

April 12, 2024

Dear fellow St. Boniface parishioners,

Thursday evening, April 11th, Bishop Persico announced the finalized plan for the latest round of parish restructuring in our diocese. According to that plan, St. Boniface is not being asked to restructure at this time. We will remain a stand-alone parish.

If you would like to view the whole plan, please visit the diocesan website <https://www.eriecd.org/planning.html>. Please note that the finalized plan differs significantly from the preliminary plan announced last fall. I am grateful for your patience and understanding throughout the entire planning process leading to this announcement. I would like to thank in particular our parish leadership who assisted me with listening to you, the parishioners, and drafting our official response to the preliminary plan.

In light of the finalized plan, we may be tempted to think that our work is done now and we can just relax and get back to business as usual with little or no regard for our neighbors in other parishes or the larger diocesan reality of which we are only one part. I hope this process has taught us otherwise. The factors that led the bishop to initiate a diocesan planning process for restructuring parishes over ten years ago remain just as important today. These include negative factors, such as the declining number and advancing age of parishioners and priests in our diocese, factors which are only becoming more urgent. But it also includes positive factors and reasons for hope, such as a growing awareness that the Church we share is not a building but a community of believers stretching across our area and all thirteen counties of Northwest Pennsylvania; that the Church is not about maintaining what we have but about furthering a mission to grow in what we don't; and that, above and before everything, the Church belongs to God, who has graciously blessed us by gathering us together as its members, beneficiaries, and servants.

With this in mind, our work as the Church does not end with this plan, and neither does the work of our parish. We have not been asked to restructure at this time, but we absolutely need to change if we would continue to serve our mission in our changing area today. Let us work together to do exactly that and let us keep our fellow parishes who are being asked to restructure at this time in prayer.

Thank you again for all you do at St. Boniface and for being the faithful disciples of Christ that you are!

Fr. Marc