

ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC PARISH

STRATEGIC PLAN 2023 TO 2027





We nurture and grow a welcoming faith-filled community that is a beacon of God's love to all.

FOREWORD

Dear Parishioners,

Our Strategic Plan is a blueprint and guide for our future. A strategic plan allows us to identify the best our parish has to offer and to acknowledge areas for growth. Put simply, our Strategic Plan is our road map. Through this process we evangelise inside and outside our parish. We celebrate and share the joy of the Catholic faith in the St. Thomas Community, a spiritual home, a place where people can form relationships, grow and feel supported in their needs and in their relationship with God and one another. To many, the parish represents all of these things and our future plan offers hope and confidence in a future characterised by welcoming, caring, and stability. With all this in mind, the enthusiasm surrounding this project makes me proud to lead this great parish and I am excited for what lies ahead.

I am grateful to the Parish Pastoral Council, the ministry leaders, Evangelisation Brisbane and all of the people that have worked hard to develop this strategic plan for the benefit of St. Thomas' Parish. We recognise with special gratitude all of the parishioners who gave so much of their time to the planning process. The enthusiasm surrounding this plan is a testament to the commitment, dedication and love you have for our parish and school community.



This Strategic Plan outlines our plan and hopes for a shared future that builds upon our strengths, addresses areas needing improvement and guides us to work collectively for those we serve in our parish community. We will take a fresh look with renewed enthusiasm at all we are doing as a parish. This collaboration will help us become a more active and vibrant parish community here at St. Thomas' Camp Hill.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Dantus Thottathil', written over a horizontal line.

Fr. Dantus Thottathil
Parish Priest

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VISION

We are a community where Jesus is central to all we do and we are led by the Holy Spirit.

We have a strong sense of mission and outreach where we serve the most vulnerable and enable everyone to feel valued, welcomed and loved in the way of St Thomas. Our community gathers to celebrate together at the table of the Eucharist where each one of us is called into a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ. With hearts filled with song and prayer, our parish has a contagious joy. It is our dream to create a parish that is a safe haven for people from all walks of life, blending our rich Catholic tradition with our contemporary world.



MISSION



We nurture and grow a welcoming faith-filled community that is a beacon of God's love to all.

VALUES

◆ WELCOMING

◆ COMPASSIONATE

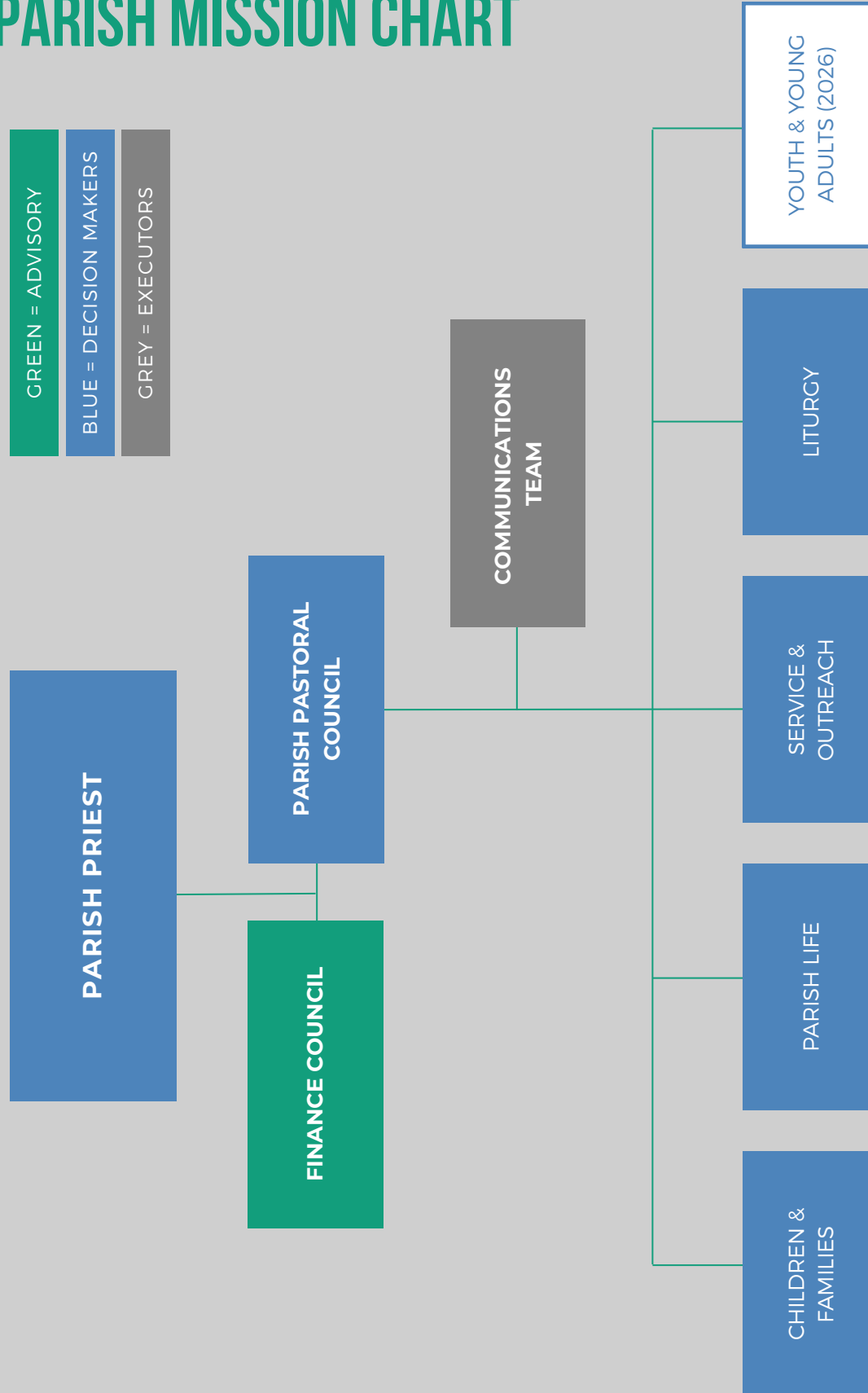
◆ DYNAMIC

◆ INCLUSIVE

◆ RESPECTFUL

◆ JOYFUL

PARISH MISSION CHART



GLOSSARY

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL (PPC):

This is a decision-making leadership team that helps the parish priest make the best decisions for the whole of the parish. This team champions the whole strategic plan and makes sure that each leadership team in the parish is empowered, encouraged and supported.

PARISH FINANCE COUNCIL (PFC):

The Parish Finance Council supports the Parish Priest in the administration of the goods of the parish (finances, property, etc). In addition, the Finance Council supports the Parish Priest in legal and risk matters pertaining to the parish. In the missionary work of the parish, the Finance Council provides advice to enable sound financial decisions to be made that further the mission of the parish.

COMMUNICATIONS TEAM:

This is a team that enables communications across the parish to remain contemporary, integrated, and consistent. The Parish Pastoral Council oversees the scope and work that is given to this team.

MINISTRY AREA LEADERSHIP TEAMS:

Our parish has four ministry areas (Children & Families, Parish Life, Service & Outreach and Liturgy) with the hope of adding a fifth ministry area (Youth & Young Adults) in 2026. Each of these ministry areas has a team leader who works with their ministry area leadership team to oversee the ministry and mission entrusted to them by the Parish Pastoral Council. These teams will ensure that every group in the parish has a place to go for support, to be empowered and to find encouragement. These teams help all parish groups stay connected to the broader parish plan.



WHOLE OF PARISH

OUTCOME ONE:

We have well supported, informed and passionate ministry leadership teams.

STRATEGIES:

- a. Dedicate a month each year to campaign for and recruit new volunteers for ministry roles (e.g. Meet a Ministry/Ministry Spotlight morning tea after each Sunday Mass).
- b. Invite and retain at least 5 new volunteers in each ministry area annually.
- c. Provide opportunities for education and training for ministry leaders and their teams (day retreats, EB leadership course, etc.).
- d. Provide a whole of parish update to each ministry leader and their team quarterly.
- e. Prepare an internal events calendar in February each year that identifies:
 - i. planned events;
 - ii. the ministry with primary responsibility for each event;
 - iii. the ministry/ies assisting with the specific aspects of the event.

OUTCOME TWO:

We have a clear leadership pathway that encourages and enables new membership in the PPC and ministry area leadership teams.

STRATEGIES:

- a. Invite a nominated team leader or leadership team member to a PPC meeting once a quarter.
- b. Write a quarterly update in the parish newsletter (focussing on one ministry area at a time) to highlight:
 - i. existing leaders;
 - ii. opportunities to step into a leadership role;
 - iii. ministry works;
 - iv. the ongoing need for volunteers.
- c. Create a formal process for the identification and appointment of new members to the PPC and ministry leadership teams.

OUTCOME THREE:

We prepare, implement and execute an informative and inspiring internal and external communication strategy.

STRATEGIES:

- a. Form a communications (internal and external) team by March 2024.
- b. Revamp the parish newsletter, website and social media by 2025.
- c. Update the parish website and ensure that information about each ministry area (including how to get involved) is accurate and attractive by early 2024.

OUTCOME FOUR:

We create welcoming, vibrant and functional spaces for our ministry areas by planning and executing a partial upgrade of the parish hall (in conjunction with the Parish Finance Council).

STRATEGIES:

- a. Form a subcommittee to plan for the partial upgrade of the parish hall in stages by December 2023.
- b. Provide reports to the PPC, PFC and the parish, including preliminary designs, staging plan and funding model by mid-2025.
- c. Complete Stage 1 of the parish hall upgrade, which comprises, or includes, works in recognition of the parish 100 year anniversary (2027) by early 2027.

OUTCOME FIVE:

We have an engaging and relevant Youth and Young Adults ministry.

STRATEGIES:

- a. Form a Youth and Young Adults ministry leadership team by 2026.
- b. Form a subcommittee of young adults to work with and support the Service & Outreach, and Liturgy ministries by early 2025.
- c. Strategies to engage with youth and young adults in the parish will be reviewed by the PPC on a six-monthly basis.





CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Children and Families Ministry exists to foster a sense of belonging for all families and children from baptism through to their teenage years. We support parents and families to feel a strong social connection to our parish as we journey with them to nurture their faith through the children's sacramental program and through a holistic range of activities. We partner intentionally with the school in this ministry so that loving and peaceful experiences are built around Christ, His Church and families.



OUTCOME ONE:

There is a strong relationship between St Thomas' School and the parish.

STRATEGIES:

- a. Actively promote parish events through the school newsletter.
- b. Organise meetings once a term between a parish representative and the school.
- c. Connect with Evangelisation Brisbane to explore the Encounter Catholic Kids Project by September 2023.

OUTCOME TWO:

Mass is vibrant, engaging and something that children look forward to participating in.

STRATEGIES:

- a. Collaborate with the Liturgy ministry and School to run a Family Mass on the 5th Saturday/Sunday of the month by November 2023.

- b. Provide a range of child appropriate resources at all Masses by December 2023, including:
 - i. children's Missals;
 - ii. colouring sheets;
 - iii. Children's Liturgy of the Word sheets.
- c. Recruit and sustain 4 to 6 volunteers across Children's ministry by 2024.
- d. Make connections with the school to explore use of child friendly action songs from school in the Mass.

OUTCOME THREE:

Children are actively engaged in the sacramental program that helps to deepen their faith, understanding and connection with Jesus.

STRATEGIES:

- a. Create child-friendly content for the sacramental program by August 2023.
- b. Host a parish-wide celebration after each sacramental program.
- c. Explore new structures each year to engage parents more in the process.

OUTCOME FOUR:

Children are visible and families feel valued in our parish, through a healthy and active Children and Families ministry.

STRATEGIES:

- a. Support and grow the parish playgroup.
- b. Re-establish a children's choir with 2 dedicated leaders by December 2023.
- c. Establish a baptism team of 4 volunteers by February 2024.
- d. Explore the possibility of launching new family initiatives, including:
 - i. parents/caregivers and child groups;
 - ii. Ready for School program.

OUTCOME FIVE:

Provide a supportive Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) program.

STRATEGIES:

- a. Invite 3 parishioners to be part of the parish RCIA team by December 2023.
- b. Provide new members in the Church, who have recently completed the RCIA program, opportunities to deepen their faith formation by inviting them to participate in different parish ministries.

PARISH LIFE

Parish Life Ministry exists to create joyful connections which ignite a sense of belonging, friendship, and love. We strive to build an active, vibrant community where parishioners grow in their faith and feel strongly connected to one another. This ministry seeks to build social networks that allow space for interest groups to exist and flourish.



OUTCOME ONE:

The parish has a warm and healthy culture of welcome and hospitality.

STRATEGIES:

- a. Establish welcome teams to greet parishioners before Mass with warmth, openness and authenticity by November 2023.
- b. Host post-baptism and new parishioners Mass and morning tea in October each year.
- c. Create an online process to invite school/parishioners to be part of a hospitality team that supports the implementation of parish social events by the end of 2023.

OUTCOME TWO:

Parishioners experience joyful and engaging connections through social networks.

STRATEGIES:

- a. Develop and support interest groups across all ages by July 2024 (e.g. Book club, Mahjong).
- b. Celebrate St Thomas' Feast Day annually with parish Mass and dinner.
- c. Establish a hospitality working crew for social events by November 2023.
- d. Create an annual calendar of social events by December of each year (e.g. working bee, parish park picnic and volunteer celebrations).

OUTCOME THREE:

Parishioners experience formation opportunities that lead to a deeper understanding of their faith.

STRATEGIES:

- a. Plan and deliver an engaging adult retreat by the end of 2023 (e.g. "Our Parish Story", host a retreat at Marian Valley, etc).
- b. Connect parishioners with ongoing formation opportunities online and face-to-face, including:
 - i. online prayer/share;
 - ii. Archdiocesan opportunities;
 - iii. pilgrimage.
- c. Host Alpha program in 2024.



SERVICE & OUTREACH



Parishioners of this parish aspire to be disciples of generosity and love by engaging in authentic acts of service and outreach. This ministry seeks to be the hands and feet of Christ and serve as He did by giving back to our local and global brothers and sisters in particular the lost, the lonely and the vulnerable. We do this through a dedicated program of outreach activities.

OUTCOME ONE:

Effective programs exist to support parishioners in need through the St Thomas Friends group and the Care and Concern group.

STRATEGIES:

- a. Recruit 2 members from the parish to form a leadership team for each group by August 2023.
- b. Recruit 6 support volunteers to serve in St Thomas Friends group & Care and Concern group by September 2023.
- c. Develop a plan for raising the profile of both groups by November 2023.
- d. Explore other ways the parish might be able to support parishioners in need annually.
- e. Increase family assistance and care initiatives by June 2024.

OUTCOME TWO:

The parish has a flourishing Social Justice program that supports the needs of local organisations.

STRATEGIES:

- a. Recruit 2-3 people to establish a Social Justice team, by November 2023. Launch an annual Parish Appeal to support a project
- b. (e.g. 2023 will be Micah Projects – a drive for essential hygiene products). Social Justice team to engage with 2-3 Social Justice initiatives
- c. (e.g. St Vincent de Paul, Emmanuel City Mission, Zig Zag, Legacy). Support and engage with Social Justice Programs in local high schools
- d. as well as programs within the deanery.

OUTCOME THREE:

The parish actively serves the needs of the broader Camp Hill/Brisbane community both spiritually and socially.

STRATEGIES:

- a. Continue to build our connections with our local nursing homes through weekly visits, and monthly Masses and carols at Christmas.
- b. Identify community needs through analysis by December 2023 and then develop a plan to serve these needs and begin executing by June 2024.
- c. Run a letter box drop campaign to school families and parishioners to invite Catholics back to church for Easter, Christmas and other celebrations.
- d. Actively encourage participation in World Day of Prayer (first Friday in March) every year and host at St Thomas' in 2026.
- e. Develop a community coffee and chat morning for mums, school parents, parishioners and playgroup mums and dads.

OUTCOME FOUR:

Established pipelines of communication for Service & Outreach opportunities exist to engage our youth.

STRATEGIES:

- a. In all recruitment attempts, ensure adequate youth are represented by September 2023.
- b. Establish a formal line of communication with local high schools and identify 3 x outreach opportunities to collaborate on by December 2023.
- c. Have a youth outreach team (focussed on youth by youth) by 2026.
- d. Ensure youth are represented on the 100 years Celebration Committee for 2027.

LITURGY



The Liturgy Ministry exists to prepare engaging and sacred liturgical experiences for our parish community, where we express and celebrate our faith together. We seek to serve by respecting our Catholic tradition and recognising the Paschal Mystery of Jesus, who connects with and transforms the faithful to live out His mission in our modern world. Recognising that “we are many parts, but all one body,” we welcome and invite those with gifts in our community to help make our liturgies meaningful and spiritually fulfilling for all.

OUTCOME ONE:

We have an enthusiastic and active liturgical ministry team to plan for and oversee all aspects of liturgy in St Thomas’ parish.

STRATEGIES:

- a. Identify and invite 4-6 parishioners to be part of the liturgy team by September 2023.
- b. Develop a charter for liturgy team members around how we work together, express different voices in the decision-making process, and our roles and responsibilities by October 2023 and revise annually.
- c. Provide liturgy team members with formation from Liturgy Brisbane and/or Evangelisation Brisbane by March 2024.
- d. Establish smaller liturgical teams to take responsibility for specific liturgical seasons, feast days, and important events by March 2025.
- e. Form a technology/social media team of 3 members who will share liturgical events and reflections online by February 2024.

OUTCOME TWO:

We have a vibrant, enthusiastic, active and growing music ministry made up of choirs, musicians and cantors.

STRATEGIES:

- a. Add 4 new musicians and 4 cantors to the roster by February 2024.
- b. Hold 4-5 music jam sessions to encourage connection and networking with other music lovers by February 2024.
- c. Provide liturgical formation opportunities to music ministry team each year, beginning January 2025.
- d. Explore other liturgical composers and artists to widen the breadth and depth of music selection for our parish community by September 2023.
- e. Engage with the school APRE by June 2023 to identify appropriate music for the annual welcome Mass and House Masses and provide 2-3 musicians for these events.

OUTCOME THREE:

We consistently and joyfully invite new volunteers to become involved in liturgical ministries and support them in their formation.

STRATEGIES:

- a. Invite current parishioners to speak to the congregation about their involvement in a particular liturgical ministry each month by December 2023.
- b. Organise and offer formation opportunities for liturgical volunteers (sacristans, Mass organisers, readers, Extraordinary Ministers of Communion, collectors, audio-visual operators) through online/onsite professional learning by November 2023.
- c. Provide spiritual and liturgical reflections on the weekly readings/ liturgical seasons and/or feast days to volunteers through social media platforms, as well as in the parish newsletter, by February 2024.
- d. Collaborate with the school community as well as the Children & Families team to invite young people and families to join the altar serving, reading, audio-visual and offertory rosters by February 2024.

OUTCOME FOUR:

In consultation with the Children & Families team we engage with and build stronger connections with families from the parish playgroup, Canossa Kindergarten and St Thomas Community by facilitating experiences of prayer, liturgical play, and liturgy.

STRATEGIES:

- a. Organise a schedule for regular conversations between Liturgy team members and the principal/APRE to make school and parish Masses more developmentally appropriate and engaging by November 2023.
- b. Seek opportunities to provide regular updates in the school newsletter and Facebook page about special feast days, the liturgical seasons, and the schedule for House Masses by December 2023.
- c. Visit or provide updates in the playgroup and/or Canossa newsletters about what's coming up in the liturgical season, as well as parish liturgical events and invite families to be a part of the experience.
- d. Invite students and families to be part of the reading, offertory and altar server roster using visits to school classrooms (where appropriate and aligned to the RE program), offering training before or after school by February 2024.







PARISH PRAYER

Heavenly Father,
we give thanks for the gift of our parish community.
May all who gather here know that they are loved,
valued and welcomed with open arms.
We pray that You encourage us to give witness to faith
and proclaim the Gospel values of love, forgiveness,
compassion, hospitality and justice.
Help us to be instruments of peace and healing to all
of creation, as we celebrate your goodness and mercy.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.
St Thomas the Apostle, pray for us.

