

DIOCESE OF TRENTON

FAITH IN OUR FUTURE

ANNUAL COHORT 8 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

THIS REPORT IS DUE TO THE DIOCESAN IMPLEMENTATION COMMISSION
BY MAY 31, 2017

AND

THEREAFTER ANNUALLY ON MAY 15 BEGINNING IN 2018

DATE: May 23, 2017

COHORT: # 8 **COUNTY:** Mercer

COHORT PARISHES, CITIES/TOWNS: St. Alphonsus, Hopewell; St. George, Titusville;
St. James, Pennington

Bishop O'Connell's goals for *FAITH IN OUR FUTURE* are the following:

1. **Strengthen and enliven** the parishes of the Diocese as well as Diocesan-sponsored organizations and ministries.
2. Explore **new models of leadership** in parishes and ministries in institutional settings (schools, colleges, hospitals, nursing homes, prisons, etc.) in order to address the challenges presented by the anticipated retirement of a large number of clergy and religious over the next ten years.
3. **Improve our stewardship** of personnel, finances, and facilities and other parish and Diocesan resources.
4. Establish **collaborative relationships** among the parishes and ministries of the diocese that will build upon the gospel to re/evangelize the local church, especially those who live on the fringes of the church, as well as those who do not yet know Christ.
5. Provide for pastoral ministry to **Hispanic Catholics**, the fastest growing segment of our Diocesan population, within our parishes and organizations.

IMPLEMENTATION COHORT 8 MISSION, VALUES AND VISION STATEMENTS ALONG WITH BACKGROUND INFORMATION

MISSION STATEMENT

The Cohort exists to implement the Faith in Our Future decisions of Bishop O'Connell in a given area of the Diocese. In planning for new models of ministry and undertaking collaboration, the work of the Cohort will strengthen and enliven all of the cohort parishes, improve the stewardship of human, financial and facility resources, and enable more effective evangelization and outreach.

We will meet this mission by:

- Embracing the Bishop's principles of Evangelization, Collaboration, Stewardship, Accountability and Service for the revitalization of our parishes.
- As Cohort Leaders, focusing on the development of Cohort 8 implementation plans that support our Pastor's direction for the Cohort.
- Collaborating with Parish Leaders and Sub-Committees to develop Goals and Objectives that focus on Social Justice, Evangelization and Faith Formation.
- Providing the needed guidance and advice to successfully put into action the plans to accomplish the Cohort's Goals and Objectives.

VALUES STATEMENT

AS A COHORT WE ARE COMMITTED TO OPERATING OUT OF THE FOLLOWING VALUES OR GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR ACTION:

We will work together:

- in a spirit of prayer and ongoing discernment
- with respect for each person, each viewpoint and each culture
- strengthening the communion and sense of community among us
- with charity, generosity, patience, persistence, honesty and humility
- engaging the full participation of all parishioners
- as brothers and sisters co-responsible for the mission of the Church
- hopeful about our future

VISION STATEMENT

AS A COHORT WE HOLD THE FOLLOWING VISION WHICH WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE ACCOMPLISHED IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS:

Our parish cohort, The Catholic Community of Hopewell Valley made up of St. Alphonsus, St. George and St. James parishes, has a unified vision of Faith, family and communion through Christ.

We celebrate a diversity of gifts and talents among our parishes which we use to connect with each other and respond to the needs of the community where we worship, live and work. We promote stewardship as a way of life as we work with all of our families to create a more just and peaceful world.

Inspired by the Holy Spirit and embracing the Gospel, we meet people where they are. We ignite the flame of faith in each other's hearts as we journey together toward our loving and merciful God, revealed both in the sacraments and in the ordinary circumstances of life.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Cohort 8 has set-up four subcommittees as follows:

Linked Faith Formation Committee (“LFF”)
Linked Social Concerns/Justice Committee (“LSC”)
Linked Evangelization Committee (“LEC”)
Linked Communications Committee (“LCC”)

Cohort 8 has been renamed internally to the “Linked Leadership Council (“LLC”). The word “Linked” is used in all the committee names to emphasize what the committees are working towards and to distinguish them from any of the other committees in the parishes.

Each of the members of the Cohort 8 team are also official members of one of the four subcommittees. Therefore, this allows for a Cohort 8 member to be present at each subcommittee meeting to offer support, suggestions and direction. It also ensures effective communications back to the Cohort 8 team regarding the work of all subcommittees.

Three of the subcommittees focus on the three main areas identified in our mission statement which are Faith Formation, Social Justice and Evangelization. The fourth subcommittee is communications which is critical to the success of the whole mission. The communications subcommittee is the largest subcommittee (17 members) and is further broken down into four subcommittees (Strategy, Bulletin, Social Media, Website).

ANNUAL COHORT 8 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

(First year: July 2017 – June 2018)

DATE: May 23, 2017

COHORT #: 8

COUNTY: Mercer

PARISHES IN THE COHORT: St. Alphonsus, Hopewell; St. George, Titusville;
St. James, Pennington

Which Models are you working on? Linkage

BISHOP O’CONNELL’S MODEL DIRECTIVE: Continue current Linkage Model for all three parishes.

LINKED FAITH FORMATION COMMITTEE (“LFF”)

GOAL: Religious Education: Establish an overall Religious Education Operating Model, so that the communities we serve feel welcome in and familiar with a program that serves all, but retains the unique character that each location offers.

ACTION PLAN

Objective(s)	Action Steps	When? How Frequent?	Responsibility	Status *
A. Define Uniform Attendance Policy & Parent Agreement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consolidate attendance policies into one overall policy 2. Consolidate parent agreements into one overall agreement 	a. Define once for school year 2017/2018	Directors of Religious Education, Pastor, LFF team	Complete
B. Establish Uniform Registration Fee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Calculate overall per student registration fee 	a. Define once for school year 2017/2018	Pastor	Complete
C. Harmonize Religious Education Calendars (non-sacramental years)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define individual parish school year calendars for each grade 2. Consolidate to provide various schooling options to parents 	a. Define once for school year 2017/2018	Directors of Religious Education, LFF team	Complete

D. Coordinated Sacramental Preparation Program	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define individual parish school year calendars for grades 2, 7-8. 2. Establish one sacramental curriculum for all parishes 3. Create one combined retreat for parents and candidates 4. Create one uniform policy for community service 5. Establish one location for celebrating Confirmation 	a. Define once for school year 2017/2018	Directors of Religious Education, Pastor, LFF team	Complete
E. Create One Religious Education Registration Form	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Aggregate content required within registration form 2. Create one Registration Form 3. Define Uniform Publication Process (Form published on Parish websites) 4. Explore the possibilities of incorporating an Online Submission 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Define once for school year 2017/2018 b. Online Capabilities – ongoing 	Directors of Religious Education, LFF team	Complete
F. Utilize one Publisher's Textbook	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research various publishers' textbook for content 2. Decide on one Publisher's textbook and classroom materials 3. Research consolidated pricing models/options 4. Consolidate to only one shipment to save on shipping charges 	a. Define once for school year 2017/2018	Directors of Religious Education, Pastor, LFF team	Complete

GOAL: Religious Education: To promote online certification opportunities as well as actively offering enrichment and training open to all catechesis in order to equalize the integrity and knowledge base of the catechesis at each of the linked parishes.

<p>A. Collaborative Catechist Training</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage existing Catechists to participate within formal training (Notre Dame Step Program – Core) 2. Recruit and provide similar training to new Catechists. 3. Encourage group participation within training class to reduce burden of taking class alone. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Formal Training Schedule: June 12th Sept 4th Jan 8th 	<p>Directors of Religious Education, LFF team</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>B. Collaborative Catechist Meeting</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define collaborative meeting schedule for catechists from all three parishes 2. Provide catechists with upcoming training and/or retreats available to strengthen their formations 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Semiannual b. Ongoing 	<p>Directors of Religious Education, LFF team</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

LINKED SOCIAL CONCERNS / SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE (“LSC”)

GOAL: Engender a spirit of mutual acceptance, cooperation, and Christian fellowship among our linked parishes so that we may better understand and meet the needs of the less fortunate.

A. Calendaring of Social Concerns Events	1. Collect events calendar info from all 3 parishes	a. 9/1/2017	LSC team; Parish Admin	Complete
	2. Determine events that need to be coordinated	b. 10/1/2017	LSC team; Pastor	Ongoing
	3. Work with ministry leaders to develop periodic event dates that will be in sync with goals of the parish and the LLC	c. 12/1/2017	LSC team; Ministry Leaders	Ongoing
	4. Establish a process for maintaining/updating the calendar of SC events that will eliminate conflict and further benefit the mission of the LLC	d. 2/1/2018	LSC team; Parish Admin; LCC team	Ongoing
B. Effective and efficient collaboration of SC ministries	1. Identify SC ministries at all 3 parishes	a. 9/1/2017	LSC team	Complete
	2. Gather information on each (Leaders, membership, activities, etc.)	b. 11/1/2017	LSC team; Ministry Leaders	Complete
	3. Assess status: active, somewhat active, inactive	c. 1/15/2018	LSC team; Ministry Leaders	Complete
	4. Determine which ministries should be combined, linked, expanded, eliminated, or initiated	d. 3/1/2018	LSC team; Ministry Leaders; Pastor	Begun
	5. Prioritize, schedule and initiate plans for above actions	e. 5/1/2018	LSC team; Ministry Leaders; Pastor	Begun

C. Provide Educational Opportunities for Parishioners on Catholic social teachings	1. Develop behavioral guidelines for a Catholic approach in all our social-outreach-related activities	a. 11/1/2017	LSC team; LFF team; Pastor	Begun
	2. Develop and provide educational offering(s) for all SC Teams on engagement actions in community outreach	b. 3/1/2018 1x/year as needed after that	LSC team w/ LFF team; Diocese Resources	Begun
	3. Sponsor educational events related to Social Justice issues	c. 2x/year initially; as needed after that	LSC team w/ Diocese; LFF team	No Action

LINKED EVANGELIZATION COMMITTEE (“LEC”)

GOAL: Increase collaborative efforts to evangelize externally and (mostly) internally so that we increase our faith and the size of our faith community.

<p>A. Create and strategically distribute coordinated “Welcome Brochures” throughout the 3 parishes</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Design 3 separate brochures for the 3 parishes that clearly point to our linked form yet highlight the unique character of each. (Model after already-existing St. James brochure) 2. Distribute them: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. At the Christmas & Easter liturgies b. At the various fellowship events of the parishes c. At parish tables at community events d. As part of new parishioner registration packets 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Finalize design, approval, and printing by early August 2017 b. Initial distribution as part of new parishioner info in August, 2017 c. Further distribution after that as described in action Step 2 	<p>Welcome/hospitality ministries of each parish, coordinated by the LEC of the LLC</p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p>B. Revitalize and build out the “Mom’s Group” in all 3 parishes in a sustainable way</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gain “lessons learned” perspectives from the St. James “Mustard Seeds” group leaders 2. Find ways to ensure dads as well as moms have ways to participate 3. Be sure to include babysitting options as appropriate 	<p>TBD</p>	<p>Individual parish teams, coordinated with each other through the LEC of the LLC</p>	<p>Cancelled. “Mom’s Group” is currently active</p>
<p>C. Use existing and new parish social events as opportunities for evangelization</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Effectively advertise ALL such events of each parish to all 3 via all communication channels 2. Ensure prayer is included in each event 3. Use each event as an opportunity to distribute the Welcome Brochure (Objective A) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Every current fellowship event at the 3 parishes (large or small), looking for opportunities to expand the number of them. 	<p>Individual parish teams, supported by the LEC of the LLC</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

<p>D. Send anniversary cards/notes for all baptisms, deaths, weddings, etc.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine what of this is already done in each parish & by whom. 2. Revitalize these efforts and build them out across all life events in all three parishes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Anniversaries of life events 	<p>Individual parish teams, coordinated with each other through the LEC of the LLC</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>E. Welcome letter to parishioners</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Draft a letter for each parish, modeled on the one Fr. Mike (as new pastor) sent to all families of St. George inviting them back to more active participation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. One time (early fall?), possibly with annual(?) follow-ups 	<p>Letter to be drafted by LEC with/for pastor</p>	<p>Cancelled</p>

LINKED COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE (“LCC”)

GOAL: Strategy: To create a comprehensive plan to support the “Faith in our Future” implementation teams in a way that creates community among three parishes, builds awareness in the broader community, supports the objective of improved efficiency and outlines oversight of communication efforts.

A. Facilitate linked parish naming efforts	1. Assist with linked parish naming strategy	a. 6/1/17	Strategy sub-team, LLC	Complete
B. Define Branding elements – logo, tagline, colors, photographs, video	1. Present Branding concepts to the LLC for consideration. 2. Meet on a regular basis to develop logo, tagline, colors	a. By 9/1/17 b. Schedule monthly meetings	Strategy sub-team, LLC Strategy sub-team	Complete
C. Define ongoing communication plan to publicize Cohort 8 updates	1. Define plan for frequency of town halls, pulpit talks, web updates and bulletin updates	a. By 10/1/17	Strategy sub-team, LLC	Ongoing. Publicity will be focus area for 2018
D. Develop a style guide for use across platforms	1. Draft style guide to provide direction for all linked parish communication	a. By 12/1/17	Strategy sub-team, LLC	Complete

GOAL: Bulletin: Develop a common bulletin for all three parishes by March, 2018.

A. Research vendors, templates, parish directory, envelopes	1. Contact vendors to identify rebates, design support capabilities, color and insert capabilities	a. 9/1/17	Liturgical Publications Inc. – Judy John Patrick Publishing – Diane Bon Venture – Eileen JS Paluch - Michelle	Complete
B. Research / Benchmark other bulletin formats	1. Research paper and online bulletins of other linked or merged parishes in the Diocese and beyond to identify best practices. 2. Identify what content should be included and excluded	a. 9/1/17 b. 9/1/17	Bulletin sub-team Bulletin sub-team, LLC	Complete
C. Determine software to be used for bulletin development	1. Work with suppliers to understand software needs. Define potential cost of software purchase if needed	a. 9/1/17	Bulletin sub-team	Complete
D. Define bulletin governance, maintenance and roles (weekly support)	1. Identify resource needs, training required, content owner(s) 2. Define protocols for getting information included in bulletin (timing, format, etc.)	a. 12/1/17 b. 2/1/18	Bulletin sub-team Bulletin sub-team, LLC	Guidelines for posting things to bulletin – Ongoing

GOAL: Social Media: Develop a cohesive strategy for various social media platforms that can be shared across the three linked parishes.

<p>A. Investigate options for Facebook and define plan for the three linked parishes</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine if we should have (3) separate FB pages or a combined page for the three parishes 2. Define support requirements and roles to keep page current 3. Develop protocols for items to be posted 	<p>a. 10/1/17 b. 10/1/17 c. 10/1/17</p>	<p>Social Media sub-team Social Media sub-team Social Media sub-team</p>	<p>Complete</p>
<p>B. Investigate options to implement Twitter account(s) for the three linked parishes</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine if we should have (3) separate Twitter accounts or a combined Twitter presence for the three parishes 2. Define support requirements and roles to keep account current 3. Develop protocols for items to be posted 	<p>a. 1/1/18 b. 1/1/18 c. 1/1.18</p>	<p>Social Media sub-team Social Media sub-team, LLC Social Media sub-team</p>	<p>Cancelled No priority to implement Twitter at this time</p>
<p>C. Develop a plan to enable e-mail blasts across the three linked parishes</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Investigate e-mail programs like Mail Chimp, Constant Contact 2. Choose program and train users 3. Develop robust e-mail list of parishioners across the three linked 	<p>10/1/17 12/1/17 4/1/18</p>	<p>Social Media sub-team Social Media sub-team Social Media sub-team, Parish administrators</p>	<p>Complete</p>
<p>D. Develop a Social Media calendar to maximize seasonal/liturgical event publicity</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define important dates, events and holidays to publicize across the three linked parishes 	<p>4/1/18</p>	<p>Social Media sub-team</p>	<p>Ongoing. Tie into Strategy/ Publicity goals for 2018</p>

GOAL: Website: Tightly link the current three parish websites on a standardized eCatholic platform to improve accessibility and promote electronic church communications.

A. Inventory and harmonize current websites to “temporary” eCatholic site	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inventory content 2. Eliminate unneeded content 3. Ensure ownership and usefulness of content for website linkage 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. 9/1/17 b. 9/1/17 c. 11/1/17 	Website sub-team	Complete
B. Standardize website for ease of use	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement best practices for linked church website 2. Incorporate branding and style guidelines from Strategy sub-team 3. User testing for completeness and ease of use 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. 11/1/17 b. 1/1/18 c. 2/1/18 	Website sub-team	Complete
C. Streamline shared services presentation on website	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify all shared services 2. Implement best practices for presentation 3. Review and approval of consolidation by all Linkage teams 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. 11/1/17 b. 1/1/18 c. 4/1/18 	Website sub-team	Ongoing. Two year focus will be on shared website
D. Establish governance for website	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Roles defined and content owners trained 2. Periodic reviews and feedback 3. Usage and Search analytics feedback loop to improve website 4. Cross training to maintain website 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. 4/1/18 b. Ongoing c. Ongoing d. Ongoing 	Website sub-team	Complete. Training ongoing