

Pastoral Planning

North Region

Beaver Island | Burt Lake | Charlevoix | Cheboygan | Cross Village | Good Hart |
Harbor Springs | Indian River | Larks Lake | Mackinaw City | Pellston | Petoskey | Riggsville



DIOCESE
— of —
GAYLORD

Welcome



DIOCESE
of
GAYLORD

Diocese of Gaylord Mission

To proclaim the saving message of God's love and invite missionary disciples to share the word of hope and charity to a troubled world.



2009 Pastoral Planning Report



DIOCESE OF GAYLORD

PARISH AND PERSONNEL TASK FORCE

September 5, 2007 – April 2, 2009

FINAL REPORT

LONG TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

Submitted to:

Bishop Patrick R. Cooney
April 27, 2009



Criteria of Decision Making

The criteria included:

1. Does the recommendation provide access to sacramental care in the area?
2. Does the recommendation represent a reasonable workload for our priests?
3. Does the recommendation support current and/or shared programming?
4. Does the recommendation support other ministries in the affected locations?
5. Is the recommendation cost effective?
6. Is the option viable in the long term?
7. Is there consensus of the entire Task Force for the recommendation?



Collaborative Ministry of All Believers

Throughout the consultative process undertaken by the Task Force, priests indicated a desire to spend the majority of their time in the ministry to which they were called – that is, preaching, teaching, providing sacramental care, and other direct ministry to the People of God – and less time on the administrative tasks of parish life. The same sentiment was also expressed by many lay people at various gatherings. The Task Force recognizes that pastoring a parish is more than just providing sacraments but also involves taking an active role in the total life and ministry of the parish and helping parishioners grow in their own faith development so that every Catholic may more fully live the Gospel in their daily lives as an example to the world. The laity also clearly indicated a desire and willingness to take a more active role in the ministries and governance of their parishes if provided the opportunity and proper guidance. Though the Church maintains a hierarchical structure, the Holy Scriptures and many Church documents support shared responsibility and the need for collaborative ministry among all the faithful—those called through the Sacraments of Initiation as well as those called through the Sacrament of Holy Orders—to carry on the mission of our Lord Jesus Christ.



GENERAL RECOMMENDATION

Parish Clustering

In many areas the Task Force is recommending additional clusters of parishes be created. The Task Force was instructed to plan for the long-term future of the Diocese and feels very strongly that, if adopted, sufficient time and support should be given to allow the collaborative ministries to develop and grow in the various areas. It has been recognized that over the course of history, clusters of parishes have been established and then broken apart before they had time to develop or even after they were working well. This has occurred both because additional clergy became available to serve in an area or a priest newly assigned to an area chose not to continue in a collaborative ministry style. While the Task Force hopes such “cluster-busting” will be avoided, certainly additional clergy should be welcomed to work collaboratively in the ministries of the cluster under the direction of the Pastor.



GENERAL RECOMMENDATION

Mass Scheduling

Parishioners must be willing to sacrifice “Masses of convenience” and be willing to compromise and adjust Mass times in order to serve the common good of the wider community. Because the Eucharist is the source and summit of Christian life, we must first strive toward well executed, spirit-filled liturgies with appropriate parish liturgical ministers. We must also protect the health and well being of the priests and ensure they have adequate time to greet parishioners before and after Masses, along with suitable time for travel between parishes.

Task Force recommendations are based on the premise that, to the greatest extent possible, priests should not be required to regularly celebrate more than three Masses each weekend. It is understood that additional Masses may be allowed, or even necessary, in certain unusual circumstances. The Task Force recommends following existing guidelines of the universal Church with regard to the number of Masses allowed on Sundays and other days.



GENERAL RECOMMENDATION

Parish Councils

In order to promote further collaboration and communication, as well as reduce the amount of administrative work for clergy in multi-parish models, guidelines should be developed to assist parishes in moving from separate pastoral and finance councils to a model where there is one pastoral and finance council with representation from all parishes in the cluster.



GENERAL RECOMMENDATION

Implementation of Recommendations

The Task Force recommends an implementation committee and a process for transition should be established to assist parishes and leadership as changes are carried out. Assistance in dealing with personnel concerns, financial issues and stewardship, training and formation, along with the spiritual, psychological and grieving issues due to experiencing change, should all be available, particularly if a parish is going to be closed, merged, clustered or without weekend Mass. It is recognized that substantial expertise in each of these areas exists within the Diocesan staff and existing structures. Additional qualified individuals also exist in most areas of the diocese who would likely volunteer in this important ministry. Further, transition processes have existed in this diocese in the past and other dioceses have also recently completed similar restructuring processes. The experience of the Task Force with local individuals as well as those from other dioceses is that substantial assistance and models for implementation of changes already exist and everyone has been graciously willing to share ideas, materials and experiences for the benefit of all. It would not be necessary to create brand new models or processes, but instead to carefully review and adapt existing models and processes to fit the Diocese of Gaylord.



GENERAL RECOMMENDATION

Existing Leadership

As stated in the Introduction, the Diocese of Gaylord has been blessed with retired, extern and religious order priests as well as Pastoral Administrators/Parish Life Coordinators who faithfully serve and care for the people of our diocese. In areas where these individuals currently have assignments, the Task Force recommends the Bishop and Assignment Board evaluate how these individuals might be best utilized, particularly during the transition process. It may be that a retired, extern, religious order priest or Pastoral Administrator/Parish Life Coordinator successfully serving a parish should remain in that position in order to assist parishioners in the transition as well as to allow time for new structures to be put in place or for newly assigned Pastors to get acclimated to the area. In all cases, however, in order to remain in their current position, these individuals must be willing to work collaboratively toward a successful transition.



GENERAL RECOMMENDATION

Deacons

It is apparent that confusion exists among a number of faithful of the diocese as to the appropriate role of ordained deacons in the Church and within the Diocese of Gaylord. Additional education to provide more clarity regarding the role and ministry of deacons in this diocese should be made available. Further, there is significant support for reinstating the Deacon Formation Program in the Diocese of Gaylord and for expanding the ministries of deacons as deemed appropriate by the universal Church and in accordance with their particular gifts and training.



GENERAL RECOMMENDATION

Sunday Celebrations in Absence of a Priest

A significant number of parishioners requested the Bishop reconsider the possibility of including distribution of Holy Communion during Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest. The Task Force recommends further education take place to explain the appropriate occasions for utilizing this rite of the Church as well as the rationale for the Bishop's decision not to offer Holy Communion during the Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest.



GENERAL RECOMMENDATION

Catholic Schools

The Task Force **strongly supports continued accessibility to Catholic School education in the Diocese of Gaylord.** In 2008, the Diocese hired a full-time Superintendent for Catholic Schools. The Superintendent is charged with responsibility for the operation of schools as well as working collaboratively to ensure academic excellence and faith formation are maintained in our Catholic schools. With the assignment of the new Superintendent, the time constraints for completion of the Final Report and a desire to have additional expertise on the committee with regard to education, the **Task Force did not complete a thorough review of Catholic schools.** Therefore, the Task Force has made few specific recommendations regarding Catholic schools in this document. However, the Task Force does recommend that a committee with appropriate expertise and vision be appointed to work with the diocesan Superintendent as well as school and parish leadership to develop recommendations to maintain Catholic school education in this diocese. Further, the Task Force **recommends that all parishes in the vicinity of a Catholic school work together to provide a measure of support to the school** which may include a commitment of both human and financial resources. Finally, the Task Force **recommends the possibility for providing diocesan-wide support for all Catholic schools** should continue to be explored and encouraged.



GENERAL RECOMMENDATION

Evangelization

Many parishioners expressed a desire for assistance in the area of evangelization and for particular outreach to youth, young adults and families. The diocese is requested to continue, and even expand, opportunities which will assist parishes with the development of programming and ministry in these areas.



GENERAL RECOMMENDATION

Continued Long-Range Planning

The recommendations of the Parish and Personnel Task Force are made based upon history, current circumstances and future projections. Because change is inevitable, the Task Force recommends that a similar committee be appointed every five years to review implementation progress. Their goal should also be to review, research and provide updated recommendations reflective of the facts and circumstances of the time as well as to look forward into the future.



Common Themes

1. The Church should allow married clergy.
2. The Church should allow women clergy.
3. The Diocese should recruit more foreign clergy.
4. Prayer services with the distribution Holy Communion should be permitted.
5. The laity should be allowed to take on some of the pastoral and administrative functions of the parish, thus allowing priests to have more time for sacramental duties.
6. There is universal concern about the workload of the clergy in today's Church.
7. Parishes and parishioners need continued formation and expanded assistance from the Diocese to minister effectively.
8. Efforts to promote vocations, particularly to priestly ministry, must be expanded at all levels.
9. Parishioners are willing to accept additional responsibility for local parish administration and ministries, but need and desire guidance as to what to do and the appropriate processes and methods to do so.
10. There is significant fear surrounding possible parish closings.
11. Many parishes, and parishioners, are experiencing financial difficulty. There is a lack of understanding about why Catholic Services Appeal (CSA) targets continue to increase and how those targets are determined.



CHEBOYGAN AREA

Specific Recommendations

St. Mary-St. Charles | St. Casimir | St. Ignatius | St. Dominic | St. Paul | St. Anthony |
Cross in the Woods | St. Monica | St. Ignatius | St. Mary | Sacred Heart | St. Clement

#1: St. Monica (Afton), **St. Ignatius (Good Hart)** and **St. Mary (Burt Lake)** should be closed (formally suppressed) with the process completed no later than September 1, 2009. A transition team should be assigned to assist the parishioners with the transition. Appropriate arrangements should be made to provide appropriate future care for the cemeteries and burial grounds of these parishes

#2: A consultation with the local Native American tribes should be undertaken to determine if they have an interest in purchasing and/or maintaining the churches at Burt Lake or Good Hart.



CHEBOYGAN AREA

Specific Recommendations

St. Mary-St. Charles | St. Casimir | St. Ignatius (Rogers City) | St. Dominic | St. Paul | St. Anthony |
Cross in the Woods | St. Monica | St. Ignatius | St. Mary | Sacred Heart | St. Clement

#3: Cross in the Woods (Indian River) should remain as a stand-alone parish and National Shrine. In the future, if the Franciscans leave the area, it is suggested the Diocese consider the facilities at Cross in the Woods as a location of residence for retired priests.

#4: The parishes of **St. Mary-St. Charles (Cheboygan)**, **St. Anthony (Mackinaw City)**, **St. Clement (Pellston)** and **Sacred Heart (Riggsville)** should become a cluster with one Pastor and one Parochial Vicar. During the transition process, a Pastoral Administrator should be maintained at St. Anthony. Mass times should be arranged so that the two assigned priests can provide weekend liturgies and sacramental care. Additional priestly ministry from the Franciscans at Cross in the Woods, or a retired or an extern priest, will likely be necessary during the summer months when visitors to Mackinaw City increase.



PETOSKEY AREA

Specific Recommendations

Holy Childhood | St. Francis Xavier | St. Francis Solanus | St. Mary of the Assumption | St. Matthew
St. Augustine | St. Joseph | St. John Nepomucene | Holy Cross | Holy Cross | St. Nicholas

#1: Holy Childhood (Harbor Springs), Holy Cross (Cross Village) and St. Nicholas (Larks Lake) should be clustered with one Pastor assigned. Mass attendance and schedules should be carefully reviewed at Holy Childhood to provide for one weekend Mass at Holy Cross. No weekend Masses should be held at St. Nicholas, but the parish should be maintained as long as a sustainable faith community exists.

#2: St. Francis Solanus (Bay Shore) and St. John Nepomucene (Praga) should be closed (formally suppressed) with the process completed no later than September.

#3: St. Francis Xavier (Petoskey) should be a stand-alone parish with one priest assigned as Pastor. The Pastor should be committed to Catholic school education and able to motivate parishioners to serve in ministries to the parish and wider community. It was also noted that there are several ordained deacons in the area who can serve and assist laity in ministering in the Catholic school, hospital, jail and college.



PETOSKEY AREA

Specific Recommendations

Holy Childhood | St. Francis Xavier | St. Francis Solanus | St. Mary of the Assumption | St. Matthew
St. Augustine | St. Joseph | St. John Nepomucene | Holy Cross | Holy Cross | St. Nicholas

#4: Currently a retired priest provides sacramental ministry to the **Augustine Center in Conway**. This arrangement should continue as long as this is needed and there is a retired priest willing to serve in this capacity. Depending upon the individual, this priest may also be able to assist with other ministry in the Petoskey area.



PETOSKEY AREA

Specific Recommendations

Holy Childhood | St. Francis Xavier | St. Francis Solanus | St. Mary of the Assumption | St. Matthew
St. Augustine | St. Joseph | St. John Nepomucene | Holy Cross | Holy Cross | St. Nicholas

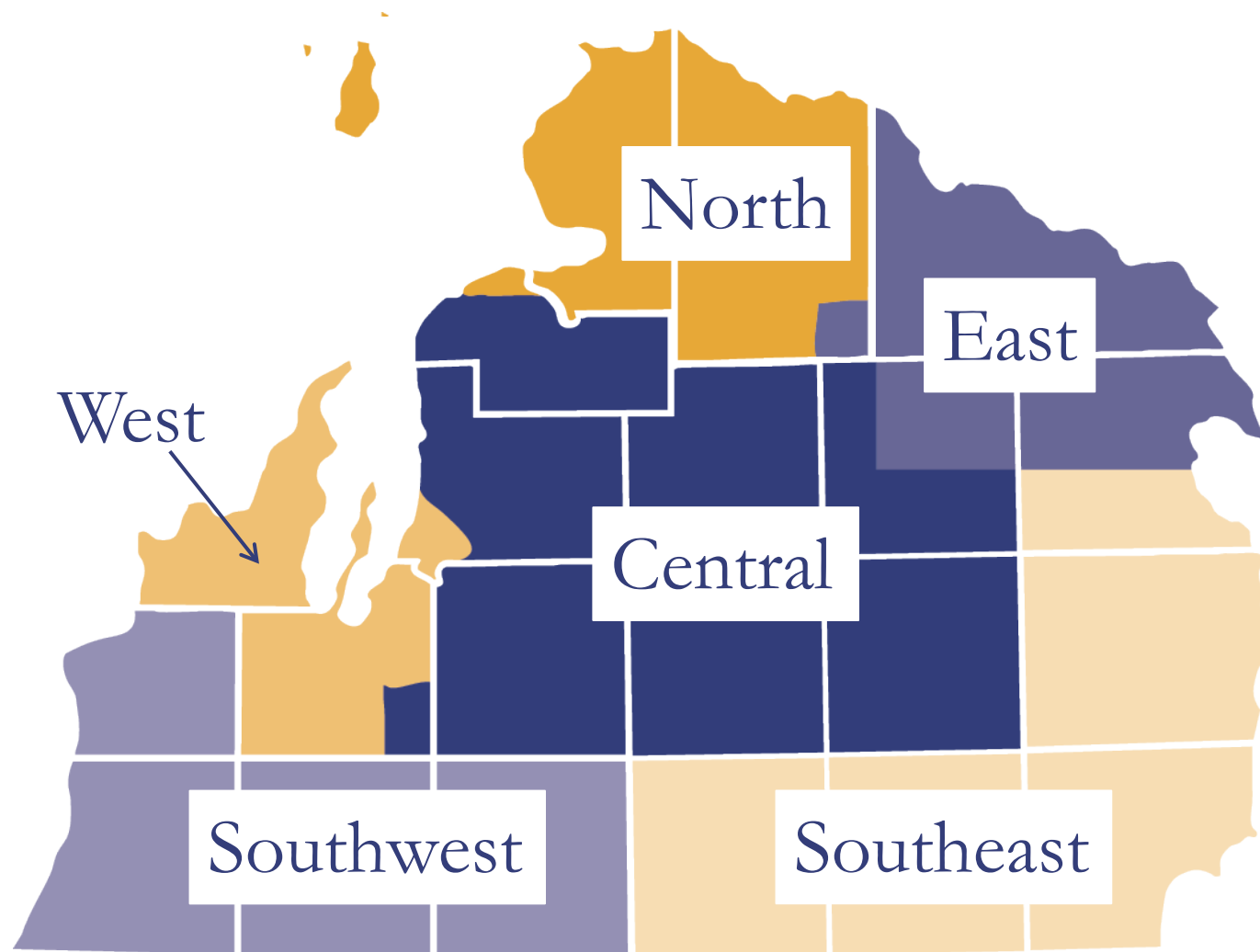
#6: St. Mary (Charlevoix) and Holy Cross (Beaver Island) should be clustered with one Pastor assigned. It may be necessary to have additional summer help for these parishes which could be provided by a retired or extern priest. There is clearly a geographic challenge for parishioners of Holy Cross and stronger efforts should be made by both diocesan and parish leadership, as well as parishioners, to encourage and enhance participation in formation programs, events and ministries of the wider church to help avoid isolation.

#7: All parishes in the area should be encouraged to work collaboratively to ensure the continuation of quality Catholic school education in the region.

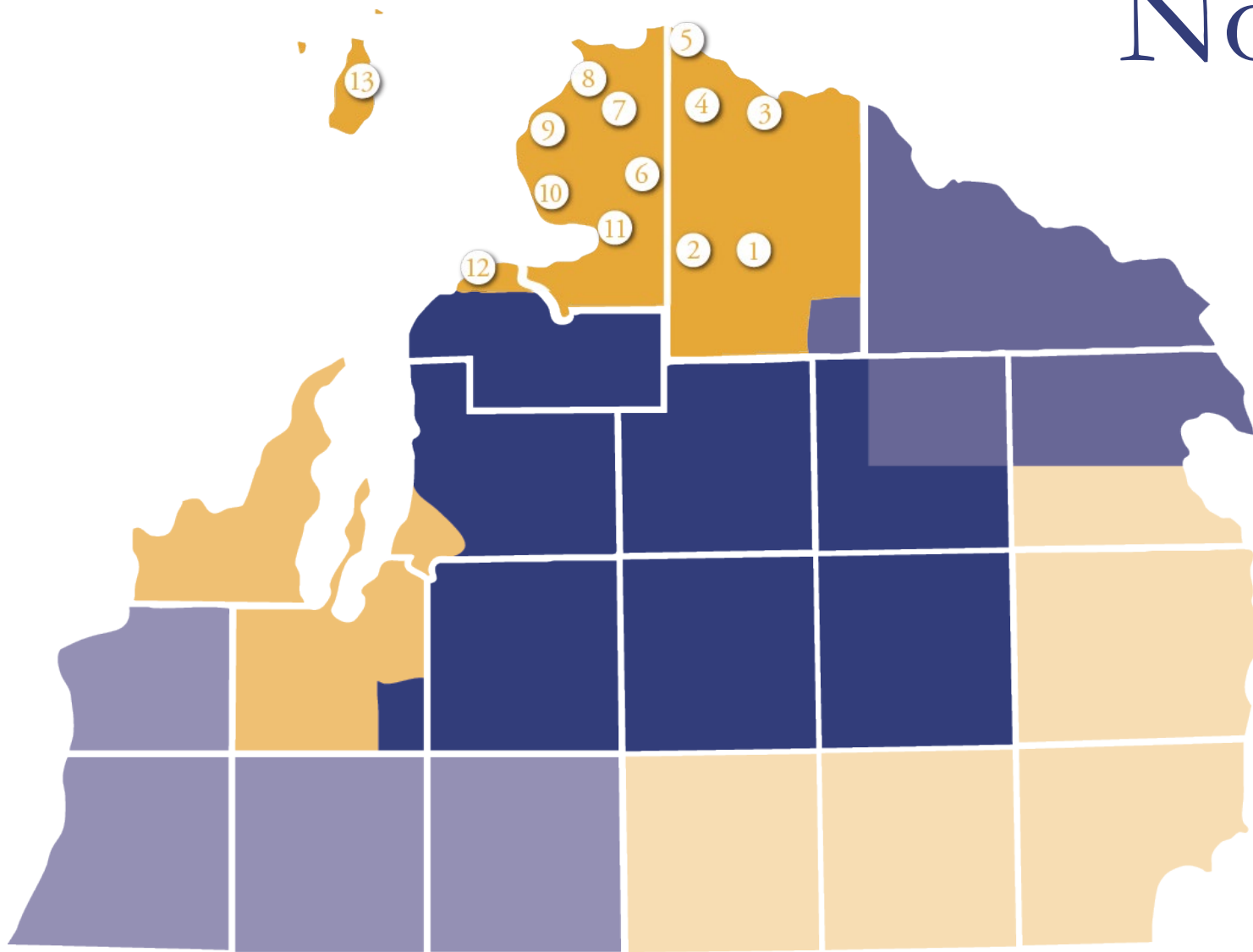


Diocese of Gaylord

6 Vicariates



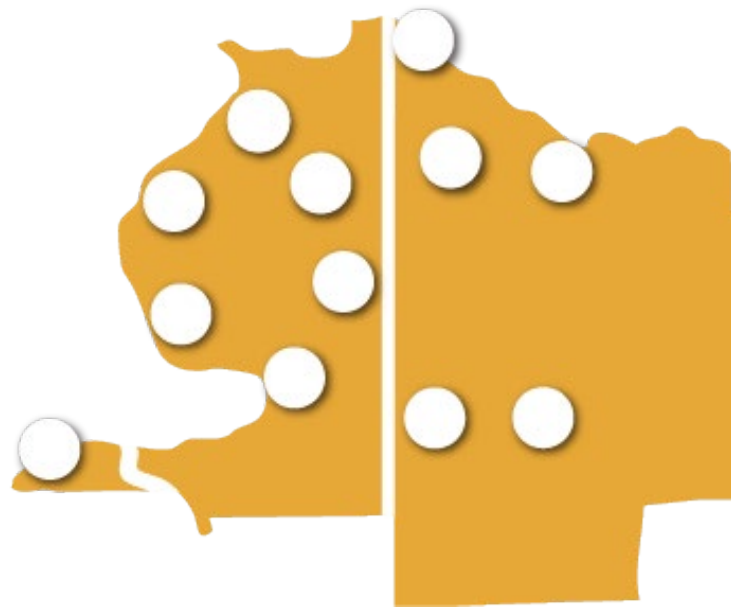
North Vicariate



1. Cross in the Woods Shrine, Indian River
2. St. Mary, Burt Lake
3. St. Mary/St. Charles, Cheboygan
4. Sacred Heart, Riggsville
5. St. Anthony of Padua, Mackinaw City
6. St. Clement, Pellston
7. St. Nicholas, Larks Lake
8. Holy Cross, Cross Village
9. St. Ignatius, Good Hart
10. Holy Childhood of Jesus, Harbor Springs
11. St. Francis Xavier, Petoskey
12. St. Mary of the Assumption, Charlevoix
13. Holy Cross, Beaver Island



North Vicariate



Vicariate Profile					
Name:			NORTH VICARIATE		
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	3366	↓	3583	3678	5095
Baptisms	77	↓	80	141	265
Marriages	64	↓	52	61	120
Deaths	124	↓	72	126	165
^Funerals					



1. Cross in the Woods Shrine, Indian River

North Vicariate



Parish Profile					
Name:	Cross in the Woods Catholic Shrine			City:	Indian River
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	300	↓	300	410	372
Baptisms	10	↓	16	17	17
Marriages	14	↑	17	5	9
Deaths	10	↓	7	7	14
^Funerals					



2. St. Mary, Burt Lake

North Vicariate



Parish Profile					
Name: Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary			City: Burt Lake		
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	0	—	0	0	0
Baptisms	0	—	0	0	0
Marriages	0	—	0	0	0
Deaths	0	↓	0	0	1
^Funerals					



3. St. Mary/St. Charles, Cheboygan

North Vicariate



Parish Profile					
Name:	Saint Mary-Saint Charles			City:	Cheboygan
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	586	↓	588	909	1791
Baptisms	7	↓	11	27	64
Marriages	1	↓	2	9	23
Deaths	34	↓	11	44	60
^Funerals					



4. Sacred Heart, Riggsville

North Vicariate



Parish Profile					
Name:	Sacred Heart			City:	Riggsville
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	199	↑	196	246	173
Baptisms	1	↓	3	7	10
Marriages	2	↓	2	2	6
Deaths	6	—	6	8	6
^Funerals					



5. St. Anthony of Padua, Mackinaw City

North Vicariate



Parish Profile					
Name:	Saint Anthony of Padua			City:	Mackinaw City
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	91	↓	75	119	150
Baptisms	2	↓	1	1	7
Marriages	0	↓	4	3	4
Deaths	5	↓	3	4	7
^Funerals					



6. St. Clement, Pellston

North Vicariate



Parish Profile					
Name:	Saint Clement			City:	Pellston
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	76	↓	74	109	108
Baptisms	0	↓	0	3	3
Marriages	0	▬	0	0	0
Deaths	1	↓	5	3	4
^Funerals					



7. St. Nicholas, Larks Lake

North Vicariate



Parish Profile					
Name:	Saint Nicholas			City:	Larks Lake
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	46	↑	46	54	34
Baptisms	0	—	1	0	0
Marriages	0	↓	0	0	1
Deaths	0	↓	0	0	2
^Funerals					



8. Holy Cross, Cross Village

North Vicariate



Parish Profile					
Name:	Holy Cross			City:	Cross Village
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	66	↓	66	152	70
Baptisms	0	↓	0	3	15
Marriages	0	↓	2	2	6
Deaths	2	↓	1	7	11
^Funerals					



9. St. Ignatius, Good Hart

North Vicariate



Parish Profile					
Name:	Saint Ignatius			City:	Good Hart
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	0	↓	0	2	7
Baptisms	0	—	0	1	0
Marriages	1	↑	0	3	0
Deaths	1	↑	1	0	0
^Funerals					



10. Holy Childhood of Jesus, Harbor Springs North Vicariate



Parish Profile					
Name: Holy Childhood of Jesus			City: Harbor Springs		
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	657	↑	642	455	407
Baptisms	11	↓	5	27	52
Marriages	12	↓	11	7	30
Deaths	13	↑	8	15	10
^Funerals					



11. St. Francis Xavier, Petoskey

North Vicariate



Parish Profile					
Name:	Saint Francis Xavier			City:	Petoskey
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	1078	↓	1350	1113	1800
Baptisms	27	↓	25	48	95
Marriages	29	↓	20	29	43
Deaths	43	↑	21	25	42
^Funerals					



12. St. Mary of the Assumption, Charlevoix

North Vicariate



Parish Profile					
Name:		Saint Mary of the Assumption		City: Charlevoix	
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	484	↓	484	452	495
Baptisms	19	—	24	19	19
Marriages	19	↑	11	5	7
Deaths	17	↑	14	13	13
^Funerals					



13. Holy Cross, Beaver Island

North Vicariate



Parish Profile					
Name: Holy Cross		City: St. James			
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	83	↑	62	67	60
Baptisms	9	↑	10	5	0
Marriages	0	▬	0	1	0
Deaths	2	↓	2	7	9
^Funerals					



Questions & Comments



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