



St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church *Laudato Si'* Action Platform Reflection

Parish Visionⁱ: *Where Jesus is encountered, proclaimed, and shared.*

Parish Missionⁱⁱ: *A welcoming community committed to preparing disciples to live the mission of Jesus Christ through spirit-filled worship, life-long faith formation, and service to each other and the world.*

Parish Strategic Plan 2023-2028ⁱⁱⁱ

Pillar #4: Compassionate Service – *We will actively engage in meaningful outreach to one another and the community.*

- *Goal #1: Educate for a deeper understanding of Catholic Social Teaching principles to live them in our daily lives.*
- *Goal #2: Create pathways of service opportunities that will engage parish members of all ages, talents and interests.*
- *Goal #3: Provide service outreach to those in need in our parish, the broader Omaha community and beyond.*

Pillar #5: We will professionally manage our resources to carry out our mission.

- *Goal #1: Implement an effective Human Resource Plan to ensure staff and volunteer fulfillment, fair treatment, and optimal utilization of gifts.*
- *Goal #2: Develop a Facility Master Plan for maintaining, using, and developing St. Wenceslaus parish facilities.*
- *Goal #3: Maintain a secure, safe, and healthy St. Wenceslaus Parish & School environment.*
- *Goal #4: Manage St. Wenceslaus financial resources with professionalism and transparency.*

Reflection

The Vatican's *Laudato Si'* Action Platform (LSAP) equips and empowers Catholic communities to live the Church's mission more fully through faithful action to better care for our common home.^{iv} The Platform invites our community to pursue seven Goals animated by Church teaching on ecology.

- *Goal #1: The Response to the Cry of the Earth is a call to protect our common home for the wellbeing of all, as we equitably address the climate crisis, biodiversity loss, and ecological sustainability.*
- *Goal #2: The Response to the Cry of the Poor is a call to promote eco-justice, aware that we are called to defend human life from conception to death, and all forms of life on Earth.*
- *Goal # 3: Ecological Economics acknowledges that the economy is a sub-system of human society, which itself is embedded within the biosphere—our common home.*
- *Goal #4: The Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles is grounded in the idea of sufficiency, and promoting sobriety in the use of resources and energy.*
- *Goal #5: Ecological Education is about re-thinking and re-designing curricular and institutional reform in the spirit of integral ecology in order to foster ecological awareness and transformative action.*
- *Goal #6: Ecological Spirituality springs from a profound ecological conversion and helps us to “discover God in all things”, both in the beauty of creation and in the sighs of the sick and the groans of the afflicted, aware that the life of the spirit is not dissociated from worldly realities.*
- *Goal #7: Community resilience and empowerment envisage a synodal journey of community engagement and participatory action at various levels.*

St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church's commitment to the LSAP expresses our Parish Vision. Caring for God's creation through pursuit of these goals facilitates *encounter* and deepened relationship with God who is present in and revealed through creation. The *Catechism* teaches that “God created the world to show forth and communicate his glory” and Pope Benedict XVI thus observes that “nature speaks to us of the Creator.”^v This encounter with God in creation can foster what Pope Francis describes as “an ‘ecological conversion’, whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them.”^{vi} These effects are evidenced through faithful evangelical *proclamation* and *sharing* of Jesus through actions and education that embody and express Catholic ecological teachings. As the Church describes, evangelization is the “announcing of Christ by a living testimony as well as by the spoken word.”^{vii}



St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church

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St. Wenceslaus's commitment to the LSAP also advances our Mission and Strategic Plan. Disciples are members of the Church as the "people of God" whose conversion initiates relationship with God. The spiritual relationship catalyzes external action that witnesses to Jesus through faith that is animated by the Spirit and "adequately responds" to God's love.^{viii} The Church's mission is to embody and advance God's "kingdom of holiness and grace, a kingdom of justice, love and peace" and where ecological stewardship is "essential."^{ix} This entails evangelization, as described above, occurs through love that wills and acts for the good and is expressed through the "Two Feet of Love in Action": charitable works as direct action and social justice as reform of systems, structures, and policies.^x Since conversion and spirituality are symbiotic with action, these expressions of love deepen internal *metanoia* and relationship with God.

Rooted in these foundations, commitment to the *LSAP Goal #5: Ecological Education* and *Goal #6: Ecological Spirituality* support the Parish Mission to *prepare disciples to live the mission of Jesus Christ* and support *life-long faith formation*. It also realizes the Parish Strategic Plan *Pillar #4, Goal #1 to educate for a deeper understanding of Catholic Social Teaching principles to live them in our daily lives*. Enhanced conversion and spirituality are also the prerequisites to ecological stewardship of God's creation. As Pope Benedict XVI observes, "The external deserts in the world are growing, because the internal deserts have become so vast."^{xi}

Animated by the *LSAP Goal #5: Ecological Education* and *Goal #6: Ecological Spirituality*, the parish conversion of mind and heart can then be expressed by actions to realize the *LSAP Goal #1: Response to the Cry of the Earth, Goal #2: Response to the Cry of the Poor, Goal #3: Ecological Economics, Goal #4: Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles, and Goal #7: Community Resistance and Empowerment*. Pursuit of these goals furthers the Parish Mission to enact *service to each other and the world*. It can also advance *Strategic Plan Pillar #4, Goal #2: Create pathways of service opportunities that will engage parish members of all ages, talents and interests, and Goal #3: Provide service outreach to those in need in our parish, the broader Omaha community and beyond*. Since spirituality, conversion, and action are symbiotic, pursuit of these goals would achieve the aforementioned LSAP and parish formation goals. Additionally, pursuit of *LSAP Goal #1 and Goal #3* can especially advance the Parish Strategic Plan *Pillar #5*.

The Church's mission calls us to embody God's kingdom where creation care is essential through internal ecclesial policies that "administer its own goods in such a way that" enact Church teaching.^{xii} Additionally, Saint John Paul II recognizes that the environment "cannot be safeguarded simply by market forces" of policies grounded in self-interest and short-term profit.^{xiii} Pope Benedict XVI warns that such "pursuit of myopic economic interests" is "a serious threat to creation" and calls for comprehensive valuations that "consider the cost entailed – environmentally and socially – as an essential part of the overall expenses incurred."^{xiv}

Since the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops calls for "prudent" ecological action and declares that "decarbonization... is the preeminent environmental challenge,"^{xv} the *LSAP Goal #1* invitation for parish decarbonization and the related *Goal #3* call for comprehensive valuations are notable opportunities to pursue the Parish Strategic Plan *Pillar #5: We will professionally manage our [energy and financial] resources to carry out our mission*. In particular, a parish decarbonization policy would advance the *Goal #1* ideal of *optimal utilization of gifts, Goal #2* aspiration to *develop a Facility Master Plan for maintaining, using, and developing St. Wenceslaus parish facilities, and Goal #4* ideal to *manage St. Wenceslaus financial resources with professionalism* that is faithful to the fullness of Church teaching.

As a parish community, we faithfully end our reflection with the words of Saint John Paul II:

At the conclusion of this Message, I should like to address directly my brothers and sisters in the Catholic Church, in order to remind them of their serious obligation to care for all of creation. The commitment of believers to a healthy environment for everyone stems directly from their belief in God the Creator, from their recognition of the effects of original and personal sin, and from the certainty of having been redeemed by Christ. Respect for life and for the dignity of the human person extends also to the rest of creation, which is called to join man in praising God (cf. Ps 148:96).^{xvi}



ⁱ St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church, “Strategic Plan 2023-2028,” 2023,

<https://www.stwenceslaus.org/component/fileman/file/documents/St.%20Wenceslaus%20Strategic%20Plan%202023-2028.pdf?routed=1&container=fileman-files>.

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, “*Laudato Si’* Action Platform,” 2024,

<https://laudatosi.actionplatform.org/>.

^v *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 319; Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, no. 48.

^{vi} Pope Francis, *Laudato Si’*, no. 217.

^{vii} Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 35.

^{viii} *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 1816, 142; Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 9.

^{ix} Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 36; Second Vatican Council, *Ad Gentes*, no. 1; Saint John Paul II, *Peace With God the Creator, Peace with All Creation*, no. 15.

^x St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 26; U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, “Two Feet of Love in Action,” 2024,

<https://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/two-feet-of-love-in-action>.

^{xi} Pope Benedict XVI, *Homily for the Solemn Inauguration of the Petrine Ministry*.

^{xii} Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 5; World Synod of Bishops, *Justitia in Mundo*, no. 47.

^{xiii} St. John Paul II, *Centessimus Annus*, no. 40.

^{xiv} Pope Benedict XVI, *If You Want to Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation*, no. 7.

^{xv} U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence, and the Common Good*, 2001,

<https://www.usccb.org/resources/global-climate-change-plea-dialogue-prudence-and-common-good>; U.S. Conference of

Catholic Bishops, “COP 28: U.S. Bishops Call for International Climate Policies that Promote Justice,” November 29, 2023,

[https://www.usccb.org/news/2023/cop-28-us-bishops-call-international-climate-policies-promote-](https://www.usccb.org/news/2023/cop-28-us-bishops-call-international-climate-policies-promote-justice#:~:text=Decarbonization%20of%20the%20economy%E2%80%94through,challenge%20faced%20by%20all%20nation)

[justice#:~:text=Decarbonization%20of%20the%20economy%E2%80%94through,challenge%20faced%20by%20all%20nation](https://www.usccb.org/news/2023/cop-28-us-bishops-call-international-climate-policies-promote-justice#:~:text=Decarbonization%20of%20the%20economy%E2%80%94through,challenge%20faced%20by%20all%20nation)

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^{xvi} St. John Paul II, *Peace with God the Creator, Peace with All Creation*, no. 16.