Figure 1e
St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Smethport

Parish data	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	Change 14-15 to 20-21 Number	Percent
Infant Baptisms	6	2	3	6	3	5	0	-6	-100%
Youth First Communions	6	6	3	3	6	6	6	0	0%
Youth Confirmations	0	0	5	4	3	3	10	10	
Adult Confirmations	0	0	6	5	3	6	0	0	
Catechumens	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Number of Candidates	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	
Marriages	0	0	2	2	0	2	0	0	
Deaths	9	4	11	12	24	9	17	8	89%
Registered Catholic households	225	202	178	218	277	197	189	-36	-16%
Average Mass attendance	236	207	208	190	182	182	136	-100	-42%
K to 8 Parish School of Religion Enrollment	40	40	47	40	35	27	31	-9	-23%
9 to 12 Parish School of Religion Enrollment	30	30	10	10	26	25	14	-16	-53%
Youth RCIA Enrollment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	

Source: Diocese of Erie

Figure 1f
St. Eulalia, Coudersport

Parish data	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	Change 14-15 to 20-21 Number	Percent
Infant Baptisms	15	10	7	5	5	6	7	-8	-53%
Youth First Communions	14	10	7	7	10	7	2	-12	-86%
Youth Confirmations	6	7	7	9	12	3	7	1	17%
Adult Confirmations	3	3	0	12	12	3	0	-3	-100%
Catechumens	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Number of Candidates	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Marriages	3	2	3	1	1	0	1	-2	-67%
Deaths	4	11	6	4	4	11	3	-1	-25%
Registered Catholic households	219	218	215	209	209	209	199	-20	-9%
Average Mass attendance	317	293	265	227	245	245	162	-155	-49%
K to 8 Parish School of Religion Enrollment	66	64	74	57	57	34	25	-41	-62%
9 to 12 Parish School of Religion Enrollment	31	31	32	35	35	34	10	-21	-68%
Youth RCIA Enrollment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	

Source: Diocese of Erie

II. CONFIGURATION AND LEADERSHIP OPTIONS

A. Configuration Options

There are models which allow for parishes to collaborate, create synergy, and share efficiencies on personnel, programs, and resources. Each model has specific applications. The implementation of a model will produce some signs of improvement. However, the most significant improvement on the parish level will happen in those ministries which the parish chooses to enhance.

1. **Merger model** – Two or more parishes are either merged with an already-existing parish or form a new parish. There can be multiple churches. One church must be designated as the parish church and the others are called secondary churches. This model is most often used when one parish can no longer be sustained by itself or when parishes are either in geographical proximity or serve the same community, town, or city.

2. **Partner model** – Two parishes share some of their resources, but they continue to exist as distinct parishes. They function in many ways like sister parishes. While they have their own parishioners, parish church, and finances, they share the same pastor, staff, and parish office. This model is used when two parishes which are both sustainable will benefit from the efficiencies which collaboration can provide.

3. **Hub/Anchor model** – Multiple parishes which surround a larger parish usually located in a town or city are served by several priests and staff from a parish office at the larger parish. Priests and staff travel between the parishes to provide ministry and parishioners from the smaller parishes travel to the larger parish for various events and celebrations. This model allows smaller parishes to experience a greater level of ministerial presence and quality. The model can also be an opportunity for priests to live in a community.

4. **Parish Family/Network model** – Parishes in proximity to each other can form their own collaborative family or network. This model is often used in larger cities as a way for parishes to share personnel, programs, and resources in order to expand ministry effectiveness or to initiate new ministries. It is a way for all parishes to focus on membership growth and ministerial quality. Assessments for common staff and programs are most often based on the use of a common percentage of parish contributions. Parishes will need to organize collaborative activity around a committee or team with representatives from each parish.

B. Leadership Options

The emerging configuration models are rooted in greater collaboration among parishes. Leadership also needs to be more collaborative, and these options provide some of the ways that are in use, and which are possible for consideration. Like the configuration model, good leadership produces better results. However, the ministry strategies are key to a more significant impact on parish data.

1. **Leadership team** – The national workshops which have been conducted under the name of "Amazing Parish" promote the creation of a leadership team for every parish. The team should consist of the pastor and other "key" leaders, usually staff. The rationale is that parishes are too multi-faceted and complex for one person to even try to do it all. The team should be no larger than five people and should meet weekly.

2. **Combined staff** – Parishes that are using any of the configuration models should consider the advantages of combining staff. In every area of ministry, there are ways to design all ministry positions so that every parish can benefit from having specialized ministers.

3. **Shared staff** – Some parishes may prefer to retain certain staff positions like a music minister, business manager, or maintenance person. However, there may be interest and need to look at sharing other ministry positions. This option allows for parishes to "pick and choose" the positions which will benefit them most. The key issue when sharing staff is to identify an individual who will be the supervisor. There are no best practice stories which involve a team of supervisors.

4. **Joint parish pastoral councils** – As parishes work together on mission and ministry, it is logical that the question of forming a single pastoral council should be considered. All parishes have the same mission from Jesus and the Church. Parishes have a range of possibilities in this regard, from an annual meeting to forming one council with representatives from each parish. The starting point is important, so begin at the level where most people are comfortable. The important point is that leadership must be shared on mission and ministry among the councils.

V. IDEAS FOR ACTION

With the knowledge that you have of the parish's current reality and the future demographics of the area, there is an opportunity for action. Parishes should consider action in the three areas of configuration, leadership, and ministry. Follow these steps:

- **First, consider the configuration options for your parish**. Is there one which makes a great deal of sense for the parish now and in the future, or will your present option serve you into the future?

- **Second, review the leadership options**. At minimum, the parish should establish a leadership team. The question is whether that is done by your parish alone or with other parishes?

- **Third, determine which ministry options would make the greatest impact** on your parish over the next several years.

Be mindful of the following helpful hints as you move toward developing your action steps.

Role of the Diocese

As in the past, the Diocese is willing to aid with any of your planning efforts. At a minimum, every parish should consult with the Diocese about any plans which are being considered.

Role of the Dean

Deans can also assist with the development of the plans by setting aside time on each deanery agenda for priests to discuss developments and progress of any planning efforts.

Group Responsible for Study, Development, and Implementation

Plans do not automatically get implemented after they are studied and developed. Some groups must be charged with the responsibility to oversee these tasks and to keep all parishes in communication about the progress or lack of progress. Joint parish pastoral councils may be capable of this as well as a strategic planning group made up of representatives from the parishes. There are many possibilities for organizing an oversight group.

Task Groups

The oversight group may need to identify task groups to develop and even implement some strategies. For example, those working in faith formation areas are likely to be the best candidates to develop a strategy because of their knowledge and experience. In new areas of ministry, the group may need to identify the best candidates from each parish or become the task group for that area of ministry.

Identify 3 Goals = 100% Possibility of Implementation

Studies about plan implementation reveal that a plan with three goals has a 100% possibility of implementation. Each goal over that total decreases the percentage of successful implementation. For that reason, a planning effort should not include more than three goals in any area of ministry. It is far more prudent for parishes to be successful in their initial efforts than to undertake many initiatives and not complete them. Successful collaborative efforts create energy and enthusiasm for further initiatives.