

# Immaculate Conception Catholic Church



## Parish Council Five Year Pastoral Plan 2010-2015

August 2010

## **Introduction**

In the fall of 2009, Immaculate Conception Parish conducted a parish survey as the Parish Council began preparing a five year plan for the parish. The survey was developed by Father Mirek Woznica. Results were made available to the parish on our website and in written form.

Based on the results of the survey, the Parish Council formed five sub-committees to address each area on the survey. The council chair of the sub-committee then invited members of the parish to assist with the development of the sub-committee's suggested five year plan. The plan was developed around the adopted Mission Statement and Vision Statement for the parish.

This document is the culmination of many months of work by the parish council, parish staff and members of our parish community. Parish council members agree that evaluation of the plan will be an on-going task.

We sincerely thank all those involved in this process, especially Father Mirek for his leadership and support in developing this plan. We are looking forward to beginning implementation in September 2010.

Immaculate Conception Catholic Church Parish Council

## **LITURGY**

**Objective #1 – To support the ICC priest, Bishop and our diocese in promulgating the new Sacramentary and music. The timeline will occur in late 2010 with a tentative completion date of December 2011.**

### **Short Term Goals (Year 1-2)**

1. Replace both the Journey songbooks and Ritual Song books at the appropriate time when the new Sacramentary is put into place. The parish priest and music ministry leaders, with guidance from the diocese will be responsible for implementation.
2. The parish priest and deacons will catechize from the pulpit on appropriate conduct and gestures during Mass. This will aid parishioners in feeling more comfortable. Areas that should be addressed are: kneeling for communion, receiving the Body of Christ on the tongue, optional hand-holding during the Lord's Prayer and a sense of reverence before and after Mass from the congregation. The pastoral staff will be responsible for implementing this goal.
3. Establish a core set of music which parishioners who attend different Masses will understand. The parish priest and music ministry leaders will be responsible for this goal.
4. The Pastor/Parish Council will replace altar server attire.
5. Provide archived audio or transcribed versions of the week's Homily for later reflection. This will be primarily the Pastor's responsibility and at times the deacons.
6. The Pastor will be responsible for the continuation of weekday and Saturday opportunities for Reconciliation.
7. Consider the addition of some supplemental Latin (vernacular, English still the primary language) to one or more of Masses.
8. Increase availability of Eucharistic Adoration by changing the day and time and consider Sunday afternoon availability. Scheduling will be the responsibility of the Pastor and pastoral staff.
9. Publicly encourage Vocations from the pulpit. This would be the responsibility of the Pastor and deacons.
10. Assist with publicizing Masses held at Holy Family Chapel. This could be accomplished by bulletin announcements and parish newsletters (religious education and proposed parish newsletter).

**Objective #2 – Encourage greater individual participation in singing during Mass or direct participation in a choir.**

1. Music, singers, and musicians should not be used for entertainment or a distraction during Mass. Instead, these gifts should complement the Mass and conform to the music guidelines outlined by the Vatican and adapted by our Bishop.

**Objective #3 – Retain the following customs and practices at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church. The Pastor and pastoral staff are primarily responsible for scheduling these events, with assistance from the Parish Council.**

1. Blessing of the food.
2. Weekday Rosary during the month of May.
3. Novenas
4. Supplemental prayers after the end of weekday and weekend Masses. The prayers should reflect Lent, Ordinary Time and Advent.
5. Weekday prayers for Vocations.
6. Diverse Stations of the Cross.
7. Chalk for Epiphany.
8. Easter Lillies.
9. Seder Meal.
10. Spiritual Adoption program culminating in October.

## **Religious Education**

**Objective #1 – Encourage more parent participation and encouragement from the pulpit in ICC's religious education programs.**

### **Short Term Goals (Year 1-2)**

1. Establish expectation/requirement that parent(s) will actively participate in the religious education program at least one during the religious education year. The Director of Religious Education will incorporate into the program at the beginning of the 2010-11 year.
2. Establish a pre-school religious education program for children aged 4-5 in September 2010. Space may be available to house the pre-school program in the school's kindergarten room, but space can be made available whether permission is granted to use kindergarten facility or not. The Director of Religious Education will contact school officials regarding securing the use of the kindergarten classroom for a pre-school program. The director will begin the selection and acquisition process of a curriculum for the program during the summer of 2010.
3. Encourage more involvement from the pulpit in the importance of religious education for our youth.

### **Mid-Term Goals (Year 2-4 of the Pastoral Plan)**

1. Immaculate Conception Parish's Religious Education program will encourage parents of students to work toward becoming certified catechists. Many of our current catechists are either certified or beginning the process of becoming certified in the diocesan religious education program.
2. All catechists will be working toward certification or be certified.
3. An evaluation of the pre-school program will take place during 2012-13. This evaluation could be done by questionnaire or professionally.
4. Encourage priest(s) and deacons to announce at Mass religious education events including registration, children's liturgies, and other activities the children are involved in.

### **Long-Term Goal (Year 5)**

1. All religious education catechists will be certified either initially, intermediate or advanced as required by the Diocese. The Director of Religious Education is responsible for the certification of catechists.
2. Establishment of an on-going religious education pre-school program.

**Objective #2 – Enhance RCIC/RCIA Team Approach and explore options for distance and/or web-based lessons.**

Short-term goals (Years 1 – 2)

1. RCIC and RCIA team leaders and members will recruit at least one (1) new team member each year.
2. Explore possibilities of teleconferencing weekly RCIA sessions based on need. The team leader with the assistance of the Pastor will assume responsibility for this goal.
3. Team leaders will explore the possibility of posting weekly RCIC and RCIA lesson plans and/or notes on the parish website each week for those participants who are not able to attend the session.
4. RCIC and RCIA team leaders will collaborate with Pastor and Deacons for referrals to the programs. Team leaders have relied heavily on the ICC Pastor in the past for referrals to the programs. Program leaders will assume more responsibility in recruitment efforts.

Mid-Term Goals (Year 2-4)

1. Team leaders and members will make available lesson plans and/or notes from previous lessons for team facilitators' use in preparing discussions. Team leaders will be responsible for keeping a "library" of plans available for facilitator's use.
2. Weekly session notes will be posted on the parish website, including important Scriptures and sections of the Catechism discussed that week. Class facilitators will be responsible for preparing lesson plans and/or notes and submitting them to their respective team leaders for posting on the website.
3. RCIC and RCIA teams will have recruited at least four new members in Year 2-4 of the Pastoral Plan. This recruitment should involve the Pastoral staff.

Long-Term Goal (Year 5)

1. By the beginning of 2014-15, Immaculate Conception Parish will establish a web-based/distance learning tool for RCIA participants. The sub-committee did not specifically address RCIC in this goal as it was felt there was a greater need for more availability of lessons for adults who may not be available to attend class due to work, illness, etc. The sub-committee wishes to note that class participation is the highest priority; but understand there are times participants are unable to physically be present for sessions.

### **Objective # 3: Use of parish web-site for Religious Education Communication with parents**

#### **Short-term goals (Years 1-2)**

1. Establish a link on parish website for Religious Education. The webmaster will be responsible for establishing the link; the Director of Religious Education will be responsible for keeping information current and should be updated frequently.
2. Utilize parish website to communicate with parents; special activities, registration information, guidelines for participation, or a weekly newsletter or bulletin for parents. The Director of Religious Education will be responsible for keeping information current and up-to-date.
3. Explore the possibility of establishing on-line registration and payment for religious education programs within the parish. This would include religious education classes for children and adults, as well as First Communion, Confirmation and adult education classes. The Pastor, staff and web-master would be responsible for designing this tool. RCIC and RCIA would not be included in the on-line registration process.

#### **Mid-Term Goal (Year 2-4)**

1. On-line registration and payment will be available for parents and other adults registering for religious education programs.

#### **Long-term Goal (Year 5)**

1. Regular and timely updates will be provided to parents and participants in Immaculate Conception Parish's religious education programs.
2. The on-line registration and payment option will be available for those who choose to use it.

### **Objective # 4: Establish a "welcome home" program for Immaculate Conception Parish**

#### **Short-term goals (Years 1-2)**

1. Investigate and research curriculums available for returning Catholics to the Church. The Director of Religious Education or other pastoral staff will begin this process.

#### **Mid-Term Goal (Year 2-4)**

1. Establishment of a program for encouraging and welcoming returning Catholics to the Church. "Re-converts/Re-verts" should be used in the program to encourage others to rejoin their faith. A team approach (similar to the RCIC/RCIA programs) could be helpful.

#### Long-term Goal (Year 5)

1. Program would be established and in place by the end of Year Three (3) of the parish's Five-Year Plan.

#### **Objective # 5: Establish a program for married couples similar to “Engaged Encounter”**

##### Short-term goals (Years 1-2)

1. Investigate and research the establishment of a program for married couples, using diocesan resources (curriculum) and sustainability of such a program.
2. Recruitment of a volunteer coordinator or couple to begin establishment of program. Pastoral staff would be vital in this recruitment. **\*The on-going commitment of the coordinator(s) would be vital in establishing and sustaining the program.**
3. Use of past participants in Engaged Encounter would be of value to the program.

##### Mid-Term Goal (Year 2-4)

1. Curriculum and/or diocesan program would start at the beginning of Year Two (2).
2. Volunteer coordinator(s) would be in place and ready to begin program.

#### Long-term Goal (Year 5)

1. Establishment of a program to assist married couples in their faith life.

#### **Objective # 6: Establish a viable youth program for Immaculate Conception Parish**

##### Short-term goals (Years 1-2)

1. Research viability of establishing a youth program for ICC youth ages 14-18 through a parish questionnaire. The questionnaire would be developed jointly by the Pastoral staff and representatives of the Parish Council.
2. Recruit a young, talented and enthusiastic volunteer youth leader. The Pastoral staff would lead recruitment efforts with help from the Parish Council.
3. Collaborate with other parishes (Sacred Heart and St. Nick's) that currently have viable programs in place.



Mid-Term Goal (Year 2-4)

1. A program (curriculum) for youth in our parish will be selected by the Pastor or Director of Religious Education.
2. A committed youth leader will be selected.

Long-term Goal (Year 5)

1. A viable program for the youth of Immaculate Conception Parish will be established. The long-term goal is to involve more of our youth in parish life through ministries; social activities geared to young people their own age, and ultimately root them deeper in their faith.

## **Social and Community Activities**

**Objective #1 – Open communication between event coordinators, current volunteers, future volunteers, attendee's, the Parish Council, staff and ICC parishioners.**

### **Short term goals (Years 1-2)**

1. The Parish Council will be responsible for choosing annual event activities and posting the dates of the events on the parish website and calendar, Facebook or similar social networking technology, and a yearly calendar in the bulletin.
2. A Parish Council member will co-chair each event/activity. Their responsibilities will include:
  - a. Recruit a committee leader/chair for each event.
  - b. The Parish Council member will recruit a committee member/chair responsible for creating and keeping a continuity file so event and activity information can be shared with existing volunteers and new event chairpersons. It will include budget, actual cost of event, profit (if fundraiser), number of attendees, and volunteer contact information for each event.
  - c. The Parish Council committee member will be responsible for sending appropriate thank-you notes to key committee members and volunteers involved in the event. This could be done by the parish council member or his/her designee.
  - d. The Parish Council member will be the liaison between the Parish Council members, staff and Pastor by providing event updates, timelines, committee needs and other information vital to the success of the event.

### **Mid-Term goals (Years 2-4)**

1. Consider by-law changes to incorporate and adopt short-term goals One (1) and Two (2) into Parish By-Laws.
2. Create a centralized work space in the church for committee leaders and chairpersons to adequately prepare and execute events. Continuity files and supplies would be readily available.
3. The Parish Council will create a form for parishioners and staff who are interested in creating or hosting an event that has not previously been pre-scheduled on the calendar of events (Event Request Form). All events will be reviewed and voted on by the Parish Council prior to the event. The form should include the following: Is the event a fundraiser? Where are the proceeds directed? Will the organizers be requesting funds from the parish budget? Where and where will the event take place?

### Long-Term Goals (Year 5)

1. The parish secretary or volunteer coordinator will develop and maintain a database of volunteers, including name, phone numbers and other contact information

### **Objective # 2 – The Parish Council will be responsible for ensuring the following events are held annually:**

- Mardi Gras
- Parish Picnic
- Harvest Festival

And supporting the following events:

- Seder Meal (bi-annual)
- Midnight Sun Festival
- Golden Days Activities
- Welcoming/Farewell events (as needed)
- Volunteer Appreciation (as needed)

### Short-Term goals (Year 1-2)

1. The Parish Council will set event dates annually and reserve venues if needed.
2. The Parish Council will recruit committee leaders/committee chairs through the bulletin, personal invitation to host event and activities with adequate notice of upcoming event.

### Mid-Term goals (Years 2-4)

2. Create an annual insert for the bulletin of yearly events and fundraisers in order to define events and increase parish awareness of upcoming events. Use media appropriate media such as parish website, Facebook, and parish newsletter.

### **Objective #3 – Encourage new volunteers, keep current volunteers interested and reach out to inactive volunteers.**

### Short-Term Goal (Year 1-2) and on-going

1. Host Volunteer Appreciation socials on a regular basis.

**Objective #4 – Provide opportunities/social activities for new and departing parishioners.**

*Short-Term Goal (Year 1-2)*

1. Sponsor a social each month to introduce new members of our church to other members. The “Hail & Farewell” could provide an opportunity to welcome our new members and also recognize those who may be leaving Fairbanks due to job transfers, etc.
2. Re-evaluate in 2 ½ years. The suggested monthly social may be too aggressive and socials could occur every two months or once a quarter.

## **Ministry and Service**

### **Objective #1 – Training and Orientation**

#### **Short Term goals (Year 1-2)**

1. Each ministry leader will serve a term of minimum of two (2) years, with a maximum of five (5) years. A leader can serve more than one term.
2. Each ministry leader, with assistance from the pastoral staff, will establish a program to train volunteers. This would include altar servers, lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, ushers and greeters and music ministers.

#### **Mid- Term goals (Years 3-4)**

1. Training program for all ministries will be evaluated for effectiveness by the leaders and pastoral staff.

#### **Long- Term goal (Year 5)**

1. Meaningful and effective training for all volunteers and lay leaders will occur on a regular basis throughout the year.

### **Objective #2 – Personal Invitation Outreach**

#### **Short Term goal (Year 1-2)**

1. A program will be developed by ministry leaders and pastoral staff to effectively invite parishioners to become actively involved in the various ministries of our parish. The Pastor, pastoral staff, ministry leaders and parish council will be responsible for developing an effective program.

#### **Mid-Term goals (Year 3-4)**

1. New volunteers in each of our parish ministries will be actively involved in his/her choice of volunteer activities.
2. Volunteer ministers will have adequate training to encourage their participation in their ministry of choice.

#### **Long-Term goals (Year 5)**

1. All parishioners who are actively participating in the various ministries of our parish will be adequately trained and supported in order to enjoy their volunteer experience.
2. A strong, effective and regular training program will be utilized on an as-needed basis for new volunteers wishing to serve our parish ministries.

### **Objective #3 – Provide quarterly retreats for parish ministries**

#### Short Term goals (Year 1-2)

1. Ministry leaders, parish council members, Pastor and pastoral staff will work together to provide ministry-related retreats for volunteers on a quarterly basis. Retreats should begin as soon as new pastors are in place.
2. Ministry leaders, parish council members and pastoral staff will organize and sponsor an annual retreat for all parish ministries. The first retreat should occur before or during the summer of 2011.

#### Mid-Term goals (Years 3-4)

1. Quarterly retreats for individual ministries will be on-going throughout the year.
2. On-going annual retreats for all ministries.

#### Long-Term goal (Year 5)

1. Effective and regular training opportunities and retreats will be made available to volunteers in our all of our parish ministries.

### **Objective #4 – Develop a parish missionary ministry**

#### Short-Term goals (Year 1-2)

1. Develop a missionary presence in our parish with the assistance of parishioners and the Pastor.
2. Begin to connect internationally with parishes we have a “connection” with in Australia, Africa and Poland; as well parishes in the villages of Alaska. We currently have contacts with parishes in Australia, Africa and Poland due to missionary works and Father. Mirek Woznica.

#### Mid-Term goals (Year 3-4)

1. Regular communications with our “sister” parishes will take place. With advice and support from parishioners, the Pastor, and pastoral staff, a meaningful relationship will occur.

#### Long-Term goal (Year 5)

1. Immaculate Conception will have fully developed a missionary ministry through contacts in Australia, Africa and Poland; as well as villages in Alaska.

## **Welcoming & Evangelization**

### **Objective #1 – Produce a quarterly/semi-annual parish newsletter**

Would include photos, quips, interviews of parish staff, parish council members, religious education programs, RCIC & RCIA information, information on various parish ministries (community service, health ministry). Also include an FAQ section to clarify “old thoughts.”

#### **Short Term goals (Year 1-2)**

1. Find an editor! Someone who would oversee the production of the newsletter quarterly. Parish staff could be used as a resource; parish council members should recruit. Use the parish bulletin as a recruiting tool.
2. Investigate ways to distribute newsletter, i.e., bulk mail, have available after Masses. Again, parish staff could be a resource; however parish council members should contact parishioners who own businesses to ascertain if their business permit could be used by the parish.
3. Check on the cost (finance committee should be apprised of this goal) of producing the newsletter “in-house.” The sub-committee estimates a cost of approximately \$40.00 per quarter in printing cost. This does not include the cost of mailing should the parish council decide to use that method of distribution. Solicitation of advertisements could be used to defray cost. The editor of the newsletter (or their designee) would be responsible for advertising.
4. Publish first edition in October 2010.
5. The parish newsletter should be posted on the website.

#### **Mid-Term goals (Year 3-4)**

1. Re-evaluate effectiveness of newsletter communication in two (2) years.
2. Technology will improve at this time and production and distribution could also improve.

#### **Long-Term goal (Year 5)**

1. To improve how our parish disseminates information concerning activities and programs in our faith community.

### **Objective #2 – Improve usher recruitment and training**

Our ushers and greeters are the first contact our visitors and potential new members of our parish meet when they attend Mass. Our pool of ushers and greeters should be reflective of our diverse faith community. Members of this sub-committee feel strongly

that it is important to involve more members of our parish in this ministry. Greeters and ushers should be friendly and welcoming to our visitors.

Short-Term goals (Year 1-2)

1. Recruitment of a volunteer coordinator for ushers and greeters. The Parish Council will lead recruitment effort.
2. Recruit a current usher/greeter to be responsible for training new volunteers.
3. The usher coordinator would be responsible (with assistance from the parish staff) for recruiting new volunteers. It would be helpful to have these new volunteers represent our diverse community, i.e., Native peoples, additional African-Americans.

Mid-Term Goal (Year 3-4)

1. Evaluate recruitment efforts in 2 years and make changes if necessary.

Long-Term goals (Year 5)

1. These “first contact” parishioners should be welcoming to visitors so they want to return.
2. Our team of ushers/greeters is representative of our faith diverse community.
3. Visitor cards should be made available for visitors to complete. During the summer months, it is recommended that all our summer guests be recognized from the pulpit as they currently are. Visitor cards could be a valuable tool for parish staff to contact those who may express an interest in joining our parish family. It would also be an excellent recruiting tool for the RCIC/RCIA programs.
4. A note of welcome to new parishioners each month in the bulletin, as well as a “thank you” for those leaving us. This information should also be included in the quarterly newsletter.
5. Maintain communication with parishioners who leave (an occasional postcard) to let them know that gone is not necessarily forgotten!

Long-term goal (Year)

1. To establish a viable program that welcomes new parishioners and thank those who have been a part of our community and are leaving. When new members are made to feel welcomed and appreciated, they are more likely to become involved in parish life.