

Immaculate Conception Catholic Church

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Dear Parishioners:

For several years we have been developing our parish pastoral plan. We have had small group meetings, discussion at the Parish Council, and of course polled the parish through online and in pew surveys. Through discussion and prayer, the Parish Council and I present our parish pastoral plan.

Our plan is part of a larger process by which we will articulate plans for the deanery and diocese. As we journey into the future as a parish, the items in our pastoral plan will direct how we utilize the resources of time, talent, and treasure.

In conclusion, I want to thank each person for their contribution. Every suggestion was considered. Some changes were made immediately. One area emerging in every forum was the need for better communication. In the coming months, you will see changes in many areas. Please ask if you do not understand something. We have so much happening at IC to help us grow stronger as God's holy people. The first section of the Pastoral Plan highlights the variety of ministries occurring at Immaculate Conception. A lot of ministry is happening. Please join us!

In Christ,

Fr. Greg Luyet
Pastor

Shelly Gilker
Parish Council President

Immaculate Conception Catholic Church Parish Pastoral Plan 2011-2016

Parish Mission: The mission of Immaculate Conception Catholic Church is to proclaim the gospel message of Jesus through Word, Sacraments and Works: to form our community in the traditions and teachings of our Catholic faith, to care for one another and the community at large and to bring others to know Jesus by our witness and example.

Strengths upon which to build

- ❖ *Immaculate Conception has a long history of service to the Church and the greater community of Western Arkansas.*
 - IC supports a variety of civic initiatives: Community Service Clearinghouse, The Clothes Closet, Next Step Day Room, Fort Smith Heritage Festival, Heart to Heart Pregnancy Support Center, Community Rescue Mission, Inter-Faith Community Preschool, In His Name, Clearinghouse Back Pack program, Latino Task Force, etc.
 - IC clergy participate in deanery and diocesan projects, as well as, ecumenical gatherings as they occur.
 - Fuerza Transformadora reaches men and women whose lives have been sidetracked through poor choices. The members endeavor to bring persons back to the faith through prayer, counseling, and peer support.
 - We have parishioners who visit the juvenile detention facilities to provide support for young people in a difficult period of their lives. We provide Friday night meals, Saturday morning donuts and assist with holiday meals, for these incarcerated juveniles.

- ❖ *Immaculate Conception is truly a “Catholic” parish in the universality of its membership who speaks many languages, come from a variety of backgrounds, and enriches the parish through their diversity.*
 - Of our registered families, 40% are recent immigrants.

- The school assists in the equipping of our youth to excel academically, personally and spiritually.
- The Hispanic community has a special place at Immaculate Conception where their culture is nurtured and many spiritual and outreach programs are provided.

❖ *Immaculate Conception cares for those who are suffering.*

- The Ladies' Auxiliary supports those who mourn through funeral dinners or the celebration of Mass.
- The parish partners with West-Ark Counseling and Guidance Center to offer low cost counseling for those who find themselves in need of this resource.
- Each year parishioners and the school children provide meals for those who are not able to do so for themselves.
- Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion visit those who are hospitalized and homebound. They communicate to the priests those who would like to celebrate the sacraments of Reconciliation or Anointing of the Sick.
- The parish offers financial assistance to those in dire need as funds are available.

❖ *Immaculate Conception is a parish that prays.*

- In addition to the celebration of the Sacraments, IC provides a variety of prayer groups in English and Spanish (Cursillo small groups), Search, and a Young Adult group for those 19-25.

❖ *Immaculate Conception offers strong educational opportunities for adults and youth.*

- Our adult education programs reach many people (scripture studies, Church history classes, RCIA (Spanish and English).
- Youth Program (Life-teen and Edge) is growing and currently reaches youth from Junior High School through Senior High.
- PRE is a strong program serving over 400 young people each week.
- We follow the Diocesan guidelines and offer a strong formation in our Sacramental Preparation programs in which we average 185 Baptisms, 159 First Communions, 65 Confirmations and 26 received into Full Communion each year
- Immaculate Conception School educates over 300 young people with a staff combining for over 500 years of cumulative teaching experience.
- We offer a preschool program for 3 and 4 year olds.
- We support church league baseball teams for children and teens as well as softball and basketball programs.

- We offer Boy and Girl Scout programs.
- We provide \$350,000 in subsidy and approximately \$120,000 for tuition assistance to Immaculate Conception School for students to receive a Catholic education through 6th grade.
- A subsidy of \$1,000 per parish student and over \$12,000 in tuition assistance is provided to Trinity Junior High for students to receive a Catholic education from 7th through 9th grade.

❖ *Immaculate Conception provides parishioners with quality Sacramental Formation and Celebration.*

- Sacraments are celebrated and people are prepared in Spanish or English for the reception of the Sacraments. For those who need, we have parishioners who assist in formation in the Laotian language.
- Our music program offers different styles of music (organ, contemporary).
- A Lifeteen Mass, which is centered around the youth, is offered each week with a band that plays contemporary music.
- Reconciliation is offered every week on Tuesday and Thursday at 5 pm in the chapel, and every Saturday from 3:30-4:45 pm. The first Saturday of every month, Reconciliation is offered from 7-10 pm.

❖ *Parishioners are very proud of being a part of Immaculate Conception*

- The location of Immaculate Conception, its Gothic structure and unique history in our community, is a source of pride to parishioners and the civic community.
- Our church serves as a Catholic “landmark” in the city of Fort Smith.
- Our parish is a frequent stop for tour groups learning of the history of Fort Smith.
- Each year we participate in the Fort Smith Heritage Festival city tour. In 2011, we will be the center of activity for the community wide event.
- Each year we have a fall cultural fair developed by the Spanish speaking parishioners and in May we have the Spring Festival. Both events draw people from throughout the community.
- Each November, the Ladies’ Auxiliary conducts its annual Bazaar.
- The school holds its annual Spaghetti Dinner in February in which we feed over 2000 people.

Opportunities for Growth

- ❖ *Issue: Our parish needs to provide opportunities to grow in holiness.*
 - Liturgical Life
 - Recruit, charter, and develop a parish Liturgy Committee
 - Successful implementation of the third edition of the Roman Missal
 - Schedule parish information session to explain the changes in the Missal (Lent, 2011)
 - Provide to parishioners written materials describing and explaining the changes (Lent, 2011)
 - Purchase Missals for the chapel and the Church (Summer, 2011)
 - Purchase and utilize bilingual missalettes/hymnals (Advent, 2010)
 - Recruit, train, and commission 25 new lectors, altar servers, and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion by Summer, 2011
 - Spiritual Life
 - Develop Spiritual Life of Parish
 - Establish a Spiritual Life Commission (January, 2010)
 - Plan and execute parish mission (Fall, 2010 and Spring, 2012)
 - Plan organize and execute a series of speakers on topics of Spirituality
 - Fall, 2010 John Martignoni
 - Fall, 2011 Jeff Cavins
 - Publicize opportunities for Spiritual growth in parish and community
 - create a list of opportunities in the area (retreats, etc)
 - Coordinate Spanish and English Cursillos, Search, etc.
 - Recruit, train, and support Sponsor Couples (Winter, 2011)
 - Launch an on-going program to increase parishioners involvement in the Adoration Chapel
 - Provide Opportunities for more Devotions
 - Rosary before Masses
 - Lenten Devotions
 - Prayer groups
 - Divine Mercy Devotions
 - Communal Anointing of the Sick

❖ *Issue: Our parish needs to establish means for more involvement of our youth.*

- Youth Advisory
- Increase stewardship among youth
- Creative involvement
- Place for youth to gather
- Continue the excellence and growth of our Confirmation and Youth Programs

❖ *Issue: We would like to develop a greater sense of connection to the Parish.*

- One step is to see every person as a steward
 - Re-Establish parish Stewardship committee (Summer 2011)
 - Promote parishioner involvement and service to the community and parish
 - Present to the Parish an annual report of volunteer hours and numbers of persons, ministries conducted, as well as financial status (Annually by last week of August)
 - Invite and budget for professionals to assist with training in stewardship development
 - Offer opportunities to give financially through ACH, traditional check, etc.
 - Thank persons for service in the Church through recognition efforts, bulletin announcements, notes, etc.
 - School and PRE work together to increase stewardship among children
 - Collection at school Masses and PRE
 - Recognize a Steward of the Week in bulletin
- A second opportunity is through effective communications.
 - Commission a professional website to be created for IC to enhance communication about happenings at IC
 - Policies, Procedures, Forms, schedules should be published in a variety of media (written, electronic, etc) (ongoing)
 - Develop a parish newsletter to be distributed on line and via paper
 - Create a welcome committee within Parish Life to create a “welcome” packet for new parishioners outlining opportunities for ministry, financial participation, etc.
 - Develop and maintain a parish data base of e-mail addresses
 - Create multiple opportunities for two-way communications between parish leaders and parishioners
 - Survey the parish as to what further communications would assist them

- Create a welcome atmosphere at weekend Masses
- A third opportunity is through occasions for Social interaction
 - Provide opportunities for persons to gather (e.g., Ladies' Auxiliary, Young adults, Men's Club, Night Wing, etc.)
 - Mother's Day Out, Women's Bible studies, 55 plus groups, etc.
- A fourth opportunity is to focus on efforts to create a sense of pride and belonging among parishioners; be open as to parish financial needs and celebrate financial accomplishments.
- A fifth opportunity is to develop a program to invite Catholics who have been absent from the Church to come home.

❖ *Issue: To serve, worship, educate well into the future, we are called to be responsible stewards of the buildings and grounds of Immaculate Conception.*

- Develop a plan for the efficient use, maintenance, repair, and acquisition of properties to meet the need for space
 - School
 - Repair side walk in front of school
 - Repair railing leading up the front steps of the school
 - Add lightning protection to the school building
 - Add lighting to dark areas of the campus to increase security
 - Church
 - Repair plaster, discover cause of plaster peeling, and paint Church
 - Repair railing on the west side of the Church
 - Update bathrooms in the west entrance of the Church
 - Estimated cost \$200,000
 - Saint Anne's
 - Repair Chapel's peeling plaster
 - Renovate the Convent to meet needs for Religious Education, Class Room and meeting Space.
 - Estimated Cost: \$1,000,000
 - Gymnasium
 - Resurface walls and ceilings for sound absorption

- Former Zachary Taylor residence
 - Remove pile of rocks from present location (by Fall, 2011)
- Consider a development program to implement over a five year period an endowment of \$1,000,000 with earnings limited to capital improvements.