

New Parishes: Stronger Together

Building up the Body of Christ

Jan 1, 2019





HALIFAX OFFICE:

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January 1, 2019 Feast of Mary Mother of God

Dear Friends,

The Feast of Mary the Mother of God celebrates the new divine life brought forth by Mary's collaboration with God's plan for humanity. Mary's essential role, however, was not without its concerns. The gospel tells us that Mary pondered what she heard in her heart. Her thoughts, I have no doubt, were marked by numerous concrete questions; her feelings, I am sure, were mixed as she struggled to make sense of her changed life; and surely, she reflected on the future outcome of this journey she accepted to go on. We can all imagine and appreciate that Mary gave much time and attention wondering, "what happens now"?

This same question is also a significant one for our Archdiocese and it has been on the minds of many of us, for the past few years, as we pondered the future of our local Church and what new life might look like at this point in our journey of faith.

On this feast day of Mary, which celebrated the new life and hope it brings to us all, I chose to inaugurate the plan for the reorganization of our Archdiocese.

What happens now begins today with the first steps for transitioning our existing diocese from its 65 parishes and 25 missions, to a new Archdiocese made up of 20 new parishes. This process is being initiated so that we can become more effective in proposing Jesus Christ; so that we can better face the challenge of relevancy for today's circumstance. The conversion of our structure also calls for a conversion of mind and heart as well as a conversion of our ways of doing and being.

New Parishes: Stronger Together, therefore, is an essential part of "Equip the Saints", the three year plan to renew our Archdiocese.

Today, we move from consultation to implementation of a vision which requires the collaboration of many in the one mission of Christ. This means bringing our people of faith together and identifying their gifts and talents so that in our new parishes we will have the people necessary to draw upon for transparent models of leadership, shared ministry, in improved structures, focused on becoming missionary disciples.



As I announce today the groupings, which will merge into the 20 new parishes, I am conscious of the work that needs to be done through 2019 so that the new parishes can all be in place by January 1, 2020. Clearly the implementation of this reorganization will take place in phases.

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. Their task will be to lay the groundwork for a merger of the separate entities that will take place throughout 2019 and be completed by December 31, 2019.

After the new parish comes into existence a moderator will be appointed to lead the new parish on the path of growth toward becoming a community of missionary disciples. The moderator will work with the clergy, leadership team, pastoral council, and finance council to realize this new vision for parish life.

In psalm 127, we are reminded that "unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain." Transition and renewal are impossible if they are not built on a foundation of prayer. Thus, on this feast day of Mary, patroness of our diocese and of the New Evangelization, I beg her intercession for our whole diocesan church as we make the necessary steps to make her Son more known in our diocese. I also call on each and every one of the faithful to turn their hearts to God in fervent prayer for our local church, for those in the church, and those far from the Church. Please take the opportunity to pray, with me, in all of your personal and communal devotional times.

Sincerely in Christ,

†Anthony Mancini

Archbishop of Halifax-Yarmouth



Building up the Body of Christ

The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.

(Ephesians 4:11-13)

What Are We Doing?

This action plan takes our diocese on a path to merge our 65 existing parishes and 25 missions into 20 new parishes. New parishes will benefit from a greater number of people to draw on, improved and transparent leadership structures, and shared ministry and mission. Today we move from consultation to implementation regarding this reorganization.

Reorganization of parishes is one of the goals outlined in the 2017 pastoral plan *Equip the Saints*. By embarking on this process we are following through on our commitment to renew the diocese by creating the conditions needed to further the mission of Christ in this time and place. The world many of us remember has changed. Beliefs once shared are now challenged or ignored. All of us know someone who has rejected or fallen away from the faith. Still many more people have never had the opportunity to hear the word of God. Reorganization of our Church is a necessary part of renewal. It gives us the opportunity to combine the strengths and talents of our people, invest in our leadership, and reach those we care so deeply about.

In short, what we are doing is following the Lord and taking seriously his call to drop our nets and become, in a new and more intentional way, fishers of people.

How Did We Get Here?

The Consultation Process

In Joy of the Gospel Pope Francis called on bishops to develop means of "pastoral dialogue, out of a desire to listen to everyone and not simply to those who would tell him what he would like to hear. Yet the principal aim of these participatory processes should not be ecclesiastical organization but rather the missionary aspiration of reaching everyone." Heeding the Holy Father's advice, Archbishop Mancini has conducted an extended consultation with laity and clergy about the shape our diocese needs to take in order to reach everyone—those in our churches and those from them.



Call for a New Pentecost

- In 2012, Archbishop Mancini released his *Pentecost Pastoral Letter* calling for the re-foundation of our local church and committing us to undertaking the challenge of the New Evangelization.
- In March 2017, the fruits of consultation, assemblies, Lenten Studies, and many other engagements led to the launch of *Equip the Saints* a three year pastoral plan for the renewal of our diocese

September to December 2017

- Archbishop Mancini and key staff members met with the clergy to reflect on and discuss the next steps in *Equip the Saints* focusing on restructuring ourselves for mission. Clergy were invited to have conversations with the people in their parishes about the plan. (Sept 2017)
- As the whole diocese gathered for the 2017 Assembly of the People of God, Archbishop Mancini responded to questions and feedback about *Equip the Saints* in his Friday night keynote address and two workshops. (Nov 2017)
- Archbishop Mancini began conversations with pastors in our regions tasking them to consult with their leadership and to prayerfully consider the uniqueness of their communities and propose a plan for restructuring and renewal in their region.

January to April 2018

- Conversations continued with clergy and laity in each region working together to develop proposals of how communities could re-organize the parishes in their region. The deadline for these proposals was set for June 29, 2018 with the aim of a new map of the Archdiocese beginning on January 1, 2019.
- Through the 2018 Lenten Video Series Archbishop Mancini invited the whole diocese to think differently about how we are Church in Halifax-Yarmouth. In the videos he proposes what a renewed parish can look like as we move forward to equip saints/one another. During this video series the important dates (June 29, 2018 and January 1, 2019) were shared.
- Participants in the Lenten Series were invited by Archbishop Mancini to send him their feedback, questions, and thoughts about the next phase of our pastoral plan by Pentecost 2018. (May 2018)
- The phrase New Parishes: Stronger Together was introduced as the next phase (Year 2) of our diocesan plan Equip the Saints. As part of this initiative, Archbishop Mancini made pastoral visits across the diocese and weekly Equip the Saints update videos were developed.
- Regional meetings of clergy and laity continued as they discerned their proposals.



May to August 2018

- Archbishop Mancini invited faithful to gather for a Pentecost Prayer Vigil to seek the guidance
 of the Holy Spirit and pray for the unity of our diocese as we work together to build New
 Parishes: Stronger Together. (May 2019)
- Proposals from the various regions were sent to Archbishop Mancini. (June 29, 2018)
- Archbishop Mancini took the feedback from the Lenten Series, the regional proposals, and all
 other feedback into prayer and discernment, privately and with key diocesan leadership
 personnel, over the summer months.

September to December 2018

- A draft detailed action plan was proposed for Year 2 of Equip the Saints, called New Parishes: Stronger Together. The document was the result of prayer, reflection and collaboration. This proposal offered new parish groupings, a focus on leadership, and the acknowledgement of the necessity for a diocesan supported transition process.
- Over a two-day period of prayer and discussion the draft of *New Parishes: Stronger Together* was shared with the clergy for their discussion and input. (October 2018)
- With input from the clergy the revised draft of New Parishes: Stronger Together was shared with the people of the diocese at the 2018 Assembly of the People of God for further prayer and consultation. Again the input of the faithful was invited and welcomed. (October 2018)
- Feedback, questions, and concerns were brought forward by clergy and laity up until November 15, 2018.
- Clergy gathered with Archbishop Mancini during an Advent Day of Reflection to continue the process of discernment and to pray about the direction and decision we need to take as a local church of Halifax-Yarmouth. (December 2018)

What Will It Look Like?

New Parish Groupings

The groups of parishes presented at the end of this document are the fruit of the consultation process outlined above. Parishes within these 20 groups are now tasked to work together throughout 2019 to prepare for merger into one parish. While some current parishes appear unaffected, this only hastens their work to bring about the new leadership structure and ministry activity described below. All new parishes are anticipated to have a minimum of 500 weekly attendees and be served by at least two priests.

Each new parish will benefit from a greater number of people to draw on, improved and transparent leadership structures, and shared ministry and mission. Each new parish will:



- Be one parish one pastoral council, one finance council, one leadership team, one staff
- Contain multiple churches
- Provide pastoral care and ministries in collaboration
- Share human and financial resources.
- Be led by clergy and lay people using their gifts and strengths in a spirit of co-responsibility and mutuality

Who Will Lead This Renewal?

Leadership Structure of New Parishes

Leadership is an essential part of the cultural change required to become a more missionary Church. Both clergy and laity will need to develop the necessary skills, competencies, and attitudes. In some cases, a conversion of thinking will be required as we adopt a stance of co-responsibility for the mission of the Church. Recent events have demonstrated that clericalism, in its many forms and expressions, can inhibit the healthy functioning of the Church.

After the merger is completed, a moderator will be appointed to lead the new parish on the path of growth toward becoming a community of missionary disciples. The moderator will work with the other clergy, parish staff, leadership team, pastoral council, and finance council to realize a new vision for parish life.

The purpose of these mergers is to provide the critical mass of resources necessary to accomplish the missionary goal of reaching each of our communities with the Gospel.

Moderator

A Moderator, usually a priest, leads the transformation of the parish entrusted to his care, with the help of other clergy and lay leaders, to become communities of missionary disciples. In most new parishes the moderator will be a priest who will also serve as the proper pastor of the new parish. In some extraordinary cases a Deacon or Layperson could be appointed to participate in this leadership role with the priest of the parish.

Associate Priest

The Associate Priest is appointed by the bishop to be part of the clergy team of a parish. In this capacity, Associate Priests are co-workers with the pastor and sharers in pastoral care of the parish according to their gifts.

Deacon

Deacons are called forth from the community to serve a diaconal ministry in the Church, whether liturgical, pastoral, charitable or social. They are appointed by the bishop to be a part of the clergy team of a parish. In addition to assisting in the liturgical function of the parish, deacons should also be assigned to serve according to their gifts and charisms.



Parish Leadership Team

A team of three to five key people, lay and ordained, who will assist the moderator in making important decisions and provide a structure of accountability for the moderator. This group meets frequently to make the day-to-day decisions that are needed to bring about missionary renewal in the parish.

Pastoral Council

The pastoral council is a planning body that brings together the diverse strengths and talents of the parishioners to work with the moderator to craft and monitor the vision for the parish. This group meets regularly to discuss and review progress toward the parish's missionary vision. Their meetings should be forward looking and focused on the pastoral and missionary activity of the parish.

Finance Council

In addition to the responsibilities outlined in the Code of Canon Law, the finance council is to help the moderator direct the temporal resources of the parish in order to accomplish the missionary vision set out by the moderator and the pastoral council. This group must meet regularly and is responsible for creating the parish budget, approving the financial statements, overseeing the revenue and expenses related to operating the parish, communicating to parishioners with transparency, and encouraging them to support the mission by their giving.

What Will We Do?

The Ministry and Mission of New Parishes

Merger is only a launching point toward renewal; each newly created parish must then concentrate their efforts on activities that indicate the life of a parish is consistent with the vision and values of the diocese. It is these activities - discerned through consultation with the faithful, prayerful discernment of the archbishop, and documents of the Holy See - that represent the work required to meet the challenge of the New Evangelization.

Mission

The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature, since it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she draws her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father.

As "the presence of the church in a particular territory," the parish is the practical expression of the Church's missionary nature. The parish exists for the same reason the Church exists: to make disciples of all nations. Thus the People of God within the territory of a parish must be "completely mission-oriented." In fact, Saint John Paul II stated that not only is evangelization an essential task of a parish community, but this activity "is the clearest sign of a mature faith." Any attempt to consider the missionary nature of our parish communities must hold evangelizing activity as a critical sign of life. Likewise, Pope Francis says that "missionary outreach is paradigmatic for all the Church's activity." Therefore, "the effectiveness of the Church's organizations, movements, parishes and apostolic works must be measured in the light of this missionary imperative."



In practical terms the work of mission involves focusing on three important facets of the church. New parishes must ensure that they:

- Have a tool for evangelization designed to reach out and invite those outside of our church, similar to Alpha or ChristLife
- Provide dedicated service to the most vulnerable in the local area, such as: the poor, the homeless, the sick, and the dying
- Rely on the guidance of the Holy Spirit in pastoral ministries, vision, mission, and discernment
 of the charisms and gifts of parishioners by putting prayer at the centre of all our decision
 making processes

Community

In these times of growing isolation, political polarization, and intense loneliness, the witness of the Christian community offers "a way of life that shines out to others." The love we share for one another and our communal worship of God is essential to our Christian commitment but also to our evangelistic witness. Jesus himself said that people will know we are his disciples by the way we love one another.

In order to foster authentic Christian community where people love and care for one another, so that all come to unity in the faith, each new parish must strive to:

- Celebrate reverent liturgies with excellent music, hospitality, and homilies
- Promote and support small communities so that the majority of our parishioners may share faith and life together on a regular basis
- Lead through a team approach that follows a consistent vision for the parish

Formation

Formation is the process of maturation in the faith—the "ever-clearer discovery of one's vocation and the ever-greater willingness to live it so as to fulfil one's mission." As the leader of a parish, the pastor-moderator is entrusted "to take care that the lay members of the Christian faithful are instructed in the truths of the faith, especially by giving a homily on Sundays and holy days of obligation and by offering catechetical instruction." Formation of adults and children for the mission is an important component of parish life. Pope Francis raises the missionary dimension of formation as an evaluative lens by saying that "in all its activities the parish encourages and trains its members to be evangelizers." In order to equip the faithful for this ministry and build them up in maturity each new parish must have:

- An ongoing process to help people grow in the life of Christ and develop skills in evangelization
- A method to identify and form leaders at every level of parish life
- A means of identifying areas of strength and giving people opportunities to serve in those areas

These activities are described in detail in the document *Communities of Missionary Disciples* that has been previously published and is available on the diocesan website: www.halifaxyarmouth.org/plan



How Will We Get There?

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. Their 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.

Transition Team

Early in 2019 a Transition Team is to be formed by the present pastor(s) of each existing parish. Members of the Transition Team will be 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 6–8 people in order to be functional.

The purpose of the transition team is to lead existing faith communities to the reality of a merged entity 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

The tasks of the transition team fall into the following categories: prayer, pastoral ministry, facilities, finance, human resources, identity, critical situations, and communications. In support of this effort, an instrument is being developed by diocesan staff to help guide the work of transition.

Diocesan Support Team

Parish transition teams will be supported, directed, and guided by a diocesan support team. This team, made up both of staff and experienced volunteers, will provide resources, regular check-ins, on site visits, and a direct avenue to the archbishop and his leadership team. The team will also act as a clearing house for feedback from all the transition teams providing the bishop the information needed to make adjustments in policy, procedures, and other issues that will inevitably arise. The team will be lead by Fr. James Mallon, Episcopal Vicar for Parish Renewal and Leadership Support in collaboration with the Office of Pastoral Life & New Evangelization and other diocesan staff.

Each grouping should form their transition team immediately following the January 1st, 2019 announcement and then schedule a workshop with the diocesan support team to help organize their work throughout the coming year.



Foundation of Prayer

"Pray in the Spirit at all times, in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints".

Ephesians 6:18-20

The work of church renewal is ultimately the action of the Holy Spirit. Without Him our work will be in vain. Therefore, this plan must be built upon prayer. Throughout 2019 all current parishes will be expected to intercede for the success of this transformation of our Church during the prayers of the faithful at all liturgical celebrations. All individuals, devotional groups, intercessory prayer ministries, clergy, religious communities, and lay faithful, are asked to include the prayer composed for this process in their regular prayer life.

The diocese will also host moments of prayer throughout 2019 especially at our Mass of Chrism, on the Feast of Pentecost, and in our Assembly on October 25 & 26, 2019. Parish groupings are encouraged to hold common celebrations of prayer and commit to a common spiritual action during Lent.

May the Lord walk with us during every step on this journey and may Mary, patroness of our diocese and Star of the New Evangelization, intercede for all involved.

Heavenly Father,

As our Archdiocese enters a decisive time of transition, we ask you to sustain our efforts to be faithful to what you are asking of us so that we become better equipped to meet the challenges of the New Evangelization.

Give us the courage and insight to take on the task of purification and renewal necessary to become a more credible Church.

Grant us the knowledge and understanding required to respond to the call of pastoral conversion and the demands for a more missionary and mature expression of Christian discipleship for our time.

May your Holy Spirit release in us the gift of wisdom to make the necessary choices and decisions to make of our new parishes: centres of evangelistic outreach, united communities of communities; welcoming centres of prayer, learning, ministry and worship; environments of healing, reconciliation and care of the poor.

Provide for us clergy and laity who are skilled in leadership, to guide this transformative journey of faith.

We ask all this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



New Parish Groupings

Parish 1

- Saint John the Evangelist, Windsor
- Saint Mary, Hantsport (closure proposed by community)
- ♦ Saint Francis of Assisi, Wolfville
- Saint Joseph, Kentville
- Saint Anthony, Berwick
- Saint Monica, Middleton
- Saint Alphonsus, Bridgetown
- Saint Louis, Annapolis Royal
- Saint Brigid, East Dalhousie (closure proposed by community)
- Saint Lawrence, Canning (closure proposed by community)
- Saint Patrick, Digby
- Saint Anne, Bear River
- Saint Joseph, Weymouth
- Saint Theresa, Southville

Parish 2

- Saint Joseph, Bridgewater
- Saint Norbert, Lunenburg
- Saint Matthew, Elmwood
- Saint Gregory, Liverpool
- Saint Jerome, Caledonia
- Saint Thomas, Shelburne
- Saint Philip, Barrington

Parish 3

- Saint Ambrose Co-Cathedral, Yarmouth
- Our Lady of Lourdes, Melbourne



Parish 4

- ♦ Saint Anselm, West Chezzetcook
- Saint Anne, Lake Echo
- Saint Denis, East Ship Harbour
- Saint Peter, Sheet Harbour
- Saint Martin, Tangier
- Saint Michael, East Quoddy
- Saint Genevieve, East Chezzetcook
- Saint Philip Neri, Musquodoboit Harbour

Parish 5

- Saint Anthony, Dartmouth
- Saint Paul, Dartmouth
- Saint Peter, Dartmouth
- Immaculate Conception, Dartmouth

Parish 6

- Mission La Sainte-Famille, Dartmouth
- Saint Thomas More, Dartmouth
- Saint Vincent de Paul, Dartmouth

Parish 7

- Saint Andrew, Eastern Passage
- Saint Clement, Dartmouth
- Saint John XXIII, Dartmouth

Parish 8

- Saint-Joseph, Ile des Surettes
- Sainte-Famille, Buttes-Amirault
- Sainte-Agnès, Quinan
- Sainte-Anne, Ste-Anne-du-Ruisseau
- Saint-Pierre, Pubnico-Ouest
- Immaculée-Conception, Pubnico-Est
- Saint-Michel, Wedgeport



Parish 9

- Notre-Dame-du-Mont-Carmel, Concessions
- Sacré-Coeur, Saulnierville
- Saint-Alphonse de Ligouri, St. Alphonse
- Saint-Bernard, St-Bernard
- Sainte-Marie, Pointe de l'Église**
- Stella Maris, Meteghan

** The diocese is in negotiation with a local society to transfer the church to them.

Parish 10

- Holy Family, Amherst
- Saint Brigid, Parrsboro
- Saint John the Baptist, Springhill
- Saint Cornelius, Streets Ridge
- Saint Paul the Apostle, River Hebert
- Saint Thomas Aquinas, Joggins
- Saint Thomas More, Pugwash

Parish 11

- Immaculate Conception, Truro
- Sacred Heart, Millbrook
- Saint Ambrose, Londonderry
- Saint Michael, Tatamagouche (Brule)
- Saint Bridget, Shubenacadie

Parish 12

- Saint Rose of Lima, Fall River
- Saint Bernard, Enfield
- Holy Cross, Middle Musquodoboit
- ♦ Saint Kateri, Indian Brook*

*will fall under the oversight of the moderator/pastor of this parish

Parish 13

- Saint Agnes, Halifax
- Saint Thomas Aquinas Canadian Martyrs, Halifax



Parish 14

- Saint Catherine of Siena, Halifax
- Saint Theresa, Halifax
- Saint Patrick, Halifax
- Saint Mother Teresa of Kolkata, Halifax

Parish 15

- Saint Peter and Saint Paul, Herring Cove and Ketch Harbour
- Saint Michael, Spryfield
- Saint John the Baptist, Armdale

Parish 16

- Saint Marguerite Bourgeoys, Upper Tantallon
- Saint Augustine, Chester
- Saint Patrick, New Ross
- Saint Anthony, Hubbards
- Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Shad Bay

Parish 17

Saint Ignatius, Bedford

Parish 18

- Saint John Vianney, Lower Sackville
- Saint Elizabeth Seton, Lower Sackville
- Saint Francis of Assisi, Mount Uniacke

Parish 19

◆ Saint Benedict, Clayton Park

Parish 20

Saint Mary's Cathedral Basilica, Halifax



Endnotes

- 1. Joy the Gospel, #31
- 2. Joy of the Gospel, #28
- 3. Joy of the Gospel, #28
- 4. Mission of the Redeemer, #49
- 5. Joy of the Gospel, #15
- 6. Mission of the Redeemer, #49
- 7. Mission of the Redeemer, #26
- 8. The Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church, #57 & 58
- 9. Code of Canon Law, #528.1
- 10. Joy of the Gospel #28

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