**St. Philip Neri 2025 AGM**

**Pastoral Ministry**

The motto of our Parish is, **“Joyfully Building up the Church”**. For over 60 years, our Parish has been working to make the Good News of Jesus Christ visible to all our members and throughout the wider community. Over the last year our Parish Staff/Leadership has tried to honor and respond to the priorities we identified during the Synod process. This report will not detail all the work that has been done, but it will attempt to highlight some of the items that reflect our efforts.

Every parish community, if it is a healthy parish community, and all its members must engage in the following activities:

Kerygma - Proclamation of the Gospel – sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ

Didache – Catechesis – lifelong apprenticeship – training in the way of Christ

Koinonia – Community in Christ – building

Diakonia – Serving Christ – servants, “loving one another as I have loved you.”

Liturgia – Worship of God – liturgy – the work of the people

Using the above-listed activities as an overall template, our Parish Leadership chose the following priorities gleaned from the Synod responses given by our parishioners.

1. **Welcoming, Hospitality and Fellowship**
2. **Highlighting the role of women in our Church**
3. **Seeing God in all things**
4. **Collaboration**
5. **Lay Formation**
6. **Discernment/Listening**
7. **Community Building**

As pastoral leadership we are of the opinion that we have a good, responsive, generous, prayerful and welcoming faith community. During the past year we have made a significant effort to be mindful of the Synod priorities as we carried out the work of the parish.

**Welcoming, Hospitality and Fellowship**

Through the generosity and joy of each parishioner, we exhibit a welcoming attitude. We hear often from visitors that our parish has a welcoming, and hospitable character. In our front office, in our ministry workshops and in our work of catechesis we have made a special effort to be mindful of this priority. When people come and ask us for assistance whether it is for the Christmas Hamper Project or for a certificate, a reference letter or a sacramental celebration we have been generous in our response. We constantly look for ways to let people know they are welcome here.

**Highlighting the role of women in our Church**

In our parish community, we try to make heard the voices of women. We also try to acknowledge the generosity of women when they volunteer. When we look at our ministry lists, women are represented in every ministry. Practically speaking, women are involved in leadership in our parish, and there is great support for their involvement. In the liturgical ministries, and in my preaching the role of women is underscored. As a parish we have been heartened by the work of Pope Francis. In his leadership, he has emphasized their contributions to the Church, he has appointed women to roles of leadership, and for the first time in our history, given them an active voice at the Synod.

**Seeing God in all things**

As the year has unfolded, the idea that God is present in all that we do – our daily work and prayer, our faith sharing and our liturgy, our outreach and care for each other has been highlighted. To this end, especially in the preaching and teaching elements of our parish life, people are encouraged to see that God is already present among them. We have been reminded that what we do matters.

**Collaboration**

Through our many initiatives as a parish this past year we have tried to work together, to listen to each other and to speak to each other. The value ofdialogue and encounter has been highlighted. This idea of collaboration has been visible in our catechesis, in our meetings and in the carrying out of various tasks in the parish. The generosity of people, their willingness to pitch in has been noted and much appreciated.

**Lay Formation**

This year various efforts at formation have been presented. These include materials presented in the newsletters, the information shared in homilies and the materials made available at various feast days. In addition, materials from the Diocese, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and our Holy Father have been made available. In both the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults and in COR (Knights of Columbus sponsored program) the efforts to know Jesus in the gospels has been at the forefront. Additionally, in the homilies our community has been encouraged to read and to study documents published by the Church. We remind ourselves that we are lifelong learners.

**Discernment/Listening**

A strong feature of our Parish Leadership has been the effort to listen to our parishioners. This listening leads us not to voting on this or that proposition but rather to prayer and waiting for the promptings of the Holy Spirit, seeking the guidance of God in our decision making. The question constantly at play in our hearts and minds is simple: how does this build up the kingdom of God, the common good of our earth and our sisters and brothers?

**Community Building**

The efforts made to build up our community have been numerous. This perhaps more than any other priority has been at work in our efforts. In our catechesis, in our funerals, in our celebrations, in our social activities, in our faith formation sessions, in how we celebrate our liturgy, in our private prayer, in our giving and in our receiving we have tried to build up one another, acknowledging the wonder and beauty of each person.

**Conclusion**

Our seven priorities help us to shape the work of our parish. When we look at the way we proclaim the gospel, teach the gospel, celebrate the gospel, build up the community and serve the world around us, we can see the influence of these priorities in our choices and in the fruits of our work.

**Activities of Note:**

**Liturgy** – the Sunday and weekday masses, the Liturgies of the Word with Communion, Liturgy of the Hours – spoken and sung, Baptism, the Anointing of the Sick, Reconciliation (Penitential Services and Private Confessions), Matrimony (Catechesis and celebration), Confirmation, First Confession, First Communion, Funerals, Adoration, the Way of the Cross, Devotions (Silver Rose, St. Joseph), Blessing of Throats, the Rosary, the engagement of people in the various liturgical ministries

**Themes and Moments** – Care for Creation, Mission Sunday, All Souls and All Saints, the Bishops Annual Appeal, Advent and Christmas, Advent food collection, Advent family activity, Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Lent and Easter, Lenten Food collection, Knights of Columbus and Catholic Women’s League meetings, ministries and suppers, Development and Peace, Truth and Reconciliation, Refugee Committee, Annual General Meetings (Finance and Pastoral), Senior’s Outings, Flourish, COR, Order of Christian Initiation, Bereavement Group, Care of the sick, Catholic Education Week, School celebrations in the parish and in the school, retreats and workshops, outreach to other parishes.

**Social Activities** – Skating Party, Soup and a Bun, Steak Night, Feast Day BBQ, Movie Night, Choir Potlucks, Staff gatherings with teachers, welcoming visitors to our parish at the doors and during mass, birthdays and anniversaries, New Year and Easter Vigil socials, Cookie Sundays, Timbit Sundays (Knights of Columbus), General Volunteers, Help Your Neighbour, Morning Coffee

In our Sunday Gospel we celebrate the Ascension, Jesus’ return to the God who sent him into the world. He invites the disciples to await the Holy Spirit who will empower them for their work of spreading the Good News. Today we stand on the shoulders of our parents and grandparents, proclaiming the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, the message of salvation. It is the same Holy Spirit alive in us that calls us, strengthens us and accompanies us in our work. We are never alone because of our communion as a faith community, and we are never alone because of the Holy Spirit.

Let us continue to be a place of welcome, a refuge, a source of support and of inspiration to every pilgrim we meet. Let us continue to be a source of hope, joyfully building up the Church. Let us remember we can do all things in Christ.

Doug Jeffrey, OMI