

Pastoral Planning

Western Region

Acme | Cedar | Elk Rapids | Empire | Gills Pier | Hannah | Lake Leelanau | Maple City
Mapleton | Northport | Peshawbestown | Suttons Bay | Traverse City



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.



TRAVERSE CITY AREA

Specific Recommendations

Christ the King | Holy Rosary | Sacred Heart | St. Phillip Neri | St. Aloysius | The Woods | St. Anthony of Padua | St. Rita-St. Joseph | St. Gertrude | St. Michael the Archangel | Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha | St. Wenceslaus | St. Mary St. Mary | St. Joseph | Immaculate Conception | St. Francis of Assisi | St. Patrick

#1: Christ the King (Acme) and Sacred Heart (Elk Rapids) should be clustered with one Pastor assigned. Parishes should work collaboratively to share resources, programming and ministries.



TRAVERSE CITY AREA

Specific Recommendations

Christ the King | Holy Rosary | Sacred Heart | St. Phillip Neri | St. Aloysius | The Woods | St. Anthony of Padua | St. Rita-St. Joseph | St. Gertrude | St. Michael the Archangel | Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha | St. Wenceslaus | St. Mary | St. Mary | St. Joseph | Immaculate Conception | St. Francis of Assisi | St. Patrick

#2: St. Phillip (Empire), St. Rita-St. Joseph (Maple City), and Holy Rosary (Cedar) should be clustered with one Pastor assigned. No weekend Masses should be celebrated at St. Rita-St. Joseph, but the parish should be maintained as long as a sustainable faith community exists. The Task Force understands an earlier change impacted St. Rita-St. Joseph which did not officially close the parish but instead ... resulted in confusion in the status of St. Rita-St. Joseph parish. To address these concerns ..., the Task Force recommends parishioners of St. Rita-St. Joseph be allowed to resume registration as parishioners of St. Rita-St. Joseph even though there will be no weekend Masses. A financial arrangement should be established ... where a percentage of income for St. Rita-St. Joseph should be contributed to the expenses of providing the priest, staff and ministries of the cluster. St. Rita-St. Joseph should retain the balance of the income to care for buildings and needs of the parish. Parishioners are expected to actively participate in the worship and ministries of the cluster as well as support the diocesan and universal Church through the CSA. ... the parish should be evaluated in 18 months using the criteria provided in this report.



TRAVERSE CITY AREA

Specific Recommendations

Christ the King | Holy Rosary | Sacred Heart | St. Phillip Neri | St. Aloysius | The Woods | St. Anthony of Padua | St. Rita-St. Joseph | St. Gertrude | St. Michael the Archangel | Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha | St. Wenceslaus | St. Mary St. Mary | St. Joseph | Immaculate Conception | St. Francis of Assisi | St. Patrick

#3: Immaculate Conception, St. Francis, St. Patrick (Traverse City), St. Joseph (Mapleton) and St. Mary (Hannah) should be clustered with one Pastor and three Parochial Vicars assigned to the five parishes. The Task Force believes more collaboration must take place in cities with multiple parishes.... The Task Force believes this recommendation will provide for increased sharing of staff, programs and ministries... and will help to promote efficiency and exercise best stewardship of the human and other resources.... Additionally, the Traverse City area is uniquely poised in the diocese with several ordained deacons and a significant number of qualified laity who can be utilized to coordinate and motivate parishioners to a variety of ministries in the area. One of the priests serving in the cluster should also be appointed chaplain to Grand Traverse Area Catholic Schools and Northwestern Michigan College. It is also recommended the priests serving Traverse City live together or gather at least several times each week for prayer and meals to develop and maintain mutual support and cooperation.



TRAVERSE CITY AREA

Specific Recommendations

Christ the King | Holy Rosary | Sacred Heart | St. Phillip Neri | St. Aloysius | The Woods | St. Anthony of Padua | St. Rita-St. Joseph | St. Gertrude | St. Michael the Archangel | Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha | St. Wenceslaus | St. Mary St. Mary | St. Joseph | Immaculate Conception | St. Francis of Assisi | St. Patrick

#4: St. Mary Hannah School and Grand Traverse Area Catholic Schools, with assistance from the Diocesan Superintendent of Catholic Schools, should explore opportunities for cooperation and collaboration which might benefit and revitalize Catholic School education in the Hannah area.

#5: If appropriate funding is available, St. Joseph (Mapleton) should be allowed to proceed with building plans so that one weekend Mass will be sufficient to accommodate parishioners while also providing additional formation and outreach ministry facilities for the cluster. This construction project should be undertaken under the direction of the Pastor of the Traverse City cluster.



TRAVERSE CITY AREA

Specific Recommendations

Christ the King | Holy Rosary | Sacred Heart | St. Phillip Neri | St. Aloysius | The Woods | St. Anthony of Padua | St. Rita-St. Joseph | St. Gertrude | St. Michael the Archangel | Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha | St. Wenceslaus | St. Mary St. Mary | St. Joseph | Immaculate Conception | St. Francis of Assisi | St. Patrick

#6: St. Michael (Suttons Bay), St. Mary (Lake Leelanau), Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha (Peshawbestown), St. Wenceslaus (Gills Pier), and St. Gertrude (Northport) should be clustered with one Pastor assigned. The Pastor should be a strong, experienced priest with a commitment to Catholic school education and an ability to foster collaborative efforts among the existing parishes.

No weekend Masses should be held at St. Gertrude, but the parish should be maintained as long as a sustainable faith community exists.



TRAVERSE CITY AREA

Specific Recommendations

Christ the King | Holy Rosary | Sacred Heart | St. Phillip Neri | St. Aloysius | The Woods | St. Anthony of Padua | St. Rita-St. Joseph | St. Gertrude | St. Michael the Archangel | Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha | St. Wenceslaus | St. Mary St. Mary | St. Joseph | Immaculate Conception | St. Francis of Assisi | St. Patrick

#6 (cont): Weekend Masses should be continued at Blessed Kateri and St. Wenceslaus for only as long as the religious order priest currently serving is able to provide them. When he is no longer able, weekend Masses at Blessed Kateri and St. Wenceslaus should be discontinued, but the parishes maintained as long as a sustainable faith community exists at each location.

When the time comes that no Masses are celebrated at Blessed Kateri and it is established that a sustainable faith community no longer exists, a consultation with the local Native Americans should be undertaken to determine if they have an interest in purchasing and/or maintaining Blessed Kateri. The church might also be maintained as a chapel where occasional special Native American Masses or funerals might be held. It is recommended that additional clergy receive instruction in the Native American customs and liturgy so this ministry can continue in the Diocese....



TRAVERSE CITY AREA

Specific Recommendations

Christ the King | Holy Rosary | Sacred Heart | St. Phillip Neri | St. Aloysius | The Woods | St. Anthony of Padua | St. Rita-St. Joseph | St. Gertrude | St. Michael the Archangel | Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha | St. Wenceslaus | St. Mary St. Mary | St. Joseph | Immaculate Conception | St. Francis of Assisi | St. Patrick

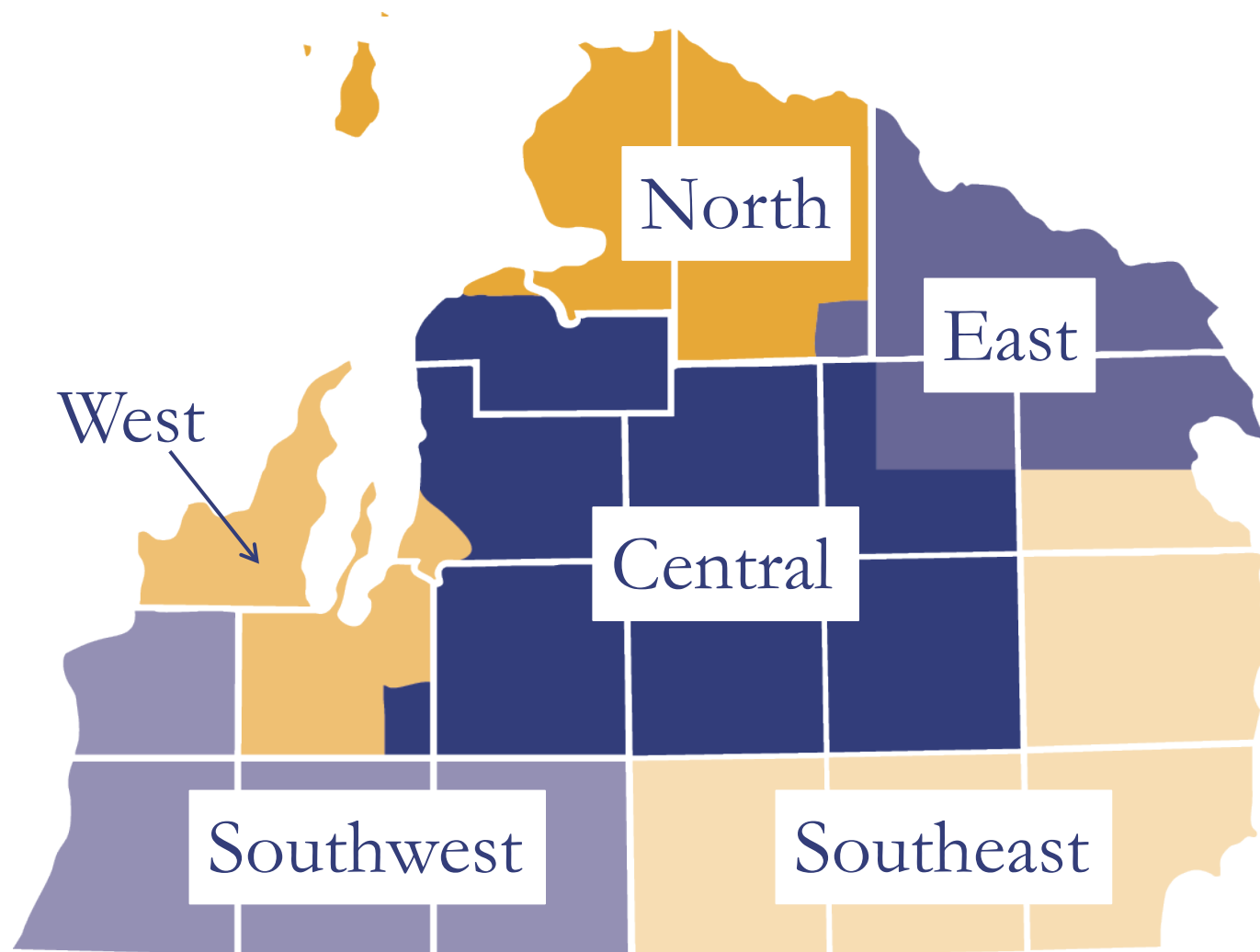
#7: A significant difficulty in the Leelanau Peninsula is that currently the churches are quite small, thus requiring more Masses and priests to serve the sacramental needs. A feasibility study of seating capacity and needs should be conducted to determine if a new, larger parish facility should be erected to better serve the Catholic population and to allow one Pastor to serve the northern half of Leelanau County. In the event a new church and parish facilities are built, St. Mary of the Assumption in Lake Leelanau should remain as part of the school campus within the new parish.

It is acknowledged that it is unlikely one Pastor will be able to provide Masses at Lake Leelanau and Suttons Bay until a larger building is erected; thus, an additional priest(s) will be required in the meantime.

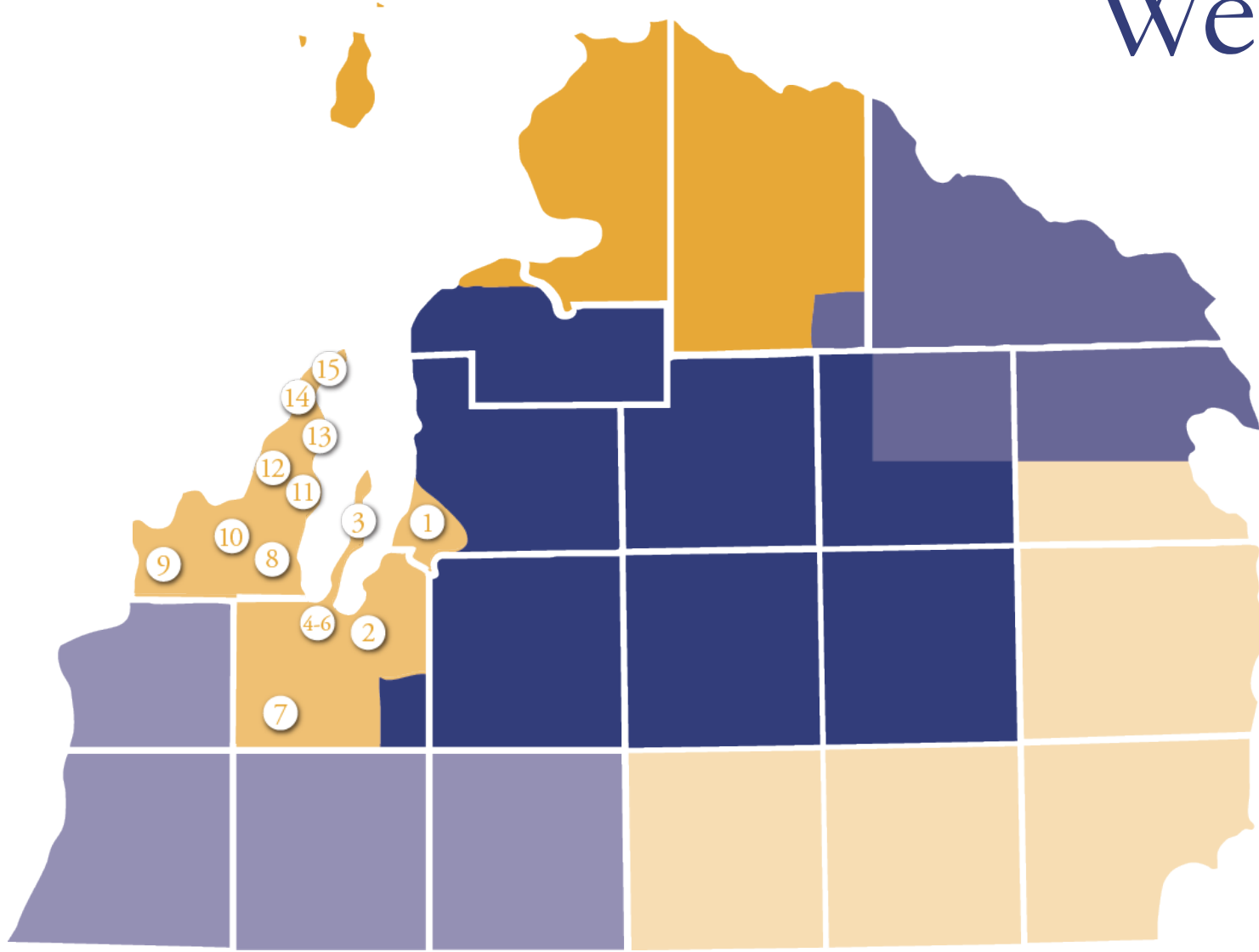


Diocese of Gaylord

6 Vicariates



West Vicariate



1. Sacred Heart, Elk Rapids
2. Christ the King, Acme
3. St. Joseph, Mapleton
4. Immaculate Conception, Traverse City
5. St. Francis of Assisi, Traverse City
6. St. Patrick, Traverse City
7. St. Mary, Hannah
8. Holy Rosary, Cedar
9. St. Philip Neri, Empire
10. St. Rita-St. Joseph, Maple City
11. St. Michael the Archangel, Suttons Bay
12. St. Mary, Lake Leelanau
13. St. Kateri Tekakwitha, Peshawbestown
14. St. Wenceslaus, Gills Pier
15. St. Gertrude, Northport



West Vicariate



Vicariate Profile					
Name:			WEST VICARIATE		
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	6219	↑	6224	7035	5968
Baptisms	182	↓	168	322	360
Marriages	90	↓	57	105	162
Deaths	188	↑	147	235	155
^Funerals					



1. Sacred Heart, Elk Rapids



West Vicariate

Parish Profile					
Name: Sacred Heart		City: Elk Rapids			
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	319	↓	326	416	321
Baptisms	8	↓	7	8	14
Marriages	1	↓	2	3	5
Deaths	8	↑	9	17	3
^Funerals					



2. Christ the King, Acme



West Vicariate

Parish Profile					
Name:		Christ the King		City: Acme	
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	550	↓	550	773	665
Baptisms	20	↓	20	30	72
Marriages	15	↓	6	9	42
Deaths	19	↑	5	11	9
^Funerals					



3. St. Joseph, Mapleton



West Vicariate

Parish Profile					
Name:	Saint Joseph			City:	Mapleton
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	393	↑	493	323	220
Baptisms	22	↓	21	101	31
Marriages	25	↑	16	16	12
Deaths	10	↑	19	4	4
^Funerals					



4. Immaculate Conception, Traverse City West Vicariate



Parish Profile					
Name: Immaculate Conception			City: Traverse City		
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	943	↑	953	954	909
Baptisms	26	↓	22	46	35
Marriages	5	↓	5	19	22
Deaths	25	↓	15	37	40
^Funerals					



5. St. Francis of Assisi, Traverse City

West Vicariate



Parish Profile					
Name:	Saint Francis of Assisi			City:	Traverse City
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	1856	↑	1848	1892	1600
Baptisms	26	↓	29	50	86
Marriages	17	↓	9	15	28
Deaths	41	↑	30	117	39
^Funerals					



6. St. Patrick, Traverse City



West Vicariate

Parish Profile					
Name: Saint Patrick			City: Traverse City		
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	466	↓	463	1088	860
Baptisms	10	↓	10	25	39
Marriages	3	↓	1	9	20
Deaths	13	↓	12	9	14
^Funerals					



7. St. Mary, Hannah



West Vicariate

Parish Profile					
Name:		Saint Mary		City: Hannah	
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	228	↓	244	262	250
Baptisms	8	↓	3	8	24
Marriages	0	↓	0	3	8
Deaths	15	↑	15	6	11
^Funerals					



8. Holy Rosary, Cedar



West Vicariate

Parish Profile					
Name:		Holy Rosary		City: Cedar	
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	380	↑	330	210	190
Baptisms	14	↑	12	9	5
Marriages	6	↑	3	9	4
Deaths	11	↑	9	5	7
^Funerals					



9. St. Philip Neri, Empire



West Vicariate

Parish Profile					
Name:		Saint Philip Neri		City: Empire	
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	276	↑	316	245	165
Baptisms	9	↑	12	7	5
Marriages	3	↓	4	4	6
Deaths	4	↑	10	7	2
^Funerals					



10. St. Rita-St. Joseph, Maple City

West Vicariate



Parish Profile					
Name:	Saint Rita-Saint Joseph			City:	Maple City
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	56	↓	26	147	168
Baptisms	8	↑	3	1	2
Marriages	0	—	2	1	0
Deaths	4	↓	2	5	5
^Funerals					



11. St. Michael the Archangel, Suttons Bay

West Vicariate



Parish Profile					
Name:	Saint Michael the Archangel			City:	Suttons Bay
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	300	↑	185	166	229
Baptisms	4	↓	6	5	15
Marriages	4	↓	2	3	5
Deaths	3	↓	2	5	10
^Funerals					



12. St. Mary, Lake Leelanau



West Vicariate

Parish Profile					
Name: Saint Mary of the Assumption			City: Lake Leelanau		
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	295	↑	298	385	292
Baptisms	26	↑	21	26	10
Marriages	7	↑	4	8	6
Deaths	25	↑	13	6	6
^Funerals					



13. St. Kateri Tekakwitha, Peshawbestown

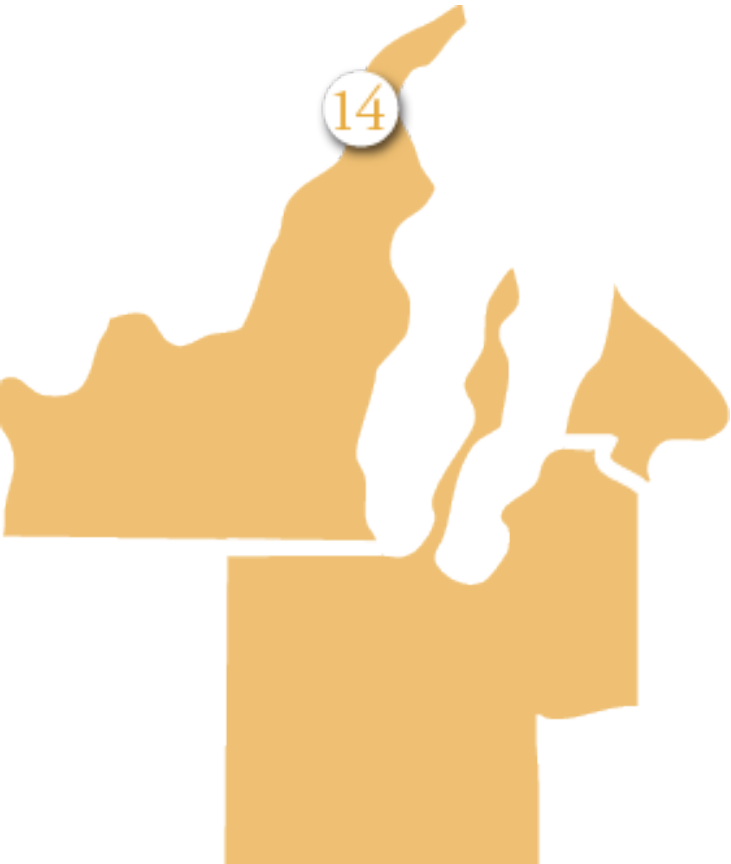
West Vicariate



Parish Profile					
Name: Saint Kateri Tekakwitha		City: Peshawbestown			
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	40	↑	75	60	30
Baptisms	0	↓	0	2	12
Marriages	0	—	0	0	0
Deaths	2	—	1	5	2
^Funerals					



14. St. Wenceslaus, Gills Pier



West Vicariate

Parish Profile					
Name:		Saint Wenceslaus		City: Gills Pier	
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	76	↑	76	69	69
Baptisms	0	↓	2	2	10
Marriages	3	↓	3	6	4
Deaths	6	↑	5	1	3
^Funerals					



15. St. Gertrude, Northport



West Vicariate

Parish Profile					
Name: Saint Gertrude the Great		City: Northport			
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	41	↑	41	45	0
Baptisms	1	↑	0	2	0
Marriages	1	↑	0	0	0
Deaths	2	↑	0	0	0
^Funerals					



Questions & Comments



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