



THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY
OF TAUNTON

STRATEGIC PLANNING OUTLINE

For the parishes of

ST. JUDE THE APOSTLE
ST. ANDREW THE APOSTLE
ST. ANTHONY
ST. MARY
ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD

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Proposed Timeline

Please note that the following timeline requires the coordination not only of these five parishes but takes into consideration a master planning calendar that includes 30 parishes already in planning, as well as the Diocesan Planning Commissions that have just launched. Parishes are asked to consider the suggested schedule as it is presented, understanding there is not much room for change because of the demands of the overall planning process

The goal for the Taunton parishes is to complete the strategic planning by June or July. It is hoped that all parish planners will be able to attend most of the meetings, but if unable, it is important to stay in touch with your team.

Most importantly, we want as many people as possible to participate. Everyone should be invited that no one can claim that they weren't asked, or that a "few chosen" people are making decisions for everyone else. If you know people who are unable to attend the initial meeting, please invite them to any and all of the future meetings!

February

Each of the required meetings is numbered:

#1 Introductory Leadership Team Meeting: The collaborative strategic planning process begins in each of the five parishes with an initial meeting of the Pastor, his Parish Leadership Team (PLT), and the planning facilitators. The facilitators outline the reasons for planning, describe the challenges and opportunities, and explain the process. PLT's suggest ways to shape the process to best meet the needs and expectations of their parish.

#2 PLT Assembly Planning Meeting: The PLT will schedule a follow-up meeting to prepare for their Parish Assembly. The purpose of the Assembly is to inform all of the members of the parish about the planning process, and to recruit volunteers to serve on the Taunton, community-wide ministry teams.

March

#3 Individual Parish Assemblies: Each PLT schedules, promotes, and co-facilitates a Parish "Listening" Assembly. The Assembly can be held in a parish hall or in the actual Church, depending on the availability of space and the expected number of people in attendance.

Facilitators are available to assist in facilitating Parish Assemblies on the following dates:

- Sunday, March 10th,
- Sunday, March 17th, or
- A weeknight, March 11th through 14th (6:30pm – 8:30pm).

April

**#4 Five-Parish Kick-Off: Wednesday, April 3, 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM
St. Anthony, Taunton MA**

Volunteers from all five parishes gather for the planning kick-off meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to introduce and explain the strategic planning process, and most importantly to form our ministry teams (See page 7 for a list and description of the teams.)

#5: Ministry Team Meetings: Wednesday, April 24, 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM

Ministry teams meet to consider strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and to begin discovery and research on best practices.

May

#6 Ministry Team Meetings: Wednesday, May 15 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM

This is an optional session for any and all of the ministry teams to continue discovery and best practices.

Additional Ministry Team Meetings....

Individual ministry teams can plan additional meetings on their own, at times and locations of their own choosing.

June

#7 Five-Parish Planning Session: Wednesday, June 5, 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM:

The six ministry teams will present their “Big Ideas” and proposed goals to the entire assembly to get feedback.

#8 Ministry Team Meetings:

Ministry teams will use feedback from #7 Five-Parish Planning Session to finalize goals and draft their plans.

9 Five-Parish Planning Session: Wednesday, June 26 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM

The Ministry Teams will present their final plan documents to the Bishop. The teams will also present their operation plans, timelines, and success metrics. Celebrate!

Parish Listening Assembly Agenda with Suggested Talking Points

The March Listening Assemblies in each of the parishes are opportunities to inform the entire parish about the planning process and to invite participation on one of the planning committees (page 7).

Following is a sample format for the Assembly with suggested talking points:

Pastor will talk about...

- Prayer and welcome to everyone to our Parish Listening Assembly
- Lead applause for those who made the meal
- The purpose for today's meeting is to hear from YOU
 - We will explain the process of strategic planning in the Diocese, and
 - Listen to your thoughts on the status of our parish
- We invite all of you to join our Parish Planning Team (PLT) to explore how we begin thinking as Catholics in the community of Taunton

- Introduce the Parish Planning Team and ask them to stand
- Introduce the Members of the **Diocesan Planning Facilitation team** who serve as our coach and guide through this process: Fr. Jim Morse, Fr. Tim Reis, Marilyn Blanchette, Mark Dollhopf
- Invite Fr. Tim Reis to talk about some of the challenges and opportunities facing our diocese today

A Member of the Diocesan Facilitation Team Member will talk about...

- Explains the Pastoral Planning Process that began 3 years ago and included surveys in the parishes, etc.
- The data collected pointed to our challenges BUT it didn't tell us WHAT to do about it.
- So the Bishop formed this Planning Facilitation team to work with each parish in the diocese and this Spring, we have begun with a pilot group of parishes, of which, this parish is a part.
- Names the overarching challenges facing the Diocese
- Our Diocese is 116 years old and today, we are being called to respond to a number of challenges, overall:
 - Decline in the number of people attending mass
 - Decline in the number of young people engaged in their faith
 - # of priests vs. the # of churches...declining number of priests (general stats on these projections)
 - All these challenges are calling us to think more as *communities* vs. individual parishes, acting in "silos"
 - We are being called to think about the impact our Church has on the communities around us,
 - And how we need to be behaving and working TOGETHER as "Mission-Partners"
- What we do at this parish fits into how the entire Strategic Planning Process for the Diocese of Fall River

[Introduce members of the Planning Leadership Team]

PLT Presenter #1:

Sacraments and Ministries:

- Will provide an overview of parish ministries and the sacramental trends over the last few years
- Talk about some of the challenges and opportunities / realities we are faced with, that the survey identified
- (Pause here and ask if anyone has any questions as it relates to our sacramental life as a parish and our ministries)

PLT Presenter #2

Finances:

- Total annual offertory trends of the last 5 years – (graph)
- total annual giving to Charities Appeal in the last 5 years (graph)
- total in Savings
- Reference any debt that the parish may be carrying – with brief explanation
- Other long term savings or assets
- (Pause here and ask if anyone has any questions as it relates to our finances)

A Member of the Diocesan Planning Facilitation Team...

- We will transition to table-led discussions (or we stay in a general session, depending on the number attending) about how we may be able to build on our strengths and discuss What is it that we want to share with other parishes and be open to listening to other parishes about what it is they do well and can share with us
- At your tables now (10-12 minutes of table discussion and some report out)
 - What is it that we are NOT doing, that we could be doing?
 - How might Taunton be better served? Where might there be natural places where the Catholic communities of this part of our Diocese could begin working together?
 - What are your ideas?

PLT invites members of the parish to join them in planning...

- There will be six meetings: April – June
- You can serve on one or more of six committees
- Each committee will discuss challenges and opportunities, research and discuss best practices, and brain storm their own ideas
- We will come together with other interested and passionate folks from our five neighboring Taunton parishes

Ministry Planning Teams

All parishioners are invited to join one of the ministry planning groups listed below. It does not necessarily have to be the ministry group to which you belong at your parish. Following are the ministry groups from which to choose:

1. Worship and Sacraments

This group will plan around “Giving Priority to the Weekend” with a focus around the 3 “H’s”: Hospitality, Homilies and Hymns. Ministries that include, but are not limited to, altar servers, Eucharistic Ministers, lectors, sanctuary volunteers/altar guild, musicians, adult choir, children’s choir, cantors/vocalists, Praise and Worship Band, greeters, and ushers.

2. Adult Formation

Prayer Groups, Prayer workshops, scripture study, small Christian communities, R.C.I.A., Programs like Discovering Christ (by Christlife.org), Parish retreats, Lenten series, Parish Book reads and discussion groups, etc.

3. Youth Ministry and Formation

Includes religious education, youth ministry groups. **Additional Opportunities:** youth retreats, junior youth groups, World Youth Day, mission trips, conventions, rallies, outreach to public schools.

4. Evangelization & Vocations

Communion to hospitalized & homebound, counseling, nursing home visitors, Prayer Groups, Pro Life Ministry, Men’s Club, Council of Catholic Women, Knights of Columbus, Women’s Club, Bereavement Ministry. It also includes our communications tools, marketing and branding **Additional Opportunities:** committees to promote vocations, video tools (ALPHA, Christ-Life), etc.

5. Community Outreach and Partnerships

Includes St. Vincent de Paul, Helping Hands Volunteer Group, Food Pantry. **Additional Opportunities:** partnering with Catholic Social Services, food to shut-ins, outreach to local civic groups (such as city government, libraries, police department, etc.), outreach to community groups (such as Lion’s, Rotary, Kiwanis, etc.), and outreach to other churches (Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, etc.)

6. Administration

Revitalization of roles, responsibilities of Finance and Pastoral Councils, as well as an analysis of parish finances, administrative procedures, personnel organization and management, facilities management, real estate utilization

Parish Models: Administrative Options

How do parishes “collaborate” in the Catholic Church?

Integral to the diocesan wide strategic planning process is the opportunity for parishes to collaborate in ways not previously envisioned. In the new “Church” paradigm, mission takes precedence over hierarchy, as conveyed by the Bishop in his Pastoral Letter:

“Yet the principal aim of these participatory processes should not be ecclesiastical organization but rather the missionary aspiration of reaching everyone.” *Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium*

As parishes come together to build on the strengths of their ministries, they should know that there are many possible models for the administration of a parish, specifically, inter-parish collaboration. These models are:

1. Traditional *Stand Alone* Parish
2. *Partner* Parishes
3. *Linked* Parishes
4. *Merged* Parish
5. *Lay Administered* Parish
6. *Chapel*

Following is a description of these organizational models, and the implications that such models have on parish budgets. It is assumed that with any of the proposed models, the parish, or parishes, will have a strategic plan for vitality and growth, moving from maintenance to mission.

Several of these inter-parish models describe collaborating, or combining, parish administrations. Such economizing would reduce the money spent on administrations and free up funds for vital ministries.

To illustrate these budget implications, a \$250,000 parish budget is used as an example, and assumes that approximately \$150,000 of that budget (60%) is spent on administration for clergy and staff including: 1) salaries; 2) medical, dental, and pension; 3) rectory; and 4) religious education. The remaining 40% of the budget is spent on specific ministries, building maintenance, insurance, etc. This is only an illustration, parishes must evaluate and assess their own specific budget implications.

1. Traditional Stand Alone Parish

Defining characteristics:

Traditional parish structure, the one most common historically to our Diocese. Fulltime Pastor and staff.

- Finance Council (required by Canon Law).
- Parish Council (optional in Canon Law, required in Diocese of Fall River).
- Accrued debts and assets remain with the parish.

Budget Implications:

No changes from sample budget of \$250,000.

2. Partner Parish

Defining characteristics:

Parishes retain their “stand-alone” canonical status but enter into a partnership with one or more parishes to create and administer joint programs.

- Fulltime Pastor and staff for each parish.
- When appropriate, they share staff (but not the Pastor).
- Separate Finance Councils (required).
- Separate *or shared* Parish Council (required).
- Shared committee structure.
- Accrued debts and assets remain with each individual partner parish; no sharing or comingling.

Examples of ways parishes can partner include:

- A common catechetical program.
- A shared youth ministry program or adult formation program.
- Support for a common Catholic School.
- A joint RCIA program.
- A shared parish outreach program, such as St. Vincent de Paul.
- A shared music program.
- Shared outreach to the community, like partnerships with other faith communities.
- Shared festivals, feasts, or dinners.

Budget Implications:

Nominal savings (based on overall budget of \$250,000), depends on which staff and expenses are shared.

3. Linked Parish

Defining characteristics:

Two or more parishes are “linked” with one pastor (canon 526.1), or three or more parishes are linked with more than one priest (canon 717.1).

- Shared fulltime Pastor(s). Where there is more than one priest in multiple parishes, they work as co-pastors *in solidum* (canon 517.1) and the Bishop appoints one as the Team Moderator to coordinate activities.
- Shared administrative staff.
- Parishes remain independent canonical entities.
- Separate Finance Councils (required).
- Separate *or shared* Parish Council (required).
- Shared committee structure.
- Accrued debts and assets remain with each separate parish.

Budget Implications:

Potential savings of \$75,000 for each of two linked parishes, \$100,00 for each of three linked parishes, etc., less cost of additional priest services.

4. Merged Parish

Defining characteristics:

Two or more parishes are suppressed (closed), and a new single parish is formed.

- Fulltime Pastor and staff.
- Finance Council (required).
- Parish Council (required).
- New parish “inherits” debts and assets from closed parishes, or debts and assets are negotiated.

Budget Implications:

Merged parishes combine budgets, eliminate need for two fulltime Pastors and two administrative staffs. Potential savings of \$150,000.

5. Deacon, Religious, or Lay Administered Parish

Defining characteristics:

Is a stand-alone parish, but *in lieu* of a Pastor, a “Parish Life Director” (permanent Deacon, religious sister or brother, or lay person) is appointed by the Bishop (canon 517.2).

- Sacraments are administered by visiting priests.
- Finance Council (required).
- Parish Council (required).
- Accrued debts and assets remain with parish.

Budget Implications:

No savings since Parish Life Director would be paid as a Pastor would be paid.

6. Chapel

Defining characteristics:

Parish is closed, or “suppressed,” and becomes a “chapel” of a “mother” parish.

- No fulltime Pastor, Finance Council, or Parish Council.
- Sacraments are administered by visiting priests or Pastor of mother parish.
- Church building must be maintained.
- No committee structure.
- Debts and assets are negotiated.

Budget Implications:

Budget is absorbed into mother Parish, funds still needed to maintain physical structure