

## Learning More About Ourselves, Our Neighbors



At the meeting of pastoral councils and the OLOL planning team on December 10, 2005, a wide variety of information was shared and discussed. Judy Willing and Jane Monagan presented a 3-dimensional map including our six churches and those bordering us on all sides. Church buildings were drawn to scale to indicate the relative size of each congregation. Driving distances between churches were also included on flags. We hope to move this map among the six churches over the coming months so parishioners can see it for themselves.

To learn more about what others are doing, Karen Rinefield, our diocesan liaison, also presented information on what is happening in the neighboring planning groups. (All parishes throughout the diocese are included in 36 planning groups for the purpose of collaboration and pastoral planning. Each group, though, looks quite different—some are composed of 4-6 large parishes; some include single parishes and clustered parishes; some, like OLOL, are a single cluster; some are a single parish with multiple worship sites.)

Our Lady of the Lakes as a whole contains 1585 registered households. The breakdown among the parishes is as follows: St. Andrew (113), St. Januarius (246), St. Michael (1004), St. Patrick (88), St. Mary (62), St. Theresa (72). At look at our neighbors should provide some perspective and context.

### Northwest Ontario

*St. Dominic in Shortsville* (510 households) will join the cluster of *St. Felix, Clifton Springs* (254) /*St. Francis, Phelps* (338) in 2007 and become one parish between

2007 and 2015. They will have a shared pastoral council beginning in July 2006. *St. Bridget, E. Bloomfield* (310) clusters with *St. Mary, Canandaigua* (1745) in 2007 and the two become one parish with two worship sites 2007-2015. Mass schedules will change with the decline of priests. *St. Patrick, Victor* (1611) will remain a single parish but work with St. Mary and St. Bridget to address the need for adequate worship space and work with all of the other parishes in collaborative ministries.

### Geneva/Seneca Falls/Waterloo

The four parishes, a new planning group formed from two smaller ones, is working on their second pastoral plan. They expect to complete it in December 2006 and have it go into effect June 2007. Whatever arrangement is chosen will involve 3 priests sharing ministry for the parishes, colleges, and hospital. They foresee additional clustering and consolidation of parishes, and a new Mass schedule.

### Steuben

The parishes in Hammondsport, Bath, Bradford, Campbell and Addison are nearing completion of their second pastoral plan. Currently *St. Gabriel, Hammondsport* (226) and *St. Mary, Bath* ((397) are each led by a pastoral administrator with a shared, part-time priest providing sacramental ministry. Interestingly, the C. Steuben planning group considered whether it made sense for St. Gabriel to join with OLOL when they were early in planning.

### Livingston/SW Ontario/SE Monroe

*St. Mary, Honeoye* (358), the parish closest to OLOL, will cluster with *St. Matthew, Livonia* (778) in 2007.

### Chemung-Schuyler

Because the planning group includes 2 parishes in Schuyler County plus 8 in Chemung County, parish restructuring for the next 10 years is centered in the Elmira area. *St. Mary of the Lake, Watkins Glen* (482) and *St. Benedict, Odessa* (61) will continue to share a priest and the weekend Mass schedule will likely remain unchanged.

**Holy Family Catholic Community** (a planning group and a single parish with 4 worship sites)—1322 households

The four original parishes in *Dansville, Wayland, Perkinsville and Cohocton* clustered in 1998 and became a single parish with 4 worship sites in 2004. When their number of priests is reduced to one (projected for sometime between 2008 and 2013) 2 churches will no longer be used for weekend Masses.

# A Brief History of OLOL Planning Time

Although one parish structure will be recommended to Bishop Clark in our finalized pastoral plan, much thought, prayer, listening and discussion have gone into reaching the two possibilities that now go to parishioners for input. Fr. Bob Ring led one presentation on the pre-planning history. The number of Masses a priest could say was not an issue in the beginning because there were few parishes in the cluster needing those Masses. Also, the constraints, or “givens” of the Dioceses were not even introduced in previous planning efforts. This planning and learning process has been one for the bishop too, said Fr. Ring, and the “givens” had not yet been determined. Five to 10 years ago there were no business managers, no pastoral administrators. It’s now a whole new world, Fr. Bob said, with annual meetings, more accountability, budgets, faith formation directors and liturgists serving multiple sites. Here is the timeline and a graphic presentation as we entered this new world.

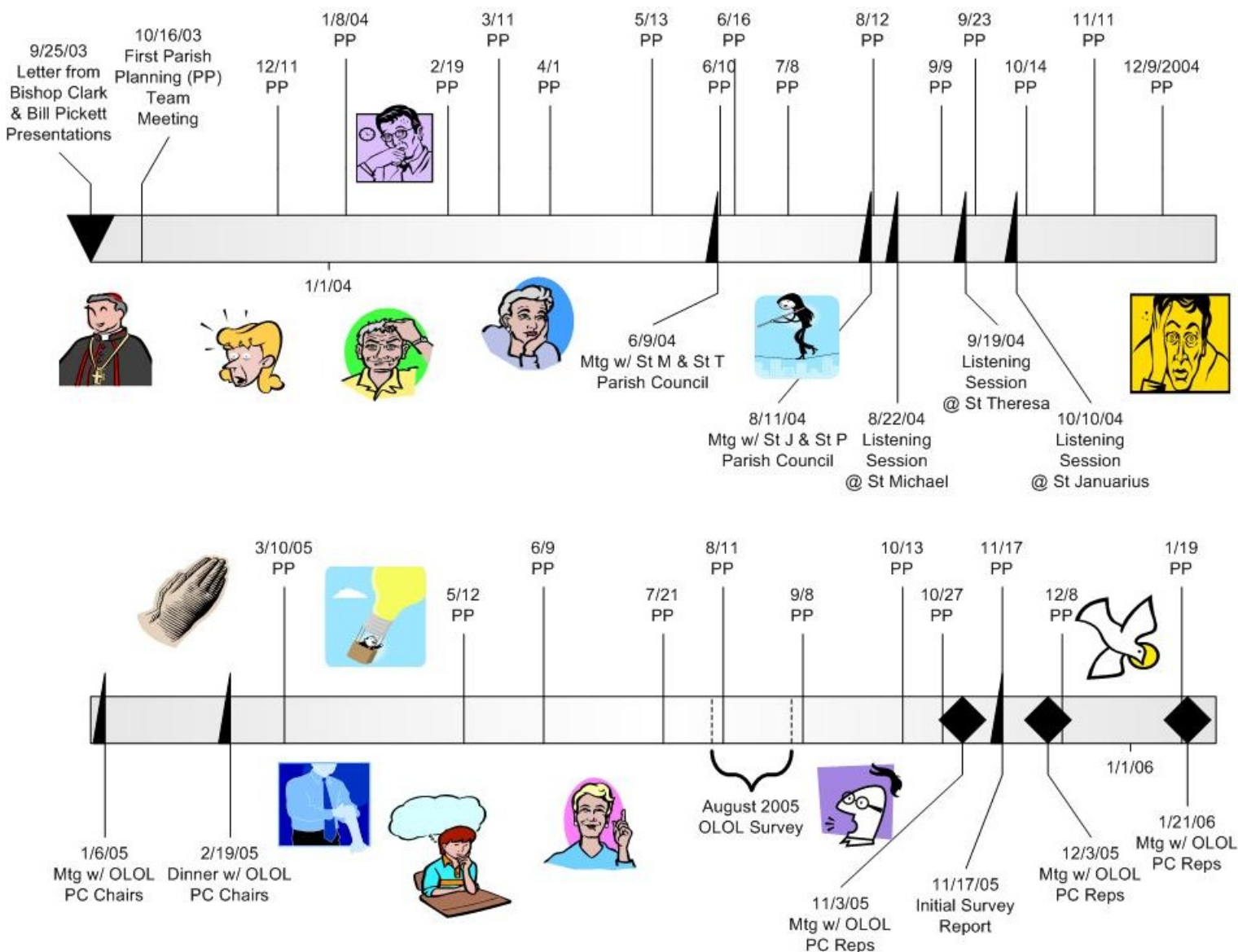
## Fall of 2003:

- Bishop sent letter to Pastor outlining expectations for next Parish Plan
- Bill Pickett of the diocesan Office of Pastoral Planning presented two workshops orienting parish council members and staff to the pastoral planning process
- OLOL Planning Team formed with representatives from the Diocese, each of the six churches and St. Michael's School

## Winter 2003-04:

- Planning Team studied letter and information presented
- Team looked at plans put forth by other communities in the Diocese

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### **Spring/Summer 2004:**

- Team considered several "out-of-the-box" alternatives
- Team recommended 3 Parish Councils, made up of two churches each, as an interim step until a final plan could be authored
- Team met with the two existing Parish Councils and reviewed issues and recommendation
- Parish Council Chairs attended some planning team meetings

### **Summer/Fall 2004:**

- Team determined need to better understand wants/desires of parishioners
- Team created a Mission and Vision Statement for OLOL
- Team held listening sessions to present information and solicit opinions

### **Winter 2004-05:**

- Team decided to take a break during the winter months to pray and recharge

### **Spring/Summer 2005:**

- Survey Committee created and administered survey to all who attend Mass celebrations at OLOL

**By August 2005**, the planning team generated 7 possible models to meet existing constraints:

- 1) Sell everything and buy Camp Koinonia or a property in a suitable location. Build new school, rectory, community center and church.
- 2) Sell all four smaller churches, keep St. Januarius and St. Michael churches open.
- 3) Sell one of the four smaller churches and keep the rest open.
- 4) Sell two of the four smaller churches. Keep St. Michael, St. Januarius, and two other churches (to be determined) open.
- 5) Sell 3 small churches. Keep St. Michael, St. Januarius, and St. Theresa open. Integrate the remaining 3 communities into the other 3.
- 6) Close St. Andrew and combine St. Mary and St. Theresa into one new church build in Gorham. Keep St. Januarius, St. Michael, and St. Patrick open.
- 7) Keep all sites open. Have 2 weekend Masses at St. Michael and St. Januarius. Alternate other weekend Masses between north and south.

### **Fall 2005:**

- Initial feedback from survey was reviewed by team and analyzed for impact on configurations being considered
- Information from Bishop's letter and Bill Pickett's presentations and the six configurations are reviewed with assembly of all Parish Council representatives

After discussing and evaluating these 7 models on a variety of criteria, including the OLOL mission and vision statements, the planning team prioritized 3 models to bring to the pastoral councils for their reaction:

- A) a single parish with two primary worship sites (St. Januarius, St. Michael)
- B) a single parish with three primary worship sites (St. Januarius, St. Michael, St. Theresa)
- C) a single parish with four primary worship sites ((St. Januarius, St. Michael, St. Theresa, and the 4<sup>th</sup> to be determined

**November 3, 2005** – the pastoral councils provided input to the planning team regarding the above 3 models and decided they wanted the opportunity to generate and consider alternative models.

**December 10, 2005** – the pastoral councils met with the planning team and discussed three additional models:

- 1) two parishes, one consisting of St. Michael, St. Theresa and St. Andrew and the other of St. Januarius, St. Mary and St. Patrick (similar to the two cluster model suggested by some St. Januarius parishioners in June 2004)
- 2) a single parish with three primary worship sites (St. Januarius, St. Michael, and St. Mary/St. Theresa sharing one weekend Mass)
- 3) a single parish with four primary worship sites (St. Januarius, St. Michael, St. Theresa and St. Mary)

**January 21, 2006** – the pastoral councils met with the planning team to prioritize which seemed to be the best models and therefore would be taken to parishioners for discussion.

A transitional proposal was made by some St. Mary's parishioners. So that more time could be given to planning and getting used to change, it recommended that St. Mary and St. Theresa first become a single parish and continue to relate to the other four parishes in some way, including sharing staff.

After several hours of work, pastoral councils identified the following two models as those that best address the current reality:

- 1) a single parish with three primary worship sites (St. Michael, St. Januarius, and St. Mary/St. Theresa sharing one weekend Mass in whatever rotation they chose)
- 2) a single parish with four primary worship sites (St. Michael, St. Januarius, St. Theresa and St. Patrick).

## Questions & Answers

*Why were some models eliminated along the way?*

- 1) The two parish model – The two parishes would be of uneven size: St. Michael/St. Theresa/St. Andrew would have 1190 households; St. Januarius/St. Patrick/St. Mary would have 396. Since each parish would have one priest (beginning in 2009), St. Januarius, St. Patrick and St. Mary could each have one weekend Mass. However, since St. Michael seems to need 3 weekend Masses to seat everyone, especially during the summer, St. Theresa and St. Andrew would likely have none. Financial analysis indicated that the smaller parish would not be viable. Perhaps most importantly, the OLOL ministries and staffing that have grown over the past few years, would be put aside as we divided into two parishes and one change (to one single parish) would instead be replaced by multiple, continual and difficult changes over several years.
- 2) A single parish with 2 primary worship sites – after these 3 meetings, most pastoral council members agreed that this will likely be our long-term model—maybe 10 or 15 or 20 years down the road. They simply wanted to move toward it more gradually, and the remaining two models allow that more gradual transition.

*How will St. Michael's School fit in the whole reconfiguration?*

St. Michael's school has been a vital ministry in our area for nearly 125 years, and has served students and families not only from St. Michael's, but also from other parishes within Our Lady of the Lakes. As we reorganize with this pastoral plan, St. Michael's school will become a ministry of Our Lady of the Lakes; efforts already begun by the school community to reach out to and serve the families throughout OLOL will be intensified. While questions of enrollment and viability need to be aggressively addressed, the value of our current ability to provide a Catholic Education to our children should be given every opportunity to flourish. We recommend that both the newly formed OLOL Pastoral Council and the OLOL Finance Council make the integration of St. Michael's school into the newly formed parish a high priority.

*What will happen with Catholic campus ministry at Keuka College?*

Over the past few years, dialogue with students and the chaplain at Keuka College has established that a realistic approach to serving the students at Keuka includes:  
-- helping them take an active role in worship and community life at St. Michael's  
-- providing a number of special liturgies and services on campus through the year  
-- meeting and planning periodically with chaplain and students  
Currently the college is searching for a new chaplain. Once that search is complete, and this plan takes effect, pastoral staff from OLOL will continue to work with the student Catholic organization and the chaplain in developing this ongoing relationship.

*What are the Care Committees all about? What will they do for churches that are closing?*

The Care Committees are intended to help ease the coming changes—to make sure that the needs of people at each church are communicated and addressed. They will serve as a bridge in communication among the parishioners of a particular worship site and with the pastor, staff and OLOL pastoral council. They may pay attention to who seems to be missing and contact them to hear their concerns and needs. They may make sure that local traditions continue, arrange transportation for those who need it, and generally help make the new Our Lady of the Lakes parish a home for all.