Good Shepherd Parish Strategic Plan
2025

Introduction

Over the past several months, Good Shepherd Parish has undertaken a thoughtful and inclusive process to help shape our future. Through a series of interviews and listening sessions, we gathered insights from a broad cross-section of our parish community as we explored our strengths, our challenges, and the opportunities before us.

We asked critical questions:

- What are the key strengths of Good Shepherd? What makes us unique?
- What aspects of our parish life are we most proud of?
- What challenges may prevent us from fully achieving our mission?
- What opportunities exist for us to grow and strengthen our faith community? How can we build on our unique strengths?
- What potential threats should we be mindful of in the years ahead?

The results of these conversations served as the foundation for the **Vision, Strategic Goals, and Supporting Needs** found in this plan.

Mission:
"*Good Shepherd Catholic Church promotes the Kingdom of God by living as disciples of Jesus Christ through our foundational principles of Worship, Evangelization, Formation, and Outreach.*"

Rooted in our mission, this plan reflects the insights of our parish family and sets a strategic course for the next 5-7 years.

Parish Insights: What We Heard

Some common themes that emerged from our conversations are:

- **Welcoming Community** – Parishioners appreciate the welcoming and inclusive nature of the parish, which is a strong foundation for building deeper relationships across different groups.

- **Stronger Connections** – Good Shepherd is a diverse and vibrant community. Community members expressed a desire for deeper relationships with other parishioners, and stronger connections between our school, English speaking, and Spanish speaking communities.

- **Commitment to Service and Justice** – The parish has a strong tradition of outreach and service, and there is interest in expanding these ministries - especially for youth and families - to provide more hands-on opportunities for participation in service and social justice work.

- **Worship and Formation** – Good Shepherd provides liturgical celebrations and faith formation programs that provide meaningful ways for parishioners to grow spiritually and connect with our Catholic faith. Parishioners expressed a desire for more consistent messaging around our Catholic faith, and more opportunities to engage our youth and young families in formation programs and liturgy.

- **Excellent School** – The parish school is a strong asset, contributing to faith formation and evangelization, with engaged parents and faculty. Strengthening ties between the school and parish communities presents a significant growth opportunity, and a foundation for school parents and youth to remain connected to Good Shepherd beyond grade school.

- **Generosity and Stewardship** – Good Shepherd parishioners have a strong tradition of generosity, contributing both financially and through volunteer efforts. However, some ministries rely on a small group of volunteers, highlighting the need for leadership development and broader engagement. As parish demographics evolve, so may giving patterns, making it essential to anticipate and plan for continued financial sustainability in the future.

- **Facility** – Parishioners appreciate the beauty and welcoming atmosphere of our church facilities. However, increasing parish and school activities have led to a shortage of gathering spaces. Coupled with ongoing maintenance needs, this underscores the importance of assessing community support for potential facility improvements/expansions.

- **Communication** – Good Shepherd utilizes multiple communication channels to reach our diverse parish community, ensuring that information is widely available. Despite these efforts, many parishioners still feel disconnected from key updates, highlighting an opportunity to enhance clarity, consistency, and engagement in our communication strategies.

Vision for the Future

As Good Shepherd Parish we embrace the distinct gifts of our School community, our English-speaking community, and our Spanish speaking community. We intentionally seek opportunities to build deeper relationships within and among these communities through programming, ministries, and consistent messaging.

To this end, we will:

- Achieve increased participation in parish life, outside works of service and social justice, and increased sharing of resources.
- Create a sustainable model for leadership development in all areas of parish life.
- Determine the best use of resources in our building, our paid staff, and what offerings best enable our parish to grow together as disciples of Jesus.

Overarching Objectives

- We seek increased awareness of who we are as Good Shepherd.
- We intentionally seek opportunities to come together with programming and ministries.
- We unify our distinct communities through consistent messaging.

Moving Forward Together

Through this plan, we seek to honor our rich history while embracing the evolving needs of our parish family. Guided by faith and the wisdom of our community, we move forward with **intentionality, collaboration, and hope,** ready to fulfill our mission.

As we move forward, we are guided by the wisdom of St. Francis de Sales:

"Be who you are and be that well."

This reminds us to f**ocus on our unique gifts** as a parish — the areas where Good Shepherd is best positioned to make an impact. While we seek to serve our parishioners in meaningful ways, we acknowledge that no single parish can be all things to all people.

Strategic Goals

Three strategic goals were identified around Community Life, Service & Justice, and Fostering our Catholic Faith. These goals reflect the insights of our community, are deeply interconnected and together form a holistic path toward achieving our **Mission and Vision**.

1. **Promoting Community Life** strengthens relationships within our parish, creating **a welcoming and connected faith family** where individuals recognize Christ in one another. A thriving parish community provides the **foundation for evangelization**, while encouraging greater engagement in both worship and service.

2. **Promoting a Thirst for Service & Justice** calls us to live out our discipleship in action. As relationships deepen within our parish, our desire to **serve each other and the broader community** grows. By participating in **works of charity and justice**, parishioners put their faith into action, reinforcing the spiritual bonds that unite us.

3. **Fostering a Common Understanding of Catholic Faith through Worship and Formation** nurtures our relationship with Christ, grounding our community and service efforts in **prayer, liturgy, and faith education**. As our understanding of the Catholic faith deepens, our desire to **engage in parish life and serve others** naturally expands, strengthening our collective identity as disciples of Jesus.

These three goals do not exist in isolation. Instead, they create a **cycle of discipleship**:

- **Community life draws people in**, strengthening their connection to Good Shepherd.
- **Service and justice inspire action**, making faith tangible in daily life.
- **Worship and formation deepen faith**, sustaining the call to both **community and service**.

By working together, these goals **empower every parishioner to live out their faith**, ensuring Good Shepherd remains **a vibrant, welcoming, and mission-driven community** for years to come.

Strategic Goal 1: Promoting Community Life

Good Shepherd will promote community life by providing and expanding opportunities for individual and group connections to develop and deepen.

Why? Relationships and individual connections provide opportunities to recognize Christ in each other and help build up the Kingdom of God.

How will we determine success? For the duration of this plan, we expect to see:

- Increased participation in fellowship events (measured through numbers)
- Increased satisfaction with community life offerings and feelings of connectedness at Good Shepherd (measured through formal and informal surveys).
- Increased ability of parishioners to articulate why they are members of the Good Shepherd community (gauged through testimonials).

Some examples of concrete points that might help us meet this goal:

- Assess staff needs and commission structure to support these activities (e.g., do we need a fellowship committee to drive community building opportunities?).
- Increased communication of and use of parish guidelines for programs and ministries at Good Shepherd.
- Emphasis (not exclusively) on activities that bring all communities together and promote family life.
- Social activities to reach out to new and searching people.
- Family resources (e.g. packets) to support prayerful family life.
- Encouraging multi-family and other small groups to support each other in community and holiness.
- Develop initiatives to keep our youth connected to the parish throughout high school, college, and young adulthood. (e.g., a ministry that sends care packages or handwritten notes to college students, helps them connect with Newman Centers, and invites them to participate in Mass or service projects).
- Explore opportunities to foster meaningful interactions with the broader community beyond Good Shepherd, ensuring a warm and welcoming approach.

Supporting Insights from Listening Sessions:

Many participants expressed a desire for stronger connections between the school, English-speaking, and Spanish-speaking communities, emphasizing the need for intentional opportunities to build relationships. Many parishioners also expressed a strong desire to develop deeper personal relationships with other parishioners. While social gatherings like Sheptemberfest, Trivia Night, and Donut Sunday are appreciated, parishioners requested more informal, low-effort gatherings that foster organic connections. Some newer parishioners feel welcomed but not fully integrated into the community, highlighting the need for structured efforts to invite involvement and deepen relationships. Additionally, many school families leave the parish once their children enter high school, indicating a need to cultivate a stronger sense of belonging and a lasting connection to the parish.

Strategic Goal 2: Promoting a Thirst for Service and Justice

Good Shepherd will promote a thirst for service and justice within members of our community.

Why? We are called to promote the Kingdom of God by living our relationship with Jesus in active service to each other.

How do we determine success? For the duration of this plan, we expect to see:

- Increased numbers and diversity of volunteers at opportunities for service and outreach, tracked by new signups and event participation.
- New commission / project leadership stepping forward.
- Increased number of people giving to special or outreach collection(s).

Some examples of concrete points that might help us meet this goal:

- Providing tools to increase deliberate invitations to current activities.
- Conduct stewardship weekends / ministry fair to raise awareness of opportunities to become involved.
- Assessment of what we are offering currently: what should we continue, start or stop: how are we both meeting immediate needs and working for justice in our local and global communities.
- Invitation to share gifts of time and talent centered around Epiphany.
- Development of ways to ask and celebrate what members of our community are doing outside of Good Shepherd.
- Collaborate between Spanish- and English-speaking parishioners to identify joint outreach projects and social justice initiatives that involve both communities working together.
- Proactively invite school, religious education, and youth group students to participate in service opportunities. Service could be more directly connected to worship, such as having children bring up food donations during Mass.

Supporting Insights from Listening Sessions:
Good Shepherd is widely recognized for its well-established outreach ministry, including food drives, El Salvador missions, and local service and social justice efforts. However, much of this work relies on a small group of (aging) volunteers, highlighting the need to expand participation as well as engage younger members, including students. A lack of new leaders stepping into ministry roles limits sustainability, emphasizing the importance of leadership development. Building on our strong tradition of service, the parish seeks to expand opportunities for involvement—particularly with youth and families—through hands-on projects focused on outreach, service, and social justice.

Strategic Goal 3: Fostering a Common Understanding of Catholic Faith

Good Shepherd will foster a common understanding of our Catholic faith through our worship and formation offerings.

Why? Our relationship with Christ is the heart of what brings us together. Nurturing this relationship requires worshipping together and being formed mind, heart, and soul together. We desire to develop consistency of voice and message across all formation and worship offerings while respecting and engaging the richness and diversity of our Catholic heritage.

How do we determine success? For the duration of this plan, we expect to see:

- Increased participation in small group offerings year over year.
- Increased Mass attendance.
- Increased School involvement in weekend liturgies.
- Increased participation year over year in Religious Education programs by English speakers while sustaining participation by Spanish speakers.
- Increased ability of parishioners to articulate what it means to be Catholic.

Some examples of concrete points that might help us meet this goal:

- Continually assess small group offerings and develop/promote a variety of small group offerings that cater to different demographics and interests while promoting respect and understanding across different demographics/interests.
- Tie offerings into the liturgical calendar/season and share examples of how to put our faith into action.
- Increase opportunities for youth to participate in weekend Masses.
- Evaluate the possibility of a Mass that incorporates contemporary music for youth and adults (e.g. Life Teen at Holy Trinity).
- Leadership development for liturgical & catechetical ministries including for adults.
- Continue to evolve/promote Religious Education program for non-school students.
- Assess need/benefit/financial feasibility having a liturgist on staff again.

Supporting Insights from Listening Sessions:
Parishioners expressed a desire for more formation opportunities for all ages, including more outside presenters, with a focus on increasing participation among youth/young families. Concerns were raised about declining Mass attendance, and lower participation in English-speaking religious education compared to the robust Spanish-speaking programs (recent staff additions were viewed as positive). Others expressed interest in a contemporary worship option, to better engage younger members. Additionally, parishioners expressed that inconsistencies in liturgical style and messaging across presiders / presenters are creating confusion about the parish's faith identity, highlighting the need for a more unified approach in preaching, formation, and ministry communication.

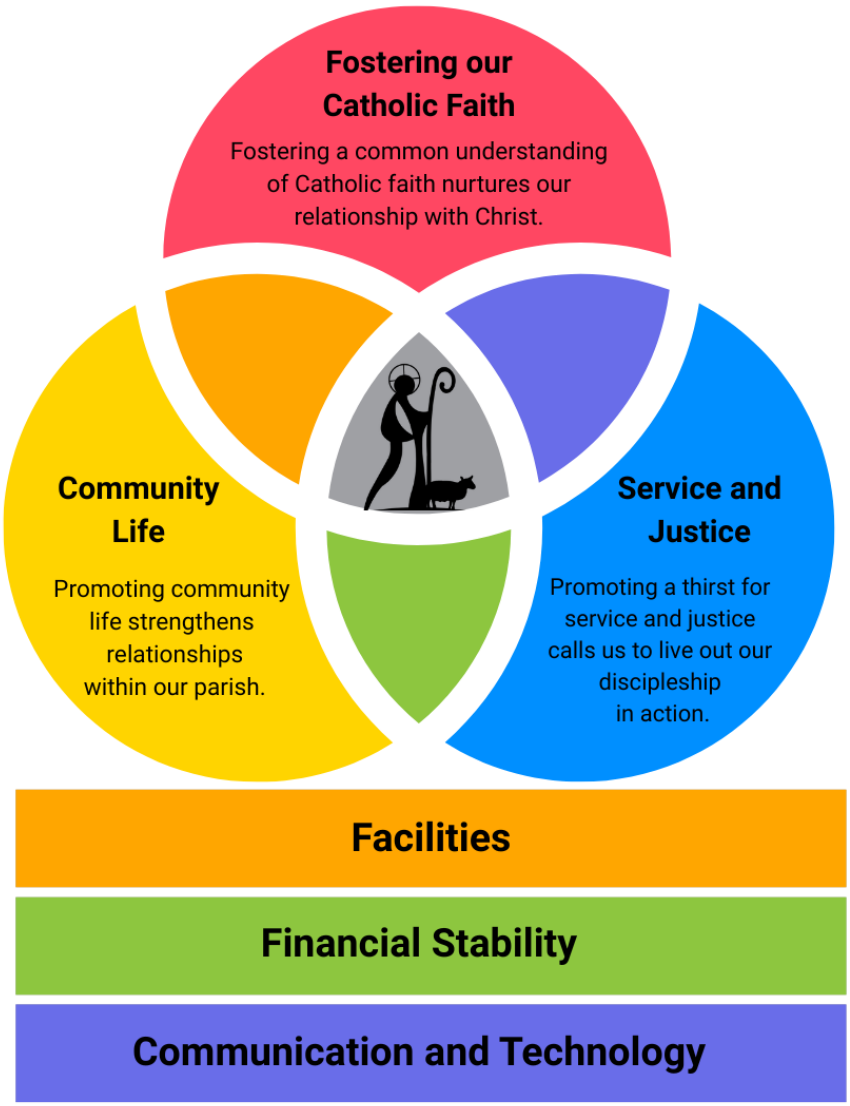
Underlying Needs to Achieve Our Strategic Goals

In order to fully realize the Vision and achieve our Strategic Goals of **Promoting Community Life, Promoting Service & Justice, and Fostering a Common Understanding of Catholic Faith**, Good Shepherd must ensure that its **physical, financial, and communications infrastructure** is aligned to support these goals. Key initiatives essential to our success have been identified in the areas of :

A. Facilities

B. Finance

C. Communications & Technology



A. Facilities: Good Shepherd will assess the need, feasibility and community support for improving / expanding our facility to better accommodate parish and school activities.

Why? To ensure we have adequate facilities and space to support worship needs, community building activities, small group offerings / meetings, and the needs of Religious Education and the School.

How do we determine success? For the duration of this plan, we will expect to:

- Complete a feasibility study in next 18 months.
- Complete the study and the suggested building or facility improvement as needed.
- Assess community support for the recommendations.

Some examples of concrete points that might help us meet this goal:
Conduct Feasibility Study.

- Validate input from our listening sessions with leaders of ministries, staff and school to get their input on space needs, potential improvements and significant maintenance requirements.
- Include exploring the feasibility of establishing an all-day preschool.
- Ensure proposed improvement / expansion project aligns with the mission and long-term strategic goals, such as ministry growth and community outreach.
- Engage a professional planning campaign group to evaluate/assess needs and conduct the process.

Supporting Insights from Listening Sessions:
The demand for multi-purpose rooms to support ministries, faith-sharing groups, and service initiatives has grown over time. Parishioners have expressed a need for more gathering spaces for social events, meetings, and formation activities, as the current limitations hinder Good Shepherd's ability to foster community. The school's growth over time has repurposed areas originally intended for community use, creating challenges during joint parish-school activities. Additionally, several school parents have highlighted the need for an all-day preschool to better serve working families, which depends on additional space. To be more welcoming to all, others have emphasized the importance of improved accessible and family restrooms. Other preferences included replacing the screen function and adding more traditional Catholic aspects to the sanctuary, while others preferred the current simplicity and beauty of the sanctuary.

B. Finance: The Finance Council and Staff will develop a near-term approach (5 year) plan and longer-term outline for financial stability.

Why? Stable finances allow for continued investment in parish events and relationship-building efforts. Ensuring financial security allows for continued service and social justice initiatives and enables investment in liturgical experiences and formation programs.

How do we determine success? For the duration of this plan, we expect to see:

- An increase in the number of giving families year over year.
- An increase in the amount of giving per family year over year.

Some examples of concrete points that might help us meet this goal:

- In concert with the Finance Council, develop a plan for future financial stability based on our changing demographics and patterns of giving.

Supporting Insights from Listening Sessions:

Analysis of underlying trends in giving patterns of families noted that the parish's offertory is currently sustained by long-term parishioners, with younger families contributing less overtime. These trends may negatively impact the future ability of Good Shepherd to thrive unless they are intentionally and strategically addressed. It was noted that some school parents may view tuition as their primary contribution, leading to lower overall stewardship engagement. Many parishioners desire greater financial transparency and education on parish needs, including major upcoming expenses.

C. Communications and Technology: Good Shepherd will continue to enhance its Communication channels and Technology capabilities.

Why? This is a key factor for success in developing community and connection, and promoting social justice and avenues of service, as well as creating a common understanding of our faith, parish mission and core values, and parish needs.

How do we determine success? For the duration of this plan, we expect to see:

- Increased satisfaction with communication at Good Shepherd as measured through surveys and feedback.
- Common knowledge of how to access information about Good Shepherd and comfort with those channels as measured through higher engagement with digital tools such as Flocknote, parish website, and social media.
- Greater awareness of parish events, with more parishioners reporting ease of access to information.

Some examples of concrete points that might help us meet this goal:

- Regularly updated website. Ability to enhance the website as technology evolves.
- Understand communication trends and evolve our technology to support those trends.
- Assess the effectiveness of current communication efforts.
- Provide more cross-communication between School, English speaking, and Spanish speaking communities in a manner that shares the good news and opportunities of the other communities without overwhelming each other.
- Provide opportunities for regular listening sessions (annually or semi-annually) that include representatives from all three communities.
- Assess staffing needs to support and accomplish above.
- Assess need/benefit/financial feasibility having a Communication Director on staff.

Supporting Insights from Listening Sessions:

Many parishioners feel they are not always aware of what's happening in the parish, even though multiple communication channels exist. School parents expressed difficulty in finding information and suggested more integrated communications between the school newsletter and the parish bulletin. Some expressed the need for shorter timelines to submit information for publication. Parishioners were pleased with live streaming opportunities, and suggested expanding the use of live streaming, social media, and digital newsletters to keep all members informed and engaged. Others expressed the need for more current information on the website.

Conclusion: A Strong Foundation for a Thriving, Mission-Driven Parish

Good Shepherd's strategic goals—**Promoting Community Life, Promoting Service & Justice, and Fostering a Common Understanding of Catholic Faith through Worship & Formation**—are deeply rooted in the real needs and aspirations of our parish community, as highlighted through listening sessions and our analysis of those insights. To fully achieve these goals, we must ensure that our facilities, finances, and communication efforts are aligned to support them. By strengthening our physical space, financial foundation, and communications we create an environment where parishioners can connect, serve, and grow in faith together. This commitment will build a stronger, more unified, and mission-driven parish that continues to thrive in discipleship.

Call to Action

Our strategic plan is only as strong as the people who bring it to life. To achieve our vision, we need **passionate and committed parishioners** to step forward and help drive key initiatives. Whether your heart is in **building community, fostering service and justice, deepening faith formation**, or supporting the critical infrastructure of **facilities, finance, and communication, your involvement is essential**.

We invite you to **prayerfully consider** how you can contribute your time, talents, and leadership to **implementation task groups and teams** that will turn these strategic goals into action. Together, we can strengthen Good Shepherd and ensure that our parish continues to thrive as a place of worship, formation, and outreach.

Next Steps for Rolling Out the Plan *(Note: To Be Discussed with the team)*

1. **Parish-Wide Announcement** – Introduce the plan through homilies, bulletin inserts, email updates, and social media.
2. **Information Sessions** – Host in-person and virtual meetings to explain the strategic vision, answer questions, and invite involvement.
3. **Formation of Implementation Teams** – Identify and recruit leaders and volunteers for task groups focused on each strategic goal.
4. **Ministry & Community Engagement** – Work with existing ministries and leaders to align efforts with the strategic goals and encourage collaboration.
5. **Ongoing Communication & Updates** – Provide regular updates through newsletters, town halls, and parish meetings to share progress and invite continued participation.

Appendix of Supporting Material

Note: This is optional and up to the team as to whether we should include this information. (This could also be an opportunity for an image depicting the process.)

The Process

Through a series of individual interviews and group listening sessions, we gathered insights from member of our parish community, including long-term and newer parishioners, youth groups, the Parish Advisory Council, volunteers with our Outreach & Social Justice ministry, Finance committee members, the Knights of Columbus, formation programming and liturgy planners, religious education teachers, staff members, school parents, school faculty, and both our English- and Spanish-speaking communities.

We asked critical questions:

- What are the key strengths of Good Shepherd? What makes us unique?
- What aspects of our parish life are we most proud of?
- What challenges may prevent us from fully achieving our mission?
- What opportunities exist for us to grow and strengthen our faith community? How can we build on our unique strengths?
- What potential threats should we be mindful of in the years ahead?

From these conversations, we developed a comprehensive **SWOT analysis,** highlighting our Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. This analysis served as the foundation for the **Vision, Strategic Goals and Supporting Needs.**