

# PASTORAL PLAN

2018 – 2022

St. Philip Benizi Catholic Church



**Mission Statement of**  
**St. Philip Benizi Catholic Church**

St. Philip Benizi Catholic Church is dedicated to continuing the mission of Jesus Christ in the Franciscan tradition. We are people of many nations united by God's Holy Spirit, who strive to be witnesses of God's love to all people.

Answering the call to Stewardship, we embrace the gifts of the Spirit and express the presence of God in liturgy, prayer, community life and social justice ministry. Through a commitment to lay leadership we accept the responsibility of spreading the Good News and creating a welcoming parish filled with the presence of Christ.

## A Letter from the Pastor

Peace and all good!

You have in your hands a significant and essential document. Our Parish Pastoral Plan will guide our pastoral efforts for the next five years and, perhaps, longer. The Parish Pastoral Plan is the fruitful culmination of over two years of study, reflection, discussion, and discernment. Hundreds of people have had a hand in producing this document. All of the feedback and input that they have provided has been invaluable in the creation of this Plan.

To all of you who participated in any way in creating this Plan, thank you very much. I am especially grateful to the members of the Pastoral Council for their leadership of this project. I owe a debt of gratitude to them, especially to the three chairpersons who have served during this time period: Bob Oertel, Rosemary St. Jacques, and Elaine Green. I am also grateful to the pastoral staff for their input and, especially, to those staff members who assisted me in writing the various drafts of this Plan.

I am very pleased with this Pastoral Plan. I believe that it provides us with a challenging and realistic roadmap for the future. This Pastoral Plan will require the hard work of all of our ministries and groups. While our Pastoral Council will have overall responsibility for assisting me in completing the recommendations, I invite and encourage each ministry and group, as well as individual parishioners, to take ownership of this Plan and to take part in its implementation.

The Pastoral Plan is divided into four major areas based on the Archdiocesan Pastoral Plan. There are four goals for

each area followed by recommendations for reaching each goal. Following each recommendation is the name of a person, department, or group that we believe would be in the best position to take the lead in its implementation. It is my desire and hope that those who are listed will reach out to others to assist them. I also encourage each parishioner to consider the recommendations that they would like to work on and contact the leader(s) listed.

Our Pastoral Plan has most definitely been influenced by the vision of Pope Francis. Pope Francis continues to call the Church to be a missionary Church, one that reaches out to all people, especially the poor, the marginalized, and those who have yet to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ. Each of us is called to be a missionary disciple who goes forth freely and courageously to share the joy we have experienced in our personal relationship with Christ. This is what it means to be an evangelizing disciple of Christ. It is my hope and prayer that our Pastoral Plan will inspire us to respond to this call with generosity, creativity, and, most especially, with joy!

Fraternally,

Fr. John A. Koziol, OFM Conv.  
Pastor

## In the Words of Pope Francis

“The Church which “goes forth” is a community of missionary disciples who take the first step, who are involved and supportive, who bear fruit and rejoice. An evangelizing community knows that the Lord has taken the initiative, he has loved us first (cf. *1 Jn* 4:19), and therefore we can move forward, boldly take the initiative, go out to others, seek those who have fallen away, stand at the crossroads and welcome the outcast. Such a community has an endless desire to show mercy, the fruit of its own experience of the power of the Father’s infinite mercy. Let us try a little harder to take the first step and to become involved. Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. The Lord gets involved and he involves his own, as he kneels to wash their feet. He tells his disciples: “You will be blessed if you do this” (*Jn* 13:17).

An evangelizing community gets involved by word and deed in people’s daily lives; it bridges distances, it is willing to abase itself if necessary, and it embraces human life, touching the suffering flesh of Christ in others. Evangelizers thus take on the “smell of the sheep” and the sheep are willing to hear their voice. An evangelizing community is also supportive, standing by people at every step of the way, no matter how difficult or lengthy this may prove to be. It is familiar with patient expectation and apostolic endurance. Evangelization consists mostly of patience and disregard for constraints of time. Faithful to the Lord’s gift, it also bears fruit. An evangelizing community is always concerned with fruit, because the Lord wants her to be fruitful. It cares for the grain and does not grow impatient at the weeds. The sower, when he sees weeds sprouting among the grain does not grumble or overreact. He or she finds a way to let the word take flesh in a particular situation and bear fruits of new life, however imperfect or incomplete these may appear. The disciple is ready to put his or her whole life on the line, even to accepting martyrdom, in

bearing witness to Jesus Christ, yet the goal is not to make enemies but to see God's word accepted and its capacity for liberation and renewal revealed.

Finally, an evangelizing community is filled with joy; it knows how to rejoice always. It celebrates every small victory, every step forward in the work of evangelization. Evangelization with joy becomes beauty in the liturgy, as part of our daily concern to spread goodness. The Church evangelizes and is herself evangelized through the beauty of the liturgy, which is both a celebration of the task of evangelization and the source of her renewed self-giving." (Pope Francis: *Joy of the Gospel* #24)

"The parish is not an outdated institution; precisely because it possesses great flexibility, it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community. While certainly not the only institution which evangelizes, if the parish proves capable of self-renewal and constant adaptivity, it continues to be "the Church living in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters". This presumes that it really is in contact with the homes and the lives of its people, and does not become a useless structure out of touch with people or a self-absorbed group made up of a chosen few.

The parish is the presence of the Church in a given territory, an environment for hearing God's word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration. In all its activities the parish encourages and trains its members to be evangelizers. It is a community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey, and a centre of constant missionary outreach. We must admit, though, that the call to review and renew our parishes has not yet sufficed to bring them nearer to people, to make them environments of living communion and participation, and to make them completely mission-oriented." (Pope Francis: *Joy of the Gospel* #26 - #28)

## Knowing Our Faith

1. Provide formational opportunities that highlight the liturgical life of the Church (i.e., Mass, sacraments, devotions, liturgical seasons, etc.).
  - ❖ Use the various communication platforms to provide informative articles pertaining to the Mass, sacraments, devotions, the liturgy, etc.  
*Liturgy and Communications*
  - ❖ Continue to promote the use of [www.formed.org](http://www.formed.org) as a source for on-line faith formation.  
*Religious Education and Communications*
  - ❖ Place “blurbs” in the weekly bulletin (monthly) regarding the liturgical season and other liturgical facts related to that month.  
*Liturgy and Office Staff*
  - ❖ Use homilies, religious education classes, Bible study classes, retreats, and other faith formation activities to improve Catholics’ understanding of the “why” of Catholic teaching.  
*Clergy and Religious Education*
  - ❖ Post upcoming RCIA topics in the weekly bulletin and invite all parishioners to attend the sessions.  
*Religious Education and Office Staff*
  - ❖ Live-stream the Sunday Mass and other special Masses in real time.  
*Liturgy and Audio-Visual*

- ❖ Record homilies, presentations, missions, and seminars, and make them available through the website.

*Audio-Visual and Communications*

2. Expand opportunities and/or resources for families to actively engage in learning the Catholic faith.

- ❖ Offer bilingual opportunities for meals and family faith oriented activities (i.e., make rosaries, advent wreaths, items using palms; show faith focused movies).

*Religious Education*

- ❖ Form “digital small faith communities” that meet together monthly in homes to view and discuss digital programs that teach the Catholic faith.

*Religious Education and Audio-Visual*

- ❖ Provide links to faith focused webinars, articles and other religious websites on the parish website and through other communication platforms.

*Communications and Religious Education*

- ❖ Take youth to the Eucharistic Congress each year.

*Youth Ministry*

3. Provide spiritual and practical formation for parish leaders, lay ministers, and catechists.

- ❖ Invite presenters from within the Archdiocese of Atlanta to conduct mini-



retreats and workshops for parish leaders and other interested parishioners.

*Pastor and Parish Staff*

- ❖ Conduct workshops and seminars for ministry leaders on teamwork, mentoring, facilitating small groups, and supporting team members.

*Pastor, Activities Coordinator, and Ministry Leaders*

- ❖ Pair each ministry group with a priest or deacon, who will meet with the group to offer spiritual formation.

*Clergy*

4. Provide formational opportunities that highlight the Church's teachings about the Sacrament of Marriage and family life.

- ❖ Use the various communications platforms to educate parishioners about the Church's teaching on marriage, family life, divorce, annulments, remarriage, homosexuality, same-sex unions, birth control, and natural family planning.

*Clergy, Religious Education, and Communications*

- ❖ Conduct mini-retreats for engaged couples and married couples.

*Pastor and Sponsor Couples*

## Living Our Faith

1. Evaluate, encourage, and expand outreach ministry to parishioners in need.
  - ❖ Provide workshops (available through Catholic Charities) for immigrant parishioners on topics such as banking and legal matters.  
*Parish Staff and Catholic Charities*
  - ❖ Advertise Catholic Charities counseling services available here at St. Philip's.  
*Communications*
  - ❖ Be proactive in promoting services already available to families here at St. Philip's (i.e., Ministry to Caregivers, St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry, and Bereavement Ministry).  
*Communications*
  - ❖ Create a parish resource guide that would assist parishioners in finding resources available in the community.  
*Office Staff and St. Vincent de Paul*
  - ❖ Organize an annual "Christian Service Program" through which parishioners could volunteer to assist fellow parishioners with household projects (i.e., painting and yard work).  
*Stewardship*
  - ❖ Find a way to connect parishioners who have skills that they wish to use to help others with parishioners who need those skills.  
*Stewardship*

- ❖ Create a resource for parishioners that lists businesses and services provided by parishioners and encourage other parishioners to utilize these businesses and services.

*Pastoral Council*

- ❖ Develop a visiting nurses ministry so that parishioners who are nurses can visit parishioners to assess their needs.

*Pastor, Pastoral Council, and Angels of Mercy*

2. Establish and maintain a welcoming environment and engage all parishioners in the ministry of hospitality.

- ❖ Create a transportation ministry that would enable parishioners who do not drive to come to Church.

*Pastoral Council*

- ❖ Host potluck dinners to welcome newcomers.

*Stewardship, Pastoral Council, and Parish Staff*

- ❖ Reinforce the need for all parishioners to reach out to new parishioners and visitors.

*Parish Staff*

- ❖ Pair established parishioners with new parishioners to help them feel at home and to get involved.

*Stewardship*

3. Evaluate, encourage, and expand outreach ministry to the wider community, especially the vulnerable, neglected, and marginalized.
  - ❖ Sponsor workshops for immigrants outside the parish on topics that would help them adjust to life in the United States.  
*Pastoral Council, Social Justice, Catholic Charities*
  - ❖ Promote and enhance our new outreach ministry to the Clayton Village Mobile Home Park.  
*Pastoral Council and Social Justice*
  - ❖ Partner with Catholic Charities to provide items for needy families (i.e., baby supplies and refugee supplies).  
*Religious Education, Catholic Charities and Social Justice*
  - ❖ Increase the visibility and knowledge of our outreach ministries by reporting on their activities in the *Benewszi* and *Stewardship Quarterly*.  
*Stewardship, Benewszi, and Communications*
  
4. Promote and deepen our commitment to care for the environment through practical, eco-friendly behaviors.
  - ❖ Place more recycling bins in strategic locations around the parish grounds.  
*Environmental Ministry*
  - ❖ Celebrate Earth Day (April 22) and World Day of Prayer for Creation (September 1)

with days of reflection and other appropriate events/activities.

*Environmental Ministry*

- ❖ Teach the tenets of Pope Francis' *Laudato Si*.

*Environmental Ministry*

- ❖ Research the installation of solar panels to supply all or some of the electricity for the parish.

*Facilities*

- ❖ Promote the use of the compost bin located at the *Laudato Si* garden.

*Environmental Ministry*

- ❖ Decrease parish waste and reduce the amount of paper we use by utilizing available technology.

*All Groups and Ministries*

- ❖ Donate leftover food from parish functions to local homeless shelters. Provide a list of homeless shelters to ministries and groups.

*All Ministries and Groups and Office Staff*

- ❖ Use only eco-friendly paper products for parish events. Discourage and abandon use of Styrofoam products.

*Environmental Ministry and all Groups and Ministries*

## Spreading/Keeping Our Faith

1. Assist parishioners in developing a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
  - ❖ Provide retreats on personal spiritual development.  
*Friars*
  - ❖ Provide opportunities for group spiritual direction.  
*Friars*
  - ❖ Increase opportunities for parishioners to share their faith in small group settings.  
*All Ministries and Groups*
  - ❖ Train parishioners in the practice of “Lectio Divina” (prayerful reflection on the Word of God)  
*Friars*
  - ❖ Encourage every parish group to use “Lectio Divina.”  
*Pastor*
  - ❖ Offer town hall meetings facilitated by the friars to discuss issues of faith and spirituality.  
*Friars*
  - ❖ Emphasize through homilies the necessity of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and the necessity for a personal prayer life.  
*Friars and Deacons*
  - ❖ Select a program of evangelization that emphasizes a personal relationship with Christ.  
*Friars and Religious Education*

2. Assist parishioners with understanding the primary role of the Mass in evangelization.
  - ❖ Host an educational Mass once a year to explain the Mass, its parts, its symbols, its origin, and its purpose.  
*Liturgy and Religious Education*
  - ❖ Teach parishioners how to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ into every situation of their lives and to work to convert individuals and society.  
*Clergy, Religious Education, and Parish Staff*
  - ❖ Provide opportunities to educate parishioners on how to engage more fully in the Mass.  
*Liturgy*
  - ❖ Make sure that all homilists preach in such a way that they assist parishioners in applying the scriptures of the day to everyday life.  
*Clergy*
  - ❖ Provide homilies on the Mass itself.  
*Clergy*
  - ❖ Invite and encourage people at the beginning of Mass to introduce themselves to others.  
*Liturgy*
  - ❖ Encourage people to reach out to people they do not know.  
*Clergy and Liturgy*

- ❖ Ensure that music selections reflect the scriptures of the day and supports the overall theme of the Mass.  
*Music and Liturgy*

3. Assist parishioners in becoming intentional disciples who evangelize others in their daily lives.

- ❖ Consider adopting a program like Alpha or Renew to teach parishioners how to evangelize others.  
*Religious Education*
- ❖ Select a “question for the week” based on the Sunday readings and invite parishioners to reflect on the question throughout the week. Encourage groups in the parish to spend a few minutes at the beginning of their meetings to share using this question.  
*Parish Staff*
- ❖ Train, integrate, and empower youth to collaborate in parish life through ministry and service.  
*Youth Minister*
- ❖ Strengthen interfaith dialogue and activities with neighboring churches, synagogues, and mosques.  
*Friars and Religious Education*
- ❖ Assist families in becoming more intentional in making the connection between faith and everyday lives. Give them practical suggestions and examples.  
*Religious Education*



4. Recognize and develop the role of Catholic devotions and other liturgical celebrations in evangelization.
  - ❖ Provide opportunities for parishioners to celebrate the devotions particular to their culture.  
*Liturgy*
  - ❖ Invite parishioners to share with others, through the *Benewszi* and other communication platforms, the devotions particular to their culture and describe how these devotions strengthen them.  
*Liturgy, Benewszi, and Communications*
  - ❖ Consider offering celebrations (i.e., Our Lady of Guadalupe, Our Lady of Divine Providence, and Our Lady of Higher Grace) bilingually.  
*Liturgy*

## The Evolution and Growth of Our Parish

1. Discern the future needs of our Parish.
  - ❖ Be intentional in choosing diverse leadership that represents the demographics of our community.  
*Pastor and Advisory Councils*
  - ❖ Continue to personally invite parishioners from our diverse cultures to be actively involved.  
*Pastor, Staff, and Ministry Leaders*
  - ❖ Use Facebook and Twitter. Provide training in the use of communications platforms.  
*Communications*
  - ❖ Update and enhance multimedia capabilities in all parish buildings.  
*Facilities and Audio-Visual*
  - ❖ Expand parking spaces and increase security (i.e., lighting, cameras, and emergency call boxes).  
*Facilities*
  - ❖ Establish a parking ministry and utilize golf carts to transport those who need it from car to Church and Church to car.  
*Liturgy and Facilities*
  
2. Create a vision for future expansion and upgrades to meet growing needs.
  - ❖ Create a committee for long range strategic planning and expansion with the goal of

discerning physical needs of our parish ten to twenty years into the future.

*Pastor, Pastoral Council and Finance Council*

- ❖ Engage in dialogue with parish staff, ministries, and parish groups in order to determine future space needs.

*Pastor and Long Range Planning Committee*

- ❖ Do an assessment of handicap accessibility and improve/update where necessary.

*Facilities*

3. Study current and future demographic trends to determine ways to better serve our community.

- ❖ Utilize census data to determine projections for future growth of Catholics in Clayton County and surrounding counties.

*Long Range Planning Committee*

- ❖ Consult the Parish Soft database to ascertain present parish demographics in order to better serve parishioners.

*Parish Staff and Long Range Planning Committee*

- ❖ Offer a workshop to parish staff and ministry leaders on multicultural and intercultural parishes in order to serve our parishioners more effectively. (USCCB's "Building Intercultural Competencies for Ministers")

*Pastor and Parish Staff*

- ❖ When hiring new staff, seek bilingual candidates (English and Spanish).

*Pastor*

- ❖ Provide opportunities for the parish staff to become bilingual.  
*Pastor and Parish Staff*
- 4. Create a vision for future pastoral endeavors.
  - ❖ Find a better way to get feedback from more parishioners.  
*Pastor and Pastoral Council*
  - ❖ Conduct a town hall meeting annually to solicit parishioner feedback.  
*Pastor and Pastoral Council*
  - ❖ Continue to assess the needs of the local community and how we might meet some of those needs.  
*Pastoral Council and Social Justice*

## Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi

Lord make me  
an instrument of your peace

Where there is hatred,  
Let me sow love;  
Where there is injury, pardon;  
Where there is doubt, faith;  
Where there is despair, hope;  
Where there is darkness, light;  
And where there is sadness, Joy.

O Divine Master grant that I may  
Not so much seek to be consoled  
As to console;  
To be understood,  
As to understand;  
To be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive,  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned.  
And it is in dying that we are  
Born to eternal life.

