

Guide to Parish Mission and Meaning

New Evangelization Team – Church of the Ascension, Virginia Beach, Virginia

“Being a Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction” *Pope Benedict XVI*

“I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting Him encounter you. No one should think that this invitation is not meant for him or her, since “no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord”. The Lord does not disappoint those who take this risk... when everything is said and done, we are infinitely loved.” *Pope Francis*

A continuing personal encounter, that is a personal relationship, with Jesus Christ is the foundation of our Faith. Every message, every initiative at Church of the Ascension should both recognize the need for this relationship and enhance the ongoing development of this relationship for each and every parishioner.

We *Proclaim the Word of God* because we are so filled with joy at being infinitely loved by God that we wish all people to participate fully in this relationship.

We *Celebrate the Eucharist* because as infinitely loved members of God’s family, we want to share intimately in God’s presence in a way that unites us to our brothers and sisters.

We *Serve the Local Community* because we recognize that God’s infinite love is for all people, regardless of their material, mental or spiritual situations.

We show mercy to all to show our intense gratitude for this personal love relationship that God has already showered upon us.

We serve the community through the *Justice and Peace Ministry*, not because we “must”, but because we recognize God’s personal love not only for us but also for those who come to us for help. Our gratitude for God’s infinite love spills over to helping others in ways that build up God’s personal relationship with us and with those whom we serve.

We actively support our families so that they will celebrate God’s love and caring with our brothers and sisters. As part of the family of God we will unite all our families in support for each other and gratitude for all God has done.

In our fund raising campaigns we recognize God’s love showing itself to each of us by providing for all our needs from God’s riches and glory. Our gratitude overflows to help our parish and diocese extend to all the Good News of God’s love and desire to have a personal relationship with each person.

For every message and initiative, we do not measure our success by the number of attendees, number of items provided, amount of money received or other measures of our activity. Success for our initiatives is measured by how we have enhanced the ongoing personal relationship with Jesus not only for those whom we contact, but also for our own personal relationships with Jesus.