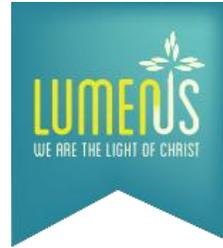


## External Community



**“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Matthew 22:39**

Our church and school are in the heart of Highland Village. However, more can be done to acknowledge, communicate and take advantage of our location as a major aspect of who we are, and to inform the way we live Christ’s mission in the world. Our gifts can be shared with those in the local and greater community, including those organizations and businesses that promote the generosity and vitality of our neighborhood; the poor who live in Section 8 housing; the residents of senior housing; the diverse community of the West 7th neighborhood; the students who attend local high schools and universities; and our diverse faith communities. We can also recognize and support those parishioners who already share, and will share, their gifts through public service.

### **Areas of Discovery**

- Despite the perceived affluence of Highland Park, one-fifth of our neighbors’ households earn under \$35,000 (20.6%); one of eight earn below the poverty line (12.2%); and almost one-fifth of those 65 and older live below the poverty line (17.4%). Our parish has a Good Samaritan Fund, an emergency fund for parishioners, and a partnership with Neighborhood House to provide food-shelf services to the community. Neighborhood demographics also suggest a need to serve seniors, youth and young families.
- We have strong connections to the Highland District Council, the Highland Business Association and the Ford site task force through involved parishioners. These works of public service can be recognized as discipleship and stewardship, and serve as a gateway for parish outreach. They can also serve as opportunities to engage our youth.
- We do not promote our church or school as based in Highland Village, nor do we visibly involve our parish in local activities such as Highland Fest. Increased promotion and involvement would serve our neighborhood and may grow our faith community.
- The development of the Ford Plant site could have a dramatic effect on our parish, school and neighborhood.

### **Conversation Starters**

- How can we acknowledge, communicate and take advantage of our location as a major aspect of our identity - to inform the way we live Christ’s mission in the world and to sustain our parish and school?
- Should we more strongly emphasize our relationship with Highland Village in our internal decisions and our external outreach?
- What opportunities are presented by our geographic location in Highland Village, by the Ford site, the Mississippi River, and West Seventh?
- How could our parish more actively engage in local decisions such as the Ford site development, and how could this support our Gospel mission?
- How can we embrace the public service of parishioners as discipleship and stewardship, and use that service as a platform for greater involvement in our neighborhood? Could such an initiative benefit the engagement of our youth?