



# Apple Valley Catholic Community of St. Elizabeth of Hungary & St. Isidore Parishes Collaborative Pastoral Plan

DRAFT

*“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.” (Joy of the Gospel, 28)*

*“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” (Matthew 28:19)*

## The Purpose of the Collaborative

Above all, our collaborative is called to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ in all that it does, especially through word, worship, witness, service, and community. Having experienced the love and joy of the Gospel ourselves, we want to attract others to the Lord and the good life of his Gospel. We strive to meet people where they are and provide companionship and support to all in our journey together.

## Our Collaborative Values

### **Faith in Jesus Christ**

Our faith in Jesus Christ is at the center of who we are and what we do. We live our faith in Jesus Christ strengthened by:

- Celebrating worship, especially Eucharist, in a way that invites full and active participation.
- Forming disciples through life-long, adult-centered faith formation.
- Our commitment to accompanying one another on the journey of faith.

### **Hospitable Community**

As a community within the people of God, we show the face of Christ and offer his embrace to all. We do this through:

- Reaching out and inviting all members to be active participants in the collaborative parish community.
- Welcoming and inviting the baptized who no longer walk in Christian faith or know the joy of the Gospel.
- Respectfully seeking to introduce to Jesus Christ those who don’t yet know him or who have rejected him.

## **Stewardship**

All we are and all we have are God's gifts to us. With these gifts we promote the mission of Christ in our community. As responsible stewards of these gifts, we:

- Promote a grateful response to God with the best that we have of our time, talent and treasure.
- Commit to serving the needs of the poor and vulnerable.
- Orient all toward mission with prudent stewardship in planning and spending.

## **Our Collaborative Vision**

**In three to five years we envision a collaborative community in which we joyfully encounter Christ and respond by going out to share him with others.** We envision well-prepared and joyful liturgical celebrations characterized by effective ministries and full, conscious, active participation by the assembly. Through worship, faith formation, community, and service, parishioners of all ages—especially adults—will grow in appreciation of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. We will become more ready to live and give voice to our faith in all important areas of life without exception. Our community will be welcoming and hospitable. We will reach out to meet people where they are, **attract** them to Jesus Christ, and gently invite **them to join us in** following him on the journey of faith.

## **Our Collaborative Priorities**

In the next 18-36 months, our priorities will be:

1. Faith formation that equips us to be evangelizers
2. Quality celebration of and participation in Eucharistic Liturgy
3. Promoting a culture of vocations in general and to the diocesan priesthood in particular

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### **Collaborative Priority 1: Faith Formation that Equips us to be Evangelizers**

True disciples are equipped to live and share the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The better we are formed as disciples, the better we can evangelize, at any age. We will examine how current faith formation efforts equip people for the mission of evangelization in our collaborative and explore how faith formation can evolve in even more meaningful ways to form us as disciples. We seek to incorporate opportunities, both inside the church walls and outside of the parishes, where our faith can be shared and we can continue to learn from one another.

**GOAL #1-1: Create a Faith Formation Advisory Team drawn from both parishes who will be trained in their mission and then will assess the existing collaborative faith formation initiatives in light of the goal of forming disciples by September 30, 2017.**

- Related Tasks:
  - a) By September 30, 2016 identify 4-6 people to be invited to serve on the Faith Formation Advisory Team (with nominations from councils, pastoral plan team and staff).
  - b) By March 31, 2017, using local, diocesan and national training resources and events, train participants on this team in evangelization and disciple making so that they can understand their mission and in turn can train others.
  - c) By September 30, 2017 the team will conduct an assessment of the collaborative, identifying the gifts, resources, and challenges present and prepare an inventory of current programs which will include both program descriptions and identification of the program purposes in regard to overall mission.

**GOAL #1-2: The Faith Formation Advisory Team will be ready to make recommendations to the collaborative leadership by February 15, 2018.** With the assessment from Goal #1 in hand, the team will look for how else or better we can do the work of faith formation and forming disciples in our collaborative to further enhance, expand and complement the current Growing in Faith Together (GIFT) paradigm.

- Related Tasks:
  - a) The team will identify best practices, and learn what other parishes are doing in this area.
    - The team will consider what other approaches may have promise, but have not yet been adopted in our collaborative.
    - Then the team will suggest ways of either shaping or reshaping existing programs or adding new ones.
  - b) The team will propose 2-3 new disciple-forming faith formation activities, and/or programs, with a specific focus on adult faith formation, to offer the parishes and the community.
    - The team will look at opportunities for deeper growth for those who are already intentional disciples as well as help engage those who have not yet become disciples, and everyone in between.
    - Ideas to be considered (but not limited to):
      - Alpha for Catholics
      - Cursillo, Marriage Encounter and other retreat options
      - Small faith sharing groups, capitalizing on already existing groups
  - c) By March 1, 2018, a plan and timeframe for implementing these will be determined and necessary resources identified. Curricula will be developed where necessary by May 1, 2018, so that new initiatives will be ready to roll out in the 2018/2019 year.

**GOAL #1-3: Hold two new faith formation activities, one in the spring of 2017 and one in the fall of 2017.** While the long-term evaluation called for in Goal #2 is underway, the team will coordinate implementation of two programs that will be designed as threshold experiences to meet people where they are in their journey of faith and invite them to deepen their participation

in discipleship. These activities are intended to be easy to orchestrate, provide the community with a sample of potential future ongoing formation activities, and will help bring the Faith Formation Advisory Team together as a functional unit.

Event: A “Theology-on-Tap”-style event or short series of events that feature an invited speaker plus informal discussion hosted outside of a church setting (e.g. local restaurant, function room)

Event B: “Sacramental Reunions” that will give parents of children who have celebrated sacraments an opportunity to connect with each other and the parish communities on another level, encouraging engagement between the sacramental moments. Recommend starting this initiative with Baptism reunions and eventually adding events for other sacramental moments.

- Related Tasks:
  - a) The team will organize and run the events, inviting others in the community to take part in implementation. Collaborative Staff will be on hand to offer support and help answer questions, etc.
  - b) Communication is key to these being successful, and will be coordinated by the team to include: emails to families; written letters, phone calls and personal invitations to families, bulletin and on-line announcements, etc.

## **Collaborative Priority 2: Quality Celebration of and Participation in Eucharistic Liturgy**

The Sunday Eucharist is the source and summit of Catholic life where we encounter Christ in the word, in sacrament, in the person of the priest and in one another. It is the one place where we see the greatest number of people, in different stages of their faith journey, some seeking faith, others to deepen faith. Our challenge is to seek excellence in the preparation of our liturgies and for each of us in our place in the assembly to be the presence of Christ for one another.

### **GOAL #2-1: Create a Collaborative Liturgy Committee of 12 members by September 2016.**

- Related tasks:
  - a) Provide training opportunities for committee members to be completed before Lent, 2017.
  - b) Assess the quality of liturgical life to understand what we do well and what we could do better, and how we might foster a common experience of liturgy at both parishes by June 30, 2017.
  - c) Establish formal responsibility for coordinating liturgy at St. Isidore by June 30, 2017.
  - d) By December 31, 2018, expand involvement in parish life by inviting people, 20 – 30 people, across both parishes, to make a commitment to service in liturgical ministries, with particular focus on:
    - Increasing lay ministers at St. Isidore by 10 – 15 people
    - Inviting 15 – 20 confirmed teens to participate in ministries including hospitality, especially at St. Isidore
    - Inviting 5-10 adults to train as altar servers

**GOAL #2-2: Establish a formal collaborative Hospitality Ministry with a core team of 2-4 people to engage people before and after the liturgy at both St. Isidore and St. Elizabeth by the beginning of Advent 2017 (November 2016).** This ministry expands the concept of hospitality to a deeper purpose of personal encounter and evangelizing. It does not replace the role of greeter but complements it.

- Related tasks:
  - a) Establish this as a formal ministry that begins with hospitality and grows into personal witness.
  - b) Research best practices within the Catholic Church as well as other communities of faith.
  - c) Identify 2-4 people who have the charisms and gifts for such a ministry by September 30 2016 and provided appropriate training for them before Advent (November 27, 2016).
  - d) Between June and September 2016, identify and evaluate applicability of training opportunities to help form the team for this ministry. These could include but are not limited to the Making Disciples workshop of St. Catherine of Siena Institute and the Catholic Hospitality Institute. These can also be in conjunction with the ongoing training efforts in other areas of parish ministry, such as with the faith formation and vocation teams.

**GOAL #2-3: Develop a monthly Coffee & Conversation Sunday at St. Elizabeth by January 2017**

- Related tasks:
  - a) By December 1, 2016, recruit a team of 2-5 people to set up coffee after Masses in order to extend hospitality, share the joy of the gospel and expand people's sense of community.
  - b) The team will design and employ comfortable, adult-friendly icebreakers to encourage people to become acquainted with other parishioners.
  - c) Provide an opportunity to advertise and explain ministry and formation opportunities.
  - d) Extend the benefits and experience of what the Welcome & Information Center offers to a larger audience.

### **Collaborative Priority 3: Promoting a culture of Vocations in General and to the Diocesan Priesthood in Particular.**

A vocation is a call from God. All Christians are called to communion with God and neighbor, and all are called to serve in support of God's plan of salvation. There is one universal call to holiness, and many ways to live that call. The response to our call can be found in the ordained ministry, married life or consecrated religious life and also through many ways in the single life. In making it a priority to support all parishioners in recognizing and living out their response to their specific calls to holiness, the active response to the call to vocations to the diocesan priesthood will flourish.

**GOAL #3-1: Create a Collaborative Vocations Team consisting of 6-8 people, by November 1, 2016**

- Related Tasks:

- a) By September 1, 2016, the Collaborative Pastoral Council will create a subcommittee dedicated to achieving this goal. This subcommittee will clarify role of Vocations Team and the responsibilities of its members.
- b) The subcommittee will communicate the vocations priority and the need for a vocations team, recruit and evaluate potential members and name the team by November 1, 2016.

**Goal #3-2: Execute at least two initiatives to help create a culture of prayer for vocations to the diocesan priesthood within the collaborative by June 30 2017:**

- At least one initiative to support individual prayer around vocations
- At least one initiative to promote parish/collaborative-wide intentional prayer for vocations
- Related Tasks
  - a) Vocations team to review resources provided by the archdiocese and other available resources for possible activities, and also to consider working with other local collaboratives to hold events as practical.
  - b) Vocations team to promote and implement such events or recruit volunteers to do so.

**Goal #3-3: By December 2017, implement at least three activities to increase awareness and the practice of discernment about vocations with specific emphasis on vocations to the diocesan priesthood, directed to:**

- The parishes at large, to help increase the awareness of vocational paths and support to all in the process of discernment.
- Parents and families, to help foster a favorable environment within families for the support acceptance of the desire of young men who may be exploring a call to the priesthood.
- Individuals in discernment, especially youth and young adults, to make known and provide venues of individual support and resources.
- Related Tasks
  - a) Vocations team to review resources provided by archdiocese for possible activities.
  - b) Vocations team to promote and implement such events or recruit volunteers to do so.
  - c) Priests will take an active role by witnessing to their own call and response to this call.

**Goal #3-4: Implement at least three “vocations inviting” events by December 2017, (approximately one every 6 months), through which young men can actively consider vocations to the diocesan priesthood.** For example, this could include invitations to the St. Andrew’s dinners, vocation discernment retreats, visits by newly ordained priests and seminarians.

- Related Tasks
  - a) Vocations team to review resources provided by archdiocese for possible activities
  - b) Vocations team to promote and implement such events or recruit volunteers to do so.
  - c) Priests will take an active role by personally encouraging and inviting young men to vocation discernment events and be available as a resource for individuals in discernment.