

Parish Development Ministry Report

Joe Kormos Archdiocesan Assembly , 2018

The following are a few highlights from 2018.

Small Parish Forum -- Toledo July 12-14

The 2018 Small Parish Forum took place from 3PM Thursday July 12 thru noon on Saturday July 14 at St. George Orthodox Cathedral near Toledo OH.

Total attendance was 54 – ~70% of whom were laity.

Attendees came from as far away as Iowa, St Louis, Chicago, Georgia, Saskatchewan and Toronto. The location was less than three hours from Pittsburgh. Not including the hierarchy, chancellor and clergy keynote speaker, Fr Tom Soroka, there were two (2) attendees from the Archdiocese of Western PA.

Eight speakers contributed to the Forum – some contributing via video. All materials are posted online on the Parish Development/Small Parish Forum page.



Feedback

Of note was the statement heard from an attendee from the host parish, “When we agreed to host this event we didn’t think we needed to actually attend. We didn’t think we needed it. But we learned so much! We now realize *we needed this.*”

Parish Development Review Meeting with Diocesan Council

On Monday evening June 18, a meeting was held with the Archdiocesan Council at St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral to explore if/how to improve the effectiveness of the Archdiocese’ parish development ministry.

Prior to the meeting a summary document was shared with all of the Council. Most of the council attended the meeting. Discussion was open, useful and constructive. Essentially the overall outcome was a sense that as an Archdiocese we need to continue to strengthen this ministry.

Key focus areas resulting from the meeting:

- Establish an active Parish Development Advisory committee.
- Identify a 2 year Diocesan Parish Development theme.
- Better connect existing Parish Development efforts to extant Diocesan activities and communication vehicles to allow mutual reinforcement.
- Try reorienting/refocusing the Small Parish Forum, for one year to invite parishes of all sizes. E.g. : “All Parish Forum”
- Clarify viable parish status and combine with “chapel status” for some communities. (How would that work? Discussion of mission status for certain parishes as a tool for committing to renewal?)

Parish Development Committee

As a result of the above we have formed a Parish Development Committee for the Archdiocese -- a group of lay and clergy who work actively to define, implement and advance Parish Development efforts within the Archdiocese.

Members of the committee are:

- Fr. George Johnson, Archdiocesan Council, St John the Baptist Church, Conemaugh PA
- Fr. Andrew Nelko, Archdiocesan Council, St Nicholas Church, Weirton WV
- Rebecca Danchenko, Intercession of the Holy Virgin Church, Carnegie PA
- Chrisia Johnston, Holy Resurrection Church, Belle Vernon PA
- Kira Meholick, St Nicholas, Church DuBois PA
- Kristie Mertz, Archdiocesan Webmaster, St Nicholas Church, McKees Rocks PA
- Alexis Parshook, Archdiocesan Council, St John the Baptist Church New Kensington PA

A formational meeting, God willing, will have been held at the chancery on Saturday October 27. (After the writing of this report.)

Theme

Primary goal of this meeting will be to define, nominate and select a two year Parish Development theme for the Archdiocese. Hopefully we will be able to define some clear actions that can be associated with this theme. The theme will be carried out via parish projects; assistance tools, Light of Orthodoxy Articles and other Archdiocesan communications and events.

Representatives of the committee will share the selected theme at the Assembly.

Parish Forum

Pending agreement by the Diocese of the Midwest, the Small Parish Forum will, at least for one year, be identified as the "Parish Forum". It will be held at a parish in the Archdiocese likely on July 11-13 2019. The Forum would continue to be planned by the same (Small) Parish Forum group that has done so for five years. One or more WPA Parish Development Committee/team members would become members of the Parish Forum team. The Parish Forum annual theme would be inspired by the above Archdiocesan two year theme.

In Christ,

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