

Rooted in Christ

Pastoral Planning Process

June 29, 2025

Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul



DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS

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DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS

Office of the Bishop

June 29, 2025

Dear Friends in Christ,

Throughout history, the Church has continually responded to societal changes with apostolic faith and steadfast hope. On the ancient Solemnity of Saints Peter & Paul, we honor these formidable Apostles and their martyrdom. Unique in their own way and filled with the Holy Spirit, through many trials and tribulations, these Apostles enabled a fledgling church to take root and grow. As a Church, we are inspired by their courageous witness in steadfastly proclaiming the Gospel to the world. This same mission of evangelization is entrusted to us, yet we know how challenging it can be.

More than a year ago, I invited you to join me in a diocesan-wide initiative to pray for an increase in vocations, especially by praying the diocesan prayer for vocations at every Mass. In 2024, we had one priestly ordination. In 2025, seven pastors were either granted senior priest status or reassigned outside the Diocese of Grand Rapids, and there were no priestly ordinations. Given this reality, the Presbyteral Council and priests of the diocese urged me to take a hard look at the well-being of our priests and parish communities. Where do we see vibrant parish communities characterized by active participation, steady attendance, and financial health?

I am grateful to our pastors who have generously taken on the responsibility of shepherding two or three parish communities, but this is not a sustainable long-term model of parish administration. We must make the administrative burdens and sacramental responsibilities more manageable, which requires reducing the footprint of our physical structures within the diocese.

To guide us through this necessary transition, the diocese engaged the services of Meitler, a Catholic consulting group that has led pastoral planning processes in dioceses across the country. They have helped us formulate a data-driven pastoral plan that will provide crucial direction for the years ahead. The first step involved collecting relevant, self-reported data from every parish in the diocese. This data gave us an eight-year overview of parish vitality. Meitler then analyzed these figures alongside community demographic data – such as population trends and religious affiliation – to reveal how each parish and its surrounding community are evolving.

In addition to collecting and analyzing data, the consultants visited every parish and interviewed pastors to provide important context. Each parish designated two diocesan liaisons who could engage parishioners and collaborate with Meitler to integrate local perspectives. These individuals led local meetings and contributed feedback at deanery-wide gatherings, ensuring broad

participation from the lay faithful. I am deeply grateful to the diocesan liaisons and parish leadership for their insight and commitment to this process.

I also wish to extend my gratitude to our priests, who have worked together to review each draft of the plan and offer feedback on its potential impact on their parish and the diocese as a whole.

The enclosed report is the culmination of a year of dedicated effort and reflects the gravity of the moment we face. I recognize that change is difficult and takes an emotional toll, especially when that change occurs in places and communities where key moments in our life of faith occurred. Yet, we risk stagnation and even decay if we do not make adjustments. Each parish is a communion of persons extending beyond the confines of a building. Sometimes, in order for that communion of persons to be healthy and continue to grow, the administrative and physical structures of that community must transform.

It is providential that this process has taken place during the Jubilee Year of Hope. As Pope Francis reminded us in the bull of indiction introducing the Jubilee Year: “In the heart of each person, hope dwells as the desire and expectation of good things to come, despite our not knowing what the future may bring. Even so, uncertainty about the future may at times give rise to conflicting feelings, ranging from confident trust to apprehensiveness, from serenity to anxiety, from firm conviction to hesitation and doubt” (*Spes non Confundit*, 1).

The first Christians experienced a similar range of feelings as they set out to grow the early Church. Saint Paul encourages the Colossians, “So, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, walk in him, rooted in him and built upon him and established in the faith as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving” (Col 2:6-7).

Let us take the words of Saint Paul to heart and remain rooted in Christ, overflowing with gratitude for all He has given us. Be assured of my prayers for you and your parish community as this plan is implemented.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "David Walkowiak", with a small cross symbol to the left of the first name.

Most Reverend David J. Walkowiak
Bishop of Grand Rapids

INTRODUCTION

In July 2020, the Vatican Dicastery for the Clergy issued new instructions on parish reform in *“The Pastoral Conversion of the Parish Community in the Service of the Evangelizing Mission of the Church.”* The document’s stated goal of parish reform is to move parishes from a *“self-preservation”* model to one of *“evangelization.”* The document further encourages parishes to become less *“interested in preserving a nostalgia for former times as opposed to looking to the future with courage.”*

The Synod on Synodality, in the years 2023 and 2024, modeled a way of being Church that listens to clergy, religious, and the faithful to address the issues of the times and to address them collaboratively.

The Diocese of Grand Rapids has initiated a study of the 11 counties where its 79 parishes and 31 Catholic schools are located. The purpose of the study is to develop a pastoral plan that will bring renewed vitality and vibrancy to the diocese for the years ahead, given current and future priest projections. The study was conducted by Meitler, a consulting firm that has supported similar efforts in dioceses across the country. Meitler helped formulate a data-driven pastoral plan based on input from priests and laity.

As the implementation of the plan proceeds, we pray that God and His Spirit will lead us, be with us, and guide us as we discern – in the words of Pope Francis – that ***“change and reform are in the very nature of a church that is called to be missionary in a world that is experiencing a change of epoch.”*** (12/21/19)

I. VISION

One of the pioneers of church planning, the late Father George Wilson, S.J., rooted his vision for parish planning in the death and resurrection of Jesus. All dioceses, parishes, and even specific ministries experience dying and rising in their histories. Without dying, there can be no resurrection, no new life. Planning, according to Father Wilson, is an act of hope – dying parishes can be resurrected, and good parishes can become better through a commitment to a life-giving vision and strategic plan.

The title the Diocese of Grand Rapids has selected for this pastoral plan is **“Rooted in Christ.”** The vision flows from the Letter to the Colossians, 2:6-7

“Continue, therefore, to live in Christ Jesus the Lord, in the spirit in which you received him. Be rooted in him and built up in him, growing ever stronger in faith, as you were taught, and overflowing with gratitude.”

Being “Rooted in Christ” means that personal faith and the life of the parish must have deep roots which create a strong foundation that can be built upon and result in growth. When looking at a tall building or a tree, few people realize that the pilings that support the building or the tree’s roots are nearly as deep as the building or tree is high.

As Christians, rootedness must be “in Christ.” The grace of baptism is the source of our call as Catholics to participate in the mission of Christ. Moreover, it is not only individual Catholics who must be rooted in Christ. Being “rooted in Christ” also means that parishes must be committed to carrying out the mission of Christ.

This vision for the future recognizes that Catholics are called to “go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations” (Matthew 28:19). Demographic data projects overall growth in the eleven counties of the diocese, but not in every parish community across those counties. Therefore, change is necessary so that all parishes can carry out the mission of Christ with greater vitality. There will be mergers and new clusters of parishes, and some church buildings will close. With fewer priests available for active ministry and fewer retired priests able to serve, one important purpose of the plan is to reduce the number of parish assignments so that newly ordained priests have the opportunity to be formed in priestly identity prior to being appointed pastor, as well as to allow the diocese to designate priests to specialized, non-parochial ministries when necessary.

The pastoral plan also provides an opportunity for parishes to review and act upon a list of ministries from the Synod on Communion, Participation and Mission, Pastors and parish leadership will be encouraged to develop their own ministry plan. They may choose to do this alone or in collaboration with neighboring parishes.

The fruit-bearing tree is an important parable Jesus used to describe growth in the Christian life. A tree is recognized by the fruit that it bears. If this pastoral plan and the ministry plans developed by parishes are indeed “Rooted in Christ,” they will bear much fruit.

II. CRITERIA FOR VITAL PARISHES

A. Rationale for and Development of Vision and Criteria

These “Criteria for Vital Parishes” were initially developed with input from deanery planning committees during the ‘Our Faith, Our Future’ planning process in 2011 and revised with recommendations from the ‘Rooted in Christ’ deanery planning committees in 2025.

A vital parish is one that possesses the resources necessary to fully carry out the mission of Christ, whether as a stand-alone parish or in collaboration with other parishes. The availability of priests for active ministry will impact the assessment of a parish’s viability.

The following elements are essential to be deemed a vital parish, but they are not a comprehensive list of criteria in making the determination.

B. Criteria

WORSHIP AND THE SACRAMENTS

1. Liturgical celebrations are carefully prepared and well executed with enthusiastic participation.
 - a. When reviewing Sunday Mass schedules, Mass is considered to be well attended when attendance exceeds 50% of the church’s seating capacity.
 - b. Additionally, consideration must be given to the population of the parish and the number of Masses offered.
2. Homilies are thought-provoking and challenging, encouraging parishioners to grow and live as disciples of Jesus Christ.
3. Sacramental preparation is provided and conducted according to approved guidelines.
4. Additional opportunities for prayer are offered in addition to Mass and the sacraments.
5. Liturgical music is of high quality, engaging, and appropriate for worship.
6. Worship space is dignified, liturgically appropriate, accessible, and inviting. The environment reflects the Church's liturgical seasons and celebrations.

EVANGELIZATION

1. The parish invites parishioners to evangelize and actively reaches out to inactive/non-participating Catholics, inquirers/seekers, and those who do not belong to a religious community.
2. The OCIA is implemented both liturgically and catechistically.
3. The parish promotes a welcoming, hospitable, and culturally sensitive spirit at all events.
4. The parish fosters respect and understanding for the spiritual and cultural gifts of other Christian denominations as well as other world religions.

MISSION AND LEADERSHIP

1. The parish has a clear Christ-centered mission, which is understood within the context of the local and universal Church.
2. The parish is staffed appropriately to facilitate parish ministries. They also receive appropriate education and ongoing formation to be effective in their roles.

3. Parish leaders are empowered and guided to serve in a manner that furthers the mission and vitality of the parish according to their role.
4. The parish has effective pastoral and finance councils and committees. The committees actively engage and involve the faithful in carrying out the pastoral activity of the parish.
5. The parish develops annual and long-range plans to carry out the mission and ministry of Jesus and to serve the needs of the people in the area.

PASTORAL CARE

1. The parish ministers to people in hospitals, health care facilities, and other facilities.
2. The parish ministers to the homebound and elderly parishioners.
3. A ministry is offered to support those grieving, the separated and divorced, and others in need.

FAITH FORMATION AND CATHOLIC EDUCATION

1. Adult faith formation programs, including Bible study, small groups, and retreats, are provided to form missionary disciples.
2. The parish provides comprehensive and engaging faith formation for children in religious education programs and Catholic schools.
3. The parish has ministries that reach youth and young adults.
4. Parents are engaged with the parish and active in the development of their family's faith.
5. Catholic schools provide a quality Catholic education that is available, accessible, and affordable.
6. Vocations to the priesthood, religious life, and permanent diaconate are actively and prayerfully promoted.
7. Catechists, teachers, and catechetical leaders are trained and competent in their ministries.

PARISH COMMUNITY

1. The membership of the parish is sufficient in size to carry out the mission of the Church, including ministries and programs that serve the needs of parishioners of all ages.
2. The parish provides opportunities for fellowship to promote a sense of belonging and community among parishioners.
3. A communication strategy using technologies to reach both young and old is in place, allowing the parish to maintain regular contact with parishioners, keep them informed, and promote ministries and events.

SERVING OTHERS

1. The parish engages in active ministries serving people in need within the immediate parish area, the diocese, and the world.
2. When appropriate, moral issues are addressed from the pulpit.
3. The parish collaborates with other churches and civic agencies to serve the wider community.

STEWARDSHIP

1. Parishioners understand stewardship as a response to their discipleship and give their time, talent, and treasure to support the mission of the Church.
2. The parish practices responsible budgeting by operating with a balanced budget and ensuring sufficient funds for ministries, programs, facilities, and staff.
3. Parish facilities are well-maintained and adequate for parish ministries and programs.
4. The cost of maintaining the facilities is in balance with other expenses and is a reasonable share of the operating budget.
5. Financial reporting is timely and follows the accounting standards established by the USCCB and the diocese.

C. Recommendations for Parish Use

1. These criteria can be used by parishes as a checklist to evaluate their effectiveness in carrying out the mission of Christ. The results of the evaluation process can be used by parishes to recognize areas of mission and ministry that need to be strengthened and lead to dialogue and action about how that might be accomplished.
2. The criteria can also serve as a tool for parishes to guide greater collaboration between parishes. For example, identified strengths and areas for improvement can become the basis for collaboration. One parish's strength in an area of ministry may quickly and qualitatively assist both parishes to become more vital. Two parishes working together can accomplish more than each working alone and do so with shared costs rather than one parish bearing the entire financial burden.

III. PARISH DESIGNATIONS

Parish life has become more complex and culturally diverse. Canon law provides certain guidelines for parishes and the authority of a bishop to organize the diocese in a way that best provides for effective pastoral ministry. The following, commonly used designations are currently in use in the Diocese of Grand Rapids.

A. Stand-Alone Parish

A parish with its own pastor, parish church building, finances, finance and pastoral councils, parish staff, and parish office.

B. Church (or Church Building)

A building consecrated and set apart for worship, especially liturgical worship. A church that is part of a parish merger will continue to be used as a church building until other arrangements are made, including but not limited to continued use for religious purposes or as a worship site where Sunday Mass, other liturgical celebrations, and prayer services may be held. The facilities may also be used for social activities and ministries. Alternatively, the church and other facilities of merged parishes will be sold.

C. Parish Cluster

Two or more parishes are designated to collaborate, to various extents, on ministries, resources, and personnel. The parishes are served by one pastor. Parishes in a cluster should consider forming one pastoral council and coordinating the schedules of their finance councils. Each parish retains its own finances and buildings. Clustered parishes should also consider the advantages of a parish merger. If deemed advantageous, clustered parishes should request that the bishop issue a decree merging the two parishes.

D. Parish Merger

There are two types of mergers:

1. A parish is combined with an existing parish. The church of the merged parish remains open and in use for religious purposes until other arrangements are made or the property is sold.
2. Two or more parishes merge to form a new parish. The church buildings of the former parishes remain open and in use for religious purposes until other arrangements are made.

IV. INVITATION/OPPORTUNITY TO ADD OR STRENGTHEN PARISH MINISTRIES FOR A MORE VITAL FUTURE

A. Rationale for and Development of Goals and Priorities

The opportunities under the “Synod List” below were selected as top priorities in the diocese during the Synod on Communion, Participation and Mission. The areas of opportunity listed under the “Rooted in Christ” List below were selected by parish representatives during the pastoral planning process. The full results can be viewed in the appendix. The priests and pastoral director of the diocese suggest prayerfully reflecting on this list and using it as a starting point to plan for and implement ministries that they believe will lead to a more vital future for their parish.

B. Goals and Priorities

Synod List

1. Develop ways to provide greater support for priests.
2. Increase efforts in all areas of faith formation, particularly post-confirmation and formation for adults.
3. Identify ways to evangelize more effectively.
4. Determine opportunities, especially in multi-cultural parish communities, to promote respect and understanding of one another’s cultures.
5. Engage parish pastoral councils in the fostering of pastoral activity and promoting transparency at the parish level.

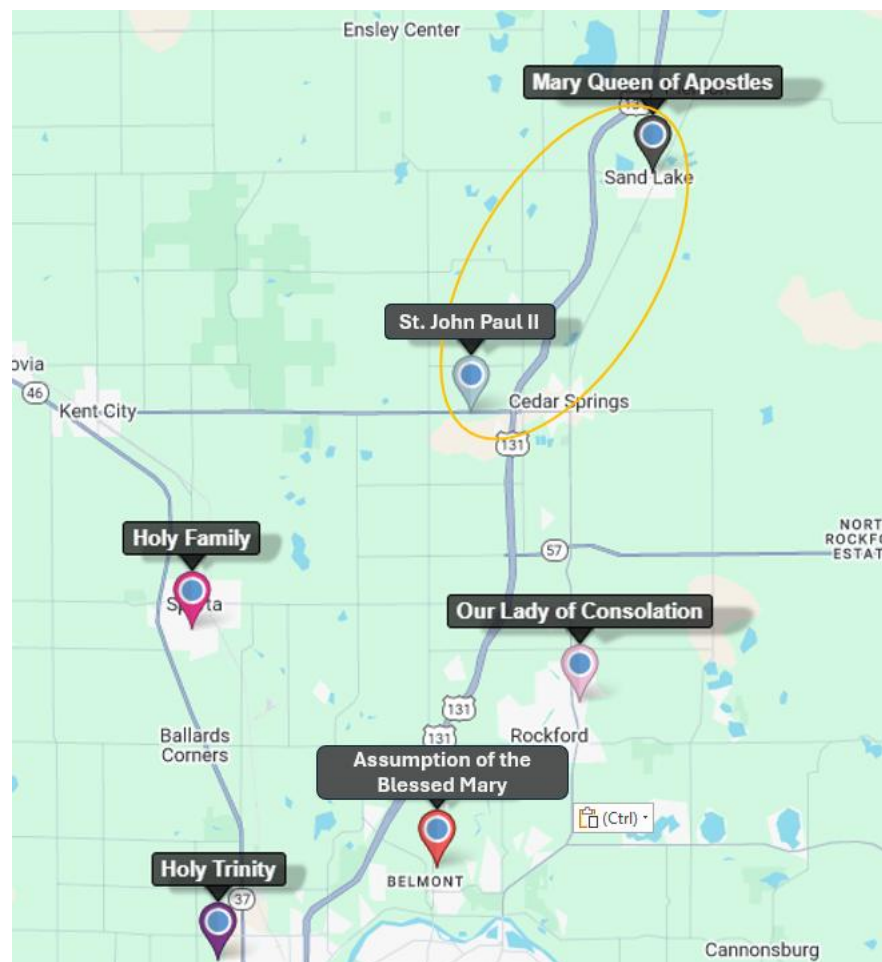
“Rooted in Christ” List

1. Provide a range of group ministry programs to strengthen people’s faith and connection with their faith community, e.g., men’s group, women’s group, Renew style groups, Alpha, and marriage encounter.
2. Focus long-range parish evangelization/welcoming efforts on OCIA, child baptisms, weddings, funerals, and enrollment and retention in Catholic schools and religious education programs.
3. Collaborate on regional adult faith formation opportunities, which may include Bible study, retreats, lectures, and thematic series.
4. Establish an area or regional approach to young adult ministry for those in their 20’s and 30’s.
5. Provide greater assistance and support to those who are enduring difficult life circumstances (e.g. divorced, widowed, loss of a child, homebound, etc.) in the area.
6. Increase efforts to engage more parishioners to share their gifts and talents and become involved with parish efforts to carry out the mission of the Church.

V. GRAND RAPIDS NORTH DEANERY

Deanery Maps

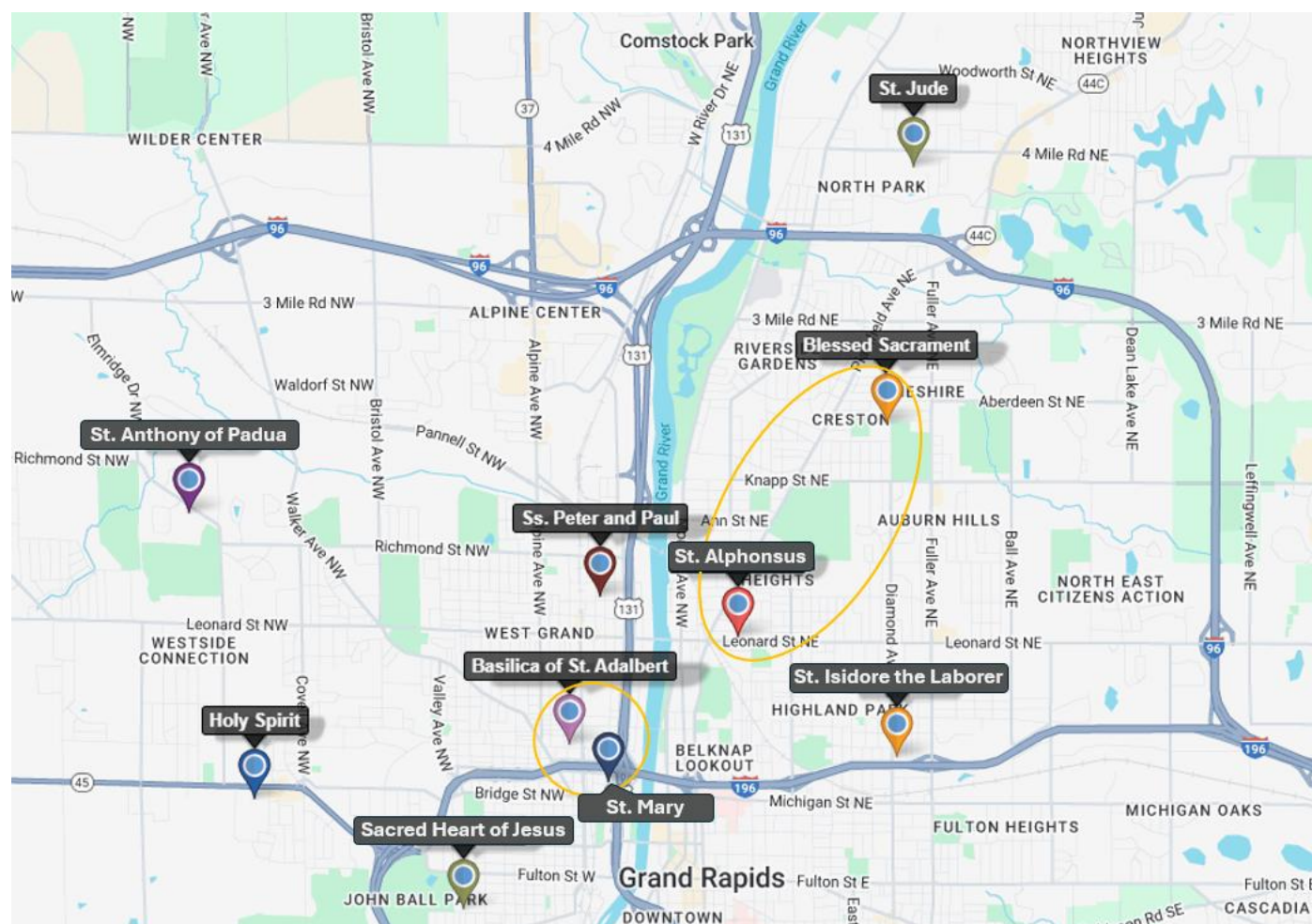
Current Map of Parishes in the Grand Rapids North Deanery (northern half of the deanery)



Map Key



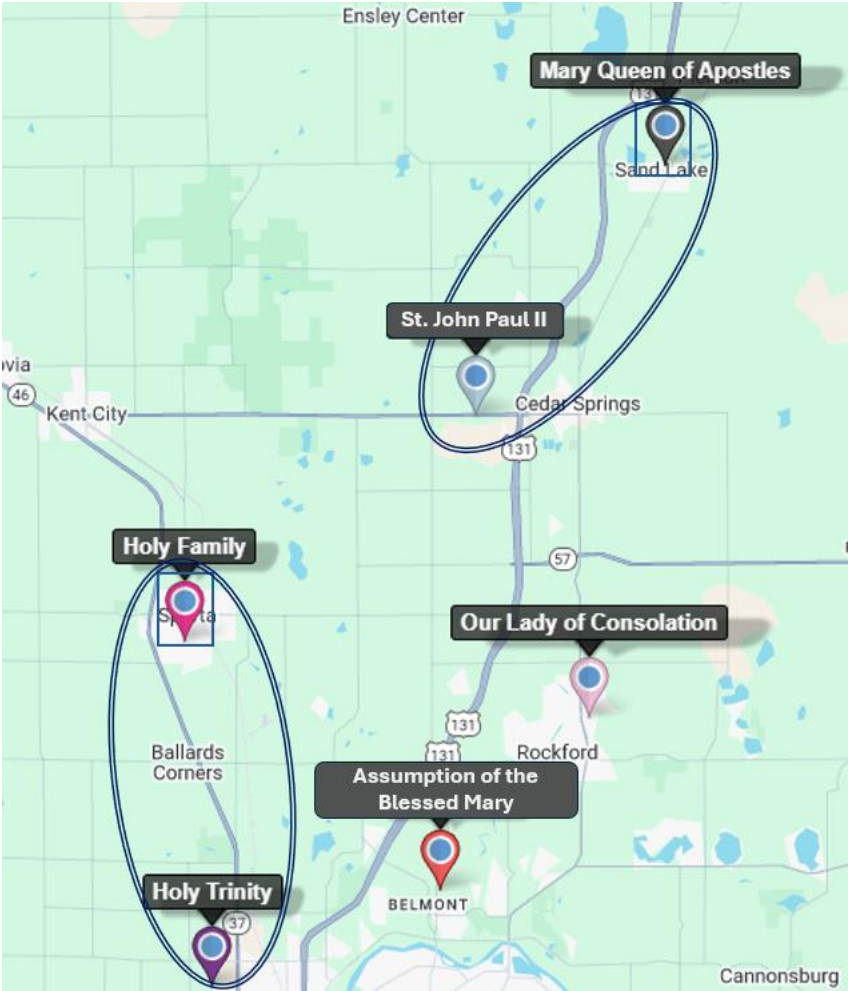
Current Map of Parishes in the Grand Rapids North Deanery (southern half of the deanery)




Map Key




Future Map of Parishes in the Grand Rapids North Deanery (northern half of the deanery)

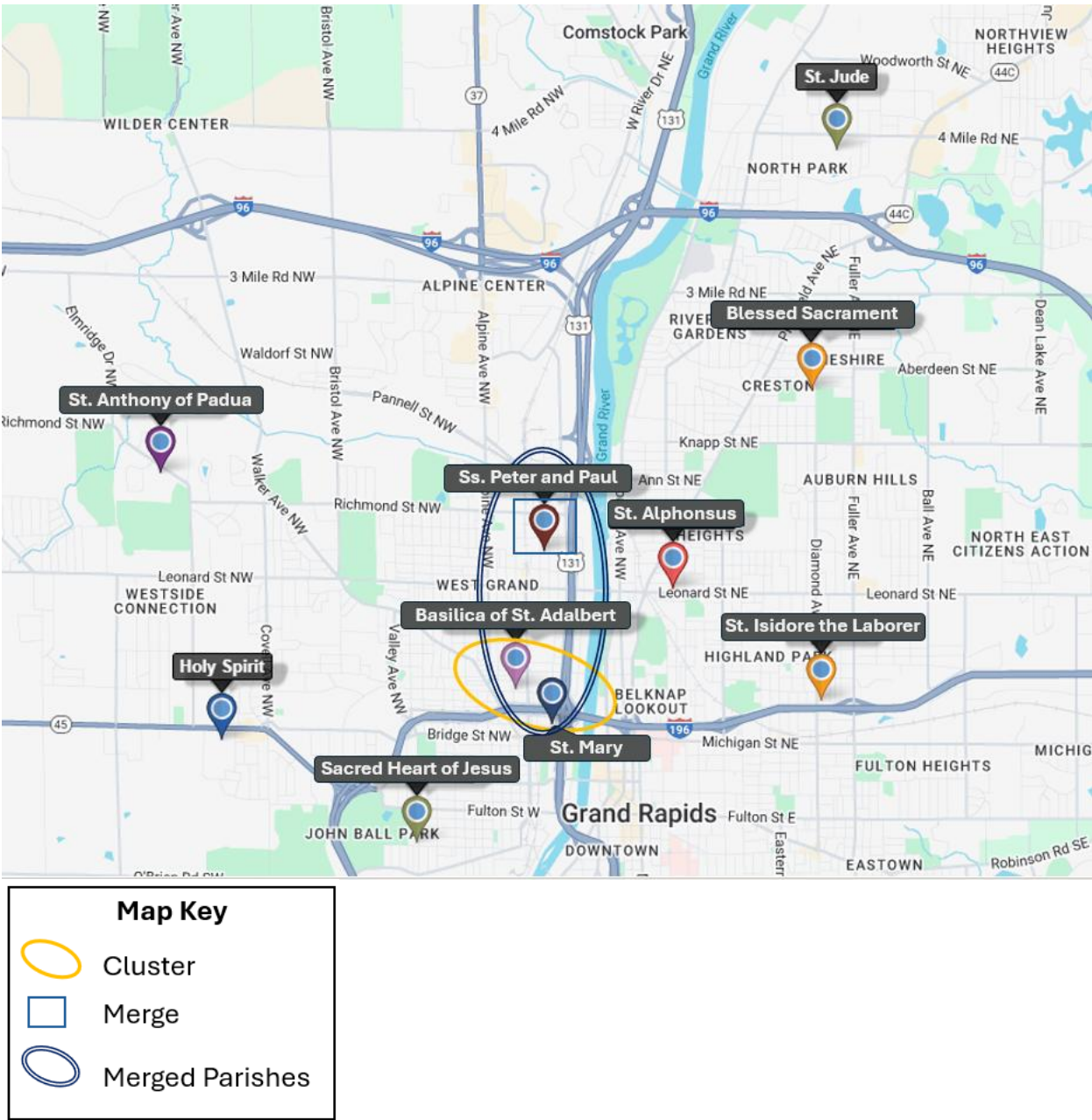


Map Key

 Merge

 Merged Parishes

Future Map of Parishes in the Grand Rapids North Deanery (southern half of the deanery)



Summary of Required Actions for Parishes in the Grand Rapids North Deanery

1. Upon the promulgation of the plan, the parish of Mary Queen of Apostles in Sand Lake will merge with St. John Paul II in Cedar Springs. The facilities at Mary Queen of Apostles will continue to be used for religious purposes until the merger is complete and the property is sold.
2. Upon the completion of the term of the pastor, the parish of Holy Family in Sparta will merge with Holy Trinity Parish in Comstock Park. The parishes should begin taking steps toward implementing this merger with the promulgation of the plan. The facilities at Holy Family will continue to be used for Hispanic ministry.
3. Upon the completion of the term of the pastor, the parish of Ss. Peter and Paul in Grand Rapids will merge with the Basilica of St. Adalbert in Grand Rapids. The parishes should begin taking steps toward implementing this merger with the promulgation of the plan. Ss. Peter and Paul will continue to be used for religious purposes until the merger is completed and the property is sold.
4. The parishes of Blessed Sacrament and St. Alphonsus in Grand Rapids will be clustered and served by one pastor. Upon the completion of the terms for the pastors at St. Isidore the Laborer and St. Jude, the configuration of the parishes of St. Alphonsus, St. Jude, St. Isidore, and Blessed Sacrament will be reassessed.
5. The parish of St. Mary in Grand Rapids will continue to cluster with the Basilica of St. Adalbert in Grand Rapids.
6. The following parishes will remain stand-alone parishes:
 - Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Belmont
 - Holy Spirit, Grand Rapids
 - Our Lady of Consolation, Rockford
 - Sacred Heart of Jesus, Grand Rapids
 - St. Anthony of Padua, Grand Rapids
7. All parishes in the Grand Rapids North Deanery should consider collaborating with other parishes on existing or new ministries. Such collaboration can share costs and usually results in greater participation and ministry effectiveness. Collaboration is recommended for two to three parishes. Parishes with the same civic identity should consider the advantages of working together in certain ministries.

Impact of the Required Actions on Parishes in the Grand Rapids North Deanery

- a. The number of priests allocated to the deanery can be reduced by four.
- b. Smaller parish memberships have been combined so that all parishes in the deanery are comparable in size.
- c. The number of buildings will be reduced when mergers and sales are complete.
- d. Collaborating parishes will be able to steward their resources better by focusing on shared ministries.

Grand Rapids North Deanery Parishes

Parish Recommendations for Mary Queen of Apostles, Sand Lake and St. John Paul II, Cedar Springs

- a. Upon the promulgation of the plan, the parish of Mary Queen of Apostles in Sand Lake will merge with St. John Paul II in Cedar Springs. The facilities at Mary Queen of Apostles will continue to be used for religious purposes until the merger is complete and the property is sold.
- b. St. John Paul II Parish should welcome parishioners from Mary Queen of Apostles Parish to register at the parish. The increase in membership will benefit Mass attendance and other ministries.
- c. The parish should develop a strategy for additional membership growth outside of the merger. At its 2024 size, the parish is not much larger than other parishes that are being merged and closed in other parts of the diocese.
- d. The parish should continue to study its need for future ministry space and its current use of facilities.
- e. St. John Paul II should continue using “Divine Renovation,” as a guide for parish ministry and vitality.

Parish Recommendations for Holy Family Parish, Sparta and Holy Trinity, Comstock Park

- a. Upon the retirement of the pastor, the parish of Holy Family in Sparta will merge with Holy Trinity Parish in Comstock Park. The parishes should begin to take steps to implement the merger with the promulgation of the plan. Holy Family will continue to use its church building and other facilities and serve as a location for Hispanic ministry.
- b. Study future staffing and ministry needs of the communities. The merger should create opportunities for financial efficiencies and resources which can benefit both sites’ ability to offer a fuller range of ministries.
- c. The parishes should study, in conjunction with the Office of Hispanic Ministry, the state of Hispanic ministry and the future needs in the Sparta area. Approximately 75 people currently attend the monthly Spanish-language Mass at Holy Family Church.
- d. Holy Trinity Parish should study its space needs. There is a limited number of rooms available for meetings with adults, and the location of the rectory is not desirable.
- e. The support for, promotion of, and recruitment of students for Holy Trinity School is lauded and can be expanded with the merger.
- f. It is recommended that Holy Family retain an administrative assistant and maintenance staff at the site; schedule one weekend Mass and rotate daily Masses between the two sites; start a young adult ministry; and study the creation of a baby pantry for mothers in need.
- g. It is recommended that Holy Trinity look for ways to increase enrollment at Holy Trinity School, which will hopefully be aided by the merger.

Parish Recommendations for Ss. Peter & Paul, Grand Rapids

- a. Upon the retirement of the pastor, the parish of Ss. Peter and Paul in Grand Rapids will merge with the Basilica of St. Adalbert in Grand Rapids. The parishes should begin taking steps toward this merger with the promulgation of the plan. Ss. Peter and Paul will continue to be used for religious purposes until the merger is complete and the property is sold.

- b. Until the retirement of the pastor, members of the parish should continue their support for and participation in the life of the parish.
- c. With the approval of the plan, the parish should begin to collaborate with the Basilica of St. Adalbert on preparations for the parish merger.
- d. Upon the retirement of the pastor at SS. Peter and Paul, the parish should develop a transition plan with the pastor and other leaders from the Basilica of St. Adalbert.
- e. Ss. Peter & Paul should continue its current ministries, particularly those serving the needs of those in the neighborhood.

Parish Recommendations for Blessed Sacrament, Grand Rapids, St. Alphonsus, Grand Rapids, St. Isidore the Laborer, Grand Rapids, and St. Jude, Grand Rapids

- a. The parishes of Blessed Sacrament and St. Alphonsus in Grand Rapids will be clustered and served by one pastor. Upon the completion of the terms for the pastors at St. Isidore the Laborer Parish and St. Jude Parish, the configuration of the parishes of St. Alphonsus, St. Jude, St. Isidore, and Blessed Sacrament will be reassessed.
- b. All four parishes should continue their support and recruitment for, and promotion of All Saints Academy.
- c. Since the parishes have collaborated so successfully on All Saints Academy, they should also study staffing, ministries, and resources to determine if there are additional opportunities for collaboration.
- d. A study should be conducted regarding the use of facilities in the parishes.
- e. St. Jude should continue to implement its strategic plan.

Parish Recommendations for Basilica of St. Adalbert, Grand Rapids and St. Mary, Grand Rapids

- a. The parish of St. Mary in Grand Rapids will continue to cluster with the Basilica of St. Adalbert in Grand Rapids.
- b. The parish should study the facilities at St. Mary and determine their best uses for ministry.
- c. The parish should study the potential for growth in the Spanish-speaking community and develop an evangelization plan for the ministry at St. Mary.
- d. St. Mary should continue its sponsorship of San Juan Diego Academy, and both parishes should continue to support Catholic Schools in the area.
- e. St. Mary should continue its efforts to grow deeper connections among bilingual families; strengthen lay leadership; and expand parish outreach to the most vulnerable on the West Side.
- f. The Basilica should work to deepen the spiritual life of the parish through liturgies; invite, accompany, and form disciples at every stage of faith; and support young adults in faith, community, and mission.

Parish Recommendations for Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Belmont

- a. The parish already collaborates with other Catholic parishes on a local food pantry and should explore greater collaboration with those parishes in other ministries, particularly adult faith formation.
- b. The parish should continue its strong support of Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Catholic School, which is a National Blue Ribbon School.
- c. The parish should establish teams of 55 & older individuals to socialize, study the bible, and serve the parish in various activities; develop mission trip involvement; emphasize faith formation programs; develop adult faith formation and enrichment with other parishes.

Parish Recommendations for Holy Spirit, Grand Rapids

- a. The parish should continue its renewal efforts using “Rebuilt.”
- b. Holy Spirit should explore the potential for collaboration with neighboring parishes in various ministries, particularly ministry to young adults.
- c. The parish should continue its support and commitment to Holy Spirit School.

Parish Recommendations for Our Lady of Consolation, Rockford

- a. As the area continues to grow, the parish should develop a comprehensive plan to account for staffing, ministries, finances, and facilities that will be needed in the future.
- b. With projected population growth, the parish should increase its efforts to reach out to Catholics and non-Catholics in the area to welcome and engage them in the life of the community.
- c. The parish should continue its support for, promotion of, and enrollment efforts for Our Lady of Consolation School.

Parish Recommendations for Sacred Heart of Jesus, Grand Rapids

- a. The parish should continue its efforts to support Catholic education.
- b. As the enrollment of Sacred Heart School is nearing capacity, a study should be conducted in conjunction with the Office of Catholic Schools to plan for the future.
- c. Sacred Heart should continue its efforts in catechesis; Catholic education through the school; sacred music; and Eucharistic processions.

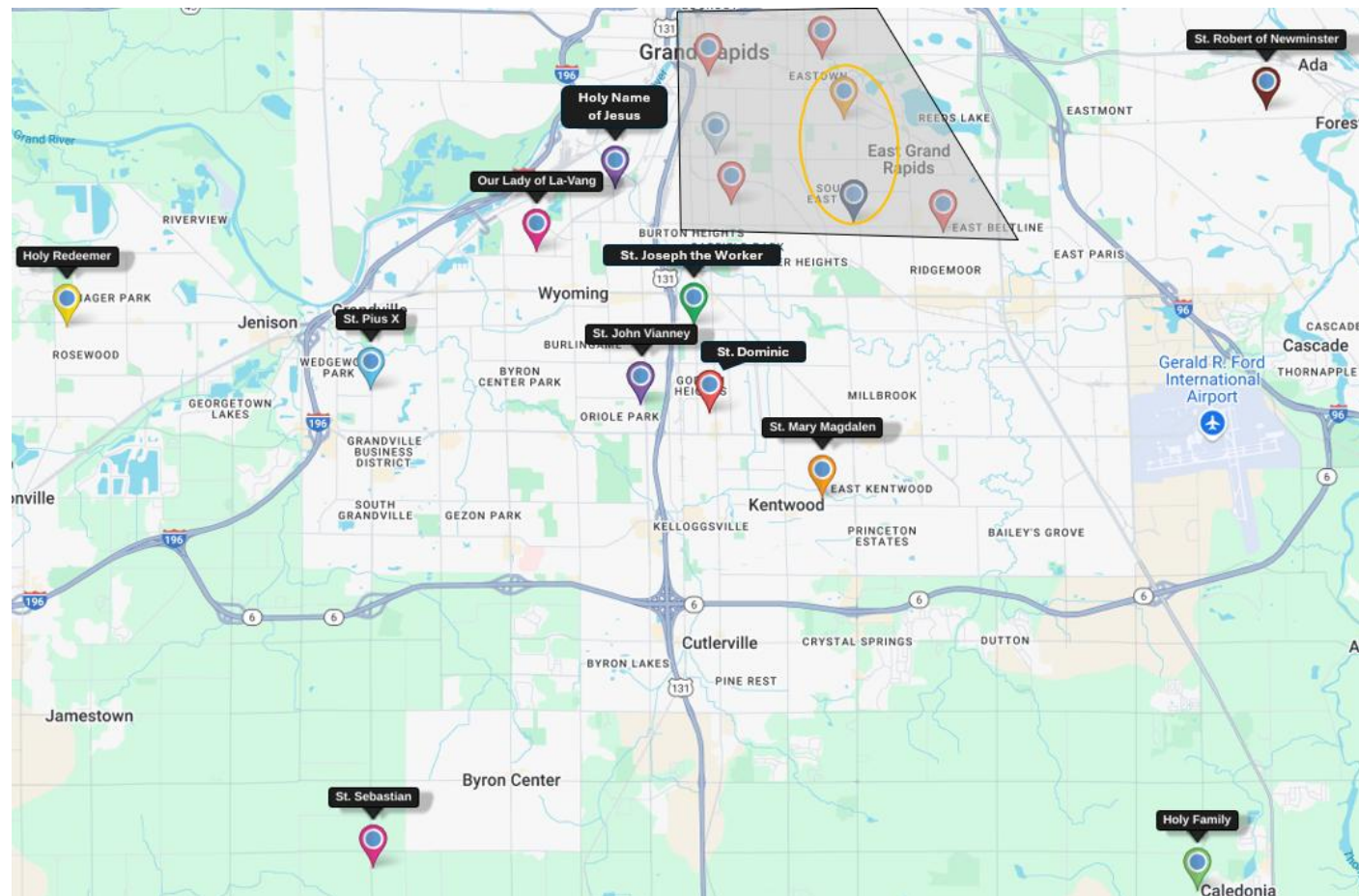
Parish Recommendations for St. Anthony of Padua, Grand Rapids

- a. The parish is encouraged to continue its support of and commitment to St. Anthony of Padua Catholic School.
- b. A study should be conducted, in conjunction with the Office of Catholic Schools, regarding the feasibility of adding an early childhood center at the parish.
- c. St. Anthony of Padua should continue its efforts to develop ways to provide greater support for priests; increase efforts to engage more parishioners to share their gifts and talents; and establish an area approach to young adult ministry.

VI. GRAND RAPIDS SOUTH DEANERY

Deanery Maps

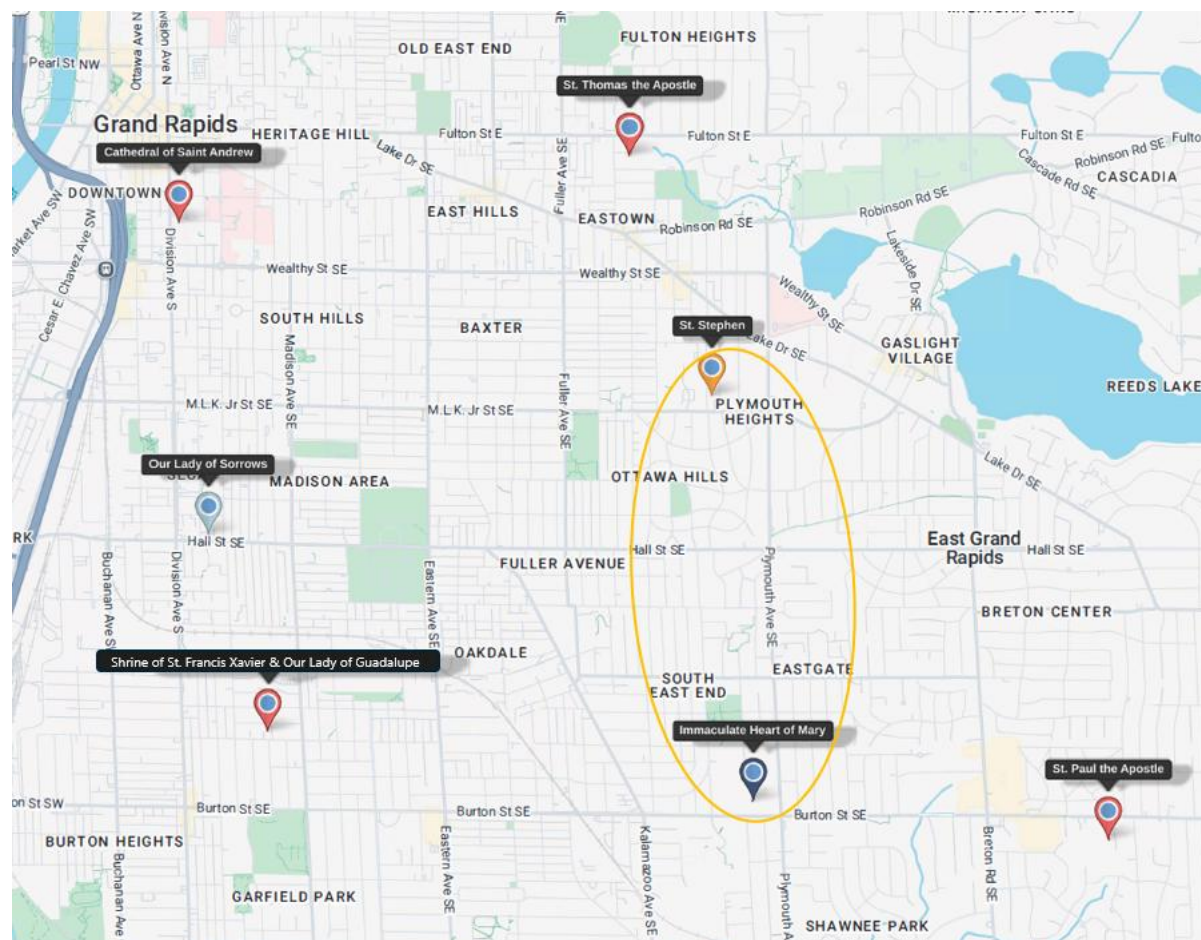
Current Map of Parishes in the Grand Rapids South Deanery



Map Key



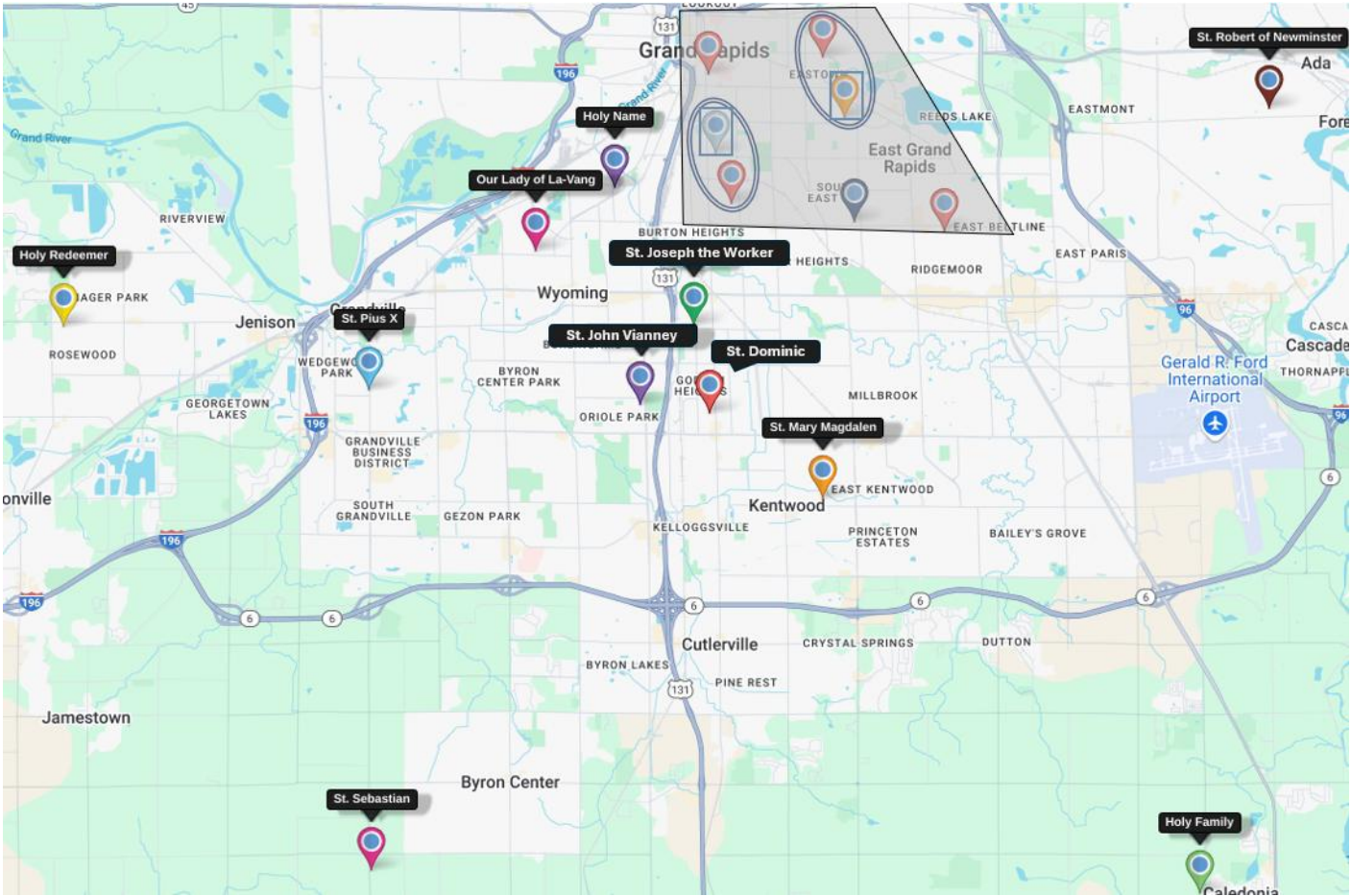
Current Map of Parishes in the Grand Rapids South Deanery (Grand Rapids)



Map Key



Future Map of Parishes in the Grand Rapids South Deanery

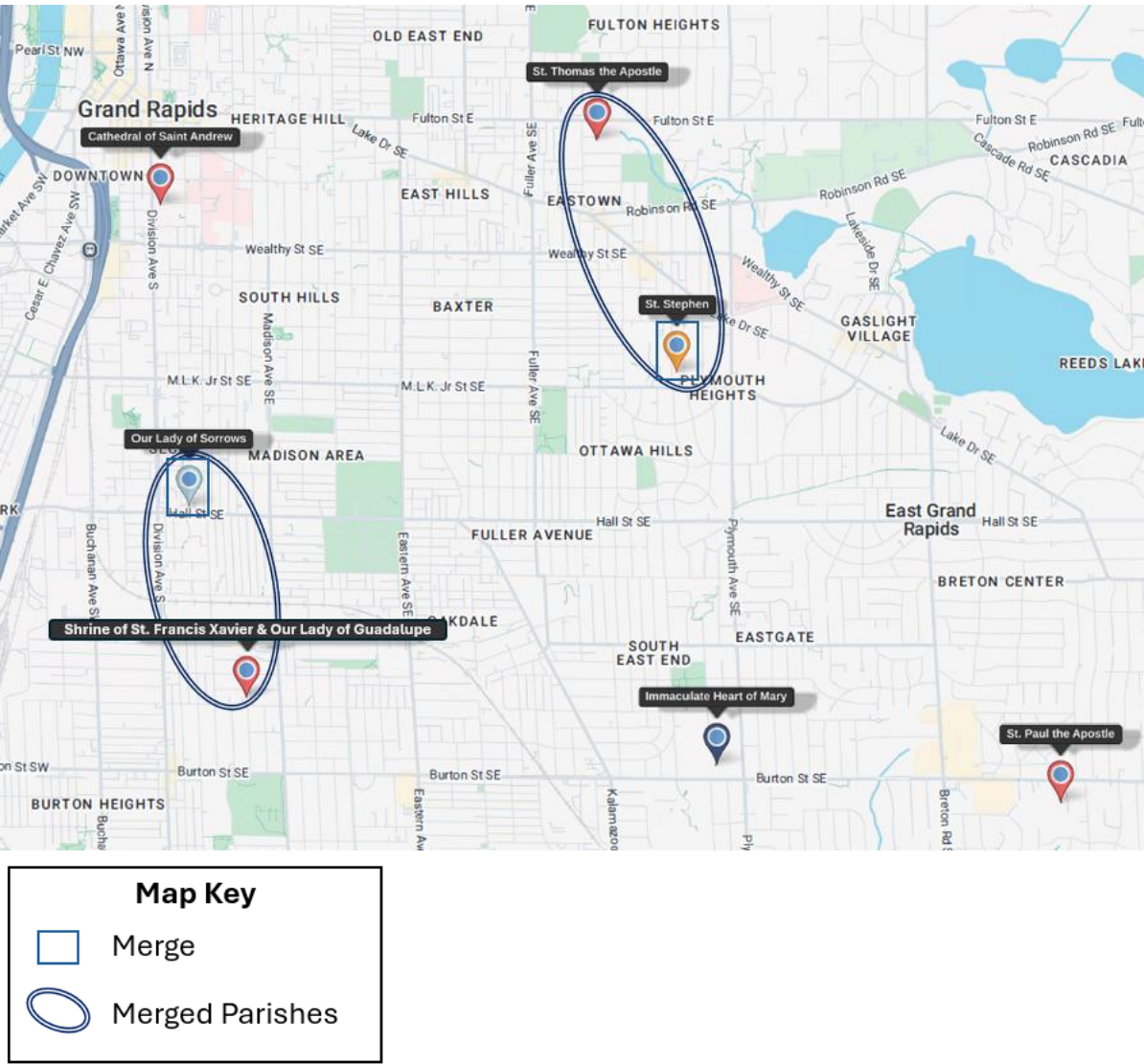


Map Key

Merge

Merged Parishes

Future Map of Parishes in Grand Rapids South Deanery (Grand Rapids)



Summary of Required Actions for Parishes in the Grand Rapids South Deanery

1. Upon the completion of the term of the pastor, Our Lady of Sorrows will merge with the Shrine of St. Francis Xavier & Our Lady of Guadalupe. The parishes should begin taking steps toward the merger with the approval of the plan. The church and facilities at Our Lady of Sorrows will continue to be used for religious purposes until other arrangements are made.
2. The parish of St. Stephen in Grand Rapids will merge with St. Thomas the Apostle in Grand Rapids. The parishes should begin taking steps toward their merger with the approval of the plan. St. Stephen Church and other facilities will continue to be used for religious purposes until other arrangements are made.
3. The parish of St. Joseph the Worker in Wyoming will identify a site that will allow for a larger worship space, room for ministry growth, and ample parking.
4. The following parishes will remain stand-alone parishes.
 - Cathedral of St. Andrew, Grand Rapids
 - Holy Family, Caledonia
 - Holy Name of Jesus, Wyoming
 - Holy Redeemer, Jenison
 - Immaculate Heart of Mary, Grand Rapids
 - Our Lady of La-Vang, Wyoming
 - St. John Vianney, Wyoming
 - St. Mary Magdalen, Kentwood
 - St. Paul the Apostle, Grand Rapids
 - St. Pius X, Grandville
 - St. Robert of Newminster, Ada
 - St. Sebastian, Byron Center
5. All parishes in the South Deanery should consider collaborating with other parishes on existing and or new ministries. Such collaboration can share costs and usually results in greater participation and ministry effectiveness. Collaboration is recommended for two to three parishes. Parishes with the same civic identity should consider the advantages of working together in certain ministries.

Impact of the Required Actions on Parishes in the Grand Rapids South Deanery

- a. The priest allocation in the deanery can be reduced by one priest.
- b. Smaller parish memberships have been combined so that all parishes in the deanery are of comparable size.
- c. The number of parish facilities within the deanery can be reduced, and those parishes needing additional ministry space have been addressed.
- d. Collaborating parishes will be able to steward their resources better by focusing on shared ministries.

Grand Rapids South Deanery Parishes

Parish Recommendations for Our Lady of Sorrows, Grand Rapids and Shrine of St. Francis Xavier & Our Lady of Guadalupe, Grand Rapids

- a. Upon the completion of the term of the pastor, Our Lady of Sorrows Parish will merge with the Shrine of St. Francis Xavier & Our Lady of Guadalupe. The parishes should begin taking steps toward the merger with the approval of the plan. Our Lady of Sorrows will continue to use its church and facilities for religious purposes until other arrangements are made.
- b. The parish should study the ministry needs and use of current and future facilities and develop a master site plan.
- c. The parish should determine a future Mass schedule that will accommodate both English-speaking and Spanish-speaking members.
- d. The parish is encouraged to sustain its commitment to San Juan Diego Academy.
- e. Our Lady of Sorrows should continue its efforts to host welcome gatherings for new parishioners; organize Eucharistic ministers to homebound members; evangelization; and small Bible study groups.
- f. The Shrine of St. Francis Xavier & Our Lady of Guadalupe should continue its diocesan-wide celebration of the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe; youth events; and adult ministry.

Parish Recommendations for St. Stephen, East Grand Rapids and St. Thomas the Apostle, Grand Rapids

- a. The parish of St. Stephen in Grand Rapids will merge with St. Thomas the Apostle in Grand Rapids. The parishes should begin taking steps toward the merger with the approval of the plan. The buildings at St. Stephen will continue to be used for religious purposes until other arrangements are made.
- b. St. Thomas the Apostle should continue its strong support of St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School.
- c. St. Thomas the Apostle should develop a strategy to welcome parishioners from St. Stephen Parish.
- d. St. Thomas the Apostle should continue its efforts to collaborate on youth ministry; increase participation in youth and young adult ministry; and develop ministries to the elderly, such as grief support and caregiver support.

Parish Recommendations for St. Joseph the Worker, Wyoming

- a. The parish of St. Joseph the Worker in Wyoming will identify a site that will allow for a larger worship space, ministry growth, and ample parking.
- b. St. Joseph the Worker should continue its efforts in leadership development and youth programming.

Parish Recommendations for St. John Vianney, Wyoming

- a. St. John Vianney Parish should conduct a study of its facilities regarding current uses and future needs. At present, the parish lacks adequate meeting and storage space. A report with recommendations should be compiled and submitted to the parish pastoral and finance councils for action.
- b. The parish should continue its support of and commitment to St. John Vianney Catholic School.
- c. St. John Vianney should continue its work to increase efforts in all areas of faith formation, particularly post-confirmation and adult formation; provide a range of group programming to strengthen faith and connection with the faith community.

Parish Recommendations for Cathedral of St. Andrew, Grand Rapids

- a. The cathedral has a strong, diverse congregation and should continue its efforts to serve as a spiritual home to many cultural groups. The parish should consider ways that their experience of building respect and understanding for one another's cultures may be shared with other parishes in the diocese, beginning with those in their own deanery.
- b. The cathedral should study ways to address its long-term need for adequate ministry, meeting, and social space. The parish has developed creative short-term solutions by using space at the Catholic Information Center and at Catholic Central High School.

Parish Recommendations for Holy Family, Caledonia

- a. Considering the population growth projections and the racial/ethnic trends for the area, Holy Family should study the feasibility of establishing an early childhood center, Catholic School, and Hispanic Ministry. These studies should be conducted in conjunction with the appropriate diocesan offices.
- b. Holy Family should continue its collaboration on youth ministry through appropriate partnerships and is encouraged to explore additional opportunities for collaboration in other areas of ministry.
- c. Holy Family should continue its efforts to focus on evangelization and welcoming efforts; develop area-wide adult faith formation programs; and identify ways to evangelize more effectively.

Parish Recommendations for Holy Name of Jesus, Wyoming

- a. The parish should continue to study its need for additional ministry space and develop a plan. In the interim, Holy Name of Jesus may consider developing ministries in collaboration with other parishes.
- b. The parish should continue its support of San Juan Diego Academy.
- c. The parish's participation in the Crossroads collaboration is commendable, and the parish should explore collaboration on additional ministries with those parishes.
- d. Holy Name of Jesus should continue its evangelization and communications efforts.

Parish Recommendations for Holy Redeemer, Jenison

- a. Holy Redeemer should study the potential to build a stronger youth ministry for high school-age students and develop a plan of action. While the number of elementary religious education students has remained stable, high school enrollment has fluctuated and is low in relation to the elementary numbers.
- b. The parish should continue its ecumenical efforts and is encouraged to consider collaborating with neighboring parishes on some ministries.

Parish Recommendations for Immaculate Heart of Mary, Grand Rapids

- a. Immaculate Heart of Mary should continue its support of Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic School.
- b. The parish should study ways to increase participation in youth ministry and develop a strategy. Between elementary religious education, PK-8 school enrollment, and students attending Catholic high schools, the number of participants appears to be much lower than expected.
- c. Immaculate Heart of Mary should continue its efforts to increase the number of parish volunteers, especially for liturgical ministries.

Parish Recommendations for Our Lady of La-Vang, Wyoming

- a. Our Lady of La-Vang should reach out to other parishes in the area that have Vietnamese members to invite them to participate in holiday, holy day events, and cultural education at the parish.
- b. The parish should study religious education enrollment and develop a plan of action. Both elementary and high school enrollments have decreased, as well as the number of confirmations.

Parish Recommendations for St. Mary Magdalen, Kentwood

- a. St. Mary Magdalen should collaborate with Our Lady of La-Vang Parish on the promotion of formational and cultural opportunities for members of the Vietnamese community.
- b. The parish should study its facility needs and develop a plan that is presented to the parish finance council.

Parish Recommendations for St. Paul the Apostle, Grand Rapids

- a. St. Paul the Apostle should continue its work through “Divine Renovation” to unify and energize the parish.
- b. The parish should study the reasons for low participation in youth ministry, given the size of the school and religious education program enrollments and develop a plan of action.
- c. St. Paul the Apostle should continue its strong support of St. Paul the Apostle School, which has led to a 60% enrollment increase over the past five years.

Parish Recommendations for St. Pius X, Grandville

- a. St. Pius X should be recognized for its longevity in the Crossroads collaboration and is encouraged to explore new ministry possibilities for collaboration, such as young adult ministry.
- b. The parish should study the need to increase participation in youth ministry and develop a strategy.
- c. St. Pius X should continue its efforts to establish an area approach to young adult ministry; provide a range of group ministry programs to strengthen people’s faith; and increase efforts to engage more parishioners to share their gifts and talents.

Parish Recommendations for St. Robert of Newminster, Ada

- a. St. Robert of Newminster should continue to use insights from “Amazing Parish” to guide their parish leadership and shape parish ministries.
- b. The parish should be encouraged to continue their support for its newly established early childhood program and Catholic school.
- c. With newly added facilities, the parish should explore opportunities to initiate or expand ministries and consider the potential to collaborate with neighboring parishes.
- d. St. Robert of Newminster should continue its efforts to collaborate with other parishes on marriage preparation, young adult ministry, 24/7 adoration, and adult faith formation.

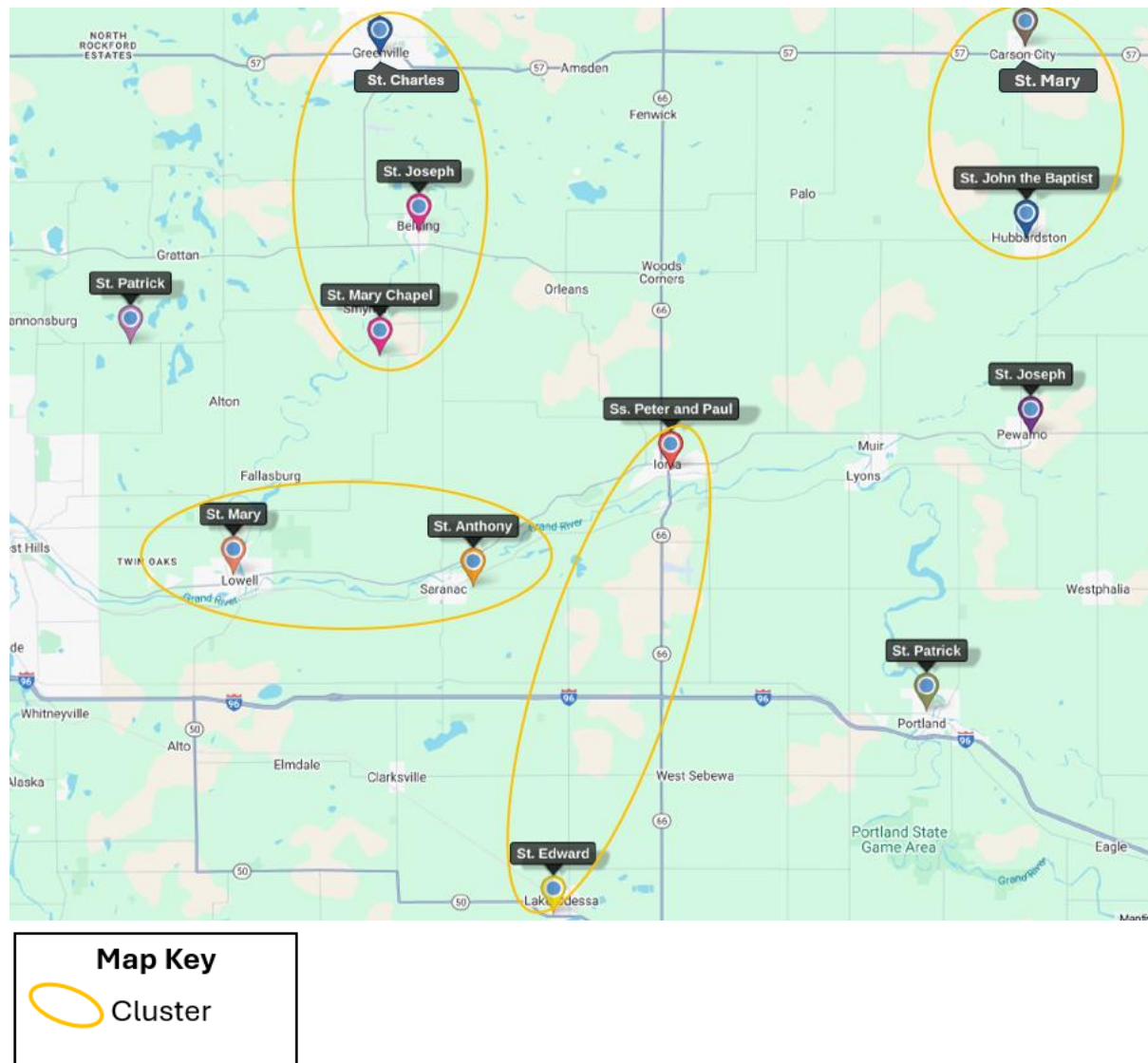
Parish Recommendations for St. Sebastian, Byron Center

- a. St. Sebastian should be commended for its history of participation in the Crossroads collaboration and is encouraged to explore additional areas for collaboration.
- b. With the projected population growth in the area, the parish should continue its study of the potential for early childhood programs and the possibility of a Catholic school.
- c. St. Sebastian should continue its efforts to increase post-confirmation and young adult ministry; develop a “Big Brother, Big Sister” new member mentorship ministry; study early childhood programs and the potential for a Catholic elementary school.

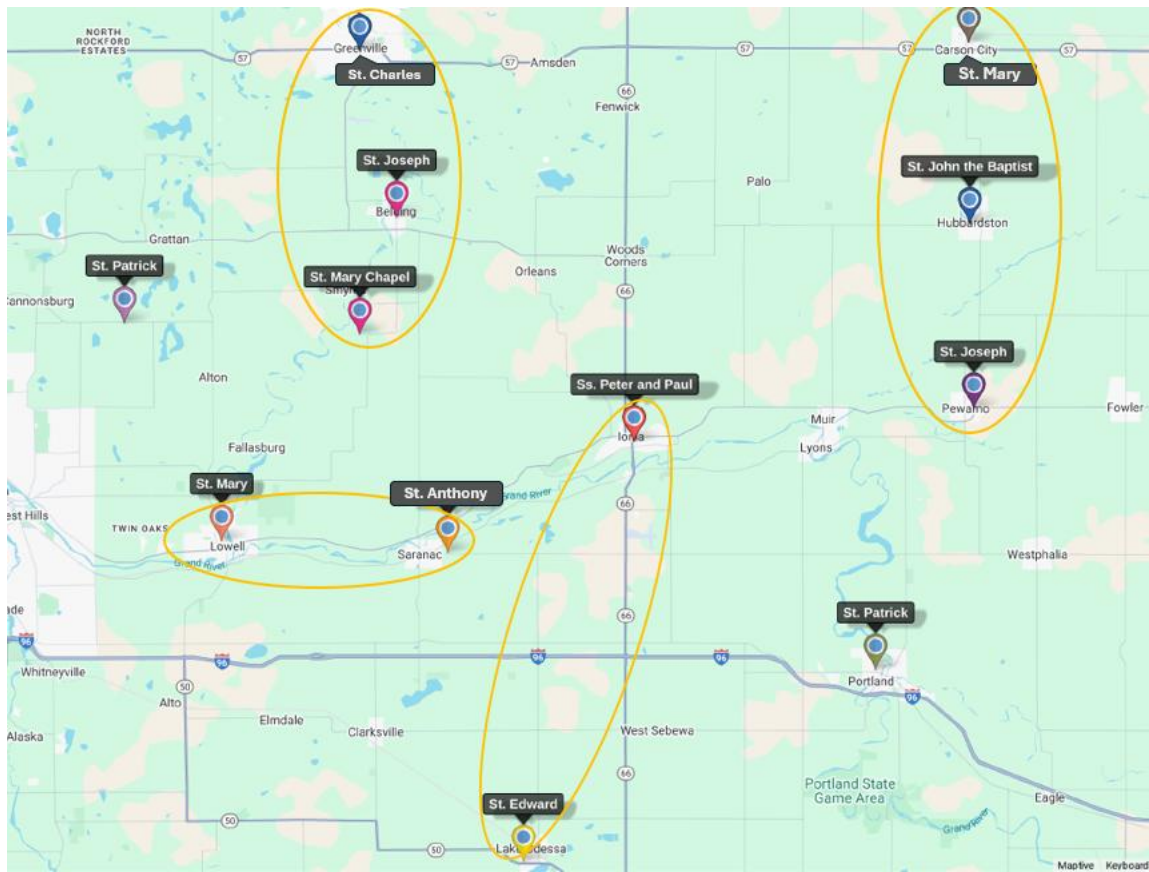
VII. EAST DEANERY

Deanery Maps

Current Map of Parishes in the East Deanery



Future Map of Parishes in the East Deanery



Map Key

 Cluster

Summary of Required Actions for Parishes in the East Deanery

1. The parish of St. John the Baptist in Hubbardston will continue to cluster with St. Mary in Carson City. Upon the retirement of the pastoral director, St. Mary and St. John the Baptist will cluster with St. Joseph in Pewamo, and the pastor of St. Joseph in Pewamo will serve as pastor for all three parishes.
2. The parishes of St. Charles in Greenville and St. Joseph-St. Mary (with church buildings at St. Joseph in Belding and St. Mary in Miriam) will continue as a cluster, with the parishes sharing a pastor.
3. The parishes of St. Anthony in Saranac and St. Mary in Lowell will continue as a cluster, with the parishes sharing a pastor.
4. The parishes of Ss. Peter and Paul in Ionia and St. Edward in Lake Odessa will continue as a cluster, with the parishes sharing a pastor.
5. The following parishes will remain stand-alone parishes:
 - St. Patrick, Parnell
 - St. Patrick, Portland

Impact of the Required Actions on Parishes in the East Deanery

- a. The deanery priest allocation will be unchanged.

East Deanery Parishes

Parish Recommendations for St. Mary, Carson City, St. John the Baptist, Hubbardston, and St. Joseph, Pewamo

- a. The parish of St. John the Baptist in Hubbardston will continue to cluster with St. Mary in Carson City. Upon the retirement of the pastoral director, St. Mary and St. John the Baptist will cluster with St. Joseph in Pewamo, and the pastor of St. Joseph in Pewamo will serve as pastor for all three parishes.
- b. St. John the Baptist and St. Mary have a history of working together and currently have a joint pastoral council. They should review their collaboration to seek even greater integration and improved ministry. The parishes should consider merging in the future.
- c. St. Joseph Parish should continue its efforts to strengthen St. Joseph Catholic School and seek ways to increase enrollment.
- d. Parishioners should continue their support for and participation in the life of the parish.

Parish Recommendations for St. Charles, Greenville and St. Joseph-St. Mary, Belding

- a. The parishes of St. Charles in Greenville and St. Joseph-St. Mary (with church buildings at St. Joseph in Belding and St. Mary in Miriam) will continue as a cluster, with the parishes sharing a pastor.
- b. St. Charles Parish should continue its efforts to strengthen St. Charles Catholic School and seek ways to increase enrollment.
- c. The parishes should continue to increase their efforts to serve those in need in their communities. The “Walking with Moms in Need” ministry at St. Charles shows promise.

- d. The parishes should work together to expand adult faith formation offerings, perhaps collaborating with other parishes to offer programs on a regional basis.
- e. St. Joseph Parish should engage in a study process to investigate additional opportunities to serve the community and to determine the best uses of its facilities. While the parish membership is small, the facilities are in good condition and could be used for many purposes.

Parish Recommendations for St. Anthony, Saranac and St. Mary, Lowell

- a. The parishes of St. Anthony in Saranac and St. Mary in Lowell will continue as a cluster, with the parishes sharing a pastor.
- b. The parishes should develop an evangelization plan to focus efforts and develop strategies for both communities.
- c. St. Mary should continue to use insights from “Amazing Parish” to guide their parish leadership and shape parish ministries.

Parish Recommendations for Ss. Peter and Paul, Ionia and St. Edward, Lake Odessa

- a. The parishes of Ss. Peter and Paul in Ionia and St. Edward in Lake Odessa will continue as a cluster, with the parishes sharing a pastor.
- b. Ss. Peter and Paul Parish should continue its efforts to strengthen and increase enrollment at Ss. Peter and Paul Catholic School. The school is currently operating at about 66% capacity and should engage in a study to identify the best paths to strengthen the school and parish financially.
- c. The pastor and finance council of Ss. Peter and Paul should engage in consultation with the diocesan finance department to ensure the parish is utilizing best practices in the areas of budgeting, accounting, and financial planning.
- d. Ss. Peter and Paul Parish should review its Sunday Mass schedule and reduce the number of Masses offered each weekend by one.
- e. Both parishes should work to expand adult faith formation offerings, perhaps collaborating with other parishes to offer programs on a regional basis.

Parish Recommendations for St. Patrick, Parnell

- a. St. Patrick Parish should continue its support of St. Patrick Catholic School.
- b. St. Patrick Parish should continue its implementation of a family faith formation program with efforts to grow participation and parent buy-in.

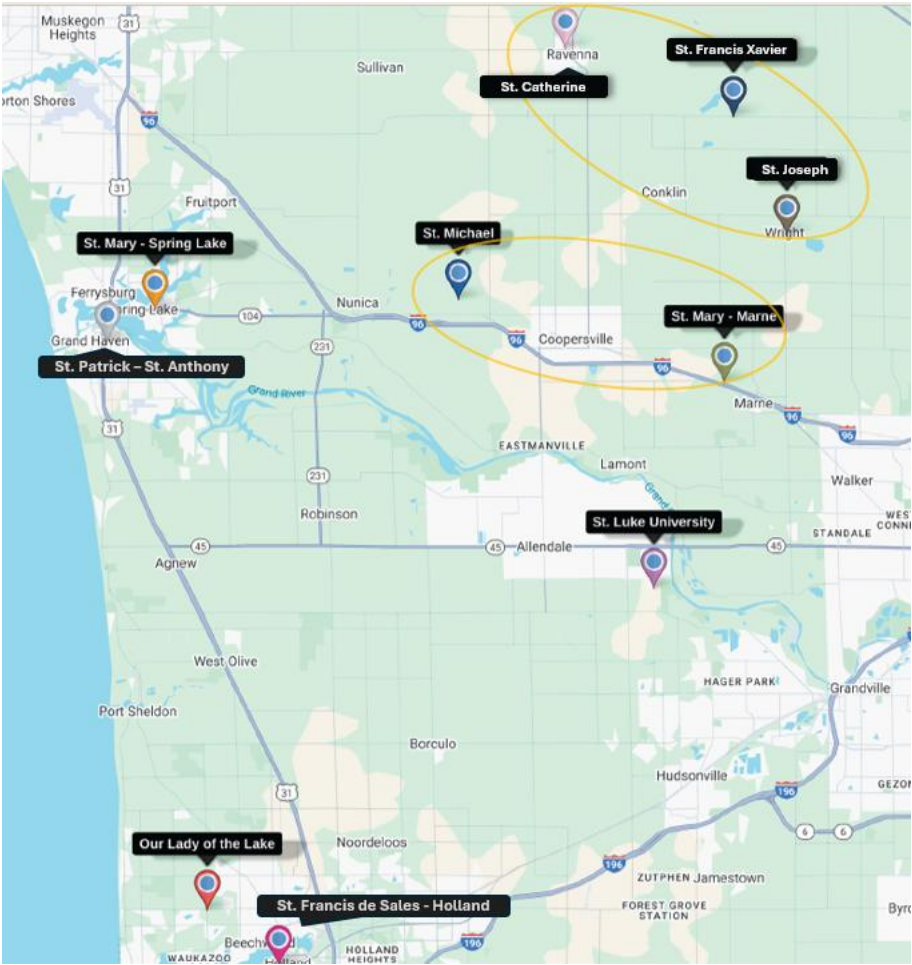
Parish Recommendations for St. Patrick, Portland

- a. St. Patrick Parish should continue its support of St. Patrick Catholic School.
- b. The parish and school should continue their separate strategic planning process to determine goals and priorities for the future.


VIII. WEST DEANERY

Deanery Maps

Current Map of Parishes in the West Deanery (Outside Muskegon)

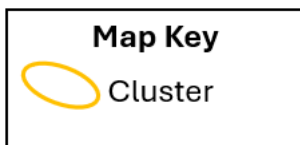
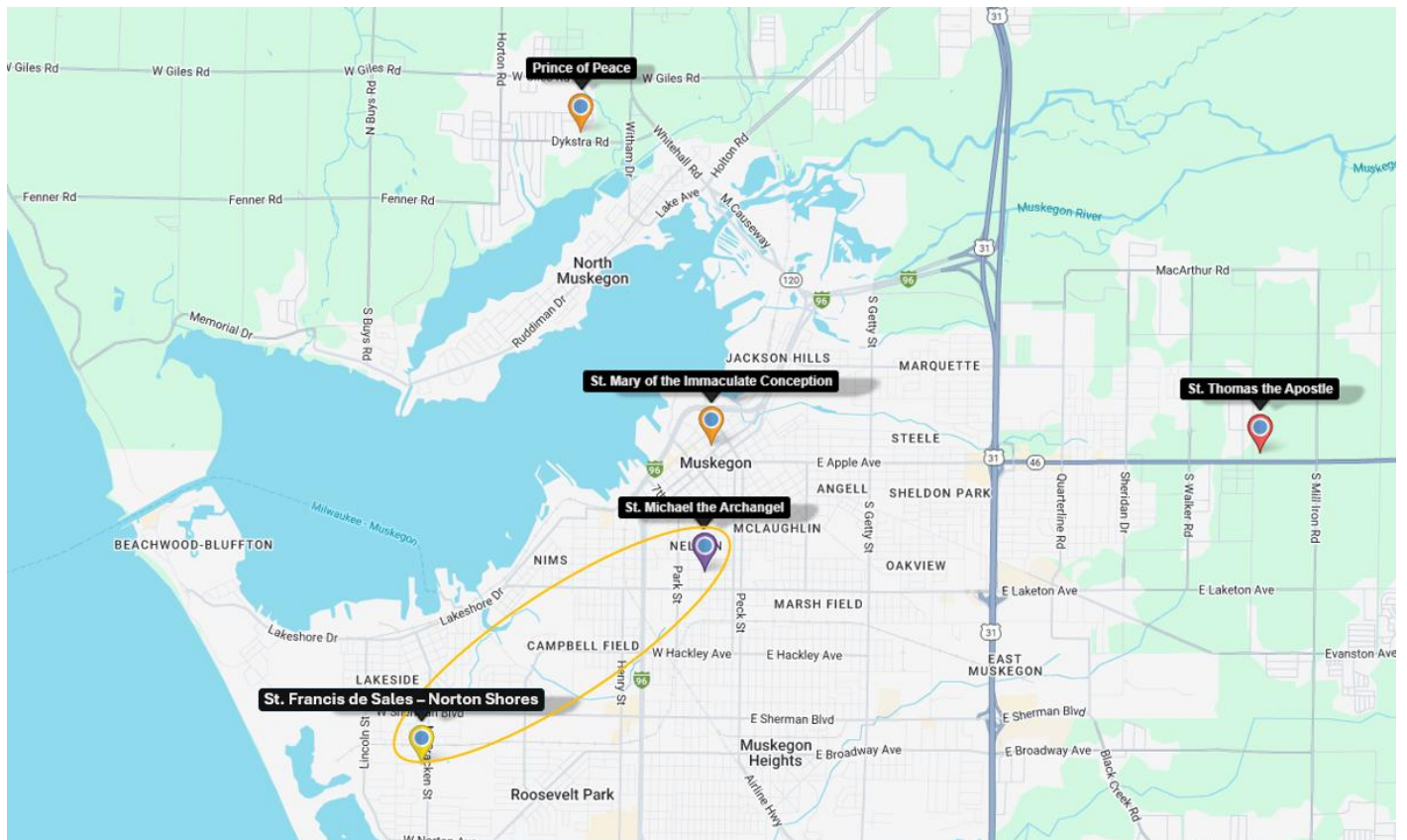


Map Key

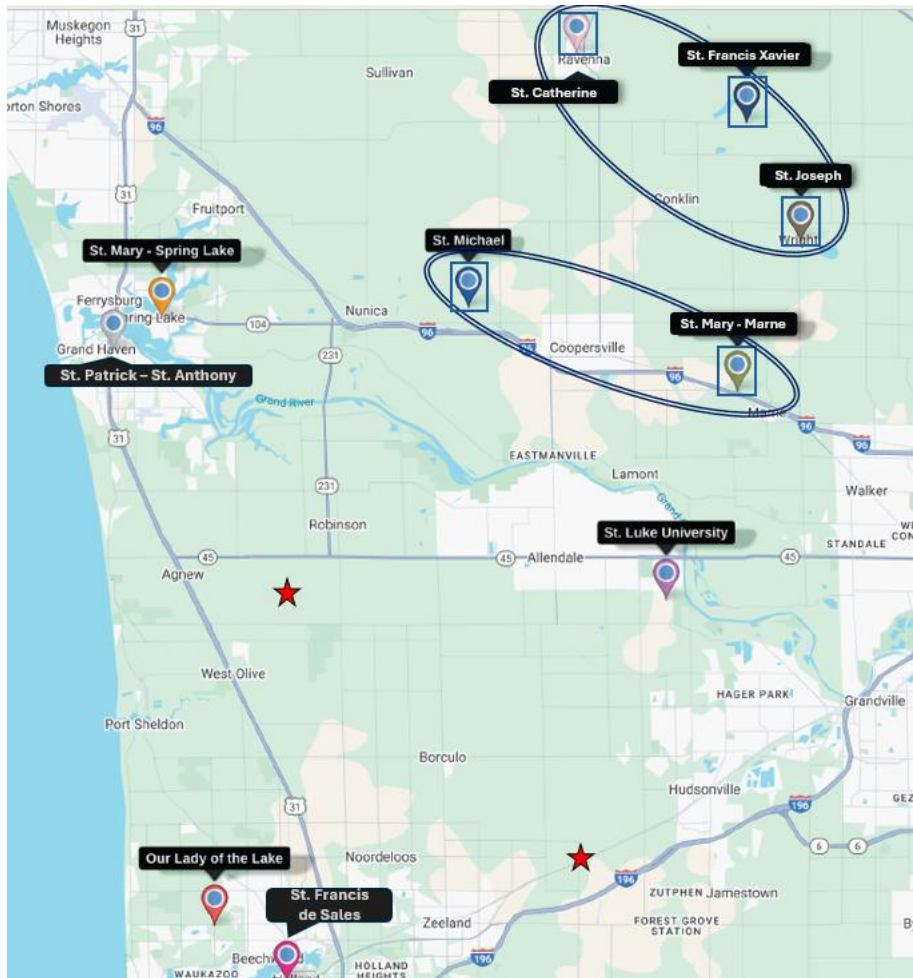


Cluster

Current Map of Parishes in the West Deanery (Muskegon area)



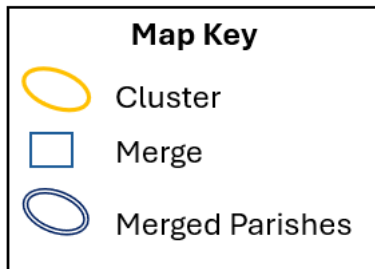
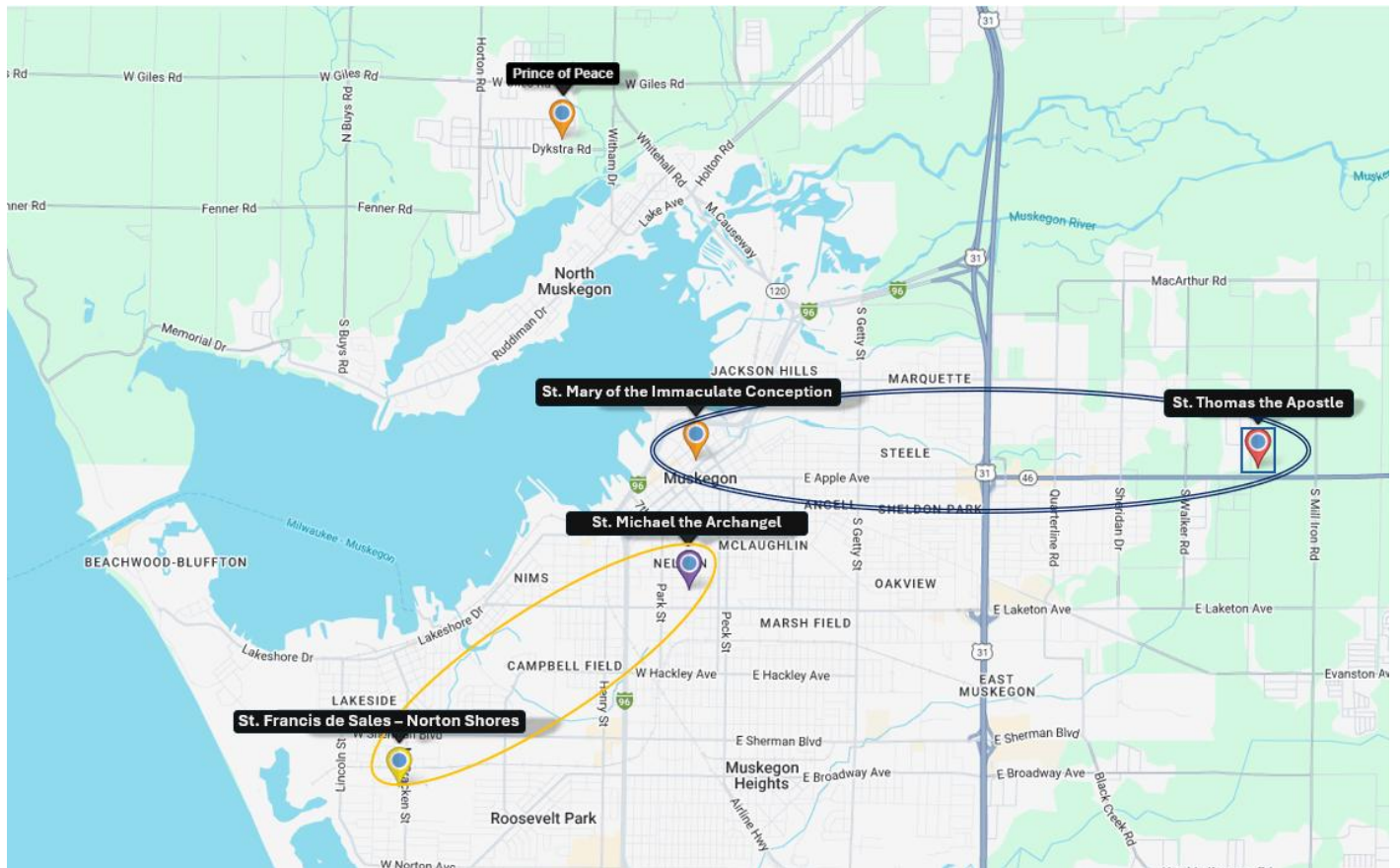
Future Map of Parishes in the West Deanery (Outside Muskegon)



Map Key

- ★ New Parish/Location
- Merge
- Merged Parishes

Future Map of Parishes in the West Deanery (Muskegon area)



Summary of Required Actions for Parishes in the West Deanery

1. The parish of St. Michael the Archangel in Muskegon will continue to cluster with the parish of St. Francis De Sales in Norton Shores and share a pastor.
2. The parish of St. Thomas the Apostle in Muskegon will merge with the parish of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception in Muskegon. The parishes should begin taking steps toward the merger with the promulgation of the plan. The facilities will continue to be used until the site is sold.
3. The parishes of St. Catherine in Ravenna, St. Francis Xavier in Conklin, and St. Joseph in Wright will merge and become a new parish. The parishes should begin taking steps toward the merger with the promulgation of the plan. The name of the church buildings will remain the same, and a name will be selected for the new parish.
4. The parishes of St. Michael in Coopersville and St. Mary in Marne will merge and become a new parish. The parishes should begin taking steps toward the merger with the promulgation of the plan. The names of the church buildings will remain the same, and a name will be selected for the new parish.
5. Land for a new parish will be selected and purchased in the area between Zeeland and Hudsonville due to projected population growth.
6. A new parish will be established between Robinson and West Olive on land already owned by the diocese due to projected population growth.
7. The following parishes will remain stand-alone parishes:
 - Our Lady of the Lake, Holland
 - Prince of Peace, North Muskegon
 - St. Francis De Sales, Holland
 - St. Luke University, Allendale
 - St. Mary, Spring Lake
 - St. Patrick-St. Anthony, Grand Haven
8. All parishes in the West Deanery should consider collaborating with other parishes on existing and/or new ministries. Such collaboration can share costs and usually results in greater participation and ministry effectiveness. Collaboration is recommended for two to three parishes. Parishes with the same civic identity should consider the advantages of working together on certain ministries.

Impact of the Required Actions on Parishes in the West Deanery

- a. In the immediate future, the deanery priest allocation can be reduced by one priest.
- b. With the eventual establishment of two new parishes and depending on their growth, at least one additional priest will be needed in the deanery, if the parishes are clustered. In the long term, two additional priests may be needed.
- c. Smaller parish memberships have been combined so that all parishes in the deanery are of comparable size.
- d. The number of parish facilities in the deanery can be reduced.
- e. Collaborating parishes will be able to steward their resources by focusing on shared ministries.

West Deanery Parishes

Parish Recommendations for St. Michael the Archangel, Muskegon and St. Francis de Sales, Norton Shores

- a. St. Francis de Sales should study the potential of updating the church sanctuary in conjunction with the appropriate diocesan offices.
- b. The parishes are encouraged to continue their support of Muskegon Catholic Central.
- c. Both parishes should consider collaborating with St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception and Prince of Peace in other ministries.
- d. St. Francis de Sales should identify ways to evangelize more effectively; promote respect for each parish's culture; develop area adult faith formation programs; and engage more parishioners to share their gifts and talents in parish ministries.

Parish Recommendations for St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Muskegon and St. Thomas the Apostle, Muskegon Township

- a. The parish of St. Thomas the Apostle in Muskegon will merge with the parish of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception in Muskegon. The parishes should begin acting on the merger with the promulgation of the plan. The facilities will continue to be used until the site is sold.
- b. St. Mary, along with the other parishes in the Muskegon area, should continue to monitor population growth to the North and East of the City of Muskegon. There have been conversations about whether a need exists for a parish on the eastern side of Muskegon. Given that parishes in that general area have struggled and been merged, the full support of the other parishes in Muskegon will be necessary to justify the relocation of a parish or the establishment of a new parish in that area in the future.
- c. St. Mary is encouraged to continue its commitment to Catholic education, especially to Muskegon Catholic Central.
- d. St. Mary should develop a strategy for welcoming parishioners from St. Thomas the Apostle Parish and engage them in the life of the community as the merger is completed.
- e. St. Thomas the Apostle, in conjunction with St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, should plan liturgical and social celebrations to highlight the history of the parish, comfort those who will feel a sense of loss, and transition people into the new community.
- f. St. Mary should conduct a summer ecclesial music program, sponsor a fellowship of Christian athletes, and create an evangelization focus.

Parish Recommendations for St. Catherine, Ravenna, St. Francis Xavier, Conklin, and St. Joseph, Wright

- a. The parishes of St. Catherine in Ravenna, St. Francis Xavier in Conklin, and St. Joseph in Wright will merge and become a new parish. The parishes should begin taking steps toward the merger with the promulgation of the plan. The names of the church buildings will remain the same, and a name will be selected for the new parish.
- b. The parishes should study their facilities usage and implement a facilities plan so that their resources are being stewarded as effectively as possible. The parishes have a history of working together and already have one staff and share buildings. The most apparent changes will be moving from multiple finance and pastoral councils to one finance council and one pastoral council.

- c. The parishes should continue their commitment to and support for Divine Providence Academy.
- d. The parish should focus on ministries to children and youth; young adult ministry; and adult formation Lenten series.

Parish Recommendations for St. Michael, Coopersville and St. Mary, Marne

- a. The parishes of St. Michael in Coopersville and St. Mary in Marne will merge and become a new parish. The parishes should begin taking steps toward the merger with the promulgation of the plan. The names of the church buildings will remain the same, and a name will be selected for the new parish.
- b. The parishes should study their building usage and implement a plan for how the new parish will function in the future. The parishes have a history of collaboration.
- c. A strategy should be developed for reaching out to and welcoming new residents of the area and inviting them to become members of the parish.
- d. The parish should focus on adult faith formation and youth ministry.

Parish Recommendations for Our Lady of the Lake, Holland

- a. Our Lady of the Lake should study the reason enrollment in elementary and high school religious education has decreased and develop a plan of action to reverse the trend.
- b. The parish should continue its support of and commitment to Corpus Christi Catholic School.
- c. The parish should be commended for its collaboration with neighboring parishes on ministry to facilities for the elderly in the area. As this age-group population increases, the parishes should study ways to expand pastoral care to these facilities and develop action plans.
- d. With the successful collaboration on Corpus Christi Catholic School, the parish should explore additional ministry opportunities with St. Francis De Sales Parish in Holland, which can collaboratively serve the entire Holland area.
- e. Our Lady of the Lake should re-introduce Children's Liturgy of the Word and Catechesis of the Good Shepherd; increase support for young parents; young adult/young family fellowship; increase activities and events for youth; develop combined seasonal celebrations with St. Francis De Sales in Holland.

Parish Recommendations for Prince of Peace, North Muskegon

- a. Prince of Peace should continue its support of Muskegon Catholic Central.
- b. Prince of Peace is known as a diocesan leader for its use of Catechesis of the Good Shepherd in all three levels. They are encouraged to continue those efforts, as well as provide support for other parishes who wish to implement Catechesis of the Good Shepherd in their communities.
- c. The parish should regularly study the ongoing use of St. Mary of the Woods church relative to the Mass attendance and operational expenses and present a report to the pastoral and finance councils.

Parish Recommendations for St. Francis de Sales, Holland

- a. With the successful collaboration on Corpus Christi Catholic School, the parish should explore additional ministry opportunities with Our Lady of the Lake Parish in Holland, which can collaboratively serve the entire Holland area.

- b. Because of the cultural and economic differences between the parishes, which can be a barrier to collaboration, the parishes may need assistance to bridge any gaps that may exist between the parishes.
- c. The parish should continue its support of Corpus Christi Catholic School.

Parish Recommendations for St. Luke University, Allendale

- a. The parish has admirably used its space for multiple purposes but needs more space to grow both as a parish and a campus ministry site. St. Luke University should study its current facilities and plan for future needs, while being mindful of the parish's finances and debt. They should develop a master facilities plan and a debt reduction plan to set up the parish for future success. To address immediate needs, the parish may consider less expensive structures that can provide more new space but at a lower price.
- b. The parish should continue its collaboration on youth ministry with St. Patrick-St. Anthony in Grand Haven and St. Mary in Spring Lake and consider other ways the three parishes may collaborate in the future.
- c. St. Luke is to be commended for its vibrant ministry to college students and young adults. The parish should consider possible ways that this thriving ministry can be expanded.

Parish Recommendations for St. Mary, Spring Lake

- a. St. Mary should continue its support of St. Mary Catholic School.
- b. The parish should continue its collaborative efforts with St. Patrick–St. Anthony in Grand Haven and explore new ministry areas. Both parishes need to strengthen their youth ministries, and there may be other areas where collaborative efforts could benefit the parishes.

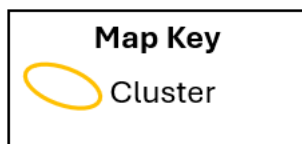
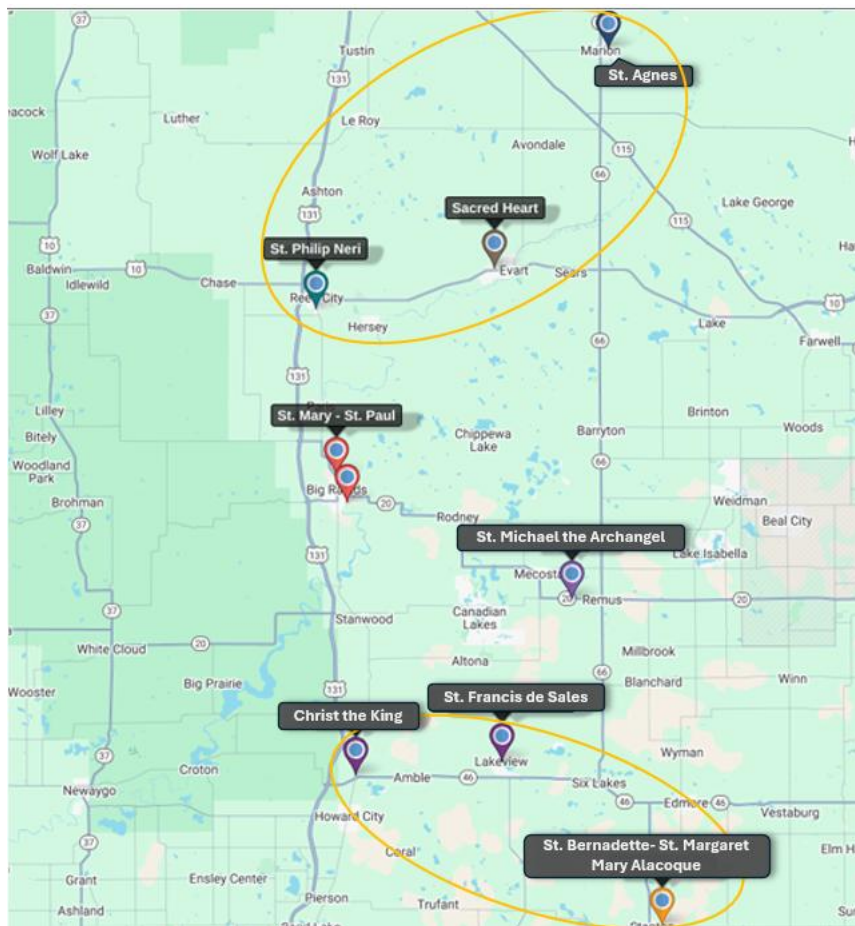
Parish Recommendations for St. Patrick-St. Anthony, Grand Haven

- a. St. Patrick–St. Anthony should evaluate the status of St. Anthony Chapel and compile a report for the pastoral and finance councils, along with the diocese. The report should include financial information on the cost of maintaining and operating the chapel, potential alternative locations for food pantry storage, and options for the future use(s) of the chapel. The parish should also consider changing its name to St. Patrick Parish.
- b. The parish should continue its support of St. Mary Catholic School.
- c. The parish should continue using the “Divine Renovation” program as a guide for parish renewal and vision for the future.
- d. The parish should continue its successful collaborative efforts with St. Mary Parish in Spring Lake and consider other ministries for possible collaboration. The collaborative effort for youth ministry also includes St. Luke University Parish.

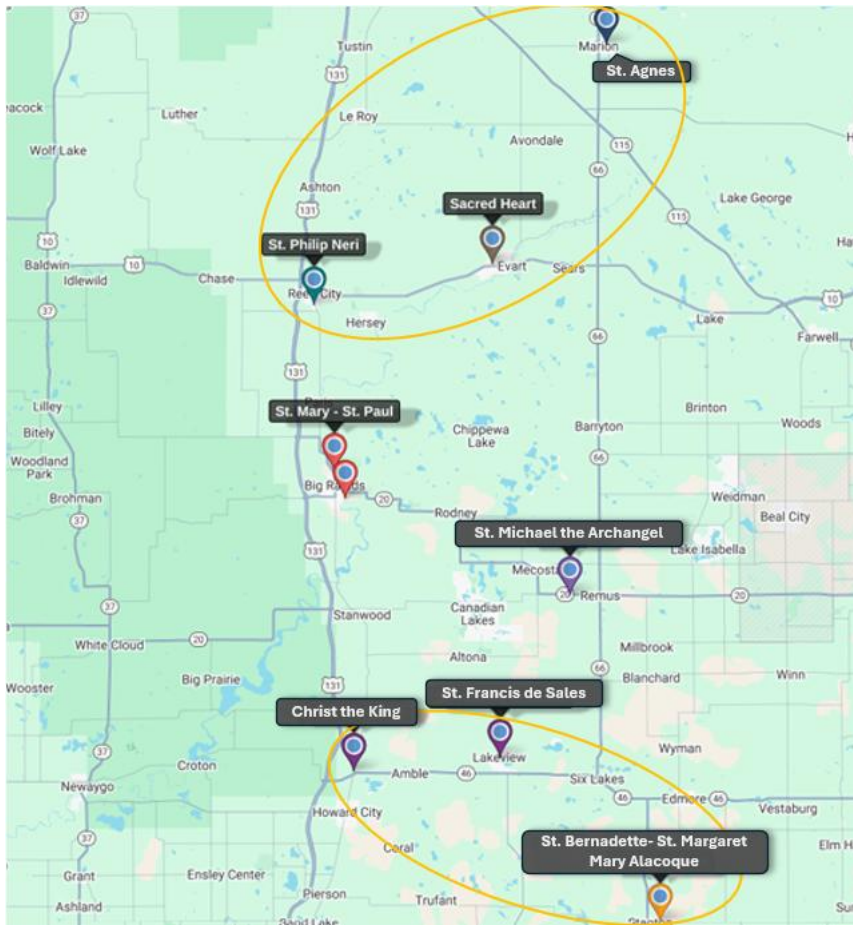
IX. NORTHEAST DEANERY

Deanery Maps

Current Map of Parishes in the Northeast Deanery



Future Map of Parishes in the Northeast Deanery



Map Key



Summary of Required Actions for Parishes in the Northeast Deanery

1. The parish of St. Bernadette-St. Margaret Mary Alacoque in Stanton will continue to cluster with the parish of Christ the King-St. Francis de Sales (with church buildings at Christ the King in Howard City and St. Francis de Sales in Lakeview), with the parishes sharing a pastor.
2. The parishes of St. Philip Neri in Reed City, Sacred Heart in Evart, and St. Agnes in Marion will continue as a cluster, with the parishes sharing a pastor.
3. St. Michael in Remus will remain a stand-alone parish.
4. St. Mary-St. Paul in Big Rapids will remain a stand-alone parish with two church buildings.

Impact of the Required Actions on Parishes in the Northeast Deanery Parishes

- a. The deanery priest allocation will be unchanged.

Northeast Deanery Parishes

Parish Recommendations for Christ the King-St. Francis de Sales, Howard City and St. Bernadette-St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, Stanton

- a. The parish of St. Bernadette-St. Margaret Mary Alacoque in Stanton will continue to cluster with the parish of Christ the King-St. Francis de Sales (with church buildings at Christ the King in Howard City and St. Francis de Sales in Lakeview), with the parishes sharing a pastor.
- b. The parishes should study future staffing and ministry needs of the communities and should review ways to strengthen their collaboration, with consideration of a possible merger in the future.
- c. The parishes should develop an evangelization plan to focus efforts and develop strategies for all three communities.
- d. Continue efforts to collaborate with the rest of the deanery (for example, continue to invite the rest of the deanery to the women's retreat offered at the parish).

Parish Recommendations for St. Philip Neri, Reed City, Sacred Heart, Evart, and St. Agnes, Marion

- a. The parishes of St. Philip Neri in Reed City, Sacred Heart in Evart, and St. Agnes in Marion will continue as a cluster, with the parishes sharing a pastor.
- b. St. Philip Neri Parish should establish a pastoral council and a finance council. Both councils should engage in training for effective councils and their role in supporting a healthy parish.
- c. The pastor and finance council of St. Philip Neri should engage in regular consultation with the diocesan Office of Finance to ensure the parish is utilizing best practices in the areas of budgeting, accounting, and financial planning.
- d. The three parishes should work together to expand faith formation offerings for adults, young adults, and youth, perhaps collaborating with other parishes in the deanery to offer programs on a regional basis.

Parish Recommendations for St. Michael the Archangel, Remus

- a. St. Michael in Remus will remain a stand-alone parish.
- b. St. Michael Parish should continue its commitment to and efforts to strengthen St. Michael Catholic School, with a special emphasis on finding ways to increase enrollment.
- c. St. Michael Parish should work to expand faith formation offerings for adults, young adults, and youth, perhaps collaborating with other parishes in the deanery to offer programs on a regional basis.

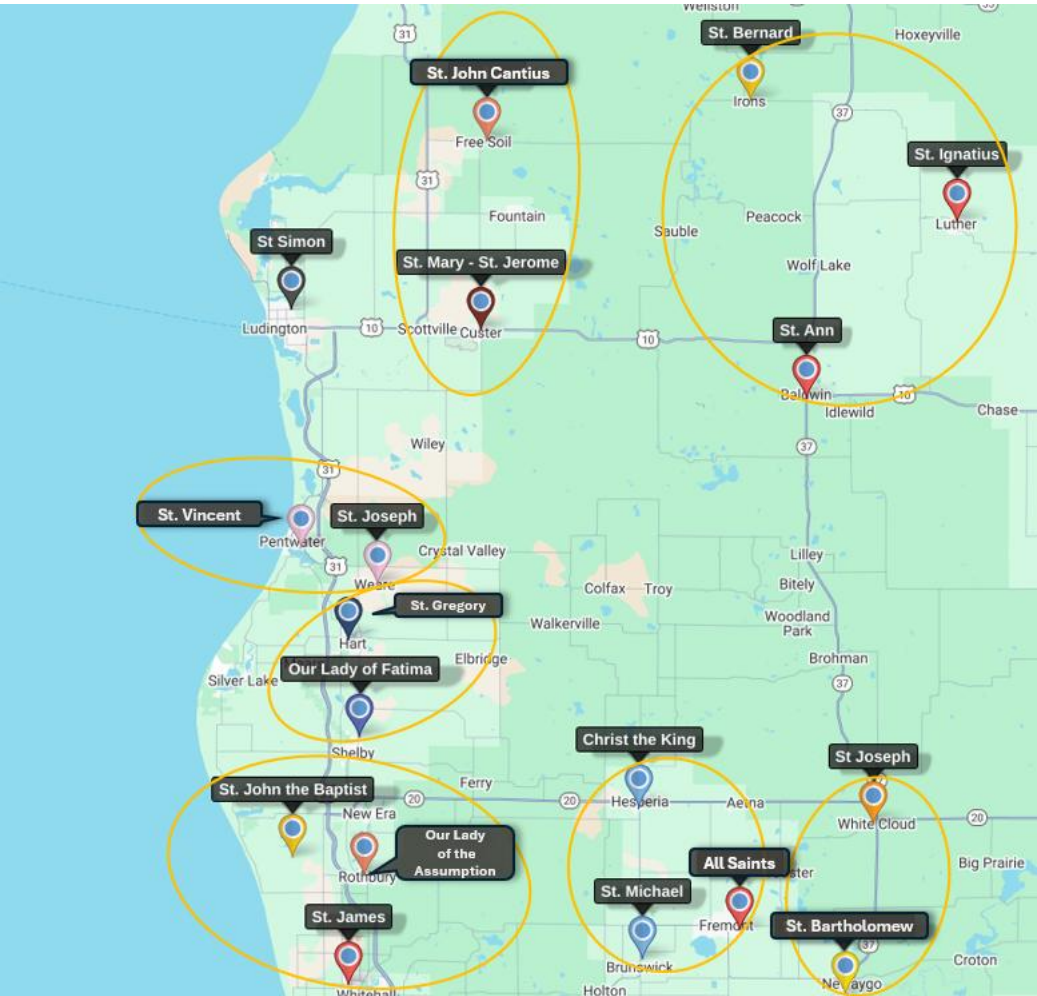
Parish Recommendations for St. Mary-St. Paul, Big Rapids

- a. St. Mary-St. Paul in Big Rapids will remain a stand-alone parish with two church buildings.
- b. St. Mary-St. Paul Parish should continue its commitment to and efforts to strengthen St. Mary Catholic School, with a special emphasis on finding ways to increase enrollment. The school and parish should work together to evaluate facility needs (both in terms of function and appearance) and establish a prioritized list of projects to be completed as funds are available.
- c. St. Mary-St. Paul is to be commended for its vibrant ministry to college students and young adults. The parish should consider possible ways that this thriving ministry can be leveraged to support ministry to youth and young adults in other parishes in the deanery.

X. NORTHWEST DEANERY

Deanery Maps

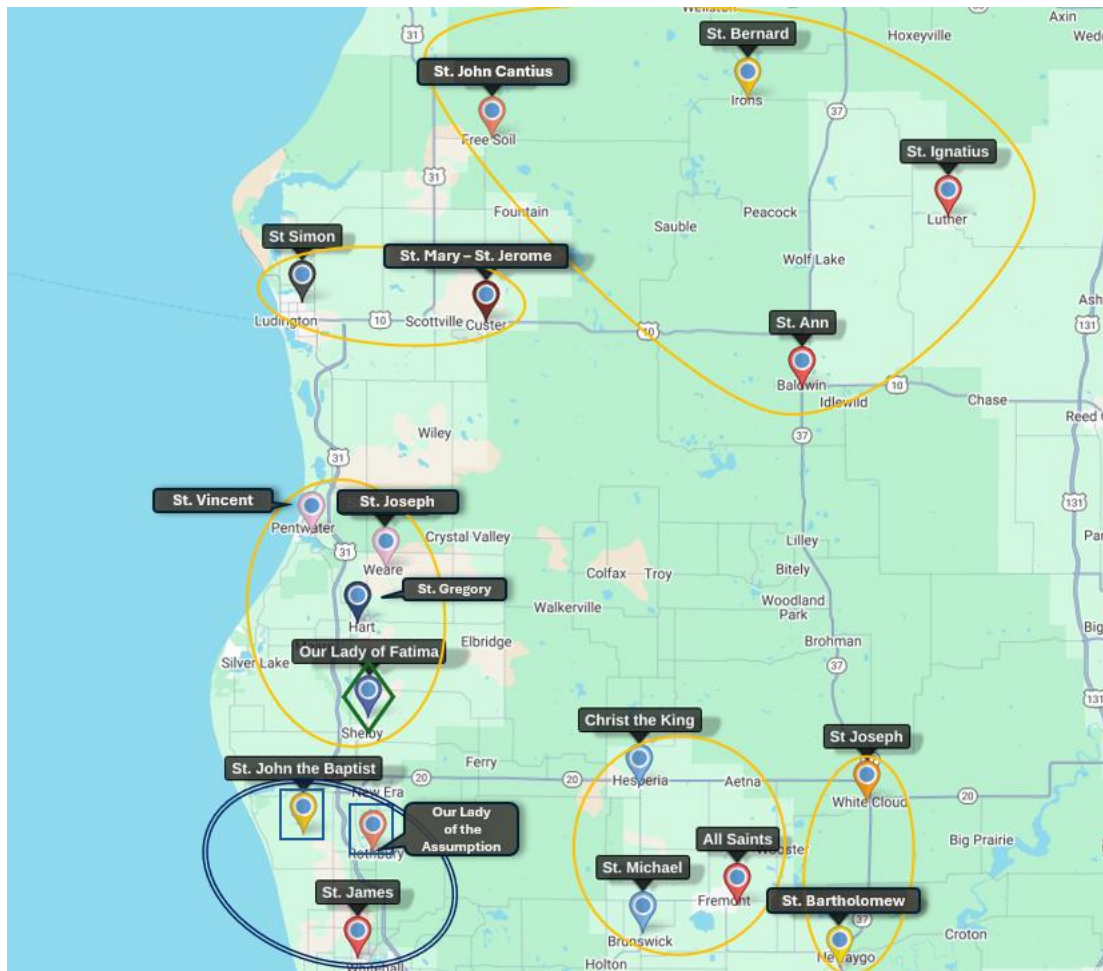
Current Map of Parishes in the Northwest Deanery







Map Key

Cluster

Future Map of Parishes in the Northwest Deanery



Map Key

-  Cluster
-  Merge
-  Merged Parishes
-  Close Church

Summary of Required Actions for Parishes in the Northwest Deanery

1. The parishes of St. Joseph in White Cloud and St. Bartholomew in Newaygo will continue as a cluster, with the parishes sharing a pastor.
2. The parishes of St. Michael in Brunswick (with a church building at Christ the King in Hesperia) and All Saints in Fremont will continue as a cluster, with the parishes sharing a pastor.
3. The parish of Our Lady of the Assumption in Rothbury, along with St. John the Baptist in Claybanks, will merge with the parish of St. James in Montague. The church buildings at Our Lady of the Assumption and St. John the Baptist will continue to be used for religious purposes, and a plan will be developed for the ongoing use or disposition of other facilities until other arrangements are made.
4. When there is a change in priestly assignments, the parishes of St. Gregory-Our Lady of Fatima in Hart and St. Joseph-St. Vincent (with church buildings in Weare and Pentwater) will form a cluster, with the parishes sharing a pastor.
5. Upon the retirement of the pastor at St. Simon in Ludington, the parishes of St. Bernard in Irons, St. Ann-St. Ignatius (with church buildings in Baldwin and Luther), and St. John Cantius in Free Soil will form a cluster, with the parishes sharing a pastor.
6. Upon the retirement of the pastor at St. Simon in Ludington, the parish of St. Mary-St. Jerome in Custer will cluster with St. Simon in Ludington, with the parishes sharing a pastor.

Impact of the Required Actions on Parishes in the Northwest Deanery

- a. The deanery priest allocation can be reduced by two.

Northwest Deanery Parishes

Parish Recommendations for St. Joseph, White Cloud and St. Bartholomew, Newaygo

- a. The parishes of St. Joseph in White Cloud and St. Bartholomew in Newaygo will continue as a cluster, with the parishes sharing a pastor.
- b. St. Bartholomew and St. Joseph, together with the other parishes of Newaygo County, should be commended for and continue their collaborative approach to youth ministry.
- c. St. Bartholomew and St. Joseph have a history of working together. They should review their collaboration to see if there are areas for even greater integration or improved ministry, with consideration of a possible merger in the future.
- d. St. Bartholomew and St. Joseph, together with the other Newaygo County parishes, should continue to support the newly established Bishop Baraga Academy.
- e. St. Bartholomew Parish should establish a Hispanic Ministry leadership team and work to improve the integration of Spanish speakers and English speakers within one parish community.

Parish Recommendations for All Saints, Fremont and St. Michael, Brunswick

- a. The parishes of St. Michael in Brunswick (with a church building at Christ the King in Hesperia) and All Saints in Fremont will continue as a cluster, with the parishes sharing a pastor.

- b. St. Michael/Christ the King and All Saints have a history of working together. They should review their collaboration to see if there are areas for even greater integration or improved ministry, with consideration of a possible merger in the future.
- c. St. Michael/Christ the King and All Saints, together with the other parishes of Newaygo County, should be commended for their collaborative approach to youth ministry, which they are urged to continue.
- d. All Saints Parish and St. Michael/Christ the King Parish, together with the other Newaygo County parishes, should continue efforts to strengthen and grow the newly established Bishop Baraga Academy.

Parish Recommendations for Our Lady of the Assumption, Rothbury and St. James, Montague

- a. The parish of Our Lady of the Assumption in Rothbury, along with St. John the Baptist in Claybanks, will merge with the parish of St. James in Montague. The church buildings at Our Lady of the Assumption and St. John the Baptist will continue to be used for religious purposes and a plan will be developed for the ongoing use or disposition of other facilities.
- b. The councils of the three churches should establish a regular dialogue about the merger and how to prepare parishioners for a transition to the new parish structure.
- c. The three churches should review their collaboration to see if there are areas for more efficient integration or improved ministry. The most apparent change will be establishing a single pastoral council and a single finance council.
- d. The work of the planning committee at St. James should be expanded to incorporate the facilities, ministries, and communities of Our Lady of the Assumption and St. John the Baptist.

Parish Recommendations for St. Gregory-Our Lady of Fatima, Hart and St. Joseph, Weare and St. Vincent, Pentwater

- a. When there is a change in priestly assignments, the parishes of St. Gregory-Our Lady of Fatima in Hart and St. Joseph-St. Vincent (with church buildings in Weare and Pentwater) will form a cluster, with the parishes sharing a pastor.
- b. The parish of St. Gregory-Our Lady of Fatima will close the church building at Our Lady of Fatima in Shelby, and the facilities will be used following the formation of the cluster until they are sold.
- c. St. Gregory Parish, in conjunction with the community of Our Lady of Fatima in Shelby, should plan liturgical and social celebrations to highlight the history of the church at Our Lady of Fatima, comfort those who will feel a sense of loss, and transition people into their new communities.
- d. Leadership at St. Gregory-Our Lady of Fatima and St. Joseph- St. Vincent should meet to discuss ways that collaboration can strengthen all three communities and improve ministries, especially as they prepare for this cluster.
- e. St. Joseph-St. Vincent Parish should work to expand adult faith formation offerings, perhaps collaborating with other parishes to offer programs on a regional basis.
- f. St. Joseph-St. Vincent Parish should investigate reasons why Mass attendance at St. Joseph has dropped below Mass attendance at St. Vincent, and whether there are steps that can be taken to strengthen Mass attendance at St. Joseph.

Parish Recommendations for St. Bernard, Irons, St. Ann-St. Ignatius, Baldwin, and St. John Cantius, Free Soil

- a. Upon the retirement of the pastor at St. Simon in Ludington, the parishes of St. Bernard in Irons, St. Ann-St. Ignatius, Baldwin (with church buildings in Baldwin and Luther), and St. John Cantius in Free Soil will form a cluster, with the parishes sharing a pastor.
- b. The parishes should work to expand adult faith formation offerings, collaborating to offer programs on a regional basis.
- c. The parishes should continue to increase their efforts to serve those in need in their communities.

Parish Recommendations for St. Simon, Ludington and St. Mary-St. Jerome, Custer

- a. Upon the retirement of the pastor at St. Simon in Ludington, the parish of St. Mary-St. Jerome in Custer will cluster with St. Simon in Ludington, with the parishes sharing a pastor.
- b. St. Simon Parish should be commended for its youth ministry work and the youth rallies it sponsors, to which the entire deanery is invited. This work should continue.
- c. St. Simon Parish should continue its commitment to and efforts to strengthen Ludington Area Catholic School (LAC), with a special emphasis on increasing enrollment.
- d. The two parishes should study staffing, ministries, and resources to determine opportunities for collaboration that will improve ministries and create efficiencies.
- e. Each parish should re-establish a pastoral council, which should engage in training for effective councils and their role in supporting a healthy parish.

XI. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PASTORAL PLAN

With the promulgation of the pastoral plan on June 29, 2025, the implementation of the plan will begin. The following groups will play an important role in the pastoral plan's implementation.

1. The terms and roles of the diocesan leadership team and the deanery planning committee representatives, who have shaped the development of the pastoral plan, will end on June 29, 2025.
2. Bishop Walkowiak has appointed Very Reverend Colin J. Mulhall, vicar general, to oversee the implementation of the pastoral plan. Father Mulhall will work with pastors, diocesan offices, Presbyteral Council, the Diocesan Pastoral Council, and others as necessary to ensure the plan is executed.
3. The priests in each deanery should regularly monitor the progress of the implementation at deanery meetings. The dean should give a deanery progress report on the implementation of the plan at Presbyteral Council meetings.
4. Each pastor/canonical administrator, together with his pastoral council, will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of parish action items.
5. Each pastor/canonical administrator from parishes scheduled to merge or cluster should convene representatives from each parish to discuss and implement the required tasks.

The charts below can be used to monitor the implementation of the plan.

New Clusters

Deanery	Parishes	Required Action	When
East	St. John the Baptist, Hubbardston, and St. Mary, Carson City	Clusters with St. Joseph, Pewamo	With the end of the pastoral director's term
Grand Rapids North	St. Isidore the Laborer, Grand Rapids, and St. Jude, Grand Rapids	The configuration of St. Alphonsus, St. Jude, St. Isidore the Laborer, and Blessed Sacrament, all in Grand Rapids, will be reassessed	Upon completion of the terms of the pastors of St. Jude, Grand Rapids, and St. Isidore the Laborer, Grand Rapids
Northwest	St. Gregory, Hart-Our Lady of Fatima, Shelby	Clusters with St. Joseph-St. Vincent, Weare	When there is a change in priestly assignments
Northwest	St. John Cantius, Free Soil	Clusters with St. Bernard, Irons, and St. Ann–St. Ignatius, Baldwin	With the end of the term of the pastor at St. Simon, Ludington
Northwest	St. Mary-St. Jerome, Custer	Clusters with St. Simon, Ludington	With the end of the term of the pastor at St. Simon, Ludington

New Mergers

Deanery	Parishes	Required Action	When
Grand Rapids North	Mary Queen of Apostles, Sand Lake	Merges with St. John Paul II, Cedar Springs	With the promulgation of the plan
Grand Rapids North	Holy Family, Sparta	Merges with Holy Trinity, Comstock Park	With the end of the pastor's term
Grand Rapids North	Ss. Peter & Paul, Grand Rapids	Merges with the Basilica of St. Adalbert, Grand Rapids	With the end of the pastor's term
Northwest	Our Lady of the Assumption, Rothbury, and St. John the Baptist, Claybanks	Merges with St. James, Montague	With the promulgation of the plan
Grand Rapids South	Our Lady of Sorrows, Grand Rapids	Merges with the Shrine of St. Francis Xavier & Our Lady of Guadalupe, Grand Rapids	With the end of the pastor's term
Grand Rapids South	St. Stephen, East Grand Rapids	Merges with St. Thomas the Apostle, Grand Rapids	With the promulgation of the plan
West	St. Thomas the Apostle, Muskegon	Merges with St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Muskegon	With the promulgation of the plan
West	St. Catherine, Ravenna; St. Francis Xavier, Conklin; St. Joseph, Wright	Merge and form a new parish	With the promulgation of the plan
West	St. Michael, Coopersville, and St. Mary Marne	Merge and form a new parish	With the promulgation of the plan

Appendices

Possibilities of Vibrant Ministries – All Deaneries in Grand Rapids

Out of the 80 parishes in the Diocese of Grand Rapids, 61 parishes participated.

All Deaneries		
Ministry Area		
Parish Organization	Priority 1	Priority 2
Organize all parishes in the diocese into groupings of two to four parishes to collaborate on various ministries, which may include already-existing clusters.	12	10
Merge and close parishes that are in decline, especially those that are proximate to other parishes.	5	10
Consider the appointment of permanent deacons, religious, and lay persons to serve as pastoral directors in smaller parishes, to ease the administrative responsibility of priests serving more than one parish.	28	6
Recruit and form new cohorts of deacons and lay ministers with a goal of equipping them to engage in specific needed ministries.	5	10
Provide training on a regional basis for parish staff and volunteers, including information about model ministries	5	10
Develop regional approaches to Hispanic ministry.	0	0
Other: various responses.	6	0
Other: various responses.	0	10
Worship and Evangelization	Priority 1	Priority 2
Review Mass schedules to affirm that attendance at a Sunday Mass is 50% or more of the church's seating capacity or at least 100 people; if necessary, revise.	4	4
Establish teams of parishioners in every parish to contact every person on the parish roster as well as former members to listen to and invite them to engage in the parish.	7	8
Expand opportunities for ministry with older adults in the parish.	1	3
Focus parish long range evangelization efforts on new residents, RCIA, baptisms, weddings, funerals, and enrollment and retention in elementary and high school religious education.	19	20
Provide a range of group ministry programs to strengthen people's faith and connection with their faith communities (men's groups, women's groups, Renew style groups, Marriage Encounter).	24	15
Other: various responses.	6	0
Other: various responses.	0	6
Faith Formation and Catholic Schools	Priority 1	Priority 2
Where school age population is increasing, study the potential for expansion of Catholic elementary and high school locations.	1	3
Develop area or regional adult faith formation, which may include Bible study, retreats, small groups, lectures and thematic series.	23	14
Establish an area or regional approach to young adult ministry for those in the age groups of their 20s and 30s.	20	14
Organize youth ministry on an area or regional basis, which may include components that can be conducted on the parish level.	8	17
Other: various responses.	9	0
Other: various responses.	0	8
Outreach and Ministry to those in Need	Priority 1	Priority 2
Coordinate parish outreach efforts on an area or regional level to maximize their effectiveness.	15	19
Study the needs of those in need in the area or region to provide greater assistance and support.	31	15
Create more opportunities for parishioners to participate in ministries that serve those in need.	12	20
Other: various responses.	3	0
Other: various responses.	0	2
Stewardship and Communications	Priority 1	Priority 2
Increase efforts to engage more parishioners to share their gifts and talents and engage in parish efforts to carry out the mission of the Church.	38	12
Develop effective ways to welcome, orient, and engage new parishioners.	13	26
Develop a communications strategy that includes the use of new and older technologies to more effectively reach parishioners who are used to different communications technologies.	7	17
Other: various responses.	3	0
Other: various responses.	0	1

Possibilities of Vibrant Ministries – East Deanery

Out of the 11 parishes in the East Deanery, 8 parishes participated.

East Deanery		
Ministry Area		
Parish Organization	Priority 1	Priority 2
Organize all parishes in the diocese into groupings of two to four parishes to collaborate on various ministries, which may include already-existing clusters.	0	1
Merge and close parishes that are in decline, especially those that are proximate to other parishes.	1	1
Consider the appointment of permanent deacons, religious, and lay persons to serve as pastoral directors in smaller parishes, to ease the administrative responsibility of priests serving more than one parish.	8	0
Recruit and form new cohorts of deacons and lay ministers with a goal of equipping them to engage in specific needed ministries.	0	2
Provide training on a regional basis for parish staff and volunteers, including information about model ministries currently thriving in various parishes in the diocese.	0	4
Develop regional approaches to Hispanic ministry.	0	0
Other: Consider the appointment of permanent deacons, religious and lay person to serve as pastoral directors in smaller parishes, to ease the administrative responsibilities of priests.	0	1
Other:	0	0
Worship and Evangelization	Priority 1	Priority 2
Review Mass schedules to affirm that attendance at a Sunday Mass is 50% or more of the church's seating capacity or at least 100 people; if necessary, revise.	1	0
Establish teams of parishioners in every parish to contact every person on the parish roster as well as former members to listen to and invite them to engage in the parish.	0	2
Expand opportunities for ministry with older adults in the parish.	0	0
Focus parish long range evangelization efforts on new residents, RCIA, baptisms, weddings, funerals, and enrollment and retention in elementary and high school religious education.	6	2
Provide a range of group ministry programs to strengthen people's faith and connection with their faith communities (men's groups, women's groups, Renew style groups, Marriage Encounter).	2	5
Other:	0	0
Other:	0	0
Faith Formation and Catholic Schools	Priority 1	Priority 2
Where school age population is increasing, study the potential for expansion of Catholic elementary and high school locations.	1	0
Develop area or regional adult faith formation, which may include Bible study, retreats, small groups, lectures and thematic series.	3	5
Establish an area or regional approach to young adult ministry for those in the age groups of their 20s and 30s.	4	2
Organize youth ministry on an area or regional basis, which may include components that can be conducted on the parish level.	1	2
Other: Develop area or regional adult faith formation, young adult ministry and youth ministry which may include Bible study, retreats, small groups, lectures and thematic series. May also include components that can be conducted on the parish level.	1	0
Other: Coordinate by deanery, Hispanic ministry	0	1
Outreach and Ministry to those in Need	Priority 1	Priority 2
Coordinate parish outreach efforts on an area or regional level to maximize their effectiveness.	1	5
Study the needs of those in need in the area or region to provide greater assistance and support.	7	0
Create more opportunities for parishioners to participate in ministries that serve those in need.	1	1
Other:	0	0
Other:	0	0
Stewardship and Communications	Priority 1	Priority 2
Increase efforts to engage more parishioners to share their gifts and talents and engage in parish efforts to carry out the mission of the Church.	5	2
Develop effective ways to welcome, orient, and engage new parishioners.	4	4
Develop a communications strategy that includes the use of new and older technologies to more effectively reach parishioners who are used to different communications technologies.	0	3
Other:	0	0
Other:	0	0

East Deanery

Ministry Area

Parish Organization

Verbatim Comments: -Leave the 99, go after the 1. Pay the deacons.

-1. Consolidate financial services at the diocese. 2. Invite a thriving religious community to live in our diocese so their priests can help.

-Let retired priests live in parish housing and assign them to help out with a particular parish or cluster of parishes.

Worship and Evangelization

Verbatim Comments: -Make sure music fits parish needs.

-Use parish/school buildings/facilities to host opportunities that are not necessarily faith related. Get the community into our buildings.

Faith Formation and Catholic Schools

Verbatim Comments: -(The same choice for priority 1 and priority 2 is intentional).

-Need additional diocesan resources for parish religious ed programs.

-1. Support Catholic home schoolers as part of Catholic schools. 2. Focus on a few most important ministries. 3. Address varies to portal vocations such as college debt. 4. Promote transition from Catholic K-8 to Catholic HS.

-1. Encourage more interfaith collaboration with other Christian churches--promote our Catholic schools to them. 2. Consider a regional Catholic high school in our corner of the Diocese.

Outreach and Ministry to those in Need

Verbatim Comments: -1.Outreach to Catholics who've not returned from covid. 2.Parish missions. 3.Coordinate some ministries at the regional level.

Stewardship and Communications

Verbatim Comments: -Each parish needs its own bulletin.



Possibilities of Vibrant Ministries – Grand Rapids North

Out of the 16 parishes in the Grand Rapids North Deanery, 14 parishes participated.

Grand Rapids North Deanery		
Ministry Area		
Parish Organization	Priority 1	Priority 2
Organize all parishes in the diocese into groupings of two to four parishes to collaborate on various ministries, which may include already-existing clusters.	4	1
Merge and close parishes that are in decline, especially those that are proximate to other parishes.	1	4
Consider the appointment of permanent deacons, religious, and lay persons to serve as pastoral directors in smaller parishes, to ease the administrative responsibility of priests serving more than one parish.	6	2
Recruit and form new cohorts of deacons and lay ministers with a goal of equipping them to engage in specific needed ministries.	0	2
Provide training on a regional basis for parish staff and volunteers, including information about model ministries currently thriving in various parishes in the diocese.	0	1
Develop regional approaches to Hispanic ministry.	0	0
Other: Learn from and promote the ideal parish model. Fr. Ron Floyd's letter.	1	0
Other: Increase a deacon's role to full time and allow them to live in the rectory with their family for more accessibility to the parish. Provide them with additional administration and formation training. This will reduce the priest administrative workload and allow them to cover more than one parish.	1	0
Other: Parish believes that Sunday Mass is a must for every parish and should be a priority for the diocese to encourage that.	1	0
Other: Diocese to provide hands-on support for Priests and parishioners for struggling parishes.	0	1
Other: Combining options #3 and #5; consider the appointment of permanent deacons, religious, and lay persons to serve as pastoral directors in smaller parishes, to ease the administrative responsibility of priests serving more than one parish. Also provide training for parish staff and volunteers, including information about model ministries currently thriving in various parishes in the diocese.	0	1
Other: St Mary needs a Spanish Speaking priest who can provide spiritual guidance in addition to celebration of Mass.	0	1
Worship and Evangelization	Priority 1	Priority 2
Review Mass schedules to affirm that attendance at a Sunday Mass is 50% or more of the church's seating capacity or at least 100 people; if necessary, revise.	1	1
Establish teams of parishioners in every parish to contact every person on the parish roster as well as former members to listen to and invite them to engage in the parish.	2	2
Expand opportunities for ministry with older adults in the parish.	0	2
Focus parish long range evangelization efforts on new residents, RCIA, baptisms, weddings, funerals, and enrollment and retention in elementary and high school religious education.	4	5
Provide a range of group ministry programs to strengthen people's faith and connection with their faith communities (men's groups, women's groups, Renew style groups, Marriage Encounter).	7	1
Other: Review mass schedules and attendance at Sunday masses and consolidate where needed to make them more efficient and help reduce the priests workload where needed.	0	1
Other: Study churches that are thriving to see what they are offering that attracts parishioners.	0	1
Faith Formation and Catholic Schools	Priority 1	Priority 2
Where school age population is increasing, study the potential for expansion of Catholic elementary and high school locations.	1	0
Develop area or regional adult faith formation, which may include Bible study, retreats, small groups, lectures and thematic series.	4	3
Establish an area or regional approach to young adult ministry for those in the age groups of their 20s and 30s.	6	5
Organize youth ministry on an area or regional basis, which may include components that can be conducted on the parish level.	1	4
Other: Blend of 2, 3, & 4 - Singles and unmarried groups seem to be forgotten. Area groups for families to involve all ages 20s, 30s, 40s and their children. Build a foundation for youth but establish groups to continue as they grow and stay involved. Cradle to the grave approach - family and community.	1	0
Other: Organize all ministries on area & regional basis: a.) Centralize faith formation process into regions/clusters. b.) One person in charge of Faith formation for school & CCD. c.) Assess & judge school performance on Students remaining active Catholics and not solely on academics d.) Make Catholic schools free or affordable with stipulations for Parish support (financial, time, talents).	1	0
Other: Create a regional travel youth group that will meet and go to mass at other parishes and volunteer at diocesan parish events to help build a community of Catholic Faith and Evangelization among the youth.	0	1
Outreach and Ministry to those in Need	Priority 1	Priority 2
Coordinate parish outreach efforts on an area or regional level to maximize their effectiveness.	4	5
Study the needs of those in need in the area or region to provide greater assistance and support.	7	5
Create more opportunities for parishioners to participate in ministries that serve those in need.	2	3
Other: Combine c & a...these really need eachother to function effectively.	1	0
Stewardship and Communications	Priority 1	Priority 2
Increase efforts to engage more parishioners to share their gifts and talents and engage in parish efforts to carry out the mission of the Church.	10	3
Develop effective ways to welcome, orient, and engage new parishioners.	3	3
Develop a communications strategy that includes the use of new and older technologies to more effectively reach parishioners who are used to different communications technologies.	0	7
Other: Create a diocesan wide events calendar with mass and sacrament schedules and all programs that are open to participation from those outside the parish.	1	0

Grand Rapids North Deanery

Ministry Area

Parish Organization

Verbatim Comments: -Combine the 2nd & 3rd options adding "transferring some of the priest's administrative duties to others so they can focus on the Spiritual. Redefine & rename Parishes that combine and/or share resources in a manner to reduce confusion.
-Identify strengths/skills of parish staff and use these talents to train others where it is lacking
-Overall, everyone recognized value in b,c,e...but b,c we're overwhelmingly the priority
-Other: Look at what other religions are doing. We could possibly learn from others to become more efficient and effective.
-Blend of 1 & 4 - Instituted lay ministry under diocesan oversight; diocesan oversight not parish oversight.
-From parishioner research it is shown that Meitler is about creating Mega churches something of which our parishioners have no interest in. We like our small community.
-Do not agree with any of these. Pray and fast for more priests. Provide more Confession, Adoration, public rosaries. Teach respect for the Eucharist. Support priests to teach the faith on abortion, birth control and marriage. Provide more Latin Mass.

Worship and Evangelization

Verbatim Comments: -Add: Regional Cath. Young Adult Social Clubs, Youth Groups including Encounters (SEEK)/Trips, and ongoing formation for all parishioners at parish and regional levels focus: how to share the faith. Add high tech communication and External Marketing.
-offer opportunities for the community to be involved at parishes
-Other: Have the Diocese provide resources to help with implementation of group ministry programs.
-Blend of 2, 4, & 5 - Evaluate at diocesan level the quality of worship and provision of the sacraments. Include special needs ministries and mental health support.
-This was tied with Provide a range of group of ministry programs to strengthen faith and connection...
-1. "Long range goes are needed but you can't ignore existing parishioners..." 2. "Demonstrate inclusive practices so that all people are welcome; silence the rhetoric on good loving relationship and personal choices."
-Go back to our Catholic Roots and educate both young and old. People today DO NOT know their faith and its richness. Just that they are simply Catholic.
-We again had multiple "other" suggestions. The most common suggestion was to review all the Mass time throughout the deanery.
-Annual parish commitment. Traditional, beautiful, reverent Catholic Mass, male altar servers, no lay ministers, sacred music; Expand Latin Mass; Evangelization; Catechesis-the real presence, the saints, Marian apparitions; Classical Catholic education.

Faith Formation and Catholic Schools

Verbatim Comments: -Research and share best practices on priest recruitment...gold standards. Where are current priests coming from? What influence does the parish have and how do we replicate best practices in Priest recruitment.
-Focus on vocations. Get back to Catholic basics: Why be Catholic? how do I evangelize? others to become Catholic.
-Develop various age 20s - 40s adult faith formation as we build the youth ministry at the parish level.
-This was a "tie" between the two priorities submitted.
-Close alternatives (nearly tied with the above) include: Organize youth ministry on an area/regional basis which may include components that are conducted on the parish level AND where school age is increasing, study for expansion.
-All four of the above are needed! All age groups need to mix.
-Priority 1 was 68%, priority 2 21%.
-One of the main concerns was in relation to the Diocese not acknowledging the importance of homeschool families.
-Classical Catholic curriculum; Family faith formation; Less lay involvement. School staff-oath of Fidelity; Homeschooling support; Sacramentals, saints, novenas; Christ=center of every subject; Successful schools help start schools in parishes w/ facilities.

Outreach and Ministry to those in Need

Verbatim Comments: -Tailor outreach efforts on the area. I.E. Focus Hispanic Outreach in areas with high Hispanic populations, ect. Events with the Elderly and Veterans on Parish level and regionally
-1 & 2 tied for priority. Some thought all 3 were important in the efforts to evangelize.
-Blend of 1 & 2 - Build a local Catholic economic community at a deanery level.
-The above two selections were tied along with "Create more opportunities for parishioners to participate..." This was a three way tie. No consensus. "Study the needs" was ranked first because Blessed Sacrament (clustered) ranked it first.
-All three of the above are needed. Get youth involved.
-St Mary parishioners are very concerned about social justice. Our location allows us to reach out to a large community in need of food, essentials and translation services.
-The parishioners recognized the parishes need to continue to help those in our neighborhood. They see that SSPP is the anchor of the westside neighborhood and we need to continue to have outreach to those in need which is a form of evangelization.
-Catechize on Catholic social teaching; Mentor to promote independence; Evangelize the poor; Teach traditional marriage when coming for child's baptism; Parish level decisions on ministry; Parish culture of outreach; Minister to growing families.

Stewardship and Communications

Verbatim Comments: -Diocese and Parishes should share information in multiple ways including regular emails. Especially sharing diocesan and local resources and training including how to find these resources. List available trainings and volunteer opportunities.
-Some thought all 3 were important for overall success.
-These were almost a tie for prioritization.
-Other: Create a diocesan wide program to encourage parishioners to attend and participate in group activities/committees.
-Blend of 1, 2, & 3.
-There is barrier to communication using technology such as this survey and need of both new/old tech to reach parishioners. Combining parishes may help group old/new tech activities. Drop down screen at -Mass and updated hearing aid tech is needed.
-Combine 1 and 4.
-Educate on tithing, transparency on needs and budget; Yearly Commitment of fidelity; Evangelization-key to stewardship; RCIA. Reverence for the Eucharist; Billboard, etc, what Catholics believe; Utilize google maps, pictures of church, mass, confession times.

Possibilities of Vibrant Ministries – Grand Rapids South

Out of the 17 parishes in the South Deanery, 13 parishes participated.

Grand Rapids South Deanery		
Ministry Area		
Parish Organization	Priority 1	Priority 2
Organize all parishes in the diocese into groupings of two to four parishes to collaborate on various ministries, which may include already-existing clusters.	2	3
Merge and close parishes that are in decline, especially those that are proximate to other parishes.	1	3
Consider the appointment of permanent deacons, religious, and lay persons to serve as pastoral directors in smaller parishes, to ease the administrative responsibility of priests serving more than one parish.	8	2
Recruit and form new cohorts of deacons and lay ministers with a goal of equipping them to engage in specific needed ministries.	0	2
Provide training on a regional basis for parish staff and volunteers, including information about model ministries currently thriving in various parishes in the diocese.	1	0
Other: Combination of (1) Organize all parishes in the diocese into groupings of 2 to 4 parishes to collaborate on various ministries, which may include already-existing clusters. (3) Consider the appointment of permanent deacons, religious, and lay persons to serve as pastoral directors in smaller parishes, to ease the administrative responsibility of priests serving more than one parish. (5) Provide training on a regional basis for parish staff and volunteers, including information about model ministries thriving in various parishes in the diocese and beyond . (+) Create clear guidelines for parish closures.	1	1
Other: Parish Organization-Options 1 and 3 were both chosen as top priorities. See above.	0	1
Worship and Evangelization	Priority 1	Priority 2
Review Mass schedules to affirm that attendance at a Sunday Mass is 50% or more of the church's seating capacity or at least 100 people; if necessary, revise.	0	2
Establish teams of parishioners in every parish to contact every person on the parish roster as well as former members to listen to and invite them to engage in the parish.	0	2
Expand opportunities for ministry with older adults in the parish.	1	0
Focus parish long range evangelization efforts on new residents, RCIA, baptisms, weddings, funerals, and enrollment and retention in elementary and high school religious education.	5	2
Provide a range of group ministry programs to strengthen people's faith and connection with their faith communities (men's groups, women's groups, Renew style groups, Marriage Encounter).	4	4
Other: Both "Review Mass schedules to affirm that attendance at a Sunday Mass is 50% or more of the church's seating capacity or at least 100 people; if necessary, revise" and "Establish teams of parishioners in every parish to contact every person on the parish roster as well as former members to listen to and invite them to engage in the parish" were selected as #1 priorities.	1	0
Other: Establish teams of parishioners... and Focus parish long range evangelization...were tied for priority 1	1	0
Other: Combination of (4) Focus parish long-range evangelization efforts on new residents, OCIA, baptisms, weddings, funerals, and enrollment and retention in elementary and high school religious education. (5) Provide a range of group ministry programs to strengthen people's faith and connection with their faith communities (men's groups, women's groups, Renew style groups, Marriage Encounter).	1	0
Other: Combination of (3) Expand opportunities for ministry with older adults in the parish. (4) Focus parish long-range evangelization efforts on new residents, OCIA, baptisms, weddings, funerals, and enrollment and retention in elementary and high school religious education. (5) Provide a range of group ministry programs to strengthen people's faith and connection with their faith communities (+ young adult ministries, men's groups, women's groups, Renew style groups, Marriage Encounter). (+) Create individual parish commissions to help oversee ministries.	0	1
Other: See above.	0	1
Faith Formation and Catholic Schools	Priority 1	Priority 2
Where school age population is increasing, study the potential for expansion of Catholic elementary and high school locations.	0	1
Develop area or regional adult faith formation, which may include Bible study, retreats, small groups, lectures and thematic series.	4	2
Establish an area or regional approach to young adult ministry for those in the age groups of their 20s and 30s.	6	3
Organize youth ministry on an area or regional basis, which may include components that can be conducted on the parish level.	1	3
Other: Collaborate and share resources for youth ministry on a regional basis for larger events (retreats, social events, service events, etc.), but main organization and leadership to remain at local parish level. The local connection for regular social interaction is important.	1	0
Other: Effectively using vacant facilities and assets.	1	0
Other: Develop area regional adult faith... and Organize youth ministry...were tied for priority 2.	0	1
Other: Every parish needs to have their own Faith Formation program.	0	1
Other: Increase youth participation in Mass and parish activities.	0	1
Outreach and Ministry to those in Need	Priority 1	Priority 2
Coordinate parish outreach efforts on an area or regional level to maximize their effectiveness.	5	2
Study the needs of those in need in the area or region to provide greater assistance and support.	5	6
Create more opportunities for parishioners to participate in ministries that serve those in need.	3	4
Other:	0	0
Stewardship and Communications	Priority 1	Priority 2
Increase efforts to engage more parishioners to share their gifts and talents and engage in parish efforts to carry out the mission of the Church.	9	5
Develop effective ways to welcome, orient, and engage new parishioners.	3	6
Develop a communications strategy that includes the use of new and older technologies to more effectively reach parishioners who are used to different communications technologies.	1	1
Other:	0	0

Grand Rapids South Deanery

Ministry Area

Parish Organization

Verbatim Comments: -Provide training on a regional basis for staff and volunteers received equal votes for priority 2.
-Additional parishioner comments: Match priests giftings to the parish serving (Bi-lingual priest to Bi-lingual Parish).
-1) Coordinate Mass times in deaneries to accommodate early morning needs. 2) Create centers of excellence. Not every parish has to be good at everything. 3) Communal residences for priests for better support system. 4) We need a local retreat center.
-Proposal #5 - this kind of training is available at the Catholic Information Center and is open to all parishes. None of these proposals are so dominant as to eliminate any of them. All will be needed to meet the missin needs of various parishes. Promote incentives and competitive salaries for retention and long-term commitment of lay ecclesial professional ministers. Recruit Lay ecclesial ministers and provide scholarships if they commit to working in a parish.
-Make Mass times, confession times, and adoration times around the diocese more front and center on the Diocesan Website - so a rookie can find them.

Worship and Evangelization

Verbatim Comments: -Parishioner Add On: Mass schedules should not compete with nearby parishes. Outreach to college students.
-1) Improve accessibility for hearing, blind and physical needs 2) Provide Hospitality programming for parishes to ensure people feel welcome 3) Process in place when people leave a church 4) Better follow up after people receive Sacraments.
-Need of young deacons to help parishioners in need. Also, Bilingual masses are a problem with division within the parish.
-Create /Strengthen opportunitFocused efforts to provide "on Ramps" for teens and young adults to participate in parish ministries. ies to equip and support parents in their efforts of raising their children in the faithparents. Teach parishioners to evangelize through their personal influence and relationships. Try to identify all regular attending parishioners who have no parish involvement. Ensure full diversity of musical expressions at parish worship opportunities to include traditional and contemporary songs, as well as organ, piano, and guitar instrumentality.
-Be more visible and present at local community events - food festivals, business extravaganzas, sporting events, community fairs, etc.

Faith Formation and Catholic Schools

Verbatim Comments: -Include young adult ministry with point number 2.
-Focus on Evangelization. Pair different social economic parishes.
-1) Better connection between the church & the secular 2) Parents of religious education children need community. 3) Include public school students with Catholic school students in community life & Faith Formation 4) More outreach with Aquinas College.
-Provide assistance to, and partner with, parents to engage their families in the life of the parish and forming faith communities in their homes. Connect faith formation to worship in explicit and intentional ways, by ensuring the integration of worship, prayer, and faith sharing into all formation classes (for children, youth, young & mature & senior adults).
-more conversations between parishes about what is working and what is not working.

Outreach and Ministry to those in Need

Verbatim Comments: -Concern that when people are dying there is often no priest.
-Provide Mission Trip opportunities to people of all ages.
-Pastoral care for those with mental health needs. Serving those in need should be a measurement of the health of a parish. Provide regular family outreach opportunities for serving those in need and forming children, youth, and young adults in the Christian value of service to those in need.
-Find ways to better explain Catholic Social teaching to laypersons.

Stewardship and Communications

Verbatim Comments: -Suggesting ways to share resources among the need and affluent parishes.
-Provide information for parishes to promote tithing as the giving from your first fruits.
-Combine a., b. and c.
-each stewardship/generosity as an important aspect of the individual and family's maturing in their faith. Encourage volunteer commitment to ministries to flow from one's personal encounter with Christ in prayer and worship. More on Evangelization - What are we doing to engage the huge percentage of people who claim to be Catholic but are not engaged in their Catholic life and the life of a parish? Continue current -Parish Prayer Chain ministry by soliciting prayer needs and intercessions and distributing them via email to faith community members for personal prayer. But tweak it one step better, by having once a month lay-led communal prayer service, where the book of printed intercessory prayers is communally prayed for in the chapel (in rosary service, or short liturgy of the word service).
-Openness to life in marriage and support and encouragement of large families. The average priest has five siblings.

Possibilities of Vibrant Ministries – Northeast

Of the eight parishes in the Northeast Deanery, five parishes participated.

Northeast Deanery		
Ministry Area		
Parish Organization		
Organize all parishes in the diocese into groupings of two to four parishes to collaborate on various ministries, which may include already-existing clusters.	2	1
Merge and close parishes that are in decline, especially those that are proximate to other parishes.	0	1
Consider the appointment of permanent deacons, religious, and lay persons to serve as pastoral directors in smaller parishes, to ease the administrative responsibility of priests serving more than one parish.	2	2
Recruit and form new cohorts of deacons and lay ministers with a goal of equipping them to engage in specific needed ministries.	0	1
Provide training on a regional basis for parish staff and volunteers, including information about model ministries currently thriving in various parishes in the diocese.	0	0
Develop regional approaches to Hispanic ministry.	0	0
Other: Assign a permanent pastor.	1	0
Worship and Evangelization		
Review Mass schedules to affirm that attendance at a Sunday Mass is 50% or more of the church's seating capacity or at least 100 people; if necessary, revise.	1	0
Establish teams of parishioners in every parish to contact every person on the parish roster as well as former members to listen to and invite them to engage in the parish.	1	0
Expand opportunities for ministry with older adults in the parish.	0	0
Focus parish long range evangelization efforts on new residents, RCIA, baptisms, weddings, funerals, and enrollment and retention in elementary and high school religious education.	1	2
Provide a range of group ministry programs to strengthen people's faith and connection with their faith communities (men's groups, women's groups, Renew style groups, Marriage Encounter).	1	2
Other: Add a Saturday Mass.	1	0
Other: Having a pastor is a priority.	0	1
Faith Formation and Catholic Schools		
Where school age population is increasing, study the potential for expansion of Catholic elementary and high school locations.	0	0
Develop area or regional adult faith formation, which may include Bible study, retreats, small groups, lectures and thematic	2	1
Establish an area or regional approach to young adult ministry for those in the age groups of their 20s and 30s.	2	0
Organize youth ministry on an area or regional basis, which may include components that can be conducted on the parish level.	0	4
Other: Expand faith formation.	1	0
Other:	0	0
Outreach and Ministry to those in Need		
Coordinate parish outreach efforts on an area or regional level to maximize their effectiveness.	1	0
Study the needs of those in need in the area or region to provide greater assistance and support.	3	2
Create more opportunities for parishioners to participate in ministries that serve those in need.	1	3
Other:	0	0
Other:	0	0
Stewardship and Communications		
Increase efforts to engage more parishioners to share their gifts and talents and engage in parish efforts to carry out the mission of	4	0
Develop effective ways to welcome, orient, and engage new parishioners.	0	5
Develop a communications strategy that includes the use of new and older technologies to more effectively reach parishioners who are used to different communications technologies.	1	0
Other:	0	0

Northeast Deanery

Ministry Area

Parish Organization

No Additional Comments.

Worship and Evangelization

Verbatim Additional Comments: -Having a pastor is a priority.

Faith Formation and Catholic Schools

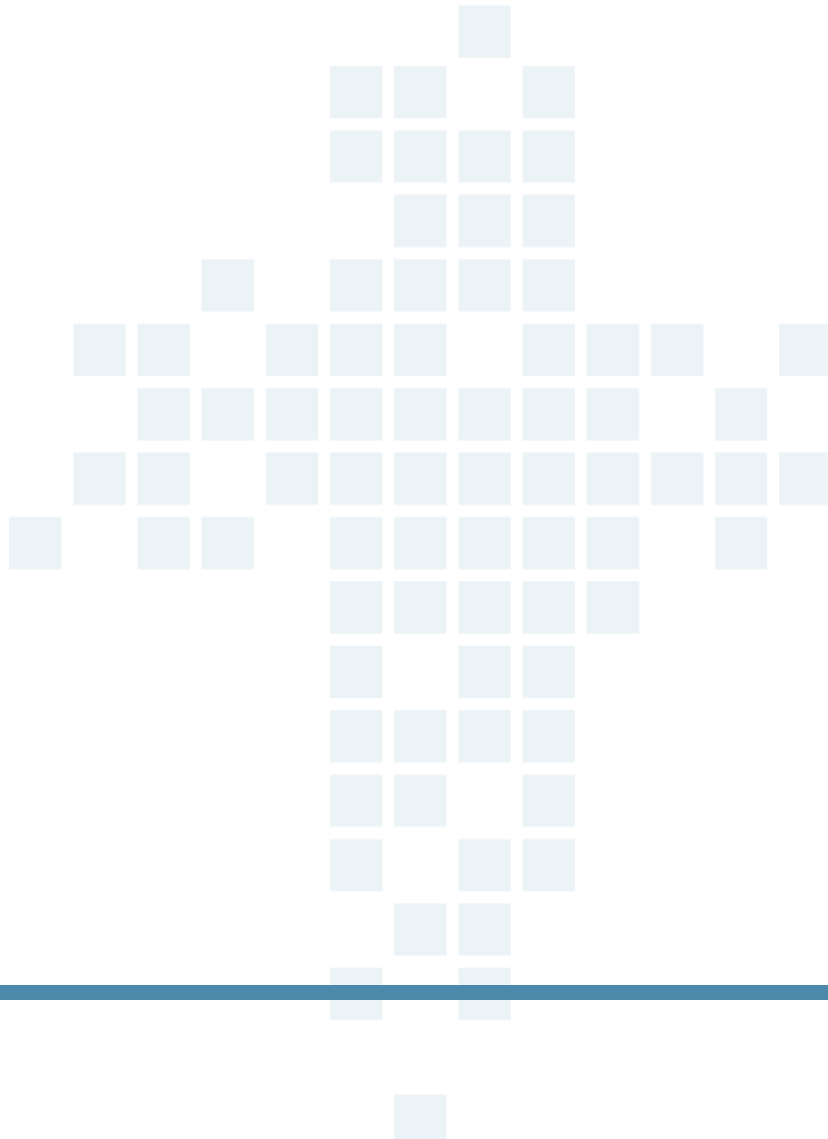
No Additional Comments.

Outreach and Ministry to those in Need

No Additional Comments.

Stewardship and Communications

No Additional Comments.



Possibilities of Vibrant Ministries – Northwest

Out of the 13 parishes in the Northwest Deanery, 12 parishes participated.

Northwest Deanery		
Ministry Area		
Parish Organization	Priority 1	Priority 2
Organize all parishes in the diocese into groupings of two to four parishes to collaborate on various ministries, which may include already-existing clusters.	2	0
Merge and close parishes that are in decline, especially those that are proximate to other parishes.	2	0
Consider the appointment of permanent deacons, religious, and lay persons to serve as pastoral directors in smaller parishes, to ease the administrative responsibility of priests serving more than one parish.	0	0
Recruit and form new cohorts of deacons and lay ministers with a goal of equipping them to engage in specific needed ministries.	4	2
Provide training on a regional basis for parish staff and volunteers, including information about model ministries currently thriving in various parishes in the diocese.	3	5
Develop regional approaches to Hispanic ministry.	0	0
Other: The pastor should not be doing office work. Develop an evaluation process for pastors that incorporates feedback from parish staff, council/committee members, and parishioners. The evaluation process will identify both strengths and areas in need of support, and someone from the diocese will meet with each priest to discuss ways the priest can receive support in areas of need.	1	0
Other: Creating a hierarchy structure that categorizes duties and responsibilities of the congregation	0	1
Other: Develop an evaluation process for pastors that incorporates feedback from parish staff, council/committee members, and parishioners. The evaluation process will identify both strengths and areas in need of support, and someone from the diocese will meet each priest to discuss ways the priest can receive support in areas of need.	0	1
Other: Develop regional approaches to the vulnerable and all of their needs i.e. Hispanic, LGBTQ, Single parent, elderly etc in our communities.	0	1
Other: St. John Cantius- Free Soil and St. Mary's- Custer have already combined.	0	1
Other: The evaluation of the priest option that had been added.	0	1
Worship and Evangelization	Priority 1	Priority 2
Review Mass schedules to affirm that attendance at a Sunday Mass is 50% or more of the church's seating capacity or at least 100 people; if necessary, revise.	1	0
Establish teams of parishioners in every parish to contact every person on the parish roster as well as former members to listen to and invite them to engage in the parish.	4	2
Expand opportunities for ministry with older adults in the parish.	0	1
Focus parish long range evangelization efforts on new residents, RCIA, baptisms, weddings, funerals, and enrollment and retention in elementary and high school religious education.	0	6
Provide a range of group ministry programs to strengthen people's faith and connection with their faith communities (men's groups, women's groups, Renew style groups, Marriage Encounter).	6	2
Other: Expand Opportunities for ministry for each adult in the parish.	1	0
Other: Look into forming a men's group	0	1
Faith Formation and Catholic Schools	Priority 1	Priority 2
Where school age population is increasing, study the potential for expansion of Catholic elementary and high school locations.	0	1
Develop area or regional adult faith formation, which may include Bible study, retreats, small groups, lectures and thematic series.	7	4
Establish an area or regional approach to young adult ministry for those in the age groups of their 20s and 30s.	2	3
Organize youth ministry on an area or regional basis, which may include components that can be conducted on the parish level.	3	2
Other: Continue faith formation with Fr. Matt through coffee & catechism after Thursday mass	0	1
Other: Look into an adult bible study group	0	1
Outreach and Ministry to those in Need	Priority 1	Priority 2
Coordinate parish outreach efforts on an area or regional level to maximize their effectiveness.	2	3
Study the needs of those in need in the area or region to provide greater assistance and support.	8	2
Create more opportunities for parishioners to participate in ministries that serve those in need.	1	6
Other: Ministry in our own parishes.	1	0
Other: Look into groups to visit the homebound.	0	1
Stewardship and Communications	Priority 1	Priority 2
Increase efforts to engage more parishioners to share their gifts and talents and engage in parish efforts to carry out the mission of the Church.	6	3
Develop effective ways to welcome, orient, and engage new parishioners.	4	5
Develop a communications strategy that includes the use of new and older technologies to more effectively reach parishioners who are used to different communications technologies.	1	3
Other: Improved communication between clustered churches regarding traditions and cultures.	1	0
Other: Volunteers with various talents that take of the parish needs.	0	1

Northwest Deanery

Ministry Area

Parish Organization

Verbatim Comments: -The pastor should not be doing office work. Develop an evaluation process for pastors that incorporates feedback from parish staff, council/committee members, and parishioners. The evaluation process will identify both strengths and areas in need of support, and someone from the diocese will meet with each priest to discuss ways the priest can receive support in areas of need.

-We would like to see priest of different orders to come and assist in our parishes.

-Recruiting deacons and lay ministers is also important.

-We can't forget the financial burdens associated with grouping parishes vs closing - keeping partially utilized facilities is not feasible, and closure probably inevitable? Move priests more often. Priests need to be taught/coached in communication skills, not to be arrogant and talk down to people.

-Also interest in #s 3,4 and 5.

Worship and Evangelization

Verbatim Comments: -Reducing Masses may be necessary to ensure enough readers, proclaimers, servers, etc. We must do something significant to address all things "marriage" - strengthening, dealing with divorce and annulments, etc.

-Allow women to be more involved in Mass.

Faith Formation and Catholic Schools

Verbatim Comments: -We felt this was like a train the trainer to facilitate better programming at the parish level.

-Would like a program from the diocese to help involve teens

Outreach and Ministry to those in Need

Verbatim Comments: -Create a parish phone list for parishioners.

-Needs to be directed by the priest based on the talent pool of the parish.

-Outreach programs are good, but don't address the shortage of priests.

Stewardship and Communications

Verbatim Comments: -Develop an effective way to welcome new parishioners.

-All three are a high priority for any growth to take place.

-These are tactical ideas, any of them can be effective, but none address the shortage of priests.

Possibilities of Vibrant Ministries – West Deanery

Out of the 15 parishes in the West Deanery, 10 parishes participated.

West Deanery		
Ministry Area		
Parish Organization	Priority 1	Priority 2
Consider the appointment of permanent deacons, religious, and lay persons to serve as pastoral directors in smaller parishes, to ease the administrative responsibility of priests serving more than one parish.	4	0
Organize all parishes in the diocese into groupings of two to four parishes to collaborate on various ministries, which may include already-existing clusters.	2	5
Recruit and form new cohorts of deacons and lay ministers with a goal of equipping them to engage in specific needed ministries.	1	1
Provide training on a regional basis for parish staff and volunteers, including information about model ministries currently thriving in various parishes in the diocese.	1	0
Merge and close parishes that are in decline, especially those that are proximate to other parishes.	0	1
Develop regional approaches to Hispanic ministry.	0	0
Other: Recruit and form new cohorts of deacons and lay ministers with the goal of equipping them to engage in specific needed ministries, BY providing training on a regional basis (diocese-led or sharing information on model ministries thriving in our various parishes) (Explanation: A combination of items 4 and 5 emphasizing the laity and removing the reference to deacons. We did not see additional deacons as helping in this category as much as better	1	0
Other: Consider the appointment of permanent deacons, religious, and lay persons to serve as pastoral directors, to ease the administrative responsibility of priests. (revision of c.)	1	0
Other: Pastor and key staff members to work as a Leadership Team	1	0
Other: Create a position for Faith Formation Coordinator	0	1
Worship and Evangelization	Priority 1	Priority 2
Review Mass schedules to affirm that attendance at a Sunday Mass is 50% or more of the church's seating capacity or at least 100 people; if necessary, revise.	0	1
Establish teams of parishioners in every parish to contact every person on the parish roster as well as former members to listen to and invite them to engage in the parish.	0	0
Expand opportunities for ministry with older adults in the parish.	0	0
Focus parish long range evangelization efforts on new residents, RCIA, baptisms, weddings, funerals, and enrollment and retention in elementary and high school religious education.	4	3
Provide a range of group ministry programs to strengthen people's faith and connection with their faith communities (men's groups, women's groups, Renew style groups, Marriage Encounter).	4	2
Other: Establish strengths-based ministry (such as Called and Gifted) to equip parishioners to lead in all aspects of evangelization.	1	0
Other: Implement a program to help people understand the Mass	1	0
Other: Establish times for Eucharistic Adoration	0	1
Other: Form evangelization ministry to explore why people are not coming to church and focus efforts on new residents, RCIA, baptisms, weddings, funerals, and enrollment and retention in elementary and high school religious education, placing a concerted emphasis on making the parish welcoming and joyful.	1	0
Other: Train parishes to develop a culture of "radical hospitality."	0	1
Faith Formation and Catholic Schools	Priority 1	Priority 2
Where school age population is increasing, study the potential for expansion of Catholic elementary and high school locations.	0	1
Develop area or regional adult faith formation, which may include Bible study, retreats, small groups, lectures and thematic series.	3	1
Establish an area or regional approach to young adult ministry for those in the age groups of their 20s and 30s.	2	2
Organize youth ministry on an area or regional basis, which may include components that can be conducted on the parish level.	2	2
Other: Establish an area of regional approach to young adult ministry for those in the age groups of 20's and 30's but also for junior high and high school aged kids.	1	0
Other: The first two options got equal votes.	1	0
Other: Collaboration among parish youth groups	1	0
Other: Small group Bible studies for parents while children are in religious education or Catechesis of Good Shepherd	0	1
Other: Look for ways to increase engagement and a sense of community while providing educational and other opportunities for growing in our faith all age levels.	1	0
Other: No second priority was identified.	0	1
Outreach and Ministry to those in Need	Priority 1	Priority 2
Coordinate parish outreach efforts on an area or regional level to maximize their effectiveness.	3	4
Study the needs of those in need in the area or region to provide greater assistance and support.	2	1
Create more opportunities for parishioners to participate in ministries that serve those in need.	4	1
Other: Encourage participation of more young parishioners (lectors, communion ministers, etc.)	1	0
Other: Parishes to model tithing by tithing as a parish to people in need in the community and to foreign missions, such as Haiti	0	1
Other: Develop a structure within the parish to clearly communicate the services we offer and specific needs of the ministries; consider re-instituting the position of Volunteer / Ministry Coordinator to match talent with need.	1	0
Other: No second priority was identified.	0	1
Stewardship and Communications	Priority 1	Priority 2
Increase efforts to engage more parishioners to share their gifts and talents and engage in parish efforts to carry out the mission of the Church.	5	1
Develop effective ways to welcome, orient, and engage new parishioners.	0	3
Develop a communications strategy that includes the use of new and older technologies to more effectively reach parishioners who are used to different communications technologies.	4	3
Other: Educate parishioners on what it means to be a steward and offer tools to evaluate their gifts and talents, helping them realize how they can use those talents to be stewards to other.	1	0
Other: Help people discover a personal relationship with Jesus as disciples through concepts of the book by Sherry Weddell, Forming Intentional Disciples	1	0
Other: Involve children/parents in various aspects of the mass (bringing up gifts, leading stations, altar-serving, lectoring, Eucharist, etc)	0	1

West Deanery

Ministry Area

Parish Organization

Verbatim Comments: -It was suggested that Options B & C should be combined into one option.

-Priority 1 represented 50% of the responses and Priority 2 was 38%. It was suggested that we should consider moving St. Michael to another location and be merged with St. Thomas in East Muskegon. - Pastor and key staff members to work as a Leadership Team (*see Cast into the Deep, 2/12/25 DoGR*)

Worship and Evangelization

Verbatim Comments: -2nd choice was a tie between A and E.

-Priority 1 and 2 were evenly divided at 50%.

Faith Formation and Catholic Schools

Verbatim Comments: -Priority 1 & 2 (tied) and each represented 30% of our responses. Option D was 25%. It was suggested that we should lobby the State to provide vouchers to Catholic Schools.

-2nd choice was tie between C & D.

-Priority 1 & 2 were evenly divided at 50%. Supports lobbying the State for School vouchers.

-Establish a "Theology On Tap" for young adults

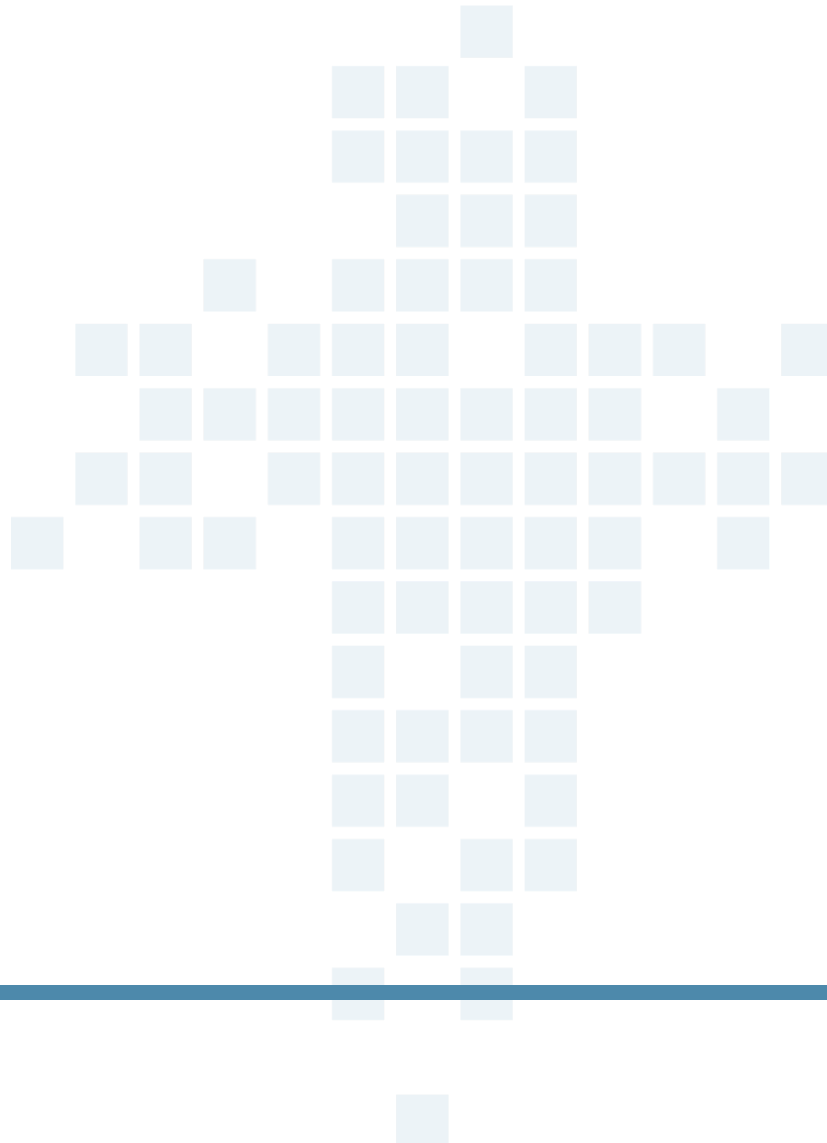
Outreach and Ministry to those in Need

Verbatim Comments: -Option A represented 40%; Option C 30% and Option B 25%.

Stewardship and Communications

Verbatim Comments: -Priority 1 represented 80% of our responses; Option

-Priority 2 Options A & B were tied at 50%.



Rooted in Christ – Response Form on Parish Recommendations

Pastoral Plan for Diocese of Grand Rapids – Data Tables

As part of the Rooted in Christ study, we asked each parish to provide feedback in three areas:

- Parish Recommendations
- Collaboration with other parishes: history and future
- Future Ministry Focus

This enabled each parish to share insights and ideas that best reflect their community. Out of the 80 parishes in the Diocese of Grand Rapids, 64 parishes participated.

Diocese Data

Deanery Response Rates

Deanery	Count
Grand Rapids North	13
Grand Rapids South	12
East	10
West	12
Northeast	4
Northwest	13
Total:	64

Parish Recommendations

Do you affirm the recommendations for your parish? *(Select all that apply.)*

Deanery	Affirm	Change	Add
Grand Rapids North	10	1	3
Grand Rapids South	9	3	4
East	8	2	0
West	8	3	5
Northeast	3	1	2
Northwest	11	5	1
Totals:	49	15	15

Future Ministry Focus

Has your parish collaborated on ministries with other parishes in the past?

Deanery	Yes	No
Grand Rapids North	12	1
Grand Rapids South	12	0
East	9	1
West	12	0
Northeast	4	0
Northwest	12	1
Totals:	61	3



Smarter decisions.
Stronger mission.

Deanery Response Rates *(continued)*

Assess the level of interest in collaboration with another parish or parishes on certain ministries:

Deanery	High	Medium	Low
Grand Rapids North	6	6	1
Grand Rapids South	7	5	0
East	7	3	0
West	9	1	2
Northeast	3	1	0
Northwest	7	5	0
Totals:	39	21	3

Deanery Data

Parish Recommendations – Grand Rapids North

Do you affirm the recommendations for your parish? *(Select all that apply.)*

Parish	Affirm	Change	Add
Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Belmont	1		
Basilica of St. Adalbert, Grand Rapids			1
Holy Family, Sparta			1
Holy Spirit, Grand Rapids	1		
Holy Trinity, Comstock Park	1		1
Our Lady of Consolation, Rockford	1		
Sacred Heart of Jesus, Grand Rapids	1		
Ss. Peter and Paul, Grand Rapids		1	
St. Anthony of Padua, Grand Rapids	1		
St. Isidore, Grand Rapids	1		
St. John Paul II, Cedar Springs	1		
St. Jude, Grand Rapids	1		
St. Mary, Grand Rapids	1		
Totals:	10	1	3

Future Ministry Focus

Has your parish collaborated on ministries with other parishes in the past?

Parish	Yes	No
Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Belmont	1	
Basilica of St. Adalbert, Grand Rapids	1	
Holy Family, Sparta	1	
Holy Spirit, Grand Rapids	1	
Holy Trinity, Comstock Park	1	
Our Lady of Consolation, Rockford	1	
Sacred Heart of Jesus, Grand Rapids	1	
Ss. Peter and Paul, Grand Rapids	1	
St. Anthony of Padua, Grand Rapids	1	
St. Isidore, Grand Rapids		1
St. John Paul II, Cedar Springs	1	
St. Jude, Grand Rapids	1	
St. Mary, Grand Rapids	1	
Totals:	12	1

Parish Recommendations – Grand Rapids North *(continued)*

Assess the level of interest in collaboration with another parish or parishes on certain ministries:

Parish	High	Medium	Low
Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Belmont		1	
Basilica of St. Adalbert, Grand Rapids		1	
Holy Family, Sparta		1	
Holy Spirit, Grand Rapids	1		
Holy Trinity, Comstock Park	1		
Our Lady of Consolation, Rockford		1	
Sacred Heart of Jesus, Grand Rapids		1	
Ss. Peter and Paul, Grand Rapids	1		
St. Anthony of Padua, Grand Rapids	1		
St. Isidore, Grand Rapids			1
St. John Paul II, Cedar Springs		1	
St. Jude, Grand Rapids	1		
St. Mary, Grand Rapids	1		
Totals:	6	6	1



Smarter decisions.
Stronger mission.

Parish Recommendations – Grand Rapids South

Do you affirm the recommendations for your parish? *(Select all that apply.)*

Parish	Affirm	Change	Add
Holy Family, Caledonia	1		
Holy Name of Jesus, Wyoming		1	1
Immaculate Heart of Mary, Grand Rapids	1		
Our Lady of Sorrows, Grand Rapids		1	1
Shrine of St. Francis Xavier/Our Lady of Guadalupe, Grand Rapids	1		
St. John Vianney, Wyoming	1		
St. Joseph the Worker, Wyoming	1		
St. Pius X, Grandville	1		1
St. Robert of Newminster, Ada	1		
St. Sebastian, Byron Center	1		
St. Stephen, East Grand Rapids		1	
St. Thomas the Apostle, Grand Rapids	1		1
Totals:	9	3	4

Future Ministry Focus

Has your parish collaborated on ministries with other parishes in the past?

Parish	Yes	No
Holy Family, Caledonia	1	
Holy Name of Jesus, Wyoming	1	
Immaculate Heart of Mary, Grand Rapids	1	
Our Lady of Sorrows, Grand Rapids	1	
Shrine of St. Francis Xavier/Our Lady of Guadalupe, Grand Rapids	1	
St. John Vianney, Wyoming	1	
St. Joseph the Worker, Wyoming	1	
St. Pius X, Grandville	1	
St. Robert of Newminster, Ada	1	
St. Sebastian, Byron Center	1	
St. Stephen, East Grand Rapids	1	
St. Thomas the Apostle, Grand Rapids	1	
Totals:	12	0

Parish Recommendations – Grand Rapids South *(continued)*

Assess the level of interest in collaboration with another parish or parishes on certain ministries:

Parish	High	Medium	Low
Holy Family, Caledonia	1		
Holy Name of Jesus, Wyoming	1		
Immaculate Heart of Mary, Grand Rapids	1		
Our Lady of Sorrows, Grand Rapids	1		
Shrine of St. Francis Xavier/Our Lady of Guadalupe, Grand Rapids		1	
St. John Vianney, Wyoming		1	
St. Joseph the Worker, Wyoming		1	
St. Pius X, Grandville		1	
St. Robert of Newminster, Ada		1	
St. Sebastian, Byron Center	1		
St. Stephen, East Grand Rapids	1		
St. Thomas the Apostle, Grand Rapids	1		
Totals:	7	5	0

Parish Recommendations – East Deanery

Do you affirm the recommendations for your parish? *(Select all that apply.)*

Parish	Affirm	Change	Add
St. Anthony, Saranac	1		
St. Charles Borromeo, Greenville	1		
St. Edward, Lake Odessa	1		
St. John the Baptist, Hubbardston		1	
St. Joseph–St. Mary, Belding	1		
St. Joseph, Pewamo	1		
St. Mary, Carson City		1	
St. Mary, Lowell	1		
St. Patrick, Parnell	1		
St. Patrick, Portland	1		
Totals:	8	2	0

Future Ministry Focus

Has your parish collaborated on ministries with other parishes in the past?

Parish	Yes	No
St. Anthony, Saranac	1	
St. Charles Borromeo, Greenville	1	
St. Edward, Lake Odessa	1	
St. John the Baptist, Hubbardston	1	
St. Joseph–St. Mary, Belding	1	
St. Joseph, Pewamo	1	
St. Mary, Carson City	1	
St. Mary, Lowell	1	
St. Patrick, Parnell		1
St. Patrick, Portland	1	
Totals:	9	1

Assess the level of interest in collaboration with another parish or parishes on certain ministries:

Parish	High	Medium	Low
St. Anthony, Saranac	1		
St. Charles Borromeo, Greenville		1	
St. Edward, Lake Odessa		1	
St. John the Baptist, Hubbardston	1		
St. Joseph–St. Mary, Belding	1		
St. Joseph, Pewamo		1	
St. Mary, Carson City	1		
St. Mary, Lowell	1		
St. Patrick, Parnell	1		
St. Patrick, Portland	1		
Totals:	7	3	0

Parish Recommendations – West Deanery

Do you affirm the recommendations for your parish? *(Select all that apply.)*

Parish	Affirm	Change	Add
Our Lady of the Lake, Holland	1		
Prince of Peace, North Muskegon	1		
St. Catherine, Ravenna		1	
St. Francis de Sales, Holland			1
St. Francis de Sales, Norton Shores	1		1
St. Francis Xavier, Conklin		1	
St. Luke University, Allendale			1
St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Muskegon	1		
St. Mary, Spring Lake	1		
St. Michael the Archangel, Muskegon	1		1
St. Michael, Coopersville	1		
St. Thomas the Apostle, Muskegon Township	1	1	1
Totals:	8	3	5

Future Ministry Focus

Has your parish collaborated on ministries with other parishes in the past?

Parish	Yes	No
Our Lady of the Lake, Holland	1	
Prince of Peace, North Muskegon	1	
St. Catherine, Ravenna	1	
St. Francis de Sales, Holland	1	
St. Francis de Sales, Norton Shores	1	
St. Francis Xavier, Conklin	1	
St. Luke University, Allendale	1	
St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Muskegon	1	
St. Mary, Spring Lake	1	
St. Michael the Archangel, Muskegon	1	
St. Michael, Coopersville	1	
St. Thomas the Apostle, Muskegon Township	1	
Totals:	12	0

Assess the level of interest in collaboration with another parish or parishes on certain ministries:

Parish	High	Medium	Low
Our Lady of the Lake, Holland			1
Prince of Peace, North Muskegon	1		
St. Catherine, Ravenna	1		
St. Francis de Sales, Holland	1		
St. Francis de Sales, Norton Shores	1		
St. Francis Xavier, Conklin		1	
St. Luke University, Allendale	1		
St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Muskegon	1		
St. Mary, Spring Lake	1		
St. Michael the Archangel, Muskegon	1		
St. Michael, Coopersville	1		
St. Thomas the Apostle, Muskegon Township			1
Totals:	9	1	2

Parish Recommendations – Northeast Deanery

Do you affirm the recommendations for your parish? *(Select all that apply.)*

Parish	Affirm	Change	Add
Sacred Heart, Evert	1		1
St. Agnes, Marion	1		
St. Michael the Archangel, Remus	1		
St. Philip Neri, Reed City		1	
Totals:	3	1	1

Future Ministry Focus

Has your parish collaborated on ministries with other parishes in the past?

Parish	Yes	No
Sacred Heart, Evert	1	
St. Agnes, Marion	NA	NA
St. Michael the Archangel, Remus	1	
St. Philip Neri, Reed City	1	
Totals:	3	0

Assess the level of interest in collaboration with another parish or parishes on certain ministries:

Parish	High	Medium	Low
Sacred Heart, Evert	1		
St. Agnes, Marion	NA	NA	NA
St. Michael the Archangel, Remus	1		
St. Philip Neri, Reed City		1	
Totals:	2	1	0

Parish Recommendations – Northwest Deanery

Do you affirm the recommendations for your parish? *(Select all that apply.)*

Parish	Affirm	Change	Add
All Saints, Fremont	1		
Our Lady of the Assumption, Rothbury		1	
St. Ann–St. Ignatius, Baldwin		1	
St. Bartholomew, Newaygo	1	1	
St. Bernard, Irons	1		
St. Gregory-Our Lady of Fatima, Hart	1		
St. James, Montague	1		
St. John Cantius, Free Soil	1		
St. Joseph, Weare		1	1
St. Joseph, White Cloud	1		
St. Mary–St. Jerome, Custer		1	
St. Michael, Brunswick	1		
St. Simon, Ludington	1		
Totals:	9	5	1

Future Ministry Focus

Has your parish collaborated on ministries with other parishes in the past?

Parish	Yes	No
All Saints, Fremont	1	
Our Lady of the Assumption, Rothbury	1	
St. Ann–St. Ignatius, Baldwin	1	
St. Bartholomew, Newaygo	1	
St. Bernard, Irons	1	
St. Gregory-Our Lady of Fatima, Hart	1	
St. James, Montague	NA	NA
St. John Cantius, Free Soil	1	
St. Joseph, Weare	1	
St. Joseph, White Cloud	1	
St. Mary–St. Jerome, Custer		1
St. Michael, Brunswick	NA	NA
St. Simon, Ludington	1	
Totals:	10	1

Parish Recommendations – Northwest Deanery (*continued*)

Assess the level of interest in collaboration with another parish or parishes on certain ministries:

Parish	High	Medium	Low
All Saints, Fremont	1		
Our Lady of the Assumption, Rothbury	1		
St. Ann–St. Ignatius, Baldwin		1	
St. Bartholomew, Newaygo	1		
St. Bernard, Irons		1	
St. Gregory-Our Lady of Fatima, Hart	1		
St. James, Montague	NA	NA	NA
St. John Cantius, Free Soil	1		
St. Joseph, Weare		1	
St. Joseph, White Cloud		1	
St. Mary–St. Jerome, Custer	1		
St. Michael, Brunswick	NA	NA	NA
St. Simon, Ludington		1	
Totals:	6	5	0

Rooted in Christ – Response Form on Parish Recommendations

Pastoral Plan for Diocese of Grand Rapids – Comments

Out of the 80 parishes in the Diocese of Grand Rapids, 64 parishes participated. The following are raw comments from respondents which may include grammatical errors/typos.

Grand Rapids North

Parish Recommendation Comments:

- Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Belmont - If some churches are being turned into Spanish missions, then at least one English or bilingual mass could be held also. Just in case the parish starts growing again and can be opened up to its former status. No! I find it incredibly discouraging and frustrating that the Catholic Church is the largest charitable organization in the world yet we are incapable of keeping our doors open to those in our own community. another quick turnaround survey, why even ask the bishop is going to do what he wants anyway. Hard job but we'll laid out.
- Basilica of St. Adalbert, Grand Rapids - PARISHIONER FEEDBACK ON THE "ROOTED IN CHRIST" RECOMMENDATIONS On April 29, the Basilica of St. Adalbert held a parish town hall to discuss the "Rooted in Christ" diocesan plan for St. Mary Parish in Grand Rapids to continue clustering with the Basilica, with a bilingual priest appointed to serve both communities. The meeting also addressed the planned future merger between the Basilica and Saints Peter and Paul Parish upon the retirement of its administrator. The session reflected a thoughtful, faithful, and engaged community that is eager to support the broader Catholic mission in Grand Rapids. At the same time, parishioners raised several constructive concerns and suggestions regarding the proposed plans. REQUEST FOR BROADER VISION BEYOND DEANERY BOUNDARIES Parishioners questioned why clustering options for St. Mary's appear confined to the Northern Deanery. They encouraged a broader diocesan perspective and specifically recommended considering the Cathedral of Saint Andrew, which is just 1.5 miles from St. Mary's and already offers a robust Hispanic Ministry, including Spanish-language Masses on Saturday mornings and Sunday afternoons, along with other culturally responsive programs. Given the geographic proximity and pastoral alignment, many felt that the Cathedral may be better positioned to provide ongoing support and growth opportunities for St. Mary's, and that ministry fit should take precedence over administrative boundaries. CONCERN FOR PRIESTLY CAPACITY AND PARISH VITALITY Parishioners expressed significant concern that appointing one bilingual priest to cover both the Basilica and St. Mary's could stretch resources too thin, diminishing the quality of pastoral care and weakening both communities. Key questions included: - How will Mass schedules at the Basilica be impacted—especially during holidays—when attendance is already at a five-year high? - Would a demonstrable increase in parishioners (e.g., 100 new members) help retain an associate priest? - What assurances exist that the next pastor will maintain the liturgical practices and community engagement strategies that have driven the Basilica's growth in recent years? There is particular concern that a new priest might introduce significant changes that disrupt the momentum the Basilica has built over the past five years. FINANCIAL AND OPERATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES Parishioners voiced concerns about growing financial obligations being placed on the Basilica: - The Basilica inherited the financial responsibilities of St. James and continues to bear those costs. - Under the current proposal, it would also assume responsibility for Saints Peter & Paul following the retirement of its administrator, although no

timeline has been provided. - Parishioners questioned whether the Basilica might also be expected to financially support St. Mary's in the future, should it cease to be financially independent. - Concerns were raised about restrictions surrounding the sale of the St. James property, and the community encouraged diocesan support in accelerating this process. These concerns were especially pressing in light of the Basilica's current growth, and parishioners felt that placing additional burdens could jeopardize its long-term vitality. **LONG-TERM VISION AND STRATEGIC PLANNING** There was a clear call for more transparent, strategic, and data-informed planning: - Parishioners recommended using five-year parish data (to account for COVID disruptions) to more accurately reflect recent growth trends. - Some questioned whether the diocese could explore mission priests from other countries to help address the priest shortage affecting the U.S. - There was interest in understanding how staffing models at the Basilica may need to evolve under new pastoral leadership. - Parishioners called for planning approaches that actively build on the strengths of thriving parishes like the Basilica, rather than limiting or diluting them. **CULTURAL AND PASTORAL NEEDS OF ST. MARY'S** The Basilica community affirmed its support for culturally responsive ministry and acknowledged the importance of serving the Hispanic Catholic population. However, there was concern that a single bilingual priest may not be able to offer the deep, focused engagement needed for St. Mary's to grow and thrive. Parishioners felt strongly that effective Hispanic ministry requires intentional leadership, adequate time, and resources that may be compromised under the proposed plan. **COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATIVE DECISION-MAKING** Throughout the town hall, parishioners consistently advocated for better communication and collaborative decision-making. While recognizing the complexities of diocesan planning, many were concerned that both the Meitler Group and the Diocese had overlooked the Basilica's substantial growth over the past five years in developing their proposed plan. They emphasized that open dialogue, mutual respect, and shared discernment are essential for maintaining trust and ensuring that parish life remains vibrant, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of BOTH faith communities.

- Holy Family, Sparta - 1) Keep administrative assistant on staff to answer phones and maintain access for parishioners as needed. 2) Keep maintenance staff to maintain the facility. 3) Rotate daily masses between parishes and hold one weekend mass at Holy Family.
- Holy Trinity, Comstock Park - We Request that due to the current needs of our parish to grow our school and adult meeting space it would be challenging especially for our Priest, for us to merge with Holy Family. They may be better served at Cedar Springs.
- Ss. Peter and Paul, Grand Rapids - No one affirmed the current proposed plan. Our recommended change would be the following as we feel many changes to our parish and surrounding parishes, as well as the neighborhood, could take place before the retirement of the current administrator. Upon the announcement of the retirement of the Canonical Administrator/Pastor the Diocese will evaluate whether it is appropriate for SS. Peter and Paul Parish to merge or cluster with the Basilica of Saint Adalbert. The Diocese will assess the current attendance and financial status of SS. Peter and Paul, will weigh the impact of the closure on the westside neighborhood and the parish's outreach, as well as consider the needs of the Pastor of Saint Adalbert's at the time of the retirement. We also feel that the parish of our size would be one that would be served well by a priest nearing retirement age.
- St. Anthony of Padua, Grand Rapids - A couple of parishioners suggested to expand the recommendation of an early childhood center to include infants for those families who have an infant as well as a toddler and need daycare.

- St. John Paul II, Cedar Springs - Emphasis on how to welcome parishioners from Mary Queen of the apostles Parish. Also, currently developing a strategy for additional membership, the divine renovation program and the various parish ministries.
- St. Jude, Grand Rapids - "The first main discussion was on identifying the top recommendations for Response Survey #2 question 6 using the handout (i.e Second Draft of section IV) that all the participants were provided. The top recommendations, according to the group (and in no particular order), were as follows: 1. Increase efforts in all areas of faith formation, particularly post confirmation and formation for adults. 2. Engage parish pastoral councils in the fostering of pastoral activity and promoting transparency on the parish level. 3. Provide a range of group ministry programs to strengthen people's faith and connection with their faith communities. 4. Focus long-range parish evangelization/welcoming efforts on OCIA, child baptisms, weddings, funerals, and enrollment and retention in Catholic schools and religious education programs. 5. Increase efforts to engage more parishioners to share their gifts and talents and become involved with parish efforts to carry out the mission of the church."
- St. Mary, Grand Rapids - Do you affirm the recommendations for your parish? We affirm continuing to cluster with the Basilica of St. Adalbert under the leadership of a bilingual pastor. We have studied our facilities and affirm their many uses for current and future worship, leadership, education, and fellowship. Our office building/former rectory is actively used is used as a base of operations for faith formation for teens and adults (in Spanish and English); the Children's Christmas Giving Tree, an annual gift program providing about 16,000 gifts for disadvantaged West Side (and beyond) children that also collaborates with San Juan Diego Academy, Godfrey-Lee schools, Puertas Abiertas, diocesan prison and jail ministry, and Catholic Charities WM's Christmas gift program; supporting our partnership with Help Pregnancy Aid; an active volunteer building & grounds group; parish outreach and support to neighborhood unsheltered individuals with clothing, food and blankets; collaboration with Knights of Columbus—St. Adalbert for their Coats for Kids campaign; and support for the very active St. Vincent de Paul Conference (shared conference with St. Adalbert), which has strong, collaborative ecumenical and community associations in serving those in need. Our activities center is actively used to host many community-building and social justice functions, such as the Pequeña Comunidad Cristiana—a weekly Spanish-language bible study and faith sharing group; Men's Open AA, a very active weekly group; Young People's Open AA, an energetic weekly group that incorporates social activities and athletics into their meetings; our parish International Festival, which celebrates our diverse cultures through a wide-ranging palette of foods and multi-cultural entertainment; our annual parish Indoor Yard Sale fundraiser, (which also collaborates with the St. Alphonsus clothes closet and the Cathedral Clothing Center); the semi-annual Metal for Meals drive, which collects about 2000 lbs. of scrap metal/year to raise money for our food pantry; Sunday morning coffee socials; funeral luncheons; weekly pickleball for retired members of the community; serving as a community polling place; and hosting a Golden Gloves youth sports training gym. (Golden Gloves leases the lower floor of the lower floor of the facility which is active Monday–Friday evenings. They are involved in multiple annual competitions, some of which are also hosted in our activities center. They also support a kids' boxing club.) Our food pantry is involved with four scheduled distributions/month that serve about 250 people/month, plus serving people by appointment between distributions. For Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter, we also distribute 80-110 holiday food boxes each time. Our food pantry collaborates with Puertas Abiertas (which serves the vulnerable population of Latina women and their children in Kent County) to provide food assistance to their clients. Our church building is known not merely for our Sunday liturgies in English and Spanish, but also weekly

prayer and faith-sharing; monthly Prayer of Peace in the spirit of Taizé (bilingual, ecumenical, musical prayer with an attendance of about 75/month); annual celebrations in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe; and free music concerts offered to the community, including regular appearances by Herencia Oaxaqueña, the West Michigan Flute Association and the Edelweiss German Choir. Our church maintains an open door throughout the week that allows individuals to come inside to pray and leave the stress of the world behind. We are aware of great potential for growth for both the Spanish-speaking community and the English-speaking community. Both language communities are vital to the fabric of the parish, where parishioners collaborate, serve together and learn from one another. In the post-COVID era, our attendance and participation in both communities have slowly but consistently grown. Newer members to our finance and pastoral councils are providing us with new insights and fresh energy. The faith formation component of our parish in the last year has shown tremendous growth for children and teens. We see the potential for growth in this area to continue with the support of the staff and guidance of the pastor. (Three of the four staff members speak both English and Spanish.) Plans for future adult faith formation opportunities (in both languages) are already being formed. The people of St. Mary's have supported San Juan Diego Academy since its inception and are committed to continuing this support. Students from St. Mary's also attend St. Thomas, St. Anthony, and have attended Sacred Heart.

What ministry or ministries are recommended for your parish focus in the future?

- Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Belmont - Teams of Our Lady 55 & older group to socialize, bible study, and serve the parish in various activities. Mission trip involvement - not only in other countries, but here in the United States also. Work with Habitat for Humanity, veterans, and others in need. Use registration data of parishes to understand if persons in parishes subject to mergers or clustering don't "fade away" altogether from attendance. Use the data to lovingly and encouragingly reach out to them and then to carefully follow-up with groups or individuals as necessary to invite those who may not be attending to return. This outreach and follow-up should be done at various levels, from the bishop, all pastors of the churches being merged and clustered, and individuals and acquaintances of the persons no longer attending. At the parish and individual level, some refreshment catechesis and training may be needed to ensure consistent messaging and ability to answer questions and address concerns. With COVID-19, we seem to have lost persons from attending who may have been "on the fence" about the Church and faith, and the merging or clustering of parishes could result in the same losses. Loving outreach and understanding is necessary for those persons. Like Jesus, we need to look for the lost sheep and bring them home. more bible study for working moms or partner bible studies. Lots of programs now for men and that was very much needed. There should be a collaborative Mental Health ministry among the parishes. Catholic education, serving local communities AVBM should share services and programs/leaders with either St Jude or Our Lady on: all Faith Formation classes and activities, Youth ministry. OCIA. This would be a better use of combined resources and possibly increase the participation in these programs. Adult education and enrichment working with other parishes on faith formation Senior citizens. Our senior lunches have really been well recieved and attended. Suggest we add Bible studies throughout the year and maybe a quilting and sewing group that can create quilts, pillow covers, knit hats and mittens and other articles for children and families in need. especilly for young mothers, single mothers and others in need. Faith formation youth and adult.
- Basilica of St. Adalbert, Grand Rapids - WORSHIP, SACRED MUSIC, AND ENVIRONMENT FOCUS: Deepen the spiritual life of the parish through reverent, beautiful liturgies and a sacred

environment that draws people into the presence of God. This ministry area includes liturgical planning, sacred music, and the formation of liturgical ministers (lectors, altar servers, extraordinary ministers, ushers, sacristans, etc.). It also includes stewardship of the worship environment—ensuring that the church's physical space reflects the beauty, dignity, and reverence appropriate for the celebration of the liturgy. This involves attention to art and architecture, seasonal décor, cleanliness, hospitality, and the maintenance of sacred vessels and furnishings. Together, these elements support full, active, and conscious participation in the liturgy. **EVANGELIZATION & FAITH FORMATION FOCUS:** Invite, accompany, and form disciples at every stage of faith. This ministry focuses on outreach to those not currently engaged in parish life, re-engagement of inactive Catholics, and the ongoing formation of all parishioners. It includes RCIA/OCIA, small groups, adult formation programs, missions or retreats, and hospitality initiatives. The goal is to build a culture of evangelization where every parishioner feels equipped to grow in faith and share it with others. **YOUTH FAITH & LEADERSHIP FORMATION FOCUS:** Engage middle and high school students in a dynamic relationship with Christ and His Church. Youth Ministry should be more than social events—this area aims to form missionary disciples among young people through consistent relational ministry, sacramental preparation, service projects, faith formation, retreats, and leadership opportunities. It also includes connecting with families to support faith at home. **YOUNG ADULT ENGAGEMENT & VOCATION DISCERNMENT FOCUS:** Support young adults (ages 18–39) in faith, community, and mission. This ministry builds bridges between life stages—college, early career, marriage, and family life—helping young adults stay connected to the Church through community, formation, and service. This includes small groups, speaker series, mentorship, and spiritual direction, with special emphasis on helping young adults discern their vocational call, whether to marriage, religious life, or lay mission.

- Holy Family, Sparta - 1) Start a 20 to 30 group. 2) Consider starting a Walk with Mom's in need baby pantry.
- Holy Spirit, Grand Rapids - We will celebrate Corpus Christi's feast day on June 22, 2025, with St. Anthony's in the West Catholic Gym.
- Holy Trinity, Comstock Park - We are open to collaborating in all area.
- Our Lady of Consolation, Rockford - Community outreach to unchurched and disengaged Catholics.
- Sacred Heart of Jesus, Grand Rapids - Catechesis, Catholic education through the school, Sacred music, Eucharistic processions.
- Ss. Peter and Paul, Grand Rapids - We plan to continue with the current ministries we have. We feel that the ministries serve the neighborhood that we have been a part of for over 120 years. Our small parish has great outreach in our neighborhood and throughout Grand Rapids. Our current ministries include: Partnering with the Northwest Food Pantry Food Baskets during Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas for the westside neighbors Food Vouchers for neighbors in need Giving Tree (GR Public School families benefiting) Knights of Columbus Neighborhood Cookout Utility/Rental Assistance for neighbors Toys for Tots Distribution Site House of Transformational Blessings (Home for women located in our Convent) Christmas Caroling at Saint Anne's Home and Kent Community Hospital Vacation Bible School (free to all who participate) Mother's Group Funeral Luncheons Clothing Center- which provides free or low-cost clothing and household goods to anyone in need. The clothing center also collaborates with *Alphas Women's Center *Love Inc. *Matthew's House *Exodus *Godfrey Lee High and Middle School *Buchanan Middle School *Gladolia Elementary *Harrison Park *Salvation Army



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*Saint Alphonsus *Saint Gianna's *Goodwill *Mission Store Men's Ministry Rosary Makers
 Legatus Meeting Site Knights of Columbus Retreat Saint Anne's Novena Perpetual Help Novena
 Tuition Assistance Sacred Heart Drama Club West Catholic Retreat Saint Anthony School Retreat
 AA Meetings Lenten Soup and Salad and Stations of the Cross Biweekly Senior Lunches
 Lithuanian Scouts and Dance, which continues to teach the culture on which the parish was
 built.

- St. Anthony of Padua, Grand Rapids - 1. Develop ways to provide greater support for priests. 2. Increase efforts to engage more parishioners to share their gifts and talents and become involved with parish efforts to carry out the mission of the church. 3. Establish an area or regional approach to young adult ministry for those in the age groups of their 20s and 30s.
- St. John Paul II, Cedar Springs - Our parish has collaborated on ministries in the past Such as the teen group and St. Vincent, de Paul conference, increasing collaboration with God's kitchen meals, and food drives. The interest in additional collaboration is low to medium at this time given that St. John Paul II is a relatively new parish, and still trying to grow the current ministries. However, there were several recommendations for possible additional ministries: hospitality committee, young adult group, young family group/women's with young children group, teams of our Lady group for married couples, widowers group and a grief support group. There was also discussion for increasing youth/children activities(trunk or treat for Halloween, Easter egg hunt, Christmas party). there was a suggestion in having a homeschool support group.
- St. Jude, Grand Rapids - The second main discussion of the evening centered around the parish recommendations 4 for the North Deanery in the Third Draft of "Rooted in Christ". This was the attempt to answer question #3 of Response Survey #2. The recommendations related to item 4 for the North Deanery are as follows: The main point of emphasis that came out of the discussion relates to the timing of the clustering. There was support for the clustering to start as soon as possible. Fr Ayub recommends a change in the Third Draft statement to read: "Upon the completion of the term for the pastor at St Isidore or St Jude, the parish....." The parish representatives discussed support for: 1. St. Jude and the other parishes that support All Saints Academy should consider additional ways to collaborate on staff, ministries and resources. 2. The parish should be commended for its support of All Saints Academy and encouraged to continue that commitment, including its efforts to expand an endowment that can provide third-source funding for Catholic schools.
- St. Mary, Grand Rapids - St. Mary's has long collaborated with the Basilica of St. Adalbert (and formerly St. James) in the Steepletown initiative and continued to collaborate since the closing of St. James and changes at Steepletown ministries. With continued support, we are poised to grow deeper connections among our bilingual families, strengthen lay leadership, and expand our outreach to the most vulnerable on the West Side. The mission of St. Mary's is: + To proclaim and teach the good news + To worship in joy and gratitude + To welcome the stranger and the outcast + To serve the needs of the people, body and spirit + and to labor for gospel justice, so that all may have what they need. All of this is worthy to continue. St. Mary's is a strategic multicultural asset to the diocese with a proven track record of outreach and collaboration in a vital area of the city. Our ability to serve the West Side with multicultural ministry (not just Spanish- or English-language based) will be valuable in our involvement with agencies serving the population of the ever-changing West Side. We aim to continue to encourage people to come to our bilingual staff to provide no-cost translation in cases of immigration, requesting birth certificates and applying for drivers licenses. Our family-centered formation program supports pursuing our mission across generations.

Grand Rapids South

Parish Recommendation Comments:

- Holy Family, Caledonia - We affirm the recommendations, with regards to studying the feasibility of a possible early childcare center and a catholic school, although for a full school, we would be in more support of regionally or multi-parish supported school, instead of just being sponsored and supported by Holy Family only. In regards to a potential Hispanic ministry, we would need to be shown there is sufficient population and desire in the area.
- Holy Name of Jesus, Wyoming - -Wish to not that we also collaborate with our Spanish speaking parishes. -We have talked about space issues, but the reality is that there is no space. We host events for CROSSROADS in spaces within the parishes that work - sometime our worship space is utilized for events that lend to event.
- Immaculate Heart of Mary, Grand Rapids - We feel we have a strong youth ministry and are curious about the source of that recommendation.
- Our Lady of Sorrows, Grand Rapids - Parishioners did NOT support the recommendations for our parish. The people felt that Our Lady of Sorrows is very active in ministry not only in the area where it is located, but very active in Social Justice issues concerning Immigration. Parishioners are quite active in serving when the Consul of Guatemala comes to the parish to help people fill forms in order to stay in the USA legally. Parishioners are very active in church ministries, and devotions (novenas). Our parish has a lot of children and youth. The parents encourage their children and teenagers to be active in a church ministry (serving as a server during liturgy, or teenagers usher during Mass). They are the future of the Catholic Church. The parishioners that came to the meeting recommend to leave Our Lady of Sorrows as is since it is increasing in numbers for the Spanish Liturgy. St. Francis Church does not have ample room for parking, the sound in that church echoes a lot.
- Shrine of St. Francis Xavier/Our Lady of Guadalupe, Grand Rapids - Our parish would like a time line of when these changes should occur. A welcoming event which includes introductions and a ministry fair type event would be helpful to start off this merger.
- St. Joseph the Worker, Wyoming - We can stay at St. Joseph the Worker until we can purchase land to build a bigger church, that can accommodate 2,000 parishioner.
- St. Pius X, Grandville - Add "renewed commitment from all four Crossroad parishes" - to say we are going to continue collaborating is great, but we are one of many. We have tried to initiate collaboration and would like to see renewed commitment from all of the Crossroads parishes.
- St. Robert of Newminster, Ada - 1. The parishioners were interested in learning more about "Amazing parish" 2. Still work to be done getting buy-in to the capital campaign from SRN families who do not have children attending SRN Catholic School 3. Especially makes sense to collaborate with St. Mary's and St. Patrick's.
- St. Stephen, East Grand Rapids - We believe it would be prudent to take some time to determine the most appropriate disposition of the facilities of St. Stephen Parish. St. Stephen Parish is in a secure financial position. The liquidation of the unrestricted endowment of the Raymond James account in excess of \$600,000 and the proceeds from the sale of the rectory is more than enough to pay off St. Stephen Parish's debt to the Diocese of Grand Rapids. The investment income (within the 4% spend rate) from the \$2.4 million dollar endowment held at Catholic Foundation of West Michigan will cover the operating costs and expenses of the facilities at St. Stephen. The newly renovated St. Stephen church could be used as a worship site and avoid

paying property taxes to East Grand Rapids. This recommendation will allow the new pastor at St. Thomas the Apostle time to get acclimated in his new position and adequate time to assess the needs of the merged parishes with regard to the facilities of both St. Thomas the Apostle and St. Stephen. In addition, this will allow the Diocese time to assess their needs for educational facilities, conference center, retreat venue or meeting space.

- St. Thomas the Apostle, Grand Rapids - As we welcome parishioners from Saint Stephen, we are aware that our own facilities are limited due to the school population using much of our space throughout the day. We will need to address these concerns with a new pastor, since Fr. Jim is retiring soon.

What ministry or ministries are recommended for your parish focus in the future?

- Holy Family, Caledonia - 1. Focus on long-range parish evangelization/welcoming efforts on OCIA, child baptisms, weddings, funerals, and enrollment and retention in Catholic schools and religious education programs. 2. Develop area or regional adult faith formation (especially "big" events, like retreats and missions). 3. Identify ways to evangelize more effectively.
- Holy Name of Jesus, Wyoming - -Evangelization -Communication.
- Immaculate Heart of Mary, Grand Rapids - Our discussion focused on increasing the number of volunteers in various parish ministries, especially for the celebration of mass- ushers, altar servers, cantors, Eucharistic ministers.
- Our Lady of Sorrows, Grand Rapids - We lost our Youth Minister in our parish to Priesthood. He became a priest just a few years ago. So we are looking for someone to do this ministry since we have a lot of youth. This is a very high priority. Our Spanish Mass is growing. One of the ministries that surfaced was the Ministry of Hospitality, so that new people that are coming in feel welcomed. It was mentioned possibility of inviting new parishioners to a welcome gathering. At this gathering a few parishioners can welcome and talk about the various opportunities available within the parish community so that new people can be a part of a ministry with the parish. Our parish is very much focused in building "community" in the parish. Another ministry that was mentioned was taking communion to the sick or elderly. Evangelization is a high priority in the parish. Some of our parishioners have received training to give classes to parents, and godparents for the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, first communion. Our Religious Education program has increased. It was mentioned that small groups of bible study are needed for personal growth. Another, was prayer groups. Training of Extraordinary Ministers to conduct a Communion Service when needed in the parish. Cursillo is a very strong movement in our parish. This movement has transformed our parishioners in getting close to Christ, but also in getting involved with the parish. Goals and Priorities: -Develop ways to provide greater support for priests -Create Bible studies -Help sick/visit homebound -Provide help and make whatever tools/supplies needed - Increase efforts in faith formation, post confirmation and formation for adults -Readings, ministry and classes for evangelization -Identify ways to evangelize more effectively -Start with Our Lady of Sorrows member families -Determine opportunities to promote respect and understanding of one another's culture -Language is the biggest hurdle to overcome -Be friendly -Engage parish councils in fostering of pastoral activities and transparency on the parish level -We need to update the current Website at Our Lady of Sorrows Parish "Rooted in Christ" List -Provide a range of group programs to strengthen people's connection with their faith communities: men's/women's groups, marriage encounter -Make pamphlet about Our Lady of Sorrows Parish and hand out at Parish Festival -Focus long-range parish efforts; baptisms, weddings, funerals and enrollment in Catholic schools and religious education

programs -Already in motion -Develop adult faith formation(Bible study, retreats, lectures, etc.)
-Not sure how to compete with nondenominational Churches -Increase efforts to engage parishioners to share their gifts and talents, become involved with Parish to carry of the mission of the Church -Existing ministries need to take more responsibility of finding people to fill in where obligation cannot be met

- Shrine of St. Francis Xavier/Our Lady of Guadalupe, Grand Rapids - The feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Youth events such as retreats and the Steubenville Youth Conference. Adult ministry, cursillo.
- St. John Vianney, Wyoming - Increase efforts in all areas of faith formation, particularly post-confirmation and formation for adults. Provide a range of group ministry programs to strengthen people's faith and connection with their faith communities.
- St. Joseph the Worker, Wyoming - Leadership development and youth programming.
- St. Pius X, Grandville - #1 Priority: Establish an area or regional approach to young adult (those in their 20s and 30s) and adult ministry, which may include Bible study, retreats, lectures, and thematic series. #2 Priority: Provide a range of group ministry programs to strengthen people's faith and connection with their faith communities, e.g., men's group, women's group, renew style groups, Alpha, and marriage encounter. #3 Priority: Increase efforts to engage more parishioners to share their gifts and talents and become involved with parish efforts to carry out the mission of the Church.
- St. Robert of Newminster, Ada - Collaboration opportunities: Marriage Preparation, Young adult ministry, 24/7 adoration, Parish Missions with nationally known speakers.
- St. Sebastian, Byron Center - Parishoners suggested we increase post-confirmation efforts and ministry for 30+. Proposal of a "Big Brother, Big Sister" new member mentorship ministry Early Childhood Education and Catholic Elementary school was discussed and received positive feedback and support.
- St. Stephen, East Grand Rapids - Knights of Columbus Holding Hands with Haiti Right to Life Annettes' Food Drive Giving Tree St. Mary's Food Pantry Prison Ministry.
- St. Thomas the Apostle, Grand Rapids - 1) We have collaborated with other parishes for holding youth ministry events. We can see that happening in the future as well. 2) We would like to grow our youth and young adult ministries. 3) Grief support, Caregiver support, and ministries that assist our elder parishioners are important for our future. 4) Welcoming a new pastor after 32 years with Father Jim Chelich is also a major focus.

East Deanery

Parish Recommendation Comments:

St. John the Baptist, Hubbardston - Not in favor of a merge. They would like to keep the Pastoral Director Model and have more Pastoral Directors trained. They noted that Pewamo is too small to absorb St. John the Baptist.

- St. Joseph, Pewamo - I think that this is the best solution that we have for the time being. We continue to pray for more vocations to the priesthood. I think that we can and should do more to prepare hearts to be open to the call and encourage this vocation among young people.
- St. Mary, Carson City - Most parishioners do not favor a merge. They want to keep the Pastoral Director Model and have more Pastoral Directors trained. They feel three parishes is too much for one priest. They repeated that the parish is a historic community and the center of community action.
- St. Mary, Lowell - St. Mary has a vibrant youth community.

What ministry or ministries are recommended for your parish focus in the future?

- St. Anthony, Saranac - -Strengthen Youth/Young Adult ministry -Seek collaboration with other parishes in the East Deanery to share resources. - Form a Welcome Committee - Adult Bible Studies - Enhance community outreach projects.
- St. Charles Borromeo, Greenville - Adult Faith Formation.
- St. Edward, Lake Odessa - Faith Formation & Catholic Education (OCIA) Enhance Parish Community (activities for 18-30 yr olds; enhance communication) Evangelization (advertise our Parish in the community and advertise for OCIA).
- St. John the Baptist, Hubbardston - Adult Faith Formation, community outreach

St. Joseph—St. Mary, Belding - Evangelize to migrant gatherings. Develop activities to attract non-parishioners. Extend help to parishioners in need of transportation, home visits. Share the "Walking With Moms in Need," to more families in Belding area.

- St. Joseph, Pewamo - Walking with Moms in Need A ministry to encourage vocations to the priesthood and religious life & to prepare hearts to receive the call Note: I think that collaboration is great between parishes to share ideas and to foster learning. On the other hand I think that we should build up our faith communities and remain as parish independent as possible in ministry action. Right now we are spread too thin in the priesthood. Continuing down the path of consolidating parishes long term will result in spreading the laypeople too thin. We need to focus on building up our faith communities and vocational interest and commitment.
- St. Mary, Carson City - Youth-Young Adult Ministry, Adult Faith Formation, Community Outreach - Food Pantry.
- St. Mary, Lowell - Deanery coordination on ministries such as VBS, Rescue Project, etc where one parish within the Deanery takes lead on developing/implementing a program that is offered in multiple parishes at various times throughout the week. Totus Tuus VBS program shared throughout deanery.
- St. Patrick, Parnell - Youth Ministry, OCIA.

St. Patrick, Portland - Walking with Moms in Need; continue working on St. Vincent de Paul Society. Our strengths are marriage prep, KC's who support Pregnancy Services of Ionia Count, Altar training program. Need ideas for our Religious Ed program.

West Deanery

Parish Recommendation Comments:

- Our Lady of the Lake, Holland - "C" is already a ministry which OLL, SFDS and St Peter (Saugatuck/Douglas-Kalamazoo Diocese) are collaborating on.
- St. Catherine, Ravenna - We would appreciate the opportunity to plan over the next 5 years for a merger between the three parishes. We have functioned well as a cluster of three parishes and already share many resources and ministries. We want an opportunity to determine and plan for a merger of the three in a stepped process.
- St. Francis de Sales, Holland - SFDS should be commended for its substantial outreach to Hope College students via the St. Benedict Institute.
- St. Francis de Sales, Norton Shores – St. Francis de Sales (Norton Shores) & St. Michael the Archangel (Muskegon) have been Clustered since 2012. The relationship, primarily, has been to share one priest and minimal collaboration on ministries. Going forward, a stronger commitment between the parishes to collaborate must exist to achieve our future goals within our communities.
- St. Francis Xavier, Conklin – The representatives agreed that St. Francis should merge with St. Joseph in the near future, but there was a desire for a longer process to move with St. Catherine as we explore how the merger will effect our ability to get grants with parishes in two different counties.
- St. Luke University, Allendale - In addition to those recommended, the primary goal that parishioners expressed was to evangelize both within and outside of Saint Luke's, with a particular emphasis on GVSU students.
- St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Muskegon - Status of St. Michael's seems to be changing with every draft.
- St. Michael the Archangel, Muskegon - The Affirm was not 100% consensus but a majority. Add: Enhance our collaboration as a Cluster with St. Francis de Sales. Identify and invest in resources for community outreach to lessen the priest duties and utilize lay individuals more.
- St. Thomas the Apostle, Muskegon Township - We affirm with being merged to St. Mary's. We would like to change/add to become a worship site. We feel that there needs to be a church for Mass available on the East side. We conducted our own survey and would like to share with you the results and also the comments from our townhall meeting. When asked what parish would you attend if St. Thomas closed 25 said St. Mary's, 6 St. Francis de Sales, 11 St. Michael's, 14 Prince of Peace, 7 St. Catherine's, 1 St. Mary's Spring Lake, 10 undecided, and 20 will quit attending completely. 93 feel that there should be a parish/church/worship site on the East side of Muskegon. Would you like St. Thomas to become a worship site with an understanding there needs to be a future assessment of the site 86 yes and 9 no. Out of the box ideas/Comments: If the church stays open, we need a plants and ground committee. The water lines should have been blown out by air to make sure all the water was out of them. A plants and grounds committee with some older people with "handyman" skills to walk around and keep an eye on what needs to be painted, fixed, etc. would be a great help. Remove parts of building not needed. Keep it a worship center. Will keep costs down. If church grows we will have the land to do it. Purchasing land in future would cost a large amount of money. We need a church on East side of Muskegon. Even if there is a worship site with one Mass. Downtown is not growing-East Muskegon is or has the opportunity to. Praying Sacred Heart sells so we have more options

to consider. St. Mary's doesn't have good parking or special things for the elderly. Sell excess land to raise money. Can we have communities from area parishes that support events? We rotate events through? Can all parishes use Muskegon Catholic as a neutral site? Can we start a daycare with rooms to generate funds and embed young families? Sell some land to help offset costs. What will happen to all the stained-glass windows we had put in? Seems like such a waste of our money now for all the repairs we have done. I don't feel this is a move that makes sense. All churches in Muskegon County (West Deanery) should partner on Sacrament prep/Religious Education. If people of St. Thomas were all to go to St. Mary's there is not enough space at St. Mary's. St. Mary's is too small to accommodate all the people of St. Thomas. If we close, I feel many seniors will not go to church at all. God help us all. Maybe we need to look at allowing priests to marry to help there become more vocations to the priesthood. Would it be possible for St. Thomas and St. Michael's to become one parish at the Sacred Heart site? Someone suggested selling the land. Sell 20 acres. Close the existing church and use the hall for our church. Leave St. Thomas open. We need to save St. Thomas Church! Maybe we should check with the contracting company who built this building in appropriately. We need a catholic church on the east side of Muskegon the closing of St. Thomas would be a great big mistake. Do not close St. Thomas!! Sell the church and some of the property and convert the hall into the church at it originally started out as. I feel we have enough people to accommodate it as a church. St. Thomas has recently updated the sound system, installed Air conditioning for the first time, redone all roofs on all buildings the church is in good shape. The rectory will not be used. Make us a worship site. Everyone cannot fit in St. Mary's for Mass. With at least 1 mass per weekend and funerals and weddings would be ok. Sell buildings in Grand Rapids and Spring Lake that are being used for housing. Is St. Mary's going to provide communion to seniors in East part of County that cannot make it to church if closed? The church is going to lose people no gain. We are losing Catholicism in Muskegon. Have the diocese give back to St. Thomas since we are all supposed to be one and we have always given to CSA. Sell the apartments they built in Grand Haven to help the people maintain our religion. Is St. Mary's going to deliver communion to all those that will be unable to attend St. Mary's? You are taking my religion away from me and many others!!!! We would love St. Thomas to stay open. Even if mass shortage only on weekend 1 mass either Saturday at 4 p.m. or Sunday at 10 a.m. Sell land behind the church. We have shared a priest before, and we can do it again. With all of the other churches closing here should be plenty of priests. Sell the back property to pay for the upcoming improvements. Lower selling price of Sacred Heart. Tear off the rectory and office and make ne and smaller or just put up a wall, tear down, and make a smaller office in the hall. To close St. Thomas is a huge mistake!! Have they considered the distance for the elderly? Build a new church on the east side to accommodate people from all parishes. Restart activities and more Chicken Festival, Wild Game Dinner, and "SEEK" for the young. Update St. Thomas for East side of Muskegon. We need a church east of US 31. We need to be a worship site. St. Michael is the only a little more than a mile from St. Mary's. We are 7 miles from St. Mary's. St. Thomas should be a worship site. Just a comment. I remember when they tried to combine all the churches together to do Mass at the Walker Arena. That did not work. People want to go to their own church. They won't go at all. So we are not just going to lose Catholics from our church, but the other churches forced to merge also. That is a lot of Catholics not going to any church and not being there to put their money in the offertory. Demolish the rectory and office and possibly build a small office or use a room within the church for office space. Doesn't make sense to have 4 churches on the northside and possibly nothing on the eastside! Sell half of the land and keep just enough for the parish. People will lose their

faith. Sell the land and improve St. Thomas. Keep the church and hall and sell all other land. Bring in Priest that knows how to grow churches and not put people away. Downsize! Keep it open! Leave St. Thomas open! We need St. Thomas open for the East side. If we need to go down to one mass to keep it open, we should. If we need to sell unused land, then do it. I will not attend at all if St. Thomas closes. I will attend an episcopalian church. We are the only church on the east side of Getty St. Is this what Jesus would do? I will be unable to attend at all. My 70 years of faith will be taken from me! No churches east of US 31 makes no sense from a geographic or demographic point. How come 3 churches on the western side and then there won't be any church on the east side? I will roam from church to church and not register anywhere! Keep St. Thomas Open! I will watch mass on tv if St. Thomas closes. They are leaving the entire eastern half of Muskegon County a Catholic desert!! St. Thomas is the only truly handicap accessible church in Muskegon. There are 2 entrances one on each side of parish that has no steps to get into the building. Handicap parking right by the door and do not have to walk very far. Everything in the church is one level and no slants. Access at St. Michael's, St. Mary's, and St. Francis is difficult and hard for us to get into the church. We are concerned where do people go if they cannot get to St. Mary's. If St. Thomas closes it will drop the numbers of practicing Catholics in Muskegon. We thought the goal after Covid was to get people back to church and now we are sending them away by closing the church. Sell part of the land and reduce the building size. This would solve a lot of the problem for St. Thomas. What will happen to my funeral plans? I have everything already prepared and planned for St. Thomas. Why were we allowed to spend so much money to fix our church if you are just going to close it. The windows and air conditioning seem like such a waste of our money now. What will happen to the statues in the church? I donated the statue for the Franciscans and I am not going to let that go to any other parish. What about moving St. Thomas back to Sacred Heart building and bringing people back that haven't registered anywhere. We lost 150 families from the closing of Sacred Heart and probably just as many from the closing of Our Lady of Grace. Who is making all these decisions and why are they not here for us to talk to. Seems like a big cop out for taking responsibility for actions that are going to impact a lot of people. Traveling into town is not an option for elderly people. Everything we need is here in the east side and we do not know the roads anymore downtown. We already had 2 accidents from elderly leaving the parking lot. You are asking for a lot more by making us travel into territory we are not familiar with. Why did you allow for expenses of new sound system, air conditioning, parking lot and all new roofs on every part of the building? St. Thomas is history that the diocese never paid to have to begin with it was all donated to the Franciscans in memory of a child that passed while getting off the bus from St. Mary's school. Hence the name of St. Thomas was given. Tear down the building and rebuild the church in the back field. Why do we have to keep destroying history by getting rid of everything? Please consider if nothing else to keep us as a worship site. I feel you at least owe that to East side of Muskegon.

What ministry or ministries are recommended for your parish focus in the future?

- Our Lady of the Lake, Holland - The question above about level of interest in collaboration merits an explanation. OLL already collaborates w/SFDS on a number of ministries so further collaboration is low although not none existent in one area (music). The following are areas of present collaboration: Lane adult education MM-Millions of Monicas Corpus Christi School Haiti Ministry Visitation Ministry Knights of Columbus St Vincent Food Pantry Ministries recommended for future 1. Bring back CGS (Catechesis of the Good Shepherd) and Children's Liturgy at Mass 2. More support for young moms, ie, parenting skill, camaraderie, kids play

times/social groups. 3. Young adult/young family support and fellowship, suggestion made to have a pickleball league/trivia night 4. Bring back work camp for teens/early adults, have dances, picnics, bus trips to religious sites or retreats/events 5. Combined seasonal celebrations w/SFDS like Pentecost one in the past, combine choirs (monthly basis possibly for practice). When pipe organ up and running, concerts It's very hard to have combined events/collaboration when building community at our own parish is lacking per some attendees General consensus is for more support for young families.

- Prince of Peace, North Muskegon - • Expanded: Create an UMBRELLA OF FAITH FORMATION for our Parish. o Continue: Outreach to adults with OCIA, open to all parishioners • Continue: 1) CATECHESIS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD, with collaboration with other parishes and DoGR, and with OCIA and Discipleship. 2) Support Home Schooling parents. 3) Continue and Continue: Youth Ministry. 4) Expand: Boys and Girls Faith-life organizations o Continue: COLLABORATION WITH MUSKEGON CATHOLIC SCHOOLS • Expand: DISCIPLESHIP, From Faith-life of the Parish, into Evangelization; Continue and Expand adult bible studies organized and led by Knights of Columbus, collaborating with Staff • Expand: College student ministry • Continue: Outreach Local with St. Mary of the Woods Baby Pantry • Continue and Expand Worldwide: Twin Parish in Haiti. Working with new pastor there. Better informing parishioners of activities.
- St. Catherine, Ravenna - Young adult ministry opportunities Faith formation Lenten series.
- St. Francis de Sales, Holland - This is still to be determined, however, we note that there are several areas of shared ministry with Our Lady of the Lake at present: (Corpus Christi Catholic School, St. Vincent de Paul, Knights of Columbus, St. Benedict Institute, Migrant Outreach, pastoral care to the sick and homebound, and coordinated Mass, Adoration, and Confession timing). Occasional shared liturgies (e.g. Pentecost), youth, family, and adult education/catechesis were mentioned as desired collaborations by parishioners who attended the feedback session.
- St. Francis de Sales, Norton Shores - 1. Identify ways to evangelize more effectively. 2. Determine opportunities, especially in multi-cultural parish communities, to promote respect and understanding of one another's cultures. 3. Develop area or regional adult faith formation series. 4. Increase efforts to engage more parishioners to share their gifts and talents and become involved with parish efforts to carry out the mission of the Church.
- St. Francis Xavier, Conklin - We will continue to focus on youth through our two schools, two child care facilities and one youth ministry program.
- St. Luke University, Allendale - There is a lot of interest in collaborating with other University ministries in the diocese, as well as those in faith formation and Catholic Services.
- St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Muskegon - FUTURE: A summer ecclesial music program sponsored by St. Mary's Music Ministry, collaborating with other Muskegon and Diocesan parishes and some outside DoGR. FUTURE: Sponsor a Fellowship of Christian Athletes organization, collaborating with Prince of Peace, Muskegon Catholic schools, other parishes, and public schools as well. CURRENT AND EXPANDING: First Thursday Monthly Hora Santa (Holy Hour) with a theme. A presentation is given, followed by group discussion, contemplation, and Benediction. Expanding this for English-speaking community. CURRENT AND EXPANDING: Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. Collaboration between St. Mary's and Prince of Peace. Prince of Peace has collaborated with the Diocese which has provided some funding. CURRENT AND EXPANDING: St. Mary's has collaborated with other Muskegon parishes for a city-wide Corpus Christi Procession. This was done well in Jun-24 and further collaboration among Muskegon

parishes, including Prince of Peace, is planned. FUTURE: St. Mary's has an opportunity to create an evangelization focus point for the Muskegon community with its newly-acquired Hennessy's building. Currently, a multi-parish Bible study meets there. The site is available for the Muskegon Downtown Clergy group meeting monthly. Other options are being studied. CURRENT: Theology on Tap for young adults is offered regularly. Collaborating with the Diocese, guest speakers have included DoGR leaders.

- St. Mary, Spring Lake - Fr. Bill VanderWerff will work with the Pastoral Council and the pastor at St. Patrick-St. Anthony to develop strategies to increase collaboration between the two parishes.
- St. Michael the Archangel, Muskegon - 1. Expand and enhance Adult Education. 2. Increase community outreach. 3. Continue support of Muskegon Catholic Central, Catholic education, Catholic Charities of West Michigan.
- St. Michael, Coopersville - Adult and youth religious education.
- St. Thomas the Apostle, Muskegon Township - None at this time as we collaborated with Sacred Heart that is now closed and St. Thomas will not have to collaborate being that you want to merge and close the parish.

Northeast Deanery

Parish Recommendation Comments:

- Sacred Heart, Evart - Need a permanent pastor. Collaborate with St Paul/St Mary Faith Formation Add Saturday Mass.

St. Philip Neri, Reed City - We need training for our current business person in budgeting, accounting, and financial planning. St Philip Neri/ St Anne would like help in training and formation of our people to promote and engage in the ministries of the church. Traveling to other parishes in the winter months is too difficult (5 months of the year). We need a priest who wants to be in this area of the diocese and is willing to live out his priestly vocation.

What ministry or ministries are recommended for your parish focus in the future?

- Sacred Heart, Evart - Faith Formation Homebound parishioners communion Anointing of the sick Youth and adult ministries Increase pastoral ministries such as reconciliation and adoration.
- St. Michael the Archangel, Remus - Youth and young adult. Bereavement ministry. Evangelization and OCIA for younger people.
- St. Philip Neri, Reed City - outreach to the sick/dying, outreach to those who no longer come, formation in the liturgical life of the church, the meaning of the sacramental life of the church. Promote and develop the gifts and talents of the People of God at St Philip Neri.

Northwest Deanery

Parish Recommendation Comments:

- Our Lady of the Assumption, Rothbury - We request to remain as a cluster with St. James, Montague, maintaining our own identity, and finances and buildings. (Prior to this cluster, OLA was clustered with Our Lady of Fatima in Shelby from 1974 until 2012. Each parish thrived under this arrangement.) We will be sending more information via e-mail to Michael Taylor shortly with further explanation on this request.
- St. Ann–St. Ignatius, Baldwin - Do not agree that St Ignatius should be closed. Now sure how Father Matt can take on another parish.
- St. Bartholomew, Newaygo - There is concern by some whether the value received is commensurate with the cost of providing the Bishop Baraga Academy. There is concern whether the school is financially sustainable without greatly burdening the local parishes for contributions. Also, there are several Christian elementary schools in the area, but no Catholic/Christian high school options. Maybe that would be a better focus, or some sort of a hybrid offering in partnership with Catholic/Christian homeschoolers. Also, St Bart (Newaygo) and St Joe (White Cloud) have been working well together. There is momentum for many good things. Given enough time, a greater consolidation of ministries will likely happen organically as relationships between parishes continue to grow stronger. This approach has a greater likelihood of preventing frustration and a loss of momentum.
- St. Gregory-Our Lady of Fatima, Hart - While there are expected reactions of grief over the closing of Our Lady of Fatima, overall, Father is leading our parish with an attitude of unity. This view has been adopted and echoed by parishioners, including and especially those who regularly attend OLF: "The Church is not a building or a place, but the people." "We will stay together and pray together." "We are blessed to live in a country where we can worship where we want to worship." "We are building a community, not buildings." Parishioners are already thinking about needing to find a new location to house the OLF quilting ministry, though also see this as an opportunity to grow this ministry by gaining members from St. Joseph-St. Vincent. Parishioners also wish to continue some OLF traditions, such as the monthly potluck after OLF is closed. Parishioners, including Spanish-speaking parishioners, who regularly attend St. Gregory's have asked how they can help moving forward. St. Gregory's is committed to welcoming all during this closure and clustering process. There was a comment that selling OLF loses out on an ideal location for ministry happenings in that there is a new housing development next door and a new school across the street. There are questions regarding timeframes and which priest will pastor the clustered parishes, as well as question regarding whether the Diocese will allow the parish to retain any of the proceeds from selling Fatima to use for other projects. Along similar lines, parishioners express concern that our CSA assessment is not realistic given our financial situation, however believe retaining some of the profit from selling OLF could remedy that. We are placing our trust in the Holy Spirit at this time and will move forward with building the kingdom of God.
- St. John Cantius, Free Soil - We agree to the cluster of the four parishes as long as St John Cantius continues to have one weekend mass.

St. Joseph, Weare - Request further in-depth analysis of church's viability since key findings data was incorrect. Proceeds from Our Lady of Fatima should go to St. Gregory/Cluster. Obtain associate priests to help with Masses, especially in the high tourist season. Obtain deacons to help with funerals, baptisms, marriage prep, religious education, weddings, blessings, homebound ministry and communion services.

Obtain priests from other religious orders and countries. Make St. Gregory and St. Vincent worship sites, St. Joseph the priest in residence, with separate finances, ministries and personnel. Clarity as to why St. Gregory was chosen for priest in residence. Keep St. Vincent and St. Joseph as their own cluster and find extra priest, preferably Spanish speaking, to maintain St. Gregory's community so change won't be detrimental to the Hispanic parishioners. Develop social media campaign for community knowledge and involvement. Concerns: Less contributions with less Masses due to priests' availability. Our Lady of Fatima has better parking and facilities for future growth and a new, large housing complex being built next door. St. Gregory's current financial situation. CSA doesn't reach our parish/community, needs are not addressed. Language barrier with priest at St. Gregory. Key findings had incorrect data. We work very hard for church viability including successful fundraisers. Large community presence. We feel deserted due to distance from Grand Rapids. Afraid Hispanic parishioners will find another denomination or stop attending church. Our future and faith rests on keeping parishes open. The bishop's role is to care from his priests; this cluster would drastically overload priest's responsibilities and lessen availability for vital sacramental life. Would this cluster solve the future priest issue, or will there be more closures? Faith Magazine and the Diocese are not involved in our community. Our parishes are strong enough to acknowledge and deal with changes. Combined feedback from St. Joseph Town Hall (62 members) and St. Vincent (26 members).

- St. Joseph, White Cloud - We are hoping that increased collaboration will lead to more vibrant parishes.

St. Mary–St. Jerome, Custer - St. Mary's is not in favor of a merge with St. Simons. When the explanation was made to the parishioners the consensus was that being part of a cluster was more appropriate. We also believe that St. Johns could be part of our cluster since what is presented to them is a poor solution based on distance. This consideration is based on what would be the solution with the least loss of total parishioners.

- St. Simon, Ludington - Our members, and some from St. Mary Custer met yesterday (4/30) and generally understand the situation and accept the Draft 3 plan as reasonable under the circumstances.

What ministry or ministries are recommended for your parish focus in the future?

- All Saints, Fremont - NET Ministries, Bishop Baraga Academy.
- Our Lady of the Assumption, Rothbury - OLA already participates with St. James, as we have been clustered since 2012. We share Religious Ed for children, and adults, RCIA, adoration and Right to Life events and Knights of Columbus. We could improve with communication by having joint pastoral council or planning meetings. We have had joint budgeting meetings. OLA has had a representative at the Liturgy meetings. We have been focusing on new membership. We have had new members for the past 2 years, and others have expressed an interest in the future.
- St. Ann–St. Ignatius, Baldwin - Retaining parishioners Increasing enrollment.
- St. Bartholomew, Newaygo - Continue to bring in a NET discipleship team to evangelize the youth of Newaygo County and assist the five parishes in their faith formation ministries. The first year was very impactful and we intend to continue the momentum. Youth participation increased and many of the adults were impressed and touched by their interaction with the NET discipleship team.

St. Bernard, Irons - Coffee & Catechism, Campfire Catechism/Theology on Tap, Women in Faith Conference, Baby Pantry, Food Pantry, K of C Men's Fraternity, Sick and Homebound Visits.

St. Gregory-Our Lady of Fatima, Hart - We are very interested in working with St. Joseph-St. Vincent as we work to develop our youth and young adult ministries. As mentioned earlier, we are looking forward to collaborating with St. Joseph-St. Vincent in continuing and expanding our quilt ministry. We have also identified the need for additional ministries, such as jail ministry, and believe our geographical location and pre-existing friendships with members of St. Joseph-St. Vincent set us up for successful collaboration in these and other ministries.

- St. John Cantius, Free Soil - To continue to have one weekend mass at each of the parishes in the cluster, Rosary Society, Men's Club, Bible Study.

St. Joseph, Weare - Welcome displaced Hispanic population. Use technology to view Mass when a priest cannot be present or have communion services. To help priests: Parishioners/community should contact church when loved ones are ill (not wait until they're deathly ill) to schedule anointing of the sick. More anointing Masses. Proactive funeral planning, especially for non-parishioners. More Eucharist Ministers, especially for the homebound. More Lay Ministers to facilitate communion services.

- St. Joseph, White Cloud - Under outreach, we discussed food truck ministry, linking with schools and other community organizations to better serve the need in the area. Under evangelization, we discussed using more social media but also print media in the community (tourism pamphlet) as well as attending larger community events with booths. Under faith formation we want to continue to increase collaboration with St. Bart's in particular with religious education.
- St. Mary-St. Jerome, Custer - Eucharist to the sick and homebound Evangelism toward fallen Catholics Continue expansion of youth ministries.
- St. Simon, Ludington - Youth and faith formation ministries already cooperate and will continue. Missions are open to all. Adoration is open to all. Finance and school will need development.