



OUR PARISH LIFE – TOGETHER WE SERVE

An invitation to continue our journey together – as a parish – in prayer, service and community.

Dear St. Philip Parishioners,

In June we asked for your suggestions on ways to continue our parish life together. We wish to thank all of you who provided thoughtful and prayerful suggestions for our parish. The parish council reviewed, discussed and prioritized ideas before making a set of initial recommendations to Father John. In this letter, we'd like to summarize the output of this process and how we intend to begin to grow from here as a parish community. Where we go *together* from here largely depends on ALL of us coming together as parishioners and sharing our unique God-given talents. Our commitment to you as a parish council is to do what we can to *enable* us all to come together as St. Philip Parish and to live according to Jesus' teachings.

Throughout all of your suggestions, there were three overall themes that emerged: (1) Our parish should first of all be a parish of **PRAYER**; (2) Our parish should be involved in continual **SERVICE** both within the parish community and in our local community as a means of *evangelization* and (3) Parishioners should be supported in a variety of ways to grow and live together as a parish **COMMUNITY** of disciples. Across these three categories, specific actions were identified to start based on your suggestions and the discussion of the council. We'd like to emphasize that this growth together as a parish will not be a one-time initiative with a start and finish, but instead it will be an ongoing process led by the Holy Spirit. All parishioners should feel welcome to submit new ideas and provide feedback at any time in the future.

As we reviewed your suggestions and comments, there were two items we wanted to work on right away:

1. Many parishioners were not aware of the many ministries that St. Philip already has to offer, and they didn't know how to become involved.
2. With all the existing ministries and the desire to do even more, there was a need for a dedicated person with the responsibility to help coordinate volunteers, to help ensure ministries continued over time and to help parishioners with new ideas to get them off the ground.

As a result, hopefully you have noticed some activities and changes in communications that we hope will help each parishioner to become more involved in our parish. The September volunteer fair was a great success, resulting in 115 new volunteer signups for the 23 organizations and ministries. Also, you may have noticed a new monthly parish activity calendar for October that was distributed in the bulletin. A special thanks goes to the volunteer fair organization committee and to our parish office staff for all their work to improve our parish website, social media and bulletin communications. Regarding the second item, the parish council feels that the support of parishioners and our parish ministries is such an important need that we have recommended stepping out in faith and hiring someone to have responsibility for coordinating ministries, volunteers and new initiatives. Please look for more information on this in the future.

In the rest of this letter, we'd like to share specific actions that we have prioritized. Many ideas were specific to St. Philip Parish, while others were more applicable to the Tri-Parish Catholic community or to existing organizations, and those ideas will be shared appropriately. Also, some suggestions will take more thought, more study and just a longer time to implement. While there are far too many good ideas to do them all, we need to start somewhere and following is a list of our first recommendations.

In the theme of PRAYER:

- A stewardship prayer to be prayed regularly together at Mass for the intentions of growth and evangelization by our parish community.
- A semi-annual parish-wide holy hour together with adoration and prayer for the intentions of our parish, our city and individual prayer requests.
- Annual parish consecration prayer to Jesus through Mary at the time of the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary.
- A periodic reflection in the parish bulletin, written by Fr. Raj.
- Support for qualified spiritual directors to aid parishioners in spiritual growth.

In the theme of SERVICE:

- Continuing our Lenten initiative to support charities on a rotating basis throughout the entire year, by the parish collection of goods to donate.
- Having periodic dedicated parish service days, working together as a parish within the parish and/or at local charitable organizations.
- Implementing health and wellness services as support and outreach, especially for seniors.
- Finding new ways to help parishioners identify their talents (charisms) and how to use those talents in service to the parish and community.

In the theme of being a parish COMMUNITY of disciples:

- Re-establishing a "New Parishioner Welcome Committee" and process.
- Enhancing parish outreach to those with significant events like marriage, baptisms and funerals.
- Equipping our parish with new *evangelization* tools for experiencing the Mass to include those who are not Catholic or are returning.
- Forming care and compassion groups that, as a parish community, can support those who are sick, grieving, homebound and in need.
- Enabling a process by which small groups can form around specific interests in spiritual growth, current topics or simply for social activities with other Catholics.

We hope that this gives you an idea of the direction where we, as a parish, are discerning that we should GO and the *first* steps that we will take along the way. As always, we prayerfully, respectfully, and humbly INVITE you to continue to join us in this journey - TOGETHER.

Your St. Philip Parish Pastoral Council