

St John Neumann Pastoral Council

A Pastoral Council has been mandated by the Diocese for all parishes. The inclusion of the word "Pastoral" defines the role for the council. Rather than focusing on specific program planning and implementation, the new model calls for a council that will lead the parish community in the discernment and expression of its mission. This new role presents a challenge to parishes: they must redefine the nature of their leadership and call forth those who are best gifted to serve in that capacity. The weekend of March 20/21 of 2010 our parish selected the 15 council members. Five were chosen by the parish. The other ten were selected by the discernment team and the Parish Staff during the following week. The new members are:



Debra M. Wolf

What do you bring to the Pastoral Council?

As a mother raising 4 children within the SJN parish for the past 27 years and as a Associate Professor of Nursing, I can offer the Pastoral Council my personal and professional experiences, knowledge, and communication - leadership skills needed to strategically plan and guide decisions that will support continuous growth and family harmony at SJN. I offer a personality that is welcoming and open to new ideas. I offer a belief that together many things can be accomplished successfully if we work together in a collaborative caring manner.

What are your hopes for the parish in the next five years?

Over the next five years, my vision and deepest hopes are to see the parish gather as a united whole. A parish that is able to move forward with a plan that focuses on unity not separation. I hope to see our family reunited in joyful activities that support numerous needs not only across our parish, but to surrounding community needs. I hope we can strengthen and revitalize our image in the minds of all parish members as a community one would be proud to be part of. In 5 years I hope SJN is the parish of choice for all families.



Sandy Jagus

What do you bring to the Pastoral Council?

I have enjoyed being an active member of SJN for the past 19 years. My husband D.J. and I have two children, Adam, 17 and Amanda, 13. The Catholic Formation Programs at SJN have been a passion of mine since my children were very young. I have been a Good Shepherd Level I Catechist for 12 years and a Summer CCD Catechist for the past 6 years. I was also actively involved with Vacation Bible School and the Verland Outreach Ministry for many years. Most recently my husband and I have become members of the Marriage Prep Team.

What are your hopes for the parish in the next five years?

I think this is an exciting time for our parish. By encouraging greater participation and involvement in parish ministries we can better utilize and efficiently provide the vast and abundant assets the parish has to offer. By actively engaging our youth we will revitalize our community through their witness, energy and service. It is my hope to foster a spirit of togetherness that will lead the parish forward in service and gratitude to Christ and to one another.



April Butkus

What do you bring to the Pastoral Council? The most obvious contribution I could make is the perspective of someone in the 20-30 year-old age bracket. I think that it's important to include the ideas of this demographic, so that we can continue to create an environment where young people feel excited about participating in the church. In addition, my 2 yrs in W.Africa with the U.S.Peace Corps and the work I've done in other developing countries, has instilled in me a sincere appreciation of simplicity and our commonality as a human race; and I would love to bring these values into all the great work already going on at SJN.

What are your hopes for the parish in the next five years? I hope that this parish will continue to live out the values of Christ through community service; but I also hope that the church will offer more opportunities for the parishioners to understand and reflect on the causes of inequality/injustice, both in Pgh and in our global community. It's my wish that the work of the parish will engender in its parishioners a desire to live our lives justly, and love our neighbors more completely. Lastly, I'd like to see more people get involved with SJN beyond attending Mass, because participation in the activities here has been wonderfully fulfilling for me.



Helen C. O'Hallaron

What do you bring to the Pastoral Council?

I bring my love for God and this church; my commitment to prayer as essential for peace, strength, renewal, God's grace and guidance; my desire to be part of making SJN an intimate community of faith answering God's call to holiness together; my ability to listen with compassion in ways that make people feel they are being heard and cared about; my capacity for hard work and being a woman of my word.

What are your hopes for the parish in the next five years?

In 5 years I hope to see SJN as a closely knit community, strongly committed to growing in faith together, who in supporting, caring for and loving one another become the face of Christ not only to each other but to the world.

What do you bring to the Pastoral Council?

I have been a parishioner for over 14 years. I enjoyed serving on many ministries. I believe I can bring a reasoned spiritual perspective to the Pastoral Council. I enjoy working with many of the people on the Discernment group. Together we can grow the parish in many ways. Being involved in many community organizations gives me a unique view of the wider communities we serve. Finally I've been blessed in knowing Fr. Al for a long time. We are truly blessed to have him for our pastor. I look forward to working with him.

What are your hopes for the parish in the next five years?

We need to continue the healing process for our Parish, but much good has been done. We should continue to build our Youth Ministry. We have many talented people to draw from. We recently started a Social Justice ministry. We should emphasize a continued outreach to the larger community. With the addition of Social Justice we should coordinate all Community Outreach ministries including Habitat and Light of Life. We must pay off our debt to the Diocese. A three year plan to do so should be implemented by working with Finance Committee.



Don Huber

What do you bring to the Pastoral Council?

The most important things I bring to Council are my quiet, peaceful spirit, my faith, and my ability to listen well and really hear what is being said. With my three children largely out of the house, and my outside employment calm, I also have the time and energy to commit to the Council. Being a "newer" member of SJN (less than 10 years!), I can bring new perspectives from what I have experienced in other parishes, while being open to all ideas. I believe in giving back to the community, and through prayerful discernment feel God has led me to this point.

What are your hopes for the parish in the next five years?

My hope is that our parish will continue to be a caring and giving people and a place where all feel welcomed and encouraged to grow in their faith. I hope together we can identify the unmet needs of our parishioners and determine the best strategies to meet those that are most critical. I also pray we will increase participation in the many existing parish programs while being open to new ideas, programs, and ways of doing things. By recognizing and appreciating the many gifts people bring to the parish, God's spirit can grow even more within our community.



Maureen L. Turo



Tom LaVoice

What do you bring to the Pastoral Council?

I bring a strong faith, hope and love in our Lord, Jesus Christ, his Father and the Holy Spirit. I have a willing, positive attitude and look forward to the opportunity to work with people and represent the people of our Parish on our journey through this life. I believe that we are all from the same family and no one person is better than anyone else. I try to look at everyone as if I were walking in their shoes and listen to their issues. I feel this approach will help me to represent the overall interests of our parish fairly.

What are your hopes for the parish in the next five years?

I want to see St. John Neumann continue to grow, both in our faith and in our welcoming everyone into our worship celebrations to God. I want us to be able to offer assistance to our sisters and brothers worldwide. I would like to see our parish faith strengthen and improve its financial position so we are able to continue to offer a wide variety of programs and services. I hope we can find ways to increase the involvement of more members of the parish in the many opportunities that St. John Neumann offers.

What do you bring to the Pastoral Council?

- ∴ Gratitude for God's gifts of faith, people and creation
- ∴ A life concept of piety-study-action
- ∴ Creative conceptual thinking
- ∴ Empathetic listening
- ∴ Diverse long term experience based wisdom with intrinsic values, discipline, conscience and common sense.
- ∴ Specific experience in strategic planning, consensus development and data gathering design

What are your hopes for the parish in the next five years?

*Evaluation at the end of each of the five years by all parties that reflect the following:

- ∴ Growth as a spiritually based parish community
- ∴ A current pastoral plan and continuing consensus based planning process that truly reflects the prioritized needs of the parish and related communities
- ∴ Growth in individual personal stewardship support of objectives and strategies flowing from the planning process
- ∴ Meeting the ultimate test of individual and communal discipleship of Christ



Paul Lang

What do you bring to the Pastoral Council?

I would bring the same commonalities that permeate everything I do – organization, planning and desire for a good outcome. In addition, my strengths of being, foremost, a good listener, insightful and adaptable would play a key role as a member of the Pastoral Council. Most importantly, I have the ability to set aside my own desires so that those of others can be heard, considered and possibly accepted as a better way to achieve the same end. Finally, I am willing to commit serving as a member for the next five years to bring integrity and continuity to the Council.

What are your hopes for the parish in the next five years?

My vision for St. John Neumann over the next five years is to become a faith community that our geographic neighbors and our diocese will point to when they talk about people who are committed to accepting the Gospel and living it through worship, education, outreach and evangelization. I see our members looking to our parish as one would a family, not an institution. I imagine our parish as dynamic, changing to meet the needs of our members and those we serve.



Clare Browne



Carole Shepard

What do you bring to the Pastoral Council?

I have been part of different parish communities as a young adult, a newlywed, a new mom and now an “empty-nester”. I have been involved in many ministries - including Faith Formation , Baptism & Marriage preparation classes. I also work as a speech therapist in long-term care. I believe that unique perspective is something valuable that I can bring to Pastoral Council – seeing the needs of all parish members from children in faith formation, to parents trying to find time and energy to meet the needs of children and aging parents, to older parishioners who have much to offer.

What are your hopes for the parish in the next five years?

I would like to focus on two areas – **growth** and **stewardship** Opportunities for growth include increasing involvement of our current parishioners, growing stronger relationships with our staff and community and building our parish community through the Faith Formation & RCIA program. Stewardship is also important – we are called to be good stewards of all we have to offer. Our time, talents and money are all needed to enrich our parish family. I think our struggles of the past also give us a great opportunity to be models of compassion, hope and forgiveness to our wider community.



Ann Shuckrow

What do you bring to the Pastoral Council?

A broad knowledge of the people of the parish both communally and individually;
A strong sense of the history of the parish;
People skills;
Experience with consensus building;
A proven track record in the area of getting people involved and matching their talents with possible areas of service.

What are your hopes for the parish in the next five years?

St. John Neumann Parish has been recognized as exemplifying the characteristics of hospitality and service. I would hope to see those charisms reinforced. Some years ago we had a focus on becoming a community of small communities so that when people came to worship at weekend liturgies, they would not be among strangers. There would be people present with whom they had a relationship. Finally my dream is that the SJN parish community will recapture the sense of joy that permeated our coming together whether for liturgy or social gatherings and that , comfortable in our identify, we will journey confidently into our future.



Jack McCluskey

What do you bring to the Pastoral Council?

I believe I have an open mind and am a good listener to determine the needs and wishes of the parishioners.

- ?? I have some experience:
 - Six years on SJN Parish Council
 - Two years as president
 - Lector for 20 + years
 - Weekly offering counter 20+ years
 - President of a small corporation – 25 years

- ?? I have a strong desire to :
 - Improve the life of the parish
 - Increase membership
 - Reduce debt
 - Turn the page on the past

What are your hopes for the parish in the next five years?

- ?? A healthy, friendly and growing parish known as the most Christian community in the diocese.
- ?? Even more lay involvement.
- ?? A full church at Masses.
- ?? A strong sense of family among parishioners.
- ?? More interaction with all religions
- ?? More teen and 20 + involved actively



Jeff Full

What do you bring to the Pastoral Council? What I would bring to the Council is my desire for the evangelization of God's love through the advancement of His plan for SJN. God has a great plan for our parish and He will lead us there, if we only let him. My personal journey since joining the Church and SJN six years ago has helped me to appreciate that God has a plan for His people, both as individuals and as a gathered community. I believe it is up to us to be open to His plan that will be revealed through prayer, reflection, and listening with all our senses for His guidance.

What are your hopes for the parish in the next five years?

I hope for a gracious parish that is welcoming to all and diverse in its faithful, but strongly united as one in communion with Christ. May our community reflect His heart in both word and action, through its ministry to those within our community and those in need beyond our community that we are called to serve. I hope for a parish that is financially sound through the prudent use of its resources to evangelize within the community and beyond through its volunteers, staff, and facilities.



Sam Kirsch

What do you bring to the Pastoral Council?

Members of the SJN Pastoral Council should possess the ability to advise, advocate and implement. I am an effective listener committed to help identify the diverse needs of the community and provide perspective and advice in an honest, direct fashion. As an advocate, I bring a collaborative spirit that will enable me to build consensus and effectively communicate the goals and objectives of the Council and parish. My professional background and experience enables me to ensure that the plans identified by the Council to address the critical needs of the parish are successfully implemented by taking ownership and responsibility for their success.

What are your hopes for the parish in the next five years?

To maintain our commitment to building a parish that effectively meets the needs of its members while significantly increasing their involvement in both lay ministry and our energetic outreach programs. We must continue to encourage the spiritual development of our members and enrich their lives through an engaging liturgy, spiritual opportunities and fellowship. To increase parish involvement, we must first reach out to newcomers to make them feel welcome and educate and encourage them to participate. We must also increase the commitment to youth and fellowship activities so members view the parish as an integral part of their everyday lives. Finally, we need to work toward a healthy financial environment where our finances keep pace with the parish needs.



John W. Kohler

What do you bring to the Pastoral Council?

- Ability to listen
- Dedication and concern for our parish
- Experience: 26 years as an active St. John Neumann parishioner

What are your hopes for the parish in the next five years?

In five years I hope to see St. John Neumann parish becoming the spiritual home to an ever widening circle of diverse parishioners. These individuals and families will initially be attracted by our genuinely warm and welcoming congregation. St. John Neumann will be a place where anyone who is interested will feel comfortable stepping into one of our groups or ministries. Our parish activities will be organized around specific needs and wants of our members. We will be a faith filled community guided by the Holy Spirit.

**Installation of the new members is Sunday May 16, 2010 at the 9:30 am Mass.
Please keep them and our parish in your prayers.**