



## ***What We Heard***

A Summary of Town Halls on the 2022 – 2025 Pastoral Plan  
for  
Christ the King Parish

<sup>12</sup> There is one body, but it has many parts. But all its many parts make up one body. It is the same with Christ. <sup>25</sup> In that way, the parts of the body will not take sides. All of them will take care of one another.

1 Corinthians 12: 12, 25

## OVERVIEW

Christ the King (CTK) Parish has created a 3-year Pastoral Plan that will guide the mission of the parish. Throughout the month of February 2022, the Pastoral Plan and accompanying action plans for the 10 Strategic Focus Areas supporting the five Pastoral Systems, was presented to parishioners through a series of virtual Town Halls.

Approximately 140 parishioners participated in 3 English speaking town hall sessions (February 8, 10 and 16, 2022). A town hall specific to children and their families was held during the Holy Hangouts gathering on February 12, 2022, and a town hall specific to the French community was held on February 24, 2022. One town hall offered interpreter services so members of our deaf community could participate. A town hall specific to youth will be held at a future date and their feedback will be incorporated into this document.

At the Town Halls, video taped presentations were shared in order to ensure that content was the same for each session. These presentations provided an overview of the broad pastoral plan developed by the Pastoral Council; identified the parish vision, mission, commitment; defined the five pastoral systems through which work will be organized; and named 10 strategic focus areas for the pastoral systems. Leaders for each of the pastoral systems then described the actions that will be undertaken to achieve each strategic focus area.

Parishioners were broken into small groups and invited to discuss three questions:

- What excites me about these strategic focus areas?
- What fears do I have about these strategic focus areas?
- How can I contribute to these strategic focus areas?

Responses from 28 small groups were recorded and submitted to the organizers and are summarized in this document. The raw feedback is attached as an appendix. These responses will be used to continue to shape the actions of the parish and the Pastoral Team plans.

# Pastoral Plan Summary

**VISION**  
*Come encounter Christ  
 Joyfully share His love  
 Go make disciples*

**MISSION**  
*Christ the King Parish is a growing faith community of love, joy, discipleship, and evangelization that brings people into a personal encounter with Jesus Christ*

**FIVE PASTORAL SYSTEMS**  
*The mission and work of our parish can be organized in particular "systems" of activity. The body of Christ has a variety of pastoral functions that are essential, depend on another, and are interconnected*

<p><b>WORSHIP</b>  <i>We are transformed through an encounter with God as a result of excellence in all liturgies and community experiences</i></p>	<p>Focus on developing excellence in hospitality, preaching and music.</p>	<p>Focus on engaging families in community worship in a manner that promotes involvement of all ages.</p>
<p><b>SERVICE</b>  <i>We are of service to others by using our God-given gifts and have a missionary culture that reaches the lost and serves the least.</i></p>	<p>Focus on developing trust and collaboration between parish leadership and outreach ministry groups.</p>	<p>Focus on having a unified parish approach to outreach ministry that reflects the unique needs of our parish.</p>
<p><b>DISCIPLESHIP</b>  <i>We are committed to growing in faith, knowledge, and prayer, and identifying our God-given gifts.</i></p>	<p>Focus on fostering discipleship in all active parishioners.</p>	<p>Focus on ensuring that discipleship offerings provide a clear pathway and next steps for the growth of every parishioner.</p>
<p><b>EVANGELIZATION</b>  <i>We share our passion for Christ and His transforming love with those who do not know Him and invite them to a decision to trust Him, follow Him, and become His disciple.</i></p>	<p>Focus on developing a culture of invitation.</p>	<p>Focus on equipping active parishioners to talk about their faith and proclaim the kerygma (the Good News).</p>
<p><b>FELLOWSHIP</b>  <i>We are creating community experiences where people are known, loved, called by name, and supported to holiness.</i></p>	<p>Focus on establishing groups where parishioners can be known, loved, called by name, and supported to holiness.</p>	<p>Focus on building a strong sense of unity, trust, and collaboration among active parishioners.</p>

**PARISH COMMITMENT**

To undertake this mission, we commit to fostering a "missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that our customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, languages, structures and cultures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today's world rather than for our own self-preservation." (Pope Francis, *Joy of the Gospel* 27)

<sup>12</sup> *There is one body, but it has many parts. But all its many parts make up one body. It is the same with Christ. <sup>25</sup> In that way, the parts of the body will not take sides. All of them will take care of one another.*

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## What excites me about these strategic focus areas?

### Community

*“Loving the sense of community and that we are being respected and invited ... as trust builds we will grow from the church to the community.”*

Overall, feedback received indicated that parishioners are craving community. There were many comments about missing seeing people and having felt less connected to the parish since the pandemic. There was discussion about the desire to be fully back in-person with others and connecting people of faith together. The parts of the plan that people see can help with that included the Connect groups, the service ministries such as Knights of Columbus, Catholic Women’s League, St Andrews School of Evangelization, the hospitality ministry, and Alpha. People saw the plan as invitational.

### Relationship with God

*“I am excited about bringing our faith and the love of God into a deeper relationship with each other within our parish, and to focus on spreading this beyond our church to our community.”*

Participants were excited that all the strategic focus areas were centered on bringing everyone into a closer relationship with God. There was discussion about the importance of following God, not individual desires, and seeing that everything in the plan has to grow out of prayer, worship, and a personal encounter with Christ. People saw channels to encourage people to experience Christ in the plan, and that it presented a good foundation for the spiritual and faith growth of our new parish.

### The Systems

*“The five systems are very important. Training and support will be provided to those who will be ministering in those systems.”*

People understood the systems, their definitions, and the interconnectedness. Most appreciated the systemic approach to organizing our works to achieve the mission and vision of the parish. There was discussion about each of the systems and how they give good direction, encompassing all parts of all ministries in the parish. There was excitement about the Worship system, and mention that the various types of music help parishioners to be more open to genres which help us attract newcomers. There was both excitement and fear expressed about the invitation to leadership from all parishioners, and a desire to learn more about what Evangelization really means in tangible ways.

## Planning and Delivering on Plan

*"I was very impressed with the amount of time, energy and caring that went into designing the pastoral plan. It is practical and well balanced."*

Overall, participants felt that the plan was well laid out and easily understood. There were comments about the acknowledgement of the need for strong programs in areas such as Catechesis and that the plan desires to involve children, youth, and families. There was significant excitement about the concept of a Faith Map and using groups to connect with each other. People were encouraged by the thought of tangible tools to discover our God-given gifts, and that training and other supports would be made available. Participants encouraged the Pastoral Team to focus on all age groups and less active parishioners when delivering on the plan while not losing sight of inviting new people into our community.

## What fears do I have about these strategic focus areas?

### Labourers for the Harvesting

*"Where will we get the people to help execute the plan?"*

While the plan was seen to be doable, there was concern that we are a parish of elders, and that we have been dwindling in numbers of parishioners even before the pandemic. People voiced concern that it often seems to be the same people who come out and engage in activity. There was discussion about complacency, exasperated by the pandemic and the inability to attend Mass in person. People need to feel supported and not overburdened. Some expressed concern that if they volunteered, they would not have enough time to carry out the work involved with delivering on the plan. There were suggestions that we need to focus on creating teams, and there were fears of being outside of comfort zones. While people liked the idea of small groups, there was concern that having larger numbers of small groups might result in disconnection from the broader community. One group observed that it may be hard to "wrest control" from parishioners who are used to doing things in their own way, and another that it is important that we not "void" some of the amazing people we have in the parish. Finally, the importance of being inclusive through use of technology and closed captioning on the live-stream Mass was mentioned several times.

### Change

*"Too many changes within the parish might cause people to leave due to confusion and misunderstanding about what is happening."*

There was a comment that the plan felt like it was being built on sand, and that our parish has too many moving parts operationally that need to be addressed before the action components of the plan can be realized. Some were concerned that our pastoral plan

may be changed by the Diocese, and that we would face yet more changes. Some felt it important that there be a balance found between the “old” ways of doing things with new and exciting ideas, especially in terms of worship. Some parishioners are feeling as they are losing something because the more traditional way of worship that they are used to has changed at the Mass they have traditionally attended. Several groups commented on the need to address having two physical sites, and that the decision about either choosing one site or remaining as two physical sites will have a great bearing on whether we grow or continue to decline in numbers of parishioners. Finally, some felt that perhaps we might move too fast without fully realizing the consequences of our actions.

### Ministries and Service Groups

*“[We fear that] Alpha is the only tool – not many people are attending and you will need to find other ways to evangelize.”*

There were concerns and fears that some ministries are left out of the plan because they are not specifically mentioned. Several groups commented that getting long-standing groups such as the Knights of Columbus and Catholic Women’s Leagues to form one ministry across the two parish sites will be difficult, but needed, and that some people will leave the parish over this merge. Many commented fearfully that Alpha will be seen as the only ministry for Evangelization at the expense of other ministries, and that we should be promoting those other ministries as strongly. Some felt that Alpha needs to be more outwardly focused and not just “recycling the Christians already in the pews”.

### Equipping the Called and Understanding Leadership

*“[We fear] not having the knowledge or skillset to do the tasks involved.”*

Several groups commented that they feared not having the skills to do the work of the plan. Feelings of being inadequate and not “schooled” enough to do this work were expressed, although followed by the observation that this requires trust in God. Some commented that there is a great emphasis on leaders for this plan to be successful, some people want to just be “doers” and not leaders, underscoring the need to broaden the definition of leadership in the context of parish life. There were many comments about the use of technology, and the fear that some parishioners may not have access to or the skills to use technology, and therefore will be excluded. On the topic of Evangelization, there were comments that not all see that they have a role in evangelization because not everyone is comfortable in speaking openly about their beliefs. They are looking for ways to privately practice evangelization and being proud of being a Roman Catholic.

## How can I contribute to these strategic focus areas?

### Pray

*“Prayers. Lots of prayers.”*

Almost every group identified prayer as a key contribution that they could make to the success of the plan. There was agreement with the Synod Prayer that asks, “do not let us promote disorder”. Discerning that something is the will of God through prayer is essential. Participants identified participation in Adoration, Rosary, weekday Mass and personal prayer to be significant contributions that can be made.

### Grow

*“I would love the connection of parishioners to grow further with Connect groups; to grow this with our families, seniors, men, senior couples, youth.”*

Many commented that taking what we are already doing well and growing it is a way to contribute. Some who are already involved in action identified that having a list of ministries and programs at the parish would encourage participation. There was a suggestion to take this list and identify which groups can support the specific systems and strategic focus areas. Commitments to identifying God-given gifts and strengths, and then focusing use of these on achieving the vision and mission were made. Many discussed the importance of stepping into promoting the plan to others and inviting them to participate by sharing their own experience. One group remarked on the importance of remembering that WE are the church and so when we think “the church will do it”, that is a call to action by us if we are to grow.

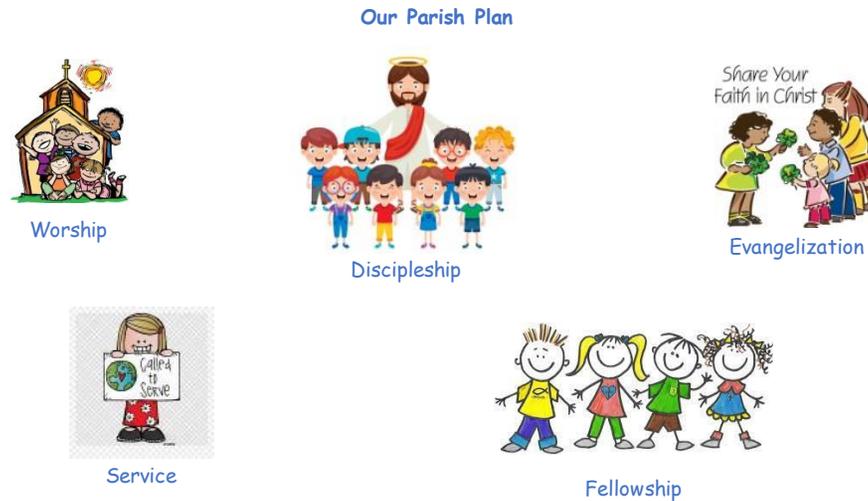
### Act

*“Take the initiative of volunteering instead of waiting to be asked to do something. We underestimate our own capacity.”*

Despite fears of “not doing things right”, many commented that they understood their role as church, and their baptismal responsibility to take action. One group commented that the world today and the negativity targeted toward the Catholic church is an example of our faith being put to the test. They reminded us that we must turn to God to empower us to overcome the natural tendency we may have to simply give up when our faith is tested and ask Him to equip us with the “spiritual skills” to help others who are considering leaving their faith and draw people to or back to the faith. Another commented that we have a collective responsibility to work at ensuring the success of this plan. Many committed to discernment about where their talents might be used within the parish, and to continue to participate in the execution of the plan.

## From Our Littles ... Feedback from Holy Hangouts Participants

A town hall specifically designed to gather input from the children who participate at Holy Hangouts was delivered in February 2022. This group participated enthusiastically, and their feedback is summarized here.



The children listened to a shortened definition of each of the systems, and then were asked three questions:

- What kinds of things could you do at church that would make you excited or happy to come every week?
- What would help you to bring a friend to church?
- How can we help you get excited about being a part of Christ the King?

Here are their responses depicted visually, with a summary of their answers to each question below.



**What kinds of things could you do at church that would make you excited or happy to come every week?**

All of the children said they love to sing and want to be able to sing the kind of music they hear at Holy Hangouts (contemporary praise and worship). Many said that music was very important to them, and they liked to feel comfortable to dance while they sing. Some said they wanted to be able to receive communion. Many want to have more social gatherings where they can be with friends, and several mentioned how much they enjoyed the Christmas party hosted by Holy Hangouts. Many mentioned that they like to be able to gather together after Mass where they could eat snacks and play games.

**What would help you to bring a friend to church?**

Again, music was really important here. Children said that if the music was more like what they hear at Holy Hangouts (contemporary praise and worship), they would want to bring their friends with them to church. If there were social gatherings with snacks, they would probably invite a friend. Some mentioned they would like to be able to bring their pets to church and the leaders talked about the blessing of the animals that happens on the Feast of St. Francis which many children did not know about. They thought it would be fun to be invited to and included in that blessing. Some wanted to be included in the Mass and be able to be readers of the Word. They thought this might be possible if the Family Masses resume, and the leaders indicated they could use Holy Hangouts to prepare for these important roles at the Family Masses. Finally, they discussed being able to receive rosaries from the parish and specifically in the month of May to celebrate Mother Mary.

**How can we help you get excited about being a part of Christ the King?**

Suggestions of having a rosary-making party and then having the rosaries they made blessed were made. The children said that being able to be with their friends in person again would make them excited, especially if ice cream was involved! Here again, lots of discussion about being able to socialize, sing, dance and be with friends would cause great excitement.



## What excites me about these strategic focus areas?

Overall, those present felt that the formulation of the pastoral systems for the French-speaking community presents a structural framework that will allow the community to live in fellowship with all members of the parish, regardless of language or ethnicity. People thought that the systems will offer the opportunity for the community to grow in faith and become more dynamic in its pastoral actions.

## What fears do I have about these strategic focus areas?

Concerns were expressed about the smallness of our community in this parish and about its dispersion, even fracturing in greater Halifax. It is therefore expressed by the respondents that the words of the gospel: *the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few* applies in a more accelerated way to our community and that there will not be enough workers to work on this pastoral plan.

## How can I contribute to these strategic focus areas?

Through the answers and the expression of concerns, the recognition to work to interest more our young people in the parish or Christian life is expressed. This would lead to building a community composed of practicing Christian Francophone families...a multitude of francophone small Churches.

## Do you agree with the pastoral systems chosen by your Francophone committee to help our community in its faith journey within its parish? Why?

People felt that the systems chosen by the Francophone committee presented a structural framework that can allow the community to thrive. It was noted that there are some challenges, including the size of the community. It was expressed that the current time of the Mass may be impacting attendance, and without attendance at Mass, it is challenging to further grow the community, and concern that if the community becomes too small, it might lose its status in the parish altogether. Some expressed a concern that, while part of the parish community, there is not an equal attention paid to the community – creating a no-win situation. It's hard to grow if not treated equally within the parish, and it's hard to be treated equally while the community is small and pastoral resources are scarce.