ST. AUGUSTINE PARISH ANNUAL REPORT: April 2024—March 2025

Current members: Father Liju Jose, Deacon Rollie Comeau, Charmaine Arandez, Leah Bowie, Roy Fairclough, Ken Kustiak, Franziska Hefti, Russell Hemingson and Jim Rakai.

Our Values: Love, Faith and Community

Mission: Lead by the Holy Spirit, we are disciples of Jesus Christ who unites people to God and to the Church.

Vision: "As Disciples of Jesus Christ, we will know and love God through our Word, Worship and Service"

I. SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Faith Formation and Worship

- **Eucharistic Adoration**: There is an increased participation in Adoration prior to masses on Wednesday and Saturday. We started First Saturday Devotions to the Immaculate Heart of Mary in August. We strengthen our faith as we pray the Rosary to ask Mary to intercede on our behalf; attend mass; mediate and go to Confession.
- **Faith Formation Initiatives**: Children's Liturgy for pre-school to Grade One runs from October to May. The NET Ministry Team provided dynamic faith-based programs for our Confirmands and youth in Grades 9-12 at the school. Missionary Families for Christ hosted a youth retreat. The "Growing in Faith Together"/GiFT (from OLPH, Sherwood Park) engaged adults through Bible studies such as "The Bible Timeline" and the 'Letter to the Hebrews" study. The Knights started a COR program to increase faith formation for all Catholic men in the parish. Promoted FORMED.org resources (religious movies for all ages, bible studies, etc.) available to all parishioners at no cost with a shared subscription with St. Stephen's (Lacombe).
- **RCIA Program**: Four candidates participated in the Rites of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA), culminated in their full reception into the Catholic Church.
- **School Catechesis**: Collaborated with St. Augustine School to enhance faith education through whole school (Thanksgiving, Advent, Easter, Grad masses, Ash Wednesday service etc.) regular classroom masses offered by Fr. Liju Jose and Fr. Garry LaBoucane (Our Lady of Seven Sorrows, Maskwacis). The school is encouraging teacher-led student/class participation in Stations of the Cross at our church.

Liturgical Celebrations

- **Sacraments and Special Masses**: Our parish celebrated First Communion, Confirmation and the Lenten and Advent liturgical seasons with well-attended masses and Penitential Services. 16 children received the Sacrament of Baptism in 2024. Four adults were confirmed on Holy Saturday. 18 children and four adults received First Communion. Deacon Rollie prepared 13 students who were confirmed by Archbishop Richard Smith at St. Stephen's Lacombe in June. Fr. Liju has increased the availability of mass attendance by adding masses on Thursdays at noon and special feast days.

- **Community Devotions**: We continued our tradition of Marian devotions; Rosary before our weekend masses: praying a decade of the Rosary with mass in the month of October and added the Five First Saturday Devotions. In mid-December, we attend nine masses at dawn, Simbang Gabi, a cherished Filipino Advent tradition.
- **Prayer Resources**: Laminated prayer cards will be updated. This includes prayers to St. Michael the Archangel and for our church building project.
- **Stations of the Cross:** Different service groups lead the Stations of the Cross after the 6:00 PM mass on Fridays during Lent.

II. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, OUTREACH AND HOSPITALITY

- **Ministries/Volunteer Appreciation**: We hosted an appreciation BBQ for all parish volunteers to recognize their invaluable contributions.
- **Parish Socials**: Events including the Parish Potluck and Bingo Night (CWL) and the Parish Campout at Lake Pofianga, fostered strong community bonds.
- **Stewardship:** Grade 11 & 12 students from St. Augustine School helped out with fall yard maintenance and washing pews and kneelers. Children who have received First Communion are active in the Altar Server and Music Ministries. Confirmands have been trained as Proclaimers of the Word/Lectors.

Outreach and Evangelization

- Launched a parish-wide outreach effort to reconnect with inactive parishioners, offering personal invitations to return to mas and the sacraments.
- **Charitable Support**: Parishioners generously contributed to fundraising efforts of the Food Bank, Jasper Fire Recovery Fund, and the "Together We Serve" campaign.
- **Knights of Columbus, Council 4503 and Catholic Women's League Initiatives**: the Knights continued their Coats for Kids programs at the public and Catholic schools and monthly pancake breakfasts. The CWL supported parish hospitality and charitable causes.

III. STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Church Building Project

- **Current Financial Status:** The Building Fund has reached $2.7 million, with estimated construction costs between $4.4.5 million..
- **Fundraising Success**: Major initiatives, including the Stampede Food Booth (raising approximately $125,000 during the June stamped and close to $25,000 at the September Chuck Wagon Finals). Have been critical to our building fund growth. Our Garage Sales and monthly refundable returns/ We CAN Build have also generated funds for the Building Fund.

- **Project Planning and Consultation**: Last April, parishioner surveys were distributed via Flocknote and handouts last April to determine financial commitment to the new church. Approximately $80,000 was pledged towards a new church if we were to proceed with building.
- **Architectural Planning**: A Building Committee was formed February 2025, bringing together parishioners with expertise in architecture, construction, and business management. Discussions continue regarding the most cost-effective construction approach. An Architect will be hired soon to carry on planning for a new church building.

Financial Transparency and Responsibility

- **Annual Budget and Stewardship**: The Finance Committee provided clear financial reports/statements, including operational and building fund updates.
- **Children's Collections**: Two Chalice children are sponsored through weekly children's donations. Surplus money was donated to support the community where our Chalice children reside. On the fourth Sunday of each month, during the Second Collection for the Building Fund, the children's collections go towards children's liturgical space in the new church.

IV. PASTORAL COUNCIL AND VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT

- **Meeting with Archbishop Richard Smith in June 2024**: A great opportunity to discuss archdiocese priorities and address concerns of our parish.
- **Membership and Recruitment**: New PPC members will be recruited to replace outgoing members, ensuring continuity in leadership.
- **Strategic Planning**: The PPC focused on aligning parish goals with the needs of our community, include faith formation, outreach and facility building.
- **Call to Protect Training**: Strengthened volunteer safety protocols, ensuring all ministry leaders/co-ordinators completed necessary training and background checks.

Volunteer Orientation & Training and Engagement

- **Ministry Training**: Coordinators were appointed to oversee Ushers, Eucharistic ministers/Acolytes, Greeters and Hospitality teams, ensuring all volunteers are well-prepared for their roles. This is an ongoing process.
- **New Volunteer Opportunities**: Initiatives launched to encourage greater participation, including membership programs for new volunteers and expanded leadership roles in liturgical ministries.
- **Call to Protect**: We are working to increase training for those who have not had training in the Call to Protect/Safe Environments Program. This is a program to ensure the safety of our youth and elderly who participate in church activities. Police Information Checks need to be updated and ongoing orientation and training is required.

V. LOOKING AHEAD: GOALS FOR 2025

As St. Augustine Parish moves forward, we remain committed to growth in faith, service and community. Several parishioners attended the October 2024 Archbishop's Dinner in Edmonton which was the kickoff for the Archdiocese of Edmonton's Pastoral Priorities. Our key goals for the upcoming year include:

A. **Targeting Archdiocese of Edmonton Pastoral Priorities**:

1. **Eucharistic Worship**: Strengthen opportunities for our faith community to increase their understanding; joyfully celebrate the Eucharist and deepen Eucharistic devotion.

2. **Confident Witness**: Enhance our faith community to become confident in proclaiming the Word to our work and life communities.

3. **Service to Marriage and Family**: Create a faith community that supports families, recognizes marriage and family as the CORE of God's plan.

B. **Enhancing Parish Outreach**: Continue to increase community engagement efforts.

C. **Advancing the Church Building Project**: Finalizing architectural plans, securing additional funding, and preparing for the next phases of construction.

D. **Developing Leadership and Volunteers**: Strengthening training for parish volunteers and increasing involvement in ministries.

E. **Supporting Families and Youth**: expanding programs for children, youth and families to foster stronger faith and community connections.

F. **Increase community involvement** in decisions impacting parishioners.

We express our deep gratitude to all who have contributed to the parish life and mission of St. Augustine Parish. May God continue to bless our parish as we journey together in love, faith and service to our community.