



**ST. JAMES CATHOLIC CHURCH  
AUGUSTA, KANSAS**

**PARISH PASTORAL PLAN  
2014 – 2017  
AUGUST 5, 2014**

**REPORT PREPARED FOR ST. JAMES PARISH BY:  
RENÉE M. HANRAHAN, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY BENEFIT, VIA CHRISTI  
HEALTH, WICHITA, KS SERVING AS AN IN-KIND VOLUNTEER CONSULTANT FOR  
THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF WICHITA**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Since August 2013, the St. James Parish Leadership and Father Michael Schemm have been engaged in monthly meetings to discern the needs of the parish and to develop a strategic plan.<sup>1</sup> From August 2013 to April 2014, Father and the parish leaders have listened for God's directions in parishioners' responses to the comprehensive parish-wide survey.

In preparation for developing this pastoral plan, the Parish Pastoral Council spent the greater part of this last year prayerfully reflecting on the new mission statement, and core values to discern where the Lord might be leading them. The leaders engaged in typical strategic planning questions like what are the key values we stand for as members of St. James. They discerned on the mission of the parish and invited all parishioners into that discussion through the use of comment cards during Sunday services. They looked at the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats from a social, demographic and economic perspective regarding the school and the parish in terms of growth, stewardship and financial stability.

The fruits of their labor, as well as input from the parishioner's surveys and comment cards, have been instrumental in developing this three year action plan. Now, they are calling **you** – the parishioners of St. James – to live out this new mission that you helped create by actively getting involved in parish life.

## **NEW MISSION STATEMENT**

St. James Parish is a Eucharistic family, guided by our Catholic faith, cultivating disciples of Jesus Christ through Hospitality, Prayer, Formation and Service.

## **CORE VALUES**

*Welcoming* – We will, by example, create a caring environment which inspires acceptance of all people as God's children.

*Stewardship* – We will, by example, lead others to share all gifts entrusted to them.

*Responsibility* – We will, by example, support one another in the pursuit of holiness.

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<sup>1</sup> See Parish Assessment & Strategic Plan, April 22, 2014 for more details and findings. Available from Parish Office and/or from the parish website [www.stjamesaugusta.org](http://www.stjamesaugusta.org).

## SELECTION OF PRIORITIES

Focusing on the new mission statement and core values, the Pastoral Council prioritized the needs based on the parish's ability to promote the Catholic faith through discipleship while becoming more financially stable. While members of the Pastoral Council would like to do more, certain limitations must be addressed if the parishioners are to more fully embrace their new mission and core values for the parish's long-term future growth and development.

The following goals are based on the ideals presented in the mission and core values, which means that they will not be fully and successfully realized if parishioners do not get actively involved in welcoming others to the parish or being friendly with those who are already members. It also means that all parishioners need to share a sense of responsibility in helping others to grow in their Catholic faith through example and stewardship.

In addition, some of these goals are pretty lofty and may likely take more than three years to reach. But the Pastoral Council felt it was necessary to "stretch" the parishioners, and both current and future leaders, in order to cultivate the disciples needed to meet today's moral and ethical challenges to our Catholic faith.

- **Engaging Our Youth/Young Adults** – If the parish is to grow and sustain itself, we must develop an atmosphere of welcoming of all young people to join us at school and at prayer.
  - **Goal 1** – To ensure that each young member of our parish (middle school/high school/single young adult) is invited to participate in our youth/young adult groups and receives the foundation and stewardship training needed to live out a Christ-like life through adulthood.
  - **Goal 2** – To explore the feasibility of expanding our quality school program to include 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades.
- **Ministry Effectiveness** – In a qualitative review of current ministries available, it was obvious that some ministries haven't been meeting and/or finding leaders for the ministry was extremely challenging. As a result, it was decided to review each ministry to measure its purpose, its membership composition and its effectiveness. It is hopeful that this effort will bring forth new energy for "dying" ministries, a change in direction for others or a creation of new ministries to better meet the needs of the recent joiners.
  - **Goal 3** – To engage parishioners in the activities and ministries the church has to offer and create a passionate investment for the parish.
  - **Goal 4** – Assess ministry opportunities for their effectiveness in promoting spiritual growth in parishioners.
- **Communications and Technology** – From the parish survey it was apparent that a more effective method of communication between parish leadership and parishioners is needed in order to maximize the efforts of the many ministries that serve the parish. Certainly, the advent of convenience technology can play a big role in that effort.

- **Goal 5** – To communicate through technology by effectively reaching out to current parishioners and increasing the appeal for new parishioners.
- **Goal 6** – Enhance Parish Council participation to integrate our “Mission Statement” throughout the area to both internal and external audiences to enhance participation by others and to encourage new membership.
- **Listening to All the Voices within the Parish** – Inviting the “unusual” voices of the parish to engage in conversation about their needs and their vision for the parish will help to more fully embrace the parish’s future. It is also the responsibility of each parishioner to share their thoughts to assist the parish’s efforts in outreach of cultivating disciples. The parish will not flourish unless ALL who are called to the table partake of its food. So, parishioners who work full-time can still share their thoughts through electronic means. Likewise, parishioners who are home-bound but don’t have internet access can still make their thoughts known through personal letters. Young adults who are away at college can still stay connected through an interactive webpage. Students who are Catholic but attend public schools can take advantage of the PSR classes and youth groups. Not sure how to communicate, checkout the bulletin for contact name and numbers or use a little creativity to see how your thoughts can be best shared as every opinion counts!
  - **Goal 7** – To recognize the individual needs and values of all parishioners while creating an effective and faithful parish family.
- **Financial Stability** – Last but not least is the importance of retiring the debt and building financial stability through faithful stewardship by ALL parishioners. It is never too early to start children on the concept of supporting their faith through their time, talent and treasure. For small children at home, picking up their toys is an act of stewardship because they are doing their part to maintain tranquility in the home. Encouraging them to sing songs they learn in school or at PSR helps to develop their singing skills but also remind them of lessons contained in the verses. Sharing a portion of their allowance or letting them pick out a favorite box food for the parish food drive are both contributing to their understanding of taking care of their church and the poor.
  - **Goal 8** – To ensure financial stability in the parish by completing the plan to pay off the parish debt.

These specific goals, along with their respective objectives, strategies, tactics, responsible ministry and progress are contained in another document but will be shared periodically with the parish. The Parish Council is looking for other ways to keep the parish informed about the progress through regular updates and/or “town hall” meetings and would welcome other suggestions from all parishioners.

May God continue to bless our parish, our parishioners and their families, as we move forward in building an enthusiastic army of disciples for Christ throughout Butler County.