



Date: **September 26, 2023**
Prepared by: **Laura Callaghan, Superintendent of Education**
Subject: **Pastoral Plan 2023-24: Called to Love**

Background

Each year, the Board Pastoral Plan supports faith formation of our community and identifies specific system goals for the year, in alignment with the Board Strategic Plan.

Working with the Catholic Faith Advisory Committee, including Leanne Moran, the System Chaplaincy Lead, and Kim Fitzmorris, Catholic Elementary Curriculum Consultant, goals are established to frame our work as a system for the coming year and root our work in our faith. The Committee examined the 2022–23 goals, progress made, and co-created the goals identified on this year's plan.

This year, our Board Pastoral Theme is *Called to Love*, and this mirrors the Catholic Education Week theme. This theme is pertinent for several reasons:

- With joyful anticipation of the Jubilee Year of 2025, we are inspired by Pope Francis announcing the theme of *"Pilgrims of Hope."* With open hearts of love, we can continue to *"fan the flame of hope"* for a bright future.
- On the fifth anniversary of Renewing the Promise, we celebrate that Catholic Education is centred on our Christian call to love. This love permeates how we live in the world and as we act with love, we build a better future.
- As Pope Francis stated in 2023, *"He wants us to be artisans of a new history, weavers of hope, builders of the future, peacemakers."* The theme of the synod, *"Enlarge the Space of Your Tent,"* invites us to listen in love, to be a healing presence to one another and to strengthen relationships. In his visit to Canada last summer, Pope Francis gave us hope for our continued work for Truth and Reconciliation. Through prayer and a commitment to love, stronger bonds are forming, and a new way forward is emerging.
- Catholic Education Week comes at the same time as Mental Health Awareness Week. Through love and compassion, we continue to support each other's wellbeing. God is love and we are always called to live out this love.
- In our continued work for Equity and Inclusion in Catholic schools, a focus on love reminds us that all God's children are loved unconditionally.

There are monthly sub-themes that will be explored:

As people of welcome (Sept)

Whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me. (Mark 9:37)

As people of gratitude (Oct)

Give thanks to the Lord for He is good, His love endures forever. (1 Chronicles 16:34)

As people of connection (Nov)

Though many, we are one body. (1Corinthians 12:12)

As people of hope (Dec)

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing. (Romans 15:13)

As people of prayer (Jan)

Pray without ceasing. (1Thessalonians 5:17)

As people of faith (Feb)

For in Christ Jesus...the only thing that counts is faith working through love. (Galatians 5:6)

As people of mercy (Mar)

Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. (Luke 6:36)

As people of joy (April)

Our heart is glad in the Lord, because we trust in his holy name. (Psalm 33:21)

As people of justice (May)

Do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God. (Micah 6:8)

As people of belonging (June)

Jesus proclaims his mission: to bring good news to the poor and oppressed. (Luke 4:16-21)

The pastoral plan identifies key actions for our work this year as we are “called to love”:

- Use Growing in Faith/Growing in Christ K-8 in daily religious instruction.
- Reflect our Catholicity in all that we do, in our classrooms and school communities.
- Align learning and achievement with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations.
- Communicate regularly with families and parishes to intentionally strengthen partnerships.

Our goals align with the board Student Achievement Plan and will help us focus on these actions in service of our strategic priorities.

Recommendations

That the St. Clair Catholic District School Board receive the report: *Pastoral Plan 2023-24: Called to Love*, for information.