

1. What are three particular strengths of this parish that attract members and keep them involved?

- Mass – people come to mass to pray and for the music
- People come to mass and are members of our parish, because we are the “Cathedral”.
- Parish activities are important to keep people involved in the parish.
- Beautiful traditional space and liturgy.
- Good traditional music
- Social ministry program.
- The services
- The music
- Volunteer opportunities such as the lunchroom
- Mass is true, beautiful, and good: connecting members to the True Worship that God asks of us as Catholics.
- Parishioners, Staff, and Ordained living out their Vocations which reveals God and His miracles to others by sheer Devotion, Charisms with Giftedness, Profound Spirituality, and Consistent Holiness. Witnesses of what God can do among others.
- Small groups do great work for example...OCIA grows the Body of Christ and the Parish by small group interaction and community within the whole which fosters great new passion becoming light and hope for all the Church to witness.
- Liturgy and homilies
- Committed core of congregation and staff
- Strong tradition of outreach to community
- Excellence in Liturgy through attention to details – liturgies are well planned.
- The dignity of the Celebration of the Eucharist is of prime importance.
- Sacred Music is an integral part of the Eucharistic celebration. Music strives to transform our hearts and minds through the power and beauty of music in the Roman Catholic Liturgy.
- The Cathedral offers our parishioners and visitors the opportunity for full, active, conscious participation in the Celebration of the Eucharist for a deepening conversion, a step forward in the journey to God, with our patroness Mary as the model for that journey.
- Social Outreach & Service - This strong culture of service isn't just an add-on—it's deeply woven into parish life and attracts volunteers who find purpose in hands-on outreach. This builds a sense of purpose and solidarity through service.
- Liturgy & Music Ministry - The combination of the organ and skilled music ministers creates a worship experience that's both spiritually moving and artistically inspiring. It enhances spiritual depth.
- Welcoming Community with Ecumenical & Cultural Reach - The Parish fosters belonging through events like coffee receptions between masses, various community celebrations, festivals, bereavement support, docent tours, all nurturing deeper bonds and loyalty by fostering real relationships and inclusivity.
- Liturgy.

- Worship space...sanctuary, the church in general.
- Events.
- Excellence in Liturgy through attention of details
- Sacred Music inclusion within the liturgy. Leads parishioners in spiritual prayer throughout Mass
- Hospitality
- The Liturgy, including the music – well organized, highly professional, a consistent expectation of excellence for everyone who participates in the ministries; there is beauty in every movement, each action is done with high level of attention to detail and coordination. All of this provides an awesome, sacred opportunity for worship. The music is so beautiful – truly spiritual – the music, every day, moves me and allows me to have a deeper spiritual experience.
- The awe-inspiring worship space, the sanctuary – the church in general. The space provides an ideal environment for prayer, reflection, a setting that is so very close to God. The space is also ideal for events such as weddings and other community events such as concerts.
- The parish is the Cathedral – it is the heart of the Archdiocese. With that comes so many opportunities for the Archdiocese to celebrate and worship – to provide special events for the community. The downtown location of the Cathedral allows us to feed and nurture the community – through our lunch program and other Social Outreach activities. We have an obligation to serve, truly serve those who are in greatest need – and this brings so many volunteers from the Cathedral and from so many other churches and community groups. Being downtown provides an obligation to be an active leader to the overall needs of the community. Some of those needs currently are finding ways to revitalize downtown, be the face of those experiencing homelessness, be a voice in finding solutions to community violence.
- Committed core of parishioners who lead the liturgy, plan and execute events that foster community.
- Cathedral Choir, Solemnity, the Mass, seat of the Diocese
- Message of acceptance and understanding
- Aid to the poor, soup kitchen, needy
- Music
- Beautiful Church
- Diversity/Inclusion
- Love, love, love
- How the choir and music program enhance the worship experience.
- Gospel based approach to the liturgy
- Opportunity to worship in such a magnificent church
- Parish Outreach to our Sisters and Brothers – Social Concerns
- Being a welcoming community to all
- Well-planned liturgies with different choirs
- Hospitality
- Diversity
- Music
- The Choir
- To the point homilies

- Parishioners – warm, friendly, faith-filled
- History
- Diversity
- The Cathedral itself historically. A beautiful place to worship.
- Diversity
- Hospitality
- Diversity
- Commitment to the poor
- Does not march to Republican-Trump anti-woke agenda.
- Several years ago, a parishioner with artistic talent taught drawing and watercolor for 17 years. An effort should be made to recruit other talented people who could share their talent. We also used to have a knitting ministry.
- Music
- People are made to feel welcomed by Hospitality Ministers.
- Diversity of members
- Quality of sermons
- Friendly congregation
- The history and beauty of the Cathedral.
- The dedication and commitment of long-time parishioners
- The welcome extended to all – visitors, the homeless, LGBT community, etc.
- When one walks into the Cathedral the overwhelming beauty and majesty touches the senses and we know we are in the Lord's presence.
- The sense of community I feel towards our Pastor and fellow parishioners gives me a sense of family and friends.
- The music is also a plus with 2 great choirs. It attracts many people.
- Great and diverse music program.
- Diversity within our congregation
- Sunday evening Mass option.
- Our beautiful liturgies
- Both Choirs and the Music
- Relationships with members (joining fun committees; we used to have lunches, get together for the committees)
- Quality of Worship & Mass. Great homilies, music.
- Our homeless lunch program: I am proud to be a parishioner because of it - we give back
- Opportunity to socialize with others. I particularly enjoy the bourbon society. We always have a few of the bottles to give our dinner guests and out of town visitors.
- Music Program - First Class music program and participation that represents unique styles at each mass that best represents the worship style: i.e. traditional, contemporary...etc.
- Worship Style that represents the dignity in which holy mass should always be conducted.
- Beautiful Worship Space that is steeped in history and significance to the faith
- Music, especially Sunday evening choir
- Diversity of members

- The welcoming friendliness of our members toward guests
- liturgies
- Lunch program for the homeless
- Sharing the cathedral with Louisville community for special events such as blue, red, white masses and MLK day music programs
- Our Cathedral soup kitchen is an inspiring and rallying endeavor that keeps parishioners involved.
- We are particularly welcoming to people of different races, ethnicities, languages, sexual orientation, etc.
- We serve as a beacon of hope in Downtown Louisville especially on Holy Days and other special occasions Downtown.
- The Cathedral's architecture and atmosphere create a profound sense of reverence and peace. Its soaring ceilings, stained glass windows, and quiet grandeur invite reflection and spiritual connection. I often feel a deep sense of awe and belonging the moment I step inside—making it not just a building, but a sanctuary.
- The Mass is beautifully enriched by the choir's music, which elevates the liturgy and stirs the soul. Thoughtful homilies and reverent rituals offer spiritual nourishment and renewal. I often describe the worship as both grounding and inspiring—something they look forward to each week.
- The parish's commitment to outreach gives members a meaningful way to live out their faith. Programs that serve the poor, support families, and build community foster a strong sense of mission.
- Welcoming "vibe" as people enter the church. Visitors comment on this often at my primary Mass (5:30 Saturday)
- Strong contingent of ministry volunteers - Eucharistic Ministers, Altar Servers, Parish Life Committee.
- High quality liturgies & music for the "big" holy days of Christmas and Easter.
- The beauty of the physical church.
- The most holy and reverent Mass and Homily.
- The beautiful choir.
- Amazing worship space + chapel, Undercroft space
- Strong choir with excellent repertoire LITURGY and PREACHing of Jesus' unconditional Love for us

END OF 1=====

2. What are three significant challenges facing the parish?

- Downtown is a challenging environment as it continues to lose residents and businesses.
- Ever present homelessness and mentally unstable people.
- Old facility requires expensive challenges to keep it functioning well.
- Security Issues- While there has been very slight improvement, security still is the foremost concern to parishioners in conversation; Such as clashes between lunch guests and Church-Going Members at mutual times to be on Campus, General Downtown Location and relation to Fourth Street Live with vastly contrasting values, Distance to safe Parking, and Finding Houseless people or belongings in secured spaces which are not cleared before Volunteers and Participants arrive. Leaving Doors ajar/ unattended while needing easy access is also a threat. It seems that there is a common belief, that it is a matter of time until a devastating event which will either close the location because members no longer believe it is safe or there is irreparable damage/ significant losses.
- Campus Size and "Crossing the Street" There is a concern that Children and Youth attend Formation across the Street and Parents unwillingness to Sign the children in and out. There are too many threats between the two locations which creates a hazard and detriment to programming. It is a tremendous responsibility and liability. People spaces need to be close and secured while storage spaces are farther away.
- Scarcity Mindset that limits further day-to-day resources, in and out, and shuts down any opportunities for continuity and long- range planning. Working from an abundant mindset means that people are willing to invest because there is no perceived threat and their stewardship contribution whether financial or otherwise, being a bad investment.
- Parking
- Disconnect from our registered parishioners and the outreach the Cathedral does.
- Embracing the newer folks who are attending.
- The downtown location
- Not having an attached school
- Aging population
- Our parishioners are getting older. We need more younger people to join the parish.
- Downtown safety is a concern.
- We need to increase our income. Expenses keep increasing, so our income needs to increase as well.
- Marketing/Financial
- Parking
- Security
- Security & Vulnerability; Following the protests in May 2020, which resulted in vandalized windows at the office/rectory, we had to board up windows and adjust Mass schedules. To this day, we are regularly repairing vandalism and dealing with violence from lunch guests or other transient people downtown at all times of the day and night, inside the church and on the street outside.
- Declining Catholic Participation & Clergy Shortage have hit us hard; weekly Mass attendance is down, and financial giving is increasingly constrained. Downtown Louisville is experiencing a population decline.

- Aging Facilities & Real Estate Pressure We have several historic buildings—church, undercroft, school/office building, rectory—that require ongoing maintenance. As attendance falls, some of these spaces are underutilized, raising sustainability concerns and costly upkeep.
 - Money
 - Attendances
 - Repairs and or upgrades to buildings and grounds
 - Downtown – perception of being unsafe
 - Aging parish
 - Parking
 - Bring more people in
 - Keep them in with love. I have been blessed by this parish.
 - Security concerns especially for evening events
 - Financial burden of maintaining a 150+ year old building
 - Attracting new members and strengthening support from current members
 - Dwindling members, aging of members
 - Resources, need for additional funding
 - Post-Covid fallout shut downtown
 - Dwindling people in pews
 - Engaging young people to be involved by attracting and captivating thought-provoking curiosity and participation in adult formation. Bring in adult speakers, not flowers and rainbows! Speakers from our community leaders in....
 - Money
 - Fewer young members
 - Location- problems in downtown past 5 years
 - Problem with over-use of incense – irritating to lungs
 - Too much singing of parts of Mass that used to be clearly verbal – i.e. the Our Father.
 - Location -downtown
 - Parking
 - Security
 - Focusing on its unique mission (Carrying on in the spirit of Fr. Ronald Knott)
 - Co-ordinating diversity and variety
 - Establishing an identity that attracts others
 - Not many opportunities to socialize and meet other people. Once per month would be nice and at different times.
 - The celebrant should be outside on the sidewalk greeting people before Mass to make us more welcoming.
 - Physical condition of building
 - Potential damage from violence
 - Parking for handicapped
 - Location – parking and the perception that downtown is not safe

- The lack of young people and families
- Finances
- Our population has dwindled. We have also had many priest changes in a short time and it has taken a toll on the Parish. Confusing and hurtful.
- The reduction of parishioners has cut into our budget and we have very little money to do what is necessary to run our Parish.
- Due to the budget constraints, we cannot even hire a secretary so our office has only a couple of employees which is not sufficient to run the Parish.
- Also ongoing need for security but no money to pay.
- Safety concerns
- Lack of parishioners volunteering in Mass parts.
- Decline in youth membership
- Money
- Participation
- Getting to know each other. Maybe through small groups studying the Bible or other learning situations.
- How to bring in new younger members to the parish. Our parish is getting older. Without an attached school how do we recruit new members?
- Budget issues. As an older facility we have significant repairs and upgrades that need to be addressed forcing our expenses to rise.
- Active participation of more parishioners. We have a small group of regulars who keep the liturgy going. Would like to see more people involved
- Location/downtown
- Aging demographic
- Few parish residents
- Location of our parish campus – parking can be challenging. Safety and security are often on the forefront of members' minds. We are an urban parish – we are not a suburban setting and that challenges us to provide our members and guests the safest experience possible. I believe a primary consideration is to provide members with a new perspective – one where we do not proliferate the notion that the downtown is unsafe. And to change the narrative – for leaders to be careful in how they communicate the safety and security needs.
- Finding ways to promote and recruit (sorry for the business-like terminology) new members, capitalize on the excitement and momentum that new members come with and nurturing those members in the long term.
- We have been challenged with having 3 pastors in 3 years. When your leader is changing so often, it is extremely difficult to make plans and follow through with those plans. It has constricted our ability to gain momentum and continuity. It is also difficult for the pastor to get up to speed on what he needs to know about the parish and parishioners as well as build relationships.
- Dwindling or stagnant income – especially as expenses increase and upkeep of our campus ages. Our collections have steadily decreased so we must find ways to increase income in other ways.
- Revenue/ Financial Support - Typical of any parish with lower attendance trending. This is compounded at The Cathedral with its aging parishioners.

- Facility Maintenance Cost - Historic campus presents higher level of maintenance and facility responsibility.
- Marketing - We have little to no effective marketing channels in which to engage or target young Catholics in our greater archdiocese.
- Aging members
- Perception that being downtown is not safe, i.e., archbishop does not live in rectory having priests less than six (6) years or more
- Overcoming peoples' fear of coming downtown
- Growing the number of people and participation for planned events
- Demonstrating that we are still a welcoming parish to people seeking acceptance by not closing up shop, which sometimes it feels like lately
- Financial - which would be eased by an increase in membership
- Downtown location/Parking issues -- unfortunate reality that I see no remedy for...
- Membership decline and engagement - not unique to the Cathedral of course. #2 above doesn't help.
- Physical maintenance of the campus.
- Attracting new members
- We do not have enough families with younger children who can fill the church in the future.
- We have a large and sprawling campus that is hard to maintain for a parish with a small number of families.
- We are too dependent on mega-donors to support the daily ministry of the church.
- Mass attendees.
- Budget
- Campus Maintenance
- Rising crime and safety issues in the surrounding neighborhood can deter attendance and limit outreach.
- Without a parish school, it can be harder to engage children and youth consistently, which affects long-term parish vitality.
- The Cathedral's historic beauty comes with high costs for upkeep and restoration.
- Budget
- Parish skews old- we need more younger families (although I am nervous that younger Catholics seem more conservative and less into social justice and I would hate for us to get away from that
- Need for different people to get involved - seems like the same people are doing everything
- A steady calendar of events would be helpful to foster connections. Coffee after 930 mass, for example, or a monthly dinner on Saturday in the undercroft. Give people a reason to feel at home at church. Our location could be a challenge, so it could be important to promote the available parking and safety of our block. The commercial building across the street could use some tidying up. I wonder if the Cathedral seems "ceremonial" to Catholics in our diocese. How can we share that our parish is a "living church" and not just a place for special occasions?

END OF 2=====

3. What is the unique mission and ministry of this parish for its members and for the wider community

- Bring people to Christ.
- Inclusiveness
- Beautiful liturgy
- Engagement of parishioners
- A sense of belonging
- Being the face of the archdiocese, especially in the center city. A place for healing in the city in time of community trauma or world-wide disaster.
- Cathedral is a beacon of Christian worship in the midst of secular surroundings. Members need to continue to provide a welcoming environment.
- Serving the homeless and opening the doors to the public weekdays.
- Soup kitchen
- Out of town visitors – convenience
- Diversity
- The daily lunch program
- Carrying on in the spirit of Fr. Ronald Knott)
- Ministry to the homeless; sister parish in Haiti; weddings
- Serving the congregation and setting an example for the diocese. Continuing the preservation of the history.
- As the mother church I believe it is our mission to serve those in need and to be example of service to other parishes.
- I feel one of our ministries should be to invite parishioners from other churches to join the Cathedral should their church be closed. I feel we should welcome folks beyond 9th Street and have a more active role in neighborhood issues. We have an aging Parish and need to recruit younger people maybe thru Catholic colleges and Newman Center at UoFL.
- Help maintain/upkeep Traeger Urban Forest?
- Host more inter-faith events?
- Offer historical tours periodically on the weekends for tourists/guests?
- A Cathedral is meant to be the unifying place for its city (community) where people can go (like on 9/11). We are the Cathedral – the home church, the seat of the Archdiocese. In this troubled world we should be “home” for the community and offer “solace” – programs that help people get through these troubled times. The Archbishop should lead that endeavor!!!
- I’m wishing the Cathedral would have as its mission that we could have small groups that would discuss how true Christianity and practicing Catholicism offers guidance and tools for living in this world.

- Our lunch program
- Our music ministry is one of the strongest in the Louisville community and continues to lead our parish in thoughtful prayer
- With our downtown location, we provide a place for worship of downtown workers and visitors. As the Cathedral and the home of the archdiocese, we also provide a spiritual home for civic gatherings when necessary and archdiocese events.
- As Cathedral: welcoming home to out of town visitors, diocesan members. A noble reproduction of what our diocese represents.
To embrace the unique role of the Cathedral in the Archdiocese and the civic community – including serving lunch to those in greatest need. To nurture the worship needs of Catholic visitors.
- Beautiful Church Wonderful Service Excellent Congregation
- to be a faith example for the Archdiocese
- to be a welcoming place for all members of the archdiocese and visitors
- to be a place of community
- to strengthen parishioners' faith lives
- to be a leader in social justice, service to others
- offer events again such as the advent/Lenten communal penance services again
- encourage people who have left to return by demonstrating a welcoming spirit of speaking and interacting with one another before and after mass
- offer bible study, book club, and other events again 4. have a separate children's mass and reconciliation 2 or 3 times per year to encourage families and children to grow together, alleviate anxiety, promote comfort levels in children as they share family togetherness of liturgies and reconciliation
- I enjoy seeing out of town people at Mass. The Cathedral offers mass for out of town visitors in a downtown setting.
- Having a downtown presence - our Catholic Church as part of the city
- 2-fold, as I see it -- (1) as the seat of the archdiocese, to lead the way in proclaiming God's word, and MAKE IT RELEVANT to the modern world. (2) to be a place of welcome, comfort and justice for all, regardless of one's social status
- Anchor church of diocese.
- Clearly - Being available to visitors to our City.
- Sandefur Hall and Feeding my Neighbor. the lunch program is unique, in that it provides dignity and a safe space every single day of the year.
- Continue the long history of serving the broader community by inviting all to worship.
- Diversity makes us stronger. There is a diversity in music at different masses, so the Holy Mass can be celebrated and reaches out to many. There is a place for all of us, each worshipping Catholics. Our Catholic presence downtown and related service to our friends on the margins is huge. Our Catholic social Justice practices are seen in action. We are not only a beautiful historical building, but a practicing heart and soul of our Catholic faith in our community.

- I believe the Cathedral's mission of being the premier parish of the Archdiocese is to emphasize its willingness to be in the forefront of social justice & emphasizing its Catholic precepts to a wider audience.
- Invite and include marginalized peoples Serve homeless, continue programs we have in place. Serve as hub for special archdiocesan celebrations i.e. Chrism Mass etc.
- Our Official Mission Statement: The parishioners of the Cathedral of the Assumption, in communion with the Archbishop of Louisville, are disciples of Jesus Christ and stewards of God's gifts to us. We commit ourselves to giving thanks and praise to God in Word and Sacrament, to engaging in life-long spiritual formation in the Roman Catholic tradition, to embracing the unique role of a cathedral in the local Church and civic community, and to responding to God's unconditional love by reaching out in hospitality and service to all.
- Our lunch program is a ministry that feeds the homeless and other guests daily.
- Our social concerns department help people get State ID's. To be employed, one must have an ID.
- People donate funds to send to Haiti to help fund the children's lunch program in their school.
- The Cathedral remains the seat of the Archbishop and therefore has a unique and specific role in the archdiocese.
- As fewer parishes maintain traditional music programs, the Cathedral stands out as one of the last bastions of artistic beauty.
- Even with the challenges of downtown, the core of the city still needs a place for worship and sometimes a special space for civic and community gatherings. As the city moves to becoming an entertainment destination, it specifically serves the worship needs of Catholic visitors.
- A population that is need of continued attention and support
- The Cathedral of the Assumption is a Parish of Choice, not of location or proximity therefore those who are parishioners come and go out of their way to be there. That brings amazing gifts and charisms from near and far. While we serve the hungry in our midst and that spreads love into the wider community we have a harder time feeding ourselves with the understanding of the Presence of God in the Eucharist and how our Presence becomes the sustenance we need to carry love between the isolated components and departments within our Church. Sometimes it feels like there are barriers and even competition for various resources instead of collaboration. The workload falls on too few people to break through the ceiling of what it could be. There is much talent but too little buy in with the people at large. This Cathedral family has so much potential but as the Parish environment has changed since Covid, we need to be creative and better equipped for opportunities to bring a freshness of formation of the ancient ideals and rituals of our Church as she has always existed. Understanding Church is the key to her continuance. People are starved for her truth, beauty, and goodness, and show up for that but to understand what it means gives a reason to live for Her, care for Her, invite others to join Her, and want to stand with Her through good times and difficult ones. We are so close to being the best Cathedral of the Assumption we can be.

- Social Justice – the Cathedral’s main focus since the 1930’s has been to feed the hungry of the Louisville downtown community. Currently the Sandefur Dining Room operates 365 days per year and is supported by a fundraising event: Let’s Dance Louisville.
- Religious Formation
- Hospitality
- While the Cathedral doesn’t have a single-line “mission statement on the web we basically aim to foster lifelong spiritual growth and formation through liturgy and sacraments, while responding to Jesus’ call by serving the vulnerable in Louisville (and beyond) rooted in both faith and social justice. I think this is and will continue to be a struggle until we revisit this. I believe some of the parish's desires that we consider “strengths” may actually be the cause of our weaknesses and are counterproductive to its current state which makes a direction/mission at this time, that is not sustainable.
- Inclusion...the church is open to everyone...all are welcome.

END OF 3=====