

ST. JOSEPH PARISH PASTORAL PLAN

2024-2025

Scripture Text

Psalm 67

- ¹ God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us;
² That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.
³ Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.
⁴ O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth.
⁵ Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.
⁶ Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us.
⁷ God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.

The Psalmist writes of a joint acclamation in the common faith of the people. There is great response to how God has formed and fashioned his own people.

The prayer of the Psalm is strong with trust that with God there will no lack of truth or grace.

Our Pastoral Plan will look to raise our common acclamation in praise of the Lord as this Eucharistic Revival for the faith of the Church in the United States leads all into the Jubilee Year of Hope declared by Pope Francis. From our Eucharistic life in the parishes, we are being led to praise the Lord in the Jubilee indulgences and graces as pilgrims.

Our Parish Discernment has determined the life of faith showing four prominent dimensions to our parish life.

First is the Heritage of our Parish represented in the senior members who steadfastly practice their sacramental life and are treasured resources of the history of our founding and memory.

Second is the Outreach in Charity represented by our most impressive Food Pantry ministry, St. Vincent DePaul referrals and gift-giving moments in union with the Carteret local response.

Third is the Parish School Community. Together with our principal, faculty, staff, students and families an authentic witness is represented for the Mission of Family Life in forming children into young adults through excellence in education and Gospel values and service.

Fourth is the Evangelization initiative to bring the Good News of our faith more and more into daily life and sharing. We look to renewal efforts as each season, speakers share, at the parish level, on the way we can make our faith more effective in its message and mission. Also, the model of small faith-sharing communities within the Hispanic and Spanish-speaking families is intended to bring prayer, understanding and commitment into greater response for home life.

Our Pastoral Plan will offer directions for each of the four dimensions of parish life, utilizing the Scripture text together with the role of discipleship in order to see clearly how our future is following God's consolations and the Spirit's gifts and fruits.

We will use, as in the past, the time frame of seasons based on the Liturgical Year dividing the sections into 1) Ordinary Time; 2) Advent/Christmas time; 3) Ordinary Time/Lent; 4) Easter/Ordinary Time.

Ordinary Time

Our heritage: Upon opening of first Sunday in September, a display is prepared in the foyer with the many vestments, ornaments, items which were so generously donated by our senior members over the years. It is a reminder of how their contributions are truly inspiring us to value our worship and encourage our place as pilgrims and witnesses.

The charity ministries receive shirts and hats with insignia for our Jubilee Year encouraging others to hear about the powerful mercy that inspires all our charity.

Our parish school learns about the importance of the Holy Door indulgence and prepares a special passageway on campus to represent the new time God has granted in His Jubilee.

With the evangelization efforts, a representation from lay renewal ministries shares the Church's call during these months in preparing for a time of mercy. The small faith-sharing communities speak on behalf of more homes entering the weekly gatherings reminding about the peace and blessings given as we live for our faith and its daily journey.

Advent/Christmas

Our heritage parishioners are invited to bless the pilgrims preparing to travel for the Jubilee visit to Rome. The senior faithful tell of their gratitude for past pilgrimages and prayer pledges are completed to be placed at the altars of the great Basilicas. Upon returning to the parish, highlights of the trip are shown at Masses and examples of how to grow during this Jubilee Year are shared.

Our charity ministries prepares special gift packages for the fire and police departments. These are shared as a remembrance and thank you for their vigilance in keeping so many safe amidst the journey of our daily lives. Also, a special Christmas sharing is prepared for the women's pregnancy center, Life Choices in Metuchen in support of the expectant mothers' and their journeys in love.

The parish school adopts a newborn child from the parish in Jesus' name with donations and gratitude for showing the face of love in innocence and family. Each classroom helps to share some decoration for the family's Christmas home preparation. Youth from the parish arrive to sing Christmas carols for the family before Christmas Eve.

As additional Advent enrichment component is added to the parish schedule with the 4 Mondays of Advent including chanted Evening Prayer with carols via ZOOM. For the Hispanic parishioners, seven days of the Christmas 'O' Antiphons 'gozos' are scheduled between December 17-23 with evening Masses.

ORDINARY TIME/LENT

Due to Lent beginning in March, there are only two (2) months of Ordinary Time due to Lent beginning in March, our parish remembers our senior members through monthly days of health checkups at the parish hall during January, February and March open to all who can benefit from a regular checkup during these winter weeks.

Our charity ministries host a soup can drive to serve at our school and catechism classes during the Lenten season. All donations will be left on our 'Soup and Soul' cart located in the church foyer.

The parish school prepares a 'Jubilee Door' on campus that will invite parishioners and visitors to pass through during school Mass days and receive a blessing in observance of our Jubilee Year proclaimed by Pope Francis.

Together with the young people's recognition by our bishop for St. Timothy medals, our parish will recognize committed families to receive the St. Joseph prize in observance of our parish feast.

EASTER/ORDINARY TIME

The senior members of our parish are invited adopt a young person who is preparing for the sacraments Confirmation and/or First Holy Communion. An opportunity to talk about the importance of sacramental blessing will be shared and the young people can sign a photo of their ceremony to be shared with our senior 'spiritual guides'.

Our charity ministries prepare additional Easter baskets for any shut-ins and our youth ministry delivers the gifts over the Easter vacation.

The school community announces its spring play presentation and all participants are given free admission to local stage productions in recognition of their talents. Our school faculty is given a special spirituality day by staff at local Catholic university chapel/retreat facility.

A special 'Passport to Family Faith' is given to each parent following the celebration of First Holy Communion, encouraging the parents of First Holy Communion children to attend regular Mass by asking for the priest's signature each week over the next few months.