PARTNERS IN THE GOSPEL

ST. JAMES CATHEDRAL | IMMACULATE CONCEPTION | CHRIST OUR HOPE

OUR FIRST YEAR AS A PARISH FAMILY

JULY 1, 2024-JUNE 30, 2025

In July 2024, the Archdiocese of Seattle formed 60 parish families from 136 parishes. This was a milestone in the Partners of the Gospel strategic pastoral planning process focused on reenvisioning parish life. As a parish family of St. James Cathedral, Immaculate Conception, and Christ Our Hope, we have begun asking ourselves: How can we look at the resources we have – people, properties, finances—and use them to support the mission of Jesus Christ? How can we ensure this mission remains at the heart of the Catholic Church in Western Washington?

Getting to know each other



While parish life has continued full tilt in the year since our parish family was formed (Mass attendance has actually increased significantly in our parish family), we have also found opportunities to get to know each other. Each parish hosted an event to welcome members from all three parishes, offer a tour, and share a meal. Other combined events included Bible Study in the spring, as well as a communal celebration of the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick around the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes at Immaculate. In December, on the First Sunday of Advent, both Christ Our Hope and Immaculate Conception adjusted their Sunday morning Mass times.

Consultative Groups

Two new consultative bodies have been meeting regularly to bring Partners in the Gospel to life in our parishes. The **Family Leadership Team** is comprised of staff from all three parishes, under the direction of the pastor. During the past year, the members were:

- ST. JAMES CATHEDRAL: Larry Brouse, Maria Laughlin, Corinna Laughlin
- IMMACULATE CONCEPTION: Barbara Connor, Deacon Joseph Connor, Alice Davis, Lauren Schultz
- CHRIST OUR HOPE: Deanna Tighe, Paula Holmes, Chuck Middendorf

This group has gathered monthly over lunch to keep each other informed about happenings in our three parishes and to look actively for ways to collaborate. The group is congenial and cooperative and looks forward to the time together, which is always fruitful.

The **Parish Family Vision Council** is made up of both staff (*) and parishioners from the three parishes.

- CHRIST OUR HOPE: Elizabeth Joyce, Jose Morales, Chuck Middendorf, Paco Medina, Deanna Tighe*, Paula Holmes*
- IMMACULATE CONCEPTION: Lori Chisholm, Maria Batayola, Dalwyn Dean, Alfredo Verzosa, Barbara Connor*, Deacon Joseph Connor*

- ST. JAMES CATHEDRAL: David Unger, Lisa Matchette, Sarah Riggio, John Engel-Kemnetz, Maria Laughlin*

This group was convened for the first time in February, 2025. The first meeting was an opportunity to get to know one another and to hear stories of our different communities. The heart of the meeting was hearing from each person around the table their response to the question: "What brought you to your parish—and what keeps you there? Please share a story or an experience that captures what your parish means to you." It became clear that we deeply value our parish communities and recognize the different gifts each brings to our parish family. We also recognized that we have much common ground, especially in our shared passion for outreach to the poor and needy in the city of Seattle.

After this first meeting, the Family Vision Council was given homework: go back to their parish communities and survey parishioners on the question of: "Who are we?" "What brought you to your parish, and what keeps you there?" And these two additional questions: "What are the greatest strengths of our parish? What are its weaknesses?"

The approach to collecting responses was different in each parish: the Cathedral conducted an online survey, Christ Our Hope and Immaculate Conception offered a combination of in-person sessions and a survey instrument. The feedback was collected over the weeks of Lent and Easter. In early May, the Vision Council met to review the feedback and to create a synthesis of learnings. These learnings will inform the work of the Council's second year, when the question of "Who do we want to become?" is explored in depth.

What's next?

The Church has navigated some major changes since Partners in the Gospel was launched, and so has our parish family. In April the world bade farewell to Pope Francis and on May 8, we welcomed Pope Leo XIV. Not long afterwards, we learned that Archbishop Etienne had appointed Father Gary Lazzeroni to succeed Father Ryan as pastor of our parish family, effective July 1. Two parochial vicars, Father Francis Thumbi and Father Sylvester Chanda, also joined the team to assist in the family, with Father Ryan serving as Pastor Emeritus of the family.

In addition. Barbara Connor retired from her role as Pastoral Coordinator at Immaculate Conception, and Paula Holmes is retiring as Pastoral Assistant for Administration at Christ Our Hope. While none of these changes undoes the work of the past year, it is a good reminder to take things slow and be patient with one another as we head into year two of Partners in the Gospel.

Listening Sessions with Father Gary Lazzeroni

To give Father Lazzeroni a chance to get to know the communities better, he will host listening sessions in September, inviting you to come share your story: "What is one of your best memories of your parish? What is one hope you have for your parish?" The dates for these gatherings are:

- **Christ Our Hope: Wednesday, September 3 at 7:00pm**
- **Immaculate Conception: Sunday, September 7 after 11:00am Mass**
- **St. James Cathedral: Tuesday, September 9 at 7:00pm**

Parishioners of all three parishes are welcome to attend any of the listening sessions.