

**THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI
RALEIGH, NC
PASTORAL PLAN 2025-2030**

PREAMBLE

The following five-year pastoral plan was created by a team of parishioners, called the Pastoral Plan Committee, who share a deep love for the Catholic Community of St. Francis of Assisi, our patron saint, and the Franciscan tradition that inspires us. The process took nearly a year to complete and involved parishioners who reflect the diversity of the parish. They submit this plan with gratitude for what has been done in the past and in the hope we can achieve even more.

The committee members identified several characteristics about the parish and its potential for growth which they thought necessary to understand in order to have a proper context for this plan. They are as follows:

1. We are **faith-filled Catholics**. Our commitment to Jesus Christ, His Gospel, and importance of sharing His Good News with everyone, especially those whose relationship with the Lord may be described as nominal, is our highest aspiration.
2. We are also **Franciscan**. As a community under the patronage of St. Francis of Assisi, we hold firmly to the values of **joy** in God's unending love, serving the **marginalized** (e.g., the poor, the elderly, the immigrant, the LGBTQ+ community), honoring the **value** and **dignity** of each person, living **simply** and **prayerfully**, and caring for our **common home**. We understand that all of our efforts are rooted in Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit just as St. Francis' life and efforts were.
3. A healthy organization is one with a **vision and members both equipped and committed to implement the vision**. In order to achieve this vision, our parish must have an effective plan and organizational leadership involving both professional and volunteer ministry leaders who are suited to the effort, well-trained, dedicated, and well-supported.
4. We live and serve one another in **community**. Our parish relies on the cooperative leadership of our clergy, lay staff, and volunteer ministry leaders. This plan also involves our entire community and requires the efforts, cooperation, and support of all to bring it to fruition. We approach our decisions using the principle of synodality and prioritize taking the time to consider the voice of the people in decision-making. **Collaboration** across ministry areas and teams is essential to prevent duplicating efforts and working in silos.
5. There is always room for **growth**. Benchmarking, seeking best practices, and frequent evaluation are important ways to ensure we are expending our efforts and resources in ways that are most likely to be fruitful.
6. When possible, we seek to engage parishioners through **small groups**. In our community of over 15,000 parishioners, we recognize the value of building smaller Christian communities to provide more intimate opportunities to encounter Christ in one another and to create a stronger sense of belonging and mission.

The pastoral plan is organized into three main **Priorities** (Encounter, Community, Mission), with six **Goals** supported by eight **Objectives**. For each Objective, there will be a self-directed team

of staff and volunteers who will work together to identify and lead **Actions** to achieve the **Objectives** over a period of five years beginning July 1, 2025.

GROUPS INVOLVED WITH THE PASTORAL PLAN

Pastoral Plan Committee: This is the group of parishioners who developed the three Priorities, six Goals, and eight Objectives.

Pastoral Plan Steering Committee: This group is comprised of two members of the Pastoral Plan Committee, the lay members of the Board of Directors of the St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Parish of Raleigh (i.e., the Chair of the Pastoral Council, the Chair of the Finance Council, and the Principal of The Franciscan School), the Director of the St. Francis Preschool, the Director of Pastoral Ministries (should there be one), the Director of Finance and Planning, and the Pastor.

NOTE: The two representatives of the Pastoral Plan Steering Committee will serve a two-year renewable term and will be selected by the Pastor. The term begins on July 1, 2024.

Objective Team: This group is comprised of staff, volunteer ministers, and other parishioners identified as those who would make helpful contributions to the identification of Action items and strategic planning for the implementation of these items for each Objective of the Pastoral Plan.

Staff: These are the employees of the parish who are responsible for the implementation of the Pastoral Plan and developing the budgets required for the implementation.

THE PASTORAL PLAN

PURPOSE

We exist as a faith community to discover and celebrate Jesus Christ
so we may joyfully serve Him
by authentically encountering, sharing, and building the Reign of God.

VISION

Our vision is to awaken in every heart the desire for the Lord
and the care of all God's creation
in a community formed by the Word of God, sacraments, and one another.

MISSION

Engage with a community that supports you.
Encounter the God who loves you.
Serve and transform the world that needs you.

PRIORITY ONE: ENCOUNTERING CHRIST

As St. Francis encountered Christ in the leper,
we create conditions for encounters with Christ
by being vulnerable, authentic, open, and meeting people where they are
so transformation may occur.

GOAL ONE: Develop the tools and initiatives to help people encounter Christ,
especially by connecting them to the needs
where their talents, skills, and charisms are best utilized.

OBJECTIVE ONE: Investigate and invest in programs and processes
that have been proven to be effective in helping adults,
especially young adults, encounter Christ.

GOAL TWO: Develop methods, programs, and opportunities
to form our youth around Christ.

OBJECTIVE ONE: Investigate and invest in faith formation programs and processes
that have been proven to be effective in helping youth encounter Christ.

PRIORITY TWO: COMMUNITY

Because of who Christ is and what He has done for us, we are a joyful, listening, interdependent Catholic community of faith that fully engages with one another in ways that are welcoming, inclusive, respectful, and co-responsible. We seek to help each other grow in the light and joy of Christ through shared responsibility, engagement, and solidarity.

GOAL ONE: Cultivate a climate of hospitality that permeates every aspect of parish life and increases opportunities to build friendship and strengthen bonds of community across generations.

OBJECTIVE ONE: Create a Hospitality Committee composed of volunteers (particularly those with a charism of hospitality) that develops and continuously improves hospitality, liturgical ministry, and systems of welcome for new parishioners, new school families, new employees, and visitors.

OBJECTIVE TWO: Create a Belonging Committee composed of volunteers (particularly those with a charism of wisdom, knowledge, pastoring, and/or encouragement) that develops and continually improves methods for creating and deepening a sense of belonging for all members of our community with particular attention to those on the margins.

GOAL TWO: Invite and involve parishioners in all aspects of parish life.

OBJECTIVE ONE: Create a Network Committee of volunteers to identify ways for parishioners to connect their interests, talents, charisms, and skills to ministries of the needs of others.

PRIORITY THREE: MISSION

As Christians inspired to share the Good News, 1) our love for salvation, 2) our love for the poor and each other, 3) our commitment to the dignity of the marginalized, and 4) our care for the human family and our planet are our way of life.

We do this because of Christ, thereby creating opportunities to inspire others to encounter Him with us.

GOAL ONE: Form a community where parishioners are spiritually awakened to live their faith lives and desire to answer the call to share this Good News with others.

OBJECTIVE ONE: Educate/inform/invite parishioners from both schools and the church to explore and develop adult faith formation groups and studies where people can grow in their understanding of the Gospel, Church teaching, and how to live the Christian life.

OBJECTIVE TWO: Encourage, increase the visibility of, advocate for, and embrace the leadership of women in the Church in light of the Synodal Process (i.e., staying open to the wisdom, experience, and insights of women).

GOAL TWO: Know, embrace, and live the principles of Catholic Social Teaching (i.e., life and dignity of the human person, family life and social participation, rights and responsibilities, care for the poor and vulnerable, dignity of work and workers' rights, and care of creation).

OBJECTIVE ONE: Educate/inform/invite parishioners into understanding and living Catholic Social Teaching in the areas of liturgy, formation, TFS, and the Preschool through engagement, involvement, and communication. Review and execute our current *Laudato Si* Action Plan on a parish-wide scale.

PREPARATION FOR AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PASTORAL PLAN

By June 30, 2024, the pastor will identify the staff person who will initiate the creation of each Objective Team. It will be the responsibility of the staff member to establish the team consisting of staff, volunteer ministers, and possibly other parishioners by August 31, 2024.

Between September 1-December 31, 2024, the teams involved with the implementation of each Objective will use this time to strategize how their Objective will take shape and identify Actions deemed important for each year of implementation, prioritizing the first year of the plan that begins July 1, 2025. Each fall, the teams will repeat the strategizing process for the successive years of the Pastoral Plan until it concludes in 2030.

NOTE: A list of possible Actions identified by the Pastoral Plan Committee has been given to the staff person who will initiate the creation of an Objective Team. Each team is free to determine if any of these Actions items will be incorporated into their implementation plan. Delegates of the Pastoral Plan Committee serving on the Pastoral Plan Steering Committee may be consulted for background on these Actions items. There may be times when the Actions of one Team may coalesce with another Team's Actions or may impact the ability of another team to achieve its Objective.

Each Objective Team may find it helpful to confer with others in the spirit of collaboration, be it the Pastoral Plan Steering Committee and/or another Objective Team in the development of their Action items.

Each January-February, three steps will occur:

- 1) Early in the January, all eight Objective Teams will gather with the Pastoral Plan Steering Committee in a retreat setting to review each Team's work and compare notes, so each Team may finalize their efforts for the coming fiscal year.
- 2) By the end of January, representatives of the Pastoral Plan Steering Committee will confer with the leaders of each Objective Team to review the finalized Action items that will be implemented beginning with the upcoming fiscal year.
- 3) The finalized Action items are communicated by the Steering Committee to the Pastoral Council, Finance Council, School Advisory Council, Preschool Advisory Council, and Youth Advisory Council and all staff in February. This three-step process will be repeated each year until the Pastoral Plan reaches its fifth year.

In March 2025, staff involved with the implementation of each identified Action item will develop budgets so that the appropriate collegial bodies and staff may review and finalize the budgets by June 30, 2025. This process will be repeated each year until the Pastoral Plan reaches its fifth year. It is recommended that a new Pastoral Plan Committee be commissioned by the pastor by April 30, 2030 to begin the work of developing the pastoral plan for years 2031-2036.

CONCLUSION

Through the collaborative work of our faith community and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we believe this plan will lead us all closer to God and help us to further spread the Good News.