



Article - Vision Statement #4:

"We will address the broader needs of our parishioners not living in their own homes (i.e. nursing homes, group homes, homes for the aged, etc.)"

The guest writer for this week's article is David Jaeger, chair of the Master Plan Committee.

This Vision Statement affects so many in our parish. It has four specific objectives that may help illustrate the vision more clearly and describe the parishioner's needs more directly.

- Develop a larger and more coordinated outreach program for those parishioners who have difficulty attending Mass. A shuttle service is envisioned to assist those who need transportation.
- Continue to develop church extension via the radio, Internet and possibly local/cable television.
- Coordinate programs to continue to draw people to parish life. Provide opportunities within all parish properties to engage all parishioners.
- Develop a closer alliance with local hospitals and parish health services.

With a congregation of our size, there are a significant number of parishioners with various physical challenges, which limit their participation at Mass and other church activities. For those, the ability to get to church or participate in other parts of church life is limited by their disabilities. Within the objectives, there are specific items that can be implemented fairly quickly. Possibilities include the development of a shuttle program, which would be great for many who have difficulty getting to church. Three of the four objectives above can be implemented without major physical changes to parish properties. Within the Christian Service organizations in our parish, there are many activities that address some of these objectives and others yet to be developed. To enhance participation in parish life, there was a thorough focus on all facilities in the preliminary Master Plan. Although much has yet to be sifted out, access to as many parts of the parish properties would be provided.

The drawing-in and engaging of all parishioners to parish life at all the facilities cannot be accomplished without changes. These changes are reflected in concept form in the preliminary Master Plan. The goal has been to make all areas of our facilities easily accessible by all. Specifically, the church property from entrance off the street to seating is intended to be as barrier free as possible. The new parking area along 12 Mile with a convenient, enclosed entrance would greatly change how people with physical difficulties view church participation. Access to all areas in the main portions of the church would be enhanced by a sensitive and thoughtful realignment of pews and with the addition of raised walking areas. Within the school facilities, envisioned additions would provide elevator access to many other portions of those facilities making them more directly a part of parish life and offering opportunities for people and students with physical challenges. The school facilities are very often used and would continue to be used for many parish functions beyond direct education. The ability to engage all parishioners into our facilities would go a long way toward implementing our broader mission of ".... putting the Gospel and teachings of the Catholic Church into action, welcoming and including all people."