Mission Statement

Bellarmine Chapel is a Catholic faith community
that strives to live out the teaching and example of Jesus Christ
in the spiritual tradition of St. Ignatius of Loyola.
We seek to be a parish where lives are transformed
by the new and creative ways of the Holy Spirit.
Nourished at the table of the Eucharist, we are sent on mission
to make disciples, serve those in need, work for justice,
and welcome all with love.

Happy Easter! As one of the many gifts we receive in this season, Bellarmine Chapel is pleased to present our new Parish Mission Statement. As you can see, the statement itself is three sentences long but it covers a lot of ground. So, on most Sundays of this season, a part of the statement will appear in the bulletin along with a brief reflection. We hope that these inserts will provide glimpses into how God is working among us, and that they will help us to pray with the mission statement.

But first, here is a chance to take in the statement as a whole and learn how it came to be. The parish has had several renditions of a mission statement over the past couple of decades. Each reflected the priorities and involvements of the time it was written. Since the last one was developed over a decade ago, it’s again time to update and renew the statement.

Over the past couple of years, we have been collecting input from the wider Bellarmine community about the parish, its ministries and functions. We’ve conducted surveys, “circle processes,” and parish-wide leadership retreats. Our staff developed a “white paper” -- a snapshot of the current state of Bellarmine and its ministries. Among other things, all this information has helped in our pastor transition process.

At the same time, this data has formed the foundation for a parish planning process. The first step in this process was to develop a current mission statement. Parishioner Tim Kloppenborg, a retired Xavier distinguished management professor, and a team of his business students provided professional guidance. The bulk of the work took place in the parish Advisory Committee (a leadership core team). The Committee worked with the pastor and staff to make the mission statement a reality. Many drafts later, the version you see above gained unanimous approval from the Advisory Committee.

From here, we will develop a narrative to flesh out and enhance the mission statement. Then, with more input from parishioners, we expect to develop a parish strategic plan. We hope that such a plan will guide specific decisions, actions and attitudes, including the allocation of financial and human resources, volunteers, space, etc. As in all that happens here, we seek in this process to pay attention to the creative movement of the Holy Spirit within Bellarmine and beyond.

The Advisory Committee and the Parish Staff
The Advisory Committee, the Pastor, and the Parish Staff
Christians are invited to nothing less than complete transformation in God. As baptized believers, our lives are not just about modest self-improvement but about conversion in Christ. We experience this transformation when we actively imagine and explore God’s ongoing creative project within us. We also witness this transformation in one another in community. Finally, we pay attention and pray with expectant faith in collaboration with the Holy Spirit and with each other to further God’s creative project.

Transformation often includes experiences like a conversion of heart toward humility and gratitude, a renewal of mind, an increasing capacity to love God and others, a greater desire to give and to receive generously and with compassion. We are transformed when we see and hear and walk in new and life-giving ways. We may notice that more and more of what we do is in and through the Risen Christ.

In order to recognize and name the transforming work of the Holy Spirit in our midst, we need to pray. To be witnesses of the Spirit at work, we are called to learn to be more attentive to the movements of God in our lives. One way our parishioners respond to this call to prayer and attentiveness, is by making “retreats in everyday life,” through The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. Participants who have done so report experiencing “a deeper relationship with God, increased knowledge of self, and getting to know other parishioners”.

Lives are also transformed through preparation for and celebration of the sacraments. The Holy Spirit is creating something new each time a child seeks First Communion, a couple seeks marriage preparation or Baptism for their child, a teen seeks Confirmation. We witness a remarkable new creation each time a candidate joins us in Full Communion during our Easter Vigil. Finally, we are transformed as we continue to live our ordinary lives by coming to the Eucharistic table week after week.

We invite you to take this mission reflection into your prayer this week

“How is the Spirit moving within me... within our community?”

“How does this part of the parish Mission Statement inspire me?”

The Advisory Committee, the Pastor, and the Parish Staff
“I am the bread of life. No one who comes to me will ever hunger; no one who believes in me will ever thirst.” John 6:35

“Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day.” John 6:54

“Because the loaf of bread is one, we, though many, are one body, for we all share in the one loaf.” 1 Corinthians 10:17

“...and when he had said the blessing, he broke the bread and gave it to them. ‘Take it,’ he said, ‘this is my body.’ Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he handed it to them, and he said to them, “This is my blood, the blood of the covenant...’” Mark 14:22-24

We invite you to take this mission reflection into your prayer this week.

“What was your First Communion like?” Remember the day and the details: the church, your family gathered, the dresses and suits, the music, your friends, and Jesus.

“Can you recall a particular time when you felt especially in need of our community’s shared worship and nourished at our Eucharistic table?”

Spend some time reflecting on what was going on in your life then and how the gift of the Eucharist and our community helped you.

“How does this part of the mission statement inspire me?”

The Advisory Committee, the Pastor, and the Parish Staff
Every Sunday as the Mass comes to an end, we are blessed and sent on our way to proclaim the Gospel in words and deeds. As we walk through the doors of the church out into the world, we are called to carry the love of Christ with us and to share that love with our families, neighbors, and the world; going “…from the sacrament of the altar to the sacrament of our neighbor.” Fr. Dan

We are SENT... “Go in peace.”

We are called to act with justice, we are called to love tenderly, we are called to serve one another, we are called to walk humbly with God.

We are sent on MISSION... “Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord.”

As a fire is meant for burning with a bright and warming flame, so the Church is meant for mission giving glory to God’s name. As we witness to the gospel, we would build a bridge of care, joining hands across the nations, finding neighbors everywhere.

We are sent on mission to MAKE DISCIPLES... “Go and glorify the Lord by your life.”

Go to the world! Go into all the earth. Go preach the cross where Christ renews life’s worth, baptizing as a sign of our rebirth. Go to the world! Go as the ones I send.

Let us build the city of God. May our tears be turned into dancing! For the Lord, our light and our love, has turned the night into day!

The Advisory Committee, the Pastor, and the Parish Staff
At the heart of our communal life is social mission. We are a Church committed to reaching beyond our walls and responding to the call of Christ to heal wounds, both personal and societal. None of us can do everything, but all of us can do something to bring about the reign of God.

$150,000
Donated annually to charity and justice initiatives

622
Households visited by SVDP volunteers last year

307
Organizations where parishioners volunteer

248
Letters collected for Bread for the World last year

155
Parishioners who have completed JustFaith

60
Garden beds installed through Fresh is Better

24
Homes built with Habitat for Humanity

14
Members of the Social Mission Core Team representing key ministries in the parish

We invite you to take this mission reflection into your prayer this week:

How does our shared faith inform your work for the marginalized and outcast of our day?
Where do you feel called by God and our community to bring this part of our mission to life in a new way?

The Advisory Committee, the Pastor, and the Parish Staff
Bellarmine Chapel Mission Statement
Sentence 3c

...to serve those in need, work for justice...

Bread for the World Letter Writing

Habitat for Humanity Collection

Fresh is Better at Evanston Parade

SVDP Thanksgiving Bag Delivery
Throughout scripture, and especially in the Gospels proclaimed during this Easter season, Jesus repeatedly urges us to love one another. He welcomes those who have been fishing all night by making them breakfast on the shore. (Jn. 21: 12). Jesus even goes so far as to give us a whole new commandment: “As I have loved you, so you also should love one another.” In fact, it is love (and nothing else) that is the litmus test for an authenticfollower of Jesus: “This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (Jn.13:34-35).

Writer James Joyce once described the Catholic Church as, “Here comes everybody.” For our parish community in these times, the need to love, welcome and include all people remains urgent. Pope Francis has recently emphasized that “everybody” encompasses migrants, refugees, and vulnerable people in general. The pope has noted that such marginalized people are not so much a threat but an invitation to recover the humanity we can easily lose in a prosperous society.

“That is why it is not just about migrants,” Pope Francis recently said. “When we show concern for them, we also show concern for ourselves, for everyone; in taking care of them, we all grow; in listening to them, we also give voice to a part of ourselves that we may keep hidden because it is not well regarded nowadays.”

The final part of Bellarmine Chapel’s mission statement calls us to welcome all people with love. We invite everybody to pass through our doors with lives just as they are—full of glory, messiness, achievements, failures, hopes, strengths, brokenness, fears, struggles and dreams—full of all that goes into being human. May our community be for all the tender embrace in which God so wants to hold us.

Questions for your prayer and reflection:

Is there a particular time you remember being welcomed with love at Bellarmine Chapel?

Does our community have any current or potential barriers that may prevent people from experiencing welcome?

What are some concrete ways that our faith community might show others a loving welcome?
sent on mission to… welcome all with love.