



# Saint Joseph the Worker Catholic Parish

## Strategic Plan

January 1, 2016



## **Mission**

*Saint Joseph the Worker Roman Catholic parish and school encourages its members to live fully the message of Jesus Christ. Inspired by the Holy Spirit through faith, love, sacraments, and service, our parish family will be a community of lifelong achievers and a center for academic excellence.*

## **Vision**

Saint Joseph the Worker Parish is a Catholic community committed to *the* mandate of Jesus in John's Gospel: *"Love one another as I have loved you."* The Parish strives to be a Christ-centered expression of the family of God, nourished by the Holy Spirit.

## **Beliefs**

1. The Eucharist is the life-giving center of this community, where, with Jesus, praise and worship are offered to the Father.
2. As members of the *Body of Christ*, we are called to serve, in prayer and action to those suffering and less fortunate.
3. The best way to lead is by example.
4. The parish Faith Formation program will remain welcoming to all ages, fervent in teaching the Catholic faith and its relevancy, and encouraging of personal encounters with Jesus.
5. Effective communication and active participation among all groups and ministries and the parish is necessary to grow in unity, have a shared vision, and a sense of serving together as one body.
6. A vibrant worship experience with strong liturgy and inspiring music keeps people engaged in the parish.
7. Building a strong parish is the shared responsibility of the pastor, parish/school staff, and all parishioners.
8. The parish school must remain vibrant, spiritually healthy, and academically strong
9. It is important to establish and maintain strong relationships with other churches and organizations within our local community.
10. We strive to practice healthy financial stewardship with all members contributing time, talent, and treasure, as they are able.



# Letter from the Pastor



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+ Mary, Mother of God +

January 1, 2016

Dear Families of Saint Joseph the Worker Parish:

All of you may recall in February 2015, the Pastoral and Finance Councils, the Stewardship Commission, and the School and Parish Strategic Planning Committees came together to begin assembling a strategic plan for the parish's future. In *Planning Tomorrow's Parishes*, Bishop Joseph Cistone has asked all parishes in the diocese to develop such plans.

During this planning process, I often asked the question: *Why Plan?* Perhaps the most important outcome of planning is that it helps me and the parish to distinguish between the urgent and the important. What planning does is to establish for us what is actually necessary, so we can prioritize for the best use of our time and resources of the parish.

To see this bold vision come together for the betterment of our community, it is clear that our work is really cut out for us. We have a wonderful vibrant community; however, at this juncture in the life of our parish and school, there is no time for us to be complacent. Jesus Christ and His Gospel proclaimed in the church are needed now more than ever! Drawing upon the words that inspired Bishop Cistone's Pastoral Letter – *A Future Full of Hope* – we must live the words of the prophet Jeremiah: "*For I know well the plans I have in mind for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare, not for woe! Plans to give you a future full of hope.*"

The plan has been developed, now we must act! As a parish leader, I would like to invite you to be a part of the implementation process, where you will have the opportunity to build on the current state of our parish and offer your time, talent, and treasure to the success of our parish. This cannot be the work of a few but many! Thank you for your support and generosity.

My heartfelt gratitude now goes to the Parish and Finance Councils, the Stewardship Commission, and the Parish and School Strategic Planning Committees for their hard work and sincere dedication during the planning process. Your leadership and the gifts you offer the parish are invaluable and your insights into the life of our parish are important as well. God bless each of you.

Saint Joseph the Worker, pray for us!

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Ricky M. Varner". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style. It is enclosed in a simple rectangular box.

Father Ricky M. Varner  
Parochial Administrator



## Prayer for Planning

*Good and gracious Father, You are the Lord of all creation. Your mercy shines forth on us daily. We implore You to be ever present in our words and deeds as we embark on a new journey in our faith community. As we plan with others Lord, keep our sights on Your vision for the furthering of Your Gospel. Help us to embrace Your will to more effectively share our Catholic faith now and for the future. You are the example of hope in our lives daily. You are the promise of life eternal. Soften our hearts, enlighten our minds, and keep the fire of your Spirit ever present in our work until one day we are all joined with You forever. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

## Executive Summary

Saint Joseph the Worker Parish (Parish) is a welcoming and a faith-filled community. Since 1882, the Parish has worshiped in three church buildings. Our present church was dedicated in July of 1907 and continues to be at the center of the Beal City community.

The Parish consists of approximately 524 families. On a typical Sunday, approximately 800 people gather in our church to worship the Lord. It is a very alive and spiritual parish.

In the current economic climate, many parishes are facing challenges in regards to church attendance and finance, it is crucial to be prepared for an ever-changing society. Saint Joseph the Worker Parish has developed a strategic plan to determine the strengths, challenges, and opportunities encountered, so the Parish may prepare for a future filled with hope, success, and optimism. The plan also identifies opportunities for growth and continuous improvement.

The plan includes the revised mission, vision, and beliefs of the Parish. During the planning process, much prayerful thought was given regarding the mission statement. The parish community, defined as both the parish and school are dependent for the success of each other. Therefore, one mission statement has been developed to embrace the “parish community” philosophy. The revised mission statement is:

**Saint Joseph the Worker Roman Catholic parish and school encourages its members to live fully the message of Jesus Christ. Inspired by the Holy Spirit through faith, love, sacraments, and service, our parish family will be a community of lifelong achievers and a center for academic excellence.**

While the Parish has developed a joint mission statement, it is required by the school’s accreditation body to have its own strategic plan. Therefore, the following information relates primarily to the Parish’s plan.

The planning process began with the collection of data, which included presentations by the Finance Council, the Stewardship Commission, and the Director of Religious Education. The Parish was also offered the opportunity to give input through a survey that was mailed to each parishioner’s home. This process led the team to set goals in the following areas: Faith Formation, Stewardship, Financial Solvency, and Worship & Liturgy.



## **FAITH FORMATION**

The Parish will develop a comprehensive, contemporary and meaningful faith formation program for all ages. In order to accomplish this, there are new and exciting faith formation programs being developed and will be implemented over the next four years.

## **STEWARDSHIP**

The Parish will foster an environment that embraces each individual's sense of belonging to God and the Parish community. This will be accomplished through hospitality, prayer, formation, service, and outreach and evangelization.

## **FINANCIAL SOLVENCY**

To ensure the Parish flourishes for future generations, the strategic plan calls for establishment of a fund balance, deferred maintenance plan, and a fund development committee. In order to accomplish financial solvency, the plan includes methods for increasing future revenues.

## **WORSHIP & LITURGY**

With the Eucharist at the center of our lives, the Sacraments are celebrated to worship God and to build-up the Body of Christ. In order to provide liturgies that invite and welcome the entire community to attend, inspire all to take part, and encourage members to evangelize, a Worship Commission will be developed.

## **CONCLUSION**

Looking back, it is important to recognize and acknowledge the sacrifice and commitment of past generations. It was through their example of sacrifice and commitment that our parish community exists today. Therefore, it is our responsibility to continue that same level of sacrifice and commitment by doing the same.

There has been considerable time, energy, collaboration, and discussion about this plan and the Parish's future. Thank you to the Strategic Planning Committee: Cindy Schumacher, Jack Rau, Amy Faber, Tom Gross, Sr., Vickie Block, Tim Schafer, Rosy Curtiss, Bob Pasch, Karen Rau, Ed Lynch, Kerry Hauck, Jim Kremsreiter, Martha Zuehlke, Julie Ward, Mary Hauck, and Father Ricky Varner.

The plan has been developed, now we must act! You are invited to be part of the implementation process, where you will have the opportunity to build on the current state of the Parish and offer your time, talent, and treasure to ensure its success. This cannot be the work of a few but many! Thank you for your support, generosity, and the life you put into Saint Joseph the Worker Parish.

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus... have mercy on us.

Immaculate Heart of Mary... pray for us.

Saint Joseph the Worker... pray for us.

All holy men and women... pray for us.



# Faith Formation

*Faith Formation and education for all ages, within our community will be centered on the teachings of Christ and how they may be applied in our daily lives. Influenced by our rich Catholic heritage, our programs will be used as tools of learning and preparation for a life-long relationship with our Living God. We will endeavor not only to educate, but also to inspire to build a faith-filled community with a spiritual vitality concentrated on the principles of Christ and His Church. At Saint Joseph the Worker, along with our new Director of Religious Education, the following goals have been developed to support the mission of our parish. In order to accomplish these goals, Sunday Mass times may be adjusted to allow time between liturgies for new Faith Formation programs to be implemented.*

*Goal#1: Develop a comprehensive, contemporary, and meaningful Faith Formation program.*

## **Year 1**

### **Children**

- † Implement Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (Level 1)
- † Increase enrollment in Religious Education
- † Create Mass survival bags
- † Develop a retreat format for sacramental preparation
- † Implement children's adoration
- † Streamline registration process for religious education

### **Teens**

- † Implement weekly Life Teen program
- † Increase enrollment in Religious Education
- † Develop participation in diocesan teen events
- † Develop mission activities (local level)

### **Adults**

- † Implement weekly special interest study group
- † Increase enrollment in Religious Education
- † Implement men's social group
- † Develop adult retreat
- † Develop catechist formation program

## **Year 2**

### **Children**

- † Implement Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (Level 2)



† Implement Pilgrims of the Holy Family program

## **Teens**

† Continue Life Teen activities

† Develop participation in Youth Ministry events (Steubenville, Right to Life March, National Catholic Youth Conference, etc.)

† Increase mission activities (local/regional levels)

## **Adults**

† Implement Adult Faith Formation program

† Implement ENDOW

† Implement couple to couple marriage preparation

† Implement Natural Family Planning (training)

† Continue catechist formation program

† Continue adult retreats

## **Year 3**

### **Children**

† Implement Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (Level 3)

† Implement Little Flowers and Blue Knights programs

† Develop children's retreat

### **Teens**

† Continue Life Teen activities

† Implement Y Disciple

† Develop and expand mission opportunities (local/regional levels)

### **Adults**

† Implement movie night

† Implement divorce support group

† Implement marriage encounter weekend (parish/diocesan levels)

## **Year 4**

### **Children**

† Evaluate and adjust Catechesis of the Good Shepherd as needed

† Implement Saint Therese Sacristan Society

† Develop children's retreats

### **Teens**

† Continue Life Teen and Y Disciple activities

† Develop and expand mission opportunities (national level)

### **Adults**

† Continue programs begun in years 1-3



## Stewardship

*We will be warm and welcoming to all. One of our greatest hopes is to reach out to those who are disengaged, so they may deepen their sense of belonging to God, one another, and the parish community. At Saint Joseph the Worker, the Stewardship Commission has been diligently working to develop the following goals.*

*“...Let us welcome one another as if we are welcoming Christ Himself.”*

*[Saint Benedict]*

*Goal #1: Hospitality – Ensure that all parishioners sense and recognize that they are invited, encouraged, and provided with the opportunity to be involved.*

- † Implement a greeter’s program
- † Assign families as greeters on a rotating basis
- † Invite more (including women and youth) in the parish to be involved in the usher ministry
- † Implement family usher ministry (fathers, sons, mothers, daughters)
- † Incorporate the use of baskets being passed for collections

*Goal #2: Prayer – In connection with other commissions and committees of the parish, provide and facilitate a variety of personal and communal prayer opportunities.*

- † Develop prayer groups
- † Develop bible studies
- † Broaden prayer line activities to increase participation (e.g., website prayer request)
- † Enhance homebound ministries





*Goal #3: Formation – Use prayer, education, and communication to strengthen stewardship.*

- † Participate in a stewardship mission
- † Implement stewardship newsletter
- † Develop projects to engage the parish, school and youth groups

*Goal #4: Service – Invite parishioners to serve and be served, giving, receiving, and sharing their God-given talents.*

- † Continue and expand mission trips (e.g., Y.E.S. program)
- † Develop a homebound assistance program (e.g., garden ministry, small home repairs, etc.)
- † Assist in small maintenance needs for the church (e.g., cleaning, decorating, gardening, etc.)
- † Hold a service ministry fair

*Goal #5: Outreach & Evangelism – Reach out to all those in need through prayer, spiritual encouragement, and material support.*

- † Engage the disengaged (e.g., Catholics Comehome.org, Catholic Lighthouse Media, etc.)
- † Increase engagement through collaboration with other churches (Ecumenism)



## Financial Solvency

*Like many parishes throughout our diocese, we are experiencing some financial challenges. These challenges often occur when demographics begin to change. The lack of employment opportunities, reduced family-size, lower school enrollment, and some Catholics are not attending church on a regular basis which leads to lower Sunday Collections. Some of the financial issues we are facing in the parish are the church debt, roof repair, deferred school and parish maintenance plan, and cemetery operational costs. Therefore, it is imperative to achieve these goals in order to meet our parish and school financial obligations. We are certain, if we all work together and support the parish and school, we will flourish for many generations to come.*

*Goal #1: Increase the amount of the Sunday collection by \$5 per average envelope used.*

- † Announce at Mass
- † Hold town hall meeting after Mass to discuss in detail
- † Promote online giving, will and estate planning

*Goal #2: Increase usage of the building project (green) envelopes equal to the number of weekly contributors.*

- † Announce at Mass
- † Hold town hall meeting after Mass to discuss in detail
- † Promote online giving, will and estate planning

*Goal #3: Establish a fund balance.*

- † Develop annual budget goals to meet fund balance
  - 10 percent of total revenues by 2018
  - 15 percent of total revenues by 2020

*Goal #4: Develop a deferred maintenance plan.*

- † Perform inventory of maintenance projects
- † Establish costs
- † Prioritize projects annually
- † Coordinate with Finance Council to establish completion year

*Goal #5: Establish a Fund Development Committee.*

- † Explore the establishment of a Fund Development Committee



## Worship & Liturgy

*With the Eucharist at the center of our lives, we celebrate the Sacraments, as a parish, to worship God and to build-up the Body of Christ. We will provide liturgies that invite and welcome the entire community to attend, inspire all to take part, and encourage members to evangelize.*

### *Goal #1: Develop a Worship Commission.*

- † Recruit parishioners who are interested in serving on the Worship Commission
- † Establish by-laws for the Worship Commission
- † Collaborate with Parish Councils and Commissions
- † Establish goals and objectives for the Worship Commission to be added to the strategic plan

