

*Aiming*  
*Proclaiming*  
*Reclaiming*

*A vision for Holy Cross  
Lutheran Church*

**30003 Ryan Road  
Warren, MI 48092**

May 17, 2004

To The Members of the Congregation:

Thank you for all of your comments, ideas, visions, support, and enthusiasm for what has affectionately come to be known as APR (Aiming, Proclaiming, & Reclaiming). I was very pleased with the turnout for the "town hall meetings" as well as the level of participation by those who came.

You were told that the schedule would be the town hall meetings, followed by a re-write of APR, and then the congregation being asked to formally vote their approval. The time has come to wrap up the process of APR and begin the new task of implementing APR. Rather than reprint 300 copies of APR and distributing them, 100 copies of the revisions have been made and are available for those who would like them. More will be printed if needed. Re-read through APR and pray over it. I am asking for you to make sure you attend services on the weekend of June 5/6 to cast your formal opinion on APR. At the end of the worship service on Saturday night you will be given the opportunity to comment once again before you cast your vote. On Sunday we will do the same thing.

If APR is accepted by you, we will begin the task of implementing it. The ideas that have been set forth in APR will be handed over to the various ministries under which they fall. The various ministries will be asked to flesh out the various proposals and begin the task of molding and shaping them into reality. This will involve the ministries doing some soul-searching, goal setting, and recruiting members of the congregation to help out in ministry. Encouragement and accountability will be a key factor in APR working. Therefore the heads of each ministry, pastor, and council will meet at the end of each year to review and assess progress, coordinate efforts, and make adjustments to APR as needed. Some ideas will be very easy to implement and others will take a little longer. Some ideas will come into reality virtually untouched and others will look totally different. Some dreams will always remain dreams. But that is okay. The important thing is we are busy about the things of God!

APR will be given to every new member of the congregation and its highlights made known to those going through the Adult Instruction classes. From time to time APR will be preached on in worship so that we may remain a focused congregation. It is my hope that you not only feel a part of the process but will continue to be a part of the process.

Sincerely in Christ,

Pastor E.

## Table of Contents

I. Background Information	p.4
II. Mission & Purpose	p.5
A. Mission in Worship	
B. Mission in Congregational Life	
III. Congregational Goals	p.7
A. Worship	
B. Outreach	
C. Spiritual Care & Fellowship	
D. Summary of Goals	
IV. Congregational Objectives	p.10
A. Individual – Ten Percent Challenge	p.11
1. Time,	
2. Treasure,	
3. Talent	
B. Congregational –	p.12
4. Worship,	
5. Outreach,	
6. Spiritual Care & Fellowship,	
V. Implementation of APR	p.15
VI. Conclusion	p.15

## I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

American Christians have long regarded the United States to be a Christian nation due to the Judeo-Christian ethics of our founding fathers. We perceive ourselves to still be a Christian nation (four out of five Americans claim to be Christian and nine out of ten adults own a Bible). Yet when American "Christians" confess what they really believe, the reality is quite different. George Barna, noted pollster, reports the following facts on religion in America:

- 6 out of 10 Americans don't believe in the existence of Satan
- 51% believe praying to the saints can have a positive affect on one's life.
- 35% believe you can communicate with the dead.
- 42% believe that Jesus was a sinner.
- 50% believe that one is saved by virtue of their own good works!
- 54% believe that only through logic, human reasoning, and personal experience can truth be discovered.

An astounding 74% of Americans believe that people are born neither bad nor good, but that we follow one of those paths as we get older and mature. Forty-four percent believe that the Koran, Book of Morman, and the Bible are different expressions of the same spiritual truths. While 38% reject that idea, 8% don't know for sure. Couple all of this with the fact that 100 million people in the U.S. are un-churched and the landscape for us being a Christian nation changes dramatically.

Concerning the state of the Christian church, Barna says: "In a sound byte society you get sound byte theology. Americans are more likely to buy simple sayings than a system of truth that takes time and concentration to grasp. People are more prone to embrace diversity, tolerance, and feeling good than judgment, discernment, righteousness, and limitations. People are more focused on temporal security than eternal security and its temporal implications. Hopefully, once Christian leaders and teachers comprehend this we can be more devoted to effectively challenging the superficial spirituality of our nation."

Finally, in over a year of study, Barna, not surprisingly, found that movies, television, the internet, books, music, public policy and law, and family were the leading influencers on people's lives. Neither Christianity nor the Church was found among the top twelve. This is the landscape that we live in as individuals and as Holy Cross Lutheran Church. As Christians we are not of the world, but it is in the world that we live. It is to those who are of the world that we are called to proclaim the Good News of salvation.

Jesus told his disciples in Matthew 10:16, "be shrewd as snakes and innocent as doves". As Christians we have a great balancing act. We need to be as savvy as the world is in reaching the world for Christ (fighting fire with fire), all the while not denying the truth of God's Word and His will for us as His children in our words and actions. As Christians and as the Christian Church, we must be clearly focused on the goal of the Great Commission: to make disciples and to nurture those disciples.

## II. MISSION AND PURPOSE

Jesus was a man clearly focused on his mission. He had a goal: To save the world from the consequences of sin. Over and over Jesus said, "I must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, be killed and on the third day be raised to life" (Matt. 16:21; Mark 10:33; Luke 9:51, 18:51). He always kept his life focused on that goal. Everything He said, everything He did, was in connection with completing that goal. Many times Jesus was tempted to lay aside His passion for going the way of the cross. But He did not lose His focus. To the cross he went. And because of that focus, that passion for the souls of the lost, we have reaped the harvest of God's undeserved grace--the forgiveness of our sins, life, and salvation.

God has given His church a very similar goal: to save the world by telling every man, woman, and child the good news of life and salvation in Jesus Christ. If we are going to accomplish the mission that our Lord has given us, we too, must be single-minded, passionate and goal oriented. We must always set before us the work that God has given us to do. Everything that we do as a congregation should be understood and accomplished in light of our mission.

**Aiming, Proclaiming, & Reclaiming** is our mission statement. We have three words that are easy to remember, simple, catchy, and to the point. But what are we aiming at? Christ! What are we proclaiming? Christ crucified! And what is it we are reclaiming? Lost lives for Christ! We are:

**Aiming** our lives toward Christ,  
**Proclaiming** Christ crucified,  
**Reclaiming** lost lives for Christ.

Three easy words to remember; expanded out to form the reason, the purpose, the mission, for the life of our congregation. Whatever we undertake as a congregation, we do so in light of those words.

## A. THE MISSION IN WORSHIP

To help us keep our focus on our mission statement, it will become a part of our every Sunday worship. We will challenge and encourage ourselves at the end of every worship service with this or a similar format:

BENEDICTION

SENDING

P: Having been blessed by God, what are we now to be doing?

**C: Aiming, Proclaiming, & Reclaiming.**

P: What are we aiming at?

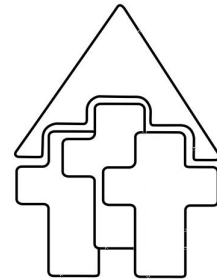
**C: We are: Aiming our lives toward Christ, Proclaiming Christ crucified, & Reclaiming lost lives for Christ.**

P: Having been crucified with Christ it is no longer you who lives but Christ who lives in you. Go, then, and boldly live your life of faith in the Son of God who loves you and has given himself up for you.

CLOSING HYMN

## B. THE MISSION IN CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

A church logo will be a great resource and visual tool to help keep us focused on our mission. The general shape of the front of our roof line is a triangle--the historical symbol that the God we worship is triune. We have three crosses on the front of our church. The one in the middle reminds us that God sent His only Son to suffer and die for us. It is to Him we aim our lives. The other two crosses remind us that Christ died for the whole world. Therefore we proclaim nothing but Christ crucified. Because Christ died for us we are reclaimed by God. As we tell others the Good News, God continues to reclaim lives for himself.



In addition to being a part of the liturgy each week, the mission statement and logo will also appear on our stationary, website, newsletter, and every worship bulletin printed.

### III. CONGREGATIONAL GOALS

#### A. WORSHIP

Never in the history of the world has life been more challenging. Every day the Christian is assaulted and tempted through movies, television, music, magazines, and political action groups promoting the selfish and lawless ways of the world. The clear lines of morality and right and wrong have become blurred or non-existent. We are so inundated with the sins of the world that we become "desensitized" to them. We are physically, morally, and spiritually spent by the end of the week. We are sorely in need of renewal and refreshment in our lives of faith. Aiming our lives toward Christ becomes critical for our spiritual welfare.

The one place for the church to help Christians aim their lives toward Christ (and have the greatest impact on the lives of its membership) is the area of worship. The church's worship services are the place where the greatest number of members can be touched. Therefore the church must strive to offer **worship services that refresh and renew** us in our Christian faith, as well as **services that equip and inspire** us to go back out into the world and do battle with our own sinful human nature, the world itself, and the forces of evil.

Young and old, men and women, believers and unbelievers will look to worship to renew themselves each week. They will come looking for different things in different ways. For good or bad, worship takes on objective and subjective characteristics. In caring for these varied groups the church must balance its Lutheran doctrine and heritage with the realities of life in the twenty-first century. **Worship styles and opportunities should abound** as we endeavor to meet those varied needs of the saints. The **Law and the Gospel** must continue to be preached and rightly divided. God's entire word must be proclaimed in season and out of season. What the people **need to hear must be preached rather than what itching ears want to hear**. And all of this carried out **in humility, love, and forgiveness**.

#### B. OUTREACH

It is our fervent prayer that those who do not know Jesus will invariably find themselves in our midst. However, our worship services may seem foreign to them. Therefore the worship life of our congregation, as it gathers corporately, takes on an added challenge and responsibility--that of meeting the needs of unbelievers, too. Therefore our worship must take on the atmosphere of **welcoming those that are wayward and lost** and **inviting them with open arms to become a part of our fellowship** with our Lord, Jesus Christ. These guests will more than likely not be familiar with our ways of worship. For

their sake our services should be as **"user friendly"** as possible. We will want their encounter with us to be the best it can be.

When one has the love of Jesus Christ poured into their hearts they cannot but speak of Christ to others. Just as there is the need and desire of humans to reproduce, so there is the desire and need in Christians to produce spiritual offspring. To know and worship Jesus without telling others about him is to keep a treasure selfishly to oneself. Such selfishness can be tragic when there is only one name under heaven by which men may be saved--Jesus Christ. As the Church strives to provide ample opportunities for its people to worship God, it also **strives to make His name and His wonderful deeds made known to a sin-sick world in need of salvation.** The church primarily accomplishes this by the preaching of the Gospel.

Outreach, however, is not limited to just preaching. Luke reminds us in his Gospel that "Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men (2:52)." The blind man called out for Jesus to have mercy on him and be healed of his blindness. And Jesus met that need. A man with leprosy cried out, "If you will, you can make me well." And Jesus healed the man right away. Jesus had a wonderful compassion and heart for peoples' every need. Matthew writes in 9:35 that Jesus went through all the towns and villages healing the sick and preaching the good news. Matthew then comments that Jesus saw the crowds as "harassed and helpless" and had compassion on them. Jesus paid no attention to whether or not they believed in him; he paid no attention to their status in life; he didn't care if they were appreciative of his help or not. He simply saw a need, and in love and compassion, he reached out to meet that need. Therefore **the Church also reaches out to the world, in love, by meeting the "temporal" needs of people, too.**

### C. SPIRITUAL CARE & FELLOWSHIP

In Proverbs we are told to "train up a child in the way he should go and he will not depart from it." The Psalmist in 119:9,11 says, "How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your Word. I have laid up your Word in my heart that I might not sin against you." Jesus commissioned His Church concerning His disciples: "And teach them to obey everything I have commanded you." The job of parenting has become increasingly difficult. Life in the twenty-first century is fast paced. In order to survive, too many mothers and fathers must both work outside the home. Tired from work and a long commute, parents then shuttle their children to all kinds of after school activities. This leaves little time for families to gather around the dinner table to nurture their relationship, let alone to spend time at the family altar. Couple this with parents who feel insecure and inadequate about their own faith and how to pass it on to

their children. Martin Luther's admonition, "As the head of the family should teach it in a simple way to his household," seems to fall on deaf ears.

While growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ is ultimately the responsibility of each individual Christian, and of parents toward their children, the Church stands ready **to help and provide the resources necessary for Christians to grow and mature in their faith**. She also is more than willing **to help parents in the task of educating their children**, so that, like their Lord, they may grow in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and with men. This is usually accomplished by providing home devotional materials, Sunday school, Bible classes, new member classes, Confirmation instruction, VBS, Youth Groups for every age, etc.

Spiritual care cannot be limited to education and instruction. Fellowship must also play its part. Fellowship is more than coffee and donuts after the service or an occasional pot-luck meal. Fellowship is sharing our faith with someone else; telling them what God did for us in similar circumstances; encouraging and comforting those who are hurting, not with "warm" words, but with the power and comfort of God's Word. The Christian church should be the greatest support group the world has ever known.

**Realizing the purpose and the need for fellowship** for Christians, the church **fosters an environment of fellowship** and **nurtures** among the members a **sense of mutual love and care and concern for one another**.

#### D. SUMMARY OF GOALS

##### WORSHIP

Offer worship services that refresh, renew, equip, inspire, proclaim the Law and the Gospel and preach what people need to hear, not what itching ears want to hear.

##### OUTREACH

Make His name and His wonderful deeds made known to by practicing humility, love and forgiveness welcoming those in need of salvation with open arms and reaching out to the world meet the "temporal" needs of people.

##### SPIRITUAL CARE & FELLOWSHIP

Nurture a sense of love, care, and concern among the members by providing help and resources necessary for Christians to educate their children, grow and

mature in their faith, and realize the purpose of the church by fostering education and fellowship.

## IV. CONGREGATIONAL OBJECTIVES

### A. INDIVIDUAL

Reaching the goals and objectives that we as a congregation will set for ourselves will only happen if we ourselves are personally committed to them. That means we have to have dreams and visions and goals and objectives for ourselves. A series of workshops will be held over the next year or two and every member of the congregation encouraged to participate for the purpose of growing in the understanding of what are their **spiritual gifts**, and how they might be developed and used. As part of that endeavor each member will arrive at a **personal mission statement** for their personal lives. A concurrent workshop or series will also allow members to explore their leadership skills and abilities.

To aid us in our personal commitment we will take up the **Ten Percent Challenge: Prayers, time, treasure, and talent**. When each member of Holy Cross was received into membership they were asked if they would "support the work our gracious Lord has given this congregation with your prayers, time, treasure, and talent? If so, answer: I will with the help of God." They then answered, "I will with the help of God." Those words were spoken by those received into membership because they had made a conscious decision, by faith, to become a **partner** in the **mission, ministry, and fellowship** of Holy Cross Lutheran Church (Eph 4:11-13; Phil 1:4-5; Acts 2:42-47).

We must ask, though, if we as a congregation have succeeded in our responsibility to assimilate new members into the fellowship? Have I, as a member of Holy Cross, succeeded in my responsibility to actively seek ways to become partners with my fellow brothers and sisters in Christ? (American Express is fond of saying that membership has its privileges. But it is equally true that membership has its responsibilities.)

The Ten Percent Challenge is understood in the true Lutheran sense of Law and Gospel. We will strive to reach the goal of giving ten percent of our prayers, time, treasure, and talent to Holy Cross Lutheran Church--not because we are coerced or railroaded into it (the law) but because of the Gospel ("with the help of God"). Asking ten percent isn't really all that much. Consider the following:

1. Time. There are 168 hours in a week. Of those 168 hours in a week we spend on average 56 hours sleeping, 45-50 hours working, 6 hours commuting, 9-11 hours watching television, 9.5 hours preparing and eating meals. Time for

self each week is about 6 hours for women and 8 hours for men. Chore time around the home averages 11 hours for women and 7 hours for men. Whatever amount of time one is spending on prayer and devotion time for themselves, let them be encouraged to take ten percent of that and use it as time to pray for our congregation as a whole and for individual members. If that time is 30 minutes, then 3 minutes could be devoted to that. At the end of the week that would be over 20 minutes spent praying for our congregation and its mission. About 3 hours toward our church/community endeavors is volunteered each week. For most of us that means 1-2 hours a week at church for worship and Bible Class and that is it. Let us strive for a mindset over the next few years to spending time above and beyond worship in service to our congregation.

2. Treasure. The widow's mite (Luke 21:1-4) is classic evidence of the magnitude of a little going a long way. People are always accumulating change in their pocket. Let's assume that we accumulate \$1.00 a week in change and we have made the conscious decision to give that to Lord through our congregation. Holy Cross has 343 giving units. That is \$343 extra a week. At the end of the year that is a staggering \$17,836 that could be put toward fulfilling the Great Commission. Eating out has become a normal part of our everyday activity. Let's assume that the average family of four spends about \$20.00 eating out for dinner. A conscious decision has been made to take the money spent on one of those dinners "out" each week and give it to the mission and ministry of Holy Cross. That would mean at the end of a year we would have \$356,720 given back to the Lord to fulfill His plan of saving the world.

Let's take that idea one step further. The Old Testament speaks of the tithing 10% of the first fruits of your income. Let's assume that each giving unit (whether there is one person or 15 in a giving unit) averages \$20,000 a year in income. That would mean that each giving unit would give \$2,000 a year to the work of laboring in God's vineyard. Holy Cross would have a budget of \$686,000 dollars. Extend that average to \$30,000 and the budget grows to over one million dollars! Imagine the possibilities of what could be done with that money-- every child in the congregation could sent to area Lutheran schools; the youth group could have their own building to be used as rec center where they could meet as well as youth from the whole community; New Hope could expand out beyond the borders of our building. The ideas would be endless.

3. Talent. The lesson of the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30) is not to waste the gifts that God has given us, but in faith, to use them for the common good of the people of God and the enlargement of His kingdom (reclaiming lost souls for Christ). If your talent is teaching then consider teaching a Bible Class, Sunday school, VBS, etc. If your talent is gardening, then consider donating some time to keeping the flowers, trees, and shrubs of our property in beautiful condition. If you are an artist, then consider donating some of your time to

designing and making bulletins for special services, banners, artwork for the classrooms, etc.

The blessings of everyone being involved are legion, but here are a few:

1. Those who do the work of many aren't burnt out and frustrated because they do all the work.
2. Those who begin volunteering their time feel a part of the congregation.
3. The congregation is blessed by the gifts and talents, the dreams and visions of those offering themselves.
4. You feel as though your fellow brothers and sisters in Christ here at Holy Cross are just that--brothers and sisters, family if you will.

## B. CONGREGATIONAL

As members and friends of Holy Cross equip themselves for "works of service" and share dreams and visions with each other, they will begin to focus on the mission and ministry of the congregation. With their skills, talents, abilities, warm and generous hearts, and their passionate faith, there will be no limit to the possibilities of what can be done.

1. Worship. As Holy Cross services a wide cross-section of people and age ranges, our worship services should remain as blended and varied as possible so that all of the worship needs and tastes of members and friends can be experienced.

Worship should be as family oriented as possible. Children and youth will be invited to help with ushering, passing out bulletins, taking up the offering, etc. This will help to solidify in their minds that they, too, are partners in the Gospel. Children will be expected, and taught by their parents, to participate in the worship services. Sermons, music, and liturgy will meet their needs just as it does for the adults.

It has been a longstanding tradition in the Lutheran Church to worship on Wednesday evenings during Advent and Lent. By the time those seasons are over we have gotten ourselves into the habit of midweek worship.

Baptism is our entry point into the kingdom God. It is through that sacrament that God brings to us personally everything that Christ won for us by his death and resurrection. Because baptism is so important, the baptismal font should have just as prominent a position in the church as does the altar. Serious and prayerful consideration should be given to a new font and placing it (or the old one) in a more prominent and permanent place, such as in the narthex or just

inside the doors to the nave. The symbolism of the font in that place would visualize the exorcism of the old nature and the entrance of the new Adam into the kingdom of God. This would also serve as a constant reminder to the rest of us of our own baptisms as we pass by it.

Timothy Maschke makes this very point in his textbook, **Gathered Guests: A Guide to Worship in the Lutheran Church** (copyright 2003). He writes concerning a congregation's worship space--"Three significant spaces are often identified for special consideration--the altar area, the area for the baptismal font, and the area for the pulpit. Two of these are sacramental spaces, the third is proclamation space. These three areas are key for communicating a theology of worship and a theology of God's gathered guests. Where the altar, the pulpit, and the font are located and how they are emphasized architecturally reveals much about the theology and beliefs of the people who are constructing the building. The location of these spaces also greatly affects the next generation's theological perspectives." Maschke then goes on to say about the baptismal space, "In medieval cathedrals baptismal fonts were almost always positioned near the entrance to the church. Within the past two decades, the entrance of the church is again becoming an increasingly common location for the baptismal font in Lutheran churches. This location serves as a sign that Baptism is the entrance into the family of God and a reminder to all worshipers of the continuing blessings of Baptism. This location emphasizes the communal nature of the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. Baptism is not a private act in the life of a lone Christian. Therefore, locating the font at the entrance of the church visually underscores that through Baptism a person is brought into the community of God's gathered guests."

3. Outreach. There is a need to attract and retain people of all ages, but a special emphasis on young families and their children is a must if Holy Cross is going to have a future beyond the Baby Boomer generation. Outreach by the congregation should reflect this. Friendship Sundays will be held on a quarterly basis. Members of the congregation will invite family and friends who do not know Jesus to come and worship with us (even those who belong to another church, yet never go are fair game). Our service that day will be geared to them and activities held afterwards to welcome them.

The church will budget for advertising/ publicity through the local media. The Church Ad Project (started by an Episcopal advertising executive) would be a good starting point. Their ads are witty, thought provoking, and speak to our times. As there is much traffic in front of the church (especially with a traffic light at the corner) an electronic sign will be purchased in which many different events can be put forth to the community on a daily basis.

New Hope will consider the feasibility of becoming a full-service ministry offering new hope to people that have lost hope. New Hope could take on the role of a full time food pantry, and expand their services to include legal and career counseling, helping students with school supplies, etc.

Letters of congratulations and a small gift could be given to newborns in the area. Newcomers to Michigan and/or the Detroit area could be welcomed with a letter, porch visit, or small gift.

But the greatest act of outreach must come from us personally. Each member needs to be trained in personal evangelism--that is sharing their faith experience with others and inviting them to worship with us. After all, a witness simply testifies to what they know and what they have experienced.

4. Spiritual Care & Fellowship. Members of the congregation are very warm and loving, yet so many people do not have friendships within the congregation. An atmosphere of family needs to be cultivated. This can be done through more congregational and family activities such as movie nights, game nights, inspirational speakers, small group activities, etc.

Sometimes the pastor is the last one that people want to talk with. A good friend or a caring person in the congregation may be more acceptable. That is the blessing of the Stephens Ministry--lay people trained to counsel other lay people in similar circumstances. Our Stephens Ministry is a diamond in the rough that needs to be polished through more vigorous promotion and the staffing of additional counselors.

The education of our members is becoming more important than ever. Over the next 3-5 years Holy Cross will commit itself to broaden the knowledge of our membership and its understanding of things spiritual. Several different Bible study classes should be available on Sunday morning and at different times during the week to meet the many needs of our congregation. There will be youth groups (i.e.: Pioneer Clubs) for all age groups in the congregation so that when our youth reach High School we aren't competing for their time with school and other activities. Being in High School youth group will be a foregone conclusion. There will be ministries to the single, young marrieds with no children, marrieds with children, and the divorced.

Our Sunday school will be more academic in its curriculum. Bible stories will be taught and applied in light of Law and Gospel. Having teacher training programs in place will help to placate the fears of teachers and make learning more fun for our children. A memory work program will be put in place for our Sunday school so that our children are taught simple prayers, hymns, etc. early. By the time

children reach Confirmation instruction they will already know the six chief parts of Luther's Catechism.

A men's ministry group allied with Lutheran Layman's League will be enacted so that ministry through media may continue. This will also help to encourage and enable men to take their place of leadership in the church and local congregation. An LWML will be added for the younger women of the congregation to keep us focused on missions and the Great Commission.

## V. IMPLEMENTATION OF APR

The ideas that have been set forth in APR will be handed over to the various ministries under which they fall. The various ministries will be asked to flesh out the various proposals and begin the task of molding and shaping them into reality. This will involve the ministries doing some soul-searching, goal setting, and recruiting members of the congregation to help out in ministry. Encouragement and accountability will be a key factor in APR working. Therefore the heads of each ministry, pastor, and council will meet at the end of each year to review and assess progress, coordinate efforts, and make adjustments to APR as needed. Some ideas will be very easy to implement and others will take a little longer. Some ideas will come into reality virtually untouched and others will look totally different. Some dreams will always remain dreams.

## VI. CONCLUSION

God, through the prophet, Joel, tells us, "I will pour out my Spirit on all people, and your sons and your daughters will prophesy. Your old men will have dreams and your young men will see visions." Many dreams and visions are already obtainable, while others may seem far-fetched. But the beauty of dreaming is being open to all of the possibilities. No dreams or visions should ever be dismissed, for with God nothing is impossible. If it is his will, dreams can, and will, turn into reality. By approving APR we are committing ourselves and our congregation to bringing these alive with the help of God.

May God continue to bless all of us with dreams and visions of Holy Cross's potential, equip and enable us to bring those dreams and visions to reality, and finally, fulfill the Great Commission--that of making disciples by baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to do everything he has commanded us to do.

To God Alone Be All the Glory!