PARTNERS IN THE GOSPEL

Regional Community Gatherings Overview

Thank you for joining us today to engage in the Partners in the Gospel strategic pastoral planning process. This archdiocesan-wide renewal effort is underway to better support vibrant, sustainable mission-focused parish communities. Parish families will create one new parish that will follow a strategic pastoral plan to best carry out the mission of the Church, helping others know the love and joy of Jesus.

When parish families formed in 2024, each began welcoming and getting to know each other. They formed two leadership teams with representatives from each parish to help guide the parish family through the One Parish Planning process. This process is helping parish families create their vision, goals and initiatives, with multiple opportunities for parishioners to engage through community consultation sessions.

Since forming parish families, many ministry leaders have already begun combining ministries, resulting in more robust youth programs and engaging faith formation opportunities, joint liturgies and combined fellowship events, and an increase in volunteers for outreach and service. These are early fruits of this parish renewal work.

Why now?

Today we face many realities that impact parish life and make it difficult to fully live out our mission. We face an urgent – yet exciting – opportunity to transform parish life. Over the past few decades, our local Catholic Church has experienced a decrease of engaged parishioners, fewer priests, dwindling finances, deteriorating campus conditions and more. Here are just a few statistics:

- While the overall population in the Archdiocese of Seattle is growing, registered households are declining, along with Mass attendance, baptisms, first Communions, marriages in the Church and parish giving.
- Parishes are "living beyond their means" while struggling to support staff, ministries, outreach and maintenance of their campuses with the income from regular parishioner contributions.
- Last year alone, we celebrated the lives of eight archdiocesan priests who died – while ordaining one new archdiocesan priest this year.

> *"How can we reorganize and restructure parishes so that we are spending more time reflecting Christ's radical love rather than trying to preserve the status quo that was designed for a different era?"*
>
> - Archbishop Paul D. Etienne

These factors affect the faith experience of parishioners and hinder us from effectively carrying out our mission. This reality requires a change which parish families will articulate through development of a One Parish Plan.

Five Stages of One Parish Planning



1. **Organizing & Kickoff**
   Gathering the team to determine roles, responsibilities and planning timelines.

2. **Who are we?**
   This stage sets the foundation of the parish family and the larger community, generating information about the people, ministries, gifts and opportunities. It also introduces a set of viability and baseline metrics for the parish family to track progress and evaluate the impacts of new initiatives.

3. **Who do we want to become?**
   This stage considers the unique makeup of the community and the desires for the future parish. During this time, the parish family will set a community vision.

4. **How do we get there?**
   Using the community vision, the parish family will develop a concrete plan for all areas of parish life while determining the best use of resources.

5. **What should we be called?**
   The parish family will select names from a pre-determined list that reflect the vision of the new parish. These names will be submitted as part of the One Parish Plan for Archbishop Etienne's discernment and final selection.

Once the One Parish Plan is submitted to the archdiocese, the Review Committee, composed of archdiocesan staff as well as priests, parish staff and lay leaders, will review, seek necessary clarifications and ensure the plan is complete. It will then be given to the archbishop, who will consult with the Presbyteral Council about each plan before discerning his decision. Once the plan is approved, the parish will begin implementing its One Parish Plan.

To learn more about the One Parish Planning process, visit archseattle.org/partners.