**MISSION STATEMENT**

*Why does our parish exist?*

Our parish mission is to use our devotion to Christ, love for the Lord, knowledge of Scripture, and compassion for one another to grow spiritually, help those in need, and to inspire others to follow Christ’s teaching. St Thomas The Apostle, Pray for Us.

**VISION STATEMENT**

*Where is our parish called to be 3 – 5 years from now?*

St Thomas the Apostle Church seeks to be a welcoming community of people who inspire to meet the needs of all through an inspirational Mass experience, Faith Formation offerings, engagement in the church and caring for others.

**PRIORITIES & GOALS**

*What will be our focus and desired outcomes?*

Priority: **Weekend Mass Experience**

Definition: The Weekend Mass Experience begins with the feeling a person gets the moment they step onto church property - both aesthetically and through their interactions with others. It is enriched by a welcoming and engaging atmosphere, and a relatable Gospel message to promote a personal connection to Jesus through the Eucharist.

Rationale: This is a priority because it is our primary connection to current and future parishioners. Weekend Mass is an opportunity for spiritual growth and chance to make a positive impression. We also know from our 2020 parish survey that only 42% of the respondent felt the parish helps them grow spiritually by offering vibrant and engaging Masses.

Goals:

* Increase from 8% to at least 27% the strongly agree responses to the statement my parish helps me grow spiritually by offering vibrant and engaging Sunday Masses by December 31, 2022.
* Increase average weekend Mass participation from 800 to 880 by December 31, 2022.

Priority: **Spiritual Growth & Discipleship**

Definition: Spiritual Growth is a parishioner’s journey to learn and deepen their belief in the Catholic faith. Embedded within one’s faith formation journey is the process of making someone become ‘like Christ’ in hopes that they will then share the word of God to others.

Rationale: Spiritual growth and Discipleship are essential to a healthy parish so that each of us can become the best versions of ourselves, live our faith to the fullest, and help others find joy in following Jesus. Through Baptism we are all called to “go and make disciples of all nations”. These are core practices and both were identified in our 2019 parish survey as areas of opportunities.

Goals:

* Increase the percentage of parishioners who strongly agree that the parish provides them with opportunities to grow spiritually from 14% to at least 39% by September 2022.
* Grow the number of parishioners who feel called to discipleship in Christ from 7% to 24% by September 2022.

Priority:**Active Involvement**

Definition: A parish family engaged in building community through various ministries, including those beyond church boundaries.

Rationale: To rebuild the sense of community, offering different activities and opportunities for people of all ages.  This involvement promotes fellowship and inspires everyone to serve as Jesus’ disciples beyond our parish. Currently approximately 14% of our parishioners are engaged in at least one ministry.

Goals:

* Increase the number of parishioners engaged in at least one ministry by 10% (or from x to y) by December 31, 2021.
* Increase the 'strongly agree' responses from 16% to 30% to the statement my parish helps me connect to a local catholic community that makes me feel welcomed and accepted by December 31, 2022.
  + Host parish social events that are organized into small groups, promote unity with other "new" to you, by September 30, 2022.
  + Recruit parishioners to mentor ST teacher recommended students, encouraging growth in their Faith, knowledge, and self-concept, each school year, beginning in 2021 Fall.
* Provide at least one new parish family opportunities to participate in organized groups that help strengthen fellowship and Faith by July 1, 2022.
* Starting in calendar year 2021, provide at least one new opportunity per year for people to serve those in need.

**VALUES AND BELIEFS**

*What values and beliefs will guide our community and how will they be exemplified?*

Parish Value:  **Faith**

Definition**:** We believe faith is a personal and communal relationship to God which we can grow as a community by living according to His Word.

Examples of ways we live out this value:

* We will deepen our faith with weekly mass participation.
* We will encourage parishioners to grow in their spiritual education through faith formation opportunities.
* We will continue to read and learn to understand scripture so that we can share His Word with others.

Parish Value: **Love**

Definition: We love because God loved us first.  His is a merciful love for us.  We go forth to reflect His love in our daily lives, in all we do and with everyone we meet.

Examples of ways we live out this value:

* We will honor God's name.
* We will treat each other with respect.
* We will practice forgiveness and compassion.
* We will show people we care and believe in them.
* We will be role models of generosity.

Parish Value: **Fellowship**

Definition: We believe it is important to have loving relationships with God, fellow parishioners, and our community while embracing diversity and encouraging unity.

Examples of ways we live out this value:

* We will establish an inviting atmosphere so every current member and new person feels welcomed, is comfortable returning, and wants to share their God given gifts/talents with all.
* We will personally invite and follow-up with those wanting to join a ministry, welcoming and including them within the group.
* We will contact, welcome, and sponsor new parishioners/school families, keeping them in the know and answering questions as they arise.

Parish Value: **Community**

Definition:  We are a parish committed to the welcoming and well-being of our parish family and local community. We value and want to build meaningful relationships with each other and the Lord.

Examples of ways we live out this value:

* We will welcome all to our masses and events, using various sources of media.
* We will extend genuine hospitality to all, creating a community that supports one another throughout our faith and life journeys.
* We will provide resources for those that seek support and assistance in time of need.