

# EVANGELIZATION BASED STRATEGIC PASTORAL PLAN 2021

## DIVINE MERCY PARISH



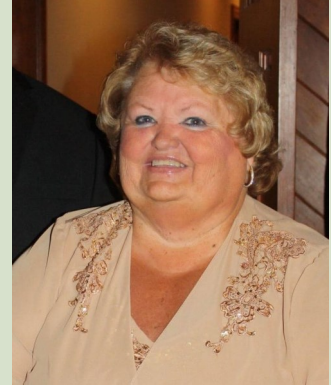
### THE CHURCHES OF ST. ANN, ST. JOSEPH, ST. MICHAEL, ST. PETER



This Pastoral Plan of Divine Mercy Parish is dedicated with love to the memory of **Mrs. Frances Ann (Frannie) Shaw** who was the wise and joyful guide for the merging our churches into one Divine Mercy Parish and process of creating the vision and the pastoral plan that will lead us to a strong and healthy future.

Her example of deep faith and joyful love for all she met will live on in the many lives she touched and in the Church she loved. Thank you, Frannie!

*In Loving Memory*  
*Mrs. Frances Ann Shaw*  
*January 16, 1950—August 18, 2021*



## The Planning Process

The pastoral planning team began meeting in the Fall of 2018. They spent time looking at the community demographics and the changes that the area is experiencing. They came up with five target groups: young adults (working and in college), middle aged, seniors, and baptized but not attending former Catholics. They used these target groups to formulate the critical success factors, barriers and strategies for the plan.

The pandemic has heightened the need to bring our parish closer together, to reach out to our neighbors in need and to connect with one another so that we can grow in faith. The key initiatives that the team and leadership at Divine Mercy have discerned include:

- Liturgy—We want to create a consistent and inspiring liturgy at all four of our worship sites by amplifying good liturgical practices and standardizing our liturgical practices. One key outcome of this initiative is to have a Liturgical committee to oversee this process, formation for liturgical ministers and a focus on our music.
- Welcome—Every parishioner has a role to welcome newcomers. We want to increase our welcoming presence to all who come to us in person or virtually through our communications. We want to make sure that young adults, whether in our community or at Frostburg State Campus are invited to belong and share their gifts
- Accompaniment—We want to create small faith sharing groups in our parish so that we can accompany one another in our faith journey. We also want to strengthen our outreach, to reach out to those in need and those who are isolated, especially during challenging and difficult times.
- Sending—Our parishioners have many gifts and talents, and we know that God has provided our parish with all the gifts we need to advance the mission of making disciples in our community. We want to strengthen the discernment of gifts so that we can match people to ministries that allow them to live into these gifts, as well as formation and feedback so that we can all continue to grow in our journey of faith.
- Encounter & Mission Support—Communication is key to our evangelization efforts along with economic stability, maintained buildings and just wages. We will focus on a comprehensive communication plan so that our mission and vision can be shared with all.

## *Our Vision*

*Divine Mercy Parish celebrates and shares the love and mercy of God with all through our worship and our welcome, and by living our discipleship in compassionate and life-giving service.*

## **Our Mission**

*To make God's mercy present to all by welcoming, loving, and leading.*

## **Our Goals**

*Our core mission priorities/goals recast the focus of our efforts, so that we are forming ourselves and others into disciples who are "mission-ready" and actively engaged in personal and pastoral missionary conversion. They correspond to a path of discipleship that flows from and continually returns to the Eucharist as a means to grow ever closer to Christ. They also embody the hallmarks of an evangelizing, mission-focused parish.*

## **Our Core Principles**

- **Liturgy:** Eucharist is the source and summit of Christian life. Our sacramental life and the Mass should welcome, engage, form, make, and send forth missionary disciples to live their faith every day as they share the Word of God and serve others
- **Welcome:** We need to prepare the soil of peoples' hearts to receive God's Word through radical hospitality, community, and reaching out to those on the peripheries. Newcomers and outsiders are a priority. Welcome and accept everyone and create a sense of belonging, trust, and openness to God's grace.
- **Encounter:** We continually experience our own conversion and bring others to experience the same through welcome and sharing of the faith and service to others, helping others to experience God's Divine Mercy through our words and actions.
- **Accompaniment:** We are companions for each other on the path of our lives in faith. Missionary disciples help each other to grow spiritually and to live the gospel more fully through prayer, study, sacrament, faith formation, and friendship.
- **Sending:** We are called to bring Christ to the world, encouraging each other through friendship and service as we support the work of the Church. The goal of "Sending" is the spiritual fruit that missionary disciples produce in their lives and communities through personal witness, service, friendship, and invitation.
- **Missionary Support:** To make the God's Mission possible in the real world, we are required to provide what is necessary and be good stewards of the resources. Careful consideration of finances, facilities, HR, development, communications, and more are important to the future strength of our Parish.

# GOALS, OBJECTIVES, CRITICAL SUCCESS

## Goals

## Objectives

### LITURGY

	Objectives	Baseline	1 <sup>st</sup> Year	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	Way to Measure
1	Increase satisfaction and consistency of experience of Liturgy that is welcoming, vibrant and transformative. Have positive ratings increase by 5% per year.	2019 Survey	Increase positive results by 5%	Increase positive results by 15%	Survey
2	Increase the number of liturgical ministers by with more diversity by 5% per year	90	Increase by 5%	Increase by 15%	Track

### WELCOME

	Objectives	Baseline	1 <sup>st</sup> Year	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	Way to Measure
1	Create a culture of hospitality and welcome in our whole parish so people feel welcome at every liturgy and event. Increase positive responses in a survey by 5% per year.	2019 Survey	Increase positive results by 5%	Increase positive results by 15%	Survey

### ENCOUNTER

	Objectives	Baseline	1 <sup>st</sup> Year	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	Way to Measure
1	Increase in new attendees at church by 5% per year	628/week (pre-Covid)	Restore to pre-Covid Mass Counts	Increase positive results by 10%	Track

### ACCOMPANIMENT

	Objectives	Baseline	1 <sup>st</sup> Year	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	Way to Measure
1	Create Opportunities for Small Faith Community Interaction—in person and online . Increase number of groups by 2 each year.	4 groups	6 groups	10 groups	Track

# FACTORS & BARRIERS, AND STRATEGIES

\* Indicates Priority Strategy

## Critical Success Factors/Barriers Strategies

### CSFs

Ensure a consistent experience of Vibrant Liturgy at all locations/churches of our parish. Should be uplifting, welcoming, engaging and relate to readings

### Barriers

- 1) Loss aversion—people don't want to change, risk losing what is familiar
- 2) Who to organize it
- 3) Difficulty recruiting
- 4) Money for musicians, etc.
- 5) Volunteers are unable to change
- 6) Two presiders, consistency of message
- 7) Staff roles

### \*L1

Form Liturgy Committee to develop and oversee a comprehensive and collaborative development of Liturgical preparation and ministries. Organize and provide comprehensive & ongoing training and support for volunteers, especially in liturgical, welcome, hospitality and music ministries.

### \*L2

Strengthen music to provide lively and uplifting music support for liturgy (diversity, participation of assembly).

### L3

Assist priests in continually offering engaging, relevant and transformational homilies that challenge and encourage people to live the Gospel

### L4

Develop Children's Liturgy of the Word Ministry

### L5

Increase online liturgical outreach by developing our ability to livestream mass on a regular basis.

### CSFs

Natural friendliness and support in our community. Want a consistent culture of welcome for all parishes.

### Barriers

- 1) Fear of rejection (overdoing it, making a mistake, looking stupid)
- 2) Lack of confidence (shyness, introverted)
- 3) Set in ways
- 4) Now knowing people's names
- 5) Having own negative issues
- 6) Variety of people, what works?
- 7) Need sensitivity to the needs of others
- 8) Churches sometimes have own identity separate from the pastorate (4 churches)

### \*W1

Ensure that every person who enters any of our churches feels welcomed and loved. Community formation on the role of every parishioner to welcome and the importance of creating a culture of welcome for our parish.

### \*W2

Develop an outreach ministry to and for young adults, both in the Frostburg State Campus and the greater parish community, so more young adults will feel welcome and included in all aspects of our parish family

### W3

Create a "welcome team" with representatives from all 4 churches to provide examples of radical welcome while recruiting "welcomers" and developing guidelines for and training of others on the theology and practice of welcome

### W4

Evaluate Signage. Parking Lot Attendants

### CSFs

Reach out with a personal approach, be proactive, learn how to share our experiences with God, help people to understand what evangelization and missionary discipleship really is.

### Barriers

- 1) Hesitance to share personally, not confident in own relationship with Jesus, unable to verbalize it.
- 2) Lack of opportunity
- 3) Lack of time
- 4) Not using internet and social media resources
- 5) Hard to identify one experience
- 6) People are not comfortable or able to use technology

### \*E1

Develop a Communications Ministry Team (see MS1) to help people to encounter Christ.

### E2

Health and Wellness seminars to gather the community on "non-church" issues, but would attract a broader member of the community

### E3

Develop Mass guides/aides for funeral liturgies that offer catechetical explanations for our Rite.

### E4

Take advantage of community events to create opportunities to meet and welcome members of the community so that we are more visible to the wider community

### CSFs

Awareness of where we are in our faith and the faith of others, help people to know how to accompany others

### Barriers

- 1) Scheduling time/Time constraints
- 2) Instructors/small group facilitators
- 3) Process of education and faith formation
- 4) Afraid to reach out to others
- 5) Lack of awareness
- 6) Inability to listen
- 7) Lack of confidence or comfort
- 8) Not sure what others want or need

### \*A1

Explore and evaluate options for small groups to make a recommendation for a program or plan. Create a formal and ongoing ministry of small groups that would help form our parish and strengthen our sense of discipleship and faith sharing

### \*A2

Strengthen our ministries in areas of Social Justice and works of Charity—outreach to homebound. Visiting and uplifting homebound and those in nursing homes

### A3

Comprehensive and ongoing training and support for volunteers, especially in catechesis and adult formation.

# GOALS, OBJECTIVES, CRITICAL SUCCESS

## Goals

## Objectives

### SENDING

	Objectives	Baseline	1 <sup>st</sup> Year	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	Way to Measure
1	Track the number of parishioner volunteers . Increase the number of volunteers by 5% per year.	151 volunteers	Increase by 5%	Increase by 15%	Track

### MISSION SUPPORT

	Objectives	Baseline	1 <sup>st</sup> Year	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	Way to Measure
1	Increase Offertory/registered family (or active families?) by 3% per year	\$50/avg contribution	Increase by 3%	Increase by 6%	Parish Statistics
2	Increase engagement of Facebook and webpage hits by 5% per year	Not Available Yet	Increase by 5%	Increase by 15%	Track

## CURRENT

Current Activities	Deliverables
L1—Form Liturgy Committee to develop and oversee a comprehensive and collaborative development of Liturgical preparation and ministries.	See Page 8
L2—Strengthen our music ministry in order to continually provide lively and uplifting music support for liturgy (diversity, participation of assembly)	See Page 8
W1—Ensure that every person who enters any of our churches feels welcomed & loved. .	See Page 9
W2—Develop an outreach ministry to and for young adults, both in the Frostburg State Campus and the greater parish community, so more young adults will feel welcome and included in all aspects of our parish family .	See Page 9
A1—Create a formal and ongoing ministry of small groups that would help form out parish and strengthen our sense of discipleship and faith sharing	See Page 10
A2—Strengthen our ministries in areas of Social Justice and works of Charity— outreach to homebound, visiting & uplifting homebound and those in nursing homes	See Page 10
S1—Formalize and strengthen volunteer recruitment (invitation), support and encouragement.	See Page 11
E1 & MS1—Strengthen Internal and External Communication with a focus on helping others to encounter Christ.	See Page 11

# FACTORS & BARRIERS, AND STRATEGIES

\* Indicates Priority Strategy

Critical Success Factors/Barriers		Strategies
<p><b>CSFs</b></p> <p>Helping all to identify their talents, positive and confident in sharing God’s love and mercy, define</p> <p><b>Barriers</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Time</li> <li>2) Procuring materials/resources for education</li> <li>3) Need to understand mission and justice and service</li> <li>4) Confidence/shyness</li> <li>5) Self—centeredness</li> <li>6) Financial concern</li> <li>7) Have not completed Encounter or Accompaniment so do not feel sent.</li> </ol>	<p><b>*S1</b> Formalize and strengthen volunteer recruitment (invitation), support and encouragement.</p> <p><b>S2</b> Finding ways to better connect and work with the local community resources (e.g. Social Services, Health System Community Outreach, University Community)</p> <p><b>S3</b> Respond to the community crisis of addiction</p> <p><b>S4</b> Catechesis about Social Justice for the Parish Community</p>	
<p><b>CSFs</b></p> <p>Continued attention to community trends and changes</p> <p><b>Barriers</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Limited time and limited volunteer “pool” (too much to be done, too few people to do it)</li> <li>2) Decreasing population and declining parish enrollment</li> <li>3) Aging and diminishing base of active parishioners</li> <li>4) Economically struggling area and declining income</li> </ol>	<p><b>*MS1</b> Strengthen Internal and External communication.</p> <p><b>MS2</b> Clarify and/or adjusting Staff Roles to fit new priorities</p> <p><b>MS3</b> Use of Facilities—to consider how they can be best used and maintained</p> <p><b>MS4</b> Stewardship and development—keeping income healthy and help people to understand the importance of their time talent and treasure</p> <p><b>MS5</b> Family/Individual Financial Budget/long term planning</p>	

## PRIORITIES

Who	When
TBD	Liturgy Committee formed on or about February 2022
Leader Coordinating with Music Director	On or about October 2022
	Coordinate Welcome Team in place on or about June 2022
Leader Coordinating with FSU Campus Minister	Young Adult Ministry Plan in place on or about May 2022
Leader Coordinating with Mission Team	Lent 2022
Leader Coordinating with Mission Team	Plan developed on or about January 2023
TBD	On or about June 2022
TBD Coordinating with Director of Mission	Communication Team/Group formed by November 2021 Website Update—January 2022

# LITURGY

L1 – Form Liturgy Committee to develop and oversee a comprehensive and collaborative development of Liturgical preparation and ministries.

- ◆ Liturgical experiences will be more cohesive across our churches, and a unified parish identity, with a strong foundation in lively Eucharist, will be strengthened. Local communities will be represented and included in planning.
- ◆ Organize and provide comprehensive & ongoing training and support for volunteers, especially in liturgical, welcome, hospitality and music ministries.
- ◆ Planning will be more creative and coordinated, especially in Liturgical seasons involving more collaboration with clergy, liturgical ministers and members of the assembly.
- ◆ Opportunities for comprehensive and ongoing training for liturgical ministry and volunteer support will be continually offered and more volunteer participation will be encouraged. A ministry network would exist so resources and knowledge will be shared more easily among all four churches.
- ◆ Liturgy committee will collaborate for related ministry teams, including music ministry and welcome committee.

L2 – Strengthen our music ministry in order to continually provide lively and uplifting music support for liturgy (increase diversity, and strengthened participation of assembly)

- ◆ Music will be uplifting and joyful, stirring emotions with real meaning and message, measured by regular input from the congregation on experience in liturgy.
- ◆ Lively congregational singing will be the norm for all liturgies.
- ◆ Music ministry will be strengthened by recruiting, training, and encouraging more musicians and cantors, especially but not limited to, younger people from our entire parish, including a variety of instruments as much as possible.
- ◆ Recruit quality voices
- ◆ Music ministry should coordinate with Liturgy Committee (see L1)

W1 – Ensure that every person who enters any of our churches feels welcomed & loved. Create and maintain community formation on the role of every parishioner to welcome and the importance of creating a culture of welcome for our parish.

- ◆ Form a team of hospitality and welcome ministry volunteers to coordinate and encourage a culture of welcome in all churches and for all parish events.
- ◆ Divine Mercy would be known as a “friendly Parish” where people are welcome to join us for Liturgy or any parish event and more people will be able to greet each other by name.
- ◆ People would be welcomed by smiling and friendly greeters at every mass and parishioners would all be involved in welcoming
- ◆ Environment at every location would be comfortable, safe, welcoming, friendly and warm
- ◆ Provide community formation for the whole parish so that each person understands their part in creating a welcoming faith community.
- ◆ Welcome committee should coordinate with Liturgy Committee (see L1)

W2 – Develop an outreach ministry to and for young adults, both in the Frostburg State Campus and the greater parish community, so more young adults will feel welcome and included in all aspects of our parish family.

- ◆ There will be more active young adult parishioners participating at Mass.
- ◆ Young adults will be active disciples in the greater community and an active presence in parish ministries and activities.
- ◆ Campus Young Adults/FSU Students will be an active presence in Divine Mercy Parish
- ◆ Relationships will be formed between Parish Community and Campus Young Adults and Parish would be a support for the YA students in need.

**WELCOME**

# ACCOMPANIMENT

A1 – Create a formal and ongoing ministry of small groups that would help form our parish and strengthen our sense of discipleship and faith sharing

- ◆ Parish will offer small group experiences that will be available to everyone as a support for faith growth and spiritual development in a variety of formats and times, to meet a variety of needs and interests while supporting parish unity.
- ◆ Small groups will be an opportunity for missionary discipleship to form in personal and community life of the participants.

A2 – Strengthen our ministries in areas of Social Justice and works of Charity by offering adult formation on Principles of Catholic Social Teaching and coordinating outreach programs for those in need, especially the homebound and those in nursing homes.

- ◆ Our name “Divine Mercy” will be a reality because our parish will be known for showing God’s mercy to those in need and in our world
- ◆ Homebound and ill will feel that they are an important part of our parish community by continued outreach.
- ◆ We would be seen as a parish that rises above the division in our world by working for the common good.
- ◆ Through ongoing formation on the Principles of Catholic Social Teaching and discipleship, our parish would visibly live Gospel values and the principles of Social Justice.

## SENDING

S4 – Formalize and strengthen volunteer recruitment (invitation), support and encouragement.

- ◆ We will increase the number of active volunteers in all areas of our parish ministries.
- ◆ Volunteer discernment process will be created and maintained to help volunteers find an area of interest and concern to them. It would be a common process for all parish ministries and local churches.
- ◆ Volunteer Sunday, ministry fair, or comparable event could be planned that advertises parish needs and ministries that offer opportunities for discipleship. Communication needs to be clear and readily available.
- ◆ There will be a process to recognize and appreciate the important contribution of all volunteers where they feel affirmed and supported.
- ◆ For all ministries, volunteer information will consist of a clear understanding of roles and expectations including reasonable expectations of length of service. (e.g. Job descriptions)

E1 & MS1 – Strengthen Internal and External Communication with a focus on helping others to encounter Christ.

- ◆ Develop and maintain a stronger digital presence and identity, including website and social media.
- ◆ Keep print materials vibrant, updated and user-friendly.
- ◆ Generate digital contact list for newsletters and ongoing communication with parishioners via email and other forms of digital communication.
- ◆ Develop and maintain a stronger digital presence and identity, including website and social media. Keep print materials vibrant and updated. Generate digital contact list for newsletters and ongoing communication with parishioners.

## ENCOUNTER & MISSION SUPPORT

# Our Monitoring Plan

*In order to ensure that our plan becomes a living document, co-owned and stewarded by God's people, we commit to the following regular opportunities to bear witness to the fruits of the Holy Spirit working through us to move closer to the vision of God's preferred future.*

MONTHLY

## Are we doing what we said we were going to do?

- What—Update on specific strategies by Plan Coordinator. Updates provided by Champions
- To Whom—Pastor, Pastoral Council and Finance Council as needed
- How—At monthly Pastoral Council and Finance Council Meetings

QUARTERLY

## Are we getting the results we want to get?

- What—Update on progress, any barriers allowing Pastoral Council to adjust strategies accordingly
- To Whom—Members of Pastoral Council, Planning Team, Finance Council, Leadership, Staff and Pastor
- How—Meeting of all Champions with those above to go through detailed look at strategies

ANNUALLY

## What adjustments do we need to make our targets and our priorities?

- What—Analysis of objectives, which strategies have been achieved, new barriers and CSFs to establish priorities for next year by group attending quarterly meetings
- To Whom—Summary provided to parish as part of annual report



### 1) SHOW UP

First of all, just showing up is a way to encourage one another to celebrate our diversity and to be one in Christ and a people for others!



### 2) PRAY

Strengthen your personal prayer life through daily prayer and worship with our community regularly.



### 3) INVITE

When you come to worship, bring a friend, invite a stranger, welcome each other.



### 9) CONNECT

Don't forget to stay up to date by reading the bulletin and visiting the website..



### 4) SOCIALIZE

Help us build strong fellowship by coming to our socials after the Masses - nourish your body and soul!

*How can I help? What can I do?"*

**Be Missionary Disciples**

THE ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE



### 8) SUPPORT

Support our community and our mission by regular giving and by sharing your time and talent.



### 5) GROW SPIRITUALLY

Commit to one thing that will deepen your spiritual life in the coming year - study, spiritual direction, joining a faith-sharing group.



### 7) SERVE OTHERS

Reflect on your gifts and talents, let them guide you to one of the ministries on our website, then commit one hour per month to serving others in this way.



### 6) NOTICE GOD

Take time each day to notice God at work in your life, and be ready to give an explanation for your hope (1 Peter 3:15). Practice sharing this with others.

Special Thanks to  
**Mrs. Karen Schaeffer**  
Who provided the photography and the design of our front cover.