

## Parish Vision

*St John the Evangelist Parish is a welcoming community of brothers and sisters in Christ that grows in love and unity, nurtures faith, serves, and gives with generosity. Nourished by the Eucharist, empowered by the Word, and led by the Holy Spirit, we share the transforming love of Jesus with others, in the tradition of our patron, St John the Evangelist.*



## Explanatory notes

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### “a welcoming community of brothers and sisters in Christ”

1. The Parish Gathering and pew card feedback identified that ‘family’ is very important to the people at St John’s. The sense of ‘family’ is one of our strengths as a parish. Jesus expands this idea of ‘family’ beyond the human-based biological and genetic connections when he says, “Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?” And stretching out his hand towards his disciples he said, ‘Here are my mother and my brothers. Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.’” (*Matthew 12:48-50*) To be brothers and sisters in Christ is to be members of the true ‘family’ of God.

### “grows in love and unity”

2. St John, our Patron, speaks constantly about love and unity, so it is good to be explicit about the centrality of love and unity in building up the Christian community. Love and unity are the signs that make Christ present in the world.

“...I give you a new commandment; love one another as I have loved you. It is by your love that everyone will recognise that you are my disciples.” (*John 13:34-35*) and...

“...We are declaring to you, what we have seen and heard, so that you too may share our life. Our life is shared with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.” (*1 John 1:3*)

### “nurtures faith”

3. Nurturing faith includes the sacramental life of the Church, but equally important, the ongoing formation of faith in both adults and children. This includes sacramental preparation, youth ministries such as LIVE Local, and adult faith formation such as Alpha, Bible Study, Lenten and Advent groups, Parish Missions, and discipleship groups such as Faith Circles.

### “serves”

4. To serve others is a central part of living the Christian Life. You cannot be a Christian if you do not have a spirit of service. Jesus makes this clear when he says:

“Anyone who wants to become great among you must be your servant, and anyone who wants to be first among you must be your slave, just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (*Matthew 20:26-28*), and again:

“If I, then, the Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you must wash each other’s feet. I have given you an example so that you may copy what I have done for you.” (*John 13:14-15*)

### **“gives with generosity.”**

5. To give refers to God’s call to us to share generously from what God has given us. This includes our time, talents, and resources. Jesus says, “Do not store up treasures for yourselves on earth, where moth and woodworm destroy them, and thieves can break in and steal. But store up treasures for yourselves in heaven... For where your treasure is, there will your heart be too.” (*Matthew 6:19-21*)

### **“Nourished by the Eucharist”**

6. In our Parish feedback, the centrality of the Eucharist emerged as one of the most important things to our parishioners, which is why this has been explicitly mentioned in our Vision. Our hope is to make the experience of the Eucharist ever richer and deeper for everyone in our parish, so that we can be empowered to live Christ’s mission in our world.

### **“empowered by the Word”**

7. Recent Popes have gone to great lengths to encourage Catholics to deepen their understanding and love of the Scriptures. It is important, therefore, that we intentionally create opportunities for the people of our parish to encounter the Scriptures more deeply. Pope Benedict XVI said, “...knowledge and study of the Word of God enable us to better appreciate, celebrate and live the Eucharist. Here too we can see how true it is that ‘Ignorance of the scripture is ignorance of Christ (St Jerome).’”

### **“led by the Holy Spirit”**

8. It is through the Holy Spirit that we have the capacity to fully live the Christian Life. Our Patron, St John speaks often about the Holy Spirit... “This is the proof that we remain in Him and He in us, that he has given us a share of his Spirit.” (*1 John 4:13*) and “No one can enter the kingdom of God without being born through water and the Spirit.” (*John 3:5*)

Also, Pope Francis speaks continuously about the Holy Spirit, and how the Holy Spirit has the power to transform us and therefore transform our world...” Let us invoke the Holy Spirit each day: He guides us along the path of discipleship in Christ.” “The Holy Spirit transforms and renews us, creates harmony and unity, and gives us courage and joy for mission.” (*Pope Francis*) Without the Holy Spirit, we can do nothing.

### **“we share the transforming love of Jesus with others”**

9. It is essential to our mission as Christians to share the Good News. We cannot be a church which focusses inwards and only on ourselves. Until his dying breath, St John continued to speak to people of the love of Jesus Christ. We are called to reach out to others, as individuals and as a church community. Pope Francis constantly urges Catholics to take their mission seriously: “Lord, teach us to go outside ourselves. Teach us to go out into the streets and manifest your love.” And again, “mere administration can no longer be enough. Throughout the world let us be permanently in a state of mission.”

### **“in the tradition of our patron, St John the Evangelist”**

10. In their feedback through the Parish Gathering and the pew cards, our parishioners mentioned their love of traditions, and how this forms part of our identity as a Parish. So let us intentionally draw on the ‘tradition’ of our wonderful patron, St John the Evangelist. This great saint and evangelist gives us an historical connection to our mission of outreach and evangelisation. As a Parish we can draw more deeply on the patronage and intercession of St John, as we grow in our mission to make Jesus Christ present to those around us.