

Ottawa West Deanery
Wednesday, March 2, 2011 – 7:00PM-9:00PM
At St. Michael and All Angels

Meeting Notes

Archdeacon Chris Dunn opened the meeting with a prayer, followed by introductions.

The meeting was well attended with 7 of the 9 parishes in Ottawa West Deanery represented:

Present: St. Mark's, St. Richard's, St. Michael's, St. Stephen's, St. Martin's, All Saints Westboro, St. Matthias.

Regrets: St. Luke's, St. Barnabas

Ron Brophy of the Parish Growth and Renewal Committee (PGRC) facilitated the evening's discussions. The PowerPoint presentation used as a discussion guide is appended to these notes.

1. Meeting Objectives

- Explore concerns and expectations regarding the future of ministry in the deanery.
- Gauge the willingness of the parishes to begin the process of area ministry planning on a deanery-wide level.
- Discuss a possible process to guide future discussions between 2 or more parishes toward the development of a "ministry plan".

2. Parish Expectations (Open discussion)

The comments below appear in the order in which they were expressed:

- Concern about the number of churches in the Deanery; how long can we possibly sustain them with diminishing resources?
- It is hoped that this process will provide a sharing of 'best practices' not only from within the Ottawa Diocese but from anywhere within the Anglican communion.
- Are there ministry overlaps between parishes? If so, then shared resources might be a more efficient way to deliver such ministries.
- Do we need to explore new models of ministry?
- The concern is not just about the number of churches, but also about the age of the churches (reference to growing capital expenses).
- We must not lose focus on the delivery of ministry. In fact, ministry must be at the heart of any process we embark on.
- There is always the danger of becoming too inward-looking.
- How do we become visionary while dealing with the immediate situations, priorities and the day-to-day realities of parish life and ministry?

- We must consider the staffing requirements (clergy and other) to support ministry.
- How do other churches deal with change?
- Are we willing to change? If so, how much?
- Subtle transformation/change in models of ministry.
- We need to understand the more recent demographic patterns in our parishes and adjust our ministries to respond.
- Explore the potential of developing niche churches.

3. Overview of PGRC Ministry

Ron provided a brief overview of the Parish Growth and Renewal Committee (PGRC), including the following points:

- The PGRC is a sub-committee of the Parish Ministry Development Committee.
- 2011 is the PGRC's third year of active involvement with parishes. In all, the PGRC has worked with, or is currently involved with, 54 congregations across the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa.
- Its mandate is to work collaboratively with parishes and congregations and to facilitate discussions leading to the delivery of "the best possible ministry with available resources".
- The role of the PGRC teams assigned to work with individual parishes and congregations is to facilitate a constructive dialogue which allows parishes to identify the best way forward.
- The PGRC's role is evolving from congregational support to include area ministry planning and facilitation.

4. Ottawa West Deanery from 10,000 ft. – Open Discussion

This part of the agenda was intended to generate discussion about the current state of the parishes in the Ottawa West Deanery. A PowerPoint slide was used to provide a high-level snapshot of each parish.

While issues vary from parish to parish, there are some themes that stand out:

- Steady/stagnating attendance resulting in fewer people to carry out ministries and financial resources being eroded by increased operating expenses.
- Some planned capital projects (e.g. new roof, elevator, etc.) requiring additional funding.
- There are no critical situations in any of the parishes in the deanery. However, several comments were made about how quickly a stable situation can change and that we should prepare accordingly.
- Generally, parishes tend to deliver ministry within their respective boundaries. While there are exceptions, this 'silo' effect prevails. Among the exceptions, it is more likely that an Anglican parish will explore shared ministry with an adjacent United Church parish (or other Christian denomination) than with another Anglican parish.

5. Area Ministry - Issues and Opportunities - (Open discussion)

This portion of the meeting explored various concepts of shared ministry that two or more parishes in the deanery might chose to develop together. The question posed to the participants was "What can we do together that we could not do as individual parishes?".

It was suggested by one participant that the question should perhaps read "What can we do together *that we don't want to do alone?*".

The comments appear in the order in which they were expressed. They are organized as either opportunities or issues:

Opportunities

- Children's ministry, e.g. joint Messy Churches. This could be supported with shared resources that either parish could not afford on its own.
- The same concept could be applied to 'youth' ministry and programs.
- There are opportunities in 'targeting' our available resources to support high-demand ministries which are shaped by local demographics and community trends. The example given was about the futility of investing resources in building up a church school when the local demographics indicate a lack of young families.
- Cooperation for Christian Education.
- An historical example of shared ministry between St. Mark's, St. Richard's and St. Mike's was discussed. It concerned baptismal prep and confirmation. It became difficult to manage because there were no 'dedicated' shared resources applied to developing the ministry.
- Shared roster for seniors visitations. Could two or more parishes share a van to support this ministry? The demand for this type of pastoral care will only increase in the future.
- Parish nursing resource employed by the parish(s). This could allow for the confluence of health and spirituality.
- Multi-parish program to gather and deliver used goods to needy individuals or families.
- Address the needs of a 'mission field'.
- Pooled fundraising resources between parishes.

Issues

- Shared ministry needs communication. The use of diocesan website to share progress and invite feedback is an example. The success of shared ministry initiatives also depends on open and regular inter-parish communications.
- Commit to deanery-level communication resources
- Intentional sharing of information between parishes.
- There is a need for us to transform from 'worshipping congregations' to 'caring congregations'.
- Better utilization of our buildings and property.
- Why do we have two downtown churches?

- Commitment to this process by the Diocese is crucial. We need to know the Diocese is behind us.
- Success depends on clergy and laity working together.

6. Where do we go from here? – (Open Discussion)

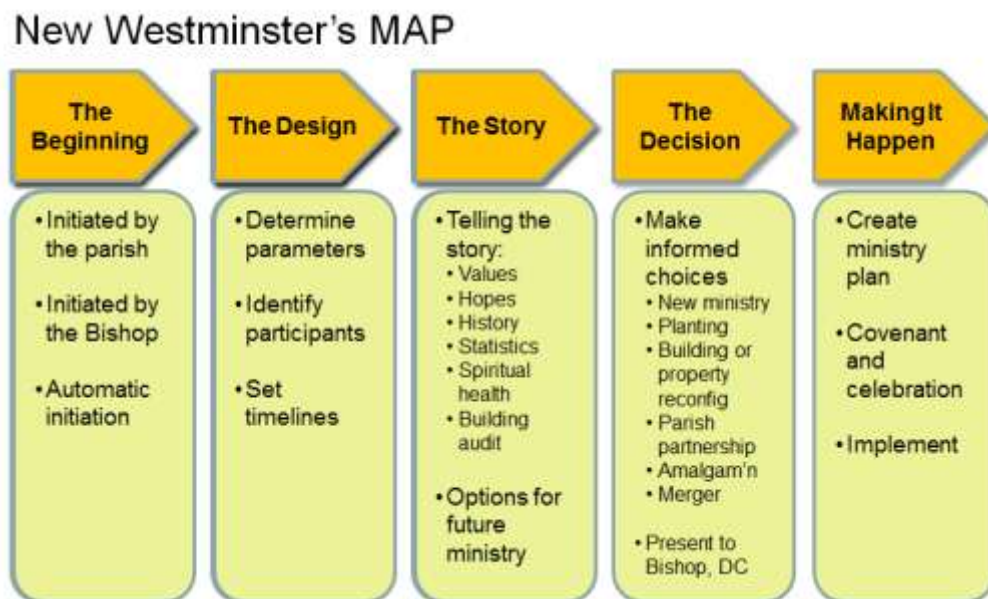
This portion of the meeting focused on a possible approach that the Ottawa West Deanery might adopt to take this evening’s discussion and level of interest to the next stage and a brief recap of immediate next steps.

Process/Approach

The Ministry Assessment Process (MAP), developed in the Diocese of New Westminster and successfully implemented there and in other dioceses in Canada over the past 10+ years, was presented and discussed at a high level.

Below is a summary of the process:

A more detailed description of the process is appended to these meeting notes.



Comments on Process by Participants

- Given the potential 2-4 year span of the process, there was concern expressed over keeping the process momentum going while dealing with turnover in leadership teams.
- The parish must own the process! The parish must run with it and move it forward – with support from the Diocese (PGRC).
- The process should ensure that a stewardship component is included.
- There needs to be a sense of urgency, a motivation for parishes to stay with it and to eventually agree on a ministry plan.

- The key motivational factor is 'where will be in five years if we don't do this?'
- Consideration should be given to the emergent/missional church model.
- Consider the Natural Church Development process – should talk to Bill Byers.

Comments on Next Steps

In general, participants were unanimous in their willingness to continue these discussions and to further define a process to move forward.

- The MAP approach is suited for inter-parish dialogue among 2-4 parishes. It is not deemed to be practical for the development of ministry plans among 9 parishes, simultaneously.
- Periodic full-deanery meetings are a good idea, but the MAP process should be explored by 2-3 parishes whose proximity, circumstances and/or ministries provide a natural alignment and a platform for ongoing dialogue.
- It was suggested that the preparation of 'ministry maps' for each parish might be a great way to identify areas of ministry overlap between parishes, and therefore parish alignments.
- It was agreed by all that transparency and communication throughout the process was an essential ingredient to success.
- It was suggested that someone experienced in the implementation of the MAP meet with the Deanery to share insights. The suggestion was well received.