

Strategic Planning Session 6 Update

On Sunday, December 15, 2024, our leadership team gathered for the 6th session of the Strategic Planning Process for the Catholic Community of Bartlesville. We are excited to share the highlights and outcomes of this session. There are incremental steps that we are taking as we proceed, such as combining the bulletins and addressing Mass times. As we move forward, more incremental steps and/or activities will be addressed.

What We Discussed: Mass Times:

After careful consideration, prayerful discernment, and a thorough review of your feedback by the Strategic Planning Team, we are pleased to announce the updated weekend Mass schedule for the Catholic Community of Bartlesville. This decision was made to address the pastoral challenges faced by our clergy, ensure a vibrant spiritual experience for all parishioners, and provide a more balanced and manageable schedule for our community.

New Weekend Mass Schedule (Effective the Weekend of January 4/5, 2025):

- **Saturday Evening Mass:**
 - 4:30 PM at St. James – confessions at 3:30
- **Sunday Morning Masses:**
 - 8:30 AM at St. John – confessions at 8:00
 - 11:00 AM at St. John – confessions at 10:30
- **Sunday Afternoon Mass:**
 - 1:30 PM (Spanish) at St. John – confessions at 12:30

Please note that there are NO CHANGES to the daily mass schedule

Why This Change?

1. **Addressing Priest Availability:** Currently, two priests serve approximately 1,000 families across six weekend Masses, a challenging schedule which includes overlapping mass times that impacts their ability to provide adequate pastoral care. Reducing the schedule to four weekend Masses allows both priests to be present at Masses, extending opportunities for confessions, parishioner interaction, and other pastoral duties. Also, planning for the future reality that only one priest may be assigned to Bartlesville. With 20 priests retiring in the Diocese in the next 10 years, and only 10 priests on track to be ordained, many parishes will feel this impact.
2. **Ensuring a Sufficient Mass Time:** Each Mass time is structured to allow:
 - a. Confessions: 45 minutes to an hour before Mass.
 - b. Greeting and preparation: 15 minutes before Mass.
 - c. Celebrating Mass: Approximately 60 minutes.
 - d. Post-Mass greetings and travel time when needed: 15 minutes + after Mass.
3. **Balancing Community Needs:** This new schedule ensures accessibility for both St. James and St. John parishioners while aligning with the strategic goals of fostering the unity of the Catholic Community of Bartlesville and inviting vibrant participation.

How the Decision Was Made

- The Strategic Planning Team reviewed all feedback submitted by parishioners regarding the proposed Mass time options.
- Key considerations included the desire to retain a Saturday evening Mass at St. James, concerns about emotional ties to current schedules and locations, and the practical logistics of balancing priestly duties and parish needs including confessions and time for priest interactions with the parishioners, and availability of priests to cover Masses in case of sickness, educational travel, vacations, personal days, and for other parishes that may have a priest shortage for various reasons.
- Multiple options were discussed, vetting the pros and cons on each, before deciding on this schedule.

Next Steps

We understand that changes to Mass times may require adjustments for many families. We invite you to embrace this new schedule with an open heart and a spirit of collaboration as we work together to strengthen and unify our Catholic Community of Bartlesville. We are growing together into one community of Catholics worshipping in two churches.

What We Discussed: Strategic Planning Goals:

- Our goal is to develop a unified plan that includes a shared **vision, purpose, values, priorities, and action steps** for the Catholic Community of Bartlesville.
- The planning process will continue monthly, concluding in May 2025, with an actionable plan ready for implementation.
- **Community Feedback:** We reflected on the insights gathered from parish listening sessions, which highlighted key concerns:
 - i. Space constraints for ministry activities.
 - ii. The need for greater evangelization
 - iii. The need to preserve traditions while embracing change.

What We Discussed: Drafting a Purpose Statement:

- We began crafting a purpose statement that reflects the mission of our Catholic Community of Bartlesville, and we are looking forward to sharing that with all of you soon.
 - **Next Steps:** At our next session on **January 12, 2025**, we will work on our Catholic Community of Bartlesville Vision and Values.
 - We encourage you to share your thoughts and feedback as this process unfolds.

We are deeply grateful for your prayers and support as we work together to strengthen and unify the Catholic Community of Bartlesville. If you have additional questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the parish offices, priests, or members of the Strategic Planning Team. Please keep our Team in your prayers as we discern God's vision for our parishes.

In Christ's Peace,

The Strategic Planning Team