

Frequently Asked Questions

**Creating the Catholic Community of Christ the Good Shepherd:
We seek the best possible outcome.**

Answers to 'need to know now' questions:

1. Every parish will maintain its current Mass schedule. Any changes will occur on July 1.
2. All parish programs and events will continue as currently scheduled.
3. Continue to work with your pastoral leaders and the parish staffs, we remain the Catholic Community in Oswego called to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ.
4. You will be continually informed as we begin to accompany one another into the future.
5. Let us accompany one another in love. The process of the last 18 months will continue to evolve. Everything related to the process is intended to provide the Oswego Catholic Community with the ability to move successfully into the future as it continues to join Jesus Christ in proclaiming the Kingdom of God.

1 What concerns initiated the current process of unification?

The number of parishes located in the Port City has long been a concern of parishioner's and pastors. The size and resources available to carry on the mission of the Church is one vital concern. The maintenance of aging parish campuses has limited the varieties of parish life and programs desired by the Catholic Community. In 2017 local leadership asked the diocese to allow this process to take place. The intentional unification discussion has been underway for eighteen months.

2. Please describe the process used to select the new campus.

The discernment process engaged the thoughtful work of the Parish Facilities and Real Estate Committee and the Steering committee. Following dialogues among the pastoral leaders, with staffs, trustees and members of the pastoral and finance councils of the parishes to gather a sense of what the parish core identity and programs, the panel asked for two studies. A Real Estate appraisal was prepared by Stoop Appraisals and an Architect's study was provided by Teitsche-Kent-Fay Architects PC. As a point of fact, both study teams were, as a matter of contract, told to offer pertinent information without reaching a recommendation. The conclusions were to be the pervue of the local committees.

As soon as each of the studies were completed and presented on March 27, the Facilities committee went to work on its recommendation. The discussions were complex, data driven, future oriented, pastoral and thoughtful. Members were sensitive to the historic nature of their tasks. As a result, they presented the steering committee with two potential campus possibilities. They were unable to reach a singular conclusion.

On April 22-23, the Steering Committee received the report. They were well aware that they would now need to make a recommendation to the Bishop for the site of Christ the Good Shepherd Parish. The integrity of the process, the clear advocacy of locations, the similarity to the previous conversations were all engaging and challenging. There was disappointment when one's favorite option moved from consideration. There was clarity that the campus would not be able to be elected by vote; that it would need to be a consensus of the body.

In a meeting at the new site, a week later, there was a poignant reflective tone, accompanied by hope for the future. It was abundantly clear that all had done their best to fulfill the mandate that they were given. The recommendation that St. Paul's would become the Catholic Community of Christ the Good Sheperd ws sent to the bishop for his consideration. We owe these men and women a debt of gratitude and support.

3. How will the pastor of Christ the Good Shepherd be chosen?

The Diocese has a process for priest personnel. The process begins by inviting priests to indicate a desire to become the pastor of a parish. The Priests' Personnel Committee, whose voting members are elected by the priests of the diocese, meet to discuss candidates. They make a recommendation to the bishop. After due prayer and consideration, the bishop discusses the parish with the priest that he selects for appointment as pastor.

This ministry will be challenging for the pastor and it will require a team of deacons, well-trained lay leaders, and the generosity of retired pastors who choose to assist with the Sacramental life of the Church as 'assisting priests.'

4. Why one full time active priest?

Since 1983, our bishops have told us that our future would likely involve fewer priests. Priests come from the same source that the always have, from Catholic families. In 1974 there were 400 priests ministering in the diocese. Today the number of full-time active priests to be assigned in the diocese is 85. To successfully be a pastor in the current reality new ways to lead are needed in parish life. A variety of deacons, lay-professionals and volunteers will be engaged with the pastor and parishioners in guiding the parish. The old model is changing, which is engaging more lay people in key roles in parish life.

5. We hear about the involvement of "**Pastoral Life Committees**" who have a responsibility for the programs and events that are a part of a healthy parish. Collaboration is critical. What are the roles given to each?
 - a. **Faith Formation** includes all faith and Sacramental and formation activity including traditional religious education, Sacrament preparation (Baptism, First Penance, First Eucharist, and Confirmation], Adult Faith Formation.
 - b. **Welcoming and Keeping Parish Traditions.** All of Oswego's Catholics will now be a part of the Catholic Community of Christ the Good Shepherd. It needs to be stated that this community is not simply St. Paul's with a new name. Even long-time parishioners of St. Paul are becoming part of a new parish. This committee is dedicated to bringing parishioners together, assuring that no one is left behind, and bringing the important traditions of each legacy parish into Christ the Good Shepherd Parish.
 - c. **Prayer and Worship;** "Unless the Lord Builds the house, in vain do the workers labor." This committee is to facilitate the blending of all Eucharistic Ministers, Lectors, Ushers, Altar Servers, and others is a key role in preparation for the new parish. All are equal members of Christ the Good Shepherd. This ministerial team is to encourage Holy Hours, times and/or days of reflection, the Liturgy of the Hours, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and, with others, a program of retreats for adults, particularly for those who minister.

- d. **Evangelization and Community Building:** The goal of this gathering of disciples is to recommend and implement opportunities for Evangelization (i.e. Christ Life and similar programs are examples), with others to foster a program of retreat opportunities for adults, to hold events and activities that will build relationships in Christ the Good Shepherd Community.
- e. **Communications:** The goal of the communications committee is to assure an on-going positive flow of communications from the parish leadership with parishioners. These communications in print, by announcement, social media, and a communication such as "flock note," will keep parishioners informed about the lives of their community.

6. How will the parish be staffed?

As we approach this question we all understand that since 1965 there have been many changes in the Northeastern United States and in our parishes.

One change has been that many roles formerly lived by priests and religious are now engaged by deacons, well-trained laity, parish staffs and volunteers. The daily rhythm of parish life has changed. These trends will continue into the future.

The 400,000 Catholics of the late 1970's is now the 225,000 Catholics of 2019. Our infrastructure was built to serve a larger diocese with greater human and financial resources. With these thoughts in mind:

What about current parish staffs?

The Steering Committee appointed a trustee committee to offer wise counsel in the administration and governance of the parish. This committee is to guide the parishes through the time of transition. When the new pastor is appointed, they will work with him. The current pastoral leaders have been and will continue to meet with parish staffs to discuss the new parish and their potential roles in it.

- 7. There are local parishes that do not seem to be involved in the creation of the Catholic Community of Christ the Good Shepherd. What of their futures.
 - **St. Peter's and Sacred Heart Mission:**

In 2007, when the current pastoral plan was announced, it stated that St Peter's and Sacred Heart Mission would merge into St. Paul's upon the retirement of

Father George Wurz. This was re-affirmed in 2013. The only change in the previous announcement is that they will be merged into Christ the Good Shepherd.

- **Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Minnetto:**

The current process does not involve Our Lady of Perpetual Help Mission. As we move forward, the parishes not involved to date will be reviewed.

- **Our Lady of the Rosary Mission** which is served by St. Mary's

At the moment, the way forward for Our Lady of the Rosary Mission, Hannibal is under discussion. The pastoral leadership in Fulton and Oswego is sensitive to the needs of the Hannibal community.

8. How will the lives of the parishes be celebrated and remembered

The home of the Catholic Community of Christ the Good Shepherd will develop professionally designed history centers (displays) that will tell the story of the legacy parishes. In addition representatives of the legacy parishes will select a few meaningful items that will become part of the interior worship environment in the Church of Christ the Good Shepherd. Celebrating the history of the Oswego Community will demonstrate that the Catholic Community of Christ the Good Shepherd stands on the shoulders of those who built the Catholic faith community of Oswego.

9. How will the Church building and other parish property be used?

Until the parish campuses are given to another use, Christ the Good Shepherd will make use of them for a variety of purposes. Each Church may be used, in this period, for weddings, funerals, daily Mass (Monday – Friday), and for other uses designated by the pastor. Weekend Mass will be celebrated in the Church of the Good Shepherd.

Other parish buildings will be used by the parish as educational, meeting, and administrative purposes as designated.

10. What will the process for transitioning from our current parishes as we become the Catholic Community of Christ the Good Shepherd? We anticipate that St. Mary's, St. Joseph, St. Paul and St. Stephen's will each have a suitably planned and celebrated closing liturgy and reception. These gatherings will be planned by the appropriate pastoral leader and the specific

community. The following week, July 6-7, the establishment of the Catholic Community of Christ the Good Shepherd will be celebrated in Mass and Reception.

11. What will we need to be attentive to during the first years of Christ the Good Shepherd?

As the Oswego Catholic Community gathers as the Catholic Community of Christ the Good Shepherd it will be important to focus on the basics; that is to praise God, build up the parish, witness to the good news of Jesus Christ, and celebrate the many gifts with which God has blessed us.

Other Questions:

- **The dedication or consecration of a Church.**

A number of individuals have raised the question of the lasting or permanent impact of a Church being "consecrated" rather than "dedicated." The 1983 Code of Canon Law addresses the question:

Canon 1205 reads, "Sacred places are those which have been dedicated for divine worship or for the burial of the faithful through a dedication or blessing which liturgical books prescribe for this purpose.

The 1917 Code of Canon Law was abrogated in 1983. The process for changing the status of a dedicated Church are found in Canons 1212 and 1222. An example of a 'consecrated' Church given to a new use would be our first Cathedral, St. John the Evangelist which serves the poor of the Syracuse community as Samaritan Center