

DIOCESE OF EAU CLAIRE
Transition Committee
FINAL REPORT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Presented to Strategic Planning Committee
October 12, 2019

Resolution 2017-1 called for the creation of a Transition Committee to facilitate episcopal transition when Bishop Lambert retires in the fall of 2020. The Transition Committee's charge from the Strategic Planning Committee was to canvass the diocese to identify needs and wants for the diocese in the future, and implications for the transition of the episcopate. The Transition Committee was elected by delegates to the 2019 Diocesan Convention and met for the first time on June 8, 2019.

Input from parishioners and clergy of the diocese were sought in a series of listening sessions, guided by a set of open-ended questions pertaining to strengths and weaknesses of the diocese at present, and hopes and fears for the diocese in the future. Results were used to develop a list of desirable characteristics of the model for the future, as follows:

- A diocese that feels small - where **personal connections** among parishioners and clergy from different congregations flourish.
- A diocese that delivers a **high value in access to services and resources**, both from diocesan office to congregations and through collaboration among congregations, while maintaining the current level of apportionment.
- A diocese that has **mechanisms in place for communications** about congregational activities and resources to flow freely throughout the congregations.
- A diocese made up of congregations that have the **capacity to attract and incorporate people of all ages** into their fellowship.
- A diocese that is **flexible and innovative** in anticipating and addressing the current and future challenges of a mostly rural, isolated geographic area where distances between congregations are large.
- A diocese that has a **firm, stable, and sustainable fiscal foundation** that positions it to thrive and not just survive in the future.

The Committee also conducted in-depth telephone interviews and an interactive discussion with Canons Vanessa Butler and William Spaid, who are currently involved in the process of creating shared episcopates and other diocesan functions in Northwestern Pennsylvania and Western New York, and Eastern and Western Michigan, respectively.

Four potential models were developed and analyzed for advantages, disadvantages, and unknown factors with respect to the list of desirable characteristics for the future diocese:

Model One: remain independent with part-time bishop diocesan;

Model Two: seek a sharing relationship with another diocese for episcopal and other select functions while maintaining independent diocese status;

Model Three: seek a sharing relationship with another diocese for episcopal and other select functions with the anticipation of closer organizational affiliation in the future; and

Model Four: continue the exploration process with extended discussion in and between congregations in the diocese.

Results are presented to the 2019 Annual Convention of the Diocese of Eau Claire for selection of one of the four models as the direction the diocese will take at Bishop Lambert's retirement.