

Dear Northland Catholic Community,

We all want to continue the Catholic presence in the Northland Area that has nurtured many of us over the years and has welcomed new members along the way. With current downsizing trends among many Catholic dioceses in the United States due to fewer active parishioners and priests, bishops must unfortunately make some difficult decisions. For the past 2 years, we have been asked to participate in a process called Real Presence Real Future in the Diocese of Columbus, started under Bishop Brennan and continued by Bishop Fernandes, in order to do long-term planning for the future of our parishes. While final decisions are still pending, our planning area could benefit greatly from working together in order to have a large and full Parish staff, offer more opportunities for adult faith formation, increase our school student services, and create a more dynamic worship experience for everyone in our highly diverse congregations.

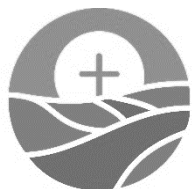
The Real Presence Real Future process has consistently recommended that St. Anthony Church and School, St. Elizabeth Church, and St. Matthias Church and School merge into one Parish, consisting of a Church (at St. Elizabeth) and a School (at St. Matthias). To be clear, this one Parish would not be two Parishes being assimilated into the third, but the creation and foundation of a new Parish under a new name. It would also be a multiethnic Parish, intentionally creating a sense of belonging for many of our parishioners coming from all different parts of the globe. If we merge our three Parishes, we also will have the benefit of an associate pastor as well as multiple permanent deacons to minister with us and to us. These changes, though sad and not without difficulty, would keep our Catholic presence in the Northland area noticeable and possibly attract other Catholics throughout our city to join us.

I am extremely grateful for the members of our three Parish communities who have kept us going for so long. Through exceptional dedication and lives of service, they have done their fair share of the work. Currently, we are operating three small Parishes within a few miles radius, doing all the work, but not enjoying the benefits. In recent decades, and hastened by the covid-19 pandemic, our masses have had a lot of empty seats and our offertories have declined. We do not want this to be our ongoing and future experience of being Catholic.

I invite you to read our Real Future flyer regarding our plans for the Northland Parish merger. As with all plans, it is subject to change. Yet, having a plan in place now allows us to move forward so we can start answering many of your excellent questions. Please know that your involvement in this process is essential. All input at our monthly meetings will be noted by our Facilitation Team and passed along to our Transition Team. The Transition Team will then keep the entire community updated on our progress. For now, I ask that you read through the whole flyer, familiarize yourself with the topics to be discussed as a community, and circulate it as widely as possible.

Pope Francis has asked us to be a synodal church, a church that walks together. While this applies to the whole universal Catholic Church, may it also apply to us. I look forward to walking with you.

Sincerely,
Fr. Tony Davis



Real Presence
Real Future

Real Future:

Creating the New Northland Catholic Parish

Calendar of Parish-Wide Events and Meetings
All are welcome!

St. Anthony Church and School

1300 Urban Dr.
Columbus, OH 43229

St. Elizabeth Church

6077 Sharon Woods Blvd.
Columbus, OH 43229

St. Matthias Church and School

1582 & 1566 Ferris Rd.
Columbus, OH 43224

March 25-29, 2023

Lenten Mission: Led by Fr. Steven Bell, CSP	March 25-26 Preaching All Weekend Masses Monday, March 27 Session 1 Tuesday, March 28 Session 2 Wednesday, March 29 Session 3 <i>More information to come!</i>
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April 27, 2023

Looking to the Past: parish histories and traditions	Sessions at 3:30 pm and 7:00 pm St. Anthony Church
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May 18, 2023

Preparing to Merge: the process and concerns	Sessions at 3:30 pm and 7:00 pm St. Elizabeth Church
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August 24, 2023

Merged Finances: assessing our financial stewardship	Sessions at 3:30 pm and 7:00 pm St. Anthony Church
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September 28, 2023

Diversity and Inclusion: creating a community of belonging	Sessions at 3:30 pm and 7:00 pm St. Matthias Church
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October 26, 2023

A New Parish: Name, Arts, and Environment	Sessions at 3:30 pm and 7:00 pm St. Elizabeth Church
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November 16, 2023

Parish Outreach I: Ministries within the parish	Sessions at 3:30 pm and 7:00 pm St. Elizabeth Church
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January 25, 2024

Catholic Education: Connecting with our Schools	Sessions at 3:30 pm and 7:00 pm St. Matthias Church
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February 22, 2024

Parish Outreach II: Involvement in the community	Sessions at 3:30 pm and 7:00 pm St. Elizabeth Church
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March 2024

Lenten Mission TBD	
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Want to be a small group facilitator?

We could use your help! Facilitators will moderate small groups at each monthly session listed above. The commitment to being a facilitator includes attending a training session in April 2023, attending at least one session monthly, being a great listener, and gathering feedback from the small group. Please let your Parish Offices know if you are interested in being a facilitator by March 31, 2023.

Who will process the feedback?

A transition team of 8-10 people representing our various parishes will meet quarterly throughout the merger year to process feedback, fulfill and monitor essential tasks, and report back to the community. All active clergy are also members of the transition team as well as professional leadership facilitators.

What is the timeline for the closures and mergers?

At this point, both St. Anthony and St. Matthias will likely be suppressed sometime throughout the merger year, allowing the bishop to establish the new parish, if he so chooses, sometime after March 2024.