

Pastoral Planning

Southeast Region

Black River | East Tawas | Hale | Harrisville | Higgins Lake | Houghton Lake | Klacking Creek | Mikado
Oscoda | Ossineke | Prudenville | Roscommon | Skidway Lake | St. Helen | West Branch | Whittemore



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 to 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.



OSCODA AREA

Specific Recommendations

Holy Family | Sacred Heart | St. James | St. Pius X | St. Anne | St. Raphael | St. Catherine | St. Gabriel

#1: The existing cluster of St. Anne (Harrisville) and St. Raphael (Mikado) should be expanded to include St. Catherine (Ossineke) and St. Gabriel (Black River). One priest should be assigned as Pastor to this cluster. St. Anne church in Harrisville is very large and can easily accommodate many of the parishioners in the area. One weekend Mass should be offered at St. Catherine. As long as it is possible, one weekend Mass should be offered at St. Raphael. No weekend Masses should be held at St. Gabriel but the parish should be maintained as long as a sustainable faith community exists. The Task Force recognizes the importance of the outreach ministry of the parishioners in Mikado to the community and recommends it be continued, and perhaps even expanded, as part of the ministry of the cluster.



OSCODA AREA

Specific Recommendations

Holy Family | Sacred Heart | St. James | St. Pius X | St. Anne | St. Raphael | St. Catherine | St. Gabriel

#2: The parishes of St. Pius X (Hale), St. James (Whittemore), Sacred Heart (Oscoda) and Holy Family (East Tawas) should become one cluster. One Pastor and one Parochial Vicar should be assigned. The Pastor assigned should be a strong, experienced Pastor (not a priest's first pastorate) with a commitment to Catholic School education. No weekend Masses should be celebrated at St. James (Whittemore), but the parish should be maintained as long as a sustainable faith community exists.

#3: All parishes in the cluster should be encouraged to work collaboratively to ensure the continuation of quality Catholic School education in the region.



PRUDENVILLE AREA

Specific Recommendations

St. Hubert | St. James | Our Lady of the Lake | St. Joseph | Holy Family | St. Helen | St. Michael | St. Stephen

#1: The parishes of St. Michael (Roscommon), Our Lady of the Lake (Prudenville), St. Hubert (Higgins Lake), St. James (Houghton Lake), and St. Helen (St. Helen) should return to being a cluster. One priest should be named Pastor of all the parishes of the cluster with one Parochial Vicar assigned. During the transition process, a Pastoral Administrator should be maintained at St. Helen. The leadership must be compatible and able to work collaboratively.

The Bishop/Diocese should provide support and assistance to help the parishes collaborate to develop a plan to maximize resources and exercise appropriate stewardship to address financial concerns and staffing, strengthen collaborative ministry programs, aid in transition and ensure quality Catholic school education continues in this area.



PRUDENVILLE AREA

Specific Recommendations

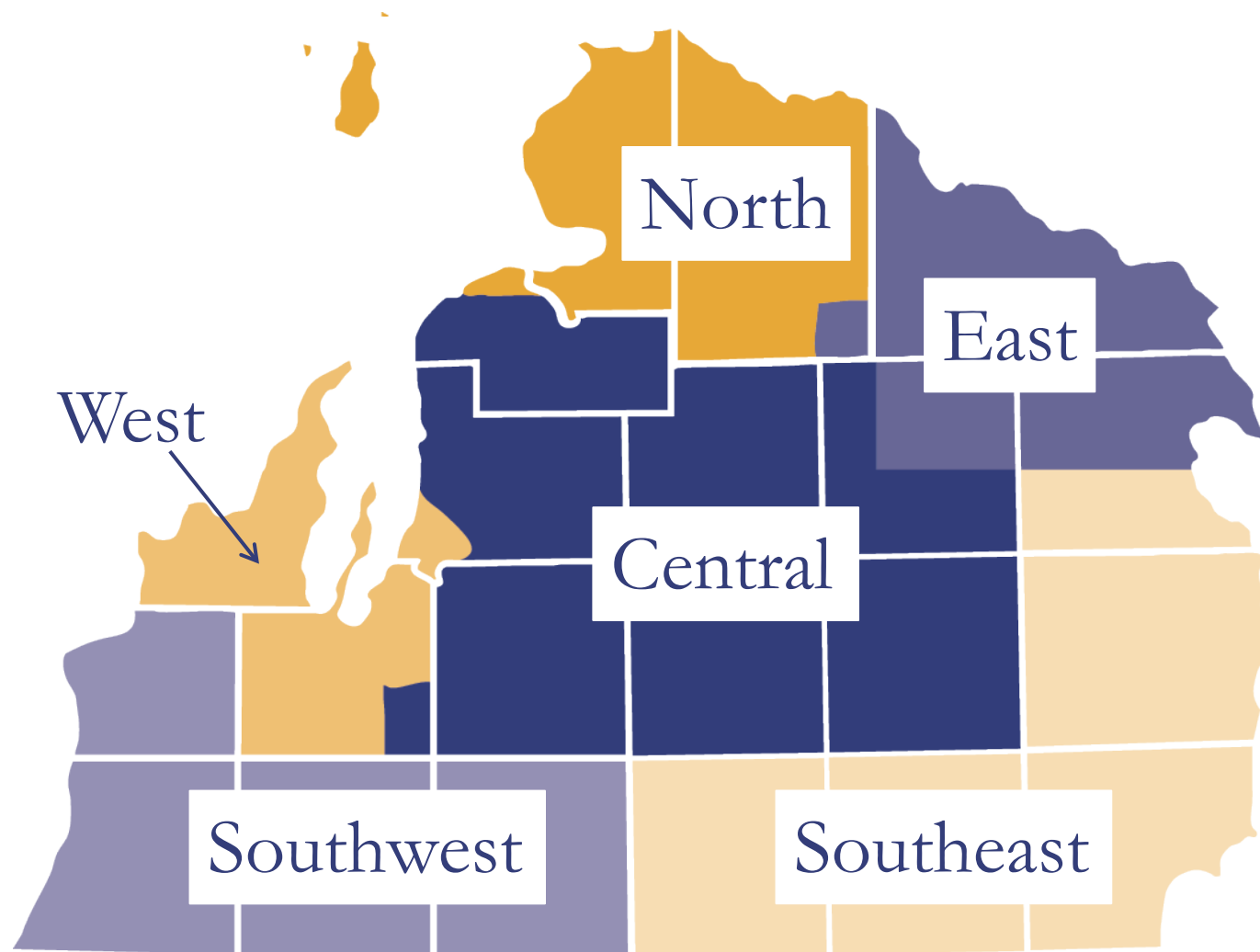
St. Hubert | St. James | Our Lady of the Lake | St. Joseph | Holy Family | St. Helen | St. Michael | St. Stephen

#2: The parishes of St. Joseph (West Branch), Holy Family (Klacking Creek) and St. Stephen (Skidway Lake) should be clustered with one Pastor. All parishes in the cluster should be encouraged to work collaboratively to ensure the continuation of quality Catholic school education in this area.

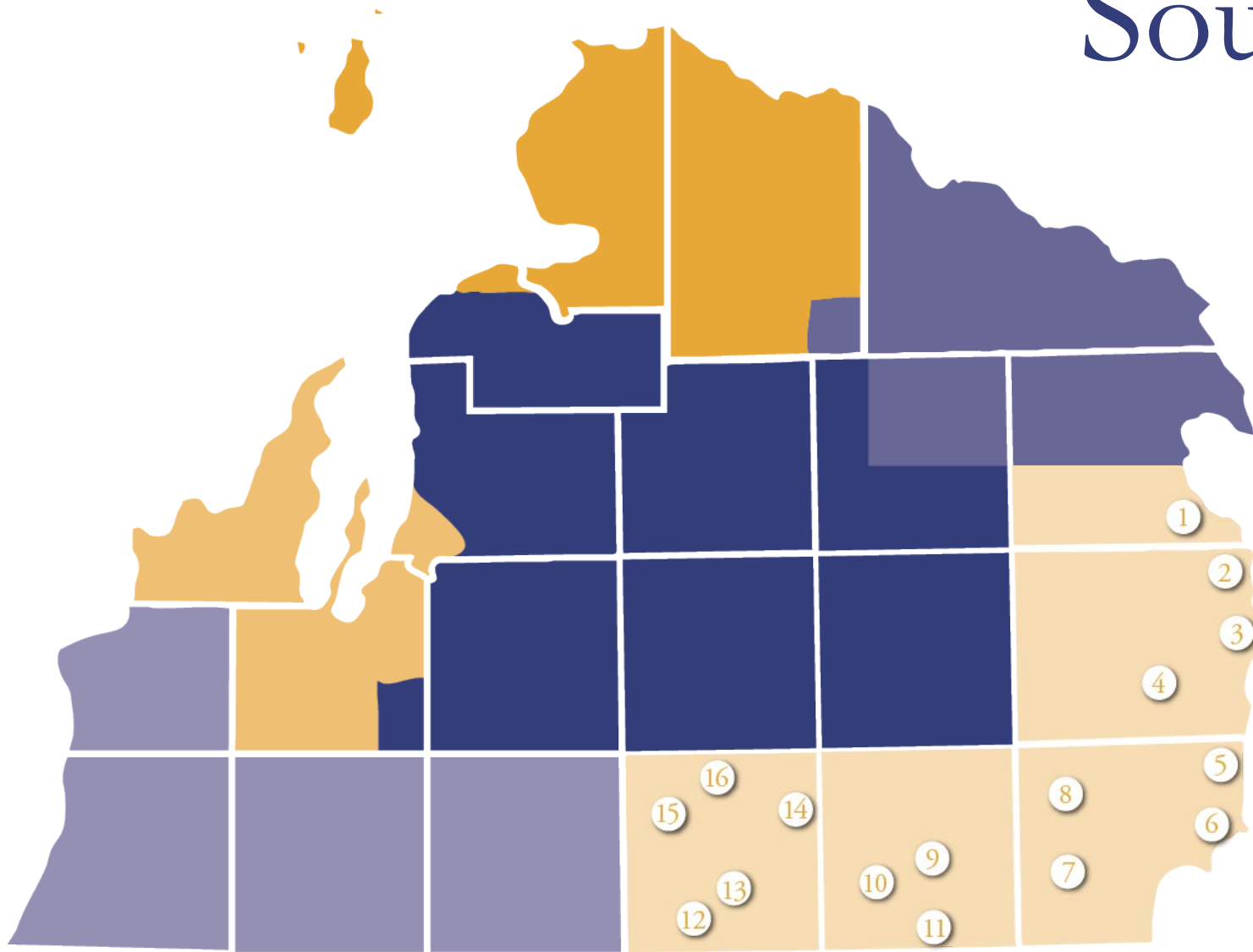


Diocese of Gaylord

6 Vicariates



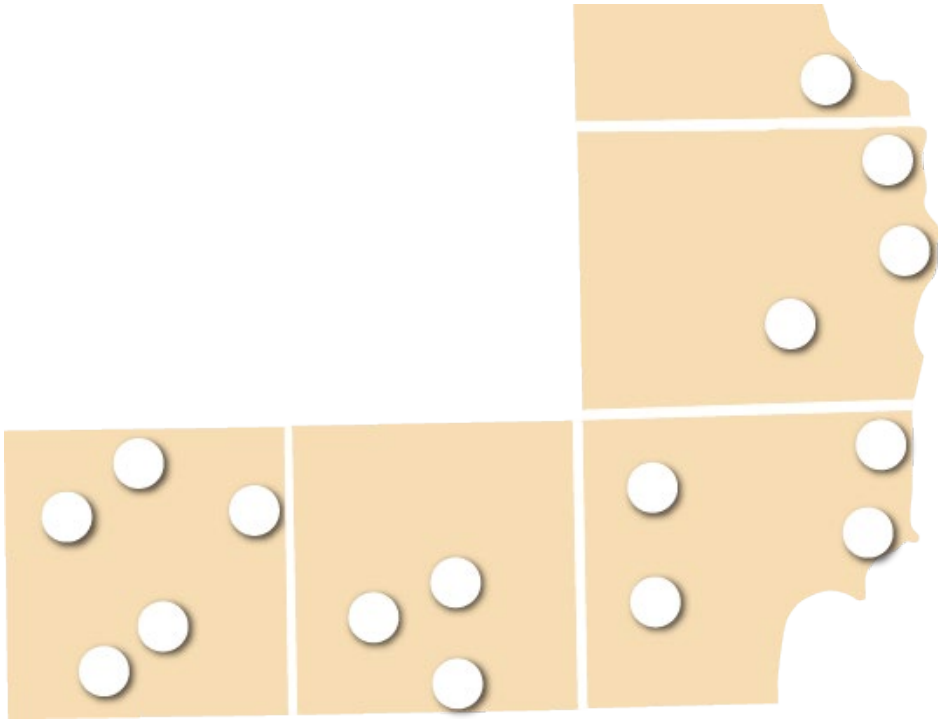
Southeast Vicariate



1. St. Catherine, Ossineke
2. St. Gabriel, Black River
3. St. Anne, Harrisville
4. St. Raphael, Mikado
5. Sacred Heart, Oscoda
6. Holy Family, East Tawas
7. St. James, Whittemore
8. St. Pius X, Hale
9. Holy Family, Klacking Creek
10. St. Joseph, West Branch
11. St. Stephen of Hungary, Skidway Lake
12. St. James, Houghton Lake
13. Our Lake of the Lake, Prudenville
14. St. Helen, St. Helen
15. St. Hubert, Higgins Lake
16. St. Michael, Roscommon



Southeast Vicariate

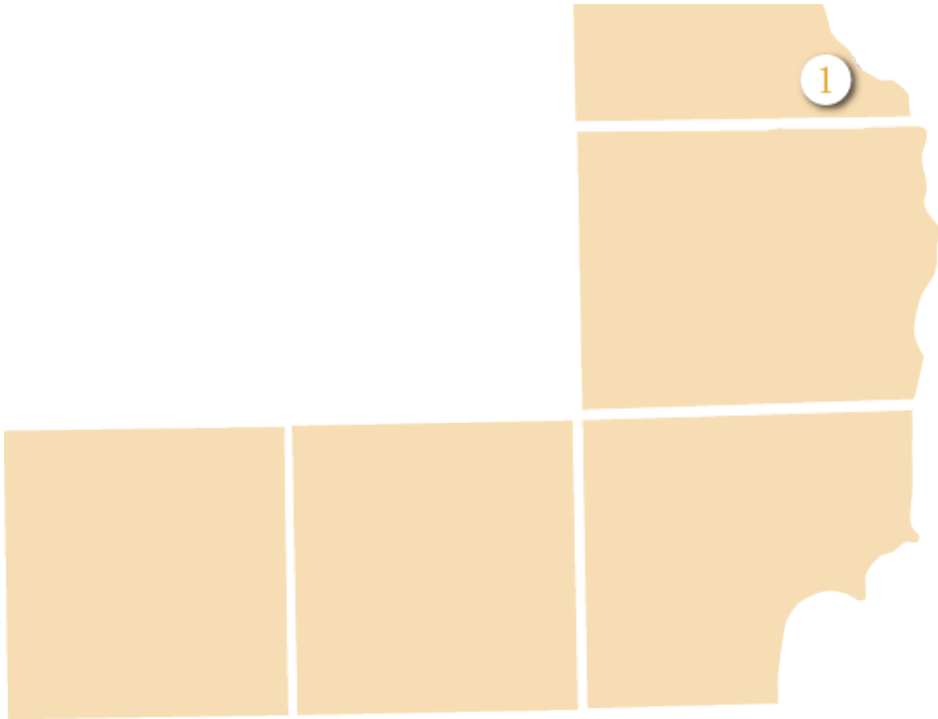


Vicariate Profile					
Name:			SOUTHEAST VICARIATE		
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	2320	↓	2102	3890	4281
Baptisms	43	↓	38	54	141
Marriages	10	↓	9	25	65
Deaths	136	↓	96	100	147
^Funerals					



1. St. Catherine, Ossineke

Southeast Vicariate

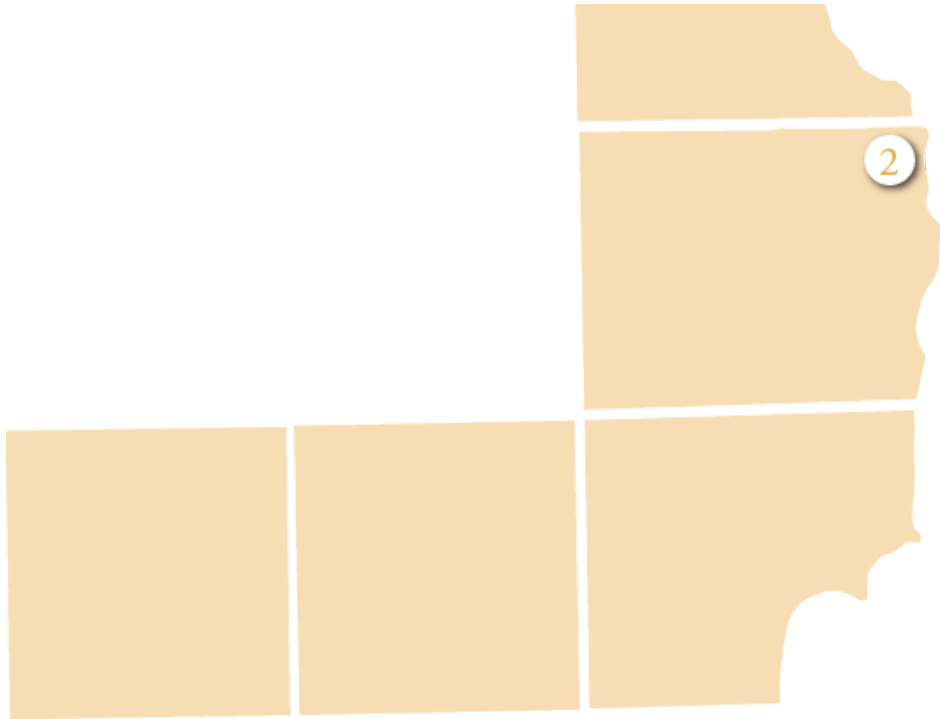


Parish Profile					
Name:	Saint Catherine of Alexandria			City:	Ossineke
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	120	↓	125	301	381
Baptisms	0	↓	0	9	12
Marriages	1	↓	0	3	4
Deaths	11	↓	10	12	14
^Funerals					



2. St. Gabriel, Black River

Southeast Vicariate

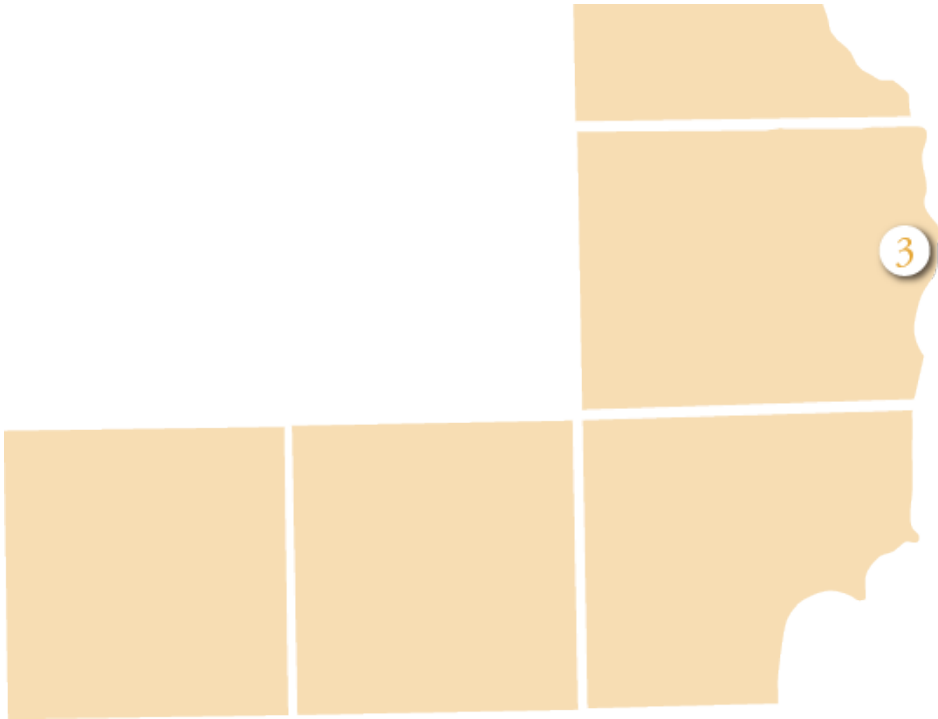


Parish Profile					
Name:	Saint Gabriel			City:	Black River
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	28	↓	28	45	67
Baptisms	0	↓	0	1	4
Marriages	0	▬	0	0	0
Deaths	3	↓	2	2	5
^Funerals					



3. St. Anne, Harrisville

Southeast Vicariate

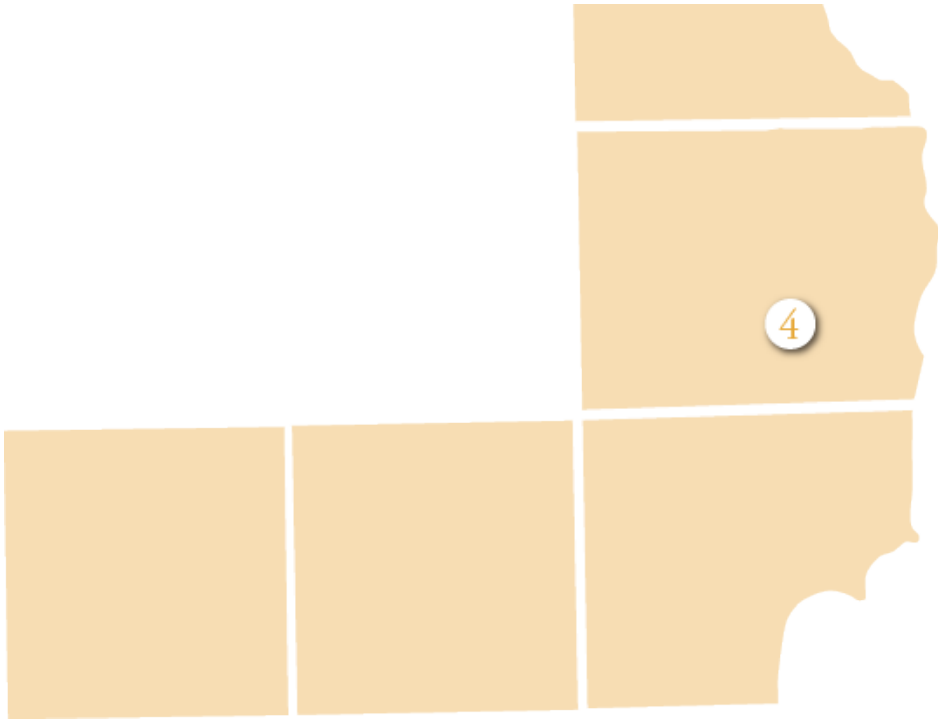


Parish Profile					
Name:	Saint Anne			City:	Harrisville
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	110	↓	89	190	220
Baptisms	3	↓	1	4	16
Marriages	1	↓	1	2	2
Deaths	9	↓	9	6	15
^Funerals					



4. St. Raphael, Mikado

Southeast Vicariate

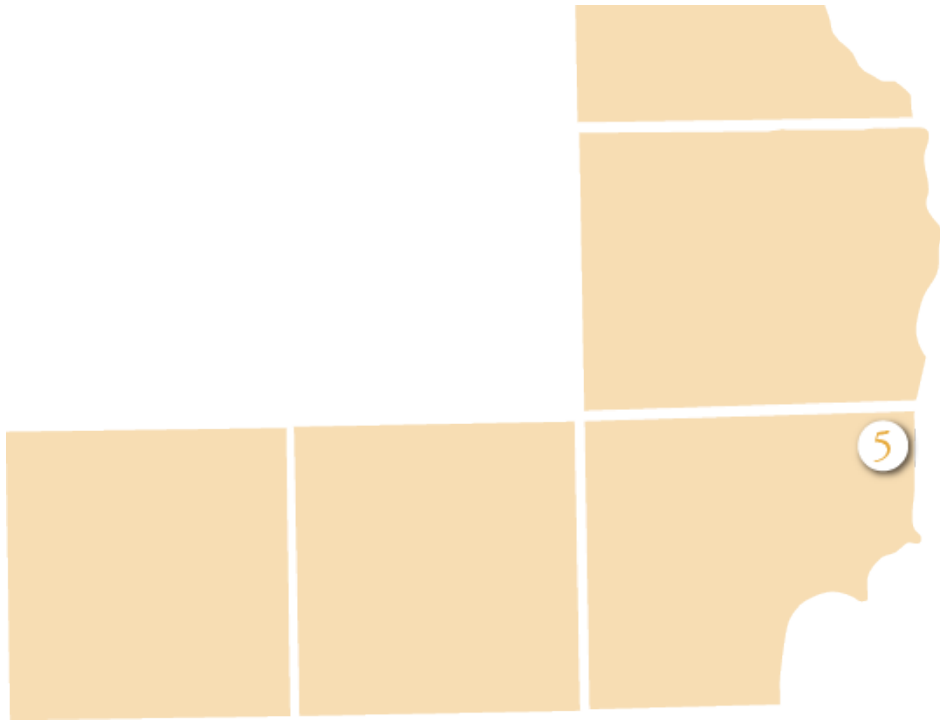


Parish Profile					
Name:	Saint Raphael			City:	Mikado
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	53	↓	50	85	85
Baptisms	0	↓	0	1	3
Marriages	0	▬	0	0	0
Deaths	0	↓	0	0	5
^Funerals					



5. Sacred Heart, Oscoda

Southeast Vicariate

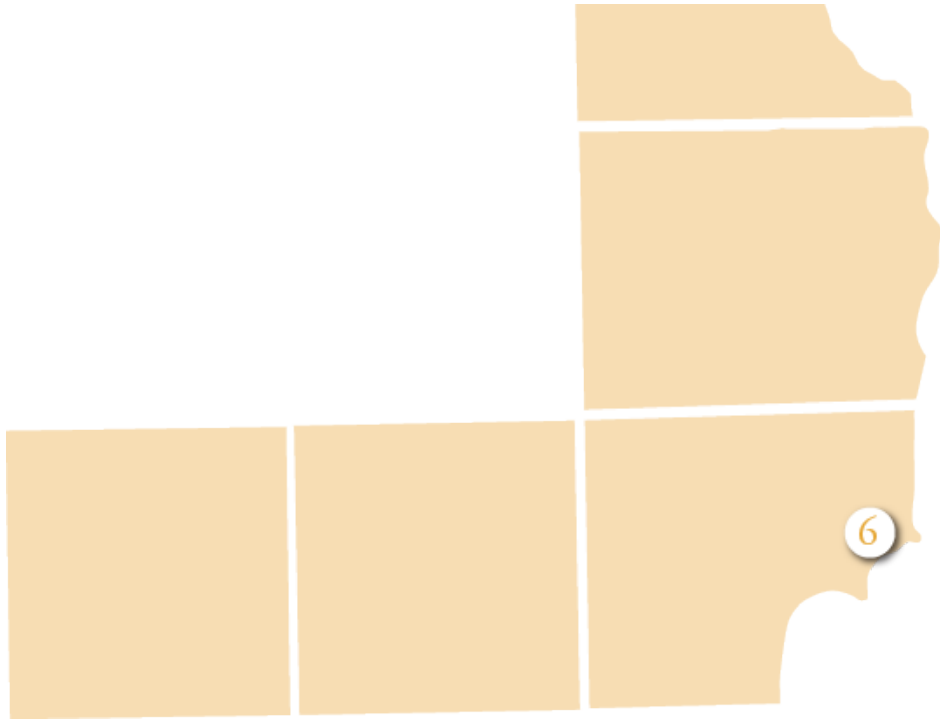


Parish Profile					
Name:	Sacred Heart			City:	Oscoda
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	325	↓	190	523	450
Baptisms	6	↓	4	5	7
Marriages	2	↓	1	6	11
Deaths	22	↑	14	19	16
^Funerals					



6. Holy Family, East Tawas

Southeast Vicariate

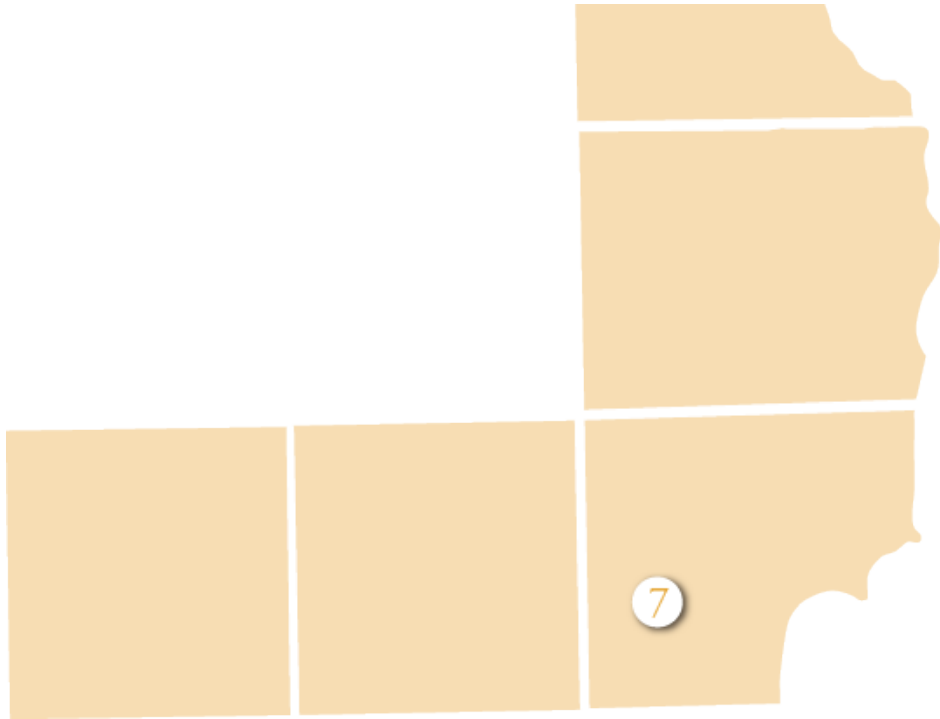


Parish Profile					
Name:	Holy Family			City:	East Tawas
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	519	↓	501	628	524
Baptisms	19	↑	19	11	15
Marriages	4	↓	6	2	5
Deaths	35	↑	18	16	10
^Funerals					



7. St. James, Whittemore

Southeast Vicariate

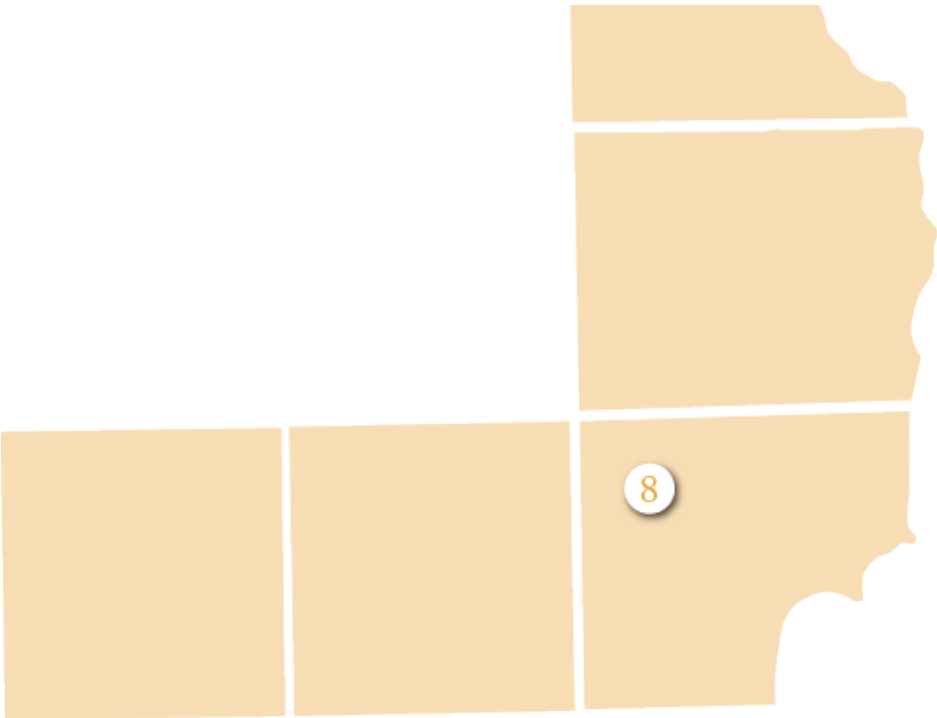


Parish Profile					
Name:	Saint James			City:	Whittemore
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	50	↓	39	90	121
Baptisms	1	↓	1	1	8
Marriages	0	↓	0	0	3
Deaths	5	↓	5	0	8
^Funerals					



8. St. Pius X, Hale

Southeast Vicariate

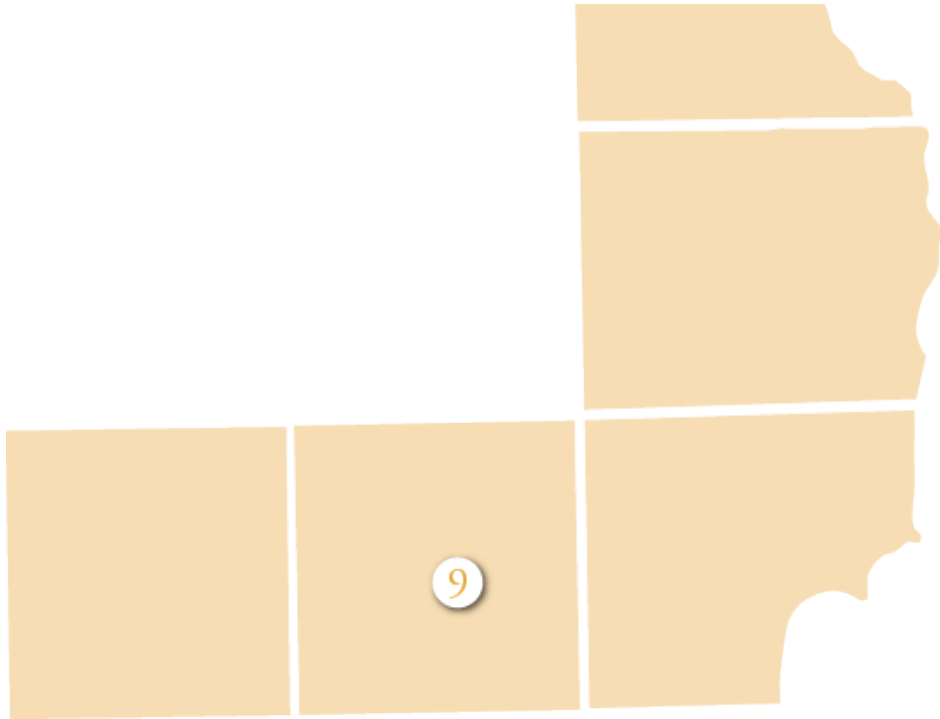


Parish Profile					
Name:		Saint Pius X		City: Hale	
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	108	↓	135	240	275
Baptisms	1	↓	1	1	9
Marriages	0	↓	0	1	6
Deaths	2	↓	3	7	5
^Funerals					



9. Holy Family, Klacking Creek

Southeast Vicariate

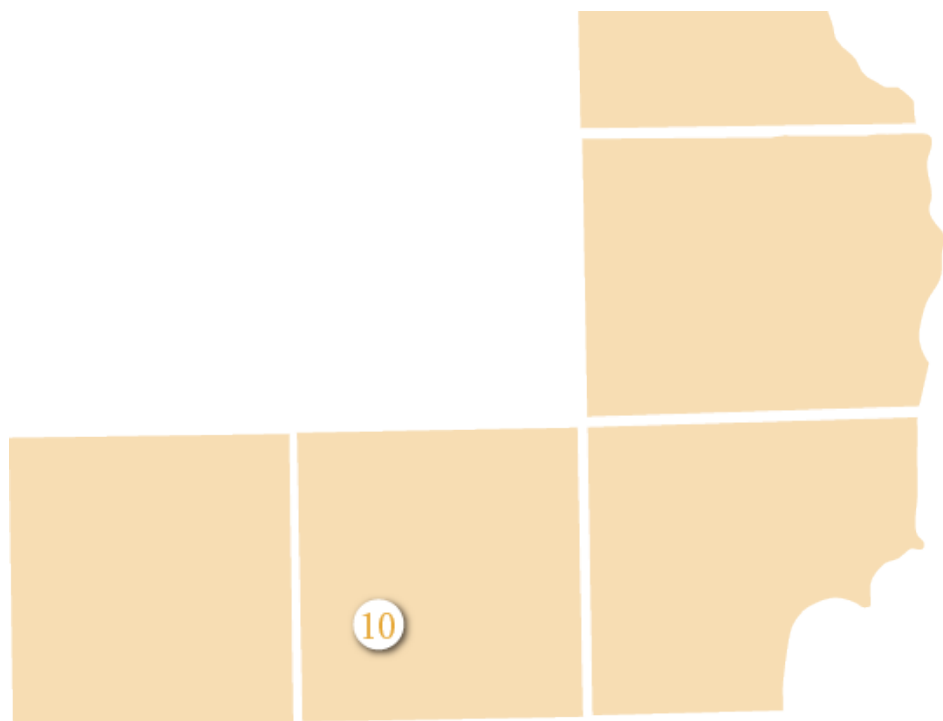


Parish Profile					
Name:	Holy Family			City: Klacking Creek	
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	97	↓	97	246	205
Baptisms	0	↓	0	4	5
Marriages	1	▬	1	2	1
Deaths	6	↓	4	6	13
^Funerals					



10. St. Joseph, West Branch

Southeast Vicariate

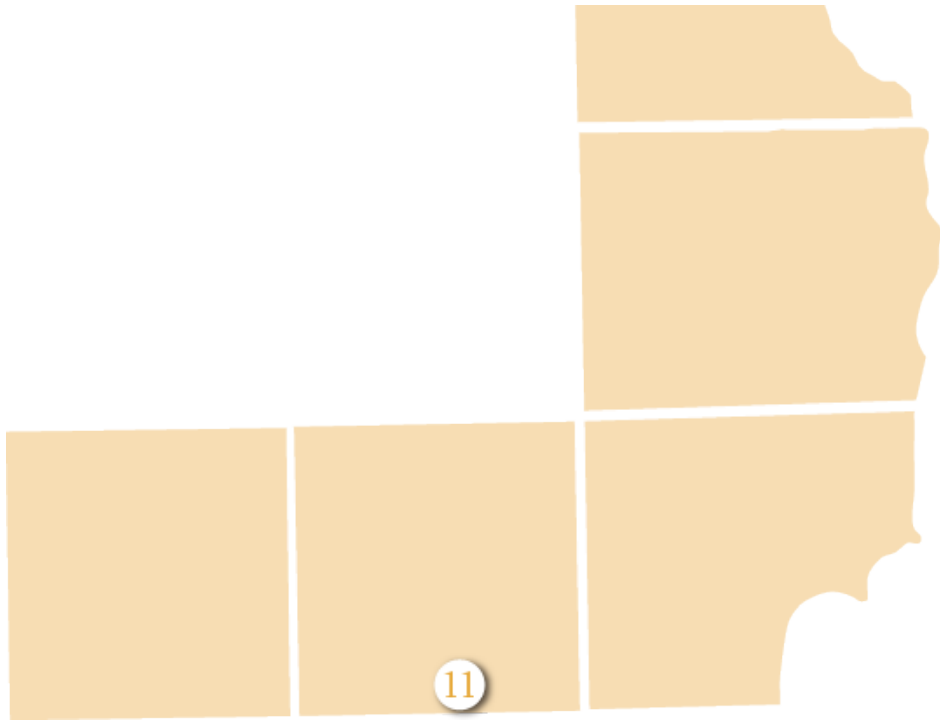


Parish Profile					
Name:	Saint Joseph			City:	West Branch
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	335	↓	335	600	799
Baptisms	9	↓	7	10	43
Marriages	1	↓	1	5	9
Deaths	19	↓	23	24	30
^Funerals					



11. St. Stephen of Hungary, Skidway Lake

Southeast Vicariate

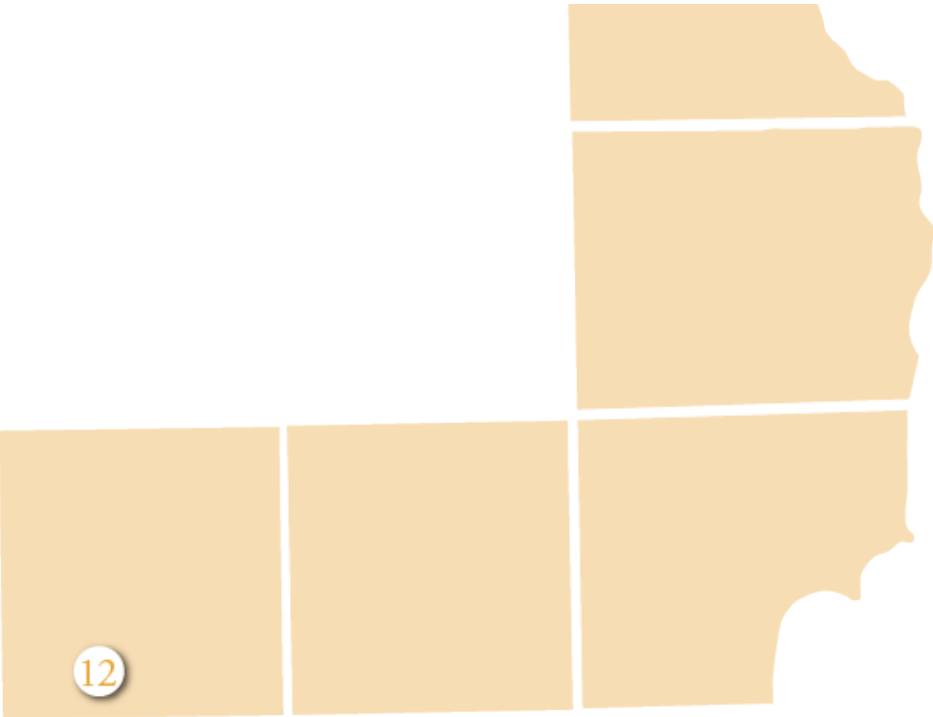


Parish Profile					
Name:	Saint Stephen, King of Hungary			City:	Skidway Lake
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	68	↓	59	225	225
Baptisms	0	↓	0	4	11
Marriages	0	↓	0	3	4
Deaths	1	↓	4	3	8
^Funerals					



12. St. James, Houghton Lake

Southeast Vicariate

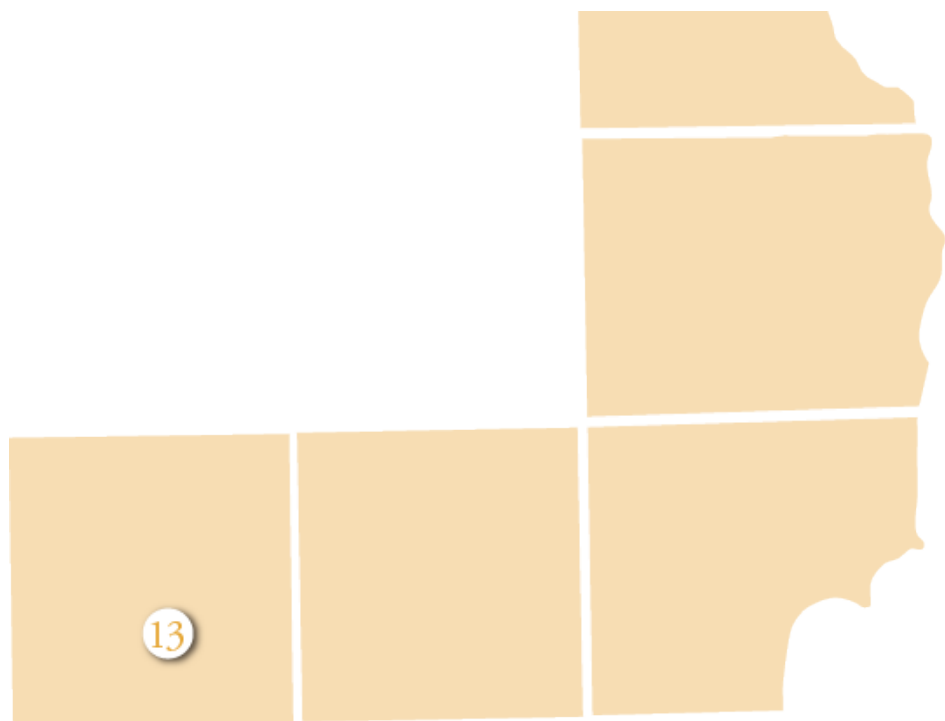


Parish Profile					
Name:		Saint James the Greater		City: Houghton Lake	
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	106	↓	106	175	163
Baptisms	0	↓	0	3	14
Marriages	0	↓	0	1	1
Deaths	5	↑	2	0	4
^Funerals					



13. Our Lady of the Lake, Prudenville

Southeast Vicariate

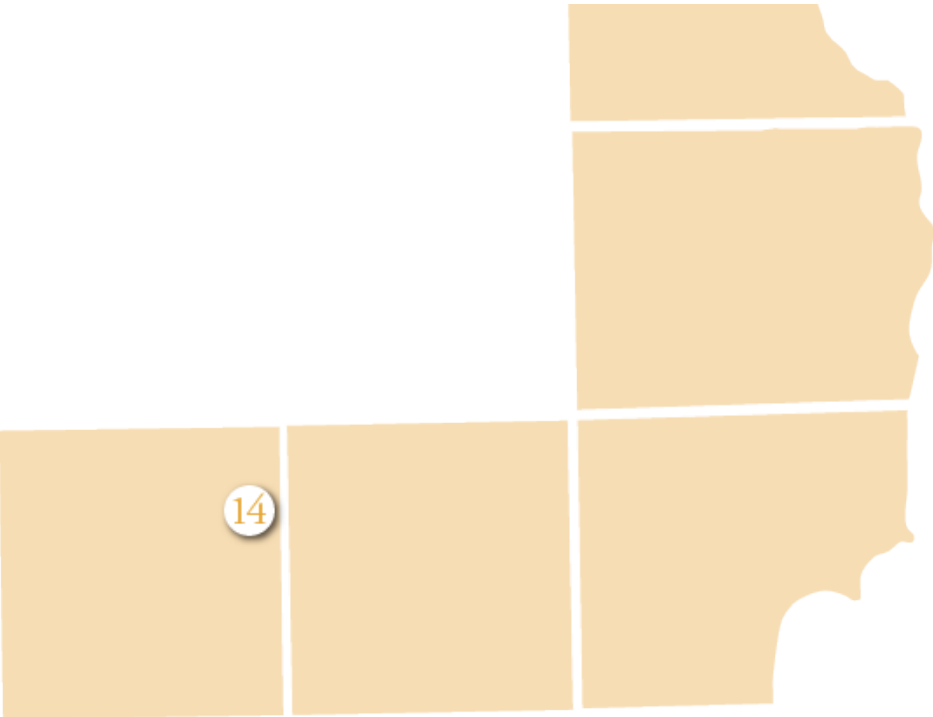


Parish Profile					
Name:	Our Lady of the Lake			City:	Prudenville
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	283	↓	285	379	645
Baptisms	6	↓	6	3	8
Marriages	2	↓	0	3	3
Deaths	18	↑	10	4	8
^Funerals					



14. St. Helen, St. Helen

Southeast Vicariate

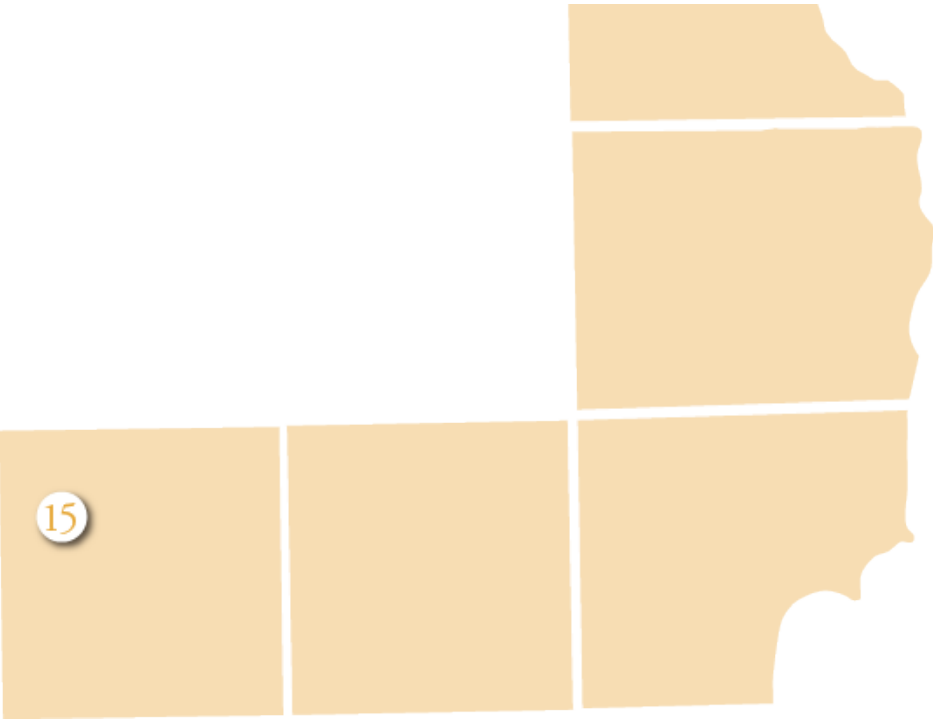


Parish Profile					
Name:		Saint Helen		City: St Helen	
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	81	↓	52	165	214
Baptisms	0	↓	0	2	7
Marriages	0	↓	0	0	3
Deaths	4	↓	2	10	19
^Funerals					



15. St. Hubert, Higgins Lake

Southeast Vicariate

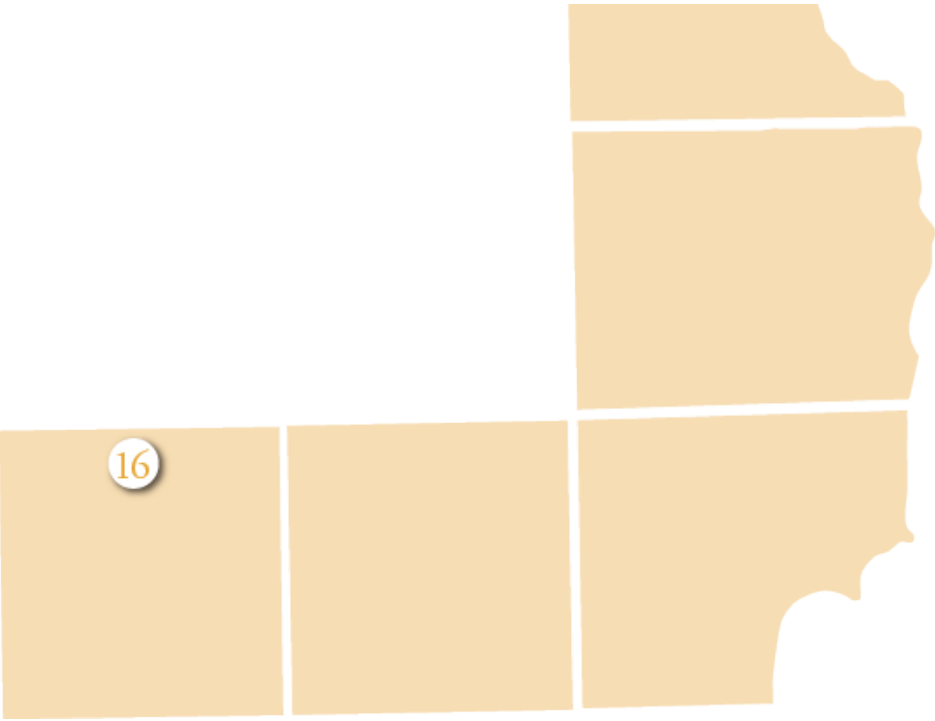


Parish Profile					
Name: Saint Hubert		City: Higgins Lake			
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	93	↓	93	178	193
Baptisms	0	↓	0	2	6
Marriages	0	↓	0	0	1
Deaths	7	↓	1	0	14
^Funerals					



16. St. Michael, Roscommon

Southeast Vicariate



Parish Profile					
Name:		Saint Michael		City: Roscommon	
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	255	↓	210	441	467
Baptisms	1	↓	0	8	8
Marriages	0	↓	0	2	18
Deaths	12	▬	10	11	12
^Funerals					



Questions & Comments



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