

**DIOCESE OF EAU CLAIRE
TRANSITION COMMITTEE REPORT
October 12, 2019**

Summary of Findings from Listening Sessions

DESIRABLE QUALITIES/CHARACTERISTICS (Want to Keep):

- feeling of community, family; familiarity with people
- rate of apportionment
- autonomy/self-determination

UNDESIRABLE QUALITIES/CHARACTERISTICS (Want to Change):

- limited resources/want more services from Diocese
- age profile: lack younger age groups
- inability to attract and incorporate new members in congregations
- tendency not to share programs, ideas or hold joint gatherings across congregations

FEARS, UNCERTAINTIES FOR FUTURE:

- declining membership, financial instability
- unsure of ability to maintain clergy presence in congregations
- loss of identity (“fade away;” “swallowed up” in a larger diocese)

VISION/HOPES FOR FUTURE:

- achieve stability (membership and financial)
- growth (spiritual and organizational)
- sustainability

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Description of Model Options

Model One: Maintain current organizational structure as **fully independent diocese, with part-time bishop diocesan.**

Action Steps: Establish a Bishop Search Committee; solicit applications and referrals of candidates; conduct application reviews, interviews, walk-about; elect next Bishop Diocesan of Eau Claire at 2020 Diocesan Convention, or at a special convention to be scheduled at another time.

Model Two: Maintain independent diocesan status and seek to establish a working relationship (to be defined) with one or more other dioceses for **sharing a bishop and selected other programs, ministries, and resources** between the dioceses.

Action Steps: Establish a Bishop Search Committee to work with the Office of Pastoral Development to recruit a Bishop Provisional for the Diocese of Eau Claire. The Bishop Provisional will be contracted to guide and represent this diocese in the identification and development of resource sharing relationship(s) with other dioceses. The Bishop Provisional will be engaged on a contractual basis for one year, with the option to extend the contract on an annual basis, with agreement of both parties.

Model Three: Seek to establish a working relationship with one or more other dioceses for sharing a bishop and selected other resources with the intent of **moving toward a closer organizational affiliation** (to be defined) between or among the dioceses over the course of the next few years.

Action Steps: Establish a Bishop Search Committee to work with the Office of Pastoral Development to recruit a Bishop Provisional for the Diocese of Eau Claire. The Bishop Provisional will be contracted to guide and represent this diocese in the identification and development of long-term affiliation relationship(s) with other dioceses. The Bishop Provisional will be engaged on a contractual basis for one year, with the option to extend the contract on an annual basis, with agreement of both parties.

Model Four: **Continue process of exploration** through intensive conversations in and among local congregations to determine the best model for the diocese in the future. Strategic Planning Committee to oversee and facilitate continuing discussions, with consultation from staff and leadership in dioceses that have experience with sharing arrangements for bishops and other diocesan functions, and from resources available through the Office of Pastoral Development.

Action Steps: Strategic Planning Committee to establish and implement a plan, including timeline and resources needed, for the extended exploration process. At the conclusion of the exploration process, the selection of a model of episcopal oversight to pursue will be made. Depending upon the decision, the Diocese of Eau Claire may establish a Bishop Search Committee to work with the Office of Pastoral Development to recruit a Bishop Provisional to facilitate negotiations with one or more other dioceses.