

The Parish of Our Lady and St Therese, Essendon Strategic Plan 2026 - 2030



Guiding our parish community into the future!

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1 Executive Summary

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Background and Purpose

Background

In October 2023 we commenced the parish strategic planning process. We called this initiative 'Looking Ahead Together', and it involved the development of Our Lady and St Therese's Parish Strategic Plan 2026 -2030. The objective of the plan is to inform and guide the future development of our parish, over the next 3-5 years.

Why are we doing this?

To ensure our parish continues to grow and thrive, it is becoming increasingly important that we develop a clear vision for the future. This plan will reflect, and support, the spiritual, community and material needs of our parish, while meeting the specific requirements and wishes of the various groups within Our Lady of the Nativity and St Therese's communities, including our school communities.

The Planning Process

How did we do it and who was involved?

A broad range of parishioners and groups, from across our Our Lady of the Nativity and St Therese's communities, were invited to participate in small focus group meetings, to share their ideas and feedback. This was to ensure that our Strategic Plan considered the different needs that exist across our entire parish community, and identified priorities and actions going forward.

Unplanned Interruption to the planning process!

Unfortunately, we had had to suspend the program in April 2024 for 10 months, due to unforeseen circumstances impacting those involved. The process recommenced in February 2025 with a fresh round of focus group meetings, adding to the feedback that had been captured in earlier meetings in 2023 and 2024.

Who was involved & what was discussed?

We conducted a number of 'focus group' meetings, across both Our Lady's and St Therese's church communities, speaking to some 50+ parishioners. This included some of the key support groups in the parish, like the St Vincent De Paul conference, men's coffee group, parish friendship group and parish leadership team. A number of individual parishioners also participated in these focus group meetings.

In the 'focus group' meetings we asked people 3 questions:

- i. What works well in the parish today?
- ii. Are there things you think we could do better?
- iii. Looking at the next 2-3 years, are there any specific 'opportunities' that you can see to improve the parish?

As a result, we captured a range of responses which we distilled down to 270+ items for consideration. We analysed this information and identified 9 'key themes' that form the basis of our strategic plan. We also captured a range of 'desired outcomes', and suggested activities, to address these perceived requirements.

About the Resulting Plan

In presenting this Strategic Plan 2026-2030, we acknowledge that it represents the views of a limited proportion of the parish, however we also recognise that this represents the population that came forward to be involved. In a community-based organization this is probably as good as it gets!

We also recognise that the parish community of today is very different from that 10-20 years ago, and will likely never return to the profile enjoyed in those years. People are more mobile, have more choices, have a more 'open' view of religion and don't feel the 'obligation' that many older people have grown up with. All of this has been accentuated by the appearance of Covid, which has left a strong mark on society and norms generally.

As a result, some of the 'desired outcomes' we captured have been interpreted in terms of 'what makes sense today', rather than trying to return to a state that no longer makes sense or is achievable today. Having said that, we now have new opportunities to build our parish and spiritual community, and an ability to reach beyond traditional borders and boundaries.

About the Resulting Plan

We have kept the 9 key themes separate to provide a level of granularity and clarity, rather than collapse them into a smaller, more nebulous group of results. We hope this makes the plan a little easier to understand.

The 'proposed actions' that we have associated with each Theme should be seen as a direction and starting point, rather than an absolute or an end point. This means that while we will initiate activity in a particular area, the final direction /outcome will depend on how we go, and what we find in the journey. The important point is that we make a start!

We don't suggest that this plan is absolutely 'correct', but we do believe that it highlights the areas, in our parish, that we need to think about going forward, and when we need to act. In that respect we do consider it 'correct' and relevant!

The success or otherwise of this Strategic Plan, like any other, will depend on the response and support of our parish community. While it opens up many new avenues for involvement from all areas of the community, the challenge will be to find eager and energetic hands to take up the challenge.

2 Summary of feedback from Focus Group Meetings

What do people think about our Parish?

What do people think about our Parish?

- Parish brings a strong sense of belonging and support
- Parish is a place of comfort and peace
- Parish is a community 'journeying together'
- Place of spiritual nourishment and inspiration
- Parish allows me to practice and evolve my faith
- Parish is very collaborative and supportive
- Place where we can share and explore our faith together
- People give life to the parish

What do people think about our Parish?

- Place where you can belong and be involved with people
- Cares for people in the community like elderly, isolated and sick
- Our parish is a welcoming and friendly community
- Sense of parish diminished in recent years due to sexual abuse scandals
- People have more distractions these days which has diminished the importance of 'parish' in their lives
- Parish is no longer the centre of 'social life'
- Amalgamation seen as a positive step for our parish and churches (St Therese's and OLN)
- Parish facilities are good and valued by people

3 Summary of feedback from Focus Group Meetings

What do people think we 'Do Well'?

What do people think we 'Do Well'?

Groups

- Church grounds and garden kept well.
- Strong framework of support groups that do a great job
- High level of parishioner involvement and support keeps the parish alive
- Strong support for SVDP through use of facilities like PACE and generosity of the parish community

Spiritual Programs

- Access to weekday masses at St Therese's
- Baptism program is very welcoming
- KIDS AT MASS is great at St Therese's
- Sacramental program well supported by liturgy group

What do people think we 'Do Well'?

Administration

- Effective parish administration team

Priest

- John Hannon a great pastor who allows the community to participate and is generous in his outreach to sick and elderly
- Parish priests are very open and strong communicators

Liturgy

- Music ministry is strong and adds meaning to our services

Amalgamation

- Parish better through amalgamation, contributes to stronger community
- Sharing of resources across church communities is good
- Parish communities good at collaborating and working together

What do people think we 'Do Well'?

Community

- Caring community, people show a genuine interest in each other
- Parish is alive, people are supportive and respectful
- Strong 'care factor' in the parish

General

- New arrangements for liturgy, administration and maintenance at OLN work better under amalgamated model
- Memorial garden a special area to reflect and remember
- OLN welcoming group works well using 'WhatsApp'

What do people think we 'Do Well'?

Issues

- Loss of 'community' under previous administration / arrangements at OLN
- OLN needs concerted effort to rebuild spiritual and social community
- OLN Tennis Club faces a number of challenges but has received good support from Fr John

4 Summary of feedback from Focus Group Meetings

What do people think we could 'Do Better'?

What do people think we could 'Do Better'?

Communication & Transparency

- Greater communication and transparency on plans, projects and finances
- Greater opportunity for people to participate on key parish committees

Families & Children

- Re-Introduce altar servers to increase involvement of young people in ceremonies
- Programs to encourage families back into the church
- Form a 'Kid's Choir' to sing at masses periodically
- Seek opportunities for greater involvement of children at mass like Prayers of the Faithful, Children's Liturgy and KAM

What do people think we could 'Do Better'?

Spiritual Formation

- Train parishioners in 'paraliturgy' so they can assist in running ceremonies across the parish
- Provide spiritual development programs linked to key seasons or relevant topic areas

Outreach Program

- Review and extend our 'outreach programs' to meet changing needs of the parish and surrounding community

Culture & Diversity

- Recognise and celebrate the cultural diversity in our parish

What do people think we could 'Do Better'?

OLN Tennis Club

- *Recognise and realise the value of the OLN Tennis Club within the parish and surrounding community*

Accessibility & Inclusion

- *Recognise and address the 'accessibility' needs of the aged, disabled and impaired within our parish community*
- *More opportunities for people, including older people, to socialise within the parish*

What do people think we could 'Do Better'?

Parish Community

- Improve new parishioner welcome process to make more personal
- People more mobile so have to 'define' who is a parishioner and how can they contribute to the parish
- Grow parish community through more social events and interaction
- More community celebrations to bring us together as a community
- More family focused functions in the parish like parish picnic, outings, dinner dance

Support Groups

- Review support groups to ensure we have the right mix to meet the changing needs of our parish community

What do people think we could 'Do Better'?

Challenges & Issues

- Many 'single points of failure' in parish support groups, need programs to grow capability for future
- Promote greater connection with the parish schools (e.g. parishioners act as 'liaison' officers with school)
- Include 2nd Reading in the weekly Parish Bulletin
- Implement a more 'professional' mass online presentation for those at home (greater need in future)
- Implement a rolling maintenance plan for the parish to ensure facilities are maintained effectively

What do people think we could 'Do Better'?

Youth

- Consider a youth ministry to increase involvement in parish (including youth choir, youth masses)
- Current services not engaging to younger people, bring in younger priests from time to time to increase interest of young people

5 Summary of feedback from Focus Group Meetings

What do people think we need to address in the
next 3-5 years?

What do people think we need to address in the next 3-5 years?

Youth

- Consider a junior 'Parish Leadership Team' to build involvement of young people
- Introduce youth programs like ALPHA and Antioch to attract young people
- Build a stronger connection with Secondary Schools, perhaps through their 'social justice' programs
- Establish a 'Youth Ministry' so young people can decide what they would like in the parish

School

- Re-engage the schools as part of the parish, look to create more opportunities for children and parents to participate
- Consider a school grade mass and morning tea once a month

What do people think we need to address in the next 3-5 years?

Spiritual Formation

- Introduce a 'speaker series' for key seasons of the church as basis of a spirituality program

Liturgy

- Provide access to weekday and weekend masses at both church centres into the future
- Introduce more 'themed' masses in future to attract people (e.g. cultural masses, Seasons of Creation)
- Strategies to manage access to service for older and impaired people following further amalgamations
- Put articles of interest in bulletin / online periodically for spiritual development

What do people think we need to address in the next 3-5 years?

Liturgy (cont'd)

- Re-introduce altar servers at masses, perhaps in less traditional dress
- Sport takes priority on Saturday and Sunday mornings so need more options for young people / families

Outreach Services

- Aged population will require new services like transport, live streaming mass, support / outreach groups
- Expand concept of parish as a community that can reach out to the broader community of Essendon
- Expand services to the elderly / disabled people - communion at home, online mass coverage, transport etc.

What do people think we need to address in the next 3-5 years?

Outreach Services (cont'd)

- Form a ministry to the aged, isolated, disabled, cultural groups who don't speak english – could be a parish focus
- Parish needs to reach 'further out', where we have the resources, into the broader local community

Communication

- Improve communication with parish community on key areas of interest like plans, projects and finances
- Communicate better on what we do, through use of new technologies
- Use technology to engage young people in parish activities

What do people think we need to address in the next 3-5 years?

Multicultural Community

- Celebrate our different cultures with special events and services (e.g. DWALHI)
- Parish likely to become more multi-cultural in next 3-5 years so we will have to consider their needs
- Invite 'ethnic ' priests to offer mass at Parish on occasions to cater for diverse cultures

OLN Tennis Club

- Work with OLN Tennis Club to improve basic facilities like access lighting and internet access
- Confirm commercial arrangements with OLN Tennis Club to provide a sound base for their future planning

What do people think we need to address in the next 3-5 years?

OLN Tennis Club (cont'd)

- Support OLN Tennis Club to become more of a community facility and resource so as to grow their membership

Challenges & Issues

- Policy to 'manage' future possibility of falling numbers and further amalgamations
- Change mass times / resourcing to make more workable for Fr John
- Grow support groups to ensure adequate for future viability of the parish
- Identify opportunities for lay people to play greater role in liturgical services in future

What do people think we need to address in the next 3-5 years?

Facilities

- Provide proper access and toilet facilities for people attending services at parish churches
- Implement a planned maintenance program to ensure parish assets are properly maintained going forward
- Look at options for more 'professional' live streaming of services to cater for time when less priests

Planning

- Develop a succession plan for key groups in the parish like PLT, SFG, SVDP and Gardening
- A strong leadership team and strategy will be important to sustain the parish, especially after John's retirement

What do people think we need to address in the next 3-5 years?

Synodality

- Monitor implications of 'Synodality' for the parish and identify opportunities to leverage going forward

Parish Community

- Identify opportunities to engage the parish 'middle age' community and increase involvement in parish
- Parishioners more mobile these days, look for ways to attract and welcome people to our parish
- Develop programs to get more families engaged in the parish community, they are future of parish

Ecumenical

- Build a stronger 'ecumenical' focus going forward, with both christian and non-christian faiths

What do people think we need to address in the next 3-5 years?

Social Justice & Environment

- Develop program(s) to address topics young people are interested in (e.g. climate, transgender, LBGTQI+)

Accessibility & Inclusion

- Improve 'disabled parking' access at parish churches, including drop off / pickup up facilities
- Increase parking places around churches
- Provide proper, dedicated disabled toilet facilities to service the churches in our parish

6 The Nine Key Themes

Key Themes that emerged to form the basis of our Strategic Plan!

- 1) Greater communication and transparency on plans, projects and finances
- 2) Programs to encourage families back into the church
- 3) Review and extend our 'outreach programs' to meet the changing needs of the parish and surrounding community
- 4) Recognise and celebrate the cultural diversity in our parish
- 5) Recognise and address the 'accessibility' needs of the aged, disabled and impaired within our parish community

Key Themes that emerged to form the basis of our Strategic Plan!

- 6) Grow parish community through more social events and interaction
- 7) Promote greater connection with the parish schools
- 8) Develop services and activities that are more engaging to younger people
- 9) Provide spiritual development programs linked to key seasons or relevant topic areas

7 Key Themes & Desired Outcomes

For each Key Theme, participants suggested a number of desired outcomes!

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| ➤ Greater communication and transparency on plans, projects and finances | → | ➤ Improved, targeted communications using website, parish bulletin, periodic briefings and other technologies |
| ➤ Programs to encourage families back into the church | → | ➤ Communicate better on what we do, through use of new technologies |
| | | ➤ Use social media technologies to engage young people in parish activities |
| | | ➤ Form a 'Kid's Choir' to sing at masses periodically |
| | | ➤ Seek opportunities for greater involvement of children at mass like Prayers of the Faithful, Children's Liturgy and KAM |
| | | ➤ Re-Introduce altar servers to increase involvement of young people in ceremonies |
| | | ➤ More family focused functions in the parish like parish picnic, outings, dinner dance |
| | | ➤ Sport takes priority on weekend mornings so need more options for young people / families |
| ➤ Review and extend our 'outreach programs' to meet the changing needs of the parish and surrounding community | → | ➤ Expand concept of parish as a community that can reach out to the broader community of Essendon |
| | | ➤ Expand services to the elderly / disabled people - communion at home, online mass coverage, transport |
| | | ➤ Form a ministry to the aged, isolated, disabled, cultural groups who don't speak english - could be a parish focus |

For each Key Theme, participants suggested a number of desired outcomes!

- Recognise and celebrate the cultural diversity in our parish



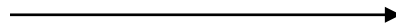
- Celebrate our different cultures with special events and services (e.g. DWALHI)
- Invite 'ethnic ' priests to offer mass at Parish on occasions to cater for diverse cultures

- Recognise and address the 'accessibility' needs of the aged, disabled and impaired within our parish community



- Improve 'disabled parking' access at parish churches, including drop off / pickup up facilities
- Increase parking places around churches
- Provide proper, dedicated disabled toilet facilities to service the churches in our parish
- Strategies to manage access to service for older and impaired people following further amalgamations

- Grow parish community through more social events and interaction



- Improve new parishioner welcome process to make more personal
- More community celebrations to bring us together as a community
- More family focused functions in the parish like parish picnic, outings, dinner dance
- Identify opportunities to engage the parish 'middle age' community and increase involvement in parish
- Parishioners more mobile these days, look for ways to attract and welcome people to our parish

For each Key Theme, participants suggested a number of desired outcomes!

- Promote greater connection with the parish schools



- Consider a school grade mass and morning tea once a month
- Parishioners act as 'liaison' officers with school to promote engagement
- Create more opportunities for children and parents to participate in parish activities

- Develop services and activities that are more engaging to younger people



- Consider a youth ministry to increase involvement in parish (including youth choir, youth masses)
- Bring in younger priests from time to time to increase interest of young people
- Consider a junior 'Parish Leadership Team' to build involvement of young people
- Introduce youth programs like ALPHA and Antioch to attract young people
- Build a stronger connection with Secondary Schools, perhaps through their 'social justice' programs
- Use technology to engage young people in parish activities
- Develop program(s) to address topics young people are interested in (e.g. climate, transgender, LGBTQI+)

For each Key Theme, participants suggested a number of desired outcomes!

- Provide spiritual development programs linked to key seasons or relevant topic areas



- Train parishioners in 'paraliturgy' so they can assist in running ceremonies across the parish
- Introduce a 'speaker series' for key seasons of the church as basis of a spirituality program
- Introduce more 'themed' masses in future to attract people (e.g. cultural masses, Seasons of Creation)
- Put articles of interest in bulletin / online periodically for spiritual development
- Identify opportunities for lay people to play greater role in liturgical services in future
- Build a stronger 'ecumenical' focus going forward, with both christian and non-christian faiths
- Monitor implications of 'Synodality' for the parish and identify opportunities to leverage going forward

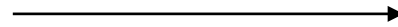
8 Themes and Proposed Actions

We used these 'desired outcomes' to develop 'action plans' for each Theme!

The following example shows how we used the various activities suggested in focus group meetings to identify 'concrete' actions / activities for inclusion in the plan:

Greater communication and transparency on plans, projects and finances

- Regular updates on Parish website
- Periodic parishioner briefings
- Items of interest in Parish bulletin
- Use social media for younger audiences



- Action Plan 1
- Action Plan 2
- Action Plan 3
-
-

As we work through each Theme and associated action plans, we need to consider and allocate priorities for each. This enables development of a timeline for the overall plan.

Translating 'desired outcomes' into 'action plans' for each Theme!

1 Greater communication and transparency on plans, projects and finances

Desired Outcomes

- Regular updates on Parish website
- Periodic parishioner briefings on new initiatives
- Items of interest in Parish bulletin
- Use social media for younger audiences
- Use technology to 'push' information to parishioners
- Periodic financial briefings to parishioners
- Produce periodic 'parish magazine / bulletin'
- Look for opportunities to publicly 'celebrate parish
- Produce a 'parish directory' of active groups and contacts
- Produce a periodic PLT update / briefing
- Publish a parish 'kids' bulletin with items of interest
- Establish simple process for parishioner engagement and ongoing feedback (Google form, QR code)



Proposed Action Plan

- Establish a 'Communications Team' in the parish
- Establish communication / change management guidelines for the parish
- Develop 'Annual Communication Program' and products
- Build online presence and associated products
- Develop 'parish directory' of active groups and contacts
- Upgrade 'parish website' to incorporate new updates and initiatives
- Establish online forum for parishioners to engage with Leadership Team and other active groups
- Publish annual calendar of parish events

Translating 'desired outcomes' into 'action plans' for each Theme!

2 Programs to encourage families back into the church

Desired Outcomes

- Form a 'Kid's Choir' to sing at masses periodically
- Seek opportunities for greater involvement of children at mass like Prayers of the Faithful, Children's Liturgy and KAM
- Re-Introduce altar servers to increase involvement of young people in ceremonies
- More family focused functions in the parish like parish picnic, outings, dinner dance
- Sport takes priority on weekend mornings so need more options for young people / families



Proposed Action Plan

- Expand role of 'liturgy team' to include kid's / family liturgy programs
- Explore and embrace the opportunities provided to families through the emerging 'Synodal Church'
- Establish weekend mass program where kids prepare and execute the liturgy with parishioners
- Establish program to support reintroduction of altar servers at selected weekend masses
- Identify options to include 'children's liturgy' as key component of selected weekend masses (possibly including kid's choir)
- Develop a 'celebrate family' program of activities targeting families over the year (may need dedicated group to organise)
- Build youth engagement through opportunities (instrumental / singing) to participate in selected masses

Translating 'desired outcomes' into 'action plans' for each Theme!

3 Review and extend our 'outreach programs' to meet the changing needs of the parish and surrounding community

Desired Outcomes

- Expand concept of parish as a community that can reach out to the broader community of Essendon
- Expand services to the elderly / disabled people - communion at home, online mass coverage, transport
- Form a ministry to the aged, isolated, disabled, cultural groups who don't speak english - could be a parish focus



Proposed Action Plan

- Establish a 'Parish Outreach Team' to lead the identification of support needs in the parish and local community
- Seek opportunities to partner with local groups / churches / agencies to support those in need in local community
- Promote relevant senior / aged support programs to assist parishioners / people in their daily living and health needs
- Expand the use of technology and other support programs to enable people to continue to participate in mass and other parish services / programs
- Expand our audiovisual facilities to enable all parishioners to fully participate in services within the church

Translating 'desired outcomes' into 'action plans' for each Theme!

4 Recognise and celebrate the cultural diversity in our parish

Desired Outcomes

- Celebrate our different cultures with special events and services (e.g. DWALHI)
- Invite 'ethnic' priests to offer mass at Parish on occasions to cater for diverse cultures



Proposed Action Plan

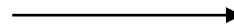
- Establish a Parish Multicultural Team to plan and organize an annual program of events to celebrate the various cultures represented in our community
- Invite priests of differing nationalities, from neighboring parishes / archdiocese, to participate in mass and other services on occasions
- Engage neighboring parishes to join in the planning and conduct of multicultural events / celebrations during the year
- Conduct information sessions for parishioners on different faiths / cultures to promote greater understanding and appreciation of beliefs
- Establish links and contacts with local / relevant faith organisations to promote understanding and interaction, including ecumenical events and shared celebrations
- Promote multicultural events where parish can enjoy 'international' food, dance and related culture differences

Translating 'desired outcomes' into 'action plans' for each Theme!

5 Recognise and address the 'accessibility' needs of the aged, disabled and impaired within our parish community

Desired Outcomes

- Improve 'disabled parking' access at parish churches, including drop off / pickup up facilities
- Increase parking places around churches
- Provide proper, dedicated disabled toilet facilities to service the churches in our parish
- Strategies to manage access to service for older and impaired people following further amalgamations



Proposed Action Plan

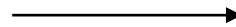
- Undertake a study to identify increased parking options / costs at both churches, including use of school yard at St Therese's and drive-through at OLN
- Provide appropriate, dedicated disabled toilet facilities at both churches as a priority
- Expand our audiovisual facilities to enable all parishioners to fully participate in services within the church
- Create flexible seating areas within our churches to accommodate seating with wheelchairs and other mobility aids as required
- Publish weekend hymns on website to enable download by parishioners with limited vision
- Expand role of the 'Welcoming Team' to include 'aged, disability and impaired' awareness program that periodically reviews needs of these parishioners

Translating 'desired outcomes' into 'action plans' for each Theme!

5 Recognise and address the 'accessibility' needs of the aged, disabled and impaired within our parish community

Desired Outcomes

- Improve 'disabled parking' access at parish churches, including drop off / pickup up facilities
- Increase parking places around churches
- Provide proper, dedicated disabled toilet facilities to service the churches in our parish
- Strategies to manage access to service for older and impaired people following further amalgamations



Proposed Action Plan (cont'd.)

- Implement a more 'professional' mass online presentation for those unable to attend the church
- Review options for providing transport to church for those who no longer drive, including Volunteer Pick-up Roster and Community Bus
- Review effectiveness of 'tactile ground surface indicators (TGSIs)' and lighting around churches to support people who are vision impaired

Translating 'desired outcomes' into 'action plans' for each Theme!

6 Grow parish community through more social events and interaction

Desired Outcomes

- Improve new parishioner welcome process to make more personal
- More community celebrations to bring us together as a community
- More family focused functions in the parish like parish picnic, outings, dinner dance
- Identify opportunities to engage the parish 'middle age' community and increase involvement in parish
- Parishioners more mobile these days, look for ways to attract and welcome people to our parish



Proposed Action Plan

- Establish a Parish Social Team to plan, co-ordinate and organize an annual program of events to engage parishioners of all ages across our community
- Engage Parish Friendship Group, Men's Coffee Group etc. to identify activities / programs that would appeal to members of the parish (e.g. book club, craft group, exercise groups, cards)
- Engage with the Parish School regarding upcoming social events and the opportunity for parishioners to participate in those events
- Promote events like lunches at local venues, group trips, or film days that provide opportunities for people to come together and interact
- Create a 'community page' on the parish bulletin promoting community participation with news, new parishioners, what's on, upcoming events and feedback

Translating 'desired outcomes' into 'action plans' for each Theme!

7 Promote greater connection with the parish schools

Desired Outcomes

- Consider a school grade mass and morning tea once a month
- Parishioners act as 'liaison' officers with school to promote engagement
- Create more opportunities for children and parents to participate in parish activities



Proposed Action Plan

- Engage with the Parish School regarding upcoming events and the opportunity for parishioners to participate in those events
- Identify opportunities for parishioners to participate / volunteer in school activities, especially the growth and development of the children
- Promote programs that recognise and reward student achievement in the school – recognise that achievement as a parish community
- Parish Bulletin include a link to the school newsletter and vice-versa to facilitate communication
- Actively promote relevant parish events in the school support groups and school newsletter – establish contacts with school support groups

Translating 'desired outcomes' into 'action plans' for each Theme!

8 Develop services and activities that are more engaging to younger people

Desired Outcomes

- Consider a youth ministry to increase involvement in parish (including youth choir, youth masses)
- Bring in younger priests from time to time to increase interest of young people
- Consider a junior 'Parish Leadership Team' to build involvement of young people
- Introduce youth programs like ALPHA and Antioch to attract young people
- Build a stronger connection with Secondary Schools, perhaps through their 'social justice' programs
- Use technology to engage young people in parish activities
- Develop program(s) to address topics young people are interested in (e.g. climate, LGBTQI+)



Proposed Action Plan

- Engage with local catholic Secondary Schools regarding upcoming events / programs and the opportunity for parishioners to participate in those events
- Initially expand role of 'liturgy team' to include a youth liturgy program to assess the opportunities and level of youth interest and participation
- Establish a 'Youth Ministry' to identify and organise programs / events that are of interest to youth in our parish
- Create online presence for Parish Youth initially on parish website, and then through social media channels, to provide information about events and activities
- Promote youth programs like ALPHA and Antioch in parish to provide a faith / community experience to young people

Translating 'desired outcomes' into 'action plans' for each Theme!

9 Provide spiritual development programs linked to key seasons or relevant topic areas

Desired Outcomes

- Train parishioners in 'paraliturgy' so they can assist in running ceremonies across the parish
- Introduce a 'speaker series' for key seasons of the church as basis of a spirituality program
- Introduce more 'themed' masses in future to attract people (e.g. cultural masses, Seasons of Creation)
- Put articles of interest in bulletin / online periodically for spiritual development
- Identify opportunities for lay people to play greater role in liturgical services in future
- Build a stronger 'ecumenical' focus going forward, with both christian and non-christian faiths
- Monitor implications of 'Synodality' for the parish and identify opportunities to leverage going forward



Proposed Action Plan

- Establish a 'Spiritual Growth Team' to identify, plan and organise programs / events to support parishioners in their spiritual growth
- Spiritual Growth Team to monitor the progress of 'synodality' in the church, and inform parishioners on its impact in our parish, and our practice of faith
- Provide parishioners with access to contemporary articles / resources on faith online using the website or other social media platforms
- Build links with local Christian and non-Christian faiths to promote a stronger, shared 'ecumenical focus' at key religious celebrations during the year
- Establish on-going training / formation programs for parishioners to enable them to assist in conduct of ceremonies across the parish
- Implement an 'annual retreat' day with mass and selected speakers discussing a range of topics

9 Strategic Plan 2026 – 2030

Proposed Actions, Priorities & Timeline

1 Greater communication and transparency on plans, projects and finances

Key Theme	Proposed Action Plan	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
1 Greater communication and transparency on plans, projects and finances						
	1.1 Establish a 'Communications Team' in the parish					
	1.2 Establish communication / change management guidelines					
	1.3 Develop 'Annual Communication Program' and products					
	1.4 Publish elements of the 'Annual Communication Program'					
	1.5 Build online presence and associated products					
	1.6 Develop 'parish directory' of active groups and contacts					
	1.7 Upgrade parish website to incorporate news, parish updates and new initiatives					

1 Greater communication and transparency on plans, projects and finances (cont'd)

Key Theme	Proposed Action Plan	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
1 Greater communication and transparency on plans, projects and finances						
	1.8 Establish online forum for parishioners to engage with Leadership Team and other active groups					
	1.9 Publish annual calendar of parish events					

2 Programs to encourage families back into the church

Key Theme	Proposed Action Plan	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
2 Programs to encourage families back into the church						
	2.1 Expand role of 'liturgy team' to include kid's / family liturgy programs					
	2.2 Explore and embrace the opportunities provided to families through the emerging 'Synodal Church'					
	2.3 Establish weekend mass program where kids prepare and execute the liturgy with parishioners					
	2.4 Establish program to support reintroduction of altar servers at selected weekend masses					
	2.5 Identify options to include 'children's liturgy' as key component of selected weekend masses (possibly including kid's choir)					

2 Programs to encourage families back into the church (cont'd)

Key Theme	Proposed Action Plan	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
2 Programs to encourage families back into the church						
	2.6 Develop a 'celebrate family' program of activities targeting families over the year (may need dedicated group to organise)					
	2.7 Build youth engagement through opportunities (instrumental / singing) to participate in selected masses					

3 Review and extend our 'outreach programs' to meet the changing needs of the parish and surrounding community

Key Theme	Proposed Action Plan	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
3 Review and extend our 'outreach programs' to meet the changing needs of the parish and surrounding community						
	3.1 Establish a 'Parish Outreach Team' to lead the identification of support needs in the parish and local community					
	3.2 Seek opportunities to partner with local groups / churches / agencies to support those in need in local community					
	3.3 Promote relevant senior / aged support briefings / programs to assist parishioners / people in their daily living and health needs					
	3.4 Expand the use of technology and other support programs to enable people to continue to participate in mass and other parish services					
	3.5 Expand our audiovisual facilities to enable all parishioners to fully participate in services within the church					

4 Recognise and celebrate the cultural diversity in our parish

Key Theme	Proposed Action Plan	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
4 Recognise and celebrate the cultural diversity in our parish						
	4.1 Establish a Parish Multicultural Team to plan and organize an annual program of events to celebrate the various cultures represented in our community					
	4.2 Invite priests of differing nationalities, from neighboring parishes / archdiocese, to participate in mass and other services on occasions					
	4.3 Engage neighboring parishes to join in the planning and conduct of multicultural events / celebrations during the year					
	4.4 Conduct information sessions for parishioners on different faiths / cultures to promote greater understanding and appreciation of beliefs					

4 Recognise and celebrate the cultural diversity in our parish (cont'd)

Key Theme	Proposed Action Plan	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
4 Recognise and celebrate the cultural diversity in our parish						
	4.5 Establish links and contacts with local / relevant faith organisations to promote understanding and interaction, including ecumenical events and shared celebrations					
	4.6 Promote multicultural events where parish can enjoy 'international' food, dance and related culture differences					

5 Recognise and address the 'accessibility' needs of the aged, disabled and impaired within our parish community

Key Theme	Proposed Action Plan	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
5 Recognise and address the 'accessibility' needs of the aged, disabled and impaired within our parish community						
	5.1 Undertake a study to identify increased parking options / costs at both churches, including use of school yard at St Therese's and drive-through at OLN					
	5.2 Provide appropriate, dedicated disabled toilet facilities at both churches as a priority					
	5.3 Expand our audiovisual facilities to enable all parishioners to fully participate in services within the church					
	5.4 Create flexible seating areas within our churches to accommodate seating with wheelchairs and other mobility aids as required					
	5.5 Publish weekend hymns on website to enable download by parishioners with limited vision					

5 Recognise and address the 'accessibility' needs of the aged, disabled and impaired within our parish community (cont'd)

Key Theme	Proposed Action Plan	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
5 Recognise and address the 'accessibility' needs of the aged, disabled and impaired within our parish community						
	5.6 Expand role of the 'Welcoming Team' to include 'aged, disability and impaired' awareness program that periodically reviews needs of these parishioners					
	5.7 Implement a more 'professional' mass online presentation for those unable to attend the church					
	5.8 Review options for providing transport to church for those who no longer drive, including Volunteer Pick-up Roster and Community Bus					
	5.9 Review effectiveness of 'tactile ground surface indicators (TGSI)' and lighting around churches to support people who are vision impaired					

6 Grow parish community through more social events and interaction

Key Theme	Proposed Action Plan	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
6 Grow parish community through more social events and interaction						
	6.1 Establish a Parish Social Team to plan, co-ordinate and organize an annual program of events to engage parishioners of all ages across our community					
	6.2 Engage Parish Friendship Group, Men's Coffee Group etc. to identify activities / programs that would appeal to members of the parish (e.g. book club, craft group, exercise groups, cards)					
	6.3 Engage with the Parish School regarding upcoming social events and the opportunity for parishioners to participate in those events					

6 Grow parish community through more social events and interaction (cont'd)

Key Theme	Proposed Action Plan	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
6 Grow parish community through more social events and interaction						
	6.4 Promote events like lunches at local venues, games nights, group trips, or film days that provide opportunities for people to come together and interact					
	6.5 Create a 'community page' on the parish bulletin promoting community participation with news, new parishioners, what's on, upcoming events and feedback					

7 Promote greater connection with the Parish schools

Key Theme	Proposed Action Plan	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
7 Promote greater connection with the parish schools						
	7.1 Engage with the Parish Schools regarding upcoming events and the opportunity for parishioners to participate in those events					
	7.2 Identify opportunities for parishioners to participate / volunteer in school activities, especially the growth and development of the children					
	7.3 Promote programs that recognise and reward student achievement in the school – recognise that achievement as a parish community					

7 Promote greater connection with the Parish schools (cont'd)

Key Theme	Proposed Action Plan	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
7 Promote greater connection with the parish schools						
	7.4 Parish Bulletin include a link to the school newsletter and vice-versa to facilitate communication					
	7.5 Actively promote relevant parish events in the school support groups and school newsletter – establish contacts with school support groups					

8 Develop services and activities that are more engaging to younger people

Key Theme	Proposed Action Plan	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
8 Develop services and activities that are more engaging to younger people						
	8.1 Engage with local catholic Secondary Schools regarding upcoming events / programs and the opportunity for parishioners to participate in those events					
	8.2 Initially expand role of 'liturgy team' to include a youth liturgy program to assess the opportunities and level of youth interest and participation					
	8.3 Establish a 'Youth Ministry' to identify and organise programs / events that are of interest to youth in our parish					
	8.4 Create online presence for Parish Youth initially on parish website, and then through social media channels, to provide information about events and activities					

8 Develop services and activities that are more engaging to younger people (cont'd)

Key Theme	Proposed Action Plan	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
8 Develop services and activities that are more engaging to younger people						
	8.5 Promote study groups during the year to look at selected topics relevant to youth formation and faith development					
	8.6 Implement a youth 'annual retreat' day with mass and selected speakers discussing a range of topics					
	8.7 Promote youth programs like ALPHA and Antioch in parish to provide a faith / community experience to young people					

9 Provide spiritual development programs linked to key seasons or relevant topic areas

Key Theme	Proposed Action Plan	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
9 Provide spiritual development programs linked to key seasons or relevant topic areas						
	9.1 Establish a 'Spiritual Growth Team' to identify, plan and organise programs / events to support parishioners in their spiritual growth					
	9.2 Spiritual Growth Team to monitor the progress of 'synodality' in the church, and inform / prepare parishioners on its impact in our parish, and our practice of faith					
	9.3 Provide parishioners with access to contemporary articles / resources on faith online using the website or other social media platforms					
	9.4 Build links with local Christian and non-Christian faiths to promote a stronger, shared 'ecumenical focus' at key religious celebrations during the year					

9 Provide spiritual development programs linked to key seasons or relevant topic areas (cont'd)

Key Theme	Proposed Action Plan	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
9 Provide spiritual development programs linked to key seasons or relevant topic areas						
	9.5 Establish on-going training / formation programs for parishioners to enable them to assist in conduct of ceremonies across the parish					
	9.6 Promote study groups during the year to look at selected topics relevant to spiritual formation and faith development					
	9.7 Implement an 'annual retreat' day with mass and selected speakers discussing a range of topics					