



## **What is a “synod”?**

A synod (Greek, “council”) is an assembly of church leaders. It has been part of the Church since the time of the apostles, and the concept was reactivated by Vatican II. Pope Paul VI established the synod as a council of bishops chosen by bishops’ conferences around the world. Pope Francis reimagined the synod, calling for a Synod on Synodality in 2021, for the first time including laity and religious, men and women from all over the world meeting as equals with the cardinals and bishops.

## **What does “synodality” mean?**

Synodality is the method by which a synod makes decisions. It involves a broad range of people engaged in careful listening, sharing insights, and prayerful discussion with a goal of discerning the call of the Holy Spirit in the present moment.

“It is precisely this path of synodality which God expects of the Church of the third millennium.” This approach to decision-making should occur “at every level of the Church’s life,” including the laity, pastors, and bishops. (Pope Francis, 10/17/15)

## **How does this involve St. Francis de Sales parish?**

In 2024 members of our parish gathered as part of the worldwide synod process, to reflect on the strengths and failings of the Catholic Church; results of that session were sent to the Vatican. Many participants found that process meaningful and decided to apply it to our community as a way to enhance the life of our parish. One of the recommendations from that gathering last September was to conduct a survey of our parish, to determine ways to strengthen our faith community. Fr. Mike and the parish council supported the recommendation and a task force was appointed to implement it; Synod Sunday is the result.

## **What is Synod Sunday and how do I fit in?**

On September 28<sup>th</sup>, everyone is encouraged to complete a brief survey about our parish’s future direction. Because of the importance of this survey, it will be distributed and completed during the liturgy. All of us can contribute to this process by entering it prayerfully, asking the Holy Spirit to guide us in discerning how to better live the mission of Jesus in our place and time. In this time before Synod Sunday, please pray for the success of this process and seek the Spirit’s guidance in your response.

Results of the survey will be tabulated and shared with the community.