

ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE VISION STATEMENT

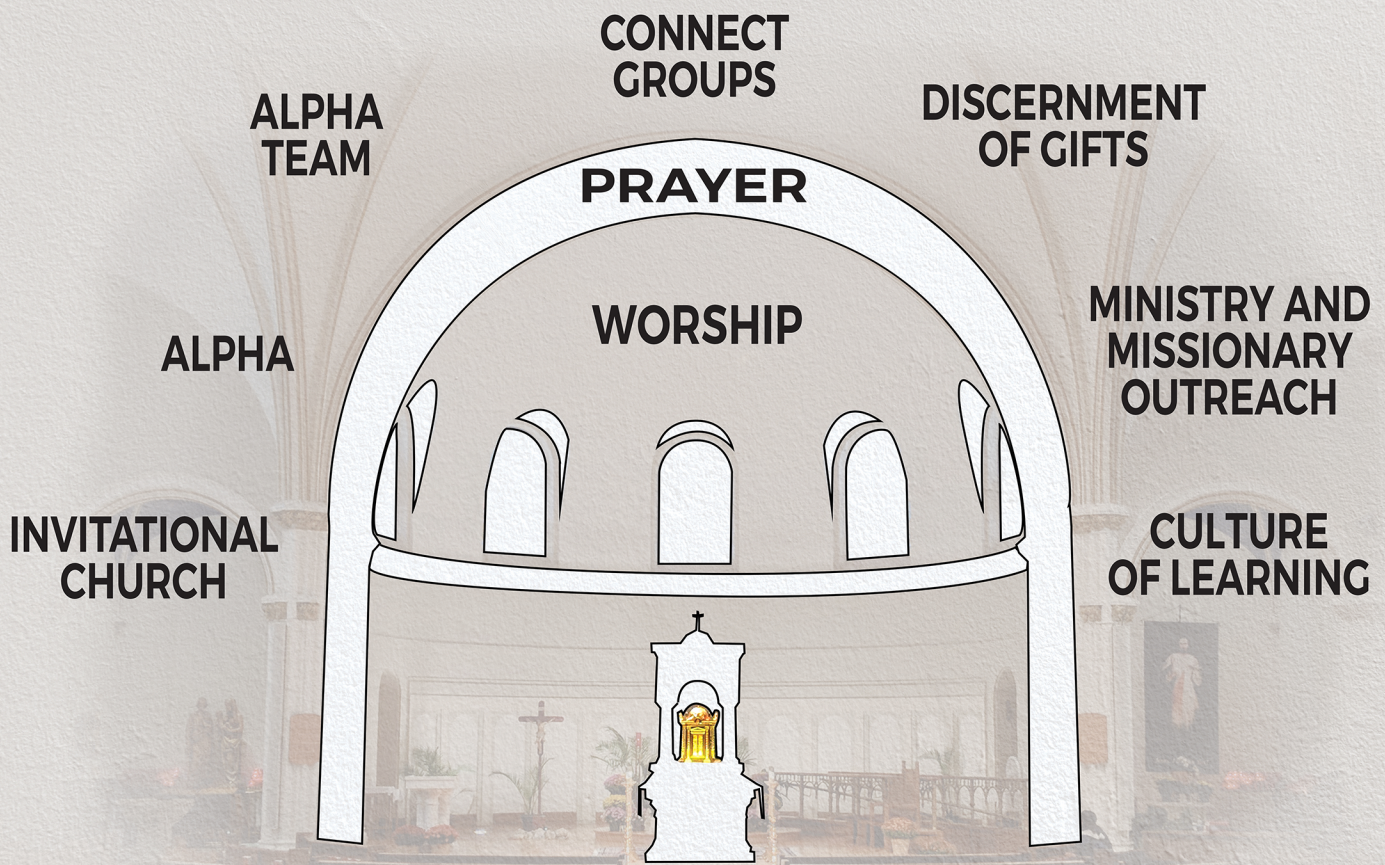
St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church is a welcoming community that exists to make and equip missionary disciples through a transformative encounter with Jesus Christ, the Gate of Heaven. As Spirit-filled disciples, we connect and share life together, love and serve the greater community, and worship and adore the living God.

This vision statement captures both our identity and a summary of our mission.

First of all, we are a Catholic Church. The word “Catholic” means universal. The one Gospel of Jesus Christ is here — for all. United to Jesus and through Him we are in communion with our bishop, and the Pope and all members of Christ’s Body in time and in eternity. Jesus came to save all people and we fulfill His command to baptize, to make disciples, and to “Do this in memory” of Him in celebrating the New Covenant of His Body and Blood at Mass.

As members of this community, we accept Jesus and welcome Jesus into our hearts in a conscious, and intentional way through faith. St Thomas struggled with this... but in the end, he said to Jesus, “My Lord and My God!” The encounter with the Risen Lord Jesus transformed St Thomas forever. Jesus does the same for us! Jesus is the Gate through which we all enter into Eternal Life. The welcome and love we have received, we give. It is that simple. How important— truly essential this is at St Thomas. So many new people come here each year! Maybe only for a short time. Our mission is to help all who come here meet Jesus and receive His love and a sense of their own belonging to Him and His greater family. We too can become a gate for them. Through that shared life, He helps us know our gifts, share our gifts, and even blesses us with more!

That is what it means to “connect and share life together, love and serve the greater community, and worship and adore the living God.” We have a strategy, a Game Plan to help deepen this vision and our own participation in the mission. Come and join us!



THE GAME PLAN

Invitational Church: The starting point of our Game Plan is to become an invitational Church. Success is measured by not only how welcoming we are, but also how our parishioners accept their role of inviting others.

Alpha: It isn't just a program, it's an experience. Alpha is our primary tool that invites others to a life of discipleship. Through Alpha people hear the Gospel in a fresh way and experience authentic Christian community. Through Alpha, all are able to belong, before they believe and behave. We encourage all who wish to belong to the parish to experience Alpha.

Alpha Team: Guests are invited to come back on Alpha Team. We aim for 50% new team members on each Alpha Course, so others are constantly moving on to different ministries. The experience of leading within Alpha raises up and equips missionary leaders.

Connect Groups: This is where Alpha alumni go to connect and grow. These small to mid-sized groups of 20-30 people retain the key ingredients of Alpha:

sharing a meal together, a talk from a member of the group, praise and worship, and discussion. Each Connect Group is led by 4 leaders, and meets every two weeks.

Discernment of Gifts: Charisms play a critical role in the life and service of lay Catholics in the life of the parish and community. Discerning particular charisms can change your life and the life of the parish.

Ministry and Missionary Outreach: All activity at the parish is meant to give us a missionary view. The Great Commission of our Lord is to "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

Culture of Learning: In 2000 years we have still not plumbed the depths of our faith. There is always more to learn. We learn not for the sake of knowledge, but to know and love our God and creator better.