

St. Patrick Parish

Meeting with Archbishop Etienne

April 25, 2022



Agenda

- Welcome & Opening Remarks
- Opening Prayer
- Introductions
- Sharing
 - Introducing the St. Patrick community
 - Proposed closure and Canon Law and Vatican Guidance
 - St. Patrick's future
- Reflections from the Advocates
- Archbishop's Thoughts & Closing Remarks
- Closing Prayer

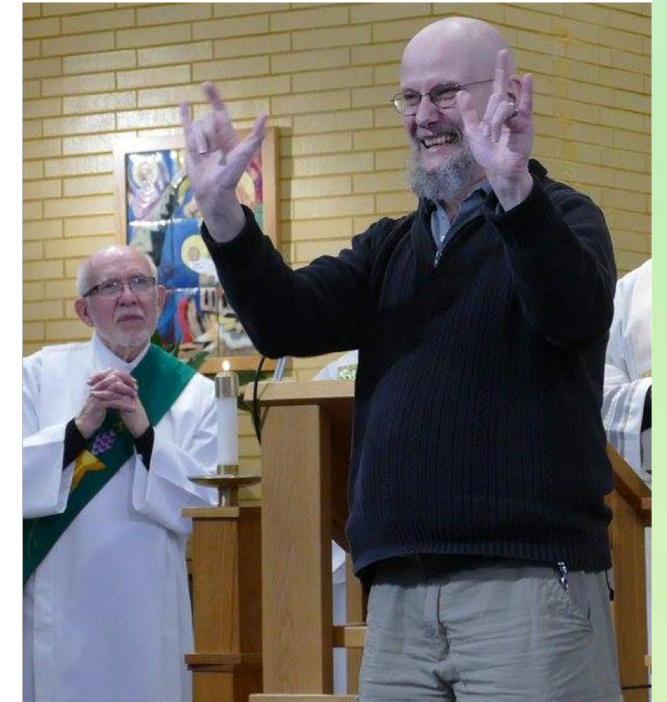
The mission statement of St Patrick Church



We are a **welcoming Christ-centered COMMUNITY** committed to keeping alive the vision and hope of **Vatican II**. Our Sunday **LITURGY**, **enhanced by the creative arts**, strengthens us for the work of peace and justice in the world and challenges us to **live in communion with one another and all of creation.**

Parish survey results – September 2021

- 98% of the nearly 190 responders said they were either “somewhat involved” or very involved” in general, that is attending Mass, supporting the parish financially, etc., while fully 72% were “very involved.”
- 73% were somewhat or very involved in one or more of the Worship ministries (music, movement, lectoring, lay reflections, baking bread, etc.)
- 66% were somewhat or very involved in one or more of our many Outreach ministries.



St Patrick Church Community Engages the faithful in the liturgy



St Patrick Church Community

Engages the faithful in the liturgy



St Patrick Church Community

Enjoys strong lay leadership

- Active Councils - Parish, Finance, Liturgy
- Liturgy and Environment
- Faith Formation for all Ages
- Synodal Church [2004, 2008, 2020, 2021-2023]

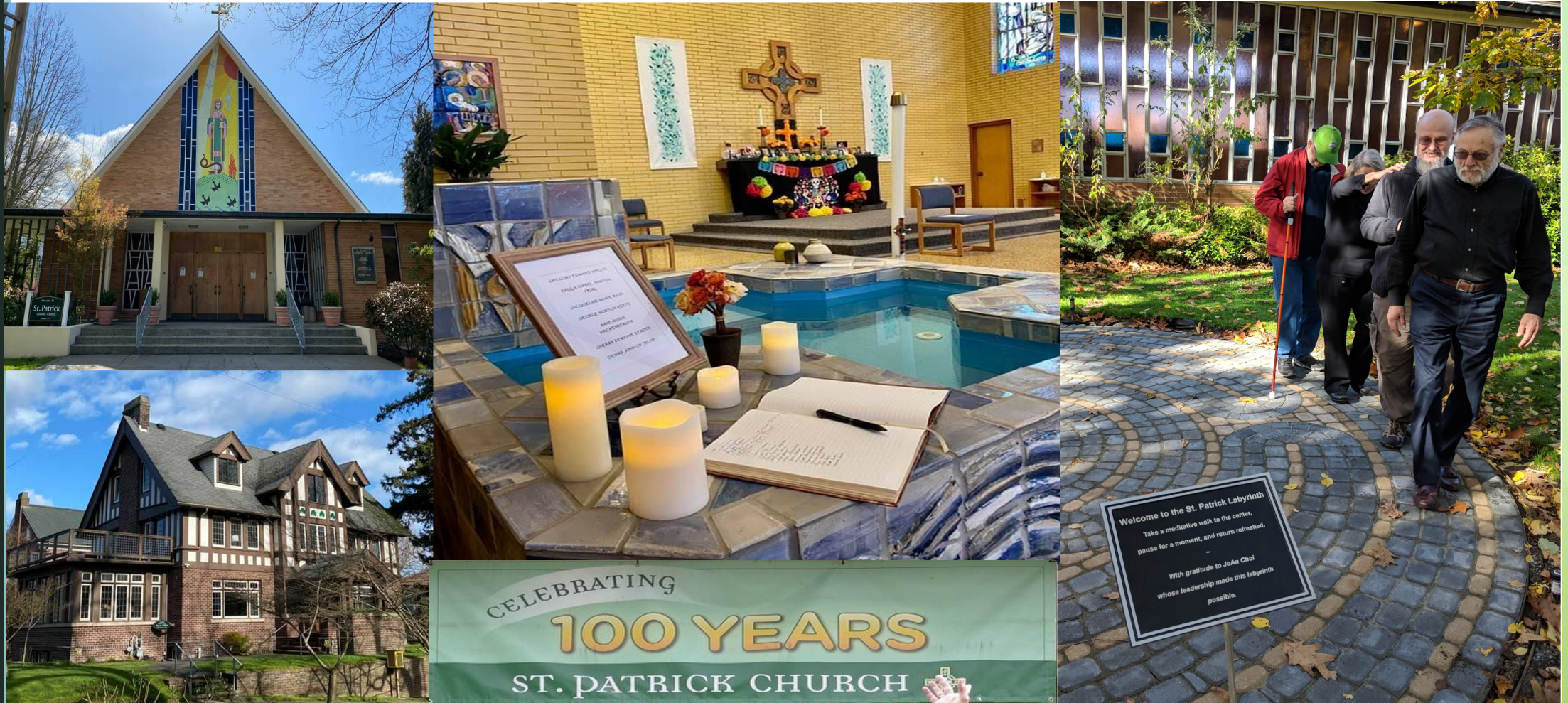


St Patrick Church Community Enjoys strong lay leadership



St Patrick Church Community

Embodies faithful stewardship



St Patrick Church Community

Forms Disciples

- Mission driven community
- Lifelong faith formation
- Culture of encounter and commitment
 - to service
- Social, racial and environmental justice



St Patrick Church Community



Is a faith-filled parish community where gifts and ministries are present and active, where partnership exists between priest, deacon, and consecrated and lay people, and where there is openness and creativity.

Mission and goal statements from Archdiocese regarding parish closure

- ***"Stronger pastoral support, more robust evangelization efforts, and excellent Catholic education"*** (BM, 4/10/21)
- ***"...the goal is to strengthen the new parish community to better serve the mission of the Church, while best using the resources available including pastoral care."*** (SPC, 5/3/21)
- ***"...to strengthen the Catholic community's mission effectiveness in South Seattle by making some key changes."*** (ABE, 9/23/21)
- ***"It is all about creating faith-filled, vibrant parish communities. It's about ensuring we answer Pope Francis' call to read the signs of the times and re-envision the Church. It's about understanding the realities we face to today with limited resources, aging buildings, declines in parishioners, and more."*** (ABE 3/1/22)

What is the just cause for closing/merging St. Patrick?

We have received no explanation of how the closing/merging of our vibrant community contributes to any of these Archdiocesan goals.

- *“...the principal motivation for modifying a parish is a **concern for souls** (CD no. 32) and this modification should be undertaken when the good of the faithful requires it (Apostolorum Successores, no. 214) – from the 2013 *Procedural Guidelines for the Modification of Parishes*.*
- It is clear from the history of parish closures nationally that closures endanger the faith lives of the people. With no recognized just cause, people feel punished and demoralized after their years of investment in the community.
- Surveys of parishes that have been closed show that a substantial fraction of the community, 20-50%, leaves the Catholic Church.

Consequences of closure/merger of St Patrick Church

The loss of parishioners will have substantial consequences for the Archdiocese that seem contradictory to its goals.

- Loss of a faith-filled vibrant community in the *hope* of strengthening a new parish community.
- The loss of a parish to assess for the Archdiocesan **Annual Appeal**, and the loss of parishioners contributing.
- More important, the **loss of support for the evangelizing ministries** of the Archdiocese, especially in the areas of social justice, our sister parish of Nueva Trinidad, and Care for Creation.

Guidance from the Holy See on Canon Law and Extinctive Union

- An **extinctive union ... should be the last choice** when dealing with various **problems affecting parochial life**, insofar as other possible remedies should have been at least considered beforehand (*PG 2013*)
- The suppression of Parishes by extinctive union is legitimate for **causes directly related to a specific Parish**. Some causes are *not* sufficient, such as, for example, the scarcity of diocesan clergy, the general financial situation of a Diocese, or other conditions within the community that are presumably reversible ... (*Instruction 2020*).
- **The principal motivation for modifying a parish is a concern for souls ...** and this modification should be undertaken when the **good of the faithful** requires it (*PG 2013*)
- We believe that the AD has not shown **just cause** for closure of St Patrick Church with respect to any “**problems affecting parochial life**” or the archdiocesan “**good of the faithful**”.

Consultation with Presbyteral Council

“Before rendering his decision, the Bishop must seek out the necessary information and, insofar as possible, **hear those whose rights could be injured** (cf. can. 50). Before consulting the members of the Presbyteral Council, which is required for validity, he must **first provide them with all relevant information**, lawfully convoke the Council (cf. can. 127 and 166), and then he himself must consult the members regarding each individual parish modification which has been proposed. The consultation must be genuine, and should consider relevant arguments both for and against the proposed modifications.” (PG 2013)

Because of this guidance from Rome, we respectfully ask that our presentation today, with associated appendices, be made available to the Presbyteral Council should you choose to proceed with a decree.

St Patrick has the resources, the will, and the charism to sustain our parish and support the Archdiocese

We are a vibrant, sustainable parish that carries out the Mission of the Church with commitment, enthusiasm, and compassion. To keep our parish community intact and worshipping at St. Patrick Church, which is our fervent desire, we want to avoid a Canon Law appeal. To that end, as our next step, we request the opportunity to discuss creative alternatives, which might include:

- A structure where the pastoral leadership is a shared appointed pastoral coordinator and parish priest, similar to our current pairing with Christ Our Hope.
- A Pastoral Unit grouping with another parish, which would foster collaboration and possible shared pastoral services while St. Patrick retains its juridic personality, Parish Finance Council, and Pastoral Council; in other words, a “cluster” relationship under the Pastor as is the case with 4 parishes in South Seattle.

Summary

- We repeat: **An extinctive union ... *should be the last choice*** when dealing with various problems affecting parochial life, insofar as other possible remedies should have been at least considered beforehand and ruled out (*PG 2013*)
- We are a **faith community with high vitality** by your own criteria. Surely, the AD and St Pat's will both be much better off to keep our parish open and to invest our communal, spiritual, and physical assets in creative ways to advance the Mission of the Church for the benefit of all.
- We are encouraged to hear of your new **“Partners in the Gospel” Strategic Planning Process**. Hopefully, you can see that our community and our lived experiences have value to offer as a vanguard in its implementation. We are hopeful to participate.
- We seek to **journey together** with you to become a model Pope Francis Parish that fulfills Vatican II Theology, with the Holy Spirit guiding us to embody Christ as Church today through our ever-renewing Culture of Evangelism.

Hearing from St. Patrick Advocates



**Thank you for this opportunity to meet.
We look forward to further dialogue with you!**



Appendices

- St Patrick Advent Synod Report – 2020
- St Patrick Church 2020-2021 Annual Report
- St. Patrick Parish Toolkit, Annotated June 2021

Key Resources

- *Code of Canon Law* https://www.vatican.va/archive/cod-iuris-canonici/cic_index_en.html
- Official Documents of the Holy See: Letter from the Congregation for the Clergy and Procedural Guidelines for the Modification of Parishes and the Closure, Relegation and Alienation of Churches (2013), *The Jurist* 73, 211-219.
- Instruction: "The pastoral conversion of the Parish community in the service of the evangelizing mission of the Church", of the Congregation for the Clergy (2020), *Bulletin of the Press Office of the Holy See*, Monday, 20.07.2020.
<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2020/07/20/200720a.html>