



## **St. Boniface, St. John the Baptist, St. Joseph Parishes**

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March 9, 2018

To: Parishioners of St. Boniface, St. John the Baptist and St. Joseph  
Fr: Fr. Jim Keiter  
Re: Parish Planning

Dear Parish Family:

You should have received a letter from Archbishop Lucas at the beginning of last week that was mailed to every parishioner of all the Parishes of our Deanery, which is known as the Rural North Central Deanery. (If you didn't receive a letter from the Archbishop, a copy is in this weekend's bulletin as an insert). Our Deanery along with each of the 6 rural deaneries have been tasked with envisioning, creating a plan and then enacting that plan to create vibrant Parishes that are helping people encounter Jesus, equipping them as disciples and living mercy. In simple terms...help people get to heaven. Unfortunately, the reality is that as an Archdiocese, an important part of this planning is how do we accomplish this with fewer Priests. Between now and the year 2025 (7 years from now) the Archdiocese is projecting that we will go from 130 active Priests serving in our Archdiocese to less than 100. As the Archbishop indicated, we must formulate how our Deanery will look and work with one less Priest in a year and 2 less Priests in the next 2 to 3 years.

I don't share these realities to scare or upset anyone. I share them, simply because this is the reality we need to plan for. Having said that, our three Pastoral Councils have been discussing, strategizing and even coming together for joint Pastoral Council meetings of all three of our Parishes to ultimately plan for the future and be a positive example to our Deanery of how we can experience a future which is faith-filled and vibrant while maintaining our "identity" as parishioners that are so intimately tied to our beautiful Churches.

The three Parish Councils have spent many hours over the past months discussing questions such as:

1. What would a perfect parish look like?
2. What do our three Parishes already share and do together?
3. What activities or "things" do we see as essential to our current Parishes/Churches that are part of that Parish/Church's identity and hence Parishioner's identity?
4. How could we restructure our current model (Parish clustering) to a better long-term model that protects our Churches' identity but provides a model that when implemented could help the Deanery planning accomplish its goals? (over)

We are at a point, where we want to share our thoughts, ideas and plan to all our Parishioners so that everyone is hearing and reading the same information as well as we will be holding three gatherings (one at each Parish) for me to explain in more detail what our Councils have been working on as well as offer ample time for Parishioners to ask questions.

This letter is part of a whole information insert to pass on to you to what we have been working on. Please review all this information and plan on attending one of the “town hall” gatherings to understand better this planning and have an opportunity to ask questions.

The “town-hall” gatherings will take place at these times:

1. Sunday, March 18<sup>th</sup> at St. John’s Parish Center, immediately following 10:30 AM Mass
2. Sunday, March 18<sup>th</sup> at St. Boniface Parish Center, at 2 PM
3. Sunday, March 18<sup>th</sup> at St. Joseph Parish Center, following 7:30 PM Vigil Mass for Feast of St. Joseph (ice cream included at this one!)

As I have stressed to our Parish Councils, all of this planning has to be grounded in Prayer and asking the Holy Spirit to guide us as it has guided the universal Church for 2000 years. I would ask you to please pray for the planning in our parishes as well as in our deanery.

In conclusion, I want to be up-front with knowing that any time we encounter change, it is often uncomfortable and emotional. I am most grateful to all three Parish Councils for their many hours of prayer and discussion, which I know was at times uncomfortable and emotional. However, it made us really look and see the many awesome parts of our Parish life that we already experience together and those parts of our Parishes that are an important part of each Parishioner’s identity. Those things always guided our discussions and planning. I ask that you please do that as well. It is always easiest to leave “things” as they are, unfortunately, that is not an option for our Parishes or our Deanery.

Again, please pray for our Parishes and Deanery planning, review the following information and plan on joining us at one of the “Town Hall” meetings next weekend.

Sincerely,

Rev. James E. Keiter  
Pastor

**St. Boniface, St. John the Baptist, St. Joseph...Pray for Us**

As we began this process of planning, we used Holy Family Parish here in Cedar County, as a beginning model to guide us. However, we very much focused on making this “our own” as to keep a focus on our beautiful Churches and the intimate identity we have connected to our Churches.

Holy Family Parish operates in the model of 1 Parish with 3 Church sites. Using this model we focused on the following questions and came up with these responses:

**What would a perfect Parish look like? What would be its characteristics?**

- A Priest/Pastor
- Participation by all in all aspects of a parish
- No excuses about Parish life involvement
- Working as one / Everyone get along
- Growing membership
- All age groups represented
- Enthusiastic Faith life
- No financial burdens
- No politics
- Parishioners want to be at Mass and Parish functions versus feeling obligated
- Church as center
  - Center of communities
  - Center of Faith life
  - Center of Parishioners life
- We teach people how to pray
- We bring people to encounter Christ
- We form disciples
- A welcoming Faith community
- Parishioners open or even excited to share their Faith
- Specialized ministries for people to become involved with
  - Bereavement ministry
  - Baptism Prep
  - Marriage Prep
  - Small group Bible studies etc.
- Vibrant liturgies
  - Full Masses
    - Increased Mass attendance
    - With kids and young people coming
  - Good homilies
  - Good music
  - A real deepening of the faith life
  - More than a feeling of obligation to attend on Sundays and Holy Days
- Spiritual growth in parishioners
- A living out of service from the Faith Community
- Not have to do this type of planning again!

**What do our Parishes already share or do together?**

- Priest/Pastor
- Leadership Team
- Deacons
- Liturgy Committee
- Mass and Sacraments schedule
- Office Staff
- Family Formation
- Edge and Lifeteen for Junior High and High School Youth
- Evangelization Team and Activities
- Totus Tuus / Vacation Bible School
- Support of West Catholic
- Support of Cedar Catholic
- Support of St. Rose School
- Annual Mission Trip – CHWC
- Catholic Order of Foresters
- Annual Parish Mission
- Adoration Hours
- Confirmation
- RCIA
- Christ Child Auxiliary – Ses Amies

**We also saw thought of several items that we could easily share or do together:**

- Helping each other with our fundraisers (there is power in numbers)
- Helping each other with funeral luncheons
- Choir members could help in each of our Churches
- Altar servers could help in each of our Churches
- Pro-life Committee

**What “things” or activities do we see as essential to keeping at our respective Churches as part of each current parish’s identity?**

**St. Boniface:**

- FUN Night – annual dinner/auction on the last weekend of October
- Summer Bazaar
- Groups such as Christian Mothers, Council of Catholic Women, Ladies Guild, Holy Name Society
- Fellowship events such as Donuts and Coffee/juice or a Breakfast once a month after Sunday morning Mass
- The two farms

**St. John the Baptist:**

- Fish Fry – First Friday of Lent annually
- Prime Rib Dinner/Auction – held on weekend in June closest to Feast of St. John the Baptist
- Riverboat Days – 3<sup>rd</sup> weekend of August annually (operate a Food Booth at this Festival in Yankton, SD)
- Groups such as Christian Mothers, Council of Catholic Women, Ladies Guild
- Fellowship events
- “Polka Mass” – once a year on a Sunday in October

**St. Joseph:**

- Bazaar – 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of July annually
- Groups such as Christian Mothers, Council of Catholic Women, Ladies Guild
- Fellowship events

**What’s our initial plan?**

We see the formation of new Parish entity (civilly and canonically) with 3 Church sites (St. Boniface, St. John the Baptist, St. Joseph). We would like to call the new Parish – ***All Saints Parish*** since it incorporates our three Patron Saints. We would move from 3 Parish Councils and 3 Finance Committees to 1 Parish Council and 1 Finance Committee. The new Parish Council would be comprised of 3 Parishioners representing each Church site for a total of 9 members that would be elected by their respective Church site. The Pastor would appoint two of the 9 elected members as the 2 Trustees of the new Parish. At the town hall gatherings we will share more specifics as to how these initial council members would be elected and how we would establish a normal 3-year term rotation of council members representing our 3 Church sites. The new Finance Committee will consist of 6 members (2 representatives of each Church site). We would operate under one general budget of general income and expenses. We would keep a building fund specific to each Church site for building site needs, maintenance, improvements etc. All endowments and the 2 farms would remain as is; specific to their site with income used in the same way it is currently in our three individual budgets. This can be explained further at the meetings. Groups such as Christian Mothers, Ladies Guilds, Council of Catholic Women, and Holy Name Society would remain specific to their sites as they already are. This is simply to give you an initial vision. Please come to one of the meetings to learn more.