



# **Saint John the Baptist Church**

## **Parish Pastoral Plan & Progress Report**

### **2020 - 2021**

#### **LETTER FROM THE PASTOR**

I pray that in these uncertain times that you and your family are safe. I would like to provide you with the latest information concerning the **Parish Pastoral Plan (PPP)**. Of paramount importance to the pastoral care of the parish is the Pastoral Plan. The parish pastoral council, selected by and representative of the parishioners, is responsible to discern, develop, implement and evaluate the plan over the course of its history.

Throughout the past several months despite the pandemic, the pastoral council has met both in person and virtually keeping to its regular schedule. The council anticipated a parish assembly first in fall 2020 and then spring 2021 to ratify the new pastoral plan created on information and insights gathered at our last assembly in June 2019.

Due to the unpredictable nature of the coronavirus and distribution timeline of the vaccine for the general public, the assembly will be further delayed until we can all socially meet in-person and safely. This will not, however, delay the promulgation of a pastoral plan.

At the September 2020 pastoral council meeting, the council agreed on a new pastoral plan. The key goals of the plan are rooted in three of the essential elements of parish life, namely, evangelization, community and stewardship.

This action on the part of the council and the resulting plan enables the parish to continue the ongoing renewal process so vital to understanding God's will for our community and to develop a vibrant parish life which meets current needs and a vision for the future.

This communication reminds us of our parish mission, provides an update on the key accomplishments supporting our original Pastoral Plan and the specific focus for pastoral priorities for the next few years.

I encourage you to review and celebrate the progress we've made and to pray on where/how you can take a more active role helping us advance our updated goals and objectives. You each have some gift, talent or resource that could help us continue our work of our parish mission.

#### **Saint John the Baptist Parish Pastoral Council**

Msgr. Kevin Lawrence, Pastor

Liz Coyle, Facilitator

Mary Brown

Tim Brown

Mike Carr

Grace Cipressi

Eileen Gray

Patrick Heron

Matt Kirsch

Paul Pelullo

Angie Robertson

Michelle Walsh

#### **PARISH MISSION STATEMENT**

*Saint John the Baptist is a multiethnic Roman Catholic Parish rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ. Founded in 1831, the Parish has a rich history of providing spirituality, education, and worship in the Manayunk, Roxborough, and Wissahickon neighborhoods of Philadelphia. As a Christian community we are united in our mission to share the Gospel, celebrate the Sacraments, and love and serve God by caring for one another. We welcome all people to become part of our vibrant and growing community.* (Ratified January 31, 2016 by Parish Assembly.)

# Saint John the Baptist Church

## Parish Pastoral Plan & Progress Report



### Seven Essential Elements of Parish Life

Our original pastoral plan, ratified at the Sept 2016 parish assembly, focused on three of the seven essential elements of parish life: Evangelization, Worship and Community. Within those areas, our goals were to:

1. Develop the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist as the central element of spiritual life within the parish.
2. Enhance the development of faith formation opportunities for parishioners and all in the community.
3. Strengthen the parish as a family by providing opportunities for fellow-ship and interaction.
4. Study and develop a youth ministry program for parish children, youth and young adults.

**Much amazing progress has been made towards these goals over the past few years. Progress and highlights have been shared at prior parish assemblies. Below is a reminder of some of those accomplishments:**

- ♦ A newly formed Liturgy committee works to enrich the spiritual experience of mass for our parishioners including
  - ♦ The introduction of the Advent wreath and Easter cross petitions.
  - ♦ Amazing Holy Week services and beautiful Christmas displays.
  - ♦ A parish wide survey to capture music and mass preferences which has been guiding our music ministry.
  - ♦ Establishing 'greeters' at mass to welcome everyone.
  - ♦ Tripling the number of Eucharistic Ministers and efforts to expand our altar server and liturgical reader pools.
  - ♦ Creation of a new Liturgy Coordinator role, to provide continued focus on enhancing the value and experience of the Eucharist for all.
- ♦ We have expanded access to resources and services for both our older and disabled parishioners through new parish liaisons and programs. Physical changes to the church are underway to optimize the environment for any with special needs.
- ♦ The parish has expanded the number and variety of faith formation programs for adults. A growing number of parishioners participate in these programs fueling individual and community spiritual richness including:



*Parish Volunteers at Find Your Greatness*

- ♦ On-going young adult ministry
- ♦ A continuous stream of multi-week study groups
- ♦ Free access for all parishioners to FORMED.org, a website containing thousands of movies, programs and references for spiritual enrichment
- ♦ Spiritual retreats for both the pastoral council and parish staff to help fuel their focus on contributing effectively to the parish mission
- ♦ St John's hosting of Dynamic Catholic's: Find Your Greatness program in 2019. Over four hundred participants enjoyed an afternoon designed to reignite our faith and remind us how much we love being Catholic.
- ♦ Encouraging and supporting an enrichment of prayer life and deepening of our faith with the annual Christmas book gift.

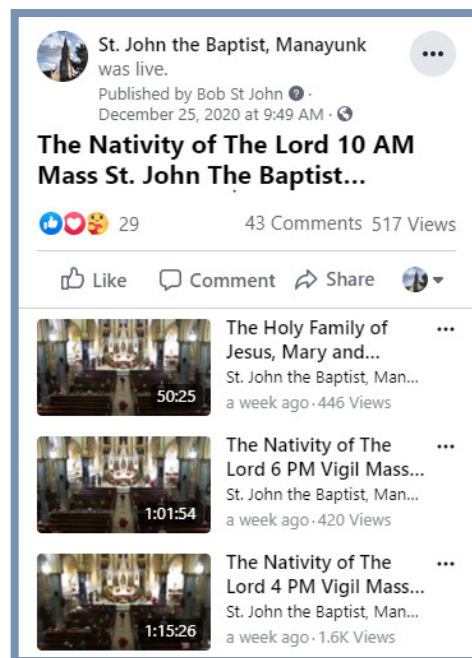


Our Lady Undoer of Knots Prayer Ribbons

- ◆ We continue to innovate, offering creative and relevant channels for parishioner prayer and service. A few examples include:
  - ◇ Praying for our Neighbors and the Lady of Knots (ribbon petitions) programs
  - ◇ The panel discussion, support resources and Taize prayer program for the survivors of abuse.
  - ◇ Back Pack Collection – school supply collection for local and city neighborhood children

- ◆ Using the Parish Assembly format, we've captured parishioner ideas and preferences for advancing our mission. In 2019, we gathered feedback on opening a catholic school, how to make our spiritual enrichment programs more accessible and what we need to do to support the continued healing of the church.
- ◆ With an eye on our family-centric and evangelization goals, we leveraged specific Discernment and Exploratory committees to complete needs assessment, interest and feasibility surveys for opening a new catholic school. That research and direct input from parishioners signaled a green light for the school idea. The planning and financial work will kick off once COVID settles down.
- ◆ St John's has fully embraced the Safe Environment Program (SEP) and has a robust process, with good compliance, in place to ensure all required adults are trained and certified.
- ◆ On the technology front, we've introduced online giving and are working to expand our use of digital channels to communicate with and engage parishioners. We are currently using the Flocknotes email application to provide timely parish information to all those who have opted in; we're leveraging Facebook and Youtube to enable virtual access to Mass during COVID; and in 2020 are launching a social media committee to increase our presence in other communication channels.

Live Streaming of Masses on Facebook and Website



Looking forward another 3-5 years, the pastoral plan has us still very focused on evangelization while we expand our efforts to address parishioner stewardship and community. Our specific goals for the next few years include:

- ⇒ Leveraging new ways to share the good news of the gospel by developing our ability to effectively use social media and digital communications to expand our reach and engagement with parishioners to broaden our community and impact.
- ⇒ Expanding and enriching the parish community by developing family centric opportunities for education and evangelization including a plan for a new catholic school and dedicated spaces for the Parish Religious Education Program (PREP).
- ⇒ Developing good stewardship practices in the parish by helping parishioners to recognize and apply their gifts, talents or resources in service to the parish mission for current and future generations.



2020 PREP Confirmandi, November 4, 2020 at Holy Family

Thanks to so many parishioners, St John's is a growing and vibrant parish, and we'd like very much for your assistance to continue this growth and development. We offer a variety of options and opportunities for you and your family to participate in the work and mission of the church. We'd love to see many more children and adults get involved. If you have ideas for additional ministries, please let us know. Please consider where and how your gifts, talents and/or resources could contribute to our pastoral goals and reach out to anyone on the pastoral council to raise your hand.

*We look forward to hearing from our parish community as we head towards a new year!*