



**ST. THOMAS AQUINAS**  
◆ CATHOLIC CHURCH ◆

*Pastoral Plan*

2019-2023



## ST. THOMAS AQUINAS ◊ CATHOLIC CHURCH ◊

In January of 2018, St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church Wichita, Kansas, began a pastoral planning effort. The objective of the process was to develop a pastoral (strategic) plan that would guide the parish for five years beginning in 2019. The planning process was guided by prayer and discernment and overseen by a Steering Committee of parishioners who represented different demographic segments of the Parish.

The first phase of the Pastoral Planning Process was a parish survey, which was open to parishioners during February and March. The objective of the parish survey was to determine how well the parish is serving the needs of parishioners.

- A total of 801 parishioners participated in the survey.
- 68% of the participants were female.
- Slightly less than 50% of participants have a BA or BS degree.
- The largest demographic of participants were between 35 and 49 years of age.
- 83% of the participants indicated that they were married.
- 38% of participants have been members of the parish for 21 or more years; the second largest group, at 16%, have been members for 11-15 years.
- 16% of the survey participants live within 6-10 minutes of the parish.
- There was not enough data on the age range from Post-High School to 24 to draw conclusions.

The second phase of the Pastoral Planning Process was focus group meetings. During the months of June and July, 75 parishioners participated in 10 different focus group sessions, which were organized according to age of parishioners (25-34, 25-49, 50-64, 65-70, and 80 and older) and marital status. The objective of the focus group sessions was to develop better knowledge related to survey data as well as provide parishioners an opportunity to voice their opinions about the parish. Through the focus groups sessions, parishioners were also able to offer suggestions of annual goals, which could lead to meeting the objectives in the Pastoral Plan and help in ensuring the vibrancy of the parish.

Following the focus group sessions, the Steering Committee developed a draft Pastoral Plan. It was written using data from the parish survey and the focus groups sessions and structured in relation to the Four Pillars of Stewardship. The draft consisted of priorities, objectives, and goals. These elements would need to work in partnership to meet the parish vision and mission.

The St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church Pastoral Plan 2019-2023 was approved by Rev. Matthew C. McGinness in early December. Implementation would begin immediately following the new year.



ST. THOMAS AQUINAS  
CATHOLIC CHURCH

## *Vision*

To unite and lead all disciples of Christ to life eternal through the Eucharist, love, and service.

## *Mission*

To help parishioners grow in holiness by providing opportunities to serve God and our community through hospitality, prayer and worship, and service.

*Priority #1*

COMMUNITY  
&  
SENSE OF  
BELONGING

*St. Thomas Aquinas  
Catholic Church will  
build a welcoming community  
which ensures a strong  
sense of belonging.*

**BACKGROUND**

As pastor for the past 10 years, Rev. Matthew C. McGinness has placed a special emphasis on cultivating a culture of hospitality. Great improvements have been made; however, through the survey and focus group sessions, parishioners were clear about their desire to feel even more loved and included at St. Thomas.

**OBJECTIVES**

1. Create an environment of Christian kindness.
2. Strengthen the sense of belonging of all through personal approaches.
3. Engage new parishioners in the life of the parish as soon as possible.
4. Provide opportunities for older parishioners to remain physically and socially active.
5. Offer fellowship opportunities for all ages.
6. Stay connected with parish members who cannot attend Mass or activities.

*Priority #2*

**PRAYER  
&  
LITURGY**

*St. Thomas Aquinas  
Catholic Church will  
foster individual and shared  
prayer lives and promote  
reverent liturgical worship.*

**BACKGROUND**

As Catholics, we must fully, consciously and actively participate in our faith. These elements are essential to our individual and shared prayer lives (Mass). Much of the feedback provided by our parishioners reflected that they find this very difficult. They desire to learn more about prayer, learn how to participate in prayer, and be provided special opportunities to pray alone and with fellow members of the parish. Parishioners also feel that there are too many distractions during Mass to allow full, conscious and active participation.

**OBJECTIVES**

1. Assist parishioners with their knowledge of and ability to pray.
2. Assure all who attend Mass have the best possible experience.
3. Enhance opportunities to participate in prayer, the sacraments and worship.

*Priority #3*

## CATHOLIC FAITH & EVANGELIZATION

*St. Thomas Aquinas  
Catholic Church will  
promote growth in faith and  
knowledge to inspire sharing the  
Good News of Christ.*

### **BACKGROUND**

As Catholics it is critical that we nurture our spirit and strengthen our faith. Faith formation is a life-long journey. In order to truly have an impact, it is imperative that our parish provides a variety of formation programs for parishioners of all ages in all stages. Although we heard that our faith formation programs are very strong, there was an indication that we may be missing the mark when it comes to our very young. As well, our parishioners desire more regular formation opportunities and they would like to be fed spiritually through modern-day means. In addition, as they have a responsibility to witness to Christ and spread the faith, our parishioners desire the opportunity to become more confident in Catholic beliefs and their ability to share the Good News.

### **OBJECTIVES**

1. Provide quality religious education and formation for parish youth.
2. Provide quality faith formation opportunities for adults.
3. Deliver faith formation resources on a regular basis.
4. Promote religious vocations.
5. Assist parishioners to better understand evangelization.
6. Motivate and inspire parishioners to confidently share their faith.

*Priority #4*

PARISH SERVICE  
&  
COMMUNITY  
OUTREACH

*St. Thomas Aquinas  
Catholic Church will  
promote active participation  
in parish service and  
community outreach.*

**BACKGROUND**

We cannot be brought to perfection in Christ if we do not obey the command that He makes repeatedly...to love one another. Our parish must assist parishioners in attaining servant hearts so they, in-turn, will choose to serve the parish and community in love. As well, the parish has a responsibility to provide and communicate parish and community service opportunities. Parishioners wish to serve both as individuals and together as a faith family within the parish and community.

**OBJECTIVES**

1. Offer well-coordinated Apostolates that provide opportunities to serve others in the parish.
2. Provide opportunities for community outreach to the poor and disadvantaged of the community.
3. Communicate parish and community service opportunities in an efficient and effective manner.

*Priority #5*

## STEWARDSHIP

*St. Thomas Aquinas  
Catholic Church will  
be a stewardship parish  
wherein parishioners  
live the stewardship way of life  
as missionary disciples.*

### **BACKGROUND**

Our parishioners live the Stewardship Way of Life by praying, participating, and giving. We spend time with God beyond attendance at Sunday Mass and on Holy Days, we actively engage in the life and the mission of the parish, and we support the parish with our first fruits in a sacrificial way. Continued growth as a stewardship parish is challenging. We must be extra vigilant in forming parishioners as disciples when they are young, weaving stewardship into every aspect of parish life, and assisting parishioners in recommitting to live the stewardship way of life each year.

### **OBJECTIVES**

1. Inspire a lifetime commitment to the stewardship way of life.
2. Establish a discipleship program.
3. Facilitate an effective and efficient annual Stewardship Commitment Campaign.
4. Coordinate a strategic effort to increase extraordinary giving among parish stewards.

*Priority #5*

## PARISH OPERATIONS

*St. Thomas Aquinas  
Catholic Church will  
responsibly operate the parish  
to fulfill the goals of  
the Pastoral Plan.*

### **BACKGROUND**

Operating the parish must be done responsibly so that we can achieve our Parish Mission. Stable frameworks for budgets, staff, and apostolate leadership must be established or refined. Our facilities must meet the needs of our entire community. Currently, parish operations are effective and efficient yet there is a need to continually evaluate operations so that we are able to best meet the needs of our faith family.

### **OBJECTIVES**

1. Select, empower, and retain effective lay leaders.
2. Utilize all parish councils to the fullest extent.
3. Employ enthusiastic staff who effectively support parish leaders and parishioners.
4. Establish policies and procedures for all parish groups.
5. Foster collaboration between parish groups.
6. Be transparent with parish and school finances.
7. Assure parish facilities are well-maintained to meet the physical, social, educational, and spiritual needs of parishioners.
8. Assure a safe and secure facility.
9. Communicate effectively with parishioners.