



Rural Family 'K'

Planning Update

December 31, 2023

To our parish families:

I am writing you with updates on progress. Since our last letter in March, we received approval from the Archbishop, directing us to continue work with the Pastoral Planning Office of the Archdiocese. The planning office conducted an onsite progress check on November 9.

A recap:

The Archdiocese is focused on strong co-responsibility for mission between priests and parishioners and reductions in administrative complexity. Our plan has us progressing in processes of canonical and structural changes to our corporations and parish structures. There will be three large projects within our plan: two canonical mergers of parishes and the merging of Pope John and St. Boniface Schools into a single school.

In July 2024, the Journey of Faith process will reduce to two priests (a Pastor and an Associate Pastor) serving this family of parishes. This is when Fr. Nields completes his six-year term as pastor of Neligh and Tilden, and it is envisioned he will take a different pastoral assignment in the Archdiocese.

***Canonical Merger of three parishes on Highway 14:**

St. Boniface (Elgin), St. Bonaventure (Raeville), and St. John the Baptist (Petersburg)

***Canonical Merger of five parishes on Highway 275:**

St. Peter de Alcantara (Ewing), St. John the Baptist (Deloit), St. Theresa (Clearwater), St. Francis (Neligh), and Our Lady of Mount Carmel (Tilden)

***Merger of the two schools housed within the same building:**

Work is underway for St. Boniface Grade School (PreK-6th) and Pope John Central Catholic (7th-12th) to merge into a single school for the 2024-2025 school year.

The plan is for Pope John XXIII Central Catholic to expand its educational services to be grades PreK-12th. This means adding of the new grades to the existing accreditation of PJCC with the Nebraska Department of Education. As a result, the support net for the merged schools will come from the two merged parishes (all eight churches) within our family of parishes.

Parishes have Patrons

Each resulting canonical parish will adopt a new name of a saint, which will be different from the campus church names. The parish name has to be the name of a saint. Collected suggestions are reviewed and presented to the Archbishop, where he will choose a name as he issues a canonical declaration of merger. For example, if St. Isidore was suggested because of the area's agricultural roots, then one of the churches would be St. John's Church of St. Isidore Parish. We will also continue to use "Catholic Parishes in Partnership." In July, we will use that name to refer to our whole Family of Parishes, replacing Rural Family 'K.'

Organizational Leadership (Co-Responsibility)

- Eight Local Leadership Committees
- Two Finance Committees
- One Pastoral Mission Council

Each church campus currently has a parish council. As we change into two merged parishes, the parish council structure will change into a Local Leadership Committee. These committees will work closely with Deacon John Starman as the Director of Operations. The Local Leadership Committees will be responsible for concerns about the physical plants, organizing local volunteers, and making each site a cohesive part of the family.

Each resulting canonical parish will have its own Finance Committee. The Finance Committees will be responsible for the budgeting, cash flow, and stewardship for their prospective parish. These groups will work with the pastor and family business manager.

There will be one Pastoral Mission Council made up of members from each of the church campuses. The Pastoral Mission Council will be responsible for setting faith mission priorities, identifying parishioner spiritual needs, and facilitating spiritual growth. This group will work with the pastor and the Evangelization Coordinator.

Proposed Weekend Mass Schedule (Projected to start the weekend of February 3/4):

Saturday:	5:30 PM	Every Weekend	Our Lady of Mount Carmel (Tilden)
	5:30 PM	1 st /3 rd /5 th Sunday	St. John the Baptist Deloit
	5:30 PM	2 nd /4 th Sunday	St. Peter de Alcantara Ewing
Sunday:	8:00 AM	Every Weekend	St. Theresa Clearwater
	8:00 AM	1 st /3 rd /5 th Sunday	St. Bonaventure Raeville
	8:00 AM	2 nd /4 th Sunday	St. John the Baptist Petersburg
Sunday:	10:00 AM	Every Weekend	St. Francis Neligh
	10:00 AM	Every Weekend	St. Boniface Elgin

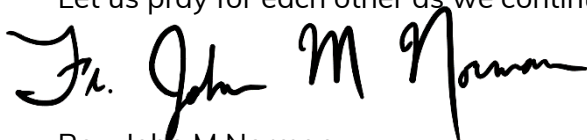
Note: The weekend for the rotation is determined by which Sunday of the month, as the Saturday is the vigil of the Sunday mass. The weekday mass schedule will change in July 2024.

Holy Day and Ash Wednesday masses to be determined.

Our family of parishes has moved to centralized administration in Petersburg. In July, a satellite office in Neligh will offer limited hours when the eight sites are under one Pastor and one Associate Pastor. The Neligh and Elgin rectory/offices will also serve as meeting spaces, as needed.

This letter is meant to communicate the direction that we are moving, with some of the first questions that may come to people’s minds. Each of these projects will have a lot of moving pieces. We have to make these changes in response to our changing landscape. These projects are meant to provide a future for our faith communities and our schools.

Let us pray for each other as we continue forward. Sincerely,



Rev. John M Norman
Convener of Rural Family ‘K’