

Saint Elias Maronite Catholic Church – Ten Year Strategic Plan

Saint Elias Maronite Catholic Church (“Saint Elias”) is a community of supportive and loving believers and a spiritual family that is centered around the Eucharistic Table. Saint Elias is a place to grow spiritually, to put faith into action and to use gifts of time, talent, and treasure as Disciples of Christ to evangelize to the world. By 2031, to better live up to this identity, Saint Elias will strive to increase the number of active families to 400.

To accomplish this goal, in addition to current parish activities and organizations, we will:

- 1) Implement a program to instruct and encourage our parishioners in their mission of evangelization.
- 2) Increase available activities and facilities to provide a variety of opportunities for all members of the parish community, young and old to spend time at the church so that we re-establish more of a community for our current members and new members.
 - a) Create several scenarios of possible uses for the current properties and costs related to each.
 - b) Present information to the parish to establish priorities, interest, and possible sources of funding. Specifically plan to address the following:
 - i) Create additional meeting space with up to date technology.
 - ii) Small chapel (see Number 7).
 - iii) Address parking.
 - iv) A multi-purpose facility which will provide space for activities for all age members from infants to senior citizens.
 - v) Basketball court – indoor and/or outdoor.
- 3) Establish a Welcome-Back Program to reach out to the many Maronite families who, for various reasons, currently attend other churches.
 - a) Compile and prioritize a list of inactive members and/or previous members who attend other Catholic churches. Assist the pastor in inviting one family at a time to share a Sunday afternoon with him at the rectory.

- i) Listen carefully to the needs of those who have left.
 - ii) Share current programs / groups provided by the church with family and encourage them to begin participating.
 - iii) Have the leader of the appropriate programs / groups contact members of the family after the meeting to get them involved.
 - b) After meeting with 4 families, schedule another get-together with all 4 families either in person or via Zoom.
 - c) Possibly assign a Deacon or church leader to follow-up.
- 4) Establish an outreach and service program or assist an organization with an established program to those living in the area, Catholic and non-Catholic, to further our obligation to assist in spreading the word of Christ throughout the world.
- 5) Create a program to keep our college students in touch with St. Elias.
- a) Prior to graduation, identify every senior in the parish / MYO and his/her college plans.
 - b) Prior to seniors leaving for college have a get together for them and other parish college students giving them an opportunity to re-establish MYO friendships and give the freshmen an opportunity to know other church members on campus.
 - c) Communicate with college students on a regular basis.
 - d) Plan a time for the pastor to get together with students attending in-state colleges/universities to celebrate liturgy for them on campus at least once a semester.
 - e) Increase our social media presence by introducing bi-weekly teaching videos.
 - f) Conduct a virtual bible study twice a month.
 - g) Schedule social activities and time MYA retreats for college students during spring, fall, and Christmas breaks.
 - h) Reach out to students attending UAB, Birmingham-Southern, Samford, Montevallo, etc. to include them in parish activities. Actively work to have joint activities with Saint Stephens on the UAB campus.

- 6) Create a networking group to assist recent graduates and others in need of a job.
 - a) Members of the group will plan sessions throughout the year to prepare pre-graduates and graduates for upcoming positions in their perspective fields of business.
 - b) Encourage parishioners to seek out college graduates from our parish to fill job openings.
 - c) When celebrating graduates in the bulletin, include their degrees and job positions they are seeking.
 - d) Utilize social media including creating a parish Linked-In group to assist parishioners in supporting parishioners' businesses and for those looking for a job or career change.
- 7) Provide support and activities for young couples in our church.
 - a) Continue to encourage young couples to be members of the Maronite Young Adults.
 - b) Survey interest in creating a subgroup of couples with young children.
 - c) Establish a prayer group for parents / mothers.
 - d) Possibly assign a deacon or church leader to work with young couples.
- 8) Build/Create a chapel on the facilities to provide increased opportunities for a more prayerful community.
- 9) Create a Family Ministry Program which will bring multiple generations together at church for fun activities, prayer, and intellectual growth at the same time. (ex: Family Trivia to include topics that will reach all generations, Disney, etc.) Host such activities during current parish events like family summer nights, thanksgiving dinner, Christmas play, etc.
- 10) Educate / reach-out to parents of children who attend Catholic schools and Saint Elias to help children and parents understand the differences in the Roman Catholic and Maronite Catholic rites and how it impacts their students.
- 11) Create a weekly Church-wide Bible Study or other form of Catechesis.