

# St Ann's Parish, Abbotsford

## Parish Enhancement 2024

### **COMMUNION**

*“The communion we share finds its deepest roots in the love and unity of the Trinity. Together we are inspired by listening to the Word of God, through the living Tradition of the Church, and grounded in the sensus fidei that we share. We all have a role to play in discerning and living out God’s call for His people.”*

***How does our Parish develop and maintain a sense of community to which I truly belong?***

### **VISION**

- We need a vibrant parish to keep us on the path and overcome isolation through a deeper sense of community which is welcoming and really open to all. It is fundamentally of importance to encourage parishioners to get to know each other better.
- It is the role of each parishioner to be welcoming to others as children of God, especially to new parishioners and we need to find ways to welcome them at Mass and invite them to coffee, provide them with a parish community orientation. We should encourage existing parish groups to seek out new parishioners.
- We need to have a coordinated communication plan that makes use of all possible means for communication (e.g. bulletin, webpage, Sunday announcements, word of mouth facilitators, etc.) and encompasses all aspects and events of our Christian community, so that no one can say they didn’t know what was going on. The Pastor’s letter in the weekly bulletin is a good addition.
- We can improve our sense of community by recognizing how multicultural we are and creating opportunities to celebrate this reality. To this end learning more about different cultures and their faith practices could enhance our community life.
- Our community can benefit by finding new ways to invest in leadership and succession planning.
- Our parish community consists of many layers, and investing our resources in learning how to respond to the differing needs of those layers will help us create a vibrant and welcoming environment. As examples, enhancing our youth ministry program, encouraging the participation of young families, and helping more parishioners to find ways to incorporate the Corporal Works of Mercy into their lives, can show “the Way” more clearly.

- The central focus of our Parish community activity is, of course, the Mass and opportunities for other devotional worship. We should continually seek ways to enhance our liturgical celebrations so as to ensure spiritual renewal is a way of life in all our parishioners.

### **COMMITMENTS TO ACTION**

- Annual/biennial synod assembly for follow up on previous commitments.
- On occasion it can be asked at Sunday Masses who is new/visiting, etc. so they can be welcomed.
- More parish input, i.e. pew surveys, suggestion box, town hall meetings.
- Keep our communication current in all media (Bulletin, web, notice boards, etc.).

### ***PARTICIPATION***

*“Participation is based on the fact that all the faithful are qualified and are called to serve one another through the gifts they have each received from the Holy Spirit in baptism. In a synodal Church, the whole community is called together to pray, listen, analyze, dialogue, discern and offer advice on making pastoral decisions which correspond as closely as possible to God’s will.”*

***How can we enhance the efforts being made in our parish to practice the skills of listening, dialogue and discernment?***

### **VISION**

- Institute more activities where parishioners get to know each other and develop an openness to word of God and use these conversations in the different groups of the parish throughout the year.
- More space and opportunity for dialogue/discussion/discipleship, focusing on both the didactic and experiential. Parishioners want to learn more about their faith (didactic) while at the same experience the faith in everyday life and among members of the community and beyond (experiential). Perhaps this comes through more apologetics and bible study opportunities.
- Enhance music ministry through new songs, screens with words, and a better sound system.
- Sharing, listening, and discerning in small groups is seen as positive and there is a desire to repeat it in some way. We should do more similar style assemblies, maybe annually.
- “Mary listens, Martha acts”, and both are important.
- Parishioners need opportunities to share faith experiences by way of testimonies.

- Having a time of silence after communion for personal prayer and reflection before other activities.
- Parishioners would be encouraged to participate more readily if there was more transparency about Parish governance, i.e. finances, maintenance, parish council, etc.
- To participate fully, one needs to have an understanding and appreciation of one's own gifts. It would help to encourage participants to have training on finding out their gifts, and how to use them in the furtherance of our Christian Mission.

### **COMMITMENTS TO ACTION**

- Enhancing openness to the Word of God, through people gathering in prayer and spiritual formation.
- Annual/biennial synod assembly for follow up on previous commitments.
- A variety of parish-wide events - low and no cost, i.e. potluck or a concert, as well as retreats and catered dinners.
- Encourage people to socialize after Mass and provide opportunities for this.
- More communication on ministries and a calendar of events (brochures, website, social media). Ministry fairs are an important vehicle for this.
- Bringing in interesting speakers.
- Fundraising events.
- Parish movie night with discussion afterwards.

### **MISSION**

*“Our Mission is to witness to the love of God in the midst of the whole human family. This Synodal process has a deeply missionary dimension to it. It is intended to enable the Church to better witness to the Gospel, especially with those who live on the spiritual, social, economic, political, geographical and existential peripheries of our world.”*

***Name the central focus of our parish in working toward furthering the mission of the Church.***

### **VISION**

- Each of us is called to give witness to the faith in ordinary acts (these might be the only gospel an observer reads!). Practicing what we preach should be our goal. Giving attention to the simple things, being a saint “in the ordinary”, doing small things with visible love.
- The role of each parishioner in evangelization is spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ... to all, including old and young, and to all the perceived divisions of our community. We should focus especially on lapsed Catholics, inviting friends and family back. In

the process we need to practice an “apostolate of the ear” ... listening to God and to each other.

- Our faith and evangelization practice could be enhanced by regular exhortation from our Parish leaders for parishioners to learn more about their faith and have the courage to step outside individual comfort zones and talk confidently about their Christian values. In the process, we need to learn how to converse about controversial topics, i.e. LGBTQ+, abortion.
- Maybe we can enhance our Christian lives by doing works of charity that are motivated by listening to the Word.
- It would help to have training on how to be friendly but safe with homeless individuals and other people on the margins, as we live our vocation, with JOY.
- Evangelization could be improved by communicating more with outside agencies about our activities and Christian community practices.
- Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) is a very important means of evangelization, both for those who want to enter the Church, but also for those who want to learn more about their faith.

#### **COMMITMENTS TO ACTION**

- Online book club.
- Initiate programs such as Alpha and advertise them as open to anyone seeking faith enlightenment in the community at large.
- Support and encourage the growth of our annual ecumenical celebrations,
- Support and encourage the migrant worker programs.
- Extend the activities of the existing outreach ministries in our parish.
- Publish inspirational messages from parish leadership.