

ST. LEO THE GREAT PARISH

MARCH 2020 NEWSLETTER

BECOMING AN EVEN MORE AMAZING PARISH. . .

There's something special about St. Leo's. Visitors remark about its welcoming spirit, the sense of unity among diverse populations, and the way the various cultures and languages come together in word and song. For parishioners it truly feels like "family" and "home."

Getting to this place wasn't easy. It required a lot of openness, work—and prayer. As Father Jim said "If we can learn to pray Eucharist together, we can do anything together." We're seeing the fruits of this in ongoing growth and involvement in parish life.

To further deepen the faith life and ministries of St. Leo's five staff members took part in a three-day *Amazing Parish* conference last May which focuses on providing tools and on-going support to help parishes move from maintenance mode to mission communities that are truly alive. The program works with a parish leadership team (PLT) which currently includes staff members who attended the conference: Father Jim Schutte, pastor; Stephanie Sepate, business manager; Casey Betz, development director; Angela Anno, pastoral associate; and Judie Kuhlman, youth minister. Members may be added to or leave the leadership team as the program continues.

The three building blocks of an amazing parish were identified as a culture of prayer, a culture of healthy teamwork, and a culture of active discipleship with prayer being primary.

The strong focus on being grounded in prayer was a natural fit for St. Leo's and leadership team members spent several months after the conference meeting weekly for prayer and team building to develop a firm foundation before beginning to work on any specific plans or programming. They continue to meet for prayer about an hour each week.

With the support of the *Amazing Parish* facilitator assigned to St. Leo's the parish leadership team developed a plan for making sure that whatever we do flows from our identity and mission. This is done by considering the answers to these five questions:

1. Why do we exist? (core purpose) The Lord has called us to receive and share the good news with all of God's people.
2. How do we behave? (Core values)
 - We are family—brothers and sisters in the Lord
 - It is our privilege to serve the kingdom
 - We embrace the cross with joy—"Pick up your cross and follow me."
3. What do we do? (Business definition) We are a welcoming Eucharistic community living out our mission through the corporal and spiritual works of mercy
4. How will we succeed? (Strategic Anchors): We know we will succeed when every decision we make passes through these filters:
 - Invest and value collaborating partners/relationships—will this further our relationship with helpful partnerships?
 - A welcoming and diverse environment—will this further our welcoming of diversity?
 - Pioneer leaders for diversity—will this be an example of leadership in operating a diverse parish?

5. What is most important right now? (Thematic Goal) Build up structure and support through being clear about how any proposal would help us bring more laborers to the vineyard.

With this in mind the team defined and took responsibility for implementing these objectives:

- Assess and deepen helpful relationships—Casey
- Empower laborers to serve—Judie and Angela
- Communicate clearly to community and parish council—Father Jim
- Begin to establish structures for success—Stephanie

St. Leo's will continue to work with *Amazing Parish* as it looks to planning for the future.

What You'll Be Seeing

Basic summary of our involvement with *Amazing Parish* in the latest pastoral council meeting summary.
Updated mission statement on front of bulletin.
Mission statement in multiple languages.
Articles in bulletin and newsletter.

How It Works—An Example

Su Casa offered a health fair at St. Leo in March, 2020. In determining whether or not to do it, the offer was filtered through the strategic anchors:
Will it further our relationship with helpful partnerships? It would be open to the community and would utilize volunteers from University of Cincinnati. **Yes**
Would this further our welcoming diversity? The event would be open not only to Hispanics but also refugees and neighborhood people. **Yes**
Would this be an example of leadership in operating a diverse parish? Instead of restricting the health fair only to Hispanics it would be open to the neighborhood which includes African American, Anglo, and refugees. **Yes**
As a result of this process, the health fair is scheduled for Thursday, March 4, 2020, from 11 am to 3 pm.

What You Can Do

Keep this process in your prayers.
Ask questions of parish leadership team.
Get more involved in parish ministries.
Check out the webpage amazingparish.org.

Health Day at St. Leo's

2573 Saint Leo Place, Cincinnati, OH 45225
Sponsored by Su Casa Hispanic Center
Thursday, March 5, 2020
11:00 am to 3:00 pm

All services are free and open to the public.

UC Health Mammography Mobile screening services for insured women age 40 and up. To register, call 513-672-3731.
The Healthcare Connection will assist individuals and families in signing up for the health insurance that is right for the m, whether it be Medicaid or private plan.
Breastfeeding consultation.
Free produce and P&G Cleaning Products and much more.