

May 25, 2025 Bulletin

All Things New ... What Is Happening?

Our One in Christ ACC “All Things New” Planning Committee has met twice with all the ACCs in the St. Cloud Deanery for an overview of the planning process for the Diocese and a review of the Guidebook that will outline the steps for planning in each ACC. We met on March 24 at St. Augustine Church and May 6 at St. Francis Xavier. These large-group meetings are being facilitated by our Diocesan Planning Team of Brenda Kresky, David Fremo, Joe Spaniol, and Bill Casey.

Our All Things New Planning Committee consists of three persons from each of our One in Christ parishes, along with our pastors. Members are: Jeff Brunn, Julie Bruns, Danna Gasperlin, Dana Howard, Kathy Janku, Adam Martin, Tom Offerdahl, Jeff Popp, Shirley Scapanski, Jeff Soderholm, Jenessa Strande, Lee Woods, Fr. Tom Knoblach, and Fr. Ron Weyrens.

Successful planning requires many voices, consistent communication, and sharing information as it becomes available. You are encouraged to visit the diocesan website for the latest developments, background, and understanding the planning process at stcdio.org/all-things-new/. The Guidebook is slated to be online by the end of May. More will be added as it is developed.

As shared earlier, the Planning Committee’s main role is to facilitate parishioner input, communicate our discussions and progress, and compile the proposed plan to submit to Bishop Neary by December 31, 2025. The Committee will write the plan, but needs your voices to do it well.

Implementation of each ACC’s plan will begin in July, 2026. A key point: to begin implementation does not mean that everything will change overnight. The plans will indicate a timeframe for implementation with some parts that can be phased in over time. Simply by way of example: “We will have a common ACC festival by 2028” or “We will develop a unified marriage enrichment program in the next year.”

When diocesan leadership met with consultants from Partners Edge, we talked about three main elements in all planning we do: the What, the Why, and the How. The “How” – what practical decisions will we make for our future vitality – is the work that is now beginning. But a sound “How” depends on and is shaped by the What and the Why.

The What is our goal, what we are trying to accomplish. For our diocese and each ACC, the “What” is found in our Guiding Principles, essentially the very purpose and mission Jesus entrusts to us. These are:

Missionary Discipleship: As baptized Catholics, we are all called to the evangelizing mission of the Church. Rooted in this mission, together we are guided by a desire to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ in the world by living and sharing a life of faith.

Sacramental Life: The sacraments are outward signs of grace that God gives to people to help them live a life close to Jesus. We are guided by the call to full, conscious and active participation of the faithful in sacramental life and prayer of the Church.

Engaging the Laity: God has given each person a unique set of gifts and charisms to live out their individual vocation. Through revitalized prayer and formation opportunities, encounters with family, friends, co-workers and neighbors, we can welcome new faces into the fold. We are guided by our strengths to stimulate renewal in the Church.

Listening as a Way of Being Church: The Holy Spirit calls us to pray, listen and discern together what God is asking of us today. By listening to each other, we are guided by learning to best respond to the spiritual needs of all people in our diocese.

Prudent Stewardship: All our resources — human, structural, financial — are gifts from God. With a deep sense of gratitude, we are guided by the use of resources to achieve our shared mission in a healthy and responsible way.

The Why is the reason we need to adapt to our changed circumstances with financial challenges, lower attendance and sacramental numbers, fewer clergy, facilities that no longer serve the same populations as when they were built, and unintended inefficiencies due to duplication of services and lack of coordination. The data have been shared previously; these are not just impressions but identified trends that we must address. That “Why” is reflected in the Design Parameters, a clear framework for each ACC to consider the decisions it faces in its unique circumstances.

Because the Design Parameters require more careful explanation, they will be featured in a future communication. They include accessibility to Sunday Mass, budgeted ministries, the expected workload and mission of parish priests, the best use of buildings, finances, and governance structures. More to come.

Please pray for, participate in, and vision with the All Things New process that we may be the Church Jesus intends us to be, for the service to God’s people on their way to the Kingdom prepared for us from the foundation of the world.