

Church of the Ascension

Pastoral Strategic Plan

2017 - 2019

“Kuyumba halumo!”

“We walk together!”

Introduction

Our Pastoral Plan is intended to inspire and guide us as a parish family; align our programs with our mission, vision and values; and lay a foundation for our next 50 years.

As a three-year plan, this document provides a Parish roadmap for calendar years 2017, 2018 and 2019. This Plan is a living document that may be modified at any time. At a minimum the Parish Council Strategic Plan Sub-Committee will review it every May prior to the new fiscal year. A new, rolling three-year plan will be promulgated in September of each year.

The Pastor and Parish Council will receive quarterly updates.

Mission

Proclaim, Celebrate and Serve

We are an open assembly of Catholic believers of the Diocese of Richmond:

- *Proclaiming the word of God,*
- *Celebrating the Eucharist, and*
- *Serving our Local Community.*

Vision

IN THIS PLACE, in our Parish, Jesus is alive, welcoming the lost and leading us all to walk together in lives of merciful compassion.

We envision a continued vibrant Parish who worships together and is Holy, Apostolic, Generous, Courageous, Self-sustaining and Active in our local community and in our Diocese.

We see Ascension growing in Christian Unity with churches in our community and in Global Solidarity with Catholics throughout our local and universal church.

Values

Everything we do as a Parish extends from the Two Great Commandments as taught to us by Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and contains the whole law of God:

➤ *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, with thy whole mind, and with thy whole strength;*

➤ *Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*

This Divine law leads us to a set of core parish values:

- We are a people being saved through grace of the cross of Christ.
- We believe that Jesus is real, alive, and wants to encounter each of us daily.
- We respect life from conception to natural death.
- We are a people of Peace and Justice.
- We are family. Every parishioner brings value to our Parish family life.
- We accomplish goals together.
- We are committed to ministries founded in the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy.
- We are all stewards of this Parish and this planet, committing our time, talent and treasure.
- We believe that:
 - Growing in our faith is a life-long gift we must pursue with joy at every age.
 - We must recognize Change as a constant, unending gift of God and trust He will give us wisdom, grace and energy to adapt to that change.
 - We must regularly assess our mission, organization, programs and ministries to ensure they are aligned with our Parish Needs, Mission, and this Plan.
 - We must be fully accountable for every offering, donation, contribution, grant and minute of volunteer time that is given to our Parish.

Strategic Vectors

- **GROW:** Grow the Parish in Membership and in Worship Participants with emphasis on our growing senior population, young families and youth.
- **EXPAND:** Expand our Liturgy, Religious Education, and Social Justice programs.
- **COMMUNICATE:** Establish an information network that proclaims the Gospel, tells our story, and connects our people.
- **RESOURCE:** Sustain and Expand our Fiscal Stability.

A specific Plan of Objectives, Actions and Milestones (POA&M) for each Strategic Vector is provided in Appendices 1 through 4. The appropriate Department or Committee Head will monitor the status of each action and will provide quarterly updates.

Appendix 5 is our parish organization, provided to show how our councils, committees, departments, ministries and staff all work together to support our pastor and parish in the execution of our shared mission, vision and values.

Every parishioner is a vital part of achieving our strategic goals and is invited to share your ideas or concerns through your chosen ministry or through a Parish Pastoral Council member.

COA Pastoral Plan of Objectives, Actions and Milestones (POA&M)

2017 - 2019

Appendix 1: Grow

Grow the Parish in Membership and in Worship Participants with emphasis on our growing senior population, young families and youth.

Note: This appendix is broken down into two distinct sections.

A. Grow Membership in the Parish

Action 1: Census. Update the parish enrollment by conducting a census of the parish. (Establish a firm and secure Parish Data base as a central source for Parishioner names, addresses, contact information, ministry preferences and Virtus training. This should be accomplished with the Parish Census.)

Responsible: Parish Council, Parish Secretary.

Target Date: June 30, 2017

Action 2: 10 % Growth. Grow parish membership by 10 % by 2018.

Responsible: Parish Council/Parish Administrator

Target Date: December 30, 2018

Action 3: Ascension Cares Campaign. Conduct an “Ascension Cares -Taking Care of our Own” Campaign. Conduct a review, revitalize and promote all Community Life ministries.

Responsible: Community Life Department Head

Target Date: Sep 30, 2017

Action 4: Family Sponsor Program. Establish a formal sponsor program for new families.

Responsible: Community Life Department Head

Target Date: Sep 30, 2017

Action 5: Military Family Program. Establish a distinct Military Family Ministry to invite, welcome, sponsor, support, and stay connected with military families new to our local community. (Provide rotating Military Families a place to “come home to”.)

Responsible: Community Life/Military Sub-Committee

Target Date: Sep 30, 2017

Action 6: Mentor Program. Establish an Adult Mentor Program. Senior members of the Parish would mentor young adults (over 18) and young parents.

Responsible: New Evangelization Team Leader

Target Date: December 01, 2018

B. Grow in Worship Participants

Action 1: Participation Count. Conduct a six month count of attendance at the various liturgies to include daily Mass, Tuesday night Mass, Saturday Mass, Sunday Masses, Holy Days of Obligation, the Christmas Masses, the Lenten Tridium, Soup and Sacrament Masses, Easter Masses, First Friday Mass, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Stations of the Cross and any other special masses that may be held annually. Provide a report Pastor and Parish Council.

Responsible: Parish Council/Liturgy Department

Action Period: September 2016 – April 30, 2017

Report Target Date: May 15, 2017

Action 2: Grow Mass Participation. Conduct a campaign (Like LOM) to draw people back to Mass.

Responsible: Parish Council and Liturgy Department Head

Target Date: May 2018 (Between Christmas and Lent)

Action 3: Ride to Mass Program. Re-Energize the Ride to Mass Program.

Focused on seniors and disabled who may need a ride to mass.

Responsible: Community Life Department Head

Target Date: May 2018

Action 4: Instructional Mass. Conduct an Instructional Mass that explains what is happening in the Mass.

Responsible: Deacons/Liturgy Committee

Target Date: May 2017

Appendix Two: Expand and Sustain

*Expand and sustain our Liturgy, Religious Education, and Social Justice programs.
(Note: This Appendix is broken down into four distinct sections: Liturgy, Religious Education, Social Justice and Ministry-Wide Programs.)*

A. Liturgy:

Action 1: Liturgy Experience. Enhance experience of the Liturgy.

Responsible: Deacons/Parish Council/Liturgy Committee

Target Date: Lent 2017 and On Going.

Action 2: Family Mass. Establish a monthly formal Family Mass and /or Children's Mass. (Part of the "Family Friendly" Parish and attract families to mass effort.)

Responsible: Parish Council/ Deacons/ Liturgy Committee

Target Date: June 2017.

Action 3: Altar Guild. Establish a parish Altar Guild Society.

Responsible: Parish Council, Finance Council, and Liturgy Ministry

Target Date: May 2018

B. Religious Education: *Provide the necessary fiscal and volunteer support to expand the religious education programs.*

Action 1: (This is a three-part action.)

a. Evaluate our overall Religious Education programs to ensure we fully serve the diverse (seniors, young families, young adults, youth, etc.) needs of the parish and provide opportunities for all.

b. Identify any resources, current or new, that may be required to sustain current programs and/or initiate additional programs.

c. Provide a report to Pastor and Parish Council.

Responsible: Religious Education DH and Parish Council Rep.

Target Date: Mar 2017

Action 2: Adult Faith Formation. Establish an Adult Faith Formation committee and draft a plan for a calendar year 2017 Adult Religious Education program (like Discovering Christ). Produce a Draft Plan.

Responsible: Religious Education Department Head

Target Date: January 30, 2017.

C. Social Justice Programs:

Action 1: Sustain our Social Justice Ministries as listed in the Parish Ministry Handbook. Ensure the ministries have intentional impact, are adequately staffed with paid staff members or dedicated volunteers, and identify the resources and funds required to achieve their goals.

Responsible: Social Justice Department Head

Target Date: Annually each March 30th.

D. Ministry-Wide Vectors: *(Note: These vectors involve actions that cross many or all of our departments, ministries and aspect of Parish life.)*

Action 1: Ministry Review. Assess all ministries for currency, effectiveness, parish participation and alignment with our mission, vision and values. Provide a report and recommendation to Pastor and Parish Council.

Responsible: Parish Council Ministry Review Sub-Committee

Target Date: May 15, 2017

Action 2: Christian Unity. Expand our parish's Christian Unity connection across all ministries. Explore connections with other local Catholic and Christian churches in each area of ministry.

Responsible: Peace and Justice Committee / All Ministry Leaders

Target Date: December 25, 2017

Action 3: Expand Youth Involvement. Involve all of our youth in more aspects of our liturgy celebrations, community prayer and ministries. *(Note: This is a three-part action.)*

a. VIRTUS: To safely involve more of our youth in more of our programs and ministries, establish a Parish-wide program that would enroll and train all ministry volunteers in Virtus Training. (This would be a Parish Wide effort that would involve all ministries.)

Responsible: Parish Council

Target Date: December 01, 2017

b. Liturgy and Prayer: In addition to our Altar servers, Youth Choir and Youth of Ascension (YOA) liturgy and programs, outline a program to expand the involvement of our youth in Liturgy by having a participating youth presence at our regular Masses as Greeters, Ushers, Sacristans, Eucharistic Ministers, Ashes distributors, Palm Distributors and Lectors. Include more YOA in the Advent,

Christmas, Lent, Trinitum, and Easter services.

Responsible: Parish Council, Community Life DH, Liturgy DH

Target Date: May 30, 2017.

c. Youth in All Ministries: Assess all ministries and identify opportunities where youth can be more involved in the planning and actions of every ministry.

Responsible: Parish Council, All Dept Heads and Ministry Leaders

Target Date: May 30, 2017

Action 4: Speakers Program. Explore the establishment of a quarterly Speakers Program. Priority Topics for this pastoral plan should include, but not be limited to, Respect Life; Health Care; Poverty and Hunger; Global Solidarity; Prison Ministry. Report to Pastor and Parish Council.

Responsible: Peace and Justice Committee

Target Date: March 30, 2017

Appendix 3: Communicate

Establish a parish-wide and community-linked information net that proclaims the Gospel, tells our story, and connects our people.

Action 1: Strategic Communications Plan. Develop a Strategic Communications Plan which will outline and define a multi-media effort designed so that our parish can effectively and efficiently communicate our faith, our values (see preamble), our ideas and concerns, and our message within the Parish and throughout our local community. This plan should include, but not be limited to, addressing the following: Identify target audience(s) and stakeholders, incorporate current and projected parish media capabilities, develop our message, and define feedback measures and metrics to assess effectiveness.

Responsible: Communications sub-Committee, Parish Administrator

Target Dates: January 18, 2017 – Submit Draft Plan to Parish Council

February 21, 2017 - Pastor's Approval of the Plan

Action 2: Hire a Communications Coordinator. This is viewed as a strategic action necessary to preserve our current, and grow our future communications successes in light of expanding demands on the time of our current parish staff.

Responsible: Parish Administrator.

Target Date: September 30, 2017.

Action 3: Develop Parish-wide Network. Establish a comprehensive and dynamic networking system and corresponding policies and procedures within our parish that links our parishioners, our ministries and committees, and all forms of our media (Lector Announcements, Bulletin, message boards, Website, Constant Contact, Social Media (ex. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) , Town Hall meetings, “Welcome Weekends”, Pastoral Letters, etc.). This network will strengthen all aspects of information sharing in our Parish; “Push” information to our parishioners and to the local community, and facilitate the pairing of efforts and skill sets with needs of the parish and members of Our Parish Family.

Responsible: Communications Coordinator, Communications sub-Committee, Parish Administrator

Target Date: September 30, 2017

Action 4: Optimize Commons Areas. Conduct a comprehensive “flow study” of the church Commons areas in order to determine the optimal placement of various communications ‘systems’ (bulletin boards, TV/video screens, display tables, etc.) within the space available and designed to deliver the intended messages to the appropriate user audience.

Responsible: Communications sub Committee (enlisting the services of

Parish Council, Hospitality Committee, and various Ministry Heads whose frequent presence in the Commons areas present opportunities to monitor parishioner flow and use of these areas)

Target Date: May 25, 2017

Action 5: Communications Capability Assessment. Conduct a comprehensive assessment of all current parish voice, print, internet and data systems to determine adequacy, capacity, and life-cycle costs to meet current and projected communications needs. This assessment should include a review, analysis and assessment of compliance with applicable rules and regulations regarding security, accessibility, and safeguarding of personal information

Responsible: Parish Administrator, Communications Coordinator, Communications sub-Committee

Target Date: July 31, 2017

Action 6: Recruit, Train and Sustain a Communications Team. The intent is to identify specifically the areas of greatest communications need within the parish (ex. Maintenance of the Parish website and/or Facebook account, Coordination with local media outlets, etc.) and then actively solicit volunteers to perform designated tasks which currently overwhelm the staff members conducting these actions as collateral duties.

Responsible: Parish Administrator, Communications Coordinator, Communications sub-Committee

Target Date: 30 January 2017

Appendix 4: Resource

Sustain and expand our Fiscal Solvency.

Action 1: Living Our Missin (LOM) Projects. Complete by June 30, 2019.

- a. New Social Justice Center (Fall 2016)
- b. Accessibility (Lift: Fall 2016; Restrooms: Spring 2017)
- c. Glass Rooms (Mary's Corner, Mezzanine (Spring/Summer 2017)
- d. Parking Lot (Fall 2017)
- e. Refurbish Parish Office (Fall 2018)
- f. Growing our Future Ministries (small portions allotted per year until end of LOM and then ongoing.)
- g. Capital Replacement Fund (As needed to complete projects a-e and then allotted end of LOM.)

Responsible: Parish Administrator and Facilities Sub-Committee.

Target Dates: Individual Dates dependent on funding from Diocese

Action 2: Capital Replacement Fund. Outline our long term Capital Replacement and Contingency Replacement Plan to the Pastor, Parish Council and Parish.

Responsible: Parish Administrator

Target Date: May 15, 2017

Action 3: Fund Development Sub-Committee. Establish a Parish Council Fund Development sub-committee to meet or exceed budgeted requirements as identified in the Pastoral Plan. Three primary vectors:

- a. Grow weekly contributions.
- b. Expand utilization of Diocesan and Private Grants.
- c. Grow the Capital Replacement Fund to meet the long term plan.

Responsible: Parish Council President/Parish Administrator.

Target Date to Establish the Sub-Committee: January 30, 2017

Action 4: Man-Hour Annual Review. As part of the annual budget requirements process, identify the number of man-hours required by each department and for each staff position to meet projected demand.

Responsible: Parish Administrator lead; Supported by all department heads and staff members.

Target Date: March 2017 and each subsequent year.

Action 5: Competitive Pay Review. Conduct a staff compensation review with the Parish Council Executive Committee (Pastor, Parish Administrator, Council President, Vice President and Council Secretary) to pay all our staff competitive

rates as defined by the Diocese and local city rates.

Responsible: Parish Administrator

Target Date: 1 Month Prior to Parish Budget Submission to Diocese.