



Pathways TOWARD A THRIVING PARISH

A Project of Loyola Institute for Ministry + NCCL

An Invitation

Imagine your parish as...

A welcoming family, where every member lives out their God-given mission with joy and purpose

A nurturing an environment where faith blossoms and spiritual renewal takes root

A compassionate community, listening with open hearts to help all thrive

A vibrant tapestry, where each person's unique gifts create a beautiful whole

Is this the parish you dream of?

If these are your hopes and dreams for your parish, we have a process that can help make this a reality! This process recognizes that the parish is where the Church lives – it is the heart of our Church.

Every parish strives to be a vibrant community where faith flourishes, the Gospel is lived, and believers encounter Jesus in word and sacrament. Every parish experiences the challenges of being a community where the Church lives. Pope Francis reminds us that a parish capable of renewal and adaptation remains "the Church living in the midst of her people's homes."

There is no one way to make this happen, no one path to follow, no one way to be a thriving, vital community of faith. There are many paths to thriving.

The Pathways toward a Thriving Parish Project will help your parish create your own paths toward a thriving, vital community of faith that is living its mission in today's world by...

- ◆ Equipping a parish leadership team with the knowledge, skills, and practices for creating a thriving parish
- ◆ Forming leaders and the parish community in the processes of listening and interpreting the needs of the community, and in the spirituality of discernment
- ◆ Embracing and discovering the shared vision and mission of the Church, and the gifts, abilities, and resources of the parish community, and equip them as individuals and teams for ministry and service in the parish and in the world

As we journey together in the three-year Pathways toward a Thriving Parish Project, your parish will be blessed with:

- ◆ A profound experience of church as the people of God, embracing a common mission with love and purpose
- ◆ Pastoral accompaniment and training for your leadership team, helping them shepherd the parish as they develop a plan toward a thriving future
- ◆ Enriching formation resources to deepen your ability to listen with compassion, understand your community's needs, and prayerfully discern God's will
- ◆ Inspiring resources and tools to discover the gifts of the parish community
- ◆ Practical resources and guidance to create and implement the parish's pathways toward thriving

Together, we'll walk hand in hand, discovering the abundant blessings that await your faith community!

*Through a generous grant from Lilly Endowment, Inc.
all services of the Pathways toward a Thriving Parish are free to participating parishes.*

Experiencing the Pathways toward a Thriving Parish Project

Parishes will develop a leadership team of 8-12 people from a variety of ministries and responsibilities in parish life to participate in the workshops and lead the initiative in their parishes. Parishes will participate in cohorts of up to ten parishes who will journey together through the five workshops and online support meetings throughout 2025, 2026, and 2027. The Saturday workshop programs will be conducted regionally for parishes that are in close geographic proximity to each other or nationally in an online format for parishes that are not close to a regional center.

Workshop #1 (Saturday In February or March 2025): Regional In-Person Workshop or National Online Workshop

What Your Team Will Experience...

- Discover the vision and practices of Thriving Parishes.
- Learn how to grow as a team that listens to the needs, hungers, and hopes of your parish community.
- Explore how listening and discernment leads to action and building a thriving parish community.
- Apply: Practice listening and discernment as a team.

Monthly Cohort Meetings with the Parish Coordinators

Workshop #2 (Saturday in May or June 2025): Regional In-Person Workshop or National Online Workshop

What Your Team Will Experience...

- Reflect on the team's practice of listening and discernment: What fruits did you experience in this way of being church together?
- Identify the mission of the parish as it is being lived out today.
- Explore the life, mission, and ministries of the parish community: What are we seeing? What are we experiencing? Who are we serving? What are emerging needs?
- Explore characteristics and practices of thriving parishes.
- Apply: Conduct parish-wide listening sessions with all ages to reflect on the life in your parish.

Monthly Cohort Meetings with the Parish Coordinators

Workshop #3 (Saturday in October or November 2025): Regional In-Person Workshop or National Online Workshop

What Your Team Will Experience...

- Analyze the results of the listening sessions and discern the implications for the future of the parish: What surprised us? What or who has emerged? What is moving us toward action?
- Develop pathways for your parish to deepen the vitality and mission of the parish grounded in listening and discernment.
- Apply: Design pathways for strengthening the parish and pathways for addressing challenges which have emerged through the listening and discernment process.

Monthly Cohort Meetings with the Parish Coordinators

Workshop #4 (Saturday in February or March 2026): Regional In-Person Workshop or National Online Workshop

What Your Team Will Experience...

- Share experiences of growth, challenge, and renewal.
- Design a multi-year action plan with strategies to implement the pathways toward thriving in the parish.
- Design a plan to engage all ages in discovering their gifts and abilities, and equipping them as individuals and teams for ministry and service in the parish and in the world.

Monthly Cohort Meetings with the Parish Coordinators throughout 2026

Workshop #5 (Saturday in February-April 2027): Continued Planning

What Your Team Will Experience...

- Discern and review the change your parish has experienced.
- Develop sustainability plans: Create strategies to maintain positive changes and continue growth beyond the project's end.

Monthly Cohort Meetings with the Parish Coordinators throughout 2027

Are you interested in being part of the team for St. Ann's? Or do you have questions? Contact Katie Johnson (kjohnson@stanncc.com; 804-526-2548)