

# Equip *the* Saints

EPH 4:11-13

**New Parishes: Stronger Together**

***Transition Team Guidelines***

# New Parishes: Stronger Together

## *Transition Team Guidelines*

### **Introduction**

On January 1, 2019 Archbishop Mancini released the action plan for *New Parishes: Stronger Together*. This action plan takes our diocese on a path to merge our 66 existing parishes and 25 missions into 20 new parishes. These new parishes will benefit from a greater number of people to draw on, improved and transparent leadership structures, and shared ministry and mission.

The first phase of implementation requires existing parishes to form transition teams within their new grouping. These teams of 6 to 8 people will be made up of the pastors and representative parishioners from each church in the grouping. Parish staff can contribute and support this group but generally are not members of the transition team. The team's task will be to lay the groundwork for a merger of the separate entities by no later than December 31, 2019.

Some current parishes have been living and working toward a combined reality for some time. Other parishes function as one *de facto* through shared ministry and experience. Other parishes still have not yet begun to look at the reality of consolidation. As a result, mergers will occur throughout the course of 2019 as the transition process is completed. All mergers are to be completed by December 31, 2019.

### **What is a Transition Team?**

A Transition Team is a group of clergy and lay people appointed by the present pastors of each existing parish. Members of the Transition Team are key leaders from each community, selected and chosen for their qualifications, and for their understanding and support of the vision of Equip the Saints. The number of members should be no more than 6 to 8 people in order to be functional.

### **What are the goals of the Transition Team?**

The primary goal of the Transition Team is to prepare the existing parishes for canonical merger on or before December 31, 2019. The secondary aim of the team is to recommend a course of action for the new parish in key areas of administration and mission. Maintaining a sense of scope is important. The work of devising a complete strategy for evangelization and renewal will fall to the moderator of the new parish, along with his leadership team, pastoral council and finance council in the months, and years, following the merger.

Thus the transition team is mandated to look at specific areas of administration and ministry for the purposes of becoming one new canonical parish by:

- Bringing their gifts, charisms and enthusiasm, to the cause of creating a new faith community of missionary disciples
- Exercising prayer and discernment in their decision making process
- Ensuring that the re-organization effort is accomplished for the purpose of the Gospel
- Developing shared moments of prayer within the grouping
- Reviewing existing pastoral and financial operations
- Developing a naming process for the new parish

## Who Will Support the Transition?

A Diocesan Transition Team has been established to guide, support, and direct parish groupings as they navigate the many steps needed to move towards becoming a new united parish. The Diocesan Transition Team, supported by the Office of Pastoral Life & New Evangelization, will act as a companion and resource for parishes throughout this whole year and will provide hands on support through pastoral visits, regular follow up, and availability by phone and email.

### Diocesan Transition Team

- Fr. James Mallon, Episcopal Vicar for Parish Renewal and Leadership Support
- Jeannette Smith, Human Resources Manager
- John Kennedy, Financial Administrator
- Deacon Robert Doyle, Vice Chancellor
- John Stevens, Manager – Pastoral Life & New Evangelization

Additionally, staff from the Office of Pastoral Life & New Evangelization are assigned to support specific groups of parishes through the transition process.

Staff Person	Parish Groupings	Contact
Wanda Comeau	8, 9, 3	<a href="mailto:wcomeau@halifaxymouth.org">wcomeau@halifaxymouth.org</a>
Chris O'Hara	1, 2, 5, 6, 20	<a href="mailto:cohara@halifaxymouth.org">cohara@halifaxymouth.org</a>
Aurea Sadi	13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19	<a href="mailto:asadi@halifaxymouth.org">asadi@halifaxymouth.org</a>
John Stevens	4, 7, 10, 11, 12, 18	<a href="mailto:jstevens@halifaxymouth.org">jstevens@halifaxymouth.org</a>

# New Parishes: Stronger Together

## *Transition Team Spirituality*

### **What methodology and spirituality will guide the Transition Team?**

This process borrows its methodology from Catholic Social Teaching and the principles of discernment developed by Catholic Action and re-presented by Saint John XXIII. This methodology was originally intended to bring social teaching from the level of principle into practical action. Thus, it is very applicable to the work of bringing our missionary principles to the level of practical action.

*“There are three stages which should normally be followed in the reduction of social principles into practice. First, one reviews the concrete situation; secondly, one forms a judgement on it in the light of these same principles; thirdly, one decides what circumstances can and should be done to implement these principles. These are the three stages that are usually expressed in the three terms: observe, judge act. “*

- Pope John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra*, 1961

### **Observe**

In a spirit of prayer and discernment, this moment combines the information from the lived reality of your existing parish communities in the areas of: prayer, pastoral ministry, facilities, finance, human resources, identity, critical situations, and communications. This gives a broad picture of the situation at each parish “as it is” in order to establish the starting point for “where we are going”.

- Establish the principle and foundation of prayer
- Take inventory of parish assets and liabilities
- Review existing buildings and structures
- List existing ministries in each parish
- Identify human resources available in each parish
- Review mass times, record attendance
- List communications methods

### **Judge**

In this case judge does not mean to “pass judgement” but rather to analyze and make an informed decision. This involves recognizing the concrete reality at each location and determining how to bring some cohesion, harmony and effectiveness in the delivery of mission and ministry in the new parish.

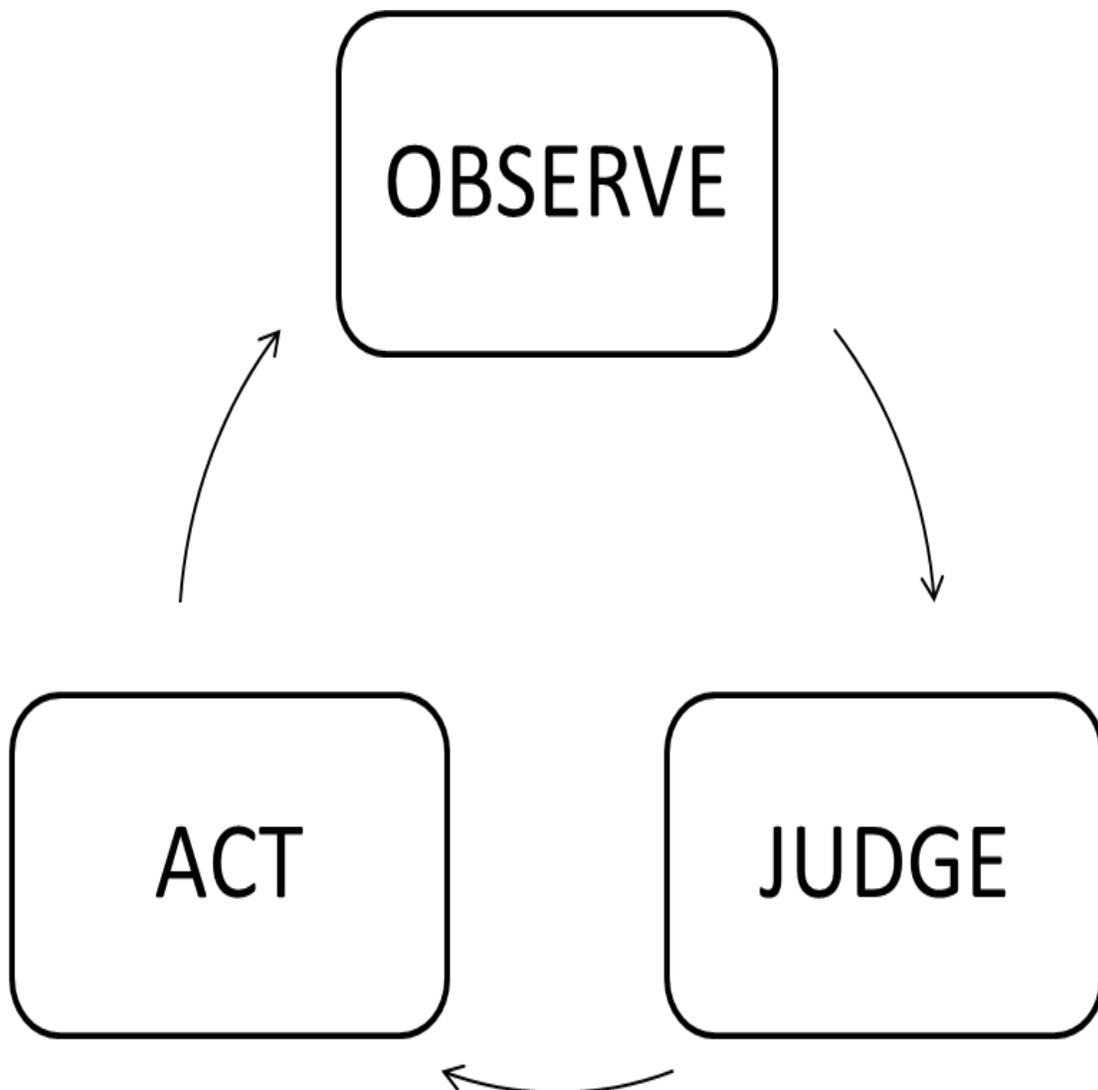
- What will actually make the missionary effort “stronger” by being together?
- What are the core issues that must be dealt with prior to a merger?
- What are the significant financial matters to consider?

- What is the status of ministry in each location (pastoral care; masses/sacraments, etc.)?
- What unmet mission challenges exist in our parishes (unchurched; youth; elderly, etc.)?

## Act

This phase of the process involves mapping out the key steps and responsibilities required to merge the existing parish communities based on the analysis above and to outline the key recommendations for the incoming moderator.

- What do you propose as solutions to specific challenges of your merger?
- What common practices can be done now? What will take longer?
- What liturgies, events, feast days can be celebrated together to begin creating a sense of identity and belonging?
- What are the personnel needs of the new parish?
- How will you communicate the fruit of this work to parishioners and to the bishop?
- What is the new name?



# New Parishes: Stronger Together

## *Getting Started: Your First Meeting—Forming the Team*

### Getting Started

After choosing and selecting members of the transition team organize your first meeting to help set the direction and focus of the group. Your staff support person from the diocese can help facilitate this meeting and it is recommended they be brought in to help you with your first meeting and stay connected with you throughout the process.

### Observe: Establish the principle and foundation of Prayer

The basis for this transition, we have said all along is prayer. So start with prayer. The prayer prepared for this process, should be used every time the group meets.

- Saying this prayer will make even more sense if the group spends a significant time together to experience, prayerfully, what God is saying to us as a Church, what the spirit is saying to each member of the team and what the Lord is expecting from each of the communities coming together into one new parish.
- Prayer starts with listening – it is followed by response and conversation with God the Father, with the Holy Spirit, with Jesus.
- The team can take time to share what each one on the team has heard in the Word of God and how that Word of God can be translated into doable action.

### Judge: Begin with the end goal in mind.

- What does **New Parishes: Stronger Together** mean to each of the members of the transition team?
- What are potential positives of this process?
- What are the possible negatives?
- What questions do you have about the process?
- Note what each one says and draw together what the concrete goal is for your new parish.
- Establish a statement of purpose and mission that everyone agrees upon – thus establishing a common language, vision and direction.
- What would be the desired description of the new parish – list some specific elements of the wish list.

### Judge: What do you have to work with?

- Identify the strengths of the transition team members. What is the unique gift each person is bringing to the table?
- What is the particular gift, strength and unique quality of each of the merging communities?
- How can these strengths come together into something greater than sum of the parts?
- Where there are strengths, there are also weaknesses. What appears to be missing at the table?

## **Act: Identify Scope & Sequence of Your Work**

Transition is not a “one size fits all” process. Each group of parishes has unique circumstances that must be considered as part of moving forward. Some parishes have a long history of collaboration while others are meeting together for the first time. Identify what can be done quickly and what will require significant consultation. This will help set the agenda for future meetings and the order of items to be addressed.

- What qualities and strengths do we have which will make us succeed?
- What are the key factors required for this merger to succeed?
- What areas already have significant overlap?
- What work has already been done?
- What is the most pressing issue facing this merger?
- What are the “elephants in the room”?
- What do we, and our parishioners, fear the most about this process?

## **ACTION STEPS**

# New Parishes: Stronger Together

## Prayer

Prayer puts our focus in the right place: on God's plan for His church. Developing a plan to involve the entire community in praying together for the Lord's will to be done in our new parish is essential to ensuring this project is more than mere administration. Despite what differences may exist between our parish communities we share "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all" (Ephesians 4:5-6). Uniting ourselves in prayer to God will also unite us to one another.

*"The great men and women of God were great intercessors. Intercession is like a 'leaven' in the heart of the Trinity. It is a way of penetrating the Father's heart and discovering new dimensions which can shed light on concrete situations and change them. We can say that God's heart is touched by our intercession, yet in reality he is always there first. What our intercession achieves is that his power, his love and his faithfulness are shown ever more clearly in the midst of the people."*

- Joy of the Gospel #283

## Observe

- What ministries and methods of prayer do our existing churches have?
- What is the current focus of our prayer intentions?
- What common moments of prayer do we share in our churches?
- What are the major feast days and celebrations of our churches?

## Judge

- How can we integrate prayer for the process into our existing activities?
- How do we make prayer a part of our entire decision making process?
- What new initiatives can we undertake to help bring people together in prayer?

## Act

- Gather all prayer groups in the new parish for a gathering of communal prayer and exhort them to continue praying regularly for the new parish
- Plan a combined parish moment of prayer

## **ACTION STEPS**

# New Parishes: Stronger Together

## *Finance & Administration—Moving towards a unified approach*

One key purpose of this reorganization is to provide the resources necessary to accomplish our mission more effectively. In the quote below Pope Francis reminds us that trying to undertake new goals and new initiatives without finding the means to achieve them is an illusion. In order to start doing what is needed, we must also consider what we can stop doing. Our financial means are an important and necessary temporal reality required for accomplishing our mission in the world.

*“Pastoral ministry in a missionary key seeks to abandon the complacent attitude that says: “We have always done it this way”. I invite everyone to be bold and creative in this task of rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelization in their respective communities. A proposal of goals without an adequate communal search for the means of achieving them will inevitably prove illusory.”*

- Joy of the Gospel #33

## Observe

### Finances

- 5 Year Financial Overview (separate attachment)
- Financial Considerations Document (separate attachment)
- Identify and compare Chart of Accounts for each church

### Administration

- Identify the location of the banks for each church. Who has signing authority?
- Identify banking procedure, counting policy, tracking policy (for authorizing cheques, depositing collections after mass, purchase order use, etc. )
- Identify software used for parish accounting and for issuing tax receipts.
- Define written approval policy and approval limits for small and large expenditures.
- Define written policy for registering what is placed in the parish safe for counters.
- Identify the date of the last internal audit and material audit.

## Judge

- Identify potential cost saving measures and ways to increase revenue.
- Where should the administration office be located for the new Parish?
- How do we provide administrative support to parishioners in all locations? i.e. signs with contact information, contact information communicated to parishioners.

## Act

- Secure counting room for collections, safe on site
- Deposit made to bank (must be able to deposit to local bank and have money auto transferred to new parish bank account, when available)
- Contact Archdiocesan Business Office when looking to bring accounting systems together and setting up a Chart of Accounts.
- Using the Financial Considerations document for reference, make recommendations as to Finance and Administration procedures for new parish
- Recommend location of new parish offices
- Recommend how other churches will access services from the offices
- Prepare a new parish viability plan consisting of
  - Operating budget of each location for the next 12 months
  - Capital budget of each location for the next 5 years

## ACTION STEPS

# New Parishes: Stronger Together

## *Human Resources*

People are the most important dimension of parish renewal. Disciples, who seek the Lord and desire for others to encounter Him, are contagious and courageous. However, even the most ardent disciple can be ineffective if not given the opportunity to use his or her gifts. This principle also applies to parish staff. Looking at our current employees in light of our missionary mandate will help us put people into the right roles, matched to their giftedness and not a simple function.

*"In our world, ordained ministers and other pastoral workers can make present the fragrance of Christ's closeness and his personal gaze."*

- Joy of the Gospel #169

## **Observe**

- Identify the paid and part-time staff and review their job description, years of service and parish commitment.
- Identify residents and part-time priests along with the ministry they provide.
- Identify the deacons who serve the parish, their ministry and time commitment to the parish.
- Itemize all salaries for staff, priests and deacons together with related remuneration, ie; stipends, housing allowances, vacation allotment, etc.

## **Judge**

- Are the people in our parish assigned to their strongest area of giftedness?
- Can our existing staff and clergy benefit from a new role that better matches their strengths?
- Are our staff receiving the appropriate care and support to be effective in their ministry?
- Are there any areas where we lack competence?

## **Act**

What supports does our team need to be successful?

What additional human resources will the new parish need?

Are any changes required in our current assignments?

## **ACTION STEPS**

# New Parishes: Stronger Together

## *Facilities*

### Observe

#### Number of buildings

- Identify the buildings and their present use. I.e. Church, hall, rectory, shed, etc. Also, review the number of hours used in the day, the times of day, length of time it is vacant. Consider the energy used when not in use and the potential for vandalism if left vacant for long periods of time. Note that keeping heat low during winter months can result in circulation of mold and other problems due to excessive moisture in the vacant space. Review possible alternate uses for the building should its present usage requirements become redundant. Hall becomes ministry centre; or church becomes a house of prayer; rectory becomes a meeting and/or faith formation centre.

#### Age of structure

- Obtain documents to substantiate when the structures were built.
- Are there building plans available?
- Are there additions completed to the building – when?

#### Condition

- What major repairs have been completed and when?
- Are the windows and exterior walls, doors, etc. weather tight?
- Are there any signs of mold, recent or in the past?
- Are there areas containing asbestos?
- What is the condition of the exterior walls? If brick, does it require re-pointing? If siding, is it intact; are there missing components?
- Are there cracks in the foundation?
- Does the ground around the structure slope away preventing water to accumulate against the structure?
- What is the condition of roof vents, chimneys, other ventilation systems?
- What is the condition of the windows and doors, and window/door framing?
- What is the condition of the insulation?
- What areas are in need of repair and at what cost?

#### Heating & Ventilation

- What kind of heating is provided?
  - ◇ If oil heat, what is the age of the oil tank? The furnace? What is the condition of the furnace? When was the burner installed?
  - ◇ Is there a scheduled maintenance program?
  - ◇ What are the intervals for maintenance?

- ◊ How many furnaces?
- If electric heat, what type – radiation, convection, in-floor?
  - ◊ If hot water, what is the quantity, age and condition of the hot water tanks?
  - ◊ What is the condition of the piping and radiators?
- What is the age and condition of ceiling fans?
- What is the condition of washroom, kitchen and other ventilation fans?

Plumbing

- What is the condition of the washroom fixtures and other plumbing fixtures (sinks, floor drains, etc.)
- What is the condition of the sump pump?
- How many sump pumps and where are they located?
- Is there a sprinkler system? What is the age and condition?
- Is it maintained and how often?

**Judge**

- Complete the facilities template and review the various facility reports to identify strengths and weakness of current facilities.
- Review any scanned insurance reports available from the diocese.
- Are they suitable for our current needs?
- Can they handle anticipated growth in our new parish?

**Act**

- Are there any problems that need to be dealt with before the merger?
- Are there any surplus buildings that won't be needed post-merger?

**ACTION STEPS**

# New Parishes: Stronger Together

## *Pastoral Ministry & Evangelization*

*“Pastoral ministry in a missionary style is not obsessed with the disjointed transmission of a multitude of doctrines to be insistently imposed. When we adopt a pastoral goal and a missionary style which would actually reach everyone without exception or exclusion, the message has to concentrate on the essentials, on what is most beautiful, most grand, most appealing and at the same time most necessary. The message is simplified, while losing none of its depth and truth, and thus becomes all the more forceful and convincing.”*

- Joy of the Gospel #35

### Observe

- Read and review the document *Communities of Missionary Disciples*
- Identify an organization/relationship chart for each parish
- List all ministries, liturgical, outreach, faith formation and evangelization for each location.
- Review ministries that add value and ministries that no longer bear fruit, (ie take a lot of resources with minimal return)
- Prepare mass counts for each mass both weekend and weekday, for a one month period (preferably before July/August)
- Prepare attendance for other liturgical celebrations, (ie Rosary, Adoration, etc.)
- Review/compare ministry guidelines for each location
- Make a suggestion for common ministry guidelines
- Review/identify ministry opportunities for each present parish location

### Judge

- Review each ministry in relationship to the nine core activities outlined in the *New Parishes: Stronger Together* action plan
- Where are we spending most of our time?
- Is it mission-oriented?
- If not, can it be adjusted to do so?
- Can it be done better?
- Can it be combined among all churches in the group?
- Should it be discontinued?

- How does this investment in time and talent advance our mission?
- In what area do we spend the least time and talent? Is this appropriate?
- Are there any “glaring” holes?
- Does something new need to be done?

## **Act**

- What ministries do we need to *cancel* to free up the people and talent needed for our new projects?
- What ministries held must we *consolidate* within the new parish?
- What areas/ministries do we lack in our churches where can we *collaborate* with another church or community partner?
- What new ministries do we need to *create* to accomplish our goals?

## **ACTION STEPS**

# New Parishes: Stronger Together

## *Communications*

### **Observe**

- Identify current communication tools in each present parish, (ie bulletin, newsletter, website, twitter, etc. ).
- Identify communications policy presently being used in each parish noting the value achieved, (hits on website, # of bulletins printed, # of newsletters per year, etc.).
- Define who prepares each communication tool.
- Identify contractual arrangements with outside sources for any/all communication tools.
- Provide suggestions for future consideration.

### **Judge**

- In 25 words or less describe the change you are undertaking, who it will help, and why they will benefit.
- Write a paragraph about why this change is necessary.
  - What brought it about?
  - How will it help?
  - Why do we have to do it?
- Who needs to know about this plan?
  - What do we need to tell them?
  - How should we tell them?
  - Who is going to tell them?
  - When are they going to be told and by what means of communications?
- What methods will we use to tell people about this plan?
  - Letters
  - Newsletters
  - Bulletins
  - Local neighbourhood/community newspapers
  - Announcements
  - E-mails
  - Social Media
  - Website
  - Information meetings
  - Phone calls
  - One on one conversations...other ideas?

# Act

- Make a grid for communications using the Audiences and Communication Channels described above. Here is a small sample to help you get started:

- SAMPLE -

Communication Channels					
AUDIENCES	Audience	Meeting	E-Mail	Website	Etc.
	Pastoral Council	X	X	X	
	Sunday Congregation		X	X	
	Etc.				X

## ACTION STEPS

# New Parishes: Stronger Together

## *Naming*

### **Observe**

- What is a parish?
  - A territorial division of a diocese
  - Exist to serve all the people within a territory
  - Usually served by a pastor
  - An organization of the people of God that has rights and responsibilities
- What is a church?
  - A sacred building designated for divine worship
  - A parish could have many churches
  - The name, of the church, usually does not change
- While not a church building, the new parish should be named according to the established norms for dedicating a church or altar. According to these norms the parish may be named for:
  - The Blessed Trinity;
  - Our Lord Jesus Christ invoked according to a mystery of his life or a title already accepted in the liturgy;
  - The Holy Spirit;
  - The Blessed Virgin Mary, likewise invoked according to some appellation already accepted in the liturgy;
  - One of the angels;
  - A saint inscribed in the Roman Martyrology or in a duly approved Appendix.
- Special Titles
  - A blessed may not be the titular without an indult of the Apostolic See.
  - A church should have one titular only, unless it is a question of saints who are listed together in the Calendar (i.e. Sts. Peter & Paul or Sts. Simon & Jude).

### **Judge**

- Consult the community for potential name recommendations
- Is there a special devotion to a particular saint in the parish grouping?
- Which saint or other figure best represents our new identity?

### **Act**

- Submit your name to the Diocesan Transition team for review and approval from the Archbishop
- Communicate the new name

## **ACTION STEPS**