

“Encounter Christ, Respond in Love, Share the Good News!”

The Local Pastoral Plan for the Collaborative of Sacred Heart and Our Lady Help of Christians, Newton 2016-2018

Our Collaborative Purpose

The purpose of the Collaborative of Sacred Heart and Our Lady Help of Christians is to be a living Gospel to those we encounter and to build up the Kingdom of God. We will foster the love of Christ and His Church and forge a community of committed disciples, in our worship, companionship, lifelong faith formation, service and outreach.

Our Collaborative Values

Discipleship to Christ – Relating personally and faithfully to Christ.

- Developing a personal relationship with Christ through prayer, scripture, sacraments, study, and service.
- Attending Mass and receiving Eucharist; living a sacramental life as a participant, not just an observer.
- Witnessing to Christ through behavior and actions.
- Acting as servant to others; listening to people as Jesus would; being available to others and supporting them emotionally and spiritually.

Generosity of Spirit – Responding to the call of Christ that inspires us to receive and share His love willingly and joyfully.

- Trusting that God’s Grace will work through human efforts; embodying the hope that our efforts will bear fruit.
- Giving freely of time, talent, and treasure; supporting the collaborative and its outreach efforts, as well as outreach by other Catholic missions; reaching out to others (family and friends, the sick and elderly, outsiders, the poor and needy, etc.).
- Going out of the way and outside the comfort zone to help a stranger or person in need; putting others before self; becoming mindful and responsive to needs of others and offering gifts and self in service to them.

Transformation – Renewing our lives, our community and our world as we respond to the Gospel and actively live our faith.

- Creating and supporting ministries to those who are seeking, marginalized or disaffected, and increasing opportunities for involvement with outreach ministries.
- Sharing love of faith with others outside of the collaborative by action (good deeds, selflessness, care for others, joyful spirit).
- Sharing personal stories of faith with others in small groups, families, homilies, etc.
- Engaging in ongoing formation (small faith communities, Scripture study, engaged prayer).

Our Collaborative Vision

At our core is our relationship to Jesus Christ as individuals and as a community.

In encountering Christ, we come to know the love of God and the joy of the Gospel. In this encounter, “we find the source and inspiration of all our efforts of evangelization. For if we have received the love which restores meaning to our lives, how can we fail to share that love with others?” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 8).

Within our community, our members encounter Christ, are drawn more deeply into the mystery of God’s love, respond in love to Christ’s call to holiness, discern God’s plan for each of us, and share the Good News within and beyond our collaborative community.

Our Collaborative Priorities for 2016-2018

Over the next three years, the pastoral staff and parishioners of the Newton Collaborative will focus our efforts on the following three pastoral priorities and associated goals, in order to fulfill the vision of Disciples in Mission for the advancement of the Kingdom of God.

Our collaborative priorities will be reviewed periodically and updated as needed.

Priority: *Fostering a Personal Relationship with Christ*

- **Goal:** 150 parishioners will actively participate in intentional adult faith formation in 2016 with a 10% increase in participation in subsequent years. It will be a two-track program:
 - 1) Those currently engaged in parish life.

The target audience is parishioners who are currently attending or have previously attended faith sharing programs. We will identify available options for faith sharing programs and survey current and past participants to determine which program meets their needs as a next step. Identified program will be open to all parishioners.

 - a) Summer 2015 – explore adult faith formation options available
 - b) October 2015 – issue survey and evaluate results
 - c) January 2016 – initiate next adult faith formation program with invitation to all parishioners to participate.
 - 2) Those marginally engaged in parish life.

The target audiences are a) families requesting Baptism, b) newly registered parishioners, and c) unengaged Religious Ed families.

 - a) For the Baptism families, we will offer a Sunday Sundaes party hospitality social event with brochures for two follow up speaker events – one in Lent and one in Advent. The speaker topic will be *parenting in faith*.
 - b) Newly registered families will be invited to a social event with a follow-up of two speaker events: Fall theme *Catholic hospitality*, Easter time theme of *friendship*.
 - c) We will extend our outreach to unengaged Religious Education families by including a postcard survey with Religious Education registration forms to identify potential opportunities for engaging them.

Timeframe is calendar year 2016, with planning in the fall of 2015 and evaluation and planning for 2017 in the fall of 2016.

- **Goal:** Two RCIA inquiry events will be scheduled each year within the collaborative with 12 personal invitations extended for each.
 - Our target group includes the unbaptized and the uncatechized.
 - Our RCIA team, active parishioners, catechists, and ministry leaders will utilize the threshold opportunities presented at baptism preparation, funerals, marriage preparation, opening of Religious Education year, and indeed any celebration of sacraments to identify and personally invite individuals to explore becoming fully-initiated Catholics.
 - a) Fall 2015 – develop RCIA brochures and materials, including an RCIA resource pack for threshold opportunities and RCIA website information.
 - b) Calendar year 2016 – Schedule the two inquiry sessions – one after Easter and one before Advent – will be upgraded to a social event with an opportunity to learn about the process of becoming a fully initiated Catholic.
 - c) Fall 2016 – evaluate and plan for 2017.

Priority: *Discerning Our Call*

- **Goal:** 25 young men will attend the RCAB St. Andrew Dinner by 2018
 - By spring 2016, 5 young men from the collaborative will attend a St. Andrew Dinner.
 - By spring 2017, 8 more young men will attend.
 - By spring 2018, 12 more young men will attend.

Necessary Tasks

- Identifying the attendees
 - a) Our priests will be “on the lookout” for young men who may be interested, particularly altar servers and those who attend Mass regularly with their families.
 - b) Our Religious Education staff, including catechists, will be similarly engaged.
 - c) Bulletin invitations and end-of-Mass announcements will also be used.
- Parishioner involvement
 - a) Bulletin announcements will name the attendees (with parental approval) and invite parishioners to pray for them
 - b) Parishioners will be invited to pray for vocations in general.
- Follow-up
 - a) Fr. Bob Blaney will be designated to follow up with the dinner attendees.
 - b) Depending on their experience at the dinners and willingness to share, those young men may be invited to share their thoughts with the Religious Ed classes and friends.
- **Goal:** A team will be called forth, who will develop and initiate a program of vocational discernment for all walks of life, to be implemented by June 2018.

Our plan for a team for “vocational discernment for all walks of life” is intended to be just that: a team who seeks to awaken the baptismal vocation of every person, and not only sacramental vocations. At baptism, we are each anointed with these words: “As Christ was

anointed priest, prophet, and king, so may you live always, as a member of His Body, sharing everlasting life". With these words, each of us is given a vocation of life in the Church – to be people of sacrifice, prayer, and service.

As of now, it is not absolutely clear that most Catholics understand this aspect of their faith and that is what this goal seeks to address, in steps, over time. Naturally, for some people, this will indeed lead to a sacramental vocation to the priesthood or to marriage, or to professed religious life. However, for many, it may awaken a vocation of service to the church through teaching, or through membership in St. Vincent de Paul, or to a committed single life, or to a renewed sense of the vocation of parenting, or to a commitment to prayer at one's place of work or to evangelizing within one's environment. In all these ways, we seek to connect people's real lived experience with a profound sense of holiness and mission, an awareness of fulfilling one's unique call to be a member of Christ's own Body.

Long-range program development

- Fall 2015 – articulate broad vision for the vocational discernment program and team.
- Spring 2015 – Recruit and assemble team. Recruit team members from all areas of parish life: married, single, ordained, religious, parent, childless, adult, teen, etc. All members of parish leadership will identify and invite parishioners to join the team.
- Fall 2016 to Fall 2017 – develop program(s) for vocational discernment for all walks of life.
- Spring 2018 and beyond – program initiated, evaluated, revised as needed.

Short-term initiatives

- During Confirmation preparation programs, panel discussions featuring various people will seek to highlight the possibilities for a life of vocation.
- Discussions of responses to our Baptismal call will be incorporated in homilies, in Religious Ed programs, and in other parish community gatherings.
- Parishioners will be invited to participate in the life of the parishes and involved in the various ministries of the parishes.

Priority: Forming Disciples for Evangelization

- **Goal:** 14 Parishioners will share their personal faith stories with the larger parish community in 2016, increasing to 28 each year in 2017 and 2018. These will be a prelude to "Share the Joy" events to be held in the spring and fall of each year.

Seven targeted parishioners from each parish will be identified and invited to develop three-minute personal witness stories. On a given weekend, at each of the Masses in the Collaborative, two of these parishioners (one from each parish) will share their witness stories with the larger parish community. "Share the Joy" events, including prayer, music, faith sharing, and refreshments (socializing), will target all members of the collaborative parishes, including inactive parishioners. At these events, we would identify additional parishioners to prepare and share witness stories in subsequent years.

Necessary Tasks

- Fall 2015 – recruit parishioners; identify small team to work with parishioners to develop witness talks; schedule 3 “Witness Weekends” before and during Lent.
- January to March 2016 – identify a team to plan and prepare for “Share the Joy” events; hold Witness Weekends.
- May-June, 2016 – prepare for and hold trial “Share the Joy” event, adapting the scheduled Ministers Appreciation event and inviting ministers and parishioners from both parishes; evaluate program and identify additional parishioners to prepare witness stories for future presentations.
- Spring/Summer 2016 – Prepare a brochure for mailing that invites neighbors and inactive parishioners to the “Share the Joy” events by proclaiming in personal ways, in the brochure, what it means to share the joy of the Gospel.
- Fall 2016 – hold two additional “Witness Weekends” (September/October) followed by a full-scale “Share the Joy” event (November), preferably at a neutral location.
- Evaluate and plan for “Witness Weekends” and “Share the Joy” events for the spring and fall of the following years.

▪ **Goal:** “Hospitality Table” will be held at weekend Masses at each parish

- monthly in 2016,
- bimonthly in 2017, and
- weekly in 2018.

On this weekend, at least one identifiable person will be available to greet new people, answer questions, and connect people with staff or ministries as needed. Each parish’s welcome ministers will become familiar with events/ministries in both parishes.

Necessary Tasks

- Preliminary: 2015-2016 – Work on building an atmosphere of hospitality that is the responsible of everyone, by reflecting on Jesus’ example of hospitality in homilies, bulletin reflections, faith sharing groups, ministry gatherings, and other venues.
- Fall 2015 – Expand and charge the Welcome Committee at each parish to identify and implement strategies for evangelizing parishioners into the life of the parish. Their responsibilities include:
 - a) developing and staffing the monthly “Hospitality Table” by January 2016.
 - b) initiating personal contact with each newly registered parishioner (phone call, email, greeting at coffee hour, etc.) by January 2016.
 - c) identifying new strategies and approaches to hospitality, welcome, and inclusion that involve the larger parish communities.

Submitted June 1, 2015