

St. Gabriel Parish, Stamford, CT
Fr. William M. Quinlan, Pastor
Pastoral Plan • September 30, 2016

Mission Statement

We the parish dedicated to the Archangel who announced the best news ever, seek to be incarnational in all we do. We seek to be, in imitation of Our Lady, God's servants, so that God is praised and blessed, and that we and all we influence may be made worthy of the promises of Christ, and so that our community is blessed in our service to it.

This Pastoral Plan was developed by Pastor William Quinlan with input and discussion from parish staff, clergy and lay leaders of the parish. An informal task force was consulted to ensure the parish was well represented. Discussions with parishioners occurred over the period of months following the Pastor's involvement with the Diocesan Synod. Those discussions along with consultation with parish staff, religious education, finance council members and clergy has produced this Pastoral Plan.

Task Force Members:

Vera Gardell, Parish Plan coordinator
Kathleen Whitehead, Parish Plan Coordinator
Alice Ryan, Parish Secretary
Kaye Gill, Senior Group Coordinator
Larry Buzzeo, Deacon
Joe Viola, Deacon
Maryann Didelot, DRE
Paul Salvatore, Finance Council President
Paul Moverley, Trustee
Joe Fiorito, Trustee

Sharon Pratt, Parishioner
Mike Baranowski, Parishioner
Eden Huang, Parishioner
Cathy Sheehan, Parishioner
Madeleine Terenzio, Parishioner
Tessie Senerador, Parishioner
Celeste Baranowski, Parishioner
Rosemary Begel, Parishioner
Gina DeVito, Parish Secretary

The following provided the framework for this Pastoral Plan:

1. The synthetic understanding and contribution of the Pastor as a sitting delegate to the Diocesan Synod.
2. The identification by the Synod of 5 challenges that face parishes in our diocese.
3. The review of parish sacramental and financial information and trends.
4. Formative discussions with parishioners and lay leaders over the past year in the context of the Synod challenges.

Submitted: 

Fr. William M. Quinlan, Pastor

Pastoral Challenge # 1: Evangelization

Rationale for Choosing Evangelization: In order to build God's Church up on earth, we are called to evangelize, to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ. Secularization has taken hold of our society and has strongly challenged our commitment to the Faith. There is a need in our parish to evangelize from within and to renew and deepen our faith and relationship with the Lord Jesus.

Statement of Goal to be achieved: To re-engage, renew, and re-invigorate in our parish community our baptismal call to enthusiastically share Christ in word and action. For those who practice and live the Catholic faith, it is a call to ongoing growth and renewed conversion. For those who have accepted the faith in name, it is a call to re-evangelization. For those who have stopped practicing their faith, it is a call to reconciliation. For the children of our parish, it's a call to be formed into disciples, through the family's faith life and religious formation.

Action Steps to achieve goal:

- Encourage family rosary devotion and recitation on a regular basis through preaching, distribution of rosaries to children and literature to the parents
- Outline the importance of regular mass attendance as a family
- Revamp the CCD curriculum with an emphasis on the importance of regular worship and family prayer.
- Move CCD classes to Sunday morning to encourage families to attend mass regularly.
- Encourage the attendance of our school children and their families to one daily mass per week prior to the start of the school day.
- Provide activities and opportunities for families to participate in the liturgical celebrations of the church.

Timeline for Completion:

All steps will be fully implemented by the spring of 2017. As each step is successful, the initiatives will be re-evaluated and added to through parishioner and DRE input.

Responsible Parties: Pastor and DRE

Cost: – \$3,000 for the cost of new CCD workbooks, sacramentals, pamphlets.

Pastoral Challenge #2: Catechesis and Education

Rationale for choosing Catechesis & Education: In speaking with parishioners the most common theme was the desire to know more about their faith. Some felt they needed to reconnect with the faith they had in their younger years while others expressed the need for a greater understanding of that faith. Still others felt the need to deepen their relationship with Christ through scriptural study. Our mission identifies St. Gabriel parish as focused on Eucharistic devotion and worship in order to better know and enter into a deeper relationship with the unseen God and His Son.

Statement of Goal to be achieved: To address our parishioners who are at various stages in their faith journey by providing resources that provide catechesis and instruction that serves their need to know their faith better.

Action Steps to achieve goal:

1. To further use our parish bulletin as a way of catechizing the faithful through pastoral writings, reflections and resources
2. Offer liturgically seasonal resources such as *5 Minutes with the Word* to the parish to help them make the most of their spiritual preparation
3. Continue and expand our current offering of *Walking with Purpose*, a bible study for Catholic women to deepen their relationship with Christ
4. Address the men of the parish during their monthly meeting as to how best meet their faith journey needs
5. Expand the parish's use of social media to provide interactive resources and direct access to clergy for personal catechesis and spiritual direction.
6. To provide CCD classes, especially the sacramental years, with greater exposure to and involvement in the liturgy.
7. To provide retreat experiences to our students preparing for sacraments.

Timeline for completion:

1. The bulletin was revamped earlier this year and pastoral writings have been included on a weekly basis. This initiative is ongoing.
2. As each liturgical season arrives, resources will be provided.
3. *Walking with Purpose* begins in October of 2016. This initiative will be offered continually with various subject offerings throughout the year.
4. This is an ongoing initiative that will be evaluated periodically.
5. The parish website was launched early this year. It will be continually updated and expanded to offer additional parish resources.
6. This initiative will begin and be ongoing throughout the school year.

Responsible Person(s): Pastor, DRE, Social Media coordinator

Cost: \$1500 for various materials, and stipends to retreat presenters.

Temporal and Administrative Challenge: Building and Facilities

Rationale for choosing Building and Facilities: St. Gabriel is a small parish of less than 500 families but has grown markedly over the last 2 years. Up until recently, the physical upkeep of the rectory and church has been a challenge due to the lack of funds. Over the past two years, the offertory has grown and we have realized an increase in net income as well as several gifts earmarked for upgrades to the parish buildings and grounds. This will allow us to address needs of the physical plant that have been neglected in the past.

Statement of goal to be achieved: To make much needed upgrades and repairs to both the rectory and church buildings.

Action steps to achieve goal:

1. Upgrade the church sound system
2. Upgrade the church lighting
3. Restore central air conditioning in the rectory
4. Upgrade bathrooms in all buildings with handicap accessibility and assistance.
5. Landscape around both the rectory and church – refurbish exterior church signage and lighting.

Time for completion:

1. April 2017
2. January 2017
3. March 2017
4. October 2016
5. Spring 2017

Responsible Person(s): Pastor and Vera Gardell

Cost: \$21,000 to upgrade the sound system in the church
\$3,000 to upgrade the lighting in the church
\$15,000 to restore rectory air conditioning
\$1,000 to upgrade bathrooms
\$1,350 to refurbish the church signage
\$4,000 for landscaping

Status of Synod Challenges Not Addressed in this Pastoral Plan

Liturgy and Worship: Our parish is extremely limited by financial constraints in what it may offer in terms of music and other accompaniments to liturgy. However, we have successfully navigated losing our Director of Music shortly after the pastor's arrival, and have been building a more congregant-friendly music program. The former Director made use of paid singers and baroque and other traditional polyphonic music forms. The current Director focuses on music agreeable to congregational participation and has done great work in encouraging a youth choir and children's chorus for special events.

Family Life: We have begun a small youth group led by three families, and have been encouraging family devotional practices, such as the Advent wreath and rosary.

Leadership: A mission offered last year in the parish brought forward many new parish leaders, and they have been incorporated into several initiatives such as the environment committee, coffee hour between Sunday masses, Religious Education program, and new Bible Study programs.