300 Feasibility Surveys were mailed to parish households. Sixty-four (64) persons responded online or returned paper copies, representing 48 households. Church Development interviewed 56 individuals representing 34 households. A total of 120 individuals from 82 households participated in the study, representing 25% of the total households of St. Bridget Catholic Church. This is a good response for a church your size.

The survey asked varying types of questions, with many questions using a scale to represent participants' opinions. **The scale went from very affirmative of the question's statement, through neutral to very non affirmative.** For the purpose of supplying an average response, the answers on the scale were assigned a numerical value of 5-1. The average answer presented is an average of all respondents to the question, written and interviewed. "I don't know" was not included in the calculation of the average.

Some of the people who completed the written survey, as well as those interviewed, did not respond to all of the questions and/or gave incomplete answers. As a result, the total responses for each question may vary. The complete data with comments can be found in Attachments A, B, C, D, and E. Samplings of comments are bulleted and included in the findings below.

1. Eighty-eight percent (88%) of all respondents (92% interview, 84% written) say St. Bridget is effective in meeting their spiritual needs.

	Strongly Agree		Neutral				Strongly Disagree			
	5	4	3		2		1			
Interviews	19	37%	29	56%	3	6%	1	2%	0	0%
Written	20	32%	32	52%	7	11%	2	3%	1	2%
Combined	39	34%	61	54%	10	9%	3	3%	1	1%
		% Positive: 88%				Average Response: 4.18				

The average percent positive collected from past client feasibility studies for this question is 81%.

- We love the parish and we are blessed with the priest we have had.
- Strongly agree even if I don't participate in all the opportunities available.
- Agree: There is always room for improvement. I enjoyed the program that Kevin Murphy did about the bible.
- Our house of worship is cozy and prayerful. Our pastor and deacon provide an atmosphere of meaningful celebration and homilies which are inspiring without being "long winded."
- I believe that when we have a part time priest, we are limited in our spiritual growth. Msgr. has a lot on his plate and he is being stretched.

- Agree: I would like to see more adult education at times when adults can attend.
- For a small parish, if someone wants to get involved they can.
- Agree: I think the Mass is more geared to the older members of the church and that is why it is more traditional. I think in order to keep our youth's involved in the church, we need more contemporary worship.
- Today, yes, but as my kids continue to grow our needs will change, would like to see more pull to have kids involved w/ the parish. Children choirs, full time youth group coordinator, etc.
- An ongoing (vs. 5-part or mission-type) adult faith formation program is important in developing the spiritual life of adults. I miss this and need this. I cannot attend either bible study.

2. Ninety-two percent (92%) of all respondents (98% interview, 87% written) say St. Bridget is effective in providing them with ample opportunities for community/fellowship.

	Strongly Agree		Neutral				Strongly Disagree			
	5	4	3	2	1					
Interviews	29	52%	26	46%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
Written	17	27%	37	60%	5	8%	2	3%	1	2%
Combined	46	39%	63	53%	5	4%	2	2%	2	2%
		% Positive: 92%				Average Response: 4.26				

The average percent positive collected from past client feasibility studies for this question is 80%.

- I haven't take advantage of the opportunities.
- This parish being a mission parish for so many years, we have a very strong bond amongst ourselves. We also have some great younger families who have gotten involved. The Knights have their own council now and they are very active.
- There are plenty of opportunities. However, I think they are not well communicated. I sometimes feel like I am outside the loop of communications. We need to have a better way to assimilate new members into the life of the parish. Once we were welcomed, we had no further assimilation.
- Agree: There are plenty of opportunities. People need to decide to get involved.
- Agree: There is always room for improvement. St. Bridget is more inclusive than any other church we have belonged to. There are plenty of opportunities to get involved; I just haven't taken advantage of the opportunities.
- For women, we have the Altar Society but it is made up of mostly older members. I would like to see something for mothers of children and youth.
- There would be more opportunity for fellowship if more parishioners got involved in planning/helping.

5. Eighty-eight percent (88%) of all respondents (96% interview, 80% written) said they were aware of the debt.

	Strongly Agree		Neutral				Strongly Disagree			
	5	4	3	2	1					
Interviews	42	76%	11	20%	1	2%	1	2%	0	0%
Written	20	32%	30	48%	1	2%	7	11%	4	6%
Combined	62	53%	41	35%	2	2%	8	7%	4	3%
		% Positive: 88%				Average Response: 4.27				

The average percent positive collected from past client feasibility studies for this question is 83%.

- It is in the bulletin once a month.
- I was very aware of the debt but not the details.
- I have been here since they built the church so I am very aware of the debt.

6. Forty-nine percent (49%) of all respondents (47% interview, 51% written) said they were uncomfortable with the debt.

	Strongly Support		Neutral				Strongly Don't Support			
	5	4	3	2	1					
Interviews	12	22%	14	25%	22	40%	7	13%	0	0%
Written	13	21%	19	30%	23	37%	6	10%	2	3%
Combined	25	21%	33	28%	45	38%	13	11%	2	2%
		% Positive: 49%				Average Response: 3.56				

- If we are going to build things, we will have to take on debt. What has made it worse is the economy.
- I am uncomfortable because I know what debt payments can do to a church budget. The money we spend on the debt could go to paying for programs or materials.
- This is a reasonable debt for a parish our size.
- I am uncomfortable because we should have paid off the church before we went into debt to build the offices and classrooms.
- All churches carry big debt. I think we are blessed here at St. Bridget.
- I am uncomfortable with the lack of understanding about the debt and how we got to this point.
- Neutral because I know it was going to take time to pay down the debt.
- Neutral: I had preferred a more inexpensive Ed building. Given what we have done in a short amount of time, we are doing very well.
- We do not understand what happened with the \$\$ raised from the current capital campaign, nor are we understanding why this building ended up costing so much.
- No one enjoys debt. But this Parish has accomplished much both physically and financially in the short span of 10 years. We do admire the effort to be responsible monetarily and in service to the parish and community.

7. The majority (68%) of all responders prefer a five-year campaign to a 3-year campaign

- Three years will be better because of the interest we are paying on the debt.
- Five year campaign would be easier for the younger people in the parish.
- It doesn't matter to me. I support the campaign and what ever is in the best interest of the parish is the right length.
- 3 years because I am tired of having to pay on the debt. Let's get it paid off.
- 5 years seems more appropriate with the economy as it is.
- Do what ever it will take to pay off the debt.
- 5 year because I have a lot of other obligations like planning for our children college education.
- Five years because people will see it as more manageable.

8. A sense of urgency was more evident among those interviewed. Seventy-six percent (76%) of all respondents said they consider it important for St. Bridget to conduct a capital campaign NOW to raise money to pay down our parish debt.

	Strongly Agree		Neutral				Strongly Disagree			
	5	4	3		2		1			
Interviews	23	43%	22	42%	4	8%	3	6%	1	2%
Written	13	22%	27	46%	13	22%	5	8%	1	2%
Combined	36	32%	49	44%	17	15%	8	7%	2	2%
		% Positive: 76%				Average Response: 3.97				

The average percent positive collected from past client feasibility studies for this question is 70%.

- I don't know how the economy impacted the last campaign.
- The sooner we pay off the debt the better.
- If we don't do it now, when will we do it?
- We need one now because there are a lot of people who joined the parish since our last campaign and never had an opportunity to make a commitment.
- Strongly agree because we have a lot of new people who weren't here when we started the campaign.
- The existing campaign comes to an end in March and without another campaign, we would have no way to be paying our \$10,000 per month debt payment.
- The sooner we start the campaign, the sooner we will pay off the loan.
- Neutral: I am not sure how urgent it is.
- I agree that it is important to focus on paying off this debt...either all of it if possible, or a significant portion. In a perfect world it would be great to eliminate it completely as quickly as possible, but with the current economy reducing it by any amount we can would be valuable as well.

9. If St. Bridget raises enough money to pay off the debt and also address another parish project, most responders indicated they want to finish Ledwidge Hall (48% interviews, 57% written); and/or hire a part-time youth minister (35%, 42%).

- Educating and keeping our youth involved in the church is very important.
- I would like to hire a full time person to do RE and youth ministry.
- I think we need to make our facilities more accessible for those who have trouble getting around.
- I think it is important that we provide help to Tim because he does a lot in the parish.
- I think it is a shame that Ledwidge hall is not completed. Mary was very generous to our parish and she deserved better.

10. Ninety-two percent (92%) of all respondents (93% interview, 90% written) said prayer is important to the success of a campaign.

	Strongly Support		Neutral		Strongly Don't Support					
	5	4	3	2	1					
Interviews	41	76%	9	17%	4	7%	0	0%	0	0%
Written	29	56%	18	35%	4	8%	0	0%	1	2%
Combined	70	66%	27	25%	8	8%	0	0%	1	1%
		% Positive: 92%				Average Response: 4.56				

11. Survey respondents want a lot more information. Overall, respondents most want information regarding the general financial health of St. Bridget and how the unpaid debt impacts the future direction of the church. Those interviewed also want information regarding the levels of support among other members for paying down the debt now. Those completing written surveys want to know fundraising plans and costs.

- How well did we do with the fulfillment of the last campaign commitments?
- What is the percentage of people who give to a campaign and will it impact their giving to the operating budget.
- A complete explanation of where our money goes now.

12. Survey respondents prefer to receive information during Mass, via email updates and through newsletters and mailings.

- Bulletin is a good source of information.
- Bulletin. During Masses on rare occasions.

13. Eighty-seven percent (87%) of respondents (94% interview, 79% written) indicate they would be willing to make a financial commitment to the campaign in addition to their current level of giving to St. Bridget if all their questions were answered to their satisfaction.

The average percent positive collected from past client feasibility studies for this question is 77%.

- 14. Sixty-eight (68) households (83% of total participating households) offered about \$84,000 per year to a capital campaign, or about \$252,000 for three years or \$420,000 over five years.**
- 15. When asked what might prevent individuals from giving to a campaign, most often cited were the economy and financial security. Many respondents indicated there were no obstacles.**
- Nothing: I would like to commit more, however, I don't want to make a commitment that I can't fulfill it.
 - Financial problems, health, home, loss of job.
 - Nothing
 - Death
 - Job insecurity. If I lose my job.
 - Our financial situation changes dramatically.
- 16. Twenty-seven (27) persons, or 22.5% of all survey respondents, indicated their willingness to serve on campaign committees.**
Please see Attachment E for complete list of possible volunteers.
- 17. When asked about having interest in planned giving to St. Bridget, 5 households answered “yes” and 38 households answered “maybe;” and 9 households say they already give to the church.**
- 18. Many persons were suggested as leaders for the campaign. The names most often given were:**
Please see Attachment D for complete list of suggested leaders.
- 19. Many comments and suggestions were offered by respondents. The following is a sampling.** Please see Attachments A and B for complete lists of comments.
- This Parish should frequently be commended for doing a wonderful job in sooooo many areas. We are very pleased to have "found" St. Bridget's.
 - I love St. Bridget and would be happy to do what I can.
 - If Tim were to leave, we would need to replace his with two people. I am concerned about wearing out Tim. He is always on for the parish.
 - Because we have a part time pastor, I think our spiritual needs are not being met as well. This isn't a comment about Msgr. but more about the situation he finds himself in. I am concerned about the youth group with the youth director leaving at the end of Dec.
 - We need to get more people involved with the parish.
 - I think we should do an annual review of the financial condition of the parish. We can include a spiritual assessment as well. We could do a survey with the parishioners asking them what they would like to do in the next year.
 - I find it hard sometimes to get to know people when I first moved to the parish.
 - The info about the budget numbers in the bulletin is not very clear. I think we need figure out a way to reflect the budget situation that is more understandable, especially when addressing the capital

campaign. I would also like to have more of Msgr. Murphy. Half time is not enough.

- The only concern I would like to say is the lack of a full time pastor. However, I don't want to see Msgr. leave because I appreciate his leadership.
- I would like to find someone assist Tim with all his responsibilities. He is over worked.
- Tell Msgr. to keep up the good work.
- The parish is under staffed. The staff is overloaded. Once we get rid of the debt, we can afford to increase our staffing especially for religious education for all levels of our parish. We do love the parish and are very happy with being a part of St. Bridget.