



**Parish
Growth** Campaign

Investing in our future 2015

[RETURN TO CAMPAIGN HOMEPAGE](#)

What we love and value about our parish

(Back in February, special Parish Gatherings were held at which those attending were invited to write personal notes to fellow parishioners, expressing what they value about St. Lawrence. What follows are some of the notes we have received in return.)

Dear _____,

I really enjoyed your note. I have to say my favorite part of St. Lawrence Church is the religious education program. I am so thankful for the foundation of faith my son has been given because of St. Lawrence. I no longer visit the church weekly, because I have moved. My youngest child attends Good Shepherd Church in Holbrook. I think St Lawrence has an outstanding religious education program. St. Lawrence's program is not too demanding but gives the child what it needs to be prepared for Confirmation. My son has had the same teacher through out his religious education and they have always had such a positive influence on him throughout the years. Raising him to have a strong faith has always been a breeze because of the program at St. Lawrence. By the way your handwriting is beautiful, mine is chicken scratch.

Dear _____,



What a nice note to receive. There truly are so many wonderful things about our parish-it is very special. When I received your note I immediately shared it with Mary and Lucy-they were all smiles when I told them it was from you.... You have celebrity status in our house. They both know what a wonderful teacher you are so I will let them answer the question also.

Me-I love the way I feel when I am there. It is an overwhelming feeling of peace that I feel every time I am there. I love the familiar faces and everyone's show of kindness. It's beautiful.

Mary-I love the signing of the church songs and the way I feel when I walk out. I love receiving the Eucharist.

Lucy- I love singing the songs and I can't wait to try the Eucharist and I love the Holy Water.

Joe-I love the warmth and friendliness of the congregation and the priests.

Dear _____,

Thank you for your note. My family and I recently moved here to Sayville. What we love about St. Lawrence is how welcoming you have been to us. We are thankful that St. Lawrence is our new parish.



Dear _____,

I was pleased to receive your note. What I love about the church that in good times and difficult times, I experience a feeling of comfort and belonging while I am there. I am happy to join with fellow parishioners at Sunday mass at our parish and appreciate how welcome Father Brian and the other priests make us feel. There is a real sense of community.

Dear _____,

Sorry for the delay in answering your note, I have been ill. I too, find St. Lawrence very comforting. People are friendly and outgoing. I find the clergy and their helpers give me a happy feeling.

Dear _____,

Thank you so much for writing to me and your feelings about our wonderful church. I came out to live on Long Island at the time our church burnt down. But it was rebuilt to the church you see today. I have grown to love and respect our church and I go every week for Mass. Father Brian is a wonderful priest. A group of us meet in the school church every Monday if you like to stop by please do.

Hi _____,



I am happy for you and the St. Lawrence community that Father Brian and Father Kevin have energized the parish. My family and I have not been a part of the parish for a few years, we now live in Maine. The parish is fortunate to have such enthusiastic members as yourself. May your love and dedication continue.

Dear _____,

Thank you for your kind note. My family and I have gotten back to the church over the years because my sons are going through the religious instruction. It is very warm and comforting and so nice to be part of the church community with family, friends and just friendly faces.

Stay warm and thank you again!

Hello _____,

We received a letter today from a fellow parishioner as part of the program “What I love about St. Lawrence”. There are a lot of things my family and I love about St. Lawrence. The welcoming atmosphere of my fellow parishioners makes us feel as though we are part of something truly special. I love the fact that as a community we do everything we can to help those less fortunate right here at home. But most of all, the one thing that keeps us coming back is Father Brian. His message every Sunday is truly special. Father Brian is



down to earth and truly accessible. He makes us feel important. His homilies are given in language that is easy for everyone to understand and ultimately embrace. His message is always positive, not punishing, e.g., if you don't do this, this will happen and so on. Since Father Brian has been with us, I have made it a point to come to church when he is saying mass. It's not that the other Fathers are bad; it's just that Father Brian has the knack of spreading the message (whatever that may be) in a straightforward manner that makes you truly believe in what he is trying to do for his flock. Thank you Father Brian.

Dear _____,

Thank you for taking time out of your day to write these letters. I am a member of St. Lawrence since 1963. Saw the old church burn down and worked on a campaign for a new church. My sons went to St. Lawrence School and I was involved in the school for 19 years. Also coached girls CYO Basketball for 12 years. Hope someone is doing that now. I know the younger generation must take over. I feel it's harder for them because both parents are working and who has extra time. We used to have CYO dances and Coney Island Night Dances for the school. What a great time, nothing fancy, just fun. I know Father Brian is trying very hard to get everyone involved again. I hope we can get the younger people active members of our parish.



Hi _____,

Thank you for the lovely letter! It was very nice to hear from the perspective of a parishioner. Regarding your question about “What I love and value about St. Lawrence”, I can tell you that I enjoy the peace I get from attending Mass. I always leave feeling renewed and ready to tackle the week ahead of me. Like you, attending Mass and receiving the Eucharist offers me a time of reflection about the priorities in my life. I believe Father Brian is doing a wonderful job uniting the community and engaging the parishioners at St. Lawrence. Enjoy your weekend.

Dear _____,

Thank you for the lovely note; I love our church as well. I think Father Brian has made wonderful connections to our youth through Faith Formation activities such as Stations of the Cross. I am blessed to have parishioners such as yourself reach out to me. Thank you and God bless you.

Hello, _____,

I love being part of St. Lawrence because here I have found a group of people who joyfully and tirelessly work volunteering to improve the lives of others that call St. Lawrence their church home. I have served and been served. I have sought out to bless and have been



blessed. I see things like faithful catechists, that show up week after week, Outreach Staff that fill out food pantry shelves with the bounty that parishioners have chosen to share, and priests who give their time to present relevant homilies and to council all in need. I have grown and improved as a Catholic Christian. I feel comfortable and welcome. I have found a family of faith where I belong. This family is always waiting to embrace new brothers and sisters.

Dear _____,

Father Brian asked me to share with you what I love and value about our parish. I cannot include everything in this note card but I can share with you what's going on now. I love that our parish seems to have a real interest in supporting the families with their process of continuing faith education, their relationship with God, and their community. So many times we can feel alone on our faith journey but at St. Lawrence we can meet many people, through different activities, who can give us support. Father Brian has incorporated "A Coming Home to Faith" program which helps us to relearn what being a Catholic is all about. From experience I know but continuing education as an adult has really helped strengthen my faith and relationship with God. I am grateful that in our parish we have many ways to do this. Father Brian has given out this past Christmas a book called "**Rediscover Catholicism**" by Matthew Kelly what a treat. Life brings us hardships and joys and all God wants is for you to share your life with Him. You are valuable because God made you and



loves you. Don't waste any more time. Come participate and meet new people. Please write back and tell me what you value about your/ our parish.

(The following remarks were written and shared in the weeks following the special Parish Gatherings.)

“There is a sentimental value in being an adult in the Parish that your grandparents moved to 20 years before you were born. Some of the people I see regularly are people who we shared baptism with from the afternoon our daughter was baptized. Others, I went to school with and then there are the new friends in the choir.

Being a member of St. Lawrence Parish has brought Jesus to life for me. The liturgies are wonderful, the people are caring and kind. I have witnessed so much generosity toward myself and family. This parish through the liturgies and the community/parishioners, Priests, Fr. Brian, continues to feed me spiritually and teach me to bring Jesus alive to others.

Our priests, their homilies, keep me on path. Welcoming and encouraged to join ministries.

I love the angels I have met in this parish community, those anonymous people who extend themselves by good works and outreach. In them I see the evidence of God's love.

The interior rafters and lights.



Gives you a sense of community, an entity that you belong to. An organized group.

Seeing the people from the community at Mass. It brings all aspects of life together. Also, the staff and volunteers are always quick to smile and are so kind.

Find comfort and joy attending Mass. Really enjoy Fr. Brian's homilies... Appreciate candles to pray before.

I love the sense of peace and feeling of spiritual renewal when I am at Mass.

The members of the parish who attend Mass and participate in ministries. There are so many who will reach out and pray for you, even if they don't know your name. I have always been made welcome in everything I've done.

As a member of St. Lawrence, I have a home. I feel centered and hopeful when I am in church. It strengthens me for the days ahead.

The beauty of the Mass- the reverence with which it is celebrated. It is home to me. The church itself.

Gives me a feeling of home. A sense of hope. Enjoying the songs etc. of yesteryear, as well as the newness out there in the world. Since 1950 I have been a member of St. Lawrence and have had and am having today the gift of many good and holy priests to help guide my spiritual life.



The community- the wholeness of being together. The caring for others, with the parish and outsiders. The staff. Support during the illness and passing of a spouse.

Sense of community – proximity to other aspects of town - always there as reminder of my faith.

Very inviting feeling with the handshake of peace during Mass. Brings us together as members of our church family.

Sense of community... .belonging... involvement of my children.

The sense of community togetherness that the parishioners and clergy bring with a deep commitment of compassion and wanting to unite people with God. Those that volunteer and support community and church activities do so with a sense of pride and responsibility that they consider is another aspect of being one of God's children.

The youth choir and holiday choir.

That it is here and I do not have to travel 45 minutes to go to church.

I love that there are many chances to serve in the parish and in doing so, we can connect with others who share the same values and vision for our community. I love that I hear the word of God regularly and am nourished and uplifted by it.

The feeling of family and caring of all concelebrants at Mass each and every Sunday.



Faith filled people. Sense of warmth, welcome, humor.
Extraordinarily generous to the poor. Resilient in the face of change.
Rooted... people stay for generations.

I grew up in this parish. I went to the elementary school, and received most of my sacraments in this parish. It truly feels like an extended family for me. I love watching my kids grow and participate in this parish.

I value that after all the years myself and my family have been a part of this parish that you always feel welcomed and can feel the presence of God just by seeing all who are present.

Friendships developed... seeing family together every week... 'cousins'.

(The following remarks were written and shared at the Parish Gatherings on February 11th & 12th, 2015.)

Having Father Brian as our Pastor. I love his energy, warmth, and personal touches in his homilies. Also, I admire and appreciate Father Candrea, his being retired, but still committed to serving Mass for us. Our children were baptized here, some 50+ years ago. Not to forget Fr. Heinlein.

As a greeter giving a welcome "Hello" and smile to parishioners as they enter gives me personal pleasure because not knowing anyone's mood, I've never gotten anything but a smile back and it



starts my Sunday off with a “feel good” feeling that continues thru the rest of the Mass and even the rest of my day.

I feel like it’s my “home”. I come to Mass and when I leave I’m renewed, I just feel complete again!

When we moved to Sayville as a young family we looked to the church as a way to join the community. Our two sons were baptized here and all three of our children received their sacraments here. Our daughter who lives out of state came back to be married @ St. Lawrence. A few years back, my husband and I celebrated our 50th anniversary here @ St. Lawrence. So through all this we certainly feel that the church has made us true members of this community.

The concern and caring of so many people when trouble comes to anyone. Someone is always available to help you when you need help the most. Support is so important in everyone’s life, as I found out when my 21 year old son died. Have been a parishioner here for 46 years.

We love Father Brian as our Pastor and the togetherness of our parishioners.

The members of the community: good, friendly people... The inclusiveness-it supports people in recovery (AA) The music on Sunday.

The feeling of togetherness praying during Mass. The bond of friendship formed as a member of the Adult choir. The sense of solidarity in lending up our voices to sing prayerfully, spiritually and



joyfully. Seeing the face of Christ in others at Mass, during hospitality as we gather together.

For me there is a long history. My brother and his family moved here in the 70's so over the years I participated in family gatherings for holidays and baptisms confirmations etc... Over the course of my life I have come to embrace the connection between those who have passed on and current family members. It's a valuable part of practicing my faith. The communion of faith is a favorite reflection and connects me to the vastness of the teachings expressed through souls living and dead and ultimately resurrected.

I love the faces of the people I see year in and year out, whether or not I know their names. There is commitment here and warmth and familiarity. It is a sub-group of our Sayville community. The friendliest town in America. I am always aware of the growth- the effort to improve and find ways to connect.

We have raised 4 children in the parish. All 4 children have had positive experiences. These experiences have led them to continue to practice their faith outside our parish. They rely on their catholic upbringing to guide them orally and spiritually.

Visiting our sick and dying-at the time by our parish priests.

Family Mass... Music Ministry... Scripture Readings...

I love having the support of a like minded parish family ... good and bad.



The work done by parishioners to help others.

I love the fact that Fr. Brian is All-in for the kids of the parish. I feel welcome when I step into St. Lawrence.

I love attending Mass and seeing familiar faces and friends. I love being with people of like minds. I love the family Mass on Sunday mornings once a month. I Love the St. Lawrence youth choir. Attending confirmation retreats with catechism classes.

I have been a member of St. Lawrence for 22 years. I really feel at home here. My 3 children have all received their sacraments here and grown up as active and valued member of the parish. I love that they are at home here too.

I do know a lot of people from St. Lawrence in and out of church. I see people in town.

I love seeing the same people at Mass. It's like visiting relatives. I'm always meeting new people and love when I see them in the community

St. Lawrence is a home experience for us. It is our community with all the people who have become our friends over the years. Unlike other circles we have belonged to, we have had spiritual nourishment from various gatherings we have with our St. Lawrence friends.

It has been my parish for 50 years. The music, getting involved, being known.



St. Lawrence is a place of comfortable familiarity, a place where I feel safe and calm.

Walking distance from home. Friendly people.

The feeling of a safe haven that guides and accepts me.

(The following remarks were made by members of the Campaign's Leadership Team.)

“It strengthens my hope; my belief in God and life after death. It allows me to connect with people with similar values. Being connected, part of a community – it’s a reason for living in the craziness.”

“A sense of community; a feeling of being in a good place; a foundation of my own faith. It’s a place to go to be closer to God. I’m grounded knowing I have a place in Sunday Mass – a foundation.”

“It’s so much a part of my own personal identity; a part of my existence. As much as I value and love myself, so do I value and love St. Lawrence. I’ve been a part of it, and it of me, since I was three years old.”

“It offers a sense of community, acceptance. There is a fluidness of acceptance of and by many different types of people – the best dressed to the worst! There are many kinds of people all of whom are accepted, with all of their quirks. It is not rigid. Diversity is celebrated.”



“Peaceful, comfortable . . . home. One can always look around and see a familiar face or faces. I am becoming more involved as my comfort increases. I have always been drawn here.”

“A marvelous feeling of acceptance, support and encouragement at ‘buoyant’ times of my life as well as not so good times. I’m so very much lifted up by the people of the parish. I’ve had some of my most profound and exquisitely beautiful experiences of priesthood here at St. Lawrence. I feel so thoroughly adopted by the St. Lawrence community.”

Fr. Brian

“I did not grow up in Sayville. The only time I come into the Sayville community is at Sunday Mass – that is beautiful to me. I have made friends with a small group of powerful, faith-filled women where we can share the message of the liturgy. It is the one place in Sayville that I want to spend my day. Being a catechist enables me to be part of children’s’ lives and activities. It is especially difficult for a single-parent and professional.”

“It gives me nourishment. We have been blessed with the priests of St. Lawrence. I’m a parishioner of over 35 years. I need to be reminded [of God’s presence/love] by the weekly readings. Involvement in its ministries offers continuous nourishment. I get so much out of Mass. It is a welcoming community.”

“A genuine, faith community. Familiarity – I notice those in attendance and those who are missing. It welcomes/appreciates



those already in ministry and there's willingness through open invitations to welcome newcomers.”