

PRESENTATION TO BISHOP PERSICO



Report on the Pastoral Planning Process

for

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Bernard, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Michael the Archangel, and St. Mary's

FORWARD

In early 2020, before the pandemic changed the way we work, gather, and worship, five regional churches of the DuBois Deanery began developing an action plan to fulfill Bishop Persico's charge to engage in parish planning. KTH Architects was engaged to assist in the organizational development to support the planning process.

Working with an Advisory Committee, with representative from various regional parishes and the clergy, KTH worked to gather information to identify the economic, social, and physical conditions of the individual parishes and church facilities. These existing conditions were reported out to the Advisory Committee, and started conversations delving more deeply into understanding how the conditions impacted the attendance, participation in sacraments, and financial health of the individual parishes. It also spurred a discussion of other factors affecting the region and Catholic church as a whole, including the decrease in clergy, a phenomenon already observed and anticipated to worsen in the next decade. After months of information gathering and interpretation, the Advisory Committee elected to share the findings with representatives of the five parishes.

After a collective meeting to review the findings, the five parish councils met and voted in favor of continued participation in a planning process to present to Bishop Persico to identify potential paths forward for our regional parishes. Three representatives from each parish formed a Steering Committee, convening on a regular basis to debate and reflect on ways to address challenges, capitalize on the strengths of our parish and region, identify threats that may negatively impact our faith community, and plan for increased collaboration in the name of strengthening our community together. These goals arose from a question posed to the group by the Bishop, "Do we want to be the last church standing? Or should we recognize that we cannot shrink our way to greatness?"

Reflecting upon that question guided the conversations that have occurred over the past year, as the Steering Committee developed a mission for their work, a vision for our regional Catholic community, and finally, recommendations that identify objectives and action items in pursuit of those objectives. The Steering Committee presents this report as a chronicle of the work that's been done, and recommendations to shape a vibrant Catholic community for today and generations to come.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page Number
Meeting Recap - May 24, 2021	3
Meeting Recap - June 28, 2021 Listening Session	6
Steering Committee Members	7
Record of Steering Committee Meetings	9
Defining Mission and Vision - Process Work	10
Surveying the Committee	13
Mission and Vision Statements	18
Parishioner Survey	19
Parishioner Survey Presentation	20
Analyzing Survey Results	28
Framework for Recommendations	29
Recommendation #1	29
Recommendation #2	30
Recommendation #3	30
Recommendation #4	31
Recommendation #5	31
Introduction to Recommendation #6	32
Recommendation #6A	33
Recommendation #6B	34
Commitment to Communication	35
Communication Recommendation #1	35
Communication Recommendation #2	35
Afterword	36
Acknowledgments	36

MEETING RECAP

May 24, 2021

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH TODAY...

... AND PLANNING FOR TOMORROW

Nationwide, attendance at weekend mass has been trending downward over the last several decades.

Bishop Persico is encouraging parishes to engage in the next step in the parish planning process, which involves developing a plan to address challenges of the next five years and to assure a successful faith-filled future.

The Bishop is challenging us to look beyond our individual parishes to view planning through a regional lens. We are stronger together.

Through a dialog with parishioners and leaders, we will examine the health of our parishes, celebrate and share our strengths, and respond proactively to and learn from our challenges.

ATTENDANCE AT WEEKEND MASS DECREASED BY 21% NATIONWIDE FROM 2015 - 2019

21% OF MEMBERS ATTEND WEEKEND MASS

Across the United States, there has been a decline in priests over the past 40 years. As a result, the number of parishes without a resident priest pastor has increased at a nearly identical pace.

How do our parishes look relative to these trends? What should we contemplate as we begin planning for the future of our community?

Data from The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, https://www.apar.org/research/religious-ecumenical-statistical

Nationwide, there has been a sharp decline in priests over the past 40 years. There is a direct relationship between that decline and the increase of parishes without a resident priest pastor, and the number of parishes operating in the absence of a resident pastor has risen to more than 3,500.

OUR CLERGY CONTEXT

2020 75 ACTIVE DIOCESAN PASTORS

2025 56 ACTIVE DIOCESAN PASTORS

25% DECLINE IN ACTIVE PASTORS IN THE ERIE DIOCESE

...REGIONALLY

...AND LOCALLY

AS THE NUMBER OF ACTIVE PASTORS DECREASES, IT IS LIKELY THE NUMBER OF PASTORS IN OUR AREA WILL REDUCE FROM THREE TO ONE

...HOW WILL THIS AFFECT OUR FAITH LIVES?

Before any planning took place, the Advisory Committee asked representatives of the five regional parishes to do a thought experiment, "How will the reduction of pastors- from three to two, and eventually from two to one- eventually impact our faith lives?"

SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP ACROSS OUR REGION...

ACROSS THE DIOCESE...

... A CLERGY CRISIS

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
TOTAL ACTIVE PRIESTS	104	100	95	90	85	79	74	70	66	61
ORDINATIONS	2	0	0	3	2	2	2*	2*	2*	2*
RETIREMENTS	5	4	3	4	3	5	2	5	4	4
OTHER DELETIONS**	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

*PROJECTIONS BASED ON AVERAGE RETIREMENT AGE AND DEPARTURE

Of the 104 active priests in our Diocese, 75 are pastors for 96 stand-alone or partnered parishes. The remainder have administrative, educational, or special assignments.

... WHAT ARE THEIR AGES?

35-40	41-45	46-50	51-55	56-60	61-65	66-70	71-75	76-80	80+	TOTAL
8	4	7	1	7	15	14	11	6	2	76

8 of our 75 active pastors have already exceeded retirement age. By 2025, we estimate an additional 26 will be retired or deceased.

... WHAT ABOUT ORDINATIONS? An average of 2 ordinations occur annually.

...WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR US?

The five parishes in these towns have leaders and members here tonight.

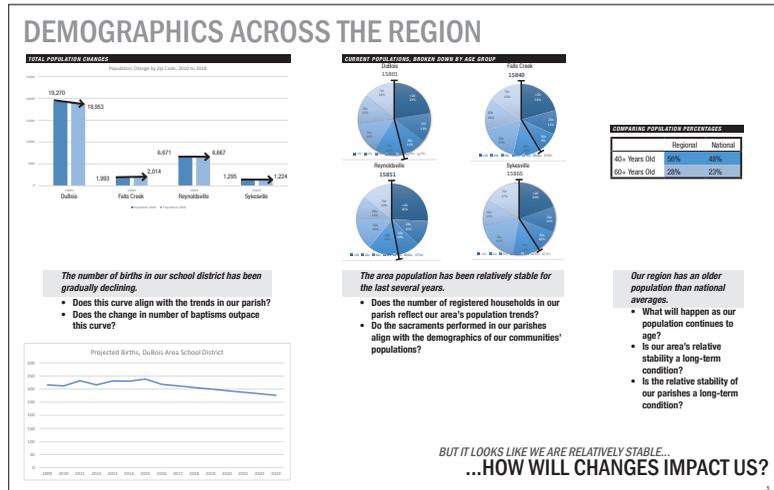
Within this context of reduced attendance and fewer pastoral resources, the Advisory Committee began by researching and presenting for consideration the upcoming reduction in clergy across the Erie Diocese and within our five-parish region. Coupled with the overall ages of pastors, the Committee recognized that our duty is to help our parishes prepare for change.

The five-parish region has been outperforming the national average for attendance, with an average weekend attendance of 26% of registered members. Nonetheless, the decrease in attendance along with the upcoming reduction in pastors presents a challenge that must be addressed.

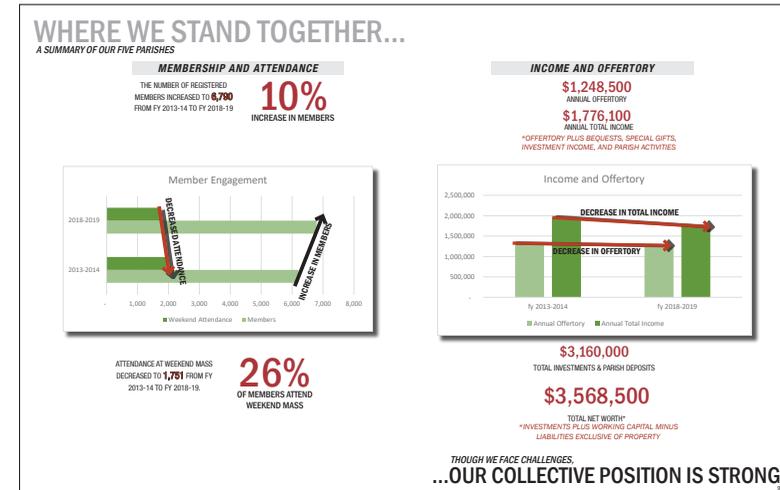
Additionally, as we consider attendance, we also must think about how we as parishioners and leaders within our parishes, can help to maximize the reach of the message of Jesus. Are there ways that we can better serve our neighbors and brothers and sisters in faith that we have not yet explored? Is there opportunity for our faith community to be stronger and more vibrant? Can we work together to plan for our future as one unified community?

MEETING RECAP

May 24, 2021

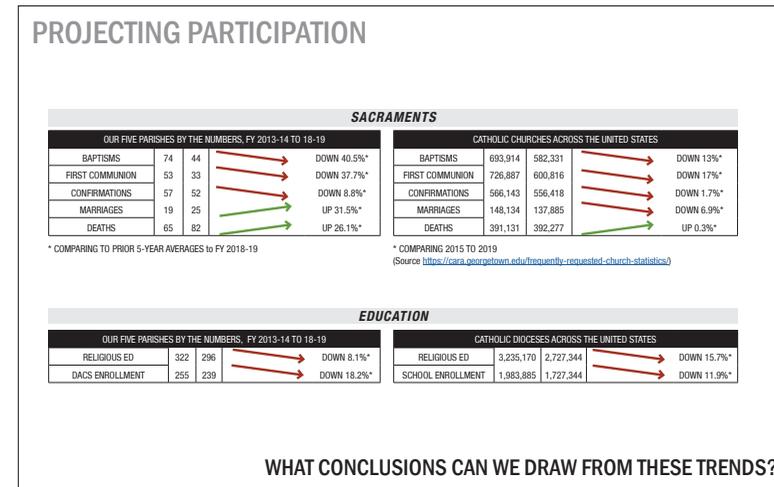


Over the past decade, our region has seen small shifts in population, which has been relatively stable. Upon closer inspection, it becomes apparent that while the region's population is stable today, the area has an older population than the national average. As an example, 56% of our regional population is over 40 compared to 48% nationally, and 28% of our regional population is over 60 compared to 23% nationally.



Using data from the US Census Bureau, the demographics of the region were chronicled and shared with parish representatives. The following phenomena were observed in the area: an aging population, fewer sacraments being celebrated, and individual parishes facing the possibility of decrease in offertory and available income. Developing an understanding of these challenges was key to begin the process of planning for the future.

The Advisory Committee also realized that there is strength in numbers. Pooling together resources- not only financial, but also in the form of volunteers, ministry, and more- may provide a pathway to strengthening our regional faith community in a manner that creates a strong foundation for future generations.



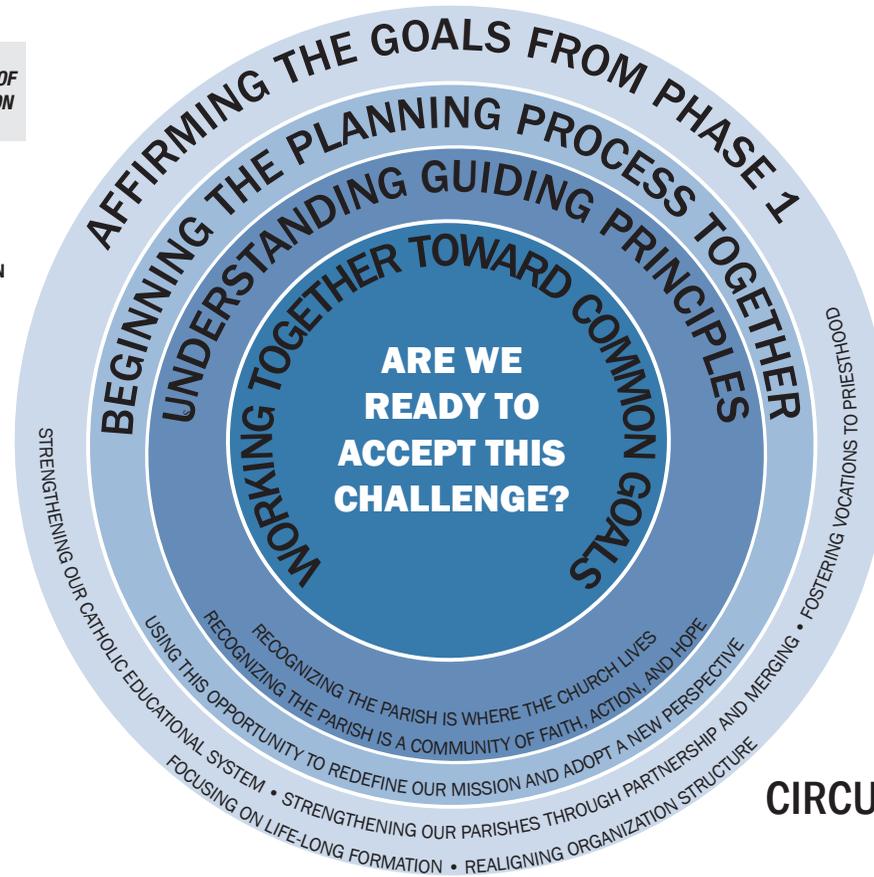
MEETING RECAP

May 24, 2021

BUILDING THE FUTURE TOGETHER...

PHASE 1 OF DIOCESAN PLANNING BEGAN IN JULY OF 2014, UNDER THE DIRECTION OF BISHOP PERSICO

- FIVE INITIATIVES WERE ESTABLISHED IN THIS PHASE
- THIS APPROACH HAS BEEN FORMULATED AND DIRECTED AT A DIOCESAN LEVEL



PHASE 2 WAS INTRODUCED BY BISHOP PERSICO IN 2019, ENCOURAGING PASTORAL PLANNING AT THE PARISH LEVEL

- **TOGETHER** WE BUILD ON OUR COLLECTIVE KNOWLEDGE
- **TOGETHER** WE CAN CELEBRATE OUR STRENGTHS
- **TOGETHER** WE CAN ACKNOWLEDGE OUR WEAKNESSES
- **TOGETHER** WE CAN IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT
- **TOGETHER** WE CAN MANAGE THREATS THAT INHIBIT OUR ABILITY TO LIVE OUR FAITH
- **TOGETHER** WE CAN EVANGELIZE THE MESSAGE OF JESUS TO OUR NEIGHBORS, FRIENDS, FAMILIES, AND FUTURE GENERATIONS

... OR ALLOWING CIRCUMSTANCES TO DICTATE OUR FUTURE?

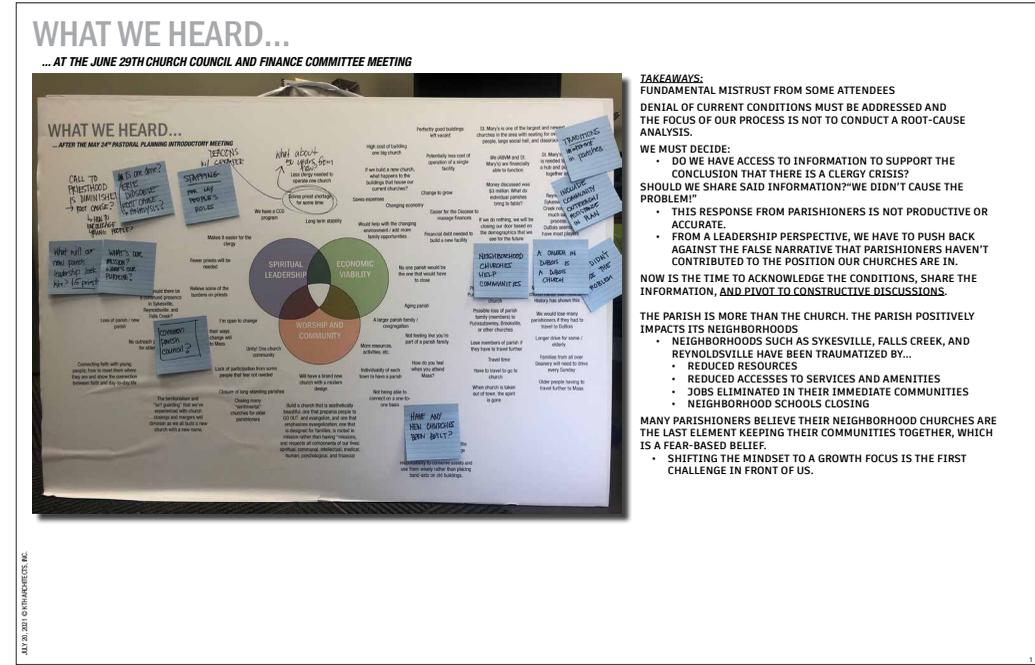
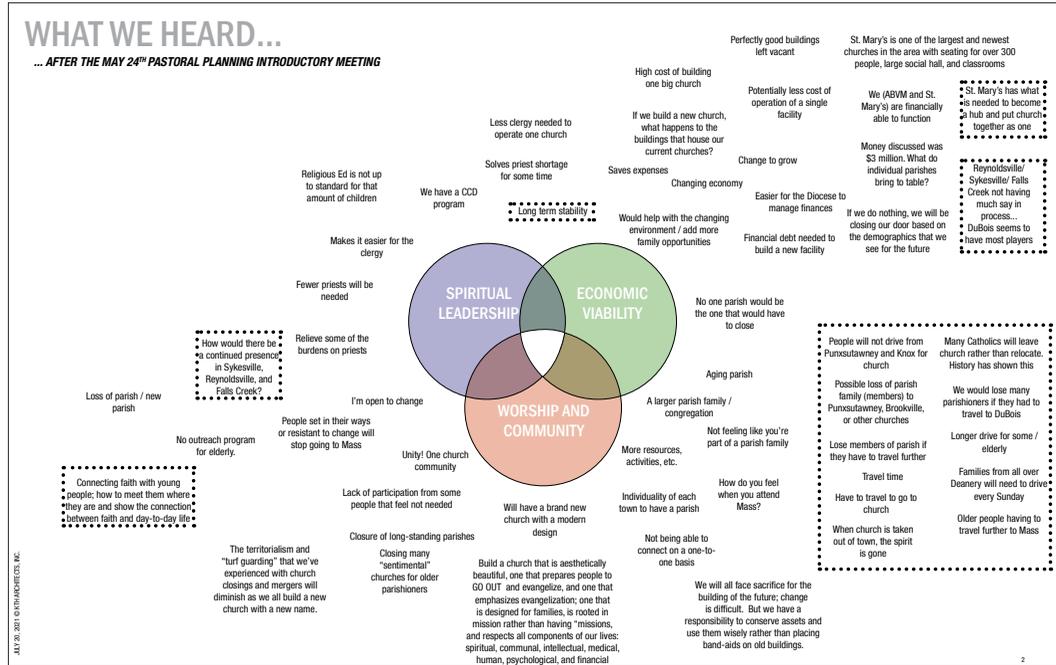
The May meeting included representatives from individual parish councils and finance committees, and at its conclusion, the initiatives of Phase 1 of Diocesan Planning were affirmed:

- Strengthening our Catholic education system
- Strengthening our parishes through partnership and merging
- Fostering vocations to the priesthood
- Focusing on lifelong faith formation
- Realigning organization structure

Attendees were asked to reflect on the prospect of the next phase of pastoral planning, to convene with fellow parishioners, and to decide whether each parish would agree to join in our collective planning process, aimed to establish a shared and supported vision for the future of Catholic faith in our community.

MEETING RECAP

June 28, 2021



- TAKEAWAYS:**
- FUNDAMENTAL MISTRUST FROM SOME ATTENDEES**
- DENIAL OF CURRENT CONDITIONS MUST BE ADDRESSED AND THE FOCUS OF OUR PROCESS IS NOT TO CONDUCT A ROOT-CAUSE ANALYSIS.**
- WE MUST DECIDE:**
- DO WE HAVE ACCESS TO INFORMATION TO SUPPORT THE CONCLUSION THAT THERE IS A CLERGY CRISIS?
 - SHOULD WE SHARE SAID INFORMATION? "WE DIDN'T CAUSE THE PROBLEM!"
 - THIS RESPONSE FROM PARISHIONERS IS NOT PRODUCTIVE OR ACCURATE.
 - FROM A LEADERSHIP PERSPECTIVE, WE HAVE TO PUSH BACK AGAINST THE FALSE NARRATIVE THAT PARISHIONERS HAVEN'T CONTRIBUTED TO THE POSITION OUR CHURCHES ARE IN.
- NOW IS THE TIME TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE CONDITIONS, SHARE THE INFORMATION, AND PIVOT TO CONSTRUCTIVE DISCUSSIONS.**
- THE PARISH IS MORE THAN THE CHURCH. THE PARISH POSITIVELY IMPACTS ITS NEIGHBORHOODS**
- NEIGHBORHOODS SUCH AS SYKESVILLE, FALLS CREEK, AND REYNOLDSVILLE HAVE BEEN TRAUMATIZED BY...
 - REDUCED RESOURCES
 - REDUCED ACCESS TO SERVICES AND AMENITIES
 - JOBS ELIMINATED IN THEIR IMMEDIATE COMMUNITIES
 - NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS CLOSING
- MANY PARISHIONERS BELIEVE THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD CHURCHES ARE THE LAST ELEMENT KEEPING THEIR COMMUNITIES TOGETHER, WHICH IS A FEAR-BASED BELIEF.**
- SHIFTING THE MINDSET TO A GROWTH FOCUS IS THE FIRST CHALLENGE IN FRONT OF US.

A month after the initial presentation to representatives of the five regional parishes, the Advisory Committee reconvened the representatives and conducted a listening session to listen to their thoughts and discuss the conversations the parish councils had after the May presentation. During this meeting, the representatives expressed their parishes' desire for long-term stability, affirmed their parishes supported the notion of building unity among the five parishes, identified contributing factors to the decrease in attendance, and shared their concerns about the proposed option of creating a comprehensive, new parish to serve our five-parish region. Through this lens, the Advisory Committee observed the need to build consensus among parishioners. The five parishes agreed to select representatives to join a Steering Committee to begin a planning process. Attendees emphasized the need to start at the beginning, challenging the Advisory Committee to lead the Steering Committee members through a planning process to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges that the collective community faces and share those with parishioners. Further, it was agreed that the process would be open-ended, and not have a conclusion until developed through a series of iterative and transparent meetings. It was under these precepts that the Steering Committee was formed.

THE STEERING COMMITTEE

Tim Carlson, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Tim converted to Catholicism in 2006, and has been attending Assumption parish since 1997. He is an active parishioner, volunteering in various ministries and committees. A safety and health professional, Tim lives in Troutville with his wife, who also attends Assumption.

Brianne Laukitis, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Growing up, Bri attended St. Michael's parish. In 2012, she began attending Assumption, her husband's childhood parish, when her family relocated back to the area after her husband was medically retired from the Marine Corps. Her parents, in-laws, grandmother, and aunts and uncles attend. Bri is a payroll administrator for Fox's Pizza of Clearfield and Sykesville, and recently accepted an invitation to serve on the Parish Council. She lives in DuBois with her husband Nicholas, and two beautiful little girls, Elizabeth Grace and Audrey Therese.

"Moose" Rosanna, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

A lifelong member of Assumption parish, Moose lives outside Sykesville in the village of Big Soldier. Serving on various parish committees, Moose attends along with his family members. Moose, an active community member and local celebrity, is a radio market manager and DJ of the Sunday Morning Polka Party,

Bert Ginther, St. Bernard

Bert is an educator, and joined St. Bernard in 2000. Since that time, he volunteers as an Usher, Lector, and Greeter, and serves on the Parish Council, Festival Committee, and Spaghetti Dinner Committee. Bert attends with his family, and lives in Falls Creek.

Glenda Hooten, St. Bernard

Glenda joined St. Bernard in 1985, and is a member of the Rosary Society, and serves on Parish Council and volunteers as a Festival Worker. Glenda attends along with family members, and recently retired, living in DuBois with her husband.

George Tinnick, St. Bernard

George recently retired from his position with DuBois Area Schools, where he was a teacher and served as the Athletic Director. He joined St. Bernard in 1970, and is an Usher and Greeter, and serves on Parish Council, Festival Committee, and Spaghetti Dinner Committee. George attends with his family, and lives in Falls Creek.

Jason Gray, St. Catherine of Siena

Jason is a retired newspaper publisher, and has been a member of St. Catherine his entire life. Living in Treasure Lake with his wife, Elizabeth, Jason has served as a Eucharistic Minister, Pastoral Council President, member of the Finance Committee, and Co-Chair of the Renovation Committee. Jason is also a recipient of the Knight of St. Gregory.

Mary Ann Nicholls, St. Catherine of Siena

Mary Ann joined St. Catherine in 2012, when she relocated to the DuBois area. Since that time, she's served as a Lector, Eucharistic Minister, and giving Communion to residents at Christ the King Manor, among other outreach efforts. A pastoral associate for St. Catherine, Mary Ann also has served as a Spiritual Director, Retreat Director, and as an Adjunct Instructor at LaRoche University and University of Dayton.

THE STEERING COMMITTEE

William H. Young, St. Catherine of Siena

The retired president of Equimeter (Rockwell of DuBois) and current owner of AdvantaClean, Bill's extensive knowledge of business and finance helps to guide the Steering Committee in its considerations of opportunities for the five parishes. Bill is an active community member, serving on the board of Penn Highlands Healthcare for the past 32 years as well as on the parish finance, cemetery, and building committees, and volunteering as a Lector and for the music ministry. Bill lives in Falls Creek with his wife, and they attend along with their son and daughter-in-law, who are also members of the parish.

Ron Hannah, St. Mary's

Ron is a registered nurse, and works as an organizational development professional with Penn Highlands Healthcare, and has leveraged this knowledge in serving on the Steering Committee. Ron has attended St. Mary's his entire life, and his wife and daughter, parents and grandparents are all parishioners. Ron volunteers as Eucharistic Minister, Usher, Confirmation teacher, and is a member of the Knights of Columbus, and serves on the Parish Council.

Julie Smith, St. Mary's

Julie is a mental health counselor and has been a member of St. Mary's parish her entire life. Attending with many members of her family, including her husband, children, parents, siblings, nieces and nephews, and other extended family members, Julie volunteers on the music ministry.

Lauren Yamrick, St. Mary's

Lauren's entire family, including her husband and children, parents, siblings, nieces and nephews, all attend St. Mary's church, where Lauren has been a lifelong member. Lauren serves on the Parish Council, and works as an office manager at a family medicine practice. Lauren lives in Sykesville with her husband and three daughters.

John Luchini, St. Michael the Archangel

Recently retired from Penn State University, John has attended St. Michael with his wife since 1995. John is active in many ministries and fellowship organizations and has served on the Finance Committee and Parish Council. John and his wife live in Treasure Lake, DuBois.

Dom Varacallo, St. Michael the Archangel

Dom lives in DuBois, and has been a lifelong member of the Catholic community, having attended St. Mary's as a child and St. Michael as an adult. An entrepreneur, Dom leverages his skills as a member of the parish Finance Committee, and as a basketball coach at the Catholic school. Dom lives in DuBois with Andrea, his wife, and his children, Dominic, Michael, Lucia, and Natalia.

Carl Yebernetsky, St. Michael the Arch Angel

Carl has been a lifelong member of St. Michael and St. Catherine. Serving on various committees within the parish, Carl also volunteers in the Holy Name ministry and is a member of the Knights of Columbus. Carl lives in DuBois and works as a lineman.

Additional Participants

Monsignor Richard Siefer
Father Bill Barron
Father Ed Walk
Deacon Steve Rowan
Deacon Dan Satterlee
Jennifer Zaffuto, Facilitator

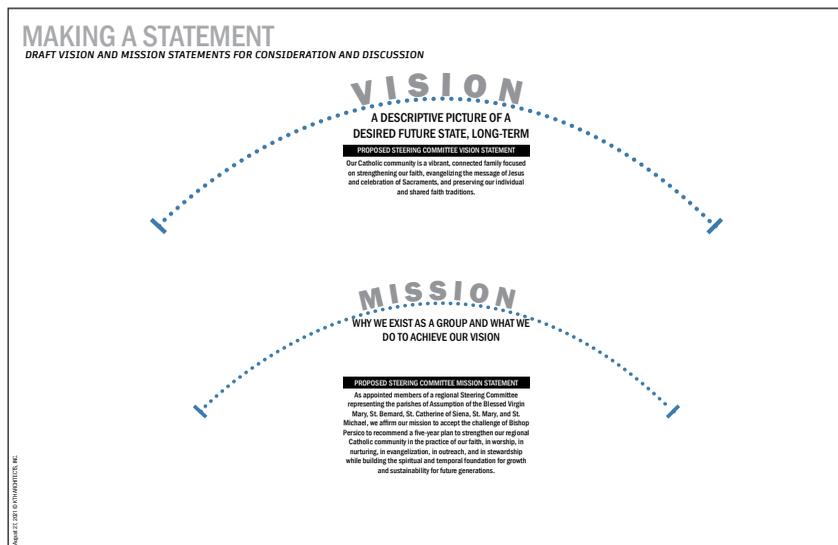
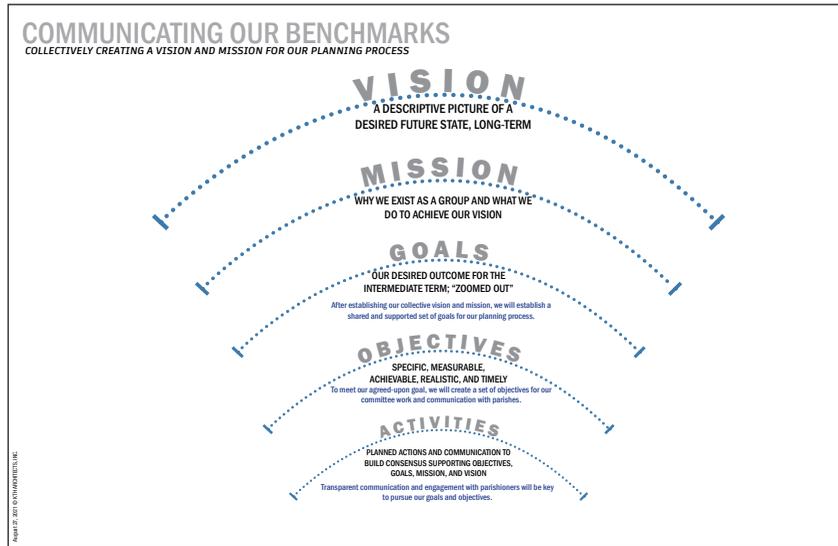
RECORD OF STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS



Steering Committee members convened many times over the next several months. Each meeting focused on slowly identifying commonalities among varying points of view. During each meeting, communicating with parishioners, both formally and casually, was discussed. Committee members took their role seriously, and served as a conduit for parishioners to share their feedback, ideas, and concerns throughout the process.

DEFINING MISSION AND VISION

September 8, 2021 meeting recap



ORGANIZING OUR IDEAS

WHICH OF THESE ARE BEST FIT FOR A MISSION? VISION? GOAL? OBJECTIVE? ACTIVITY?

STATEMENT	MISSION/ VISION / GOAL/ OBJECTIVE / ACTIVITY
Combining our parishes into one with one building and structure	
One regional family, church, and parish. Virtual giving platform and access to mass. Family-centered parish (design and structure)	
To establish resource-sharing of materials, personnel, technology, and expertise in order to streamline costs, eliminate duplication of efforts, and have consistency of operation.	
A vibrant parish that meets our mission goals and can sustain growth for the future. Adequate resources	
Parishes to work as one, merge only in DuBois and Falls Creek. A new church for DuBois only. Also work to bring in young people.	
Preserving our traditions and individuality of each parish.	
We need to figure out a mission and a structure to fit it. We don't need to re-invent; we need to rediscover. I hope at the end of this process we have an acceptable plan to present that has a good chance of being adopted.	
Grow our parish community while maintaining the traditions of each local parish.	
We need to evangelize, bring more people back to church, bring more families back to church.	
To have a Catholic community in our area that is active and viewed as such, not failing both physically and financially.	
Discuss the importance of the sacrament of the Eucharist in the life of the Church and how it is celebrated in each community.	
To keep all parishes intact so that the communities can continue to carry out their mission statement to spread the Lord's message and to keep the parish as the center of each community.	
To keep our Catholic Faith vibrant and active in each individual community. To build an understanding that even though we are individual parishes, we are connected as Catholics and must build our faith together.	
A recommendation to the Bishop for a 5-year plan for merging our five parishes into one in one location to strengthen our collective regional faith community to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow for future generations.	
Work toward developing one community of faith. To attempt to remain as-is or keep two parishes afloat long-term is ignoring the issue of the shortage of clergy and the lack of parishioners attending Mass. We must also consider our future clergy and the demands we place on them if we fail to plan accordingly. I understand this may be painful, but we must act for future generations without allowing ourselves to be nostalgic or driven by emotion.	
Bishop Persico expects us to come up with some type of a solution that reduces the number of Priests serving in the DuBois Deanery. This will almost certainly involve the reduction in the number of parishes. So my concern is that we seek a solution that lessens the number of people who will ultimately end up leaving our churches because of closures.	
I would fully like to understand the real reason we have less clergy. Never really fully understood... Once understood, the goal is to be a Catholic community.	
I think an objective should be to develop steps to increase the number of priests: a letter to the Pope? A campaign through the diocese? Advertising or talking about seminary at the schools?	

APRIL 27, 2021 | CATHOLICPEOPLE.NC

One of the first activities on which the Steering Committee collaborated was to compose mission and vision statements to guide the remainder of the process. Committee members considered the mission of the Catholic church as well as their own parishes' missions during this time. The discussion of mission and vision statements also resulted in other ideas being discussed and agreed upon as goals, objectives, or even activities that parishes may pursue individually or together to strengthen the community.

MAKING A STATEMENT

October 5, 2021 meeting recap

THOUGHTS ON VISION STATEMENTS...

VISION

WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE IN THE FUTURE? WHAT EXTERNAL FACTORS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED?

- More people excited about and desiring to join the Church and follow Christ. Develop our faith.
- Evangelize to deliver programs to bring more families back to Church.
- To have a Catholic community that is active and vibrant that meets our mission goals and can sustain for the future in all our communities and beyond.
- To be a family-based Catholic community that shares and celebrates the sacraments and other family-based activities throughout our community.
- Getting the Church communities together and sharing (adopting) the Vision we set forth.
- Be a vibrant, connected, family focused and strengthening our faith evangelizing the message of Jesus and celebrating the sacraments.
- One in faith for our Catholic Community.
- It is our intent to help our five-church Catholic Community be, act, and advance as One Community which is vibrant in sustaining our faith, maintaining traditions of our parishes, and providing strength, growth, and education for future generations while addressing the challenges of today and tomorrow.

© 2019 PARISH OF ST. PETER AND ST. JOHN, INC.

WHAT COMES NEXT... SETTING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES AND PLANNING ACTIVITIES

GOALS

WHAT DO WE NEED TO AGREE ON TO SET A GOAL?

- To build one community among our five churches.
- To increase clergy / recruitment.
- Identify ways to increase vocations to Priesthood, religious life, and to married life.
- To increase clergy / recruitment.
- Define what financial status we need to achieve to meet our goals.
- Personnel / Resources... What are they?

OBJECTIVES

WHAT SPECIFIC, MEASURABLE, ACHIEVABLE, REALISTIC, AND TIMELY ACTIONS CAN WE TAKE AFTER ESTABLISHING OUR GOALS?

- Assign subcommittees

ACTIVITIES

HOW CAN WE ENGAGE PARISHIONERS IN THE PROCESS?

- Do the work.
- Participation of parishioners.

© 2019 PARISH OF ST. PETER AND ST. JOHN, INC.

MAKING OUR MISSION STATEMENT...

MISSION

WHY WE EXIST AS A GROUP AND WHAT WE DO TO ACHIEVE OUR VISION

- We affirm our Mission accepted Bishop's challenge to develop our five-year plan to strengthen our Catholic communities!
- To increase and retain our parishioners
- To build an understanding that even though we are individual parishes, we are connected as Catholics and must build our faith future together.
- Help form a plan that identifies ways to grow excitement, desire, development, and involvement of more people in our Church.
- Meet and work together.
- As appointed members of a regional Steering Committee representing the parishes of Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Bernard, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Mary, and St. Michael the Archangel, it is our mission to develop a five-year plan to strengthen our regional Catholic Community in the practice of our faith, in worship, in nurturing, in evangelization, in outreach, and in stewardship while building the spiritual and temporal foundation for growth and sustainability for future generations.

© 2019 PARISH OF ST. PETER AND ST. JOHN, INC.

Committee members reflected over the course of the next month on what it meant to construct a mission and vision statement. This extended period allowed for discussion among committee members between the committee meetings, and allowed the committee to communicate their activities and the content of the meetings to parishioners.

At these meetings, the existing conditions of the community were discussed, emphasizing the need for accurate data to share with parishioners. The facilitators also were tasked during this time to augment the data that had been presented at the May meeting with additional economic, social, and physical characteristics of the parishes and region.

JUST THE FACTS

Reviewing economic, social, and physical conditions of our community at the October meeting

JUST THE FACTS, REVISED

DATA COLLECTED FROM THE FIVE PARISHES AND THE DIOCESE

Five Parish Summary				
	FY 2013-2014	FY 2018-2019	variance	percentage
Registered Households	2,425	2,584	159	6.6%
Number of Members	6,208	6,790	582	9.4%
Church Capacity	1,560	1,560	0	0.0%
Number of Weekend Masses	12	10	(2)	-16.7%
Total Weekend Attendance	1,944	1,751	(193)	-9.9%
Percent of members attending weekly	31.3%	25.9%	-5.3%	
Ave. Attendance per Weekend Mass	744	811	67	9.0%
Baptisms (prior 5-yr ave - current)	74	44	(30)	-40.5%
First Comm. (prior 5-yr ave - current)	83	83	(0)	-0.0%
Confirmations (prior 5-yr ave - current)	57	52	(5)	-8.8%
Marriages (prior 5-yr ave - current)	19	25	6	31.6%
Deaths (prior 5-yr ave - current)	65	82	17	26.2%
Total Ret. Ed. (prior 5-yr ave - current)	322	286	(36)	-11.3%
CMCS Enrollment - separate schedule	255	239	(16)	-6.3%
Annual Offertory	1,336,600	1,248,500	(88,100)	-6.6%
Annual Total Income	2,940,800	3,776,500	1,164,700	39.6%
Investments & Parish Deposits	3,160,000			
Total Assets (exclusive of property)	3,574,900			
Total Net Worth	3,568,900			

Number of Members by Parish		
Parish	FY 2013-14	FY 2018-19
ABVM	337	350
St. Bernard	201	400
St. Catherine	2,805	2,835
St. Mary	553	500
St. Michael	2,183	2,655

Number of Members, 5 Parishes		
	2013-2014	2018-2019
Members	6,208	6,790
Weekend Attendance	1,944	1,751

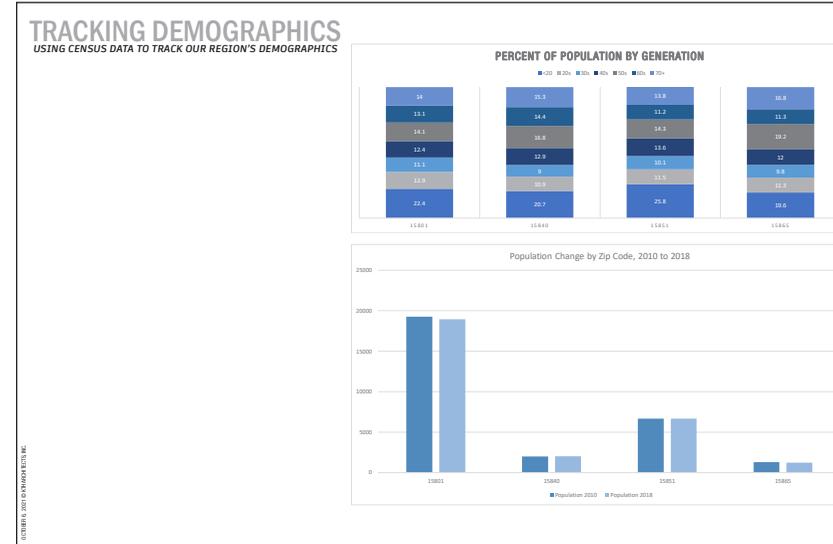
ABVM		
	2013-2014	2018-2019
Members	337	350
Weekend Attendance	394	130

St. Bernard		
	2013-2014	2018-2019
Members	201	400
Weekend Attendance	251	330

St. Catherine		
	2013-2014	2018-2019
Members	2,805	2,835
Weekend Attendance	692	775

St. Mary		
	2013-2014	2018-2019
Members	553	500
Weekend Attendance	294	242

St. Michael		
	2013-2014	2018-2019
Members	2,183	2,655
Weekend Attendance	499	274



POPULATION PROJECTIONS

PROJECTED ENROLLMENT TO ANALYZE AGAINST RELIGIOUS ED AND CATHOLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

Year	Actual	Projection
2014	273	289
2015	276	291
2016	279	293
2017	282	295
2018	285	297
2019	288	299
2020	291	301
2021	294	303
2022	297	305
2023	300	307
2024	303	309
2025	306	311
2026	309	313
2027	312	315
2028	315	317
2029	318	319

Year	Projected Births
2010	~1,000
2011	~950
2012	~900
2013	~850
2014	~800
2015	~750
2016	~700
2017	~650
2018	~600
2019	~550
2020	~500
2021	~450
2022	~400
2023	~350
2024	~300
2025	~250
2026	~200
2027	~150
2028	~100
2029	~50

Ahead of the October Steering Committee meeting, economic, social, and physical characteristics were compiled to share. These characteristics provide context for the demographics of the individual communities where the parishes operate and projections for the future enrollment of the area public school, a statistic released by the Pennsylvania Department of Education which serves as an indicator of whether the communities are expected to increase or decrease in size.

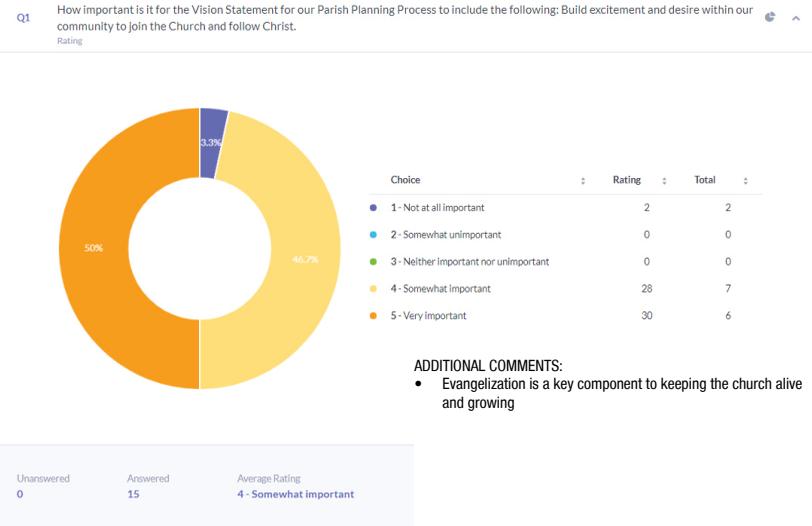
This information was complemented by aggregated data indicating the overall membership and attendance of each of the five parishes, along with a summary of the overall offertory and operating income.

Through this lens, a variety of mission and vision statements were discussed, along with goals, objectives, and activities.

SURVEYING THE STEERING COMMITTEE

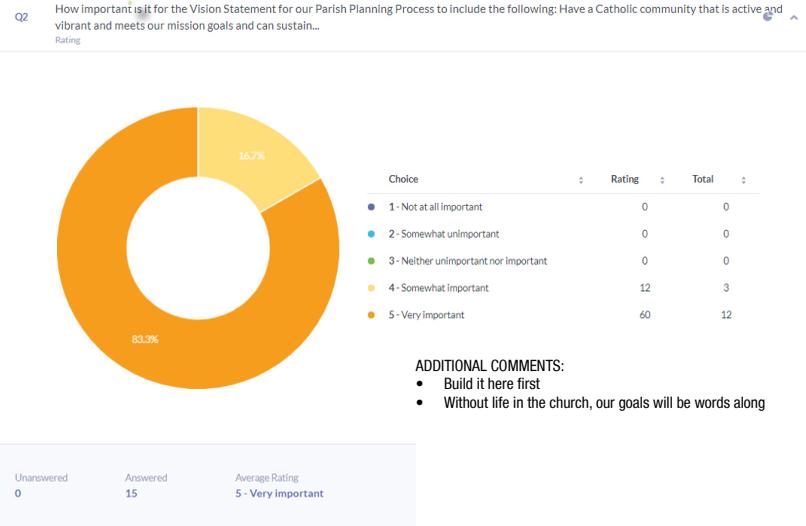
Providing an open forum for discussion ahead of the October 19, 2021 meeting

SURVEY SAYS... (PART 1)



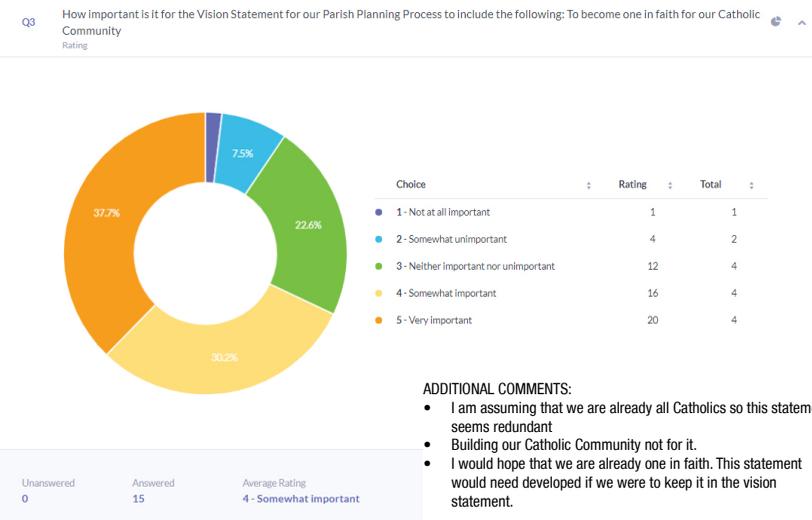
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

- Evangelization is a key component to keeping the church alive and growing



ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

- Build it here first
- Without life in the church, our goals will be words along



ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

- I am assuming that we are already all Catholics so this statement seems redundant
- Building our Catholic Community not for it.
- I would hope that we are already one in faith. This statement would need developed if we were to keep it in the vision statement.



ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

- Sounds good but who is going to do this evangelizing?
- This is a how not a vision
- Evangelization is a goal with the vision being to build the church for the present and the future.

October 19, 2021 © KTH ARCHITECTS, INC.

The conversation at the Steering Committee meeting sparked many ideas. In order to allow Committee members adequate time to consider the ideas, an anonymous survey was administered to gauge the members' opinions on the importance of each one.

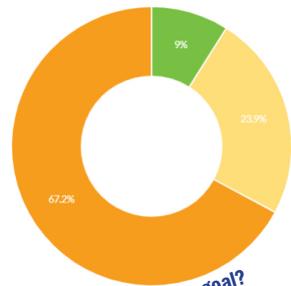
The survey was used to then draft the mission and vision statements for the committee.

SURVEYING THE STEERING COMMITTEE

Providing an open forum for discussion ahead of the October 19, 2021 meeting

SURVEY SAYS... (PART 2)

Q5 How Important is it for the Vision Statement for our Parish Planning Process to include the following: Become a family-based Catholic community that shares and celebrates the sacraments and other...



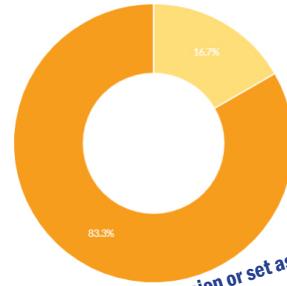
Set as a goal?

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

- Once again, nice words but who is going to do this?
- Some if not many are a family of one. The vision has to include all. Building family values and including is in the mission
- This is a goal that helps to define our vision.

Unanswered: 0, Answered: 15, Average Rating: 4 - Somewhat Important

Q6 How important is it for the Vision Statement for our Parish Planning Process to include the following: Be a vibrant, connected, family-focused, and strengthen our faith by evangelizing the message of...



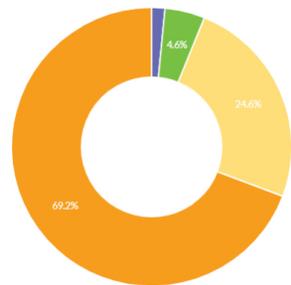
Include in mission or set as goal?

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

- Already covered in a prior question
- Vibrant and connected - connected is the key. How do we build a connected group to solve the logistics issues and personnel issues.
- I would re-word this slightly: Our vision is to grow into a vibrant, united, family-focused faith community, strengthened through evangelization, living the Gospel Message, and celebrating the sacraments.
- I think the second half is a mission or goal

Unanswered: 0, Answered: 15, Average Rating: 5 - Very Important

Q7 How Important is it for the Vision Statement for our Parish Planning Process to include the following: As members of the five parishes of Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Bernard, St...

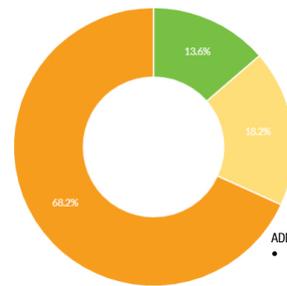


ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

- This is the key question....How many churches are going to remain at the end of this process?
- I agree with this concept. A little long and "wordy".
- Encompassing
- Too wordy

Unanswered: 0, Answered: 15, Average Rating: 4 - Somewhat important

Q8 Once a vision statement for the Parish Planning Process is drafted, how important do you believe it is to allow all parishioners to provide input?



ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

- It's important as long as their input matters...I think that most parishioners are going to view this as "the decision is already made, so what I say doesn't really matter"....need to address this issue
- Extremely important to have input from those in our parish.
- Getting the word out is key. Progress should be shared at the masses. Most key would be feedback on what parishioners don't want.
- The vision statement will be drafted after thoughtful consideration by the Steering Committee and be the standard by which all decisions will follow. It is not yet the standard for all parishioners of all five parishes. It is an important part of the Steering Committee's mission to communicate, educate, and persuade parishioners to join in this vision and be guided by it.

Unanswered: 0, Answered: 15, Average Rating: 4 - Important

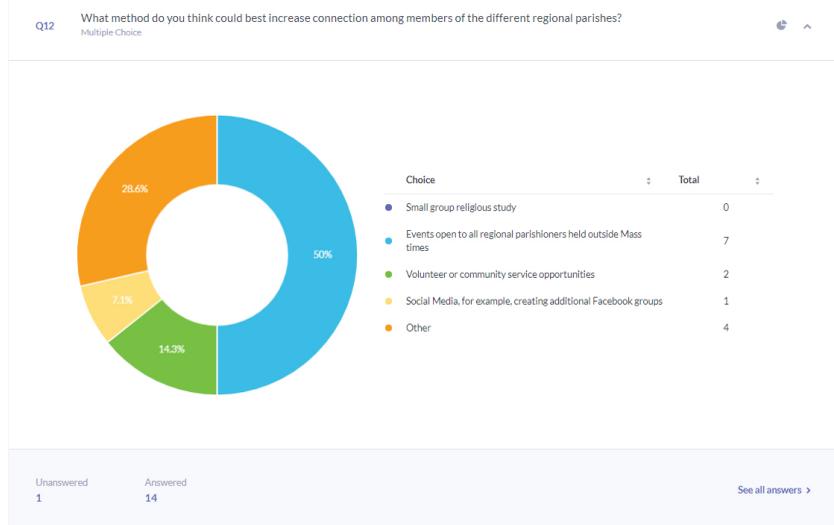
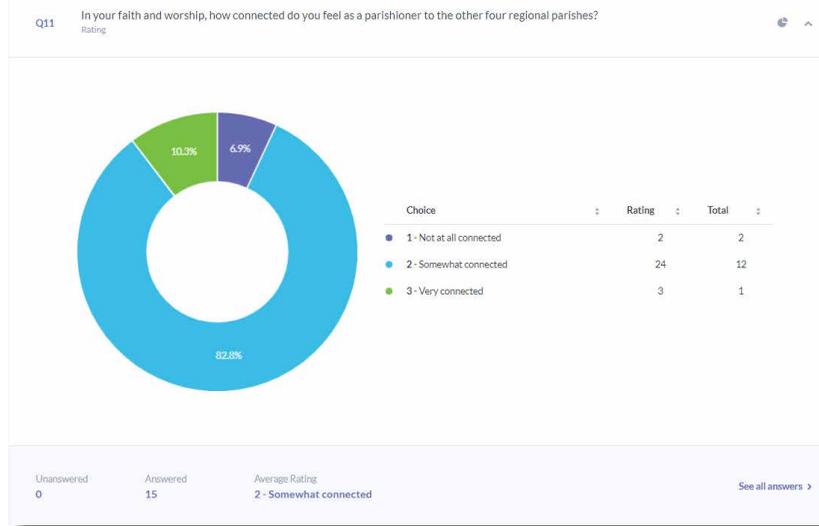
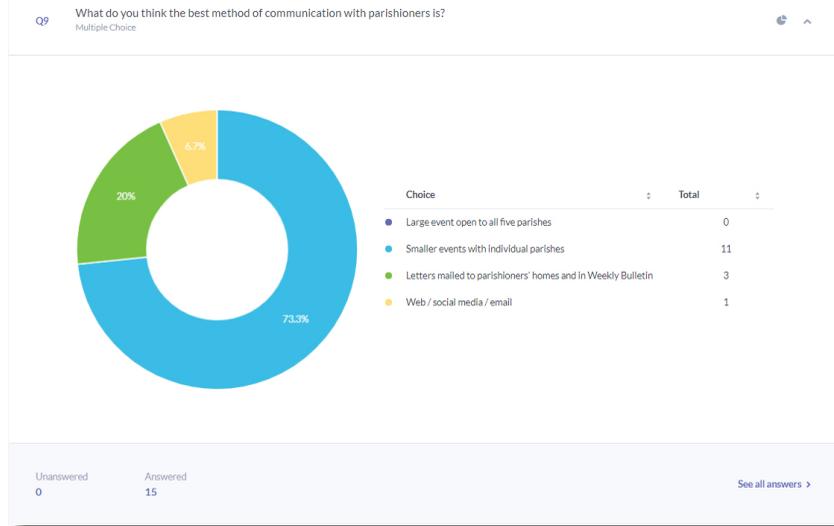
SURVEYING THE STEERING COMMITTEE

Providing an open forum for discussion ahead of the October 19, 2021 meeting

Additionally, the survey served as a method for committee members to share thoughts on topics that included, among others:

- Optimizing communication with parishioners
- Increasing connection among the parishioners at the five parishes
- Learning committee members' thoughts on the priorities that should be emphasized in the recommendations for the five-year plan.

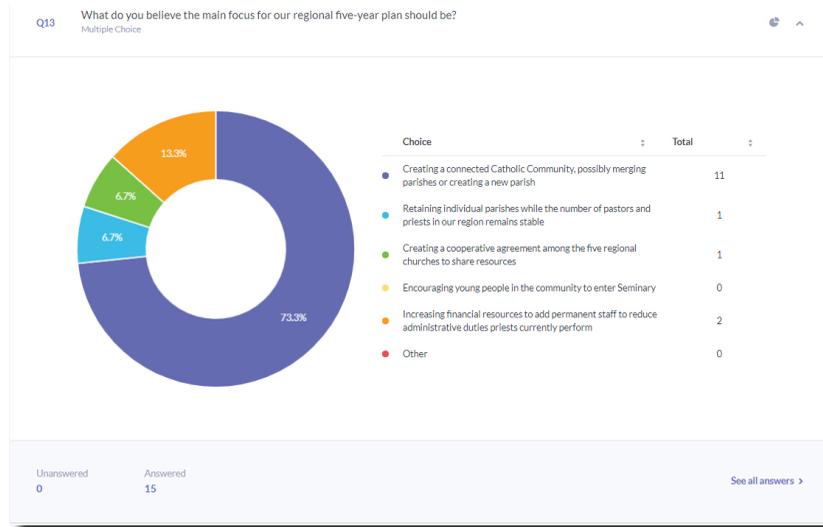
SURVEY SAYS... (PART 3)



SURVEYING THE STEERING COMMITTEE

Providing an open forum for discussion ahead of the October 19, 2021 meeting

SURVEY SAYS... (PART 4)



Additional Comments:

- I would like to choose multiple. I do find creating a Catholic community with possible merger of parishes is the best 5 year option. Creating a cooperative agreement to share resources appears to be a logical first step.
- Encouraging young to enter seminary is important. A step to that is starting regional masses on Sunday nights at DuBois Central Catholic. These could be hosted in the auditorium or gym depending on the attendance. This would help foster a regional catholic community.
- Increasing financial resources is easier said than done and retaining individual parishes could potentially be pushing the problem to a future generation or group.
- Some of these could happen in succession. Example Item 2 while doing Item 3 and ultimately long term on Item 1. All along while doing Item 4
- At some point survival will determine future actions. Early planning could prevent failures and a smooth transition
- We can run these parishes as long as we have the clergy to do it. None of them seem to be in operational crisis. My money at Assumption is a bit tight however. We don't necessarily need to force mergers. Vision and mission clarity and communication around that would help a lot.
- Shared projects would help a lot too.
- I guess this would be the main goal of this committee- provide a road map for how mergers will occur as the number of clergy in the area drops. We have 5 priests in the area. What happens when it drops to 4? Which parishes merge at that point? How about drop to 3 priests? To 2? To 1? 2021 we have 100 priests in Diocese.
- DuBois school district area we have 5 priests here (for 5 parishes, a school, a hospital, and a nursing home) 20:1 ratio 100:5 2030 projection 60 priests in diocese; ratio suggests 3 priests in that year. What is the wisest way to use those priests that matches up with the needs of the communities? That gives us a realistic chance to achieve our vision and fulfill our mission? So we have a twofold task- establish a vision and mission and get some buy in - work towards it. But also recognize facts and admit we need a road map for merging and partnering to enable priests and staff to be successful and effective.
- While creating a new Catholic Community would be an element of the mission statement, several of the other points here, including business and financial standardization and a unified program to encourage vocations could be considered goals.

The Survey also provided a comment section, to allow committee members to incorporate thoughts or ideas that had not been previously reviewed.

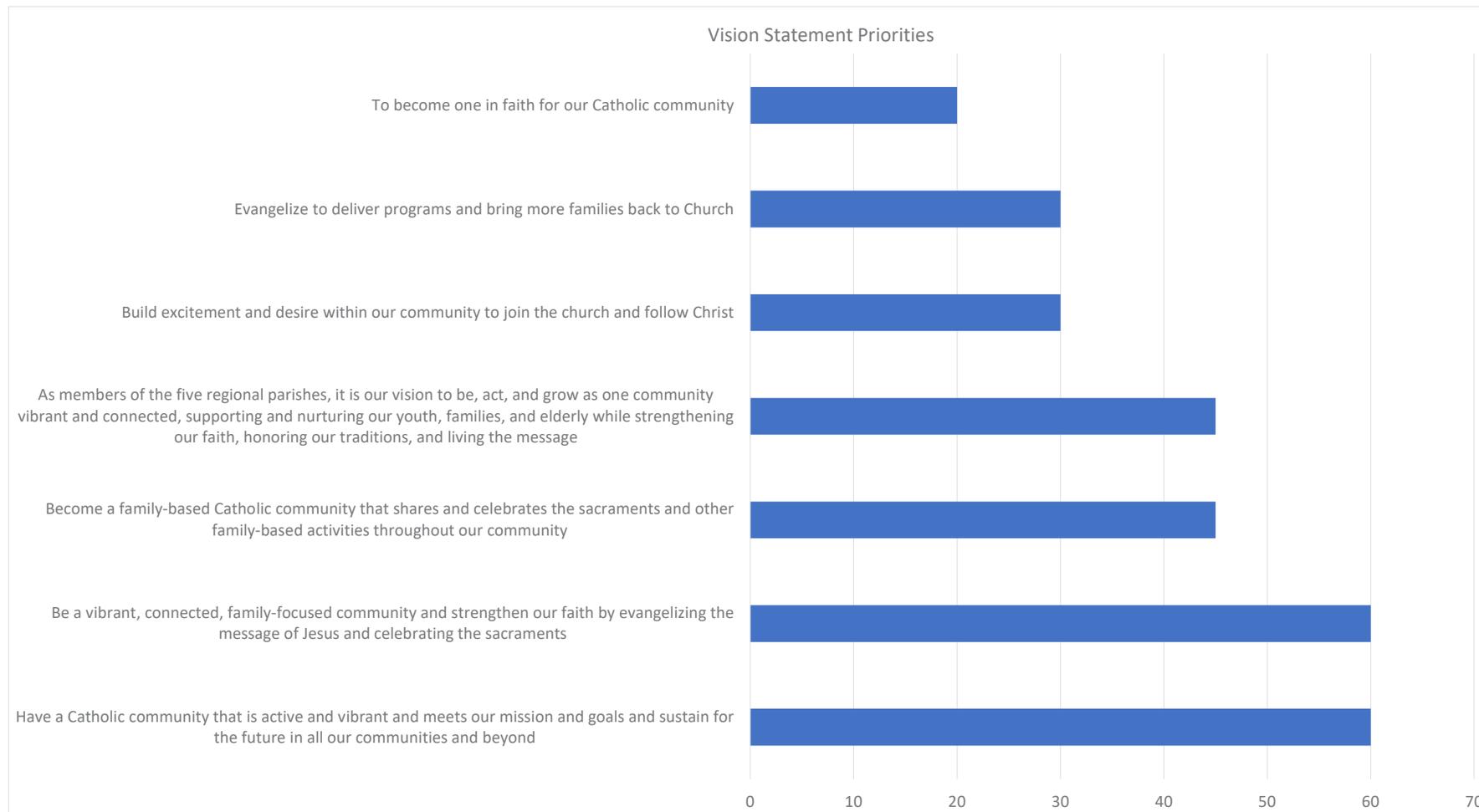
The comments provided insight on overall parishioner sentiment on impending changes to parishes. They also underscored the need to build community among the five parishes to establish a trusting relationship where each parishioner feels their voice is heard.

REVIEWING RESULTS

Reviewing Steering Committee responses to form our Vision Statement

WEIGHING THE RESULTS

Each comment was assigned a weighted result by multiplying the number of votes for that comment by the relative rank. The comments on here show the "Very Important" weighted results.



MISSION STATEMENT

The Steering Committee accepts the charge set forth by Bishop Persico in 2019 to develop a long-term plan for our regional Catholic community. We are united in our efforts to create a framework to strengthen our faith through worship, evangelization, outreach, and stewardship while building a foundation for success and sustainability now and for years to come. We embrace this as a unified community of faith.

The mission statement that was formulated represents shared understanding of the charge the Committee accepted from the Bishop. It also acknowledges that the outcome of the Steering Committee's efforts may not only be a single recommendation regarding the status of parishes and pastoral resources, but also focus on building and strengthening what we already have - communities unique to each parish that are also interdependent.

To fulfill its commitment to the Mission, the Steering Committee began a series of efforts to engage with parishioners of all five parishes to understand in greater detail the existing attributes of our Catholic community. A series of surveys and questionnaires was developed to first identify priorities within the Steering Committee. These priorities were then utilized to design a survey provided to all parishioners to gauge the parishioners' feelings on collaboration across the parishes, ideas for increasing ministries and evangelization, concerns and opportunities for sharing worship across the region, and reactions to the notions of creating a new regional parish.

The Committee's Vision for the regional parishes guided the development of the survey administered to parishioners at the five parishes. Additionally, committee members emphasized the importance of transparency in the process, and this commitment to transparent communication became a guiding principle in all future efforts the committee has made.

VISION STATEMENT

Our regional Catholic community is one in faith, vibrant, and dedicated to evangelizing the message of Jesus to together deepen our faith, honor our traditions, and encourage lifelong commitment to follow and serve Him.

The vision statement articulates characteristics that are already present within our communities, emphasizing their importance, and focusing on creating a unified faith community.

Every idea discussed by the Steering Committee was examined through this lens - does it strengthen our united faith community?

SURVEYING PARISHIONERS

Parishioner Survey for Pastoral Planning
Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Bernard, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Mary's, and St. Michael

Please complete the below survey and return either to the parish office or in a collection basket before December 5, 2021. Please select one answer unless instructed otherwise.

1. How old are you?
 - a. 18-25
 - b. 26-35
 - c. 36-45
 - d. 46-55
 - e. 56-65
 - f. 66-75
 - g. 75 or older
2. What is your gender?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Prefer not to answer
3. What is your marital status?
 - a. Married
 - b. Unmarried
 - c. Widow/Widower
4. How many family members are in your household? _____
5. How often do you attend Mass?
 - a. Daily
 - b. Weekly
 - c. Twice monthly
 - d. Monthly
 - e. Every few months
 - f. Once or twice a year
6. Do you attend Mass at any other parish?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

If you answered yes to Question #6, how often do you attend another church?

 - a. More than once monthly
 - b. Once every few months
 - c. Once or twice a year

If you answered yes to Question #6, please describe where you also attend Mass or services.

 - a. Another regional Catholic parish (in DuBois, Falls Creek, Reynoldsville or Sykesville)
 - b. A Catholic parish out of the region
 - c. A church of another denomination
7. What weekend Mass times do you prefer?
 - a. Saturday 4:30 pm
 - b. Sunday 7:00 am
 - c. Sunday 8:00 am
 - d. Sunday 8:30 am
 - e. Sunday 9 am
 - f. Sunday 10 am
 - g. Sunday 10:30 am
 - h. A different time (specify) _____

1

Parishioner Survey for Pastoral Planning
Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Bernard, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Mary's, and St. Michael

8. How often do you participate in volunteer events at your parish (summer festival, bazaar, dinners)?
 - a. Weekly
 - b. Monthly
 - c. A few times a year
 - d. Never
9. Do you participate in any ministries? Check all that apply:
 - a. Rosary Society
 - b. Eucharistic Minister
 - c. Music ministry
 - d. Lector
 - e. Usher
 - f. Altar Server
 - g. Religious Education
 - h. Knights of Columbus
 - i. Holy Name
 - j. Pastoral Council/ Committees
 - k. Other (specify) _____
10. How do you travel to church?
 - a. Walk
 - b. Drive
 - c. Carpool/drive with another family
 - d. Public transit
11. What is your travel time to church?
 - a. Less than five minutes
 - b. 5-10 minutes
 - c. 10-20 minutes
 - d. more than 20 minutes
12. What (if any) new ministries can help meet the needs of you and your neighbors?
 - a. Serving youth through activities and support groups
 - b. Assisting parishioners in transport to Mass and/or sacraments or events
 - c. Increased church presence in the community through community service and volunteer events
 - d. Other (specify) _____
13. How can we better evangelize our neighbors? What can be done to increase the evangelization of the message of Jesus outside the church?
 - a. Events such as Church in the Park to invite nonmembers to celebrate Mass with us
 - b. Free dinner in Church social hall for food insecure families
 - c. Monthly meals for shut-ins
 - d. Other (specify) _____
14. What do you believe would be the most effective method to nurture the faith of future generations?
 - a. Religious education
 - b. After school programs
 - c. Volunteer opportunities for students
 - d. Children's or youth Masses
 - e. Retreats or events with younger priests or seminarians to spark interest and fire
 - f. Better use of social media

2

Parishioner Survey for Pastoral Planning
Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Bernard, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Mary's, and St. Michael

15. What do you believe would be effective ways to increase vocations to priesthood / religious callings in young people?
 - a. Scholarships
 - b. Programs for students to learn about religious vocations
 - c. Support for families to encourage young people to consider a religious calling
 - d. Encourage young people to pursue a profession in ministry (aside from priesthood)
16. What do you believe your parish's number of registered households will be in the next five years?
 - a. Decrease in registered households
 - b. About the same number of registered households
 - c. Increase in registered households
17. Would you consider attending Mass at any other of our five regional parishes (Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Bernard, St. Catherine, St. Mary, St. Michael)?
 - a. I would not consider attending another parish
 - b. I would attend only for specific celebrations of Mass or sacraments
 - c. I would attend for Holy Days of Obligation or holidays
 - d. I would consider regularly attending another parish

Please share any other comments you may have:

Each adult member of registered households should complete a copy of this survey. If you need an additional copy, please contact your parish office.

Assumption Parish
(814) 894-2772

St. Bernard
(814) 371-0482

St. Catherine of Siena and St. Michael the Archangel
(814) 371-8556

St. Mary's Church
(814) 653-8586

Thank you!
Steering Committee for Pastoral Planning

3

Through the making of the mission and vision statements, and the ensuing discussion of ideas on how to increase engagement, foster faith formation for future generations, and create efficiencies to better utilize resources, the Steering Committee determined it was vital to engage parishioners.

Composing the survey was a concerted effort among committee members, intended to gauge the demographics of engaged parishioners, understand parishioners' willingness to continue or begin participating in new ministries or fellowship opportunities, and to provide a chance for parishioners to share their thoughts on the overall well-being of the parish communities. Survey results were shared with parishioners, and are included on the following pages.

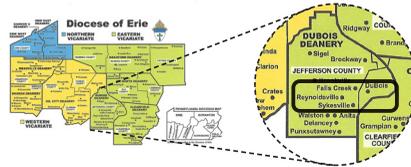
PARISHIONER SURVEY PRESENTATION

WHAT IS PASTORAL PLANNING?

Bishop Persico is encouraging parishes to work cooperatively to develop a strategy addressing challenges of the next five years and to assure a successful faith-filled future.

We are stronger together.

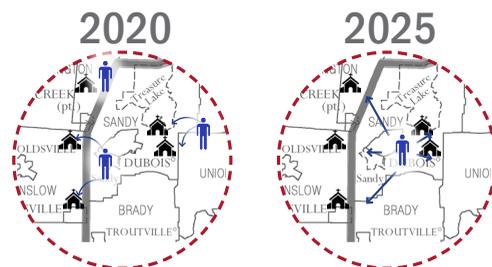
Since 2020, an Advisory Committee has been working with the pastors of Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Bernard, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Mary, and St. Michael the Archangel to assess the condition our parishes and plan for the future of our faith community.



A preliminary report of the findings was shared with Parish Council and Finance Committee members of the individual parishes in May 2021. After that, a Steering Committee, composed of three parishioners from each parish, began meeting on a monthly basis. With your help, the Steering Committee aims to provide a 5-year plan to Bishop Persico for his consideration in late spring 2022.

WHY PARTICIPATE IN THE PLANNING?

AS THE NUMBER OF ACTIVE DIOCESAN PASTORS DECREASES, IT IS **PROBABLE** THE NUMBER OF PASTORS IN OUR AREA WILL REDUCE FROM **THREE TO TWO**. IT IS **POSSIBLE** THE NUMBER OF PASTORS COULD REDUCE FROM **THREE TO ONE**.



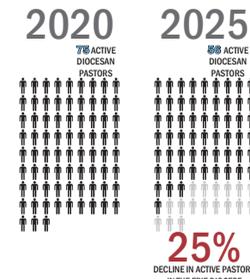
The Pastoral Planning Process empowers our area parishes to plan for the future and will conclude with providing a report to Bishop Persico that outlines actionable steps our parishes can take together to manage the inevitable reduction in pastors and to reinvigorate our parish communities.

The resulting 5-year plan will aim to align spiritual leadership and evangelization and connect our faith with actions to follow the message of Jesus through worship and actions to serve others, creating a vibrant faith community.

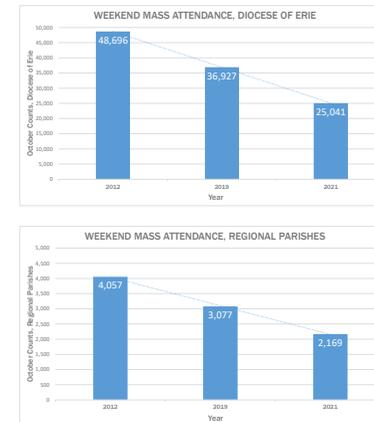
WHY MUST WE DEVELOP A STRATEGY?

The Catholic Church, Erie Diocese, and our regional parishes are all experiencing a two-fold challenge: a shortage of priests and a decline in Mass attendance and parishioner engagement.

PROJECTED DECREASE IN PASTORS IN THE DIOCESE OF ERIE



DECREASE IN MASS ATTENDANCE, 2012 - 2021



WHO IS LEADING THE PLANNING PROCESS?

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| "Moose" Rosanna,
Assumption Parish | George Tinnick,
St. Bernard | Julie Smith,
St. Mary | Deacon Steve Rowan,
Assumption/St. Mary |
| Tim Carlson,
Assumption Parish | Jason Gray,
St. Catherine | Lauren Yamrick,
St. Mary | Deacon Dan Satterlee,
St. Catherine/St. Michael |
| Bri Laukitis,
Assumption Parish | Mary Ann Nicholls,
St. Catherine | John Luchini,
St. Michael | Jenn Zaffuto, Facilitator
from KTH Architects |
| Bert Ginther,
St. Bernard | Bill Young,
St. Catherine | Dom Varacallo,
St. Michael | |
| Glenda Hooten,
St. Bernard | Ron Hannah,
St. Mary | Carl Yebermetsky,
St. Michael | |

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

Speak with your pastor or your parish's representatives on the Steering Committee. If you have feedback, comments, or suggestions, please share!

PARISHIONER SURVEY PRESENTATION

WHERE DID THE STEERING COMMITTEE START?

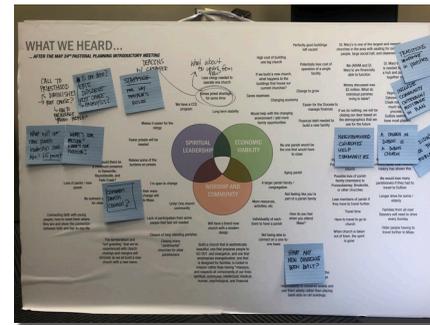
Phase 1 of the Pastoral Planning Process concluded in 2019, with the following goals:

- Strengthening the Catholic educational system
- Strengthening our parishes through partnership and merging
- Fostering vocations to priesthood
- Focusing on life-long faith formation
- Realigning organization structure

Phase 2 of the Pastoral Planning Process kicked off with an affirmation of the goals previously set.



After the May session, individual parish councils and finance committees individually discussed the concepts presented, and collectively joined together at the end of June.

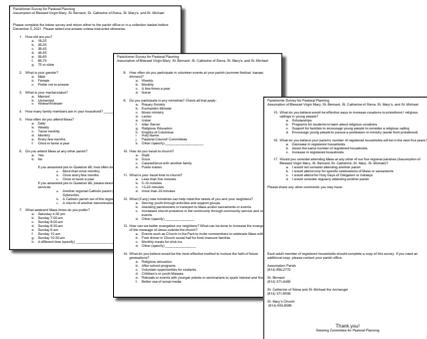


The June meeting functioned as a listening session, where the pastors were able to hear reactions, concerns and suggestions from parishioners. After the June meeting, each individual parish council deliberated on whether they wanted to proceed in the cooperative planning process. Each of the five parishes elected to continue in the planning process collectively.

The Steering Committee was formed and began their work together to define a mission for the planning process, gather additional information and data, and strategize how build consensus for the 5-year plan.

WHERE WE ARE...

During November and December 2021, a survey was distributed to all parishioners, asking for their input on the questions outlined by the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee committed to sharing the survey results with all parishioners.



Hundreds of surveys were returned. The results have been tabulated and are now shared with parishioners. The Steering Committee is now beginning the work of interpreting the results and developing them into the 5-year plan, including action items on how to manage a shortage of pastors, increase parishioner engagement, and evangelize the message of Jesus to our families, friends, neighbors, and future generations.

WHAT WILL RESULT FROM THIS PLANNING PROCESS?

THE STEERING COMMITTEE WILL MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BISHOP, FOCUSING ON ADVANCING THE GOALS SET FROM PHASE 1 OF THE PLANNING PROCESS.

THE STEERING COMMITTEE ASKS PARISHIONERS TO PARTICIPATE BY SHARING THEIR IDEAS. THE 5-YEAR PLAN WILL INCLUDE OBJECTIVES AND TASKS TO NOT ONLY ADDRESS THE SHORTAGE OF PASTORS OUR DIOCESE IS FACING, BUT ALSO TO ENHANCE OUR FAITH COMMUNITY.

PARISHIONER SURVEY PRESENTATION

STEERING COMMITTEE'S FOCUS

WHAT IS OUR VISION?

Our regional Catholic community is one in faith, vibrant, and dedicated to evangelizing the message of Jesus to together deepen our faith, honor our traditions, and encourage a lifelong commitment to follow and serve him.

WHAT IS OUR MISSION?

The Steering Committee accepts the charge set forth by Bishop Persico in 2019 to develop a long-term plan for our regional Catholic community. We are united in our efforts to create a framework to strengthen our faith through worship, evangelization, outreach, and stewardship while building a foundation for success and sustainability now and for years to come. We embrace this as a unified community of faith.

OUR COLLECTIVE QUESTIONS

HOW ARE WE FULFILLING THE MISSION OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH?

WHAT OTHER POSSIBILITIES CAN ADDRESS THE LACK OF PRIESTS?

WHAT STAFFING MODELS CAN REDUCE THE BURDEN ON OUR PASTORS AND PRIESTS?

HOW ARE WE FULFILLING THE MISSIONS OF OUR INDIVIDUAL PARISHES?

WHAT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY AS CATHOLICS TO SERVE OUR COMMUNITIES' MEMBERS IN NEED?

HOW CAN WE HONOR TRADITIONS WITHIN INDIVIDUAL PARISHES?

WHAT OUTREACH EFFORTS CAN BOLSTER OUR COMMUNITIES AND OUR PARISHES?

The Steering Committee determined that by answering these questions, we can develop the 5-year plan for our region.

DO YOU HAVE IDEAS?

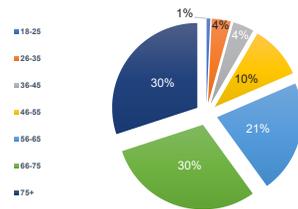
THROUGH THE PROCESS, STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS WILL BE USING THE DATA WE GATHER AND AVAILABLE INFORMATION FROM THE DIOCESE TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONS AND DEVELOP OUR STRATEGIC PLAN. THE PLAN'S FOCUS IS TO ADDRESS A SHORTAGE OF RESOURCES AND TO IDENTIFY WAYS TO REINVIGORATE OUR FAITH COMMUNITY.

MANY PARISHIONERS HAVE ALREADY SHARED IDEAS FOR PROGRAMMING AND OUTREACH THAT CAN ADD TO OUR FAITH LIVES. WE ASK THAT PARISHIONERS PARTICIPATE FULLY IN THIS PROCESS. THE COMMITTEE'S PLEDGE IS TO SHARE INFORMATION TRANSPARENTLY AND TO ADDRESS PARISHIONERS' IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS FULLY.

PARISHIONER SURVEY PRESENTATION

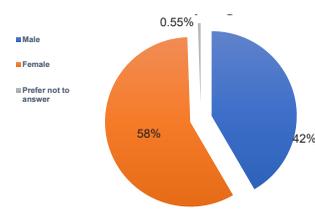
ABOUT OUR PARISHIONERS

HOW OLD ARE YOU?



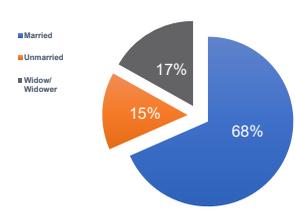
How old are you?	
18-25	5
26-35	26
36-45	29
46-55	73
56-65	155
66-75	215
75+	216
Total Responses	719

WHAT IS YOUR GENDER?



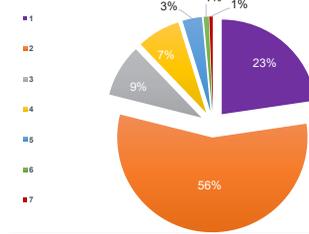
What is your gender?	
Male	303
Female	421
Prefer not to say	4
Total Responses	728

WHAT IS YOUR MARITAL STATUS?



What is your marital status?	
Married	487
Unmarried	105
Prefer not to say	120
Total Responses	712

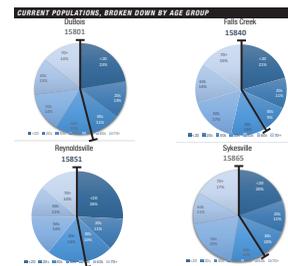
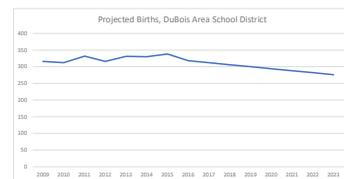
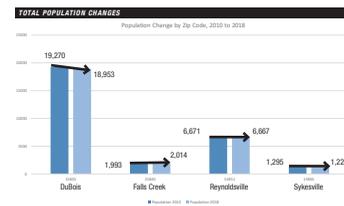
HOW MANY FAMILY MEMBERS ARE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD?



How many family members are in your household?	
1	157
2	390
3	62
4	51
5	23
6	6
7	4
Total Responses	693

HOW DO THE DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS COMPARE?

COMPARING OUR SURVEY RESULTS TO REGIONAL CENSUS DATA



The area population has been relatively stable for the last several years.

COMPARING POPULATION PERCENTAGES		
	Regional	National
40+ Years Old	50%	45%
50+ Years Old	28%	23%

Our region has an older population than national averages.

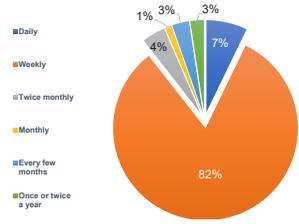
WHAT DO THE DEMOGRAPHICS SUGGEST?

- 61% OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS ARE OLDER THAN 55. 28% OF OUR REGIONAL POPULATION IS OLDER THAN 60.** *THIS SUGGESTS THAT THE YOUNGER MEMBERS OF OUR PARISHES MAY NOT BE AS ENGAGED AS WE'D LIKE.*
- 66% OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS ARE MARRIED. HOWEVER, THE MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS HAVE A HOUSEHOLD OF 2 FAMILY MEMBERS.** *THIS SUGGESTS THAT MANY SURVEY RESPONDENTS HAVE NO CHILDREN UNDER 18 IN THEIR HOUSEHOLD.*
- 56% OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS HAVE A HOUSEHOLD OF 2 FAMILY MEMBERS. 19% OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS HAVE HOUSEHOLDS OF 3 - 7 FAMILY MEMBERS.** *THIS SUGGESTS THERE ARE OPPORTUNITIES THAT CAN INCREASE ENGAGEMENT OF YOUNGER FAMILY MEMBERS, TO HELP WITH FAITH-FORMATION. INTERGENERATIONAL ACTIVITIES CAN CREATE CONNECTIONS WITHIN THE FAITH COMMUNITY AND STRENGTHEN BONDS.*

PARISHIONER SURVEY PRESENTATION

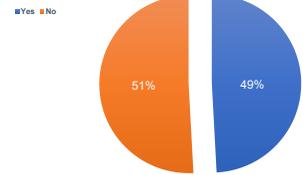
ABOUT OUR MASS ATTENDANCE

HOW OFTEN DO YOU ATTEND MASS?



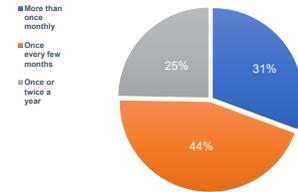
How often do you attend Mass?	
Daily	51
Weekly	587
Twice monthly	29
Monthly	8
Every few months	21
Once or twice a year	17
Total Responses	713

DO YOU ATTEND MASS AT ANY OTHER PARISH?



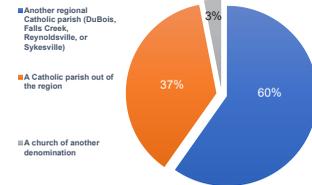
Do you attend Mass at any other parish?	
Yes	350
No	362
Total Responses	712

HOW OFTEN DO YOU ATTEND ANOTHER CHURCH?



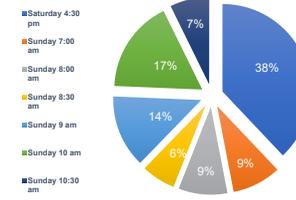
How often do you attend a church that is not your parish?	
More than once monthly	103
Once every few months	150
Once or twice a year	83
Total Responses	336

DESCRIBE WHERE YOU ALSO ATTEND CHURCH.



Please describe where you also attend Mass or services	
Another regional Catholic parish (DuBois, Falls Creek, Reynoldsville, or Sykesville)	233
A Catholic parish out of the region	145
A church of another denomination	12
Total Responses	390

WHAT WEEKEND MASS TIMES DO YOU PREFER?



What weekend Mass times do you prefer?	
Saturday 4:30 pm	351
Sunday 7:00 am	83
Sunday 8:00 am	83
Sunday 8:30 am	58
Sunday 9 am	124
Sunday 10 am	158
Sunday 10:30 am	67
A different time	48
No preference	2
Total Responses	974

ATTENDANCE AND CELEBRATION OF SACRAMENTS

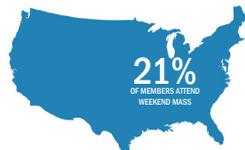
MEMBERSHIP AND ATTENDANCE

A SUMMARY OF OUR FIVE PARISHES

MEMBERSHIP AND ATTENDANCE
THE NUMBER OF REGISTERED MEMBERS INCREASED TO **6,700** FROM FY 2013-14 TO FY 2018-19
10% INCREASE IN MEMBERS

ATTENDANCE AT WEEKEND MASS DECREASED TO **1,761** FROM FY 2013-14 TO FY 2018-19
26% OF MEMBERS ATTEND WEEKEND MASS

CATHOLIC CHURCHES ACROSS THE NATION



SACRAMENTS

OUR FIVE PARISHES BY THE NUMBERS, FY 2013-14 TO 18-19			
BAPTISMS	71	44	DOWN 40.5%*
FIRST COMMUNION	53	33	DOWN 37.7%*
CONFIRMATIONS	57	52	DOWN 8.8%*
MARRIAGES	19	25	UP 31.5%*
DEATHS	65	62	UP 26.1%*

* COMPARING TO PRIOR 5-YEAR AVERAGES TO FY 2018-19

CATHOLIC CHURCHES ACROSS THE UNITED STATES			
BAPTISMS	692,914	582,321	DOWN 19%*
FIRST COMMUNION	726,887	600,616	DOWN 17%*
CONFIRMATIONS	566,143	556,418	DOWN 1.7%*
MARRIAGES	148,134	137,865	DOWN 6.9%*
DEATHS	391,131	392,277	UP 0.3%*

* COMPARING 2015 TO 2019 (Source: <https://www.pewresearch.org/factcenter/2019/04/11/frequently-requested-church-statistics/>)

WHAT DO OUR ATTENDANCE TRENDS MEAN?

WHILE OUR ATTENDANCE HAS DROPPED, A GREATER PERCENTAGE OF PARISHIONERS ATTEND MASS WEEKLY THAN ACROSS THE NATION.

THIS SUGGESTS OUR PARISHIONERS MAY BE MORE ENGAGED THAN ELSEWHERE ACROSS THE NATION. HOW CAN WE CONTINUE TO INCREASE THAT ENGAGEMENT?

ROUGHLY HALF OF THE SURVEY RESPONDENTS ATTEND MASS OR SERVICES AT OTHER CHURCHES.

MOST SURVEY RESPONDENTS WHO ATTEND CHURCHES OTHER THAN THEIR HOME PARISH ARE ATTENDING CATHOLIC MASS, EITHER WITHIN THE REGION OR OUTSIDE THE REGION.

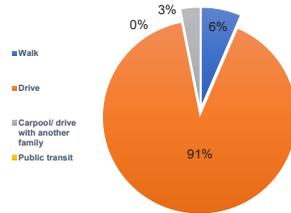
SURVEY RESPONDENTS CONTINUE TO PREFER THE MASS TIMES OFFERED AT THEIR HOME PARISHES.

THIS INDICATES THAT THE RESPONDENTS HAD CREATED A HABIT OF ATTENDING MASS AT THE TIMES OFFERED BY THEIR HOME PARISH, MAKING IT PART OF THEIR WEEKLY ROUTINE.

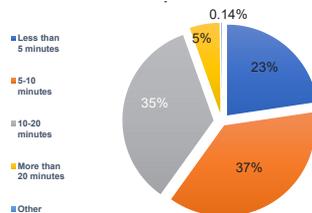
PARISHIONER SURVEY PRESENTATION

HOW WE GET TO MASS...

HOW DO YOU TRAVEL TO CHURCH?



WHAT IS YOUR TRAVEL TIME TO CHURCH?



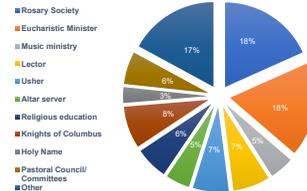
WHY ARE THESE QUESTIONS IMPORTANT?

OUR PARISHES ARE OFTEN SITUATED IN THE NEIGHBORHOODS WHERE WE GREW UP OR NEAR WHERE WE CURRENTLY LIVE.

THIS HELPS US LEARN IF PARISHIONERS DRIVE, AND IF SO HOW FAR, TO ATTEND MASS. DOES THE DISTANCE LIMIT ATTENDANCE?

MINISTRY PARTICIPATION AND VOLUNTEERSHIP

WHAT MINISTRIES DO YOU PARTICIPATE IN?



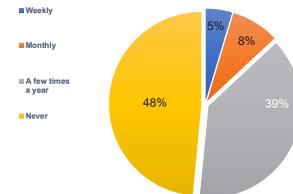
What ministries do you participate in?

Rosary Society	91
Eucharistic Minister	90
Music ministry	23
Lector	35
Usher	34
Altar server	23
Religious education	31
Knights of Columbus	40
Holy Name	15
Pastoral Council/ Committees	31
Other	85
Total Responses	498

ADDITIONAL MINISTRIES PERFORMED BY RESPONDENTS:

- Coffee ministry
- Outreach Group
- Cemetery Assn
- Changing altar clothes/ decorating church/food pantry
- Children's Lit
- Card Ministry
- Reconciliation/First Communion
- Life chain
- Card Ministry
- Eucharistic Adoration coordinator
- Fund raising
- Festival
- Eucharistic ministry for many years
- Prayer Groups
- Collection Counting
- ALPHA Course
- Home Enthronements. Other things father asks me to do.
- Pro-Life
- Dinners
- Funeral lunches
- Food pantry
- Christmas decorating
- Preparing for church seasons
- Sacristan
- Collection Counting
- Prayer chain
- Work Dinners
- Catholic school
- Bereavement committee
- Making meals
- St Michael Outreach
- Jesse Tree
- Confirmation
- Moms group
- Going to start making rosaries
- Good Samaritan
- Work at bingo
- Take care of the holy family bed.
- Outreaches to the Bereaved (dinner) and poor (food baskets)

HOW OFTEN DO YOU PARTICIPATE IN VOLUNTEER EVENTS?



How often do you participate in volunteer events at your parish (summer festival, bazaar, dinners)?

Weekly	32
Monthly	58
A few times a year	266
Never	335
Total Responses	691

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO IDENTIFY CURRENT MINISTRIES AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES?

HALF OF RESPONDENTS VOLUNTEER REGULARLY WITH THEIR PARISH.

THIS INDICATES THAT THERE ARE MANY PARISHIONERS WHO REGULARLY VOLUNTEER AT EVENTS. IT IS A SIGN OF ENGAGEMENT. HOW CAN WE INCREASE IT?

NEARLY 500 RESPONSES INDICATED A MINISTRY IN WHICH PARISHIONERS PARTICIPATE.

FIVE YEARS AGO, HOW MANY PARISHIONERS PARTICIPATED IN MINISTRIES? HOW MANY PARISHIONERS WILL PARTICIPATE IN MINISTRIES FIVE YEARS FROM NOW? WHAT ABOUT TEN YEARS FROM NOW?

WHAT MINISTRIES DO YOU PARTICIPATE IN?

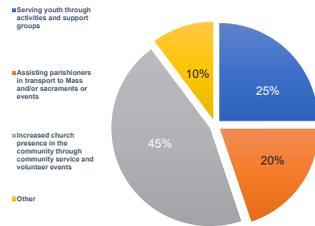
ADDITIONAL MINISTRIES PERFORMED BY RESPONDENTS:

- Not an active volunteer, but in the past
- Not at present, but I've participated in ministries in the past
- Coffee ministry
- Outreach Group
- Cemetery Assn
- Changing altar(sic) clothes/decorating church/food pantry
- Work Dinners
- Children's Lit
- Card Ministry
- Reconciliation/First Communion
- Life chain
- Card Ministry
- Eucharistic Adoration coordinator
- Fund raising
- Festival
- None presently. I was a Eucharistic ministry for many years
- Prayer Groups
- Collection Counting
- Confirmation
- ALPHA Course
- Home Enthronements. Other things father asks me to do.
- Anywhere needed
- Pro-Life
- Dinners
- Funeral lunches
- Food pantry
- Christmas decorating
- Changing altar cloths
- Preparing for church seasons
- Sacristan
- Collection Counting
- Prayer chain
- Work Dinners
- Catholic school
- Bereavement committee
- Making meals
- St Michael Outreach
- Jesse Tree
- I called and offered over a year ago & no one called back - They have their groups, just like high school.
- In past years, was active
- Not anymore - in nursing home
- None anymore
- Confirmation
- Moms group
- Going to start making rosaries
- Good Samaritan
- Work at bingo.
- Take care of the holy family bed.
- Getting too old :)
- Outreaches to the Bereaved (dinner) and poor (food baskets)
- Work Schedule

PARISHIONER SURVEY PRESENTATION

NEW MINISTRY PARTICIPATION AND VOLUNTEERSHIP IDEAS

WHAT NEW MINISTRIES CAN MEET COMMUNITY NEEDS?



What (if any) new ministries can help meet the needs of you and your neighbors?

Serving youth through activities and support groups	152
Assisting parishioners in transport to Mass and/or sacraments or events	121
Increased church presence in the community through community service and volunteer events	274
Other	62
Total Responses	609

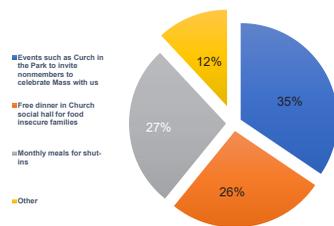
- All of the above but if one is established, make sure it is consistent... Don't leave people hanging
- Financial counseling, giving and tithing
- Small Christian communities as in the past
- Joint prayer service with other Christian churches
- Outreach Committee
- Programs to support older people's needs
- Programs for parents to nurture the spiritual development of their children.
- Habitat for Humanity
- Starting outreach dinner again
- Getting involved with food bank

ADDITIONAL MINISTRIES SUGGESTED BY RESPONDENTS:

- Partnering with other community churches and businesses for projects, dinners, etc.
- Habitat for Humanity
- Outreach dinners
- Partnering with other denominations or businesses for service project
- Perhaps something for Senior citizens or widows/widowers/singles
- Get back to home communion visits.
- Reaching out positively to Christians of other denominations & others (Jewish).
- Get together
- Prayer group formations
- Small groups that meet monthly
- Choir- had contemplating going elsewhere because you have none
- We have needed youth for the past 25 years!!
- Visiting the sick
- Eucharistic Adoration
- Praise & worship
- Men's group
- Prayer ministry
- Not Sure - maybe increased community presence
- Deliver-Bulletin
- All of the above but if one is established, make sure it is consistent... Don't leave people hanging
- Financial counseling, giving and tithing
- Men & women's groups
- Bible studies, catechism studies, book studies, home school support
- Leaving the doors to the churches unlocked so we can visit our Lord anytime
- More confession times
- First Saturday Mass at all churches
- Confession not by appointment and by only one priest trying to do them before Mass
- Open adoration and get to school on time
- Join together with other local churches for combined events. Exp. Ethnic Day, Nativity Scene, Caroling
- Youth and young adults need to be more active in all church activities.

- Youth involvement
- Working close with the school DCC
- Life teen Ministry
- Elderly sitters for home bound elderly!
- Music Lifts the soul
- More out spoken against crime against youth & abortion
- Christ the King
- Education - how to do a mass intention.
- Parishioners being appreciative of any help one offers.
- Maybe the priest can call or visit people. Just stop in and say hi. Missed seeing you.
- Welcome Back Ministry for Catholics who no longer attend Mass

HOW CAN WE BETTER EVANGELIZE OUR NEIGHBORS?



How can we better evangelize our neighbors? What can be done to increase the evangelization of the message of Jesus outside the church?

Events such as Church in the Park to invite nonmembers to celebrate Mass with us	258
Free dinner in Church social hall for food insecure families	197
Monthly meals for shut-ins	204
Other	89
Total Responses	748

- Ask the young people.
- Missions every year.
- A pastor to help close adoration so we don't have to not have it when our volunteers can't close.
- We had shut in meals - a dear lady organized them. She did not have cooperation from her pastor.
- Promote Catholic education at DCC
- Many protestants do not know they are welcome at church. Suggest doing a booth at community days
- Living life with Christ
- Free clothes closet twice a year for homeless
- Softball league
- Bowling parties
- Go first to the sons of Israel. Those registered as parishioners who do not attend mass.
- Social Media

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS FROM RESPONDENTS:

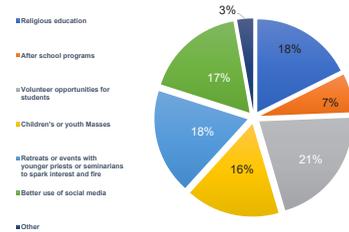
- Distribute prayer cards or handouts explaining the catholic faith such as the neighbors reaching neighbor service that were handed out at St. Catherine before.
- Elderly sitters
- Home Visits
- Enter parades, festival, other events, Fairs
- Stand up for children-Stop protecting abuses and those that harm the unborn
- Provide copies of the word among us. I first was able to see and obtain a copy in Florida. At the beginning of the pandemic. I subscribed to it. I read it daily ever since.
- Women's Teas
- Activity Clubs
- People speak to each other.
- Acceptance / diversity / fellowship
- Just being kind and welcoming.
- Reach out & touch the youth!! When i was young (say 6) the priest came & gathered us up in a bus! And took us to mass everyday. Neither of my parents loved going being choir children.
- Whatever is offered, consistently support it
- Grass cutting and sidewalk shoveling for shut-ins
- Grocery shopping for shut-ins
- More weekly activities
- Return to St. Michael's Terrace
- Maybe free dinner in church social hall
- We need to evangelize our own parishioners and especially our youth
- Do more for the youth
- Joint prayer service with other Christian churches
- Programs like Alpha for members & non-members
- Work food pantry 2X a month
- Mass online plus other services (Stations of the Cross, etc.) online
- Speak the message of Jesus- the catholic theology in church-homilies etc. word will travel.
- Encourage parishioners to be a model of Jesus Christ.
- Service to others-Home repairs for elderly, mow grass Etc.
- Reach out to former parishioners
- Reach out to non Catholics to create some type of union & respect.
- Marketing through TV, radio, newspaper, social media
- Get children more involved in church & events through good Christians and catholic example
- Focus on those in need, not only

- of food, but of socialization and direction in life
- Small groups that meet monthly
- Need to get youth & young adults involved!
- Visit shut-ins
- Social activities in the hall- "dance" "movies" for whole town
- Alpha Course
- Example and prayer (are powerful)
- Phone prayer
- Community building for families w/ kids, support for home schoolers, rosary crusades, public novenas.
- Priests should encourage us to not be afraid to speak to others about our Church and beliefs
- More time the Church is open for visits

PARISHIONER SURVEY PRESENTATION

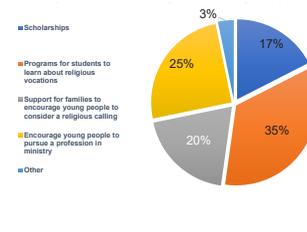
LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE

WHAT WILL NURTURE FAITH IN FUTURE GENERATIONS?



What do you believe would be most effective to nurture the faith of future generations?	
Religious education	201
After school programs	77
Volunteer opportunities for students	241
Children's or youth Masses	185
Retreats or events with younger priests or seminarians to spark interest and fire	208
Better use of social media	197
Other	32
Total Responses	1141

WHAT CAN INCREASE VOCATIONS TO RELIGIOUS CALLINGS?



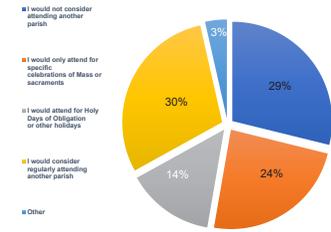
What do you believe would be effective to increase vocations to priesthood/religious callings in young people?	
Scholarships	171
Programs for students to learn about religious vocations	341
Support for families to encourage young people to consider a religious calling	193
Encourage young people to pursue a profession in ministry	247
Other	31
Total Responses	983

WHAT WILL THE FUTURE MEMBERSHIP OF YOUR PARISH BE?



What do you believe your parish's number of registered households will be in the next five years?	
Decrease in registered households	345
About the same number of registered households	306
Increase in registered households	33
Other	8
Total Responses	692

WOULD YOU CONSIDER ATTENDING ANOTHER PARISH?



Would you consider attending Mass at any of our five regional parishes? (ABVM, St. Bernard, St. Catherine, St. Mary's, St. Michael)	
I would not consider attending another parish	213
I would only attend for specific celebrations of Mass or sacraments	176
I would attend for Holy Days of Obligation or other holidays	105
I would consider regularly attending another parish	218
Other	25
Total Responses	737

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS FROM RESPONDENTS:

- All of the above but if one is established, make sure it is consistent... Don't leave people hanging
- Allow priests to marry
- Have young energetic people living out their vocations speak to the youth. Show them how great it can be!
- Our young men should be allowed to marry!
- Talk about it!
- Prayer
- Latin + mass + traditional devotions
- Let Deacons and women say Mass
- Priest and sisters visiting religious education class and talking about the work and how it happened for them.
- First Bishop must be supportive of seminarians and explore another successful diocese
- Pray for vocation
- Youth groups
- Allow priests to be married
- Allow them to marry and have children
- Priests be allowed to marry
- Rebuilding Homes
- Higher salaries, better benefits
- Allow priests to marry.
- Let them (priests) get married! It doesn't take a scientist to figure that out!
- Permit priest to marry
- Permit marriage
- Families staying together.
- Let priest get married
- Let them get married
- It has to be their calling

WHAT DO THE SHORT- AND LONG-TERM SUGGESTIONS FOR FAITH FORMATION, MINISTRY AND EVANGELIZATION TELL US?

MANY PARISHIONERS HAVE IDEAS FOR HOW TO INCREASE ENGAGEMENT	USE THESE LISTS TO CREATE NEW PROGRAMMING FOR FAITH FORMATION, WORSHIP, EVANGELIZATION, AND MINISTRY
MANY RESPONDENTS PRESENTED IDEAS THAT ADDRESSED COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD NEEDS IN ADDITION TO THE NEEDS OF THEIR PARISH COMMUNITY	USE THESE IDEAS TO CREATE NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARISHIONERS TO CONNECT THEIR FAITH WITH THEIR DAILY LIVES THROUGH VOLUNTEERSHIP
RESPONDENTS IDENTIFIED WAYS THAT OUTREACH TO YOUTH COULD BE STRENGTHENED	CREATE INTERGENERATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR EDUCATION, VOLUNTEERING, WORSHIP, AND FELLOWSHIP TO STRENGTHEN OUR FAITH COMMUNITY.

WHAT DO THE RESPONDENTS' VIEWS ON THEIR PARISHES' FUTURES MEAN?

MANY RESPONDENTS FEEL THERE WILL BE A DECREASE IN REGISTERED HOUSEHOLDS OR THE NUMBER WILL REMAIN STABLE. VERY FEW RESPONDENTS FEEL THERE WILL BE AN INCREASE IN MEMBERSHIP	THERE IS AN AWARENESS THAT THE CHURCH FACES CHALLENGES IN MAINTAINING VIBRANT PARISHES FOR THE FUTURE.
THE PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO WOULD NOT CONSIDER ATTENDING ANOTHER PARISH AND THE PERCENTAGE WHO WOULD CONSIDER ANOTHER PARISH ARE NEARLY EQUAL.	WHILE MANY OF OUR REGION'S PARISHIONERS WANT THEIR PARISHES TO REMAIN AS-IS, THERE IS A NEARLY EQUAL NUMBER OF PARISHIONERS WHO WOULD BE WILLING TO CHANGE THE CHURCH AT WHICH THEY WORSHIP. THIS INDICATES THAT INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN PARISHES COULD BE SUCCESSFUL.

ANALYZING SURVEY RESULTS

The committee analyzed survey results and made broad assessments regarding the respondents' demographics and responsiveness to collaboration in worship, ministry, and evangelization. We compared the results of the survey to the demographics of each parish as well as the regional demographics of all residents, including non-Catholic. This comparison provided the Steering Committee with a capture of how our regional parishes align or diverge from the demographics of our region and provided a window into expectations of projected membership and engagement.

Survey results indicate several key points:

- While our regional attendance has dropped, a greater percentage of parishioners attend Mass weekly than nationwide.
 - This suggests our parishioners may be more engaged than elsewhere, and leads to the question of how we can leverage that engagement.
- 431 respondents, or nearly 60%, are age 66 or older, indicating that results most clearly represent that demographic.
- Roughly half of survey respondents attend Mass or services at other churches. Most survey respondents who attend churches other than their home parish attend Catholic Mass, either within our five-church region or outside it.
- Survey respondents continue to prefer the Mass times offered at their home parishes.
- While respondents most often drive to Mass, most prefer the presence of their home parish to be in their geographic community rather than outside it.
- Many parishioners both participate in ministries and also have ideas for new ministries and fellowship opportunities to increase engagement in their parishes.
- A plurality of residents acknowledge that within the next five years, the number of registered households will either stay about the same or will decrease. This indicates an awareness of the challenges our parishes face regarding membership, celebration of sacraments, and overall engagement.
- Despite knowing that their parishes are not increasing in size, 29% (n=213) of respondents would not consider attending a parish aside from their current one. Additionally, 24% (n= 176) would only attend for specific celebrations of Mass or sacraments, such as weddings and funerals. However, 30% of respondents (n=218) would consider regularly attending another parish.

After reviewing survey results, the Steering Committee communicated the results to parishioners, delivering on a key priority of the committee, which is transparency in communication. For two weekends, committee members reviewed the survey results with interested parishioners after every Mass at each of the five regional parishes. The conversations with parishioners added another perspective to the committee members' interpretation of the survey results. All conversations that occurred subsequent to the survey considered both the data collected as well as anecdotal evidence based on the conversations with parishioners.

For the three months following the survey and meetings with parishioners, the Steering Committee debated the benefits and the drawbacks to ideas for the next five years in our region. The discussions centered around the impacts that parishioners would face if parishes offered fewer Mass times, if pastors' duties and obligations continued to increase, if parishes closed to either consolidate into an existing parish or to create a new one, collaborative efforts for fellowship, worship, and ministry across the five parishes, and how to measure the vitality of existing parishes for future consideration.

The Steering Committee identified shared values and beliefs, including:

- Love of our faith
- Perpetuation of our faith
- Nurturing our youth in faith
- Planning for the future of our regional parishes based upon our vision and mission statements

RECOMMENDATION FRAMEWORK

The process of discovering shared beliefs led to recommendations focused on strengthening the community through fellowship, but also through organizational changes intended to support the administration of parishes, standardization of financial assessments and reporting, and creating a body to serve in an advisory manner to help guide the regional parishes to act cooperatively to better serve and benefit the regional faith community.

The deliberation also revealed two opposing viewpoints among committee members – broadly categorized into either retaining all five parishes in their current framework or creating a new parish to serve our five regional parishes that have participated in this study.

Lastly, ideas for transparent communication, both top-down and bottom-up, also coalesced through the months of debate.

The following recommendations describe ways that the five regional parishes can begin to work as one, independent of the parish structure, both present-day and in the future.

RECOMMENDATION #1

The Steering Committee proposes that we retain a priestly presence at Central Catholic School and Christ the King Manor.

This would allow:

- Flexibility in assigning priests for sacramental purposes without consideration to the needs of parish operation.
- A method to address the spiritual needs of our youth and encourage vocations
- Provide assistance at parish weekend Masses when needed.

RECOMMENDATION #2

The Steering Committee proposes the formation of a regional council to guide our regional parishes through the changes of the next five years. The Regional council would act as a conduit for communication between parishioners and local / Diocesan leadership, working with the pastors constructively to advance the Steering Committee's vision of creating oneness, vibrancy, evangelization, deepening faith, honoring traditions, and encouraging lifelong commitments. This committee's goal will be to help our people be receptive to change, whether that be growth or restructuring.

RECOMMENDATION #3

The Steering Committee proposes the five parishes hire a “business manager” who will serve all five parishes and whose focus will include:

- Making and keeping budgets in conjunction with finance committees
- Assessing building and cemetery conditions in conjunction with pastors and finance committees
- Being in direct contact with contractors as well as managing maintenance and janitorial work
- Payroll, Accounts Receivable/Payable, general ledger, and monthly reports
- Managing the work tasks of the parish staff and managing human resources
- Facilitating communication across five parishes, namely through the weekly bulletins
- Assisting parishioners and leaders in the formation and leadership of regional events
- Reporting out each parishes' statistics (membership, attendance, offertory) on a regular basis (interval to be determined)
- Presenting reports to the regional council
- Overall checks and balances

This manager would meet regularly with the pastors and be reportable to them, keeping them knowledgeable of the temporal affairs of the parish.

RECOMMENDATION #4

The Steering Committee proposes the introduction of a regional Mass, to be held at DuBois Central Catholic School. Initially, the Mass could be celebrated by rotating priests from the five parishes as well as the school and Christ the King Manor. If the Sunday evening Mass develops traction, then a schedule change could be considered to continue to encourage the regional celebration of Mass.

Offertory would be allocated to the individual parishes when possible.

Regular measurement of attendance and demographics of attendees will be recorded for future planning purposes.

RECOMMENDATION #5

The Steering Committee proposes the formation of regional programming focused not only on faith formation and fellowship, but also to build a vibrant Catholic community.

These programs include:

- A regional community outreach program.
- A regional transportation program.
- A regional music ministry program.
- A regional youth program

The intent of regional programming is to build community across the five parishes, and will function through a collaborative effort of pastors, volunteers, the business manager, and regional council.

RECOMMENDATION #6 INTRODUCTION

Recommendation #6 entails two different focuses: one with a focus on addressing current conditions within the five regional parishes by maintaining all five parishes operating independently, and the other with a focus on building a foundation for future generations through the creation of a new regional parish.

Representatives from the parishes of Assumption, St. Mary's, and St. Bernard comprise 9 of the 15 folks in the Steering Committee. These members have formulated a plan, articulated in Recommendation #6A, that addresses future needs by continuing to meet the needs of individual parishes through remaining open and increasing ministry, outreach, and collaboration across the five parishes. Maintaining and improving current conditions is the mainstay of Recommendation #6A.

As shown in the survey, the population of the parishes is aging, and the representatives feel duty bound to continue to serve the older parishioners for whom change may be difficult. Additionally, the towns where these parishes are located are on the periphery of the region, somewhat removed from DuBois. The communities have had schools and businesses close in the past decades, leaving few institutions on which residents can depend. Representatives feel that for these reasons, the next five years ought to focus on community-building across the parishes, while maintaining operations in the individual parishes in an effort to maintain consistency. These representatives also posit that a concerted effort on community-building, evangelization, and ministry will result in an increase in engagement, membership, and offertory- achieving our vision of a vibrant community.

In contrast, representatives from St. Catherine and St. Michael, making up 6 of the 15 members of the Steering Committee, feel that the time to lay the foundation for future generations is now, and Recommendation #6B describes their strategy to do that. Rather than maintaining all five parishes operating under their current model, Recommendation #6B is centered around the establishment of a new parish, into which the five existing parishes would merge.

In the next few years, these representatives recommend enacting changes to support this new parish, and to build excitement across the Catholic community for it. In fact, the establishment of a new parish would not preclude the other recommendations outlined in this report; instead, the actions complement one another to simultaneously build a vibrant community and a new Catholic campus to serve this generation and those of the future. The name and location of this new parish is yet to be determined, and the representatives understand that the process to plant a new parish extends beyond semantics.

Steering committee members also recognize that planning for the future cannot take place in a vacuum. Several committee members who support keeping each parish open independently acknowledge that if pastoral resources cannot be allocated to maintain the parishes, then the creation of a new regional parish would best serve our Catholic community. Likewise, committee members who support the creation of a new regional parish also acknowledge that parishioners, particularly those who are elderly or infirm, may not be in favor of the creation of a new parish, as those parishioners may feel that their faith is less accessible to them in that situation.

The issue of keeping parishes open or pooling our Catholic community together to form a new parish was debated for several months and through a variety of forums - through small group discussions, online questionnaires, one-on-one conversations, and through the committee meetings- and members worked to understand one another's' points of view, and align and connect the needs of the parishes with a plan to optimize resources in the future.

Ultimately, the Steering Committee realized that in the absence of knowing the pastoral assignments to our region, these recommendations remain hypothetical. The following pages outline three different variations of this hypothetical.

RECOMMENDATION #6A: FOCUS ON CURRENT CONDITIONS

Recommendation #6A was formulated and is supported by the following Steering Committee members: Tim Carlson, Brianne Laukitis, Moose Rosanna, Bert Ginther, Glenda Hooten, George Tinnick, Ron Hannah, Julie Smith, Lauren Yamrick

OPTION #1: TWO RESIDENT PASTORS, ONE ASSOCIATE PASTOR, ONE CHAPLAIN AT CHRIST THE KING MANOR

- One full-time Pastor at St. Catherine for St. Catherine & St. Michael
- One resident Pastor residing at St. Mary and ministering to the parishes of Assumption, St. Bernard, and St. Mary.
- One resident pastor or chaplain at DCC who would also assist weekend Mass coverage at the five parishes as needed.

Example Mass Schedule:

St. Catherine	Saturday evening, Sunday mid-morning
St. Michael	Sunday early morning, Sunday mid-morning
St. Bernard	Saturday evening
St. Mary	Sunday mid-morning
Assumption	Sunday early morning

Weekday Mass schedule would alternate within the St. Catherine/ St. Michael and St. Bernard/St. Mary/ Assumption regions.

All five parishes will retain their Financial Committee, and the current structure of Parish Councils will remain the same. Church offices will remain open and staffed at each parish to assist the resident pastor in the operation of each parish. All cemeteries will remain active for the parishes.

Church bulletins will remain in control of the parishes but be cooperative, so they could be posted, at each parish, weekly to increase communication among the parishes. This task could be overseen by the business manager.

OPTION #2: TWO RESIDENT PASTORS, ONE ASSOCIATE PASTOR (FOR TRANSITION PERIOD), ONE CHAPLAIN AT CHRIST THE KING MANOR

- This option acknowledges that while the Steering Committee feels strongly that a full-time pastor should be present at the Catholic school, a lack of priestly resources may not allow for that assignment
- One resident Pastor to serve clustered parishes of Assumption, St. Mary, and St. Bernard
- One resident Pastor to serve St. Catherine's and St. Michael.

Example Mass distribution (based on three Pastors celebrating Mass):

- 3 Masses at St. Catherine
- 1 Mass at St. Michael
- 1 Mass at Christ the King Manor
- 1 Mass at St. Bernard
- 1 Mass at St. Mary
- 1 Mass at Assumption

An additional mass can be scheduled at another parish or could be a regional Mass.

The following recommendation accompanies both options:

We propose the development of a viability measurement for parishes that is easy to understand. The intent is to assess the overall health of individual parishes based on continued measurement. The viability measurement ought to consider attendance, offertory, and sacramental participation, among other measures. It is crucial that this measure controlled for parish size, instead communicating, for example, on a per-capita level.

This measurement could be applied to the five regional parishes to understand the trends in their vitality over the next five years and provide an empirical method to guide decision making on distributing pastoral resources.

RECOMMENDATION #6B: FOCUS ON FOUNDATION FOR FUTURE

*Recommendation #6B was formulated and is supported by the following Steering Committee members:
Jason Gray, Mary Ann Nicholls, Bill Young, John Luchini, Dom Varacallo, Carl Yebernetsky*

PROPOSAL FOR THE FORMATION OF A NEW PARISH

If the Bishop would guarantee the continued presence of three parish priests (designating one pastor and two resident associates) for our five churches for three years, we will prepare for the reduction of one priest and begin the transition to one parish in a new church with our guarantee to initiate the following:

1. Request the canonical formation of a new parish while maintaining individual parish identities for an interim period.
2. Form a joint parish council with smaller sub-councils making recommendations for the individual churches.
3. Consolidate business operations, operational accounts, financial statements, property, and cemetery maintenance under the direction of a Business Manager while maintaining separate parish capital reserves for an interim period.
4. Encourage the consolidation/cooperation of ministries, auxiliaries, and other church groups.
5. Direct excess (over goal) CSA contributions for each parish to a common fund for the development of unified programs.
6. Cease any capital improvements of property except for necessary maintenance.
7. Explore options for property disposition.
8. Coordinate planning with Central Catholic Board and administration for development of schematics for a Worship Center/School campus to serve the educational and spiritual needs of the new parish.
9. Establish a building fund with income sources:
 - Revenue from investments from reserves for three years
 - A capital campaign in 2025
10. Develop a master plan for construction and financing in 2025.

COMMITMENT TO COMMUNICATION

Through the entirety of the planning process, the Steering Committee has worked to deliver on a commitment to transparent communication with parishioners, clergy, and one another. At the listening session that preceded the Steering Committee, during conversations before and after Mass, in the surveys returned from parishioners, and during the presentations of survey results to parishioners, committee members were implored to share information as it became available. Through conversations at the Steering Committee meetings, it became evident that not only did parishioners want frank explanations of the process, but also Committee members realized that open communication among themselves was vital to achieving a set of realistic and actionable recommendations.

It is in the spirit of transparent communication that the following recommendations are proposed.

COMMUNICATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Communication Recommendation #1: Steering Committee presentation to the Bishop

The Steering Committee proposes that representatives from its 20-person body present the results of its planning effort to the Bishop. Committee members can augment the information provided in the recommendations with their observations and experiences within individual parishes and have valuable insight into the overall thoughts and opinions of the parishioners with whom they worship. Additionally, the opportunity to review the recommendations with the Bishop will more comprehensively prepare the Committee members to report back to parishioners.

Communication Recommendation #2: Steering Committee publicizes its recommendations to parishes

The Committee plans to share the recommendations that have been formulated in this report with parishioners to demonstrate the final result of the Committee's work and its fulfillment of emphasizing the priorities of parishioners throughout the planning process.

AFTERWORD

The Steering Committee recognizes the ultimate authority of the Bishop regarding pastoral assignments as well as the decision on maintaining or closing parishes. Through a reflective, thoughtful, and challenging process, the Committee feels the recommendations provided within this document encapsulate the viewpoints of the parishioners served in our five-parish region. The Steering Committee appreciates the opportunity to participate in the establishment of a plan for the future of our community.

While consensus was not reached regarding maintaining parishes, proposed consolidations, or the establishment of a new parish, the Steering Committee feels this report and its recommendations accurately represent the breadth of opinions among regional parishioners regarding the matter. However, committee members and parishioners alike all understand the supreme mission of the Catholic church is to carry out and continue the work of Jesus Christ.

The Committee members will work in response to decisions made at the Diocesan level to establish a shared and supported vision for the future in our regional faith community.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Composing the recommendations contained within this report would not be possible without the wisdom and guidance of the pastors and lay clergy of our five-parish region. The Steering Committee is grateful for the insight provided by Monsignor Siefer, Father Walk, and Father Barron. Additionally, Deacons Dan Satterlee and Steve Rowan provided invaluable advice throughout the process that could only be gained due to their unique roles in our area parishes.

The Steering Committee would also like to acknowledge the members of the Advisory Committee, who began the work that is concluded with this report:

James Curtis

Raymond Graeca

Jason Gray

Chris Nasuti