



**Joint Parish Planning  
Town Hall Meeting  
October 21, 2024  
St. John the Baptist Church**

On Monday, October 21, 2024, at 6:30PM the fourth and final Town Hall Meeting for Joint Parish Planning was held at St. John the Baptist Church. Approximately eighty (80) people representing St. John's, St. Joseph's, St. Leo & St. Ann's, St. Paul's, St. Peter's, and Transfiguration were in attendance. Clergy in attendance included: Father Seán O'Brien, Father Paul Angelicchio, Father Bob Kelly, Deacon Nick Rosher, Deacon Ed Doyle, and Deacon John MacGaffick.

Father Seán welcomed everyone and explained that the purpose of these Town Hall Meetings was to provide a forum for asking questions, listening, and sharing. Father Paul opened the meeting with a prayer. Father Paul explained that the subcommittees are working very hard to make this transition as smooth as possible. He reminded everyone that through the work of the New Name Subcommittee "Sacred Heart" was the name selected by Parishioners and will be submitted to the Bishop for approval. He also emphasized that many decisions need to be made that will effect everyone and that the Pastors understand that change is difficult. However, existing circumstances are dictating that we make changes. The good news is that we have a voice through the work being accomplished by the Joint Parish Councils, the Subcommittees and through our Town Hall Meetings. The Pastors are also always open to addressing your concerns and questions.

Father Paul and Father Seán then invited questions from the attendees.

1. Several questions were posed related to the Weekend Mass Schedule and the need for the schedule to be accomplished by 1 priest.

The Weekend Liturgy Subcommittee is working to develop a schedule that is the most convenient for parishioners. They are considering the number of attendees, building capacity, and travel time. Currently there are 11 Masses celebrated each weekend. We must reduce this schedule to 5 Masses because even though for the first year we will have the luxury of 3 priests available, that might not always be the situation. As a Vicar, Father Seán must provide coverage in the event of an emergency throughout his Vicariate which includes our new Parish sites, churches in Taberg, Camden, Boonville, Forestport, Otter Lake, Florence, Greater Oneida area, and the Route 20 Catholic Community. In addition, if one of our Parish priests is on vacation or ill, this potentially leaves 1 priest in our new Parish to cover all our weekend Masses.

The schedule for our 5 weekend Masses will be based upon the guidance provided by the Bishop. Our weekend schedule will be comprised of 2 Saturday Vigil Masses (one in Rome and one in a rural location), 2 Sunday morning Masses, and 1 Sunday evening Mass. Once the Mass schedule is developed it will be constant with no weekly rotation of times or locations. However, if after a reasonable period we find that the schedule is not working, appropriate adjustments can be made.

2. What will happen with our Music Ministry? Music is an integral part of our liturgy. Barry Russo and Anthony Stavola will be working together to bring beautiful music to all Masses. Mrs. Burgdorf will be available to assist with Funerals. Our coming together also provides the potential for choir music at every Mass.
3. What is the plan for daily Masses? The current plan is to provide 2 Masses Monday – Friday. We want to accommodate those who work and the late risers. Consideration is being given to an early morning Mass

(i.e. 7:00 AM) and then either midday or early evening. Nothing is definite yet, however, there will be no Communion Services.

4. What will happen on special occasions such as Confirmation, First Eucharist, Christmas and Easter? How will Confessions be handled? This is the last year we will celebrate Confirmation and First Eucharist in multiple churches. Beginning July 2025 we will be one parish with one celebration of these special events. We still need to work on the details for handling the increased number of people that attend during these times. Currently, we don't know if we will need to add additional Masses or adjust our schedule for Christmas and Easter. The schedule we have been using for holydays and Ash Wednesday has allowed us to accommodate everyone and a full Church leads to a wonderful celebration.

The schedule for Confession is still under consideration.

5. How will funerals be handled? Funerals can be held in any of the Churches. The day and time of the funeral will be dependent on the availability of the priests. Father Seán noted that the same will be true for Baptisms and Weddings.
6. How will finances be handled for Sacred Heart Parish? Who will be creating the budget? How will we maintain all our facilities? What will happen with our Diocesan assessments such as Hope Appeal? The money from all the Parishes will be combined for our new Sacred Heart Parish. The money from our current Parishes doesn't go to the Diocese. There will be one envelope and one bulletin. The budget for our new Parish will be developed and monitored by the Trustees and the Finance Committee. The Finance and Facilities Subcommittees are currently working to collect and assess the data we need to build our new budget such as staffing needs, and repairs and maintenance of all our facilities including our cemeteries. In terms of Diocesan assessments, we will have one assessment which is based on our total income. Coming together should make us financially stronger. Both St. John's and St. Peter's are growing with the addition of young families and if all are good stewards our new Parish will flourish. Father Seán acknowledged that our savings were affected by our contributions to the Chapter 11 Trust, but we must continue to work together and move forward.
7. What is going to happen to the organizations in each Church? The Social Subcommittee is trying to provide opportunities for all the organizations and members to meet each other and potentially work together where that makes sense. Coming together as one Parish should provide the opportunity for membership growth. Vibrant organizations create a vibrant Parish, and they are important for spreading faith and sustaining the mission of our Church.
8. What about Faith Formation? The Faith Formation Subcommittee is working together with all the Directors of Religious Education (DRE's) to build a strong program. Starting this year all children in our Faith Formation Program are learning from the same curriculum, using the same books and materials. The goal is to allow the maximum amount of scheduling flexibility for parents and children. You will be able to attend Faith Formation Classes at a time and location that best meets your needs.

Father Seán reminded everyone that though this was the last Town Hall Meeting if anyone has questions you are encouraged to call or email him. Change is challenging and the transition will take time. Not everything will be completed by July 1, 2025. Your prayers for a successful process are needed.

Father Paul thanked everyone for coming and sharing their thoughts, questions, and concerns. He closed the meeting with a prayer.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 PM.

*(This summary was prepared by members of the Communications Subcommittee who were in attendance.)*