



# St. Michael Catholic Church

*Evangelization-based Pastoral Plan*



Know Jesus  
Love Jesus  
Share Jesus

1125 St Michael's Rd, Mt Airy, MD 21771



## Message from our Pastor

Inspired by Archbishop Lori's Pastoral Letter on evangelization-based pastoral planning, "A Light Brightly Visible", our diverse Parish Planning Team of 20 parishioners and staff members was formed in March 2019 and began a process of prayerful reflection and discernment upon the vision, the opportunities and the challenges expressed in the Archbishop's letter. The Planning Team, facilitated first by the Parish Success Group, and then by the Archdiocesan Office of Parish Renewal, met together monthly and considered the current circumstances of our parish and community and identified areas of strength, weakness, opportunity and threat. The Team also deepened its understanding and renewed its appreciation of our parish Vision and Mission Statement: *Know Jesus, Love Jesus, Share Jesus.*

From this foundation, the Team carefully reviewed each of the six Archdiocesan Mission Priorities (Welcome, Encounter, Liturgy, Sending, Accompaniment and Mission Support) and brainstormed potential initiatives for our parish to pursue, and in Fall 2022 developed consensus about three goals and corresponding initiatives that form the key elements of the first year of our evangelization-based Parish Pastoral Plan: *Liturgy, Welcome and Encounter.*

“Know Jesus, Love Jesus, Share Jesus” brings the Gospel of Christ ever more effectively to both our fellow parishioners and to the larger community of which we are a part! We believe that God is always calling us to something greater—and our team is excited to be taking our first steps (along with our entire parish community of faith) toward implementing our plan in the months and years to come!



# OUR PARISH

## Know Jesus

expresses the relationship we have been given in the new life received through Baptism as adopted sons and daughters of God. This is a call to encounter Jesus: moving beyond our knowledge of Jesus into a living relationship with our Lord and Savior. It is a call to spend time in daily prayer, reading the Scriptures and frequenting the Sacraments.



## Love Jesus

expresses the response we make in reciprocating the love we have first received. It is a call to be active and intentional about conforming our lives to Christ. We are called to love God with our whole heart, mind, soul and strength. This is a call to holiness: becoming like-minded with Jesus, our spouse, and keeping His commands.



## Share Jesus

expresses the call we have been given to love our neighbor and make disciples. We have become partakers in the divine life and are called to share that life with others. As we grow close to Jesus, we become more like Him and the Holy Spirit helps us to love more perfectly our family and friends; the poor and infirmed; and, even, our enemies. The Holy Spirit will help us evangelize by giving us the courage and means to share the Gospel, invite others to faith and journey with them.



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*Our core mission priorities cast the focus of our efforts so that we are forming ourselves and others into disciples who are “mission-ready” and actively engaged in personal and pastoral missionary conversion. They correspond to a path of discipleship that flows from and continually returns to the Eucharist as a means to grow ever closer to Christ. They also embody the hallmarks of an evangelizing, mission-focused parish.*

## Liturgy

We gather together as a Catholic community of faith to celebrate the Eucharist and the Sacraments.

## Welcome

God’s Word takes root, grows, and produces fruit if it’s planted in good soil. “Welcome” prepares the soil of peoples’ hearts to receive God’s Word through radical hospitality, a rich community life where everyone can feel at home and belong, and bringing all those on the many peripheries of the church to the center as honored guests and family.

## Encounter

“Encounter” is when the seed is planted in good soil and begins to take root. It is God’s Word coming alive in someone’s heart through a personal encounter with Christ, the experience of grace, conversion, and the decision to live as a disciple.

## Accompaniment

Planted in good soil and nourished by the sun, the vine grows and flourishes.

“Accompaniment” means missionary disciples walking together to grow spiritually and live the faith more fully through prayer, sacrament, and faith formation.

## Sending

A healthy vine, planted in rich soil, with plenty of sunlight, should always produce fruit.

“Sending” refers to all those ways missionary disciples go out to produce spiritual fruit in the world through personal witness, evangelization, and service.

## Mission Support

A vine cannot thrive and produce much fruit without a “trellis” to support it. “Mission Support” refers to everything necessary to make the mission possible in the real world:

stewardship, finances, facilities, human resources, development, communication, and more.



# LITURGY

*“Liturgy” is like the sun in the sky. Without it, a vine cannot take root, grow, or bear fruit because the Eucharist is the source and summit of Christian life. The liturgy should welcome, form, make, and send forth missionary disciples to evangelize and serve others.*

## **Initiative 1: Mystagogy & Reflections on the Sacraments**

- Provide opportunities during the liturgical year for parishioners to give testimony regarding the reception of a sacrament.
- Testimonials can be given during the weekend liturgy, utilizing video technology, and social media.

## **Initiative 2: Support for Vocations**

- Raise up in public prayer and provide support for vocations to the priesthood, religious life as a brother or sister, the permanent diaconate, and lay ministry in the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

## **Initiative 3: Enhance the beauty of the liturgical environment**

- Update altar vesture, wall hangings, vestments, furniture, and metal ware.
- After the Liturgy Committee provides catechesis to the parish community, move the tabernacle under the crucifix in the main church.



*God's Word needs good soil to take root, grow, and bear fruit. We need to prepare the soil of peoples' hearts to receive God's Word through radical hospitality, community, and reaching out to those on the peripheries. This creates a sense of belonging, trust, and openness to God's grace.*

### **Initiative 1: Create and Staff a Welcome Desk**

- Consider everything from environment, to resources, to staffing a team to be present during liturgies, to large events, and other opportunities.
- Recruit a team for welcome. Develop a procedure for engagement.
- Provide formation and training for the team. Use language and messaging that becomes the parish standard.
- Welcome shall be extended to guests of our sacramental liturgies, weddings, funerals, baptisms, workshops, and retreats.
- Welcome is also extended to newcomers who are inquiring about the parish, those moving into the area, and those who have moved into new home communities.
- Welcome is also extended to faith formation families, those entering RCIA, preschool families, Fellowship Sunday, Cornerstone Breakfast, and our events participants and sponsors.

### **Initiative 2: Review and update signage around campus**

- Internally and externally, develop a strategy to welcome those who are not familiar with our campus in order to remove the sense of being lost when entering our parish buildings.
- Main church street signs need updating for both the historic church and the main church.
- Review the many reasons people enter our buildings and create signage to easily guide those to their intended destination.
- Interior signage is needed to better guide to the main worship space, restrooms, offices, pre-school, Victoria Clementine Ruane Resource and meeting space, and the fellowship hall. We will look at interior signage as well for the lower level.



### **Initiative 3: Follow up with people who contact us and express interest.**

- Match Friends.
- Create a welcoming experience at each touch-point of interaction with our St. Michael parish community.
- Offer people the sense that we have thought about the person who is going to approach us. Anticipated each person's arrival so that they know we are glad they are here with us.

### **Initiative 4: Reach out to those not receiving Holy Communion.**

- Consistently invite people who are not receiving Holy Communion at Mass to come to receive a blessing during all Masses.



# ENCOUNTER

*“Encounter” is when the seed is planted in good soil and begins to take root. It is God’s Word coming alive in one’s heart through an encounter with the person of Jesus Christ. This encounter brings about the experience of grace, conversion and the decision to live as a disciple of Christ. We seek to cultivate encounter with Christ through our personal faith sharing and service to each other*

## **Initiative 1: Small Groups**

- Cultivate an environment of trust and respect in small groups where each disciple develops confidence in sharing their story of a personal encounter with Christ in each person’s lived experience.
- Continue to support small groups such as ManAlive, Walking with Purpose, The Rescue Project, Adult Bible Studies, CLOW, and Children and Youth Faith Formation programs.

## **Initiative 2: Pastoral Visitors**

- Send out Pastoral Visitors to the homebound, elderly, and those in nursing homes in our community.
- Equip ministers to share the Gospel, the Eucharist, prayer petitions, and personal witness of the personal encounter with Christ.

## **Initiative 3: Mission and Service Work**

- Continue to the Missions in western Maryland, Jamaica, and the Baltimore area.
- Continue developing Lunches and Food Pantry work, gifts to families in need, household building and repair work.

## **Initiative 4: Build a Culture of Prayer**

- Before and at the conclusion of all meetings, programs and activities held within our community, we will offer prayer. Examples: Staff Meetings, Count Teams, Funeral Lunches, Lunches for the poor, Bingo Team, Clergy and Liturgical Ministers at Mass, Council Meetings.



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