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All Things New Proposal

Each ACC is expected to create a proposal or two to submit to the Planning Office by December 31, 2025. Each of these proposals will be reviewed and will be presented to the bishop for approval.

Area Catholic Community Name: One In Faith

Date: 11/27/2025



Mission and Vision

Does your ACC have a Mission/Vision Statement? If yes, state it here.

Mission Statement: As One in Faith, we are a community of seven parishes united in proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Rooted in the Eucharist and the sacraments, we strive to form missionary disciples who live and share their faith with joy. Together, we support vibrant parish life and Catholic education, so that all may encounter Christ and grow in holiness.

Vision Statement: We envision a faith community where all are welcomed, nourished, and sent forth as disciples of Christ. We seek to grow together in prayer, deepen participation in sacramental life, and share our gifts in service of one another. Guided by the Holy Spirit, we aspire to build a sustainable, vibrant, and missionary Church that brings the love of Christ to future generations.

Guiding Principles:

- **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 an invitation to the 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.

Design Parameters:

- Accessibility to Sunday Liturgy

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- Budgeted Ministries
- Buildings
- Pastors/Priests
- Governance
- Finances

Goals for the ACC

SMART criteria (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) must be used for each goal while ensuring alignment with the guiding principles and focus on the areas of the design parameters that fit the ACC to reach the goal. The goals should reflect the guiding principles and action steps should reflect the parameters.

Goal 1: West ACC

St. Michael parish, Spring Hill
St. Andrew parish, Greenwald
St. John the Baptist parish, Meire Grove
St. Mary parish, Melrose

Goals 1-6:

- Accessibility: 80% of the faithful must have access to a Sunday Mass within a 20-minute drive
- Governance: Reduce the number of parish corporations
- Governance: Potential Worship Sites – Primary Church, Partner Church
- Pastor/Priests: Pastors will spend at least 50% of their time in pastoral ministry
- Buildings: Overall facility usage must average 50% occupancy or higher for all weekend liturgies in the ACC
- Buildings: Buildings must be physically accessible, hospitable and safe
 - Restrooms in church building
 - Church building is either 1 level or has access to an existing elevator or ramp

Specific:

- Reduce the number of parish corporations from four to one by July 1, 2027. St. John the Baptist church building will be the Partner Church of St. Mary, which will be the Primary Church.
- One of the two Masses at St. Mary's will be in Spanish, the other in English. A third Mass will be in English at St. John the Baptist.
- Continue a weekday SJSA school Mass in Greenwald for the school children, staff, and three communities.
- Continue a weekday SMS school Mass in Melrose for the school children, staff, and community.
- Continue an annual Barley Day weekend Mass in Greenwald to honor its tradition as long as they want it.
- Continue an Assumption Mass in Spring Hill to honor its tradition as long as they want it.
- Let St. John's either construct a simple unisex handicap-accessible bathroom on the main level of its church, for which it has ample space for and has plenty of money for, so in coordination with its ramp, meets that building parameter or install an

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elevator and renovate existing basement restrooms to make them handicap accessible.

Measurable:

- Parish office will have less work after the reduction, and the pastor will have fewer meetings so he can spend more time in pastoral ministry.
- Facility usage should increase with fewer Masses, hopefully to over 50% capacity!

Achievable:

- The parish office in Melrose will handle the incorporation of St. Andrew, St. John the Baptist, and St. Michael with the help of parish sub-committees.

Relevant:

- One of the stated design parameters is to reduce the number of parish corporations, and St. Michael's in Spring Hill, St. Andrew's in Greenwald, and St. John the Baptist in Meire Grove are neighbors and have a history of working together, either through school, SJSA and Melrose Area Schools, or with attending Masses at each other's churches the past 20-30 years.
- With this proposal two of the four church buildings will have a weekend Mass, so we do not put all our eggs in one basket, which proved to be a good thing recently when the former St. Mary's church became unsafe due to fire and heat damage and Meire Grove's church became its home church.
- If approximately 1/3 of the households belong to St. Andrew, St. John the Baptist, and St. Michael, it is in the best interest of our part of the ACC to give them one Mass if our part of the ACC only gets one priest so as to limit the driving those parishioners would have to do, and the largest parish, St. Mary's, would still be surrounded by towns with Masses a maximum of eight miles away and as close as 5.5 miles.
- The choice of Meire Grove as the partner church is a compromise because it is the shortest drive for the priest, has the best chance to reach 50% capacity being closer to the large Catholic populations in Melrose and Sauk Centre which will be losing Masses, and cuts down on how far the southern three parishes have to drive. St. Mary's and St. John's are near the geographic and population center of the ACC, but no current Spring Hill parishioner living 3-4 miles south/west of the Spring Hill church will have to drive further than 15 minutes to St. John's to reach a Mass in our ACC. State Highway 4 is a major 60-mph road connecting our part of the ACC all the way down past Lake Henry, and St. John's is right on that road.
- St. John's offers a traditional style church while St. Mary's offers a newer style church, so parishioners have options for their church celebrations (baptisms, weddings, funerals, etc.)

Time-bound:

- The incorporation will begin July 1, 2027.

Action steps:

Implementation Preparation

March 2026 – June 2026:

- Determine Mass times for the three weekend liturgies.

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- Verify bids on installing a bathroom directly above the current bathroom in the St. John the Baptist Church building are still valid and/or get bids for installing an elevator and renovating existing bathrooms. Begin work as soon as we have diocesan approval.

Implementation & Transition

July 2026 – June 2027:

- Allow St. Andrew's and St. Michael's to explore the possibility of converting buildings to oratories if desired, with a decision needed before October 15, 2026. If one or both are not oratories, form sub-committees made up of parishioners of St. Michael's and St. Andrew's to discuss the future of the objects, sacred & practical such as Stations of the Cross, statues, parish hymnals, etc. in St. Andrew's and St. Michael's.
- Finalize legal, financial, and governance structures for the one corporation and parishes, ensuring diocesan approvals and compliance.
- Hold welcoming meetings and sessions on how the new parish will function, incorporating those with ministries.
- Monitor the impact of changes on parish engagement, sacramental participation, and financial sustainability.
- Address any concerns or logistical issues that arise from the transition.

Evaluation & Adjustments

January 2027 – July 2027:

- Gather parishioner feedback on how this is working with a mailed survey to all parishioners.

July 2028 – June 2029:

- If the ACC fails to achieve a 50% average occupancy or higher for all weekend liturgies in the ACC, discuss church times and/or locations.
- Look at Finances as the first three years end to verify both parishes are meeting the design parameters. For the new parish, the first years might fluctuate wildly as adjustments are made and parishioners adjust to the new parish. If the Finances are a problem, discuss if combining the two parishes into one parish would alleviate the problems, but keep two buildings.

Goal 2: East ACC – Phased Consolidation

- Immaculate Conception parish, New Munich
- St. Rose of Lima parish, St. Rosa
- Sacred Heart parish, Freeport

Specific: Maintain three separate corporations and parishes in the East ACC while a 3–5 year transition plan is formulated and merges all three parishes into a single corporation and parish under Sacred Heart in Freeport. We are suggesting a 3-5 year timeline as currently all three parishes meet all the design parameters. Pending the accessibility of priests or the possibility that the number of steps taken in the East ACC to relieve time burdens on the assigned priest and limit his commitment to one Sunday Mass for 51 weeks

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of the year will result in retaining three viable churches and a priest who has more time to focus on his ministry.

Measurable: By no later than June 2031, successfully merge the three parishes into one Sacred Heart parish corporation, with pastoral coverage, sacramental life, and building usage plans in place.

Achievable: The merger plan is phased, allowing parishes to operate independently in the short term while gradually consolidating ministries, sacraments, and facilities. This phased approach provides stability, time for parishioners to adjust, and time for parish sub-committees to come up with detailed plans for discerning the use of church buildings.

Relevant: The merger addresses the long-term sustainability of the East ACC considering priest availability, financial stewardship, and the need to consolidate resources while ensuring strong sacramental life.

Time-bound: Initial changes per action steps outlined below will begin July 1st, 2026. The merger into one corporation and parish will be completed no later than June 30th, 2031, subject to diocesan approval and pastoral needs reassessment.

Action Steps

1. **Implement liturgical changes beginning July 1st, 2026:**
 - All weekday Masses will be celebrated at Sacred Heart
 - All Holy Day liturgies will be celebrated at Sacred Heart
 - First Communion and Confirmation will be celebrated at Sacred Heart
 - All Ash Wednesday and Easter Triduum liturgies will be celebrated at Sacred Heart
 - Immaculate Conception and St. Rose of Lima parishes would continue to each have one weekend Mass
2. **Sub-committee to guide the transition by July 1st, 2027:**
 - In preparation for merger into a single corporation and parish under Sacred Heart in Freeport, form a sub-committee to develop a plan for repurposing some of the existing Immaculate Conception and St. Rose of Lima parish buildings.
3. **Develop a phased transition plan** starting July 1st, 2029, that prepares for merging corporations and parishes into Sacred Heart over the next 3–5 years.
4. **Pastoral Needs sub-committee** by December 2026:
 - Based on recurring feedback from our parishioner listening sessions, form sub-committee to assess and respond to the pastoral needs of the existing parishes.

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5. **Communicate consistently** with parishioners through bulletins, sharing sessions, and letters to build understanding, transparency, and trust throughout the transition.
6. **Finalize legal, financial, and governance structures** for the merger into one corporation and parish, based upon diocesan approvals and guidelines.
7. **Adjust plans if needed** in consultation with and direction from diocesan leadership.

Approval and Sign-Off

Date:

Pastor(s):

Other Committee Members: