

2019-21 St. Matthew Parish Pastoral Plan  
Executive Summary

**What is St. Matthew Catholic Church all about?**

The mission and vision statements capture who we strive to be as disciples. The tradition of the Catholic Church and the power of the sacraments draw each member into communion with Jesus Christ. As we grow in faith, we invite others to share the peace and joy that the Lord gives to us through the apostolic ministry of the Church, the Body of Christ, of which we are a part.

**The world today**

- Secular “experts” say that we are entering into a “post-Christian” era.
- A growing number of people are rejecting traditional religion in favor of a subjective “spirituality” that is spiritual but not religious or an atheistic worldview.
- Mass attendance and participation in non-Catholic Christian worship services is in a steep decline in Western countries.
- The large majority of those who leave the Church do so before the age of 25.

**Our parish community**

- With more than 10,600 registered households, we are currently the largest Catholic parish in the United States.
- With more than 100 active ministries, many members of St. Matthew seek ways to serve the Church and the community at large.
- There is a clear sense of St. Matthew as a welcoming parish that, while large, offers opportunities for every person to “find their place” and “feel at home”.
- **However, even as the parish registration and the local population continue to grow, both attendance at Mass and financial contributions, while both still strong, are flat or show a slight decline.**
- Recent surveys (Gallup’s ME-25 in 2014 and a CARA survey in 2015) show a slip in engagement and a concern that the parish is not effectively fostering maximum spiritual growth, particularly to the youth and young adult population.

**The planning process**

- The process began unofficially with Father Pat interviewing parish staff members and key ministry leaders.
- Pastoral Council, along with Father Pat, met with diocesan staff to begin the official effort.
- Pastoral Council members led a collaborative fact-finding process to develop the specific focus areas of the plan (goals) and the structure necessary to support these (pillars).
- Pastoral Council worked closely with key staff members and ministry leaders to develop objectives and action plans for each goal and pillar.

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**Summary of the Pastoral Plan**

**Goal 1: Focus on Spiritual Growth of Parishioners**

- A. Feeding the Sheep (Parishioners who are attending Mass)
  - 1. Maximize “The Sunday Experience” through education, intentional welcoming efforts, focus on key liturgical elements and offering engaging worship experiences outside of Mass.
  - 2. Increase engagement in faith-sharing groups and naturally occurring small groups, so every small community within St. Matthew pursues spiritual growth as an intentional and primary element of its identity.
  - 3. Provide the resources to ensure that each person can, with little effort, find ways to grow spiritually.
  - 4. Inspire and enable each parishioner to make specific commitments to his or her own personal spiritual growth journey.
- B. Feeding the Shepherds (Parishioners who are attending Mass and participating in ministry)
  - 1. Clarify focus and scope of existing parish ministries ensuring each ministry aligns with our Parish Mission and Vision.
  - 2. Foster leadership development and clearer focus for each ministry, making sure that in addition to service, all ministries foster spiritual growth of participants.
- C. Feeding the Multitudes (Parishioners not attending Mass, ‘former’ Catholics and ‘nones’)
  - 1. Leverage technology to expand our reach beyond the church walls.
  - 2. Develop a targeted marketing plan for Millennials.
  - 3. Enable our parishioners to take initiative to invite others within neighborhood and workplace environments.
  - 4. Review new member experience, enhance welcoming activities.

**Goal 2: Increase Youth, Young Adult, and Family Engagement (Gen Z, Millennials, Gen Y)**

- A. Encounter
  - 1. Increase impact of on-campus events for youth to become active in the parish.
  - 2. Evaluate and look for improvements to be made to the Life Teen Mass experience.
  - 3. Continue and expand efforts to encounter youth, young adults and families both in person off-campus and via social media.
- B. Form
  - 1. Implement discipleship groups for teens following Confirmation.
  - 2. Create ongoing formation opportunities for all catechists and Youth Ministry volunteers.
  - 3. Incorporate family catechesis into all Faith Formation programs.
  - 4. Offer vibrant young adult and family small groups, ongoing formation, and retreat opportunities.
- C. Send
  - 1. Intentionally invite teens and young adults to participate in and lead parish ministries, so that they come to feel valued and a part of their church.
  - 2. Increase visibility of youth and young adults actively participating in all aspects of parish life.

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**Pillar 1: Communications**

- A. Parish Census Update
  - 1. Update data (phone, email) for current parishioners
  - 2. Develop a single, parish-wide communications database
- B. Infrastructure
  - 1. Evaluate current staffing and needed skill sets
  - 2. Evaluate and update existing technology
- C. Parish Branding
  - 1. Define a clear and appealing St. Matthew “brand”
  - 2. Standardize and streamline communications vehicles across all ministries
- D. Online/Digital Communications
  - 1. Ongoing review and updating of technological communication vehicles
  - 2. Improve and enhance on-campus signage
- E. Print Publications
  - 1. Evaluate and redesign bulletin
  - 2. Update all print and signage materials to reflect current branding
  - 3. Consider a periodic magazine publication

**Pillar 2: Facilities**

- A. Critical maintenance at current campuses
- B. Identify, fund, and execute necessary renovations at the Ballantyne Campus to support Spiritual Growth and Youth/Young Adult Goals
- C. Identify, fund, and execute necessary expansion and renovations at the Waxhaw Campus to support Spiritual Growth and Youth/Young Adult Goals

**Our future together**

- To be an “amazing parish”
- To help everyone to know God’s loving and saving plan for each of us.
- To build a new generation of leaders filled with the joy of the Gospel.
- To be a place of encounter: through liturgy, the sacraments, and our members, all who enter our doors meet Jesus.
- **Tomorrow starts today!**