

St. John the Baptist Parish Discernment

Do you love our church? Do you want to see it thrive and grow? Do you want to see St. John's parish shining as a beacon of God's love in our community? If you answered "Yes!" to any one of these questions, we want to hear from you.

Together, we have an opportunity to create and implement an exciting plan to improve and grow our parish, to build on the existing foundation of faith, commitment and good works that have marked St. John's for the past 131 years. Your Parish Council wants to hear the thoughts, ideas, hopes and dreams of every parishioner as we go forward together, so that St. John the Baptist parish is a healthier, stronger and more vibrant parish than ever before.

Like many churches these days, our attendance has been slipping year by year. The hope is that whatever plan we create, whatever we decide to do, won't feel like a burden on church folks who are already working hard but, will actually inspire and excite the congregation and draw new people into our fellowship.

It's all about discerning God's will, and how the Holy Spirit is moving here at St. John's. We hear God best when we listen well to one another.

Over the coming weeks and into Lent we will be looking for the views of all parishioners. Opinions will be solicited in the form of individual conversations (interviews), small group discussions (focus groups), written submissions (paper based and emails) – your preference. **Our intent is to provide a venue that will encourage all to speak freely,** no names will be attached to comments in the reports.

This is an open process and anyone who would like to help is welcome to participate. We **will not rush**, we want to do this well. Once the initial period of listening is done, we will report back to the congregation what we've heard, and only then start talking about specific plans and actions. At a later date we plan to bring everyone together for a day-long meeting, to do the hard work of actually discerning which of the many good ideas and possibilities we should actually make happen. The plan must be based on what is practical and doable, and on what really inspires us, what really feels like God's dream for us.

The following questions have been developed to stimulate your thoughts. We encourage you to consider them, to pray about them, to discuss them and your thoughts about them with your fellow parishioners, family, friends and neighbours. If you wish more space please put on separate paper.

Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. Glory to God from generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. Amen.

Parish Discernment Planning Group:

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Please complete these questions and **sign the sheet next to the return box** when you return it.

1. What do you like about St. John's Parish?

2. What are your hopes and dreams for our church?

3. What would you like to see changed?

4. How could we better serve the community around us?

5. How could we share our faith with more people?