



Empowering Churches with Solutions to Simplify
Complex Diocesan and Parish Church Management

ParishSOFT Customer Success Story:

Sacred Heart Catholic Church
The Diocese of Charlotte

ParishSOFT®

Challenges

Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Brevard, North Carolina, is church home to approximately 500-550 families. The parish is community-focused, welcoming many Hispanics; retirees, who make up a large percentage of Brevard's population; and even the occasional snow-birding Catholic. As the church serves its community with Sacraments and ministries, the staff at Sacred Heart diligently serve their parish behind the scenes by recording member information, tracking Sacraments and faith formation training, generating giving records, and so much more.

Office Administrator Jenni Pogue is one of the few full-time staff members at Sacred Heart. Using web-based ParishSOFT Family Suite is an integral part of Pogue's daily work. ParishSOFT may be just software, but it's software that holds the data, invites and tracks the engagement of members, and allows the parish to effectively communicate with and support parishioners. And an integrated, web-based, user-friendly system isn't something to take for granted, especially at Sacred Heart.

When Pogue started at the parish in 2013, Sacred Heart had already paid for the ParishSOFT Family Suite. But they weren't using it! You see, making the decision to switch to a better software solution isn't nearly as difficult as taking the plunge and implementing new software. As an encouragement to other parishes that may be sitting on tools instead of using them, Pogue will attest that "taking the plunge" is worth it!

Before ParishSOFT entered the picture, the staff at Sacred Heart was getting by with software from Parish Data Systems (PDS). From Pogue's perspective, the PDS software they owned was not easy to use, lacked a faith formation component, and required a labor-intensive process for providing year-end statements to parishioners. After experiencing the difficulty of trying to run end-of-year statements with PDS, Pogue knew that making the transition from PDS to ParishSOFT had to become a top priority in 2014.

How Our Products Helped

"It's a little daunting when you have to transfer everything," Pogue said. That's probably why making the switch was put on the backburner for so long. But thanks to Pogue's initiative by mid-year 2014, Sacred Heart was well on the way to using two of their ParishSOFT modules: Family Directory and Offering and Pledges.

After transferring records from PDS to ParishSOFT, Pogue was able to store data and manage parishioner information through Family Directory. The software makes it easy to enter family and Sacrament information, track and report on data and trends, and communicate with parishioners. The end-of-year process, which had been a struggle with PDS, was made much simpler with Offering and Pledge's ability to produce parishioner contribution statements in just a few keystrokes.

Pogue has also utilized the unique user permission settings in the Family Suite to make daily operations easier and more secure. Because of the customized permission settings in ParishSOFT, Pogue can confidently let her part-time assistant help out with record keeping. The assistant has access to the data but cannot delete anything. This is a safeguard designed to give everyone peace of mind. Pogue's assistant doesn't have more access than she needs, and Pogue doesn't have to worry about anything accidentally being deleted.

Within the last year, Pogue and Tricia Poché, the faith formation coordinator, have begun using the ParishSOFT

Religious Education module. The 2016-17 school year is their first year in the new system, and Pogue is excited about the advantages she sees in using faith formation software that's integrated with their parish database.

"Through our faith formation program, we reach some of our Hispanic families," Pogue said. Often, Hispanic families who attend Sacred Heart choose not to register with the parish. This makes it difficult to get an accurate count of families and keep contact information up-to-date. However, families are required to register with Poché in order to participate in faith formation. So Poché connects with these families and then enters their information into the Religious Education module. Because ParishSOFT has a single database, whatever Poché enters in the Religious Education module updates the Family Directory database used by all modules. "It's been a nice addition for us to have that whole thing linked together," Pogue said.

Pogue also knows that transitioning from one academic year to the next will be easier than ever before thanks to ParishSOFT's ability to duplicate the previous year and move everyone forward in the roster. The Religious Education module also boasts built-in communication tools, a variety of quick reports, and customizable options for terms, sessions, and classes. Plus, like all aspects of the web-based Family Suite, all records are available to any authorized user from their web device of choice.

Results, Return on Investment, and Future Plans

Certainly making the change to ParishSOFT has made quite a difference in the Sacred Heart parish office. It's easier and less time-consuming to process end-of-year, permission settings allow for better data protection, an integrated database means that family records are being created and updated through the Religious Education module, and transitioning from one academic year to the next will be a breeze!

Happy with the changes she's already seen at Sacred Heart, Pogue is now ready to pursue other software improvements in her parish. On the top of her list is working with the finance council to select an online giving software that will remove obstacles to parishioner giving and further simplify contribution processing. Pogue is also invested in learning more and more about the software and tools she already has in ParishSOFT. One possible next step here is setting up My Own Church, the parishioner portal that comes with Family Directory. With My Own Church from ParishSOFT, parishioners will be able to update their own information, view giving history, and see information on their faith formation involvement

As she continues to pursue product training with ParishSOFT and explore the web-based applications, Pogue is grateful for the support team that has helped her so much along the way. "The best thing about ParishSOFT is the customer service. It's phenomenal," Pogue said. "As someone who's not computer savvy, it's important to have someone to call who can walk me through it." That's just what we're about here, at ParishSOFT. Our mission is to provide top-notch software and to guide parishes through how to get the most out of their tools and data so that they can shepherd their flocks and communities toward a closer walk with Christ.

Additional Information

ParishSOFT has helped thousands of parishes and dioceses implement ParishSOFT solutions. For an analysis of your software and services needs, please visit parishsoft.com or call us at 866-930-4774 x6.

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