

Church of the Little Flower

Berkeley Heights, NJ

Results of a Feasibility Study to Conduct a Capital Campaign

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74 New York Avenue, Suite 2

Huntington, NY 11743

Ph. 631.351.1368

Fax. 631.424.0277

Email: klynch@lynchdevelopment.com

Website: www.lynchdevelopment.com

I. INTRODUCTION

Lynch Development Associates was retained by Church of the Little Flower Parish to conduct a Feasibility Study to determine the parish's potential in a major capital endeavor. This campaign would be an attempt to raise the necessary funds for the renovations and repairs to the Church of the Little Flower Parish plant.

The purpose of the Feasibility Study would be to make parishioners and friends of Church of the Little Flower Parish aware of the discussions taking place; that a study is being undertaken to determine if it is possible to obtain the leadership and financial commitment necessary for a successful campaign endeavor. The study would seek their opinions toward the various projects, their present feelings toward the parish and the willingness to be involved with such an endeavor.

In conducting the Feasibility Study, a cross section of **48** individuals and/or families were met through personal interviews allowing them to openly and confidentially express their opinions in regards to the study. Additionally, a questionnaire was sent to 1,439 members of the parish family in order to give an opportunity to all parishioners to voice their opinions. This selection of 1,439 parishioners was based on their historical giving to the parish during calendar year 2008. As of the writing of this report, a total of **115** questionnaires were returned from this selected group.

All during the Feasibility Study, Lynch Development Associates (LDA) found those interviewed to be very open with their comments and suggestions, allowing the meetings to be very productive. At the conclusion of the study, LDA had a clear picture of the present parish environment and the ability of the parish in regard to its fund-raising potential in a capital campaign.

The study was intended to be a sensitive probing of attitudes and interests from a cross section of leaders regarding the proposed projects, to present liturgical and social concerns of the parish, and overall feelings toward the parish. The latter has a significant bearing on parishioner's overall inclination to give. With this information in hand, Lynch Development Associates would be in a position to develop potential courses of action for the Parish.

Lynch Development Associates is grateful for the opportunity to be of service to Church of the Little Flower Parish. We received only the warmest welcome from everyone as well as the understanding, spirited assistance and complete encouragement needed to conduct this study. LDA is particularly grateful to Fr. Andy Prachar and the staff, for their effort in setting up appointments, encouraging people to meet with us and offering their encouragement and support at every turn. Additionally, we would like to thank the parish family for their interest, participation and concern throughout the study.

With the cooperation received during the Feasibility Study, Lynch Development Associates Inc. recommends that Church of the Little Flower move forward with a capital endeavor to fund the renovation of the parish plant of Church of the Little Flower.

Based on the feedback received from potential major donors as well as consistently generous parishioners, Lynch Development Associates believes it is possible for Church of the Little Flower to raise up to 3 times their annual offertory income (\$1,500,000) in a capital campaign in an effort to fund the above mentioned projects. Major Donor support from the 48 families interviewed demonstrated a strong foundation for this capital appeal.

II. METHOD OF STUDY

The study consisted of personal and confidential interviews with a cross-section of young to elderly parishioners, and any additional individuals who were recommended by the pastor and parish staff who could provide insight into the potential of Church of the Little Flower.

A personal letter from Fr. Andy Prachar was sent asking **100** individuals or couples to partake in the interview process of the study. The intention was to effectively meet with **30-50** of the proposed interviewees. Follow-up telephone calls were made to schedule appointments with the interviewees with the option of conducting the interview in the rectory, in their home or over the phone, whichever the prospect felt was most comfortable for them. In some cases the prospective interviewee could not be reached or they were unable to commit to a scheduled interview. Naturally, all of these prospects should be contacted in the course of an active capital campaign.

A questionnaire outline was developed to guide the interview with each person (s) and all were free to comment on virtually any part of parish life they wished to discuss. Each interviewee had something to offer, some more than others, and some more specific than others. In all cases, the interviewer kept the focus on the feasibility of the campaign and the best method to realize the capital need. Also, a major focus was placed upon the need for leadership and participation.

The strength of the interview is a combination of the formal line of questioning as well as the in-depth conversations leading to additional topics of interest which unfolded as the interview progressed. The net result of these interviews and conversations were the honest feelings and thoughtful reflection of those interviewed.

Questions were created to determine the giving potential of those families or individuals interviewed for a capital campaign effort. These prospects have the strongest history of giving to Church of the Little Flower Parish and their responses to these questions have a significant impact on the financial potential in a capital effort.

Additionally, a questionnaire, resembling that of the one used for the interview process, was mailed to 1,439 selected families. The questions were more focused, providing yes or no answers or a rating scale in order to gain a clear picture of the feelings and attitudes of the parish family.

III. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Lynch Development Associates believes it is desirable to begin this report with a brief summary of the basic conclusions reached so that the reviewer can continue reading the report having that knowledge.

Originally, 100 members of the parish were selected from the parish census in order to take part in the interview portion of the study. **While 100 prospects were invited to take part in the study, many of which received follow up phone calls in order to encourage their participation, 48 responded to take part in the interview phase of the study. Phase I participation in this study is considered excellent.**

1. Most of the interviewees were aware of the proposed projects. In the interest of creating open discussion, each prospect was provided a case statement prior to the interview to discuss specific parish needs.
2. Those interviewed were given the opportunity to ask questions and pose alternatives to the proposed project. They were given the opportunity to comment on the project, its importance to the future of the community, and the overall need of the project.
3. The second part of the feasibility study was introduced with a comprehensive packet which was sent via direct mail. This packet provided the opportunity for parishioners to take part through a direct mail questionnaire. This option presented a modified version of the questionnaire utilized in the interview process. This questionnaire was designed to procure direct answers to the questions asked in order to determine any existing trends within the parish family. Parishioners were also provided the opportunity to participate in the study through LDA's website, completing their survey online. Through the mailing questionnaire and web survey we received **115 responses**. Not all respondents answered all the questions on the questionnaire and some chose to directly abstain from answering.
4. The following are our conclusions from the **first phase** of the feasibility study:
 - The enthusiasm expressed for Church of the Little Flower Parish itself during the interview process was strong with 88% indicating an either Good or Excellent rating in regard to the reputation of the Parish.
 - In regard to the leadership and operations of the parish under Fr. Andy Prachar, 100% of those interviewed felt he was doing an either Good or Excellent job. **This is extremely significant.**
 - These 48 prospects indicated a majority degree of support that the projects being proposed were necessary and desired. 81% of the interviewees indicated that the proposals were an Excellent or Good idea. Parishioners in this Phase expressed their desire to keep the campaign and the AAA separate.
 - When invited to speculate on the ability of the parish to raise significant funds through a capital campaign 79% indicated that they believed Church of the Little Flower Parish could raise at least \$1.5 million or more in a capital campaign effort.

- Each interviewee was asked to provide a range of potential gift should the proposed projects move forward. These ranges offered the donor the opportunity to make their pledge commitment over a three year period. Counsel offers these ranges in an effort to challenge the potential donor as well as to represent actual potential major gifts available to Church of the Little Flower. Even though there was varied support for different case components, many participants indicated they would give towards a capital appeal over a 3 year period. 48 study participants indicated gifts in the range of \$315,000 to \$500,000 dollars to a potential campaign effort. **We believe that this level of support will provide a formidable foundation for a \$1.5 million capital campaign. Based on this response counsel anticipates the top 100 donors will provide the initial \$750,000.**
- 36 interviewees did strongly indicate that they would be willing to volunteer to help make a campaign effort a success. 3 of these persons were willing to take a leadership role within the campaign.

5. The following are the results and conclusions from the second phase of the study:

- 115 individuals or families (Category Size: 1,439 parishioners) responded to the second phase of the study.
- 79% of the respondents felt that the Parish had an either Good or Excellent reputation.
- Over 99% of the respondents felt that Fr. Andy Prachar was doing an either Good or Excellent job.
- When asked their feelings regarding the proposal to renovate the parish plant 75% felt that it was a Good or Excellent idea.
- When asked if they believed a capital campaign would be successful over 85% of those who chose to answer this question indicated a yes response.
- When asked to consider a sacrifice of \$2 a day over five years in order to accomplish the raising of the funds necessary for the construction of the new church, 72% indicated a yes response.
- 9 respondents indicated that they would be willing to take a leadership role in this campaign effort.
- 63 respondents indicated that they would be willing to volunteer some of their time in order to make this campaign effort a success.

IN PERSON INTERVIEW RESULTS
PHASE I

• How would you rate the reputation of Church of the Little Flower?

Excellent	_____16_____
Good	_____26_____
Average	_____6_____
Poor	_____0_____
Abstain	_____0_____

Comments:-

- *There is a great feeling here, our family is proud to be parishioners here at Church of the Little Flower.*
- *Attendance has been on the rise since our new pastor has taken over. Families who have left are finally coming back.*
- *Younger families are starting to come to the parish; and are taking leadership roles.*
- *The parish has a great music program, it appeals to everyone.*
- *Everything is outstanding.*
- *It was poor before Fr. Andy got here, now it is excellent.*

• Please assess the success of the running of the parish (spiritual climate, buildings, etc.) under the leadership of Fr. Andy Prachar.

Excellent	_____40_____
Good	_____8_____
Average	_____0_____
Poor	_____0_____
Abstain	_____0_____

Comments:

- *Our family unhappily left the parish because of the previous pastor, Fr. Andy brought us back and we could not be happier.*
- *He cares so much about our parish community.*
- *He is very engaged in the parish community, a great leader.*
- *He has been a breath of fresh air.*
- *He's a hands-on person and is involved in everything that he should be. He is a perfect leader and a perfect preacher, everything this parish needs.*

• Identify some examples of positive changes that you have seen in the past few years?

- *The current change in leadership.*
- *The current renovation of the Little Church.*
- *More young families have joined the parish.*
- *Attendance at mass has improved.*

- *Increased communication with our priests.*
- *Our youth is now more involved in the parish.*

- Identify some examples of challenges the parish has faced in the past few years?

- *We have had many different pastors.*
- *We have too many affluent people in this parish who do not give any money.*
- *Our worship space is in an auditorium.*
- *The church is ugly.*
- *There is much unrest in this parish due to years and years of neglect from our leaders.*

- Identify some areas of improvement for the parish?

- *The Upper Church needs to be made more “reverent”.*
- *All buildings MUST be made handicap accessible.*
- *We need a cry room.*
- *The window unit A/Cs are too loud, we need a central air conditioning system.*
- *We cannot neglect the roof.*
- *We have too many cheap people in the parish.*

- Please rate how you feel our parish influences our community?

Excellent	_____7_____
Good	_____21_____
Average	_____18_____
Poor	_____1_____
Abstain	_____1_____

Comments:

- *We have so many ministries to attract involvement.*
- *It’s a caring parish—people really care for each other here.*
- *We have a great community and I think we set the precedent for religious groups in this area.*

- Please indicate your feelings with regard to the proposed projects:

Excellent idea	_____10_____
Good idea	_____29_____
Fair Idea	_____9_____
Poor Idea	_____0_____

Comments:

- *It is absolutely imperative that we make repairs to our parish plant as soon as possible.*
- *We trust Fr. Andy to lead us in the right direction.*
- *We must take ownership in our parish and prepare for our future.*
- *What is an emergency fund? Why do we need it?.*
- *Improvements are long overdue. (Basically everyone expressed these opinions)*
- *We must take care of our roof.*
- *The timing of this could make things difficult.*
- *It is a bad economy, but a good idea to do the campaign. We will have to come together.*
- *Whatever Fr. Andy feels we need he is the best judge of that and we should do it.*
- *I will give to the campaign but not to the AAA..*
- *I agree with everything that has to be done with the church, but why do it now?*
- *We need more specific information as to what will be done to the inside of the church.*

The following is a display of support regarding the items on the case statement:

Strongly supported case items:

- *Church, Pastoral Center and Rectory Roofs*
- *Upper Church Interior*
- *Upper Church Exterior*
- *All Code Compliances*

Moderately supported case items:

- *School Floor Repair*
- *Creation of an Emergency Fund*

Minimally supported case items:

- *Incorporation of the Archbishop's Annual Appeal*

- Do you think that your fellow parishioners would support such a project?

Yes	_____ 32 _____
No	_____ 10 _____
Don't Know	_____ 6 _____
Abstain	_____ 0 _____

If so/If not Why?

- *It all depends on their financial situation.*

- How much do you think this parish family could raise during a capital campaign?

\$1 million	_____ 9 _____
\$1.5 million	_____ 27 _____
\$2 million	_____ 0 _____
\$3 million	_____ 0 _____
Abstain	_____ 14 _____

- While we are not asking for a gift at this time, would you and your family be willing to make a sacrifice in any of the following ranges over a three year period?

\$3,000-\$5,000	_____ 21 _____
\$5,000-\$7,500	_____ 15 _____
\$7,500-\$10,000	_____ 5 _____
\$10-\$25,000	_____ 3 _____
\$25-\$35,000	_____ 3 _____
\$35-\$50,000	_____ 1 _____
\$50-\$75,000	_____ 0 _____
\$75-\$100,000	_____ 0 _____
Below \$3,000	_____ 0 _____
Abstain	_____ 0 _____

- Do you know of others within or outside the community who would consider the same?

Yes	_____ 4 _____
No	_____ 36 _____
Abstain	_____ 8 _____

- If Church of the Little Flower considers undertaking a capital appeal would you and your family be inclined to take a leadership role?

Yes	_____ 3 _____
No	_____ 45 _____
Abstain	_____ 0 _____

- Would you and your family be willing to volunteer some of your time to help Church of the Little Flower Parish reach their goals for the future?

Yes	_____ 36 _____
No	_____ 12 _____
Abstain	_____ 0 _____

- Do you know of any individuals who would be inclined to volunteer?

Yes	_____ 8 _____
No	_____ 40 _____

- Would you be willing to openly express your support for the proposed projects to fellow parish family members?

Yes	_____ 40 _____
No	_____ 3 _____
Abstain	_____ 5 _____

MAILING QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS
PHASE II

(PLEASE NOTE THAT NOT ALL RESPONDENTS ANSWERED EVERY QUESTION, THEREFORE COUNSEL HAS CONCLUDED THAT THE RESPONDENT HAS CHOSEN TO ABSTAIN FROM THE QUESTION.)

- How would you rate the reputation of Church of the Little Flower?

Excellent	_____ 32 _____
Good	_____ 56 _____
Average	_____ 14 _____
Poor	_____ 10 _____

- Please assess the success of the running of the parish (spiritual climate, buildings, etc.) under the leadership of Fr. Andy Prachar?

Excellent	_____ 87 _____
Good	_____ 24 _____
Average	_____ 0 _____
Poor	_____ 1 _____

- Identify two positive changes that you have seen in the past few years?

- *Fr. Andy has made all feel welcome, my kids actually enjoy going to church now!*
- *Our congregation has been increasing in numbers since Fr. Andy has taken over.*
- *Morale is up.*
- *The installation of kneelers.*
- *Increased mass schedule.*
- *The availability of priests for the parishioners.*
- *The organization of the Children's Liturgy of the Word.*
- *Renovation of the Little Church.*
- *Strong parish community outreach.*

- Identify two challenges the parish has faced in the past few years?

- *Low attendance due to the physical structure.*
- *The question of whether or not to build a new church*
- *The economic downturn.*
- *Lack of youth participation.*
- *Lack of priests.*
- *Getting the younger families involved.*
- *Lack of parishioner enthusiasm.*
- *Not enough parish events (picnics, bake sales, breakfasts)*
- *People leaving to go to the nicer churches in the surrounding areas.*
- *We should have just sold the Little Church.*

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• Identify two areas of improvement that you would recommend for the parish?

- *Make our church look like a church!*
- *We need more community involvement in our decision making.*
- *Install a cry room!*
- *A bigger church.*
- *We need more handicapped accessibility.*
- *Increase youth involvement*

• Please rate how you feel our parish influences our community?

Excellent	_____23_____
Good	_____52_____
Average	_____23_____
Poor	_____1_____

• Please indicate your feelings with regard to the proposed projects:

Excellent Idea	_____18_____
Good Idea	_____56_____
Fair Idea	_____14_____
Poor Idea	_____11_____

Comments:

- *Where is our help from the Archdiocese?*
- *This is long overdue!*
- *A great idea! Fr. Andy will lead us to success.*
- *Bad economy or not; it needs to be done. There is never a good time to raise money.*
- *This is NOT the time to be doing a capital campaign.*
- *The economy is horrible, how can you do this now?*
- *We would like a specific breakdown of where the funds will be going.*
- *This is something that needs to be taken care of now.*
- *We have plenty of money in this parish, but motivation is needed.*
- *It is an excellent idea, but will the economy play a factor?*

Do you think that a capital campaign would be successful and parishioners would support such a project?

Yes	_____71_____
No	_____13_____
Maybe	_____0_____

- How much do you think this parish family could raise during a capital campaign?

\$1 million	_____ 35 _____
\$1.2 million	_____ 10 _____
\$1.5 million	_____ 8 _____
Other	_____ 15 _____

- While we are not asking for a gift at this time, would you and your family be willing to make a sacrifice of about \$2 a day to a capital appeal over a three year period?

Yes	_____ 69 _____
No	_____ 26 _____
Maybe	_____ 5 _____

- Do you know of others within or outside the community who would consider the same?

Yes	_____ 22 _____
No	_____ 67 _____

- If Church of the Little Flower considers undertaking a capital appeal would you and your family be inclined to take a leadership role?

Yes	_____ 9 _____
No	_____ 89 _____
Maybe	_____ 0 _____

- Would you and your family be willing to volunteer some of your time to help Church of the Little Flower reach their goals for the future?

Yes	_____ 63 _____
No	_____ 32 _____
Maybe	_____ 4 _____

- Do you know of any individuals who would be inclined to volunteer?

Yes	_____ 25 _____
No	_____ 69 _____
Maybe	_____ 0 _____

Would you be willing to openly express your support for the proposed projects to fellow parish family members?

Yes	_____ 81 _____
No	_____ 15 _____

BREAKDOWN OF NECESSARY GIFTS

TO ACHIEVE A

\$1,500,000 GOAL

<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>RUNNING TOTAL</u>
\$100,000	1	\$100,000	\$100,000
\$50,000	2	\$200,000	\$300,000
\$25,000	5	\$125,000	\$425,000
\$20,000	5	\$100,000	\$525,000
\$15,000	10	\$150,000	\$675,000
\$10,000	20	\$200,000	\$875,000
\$5,000	25	\$125,000	\$1,000,000
\$4,000	50	\$200,000	\$1,200,000
\$3,000	100	\$300,000	\$1,500,000

President's Notes: Throughout this study, it is clearly evident to Lynch Development Associates Inc. that the leadership of Fr. Andy Prachar will be a significant asset to this campaign effort. The level of respect which the people of Church of the Little Flower have for him is commendable.

Throughout this study, it has become abundantly clear to counsel that there has been a major shift in parish life at Church of the Little Flower. Fr. Andy's leadership and his rejuvenation of parish life has been met with significant enthusiasm. Fr. Andy has built a strong level of trust with the parish community in his brief tenure this is critical to the success of any campaign effort.

With regard to the case statement itself, the people of the parish have been patiently waiting for the buildings of the parish to be cared for and the renovation of the worship space to be performed. A clear indicator of the overall desire to "see something done", would be the significant lack of economic commentary that was received during this study. Even though some members of the community mentioned the present economic downturn, many commented that the projects should be done in spite of these concerns.

It is clearly apparent to counsel that the desire to renovate and improve the parish plant of Church of the Little Flower is strong. Participation rates for this study are high with almost 50% of those persons invited to interview taking part in the study. This is the second highest level of participation which Lynch Development has experienced in our 15 tenure. Secondly, Fr. Andy's overwhelmingly positive numbers are the second highest we have seen in the past 15 years.

The level of gifts which are being offered, especially in Phase I clearly indicate the capacity of this parish to raise funds. The fact that counsel expects to receive 50% of the suggested goal of 1.5 million dollars clearly expresses the willingness of these parishioners to support this campaign effort. Additionally, 72% of the mailing/web questionnaires returned indicate their willingness to make a pledge of \$2-3,000 over a three years

period. This is a very high level of participation and illustrates that the level of commitment to Fr. Andy and the parish of Church of the Little Flower is truly systemic.

Lastly, the fact that a total of 61% of all respondents to this study, Phases I and II, indicated their willingness to volunteer shows that the level of commitment expressed by the parish goes well beyond their gifts of financial resources.

In conclusion, Lynch Development anticipates that Church of the Little Flower will have a very successful capital campaign effort and encourages the finance committee to, with all haste, move forward in seeking the necessary approvals for their capital campaign.

V. CONCLUSION

This completes the Feasibility Study conducted by Lynch Development Associates for Church of the Little Flower in Berkeley Heights, New Jersey. Our firm hopes that these recommendations have been helpful in assisting Church of the Little Flower with preparing for a successful capital campaign endeavor.

We consider it a privilege to have conducted this Feasibility Study Church of the Little Flower Parish. We would like to thank those involved with the study for the warm welcome we received from the parish family. Our firm stands ready to provide assistance to Church of the Little Flower Parish should they choose to embark on a capital endeavor.



