

# **ST. JOAN OF ARC STRATEGIC PLAN**



**Planning Horizon**

**2017 – 2021**

**28 August 2017**

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## **Purpose**

The purpose of this strategic plan is to publish our Parish mission statement, mission priorities, and strategic goals for the 2017 – 2021 planning horizon. This strategic plan helps to focus our parish activities and actions toward a common objective and goal. It serves to get everyone “on the same sheet of music” and to orient our collective goals and activities. Once published, we will measure and assess our parish activities against our objectives. We will continue to nest our planning efforts with the Archdiocese’s planning guidance and will update this plan in 2021. On August 24, 2017, this plan was presented to the Parish leadership team of Fr. Willie Franken (Pastor), Mr. Richard Berndt (Pastoral Associate), and Ms. Virginia Bahr (School Principal) who approved of the plan and its implementation.

## **Background**

This plan is designed to meet the needs of Saint Joan of Arc (SJA) Parish through 2021, while following the Archdiocese of Baltimore’s objectives and efforts that are entitled, “Be Missionary Disciples”. In order for SJA to succeed, our goals and activities must be in sync and supportive of those of the Archdiocese.

This plan was also written with the expectation that in the next two to three years, St. Joan of Arc will join with St. Patrick’s in Harve de Grace to form a pastorate in the north east region of Harford County. As a parish planning team, we see great opportunities with this prospect. We believe that with deliberate and faithful planning, the integration of efforts and sharing of resources will position our pastorate well to share the joy of the Gospel and undertake our mission as disciples.

Finally, this plan was deliberately written with the assumption that our identity as St. Joan of Arc is dependent on the integration of both our School and Parish. Our School and Church community are integral to who we are as a community and how we carry out our mission to be missionary disciples. Of course, the parish focuses on “ministry goals” while the School focuses on “educational goals” that relate to instruction. However, we must work collaboratively so that the goals and objectives of the School and Parish are complimentary and supportive of each other.

# **Overview / Summary**

Following guidance from Jesus (to make disciples of all nations), and from Pope Francis (to be in a constant state of mission), from an internal assessment of our parish and based upon the Archdiocese of Baltimore (“Make Missionary Disciples”) planning principles, SJA parish has established five strategic goals for the period 2017 through 2021. The strategic goals for the parish during 2017-2021 are:

1. Increase parish membership and parishioner engagement
2. Improve the visibility of the Parish School as a vital part of the Parish
3. Improve encounter with young adults and young families
4. Modernize facilities and develop a long range facilities plan
5. Advance the planning for the Pastorate (the combining of SJA and Saint Patrick’s Parish into a single Pastorate).

To accomplish these goals and to focus our parish efforts and activities, SJA has identified five mission priorities. These are essential to the operation of our parish and they are explicitly outlined in the “Be Missionary Disciples” planning documents.

1. Vibrant Liturgy and Worship
2. Welcoming and Sending
3. Encounter
4. Forming Missionary Disciples
5. Mission Support

The details of each goal and mission priority are described in Annexes A through E. These mission priority descriptions provide a means and methodology for us to plan, organize, and work toward our parish mission. They are intended to be a starting point for parish and school staffs, parish pastoral council, ministry and parish committees and all of our parishioners to consider, reflect upon and begin to implement in a spirit-guided manner. Annex F contains an historical summary about SJA Parish.

# Planning Process

- St. Joan of Arc began the Strategic Planning Process in March 2016 and a planning team was assembled by May 2016
- A Leadership Team of the Pastor, Pastoral Life Director, School Principal and Parish Council President was formed in August 2016
- A deliberate attempt was made to follow the Archdiocese of Baltimore “Be Missionary Disciples” planning effort and to incorporate St. Joan of Arc School’s planning efforts and activities
- As a part of the Archdiocese strategic planning effort, a parish survey and metrics were taken in fall of 2016
- Based upon the Archdiocese assessments, a parish SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Analysis was developed using the surveys, parish data, and parishioner input
- A parish stakeholder workshop was conducted on Oct 29, 2016 in order to gain parishioner input
- A Parish town hall was conducted on Feb 5, 2017 to brief the entire parish on the “Be Missionary Disciple” campaign and the Parish planning effort
- As part of the planning effort, the parish mission statement was revised and key objectives developed for the 2017-2021 planning horizon
- The plan was presented to the Leadership Team for review and approval
- The mission priorities and objectives were presented and reviewed by ministry leaders and parishioners during a workshop on May 13, 2017
- The plan was finalized by the Planning Team and submitted to the Parish Leadership team on July 15, 2017.
- The plan was approved for implementation at a meeting with Parish leadership on August 24, 2017.

# **Current Parish Assessments**

During this planning process we were very fortunate to be able to use the organizational assessment tools that the Archdiocese was using as part of the “Be Missionary Disciples” campaign in 2015 - 2016. These consisted of surveys and measurements from parish data.

However, we also realized that the surveys reflected only a portion of our parish respondents. While they were a realistic and accurate assessment, they didn’t give us the “whole picture”. We supplemented this data with parishioner input from the planning team as well as from the leadership team and from comments gained during the parish workshop on October 29, 2016. Overall we:

- We used the survey as a baseline to conduct an overall parish assessment
- We categorized our mission readiness in terms of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Our mission readiness is defined as our readiness to meet the challenges and objectives outlined in the “Be Missionary Disciples” campaign. Our overall readiness and status as a parish are summarized below:

## **Strengths**

- We have a core group of committed and active parishioners (practicing Catholics)
- Our school is strong – it’s children, families, teachers and administrators
- We are a welcoming community who participate in worship and volunteer
- We have very good liturgies, faith formation programs, and sacramental preparation
- We are fortunate to have a strong financial foundation, and good campus facilities

## **Weaknesses**

- In the past ten years we’ve experienced declining attendance, especially among young families and young adults
- Over the same time period we’ve had declining offerings and membership
- While paid off, our facilities are old and outdated. We do not have a Parish Center.
- Parishioners have many competing demands on their time

## **Opportunities**

- We have available real estate for the parish to grow
- We offer a diversity of ministries and service to the community
- Our school staff is interested in integrating activities with the parish. We have untapped resources and future potential engaging with our school families
- We have unregistered parishioners and untapped audiences

## Threats

- People have busy lives – Church competes with commitments such as sports
- Other Churches are competing for our parishioners– Evangelicals
- We are competing with the secular culture and social media
- Some in our parish have a culture of complacency – “it’s good enough”
- Future of parish school with declining enrollment, and potential that SJA School becomes a collaborative school under the Archdiocese of Baltimore

In addition to these objective assessments, the planning team used their own experiences and observations when discussing the Archdiocese observations.

## **Mission, Priorities, and Readiness Statements**

Integral to any planning effort is to specify the organization’s mission statement and identify mission priorities, supporting objectives and strategic goals. Based upon the principles outlined in the Archdiocesan “Be Missionary Disciples” campaign and the organizational assessment conducted in this planning effort, the following are adopted for St. Joan of Arc.

**Mission Statement:** *to spread the joy of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to form missionary disciples, and to meet the spiritual and nurturing needs of our community.*

**Parish Motto:** *“Jesus invites, St. Joan welcomes”.*

### **Strategic Goals:**

Our strategic goals are those imperatives that we believe are critical based upon the operating environment and the unique situation of St. Joan of Arc. These strategic goals are directly tied to the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats that we assess impact St. Joan of Arc parish and school. As the Parish leadership and Parish teamwork toward mission priorities on a daily basis, these strategic goals should be continuously considered and pursued.

Our goals are:

- Increase our Parish Membership and school registration, parishioner and school family involvement and engagement
- Improve the recognition that the Parish School is a critical part of the Parish and improve the integration of activities, resources, and efforts between the Church and the School
- Improve and foster our encounter with Young Adults and Young Families
- Continue to modernize our facilities and develop a long term facility resource plan
- Initiate coordination and planning with St. Patrick’s and begin to share opportunities, events, and activities

### **Mission Priorities:**

Mission priorities are those activities that we need to attend to in order to meet the mission given to the Church by Jesus Christ. These priorities identified below are consistent with and congruent with the mission priorities established by the Archdiocese of Baltimore in the “Be Missionary Disciples” campaign. They are essential to the proper implementation of our mission, the formation of a faith filled community, and the proper stewardship of our combined resources.

We recommend that our parish leadership, parish staff, school staff, school parents, parish council and all parishioners orient and focus parish activities, initiatives and community efforts through the lens of these mission priorities. By doing so we will focus, integrate and align our efforts along shared and congruent purpose. This process leads to a shared vision and common understanding. It provides a focused purpose to our activity and with proper prioritization enables us to improve the efficiencies and the effectiveness of our efforts to meet our mission. It will yield a Body of Christ displayed in the missionary discipleship of the people of St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church.

#### **The mission priorities for St. Joan of Arc parish are:**

- ***Liturgy:*** We celebrate our faith with joy through vibrant, prayerful worship and fellowship
- ***Welcome and Sending:*** We carefully develop and nurture a parish community where all are welcomed and we reach out to those in need
- ***Encounter:*** The joy of the Gospel is expressed in all personal encounters and relationships
- ***Forming Missionary Disciples:*** All parishioners are formed in the truth of the Gospel through meaningful faith formation and spiritual growth
- ***Mission Support:*** We develop the material, financial, and human resources of our Parish and School and manage them faithfully

The mission priorities and supporting objectives are identified in Annex A-E.



## **Mission Readiness Statement**

SJA will form a Strategic Action Team that will develop an implementation plan for the strategic plan as well as an assessment process. We believe the Strategic Action Team is well positioned to conclude parish-based planning and to help the parish initiate the actions to accomplish the highest priority missions. We are identifying the processes needed to collaborate within the parish to meet our goals. We believe that through the guidance of the Holy Spirit and with the help of dedicated parishioners we will sustain, grow, and empower our faith community to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We recognize that resources are constrained and that the Parish leadership, together with the Parish Staff, Parish Council and School leadership must prioritize parish efforts in each mission priority area.

### **Integration of Mission Priorities and Strategic Goals:**

In Annex A-E, we have identified specific objectives that support the mission priority. In each objective or “good fruits” we have identified related and supporting ministries, groups responsible, measures and targets. Finally, for each objective or “good fruit” we have linked the objective to the strategic goals.

The purpose of outlining our planning effort this way is to provide our parish team clarity and understanding of each mission priority and of how we may go improving and enhancing our activities, efforts, and results in each area.

Our recommendations are by no means definitive or authoritative but are meant to spur innovation and activity.

## **Implementation**

Upon approval by the Parish leadership, we recommend implementation of this strategic plan. We do recognize that resources are constrained and that the Parish leadership, working in coordination with the Parish Staff, Parish Council and School leadership will need to prioritize and identify objectives in each mission priority area. We cannot take on every objective at once, and will need to prioritize our efforts and appropriately allocate resources.

Our implementation plan is listed below and comprised of key steps:

- Concept briefing to Leadership team, Parish Staff, Parish Council, School staff, ministry leaders and parishioners
- Focused team training and concept development with Parish and School staff, Parish Council, committee and ministry leaders. Concurrence and adoption of the principles

contained within this plan by the leadership and parish members. Commitment to work toward our common purpose

- Establishment of a Strategic Action Team that will work in coordination with the Parish Leadership, Staff, School, and Parish Council to implement elements of this plan and to conduct semi annual assessments
- Share this plan with the Archdiocese of Baltimore “Be Missionary Disciples” planning team
- Share this plan with St. Patrick’s Pastor, Pastoral Staff and Parish Council

## **Ongoing Assessment**

An ongoing assessment is foundational to measuring our success. We are committed to the following assessment over the next three years. The Strategic Action Team will work to develop and use a variety of tools and activities:

- Use of surveys, Archdiocese and parish recording processes, feedback sessions
- A semi annual assessment review conducted at the Parish Staff, School staff, Parish Council, Ministry Leads, and Committee levels
- A consolidated annual review with the Pastor, School Principal and composite leadership team

## **Communications Plan**

Essential to the implementation of the mission priorities is our communications strategy and activities. Below are key activities:

- Use of all information technology and social media (websites, constant contact, bulletins, pulpit announcements, etc.) to inform parishioners of planning efforts, implementation, assessments and status of the plan
- Development of specific St. Joan of Arc informational products that will enable and enhances evangelization, community building, faith formation, and outreach activities
- Each quarter a “Be Missionary Disciples” progress report/update will be published and distributed to our parishioners and stakeholders using various communications means.