Clustering - Second Meeting of Cluster
Pastoral Planning Committee


<u>Purpose:</u>

- determine current resources such as personnel, programs, services, etc.
- share *Parish Resource Study* reports
- identify strengths and limitations of the proposed cluster
- initiate discussion of the plan for the cluster
- appoint a committee to write a draft *Plan for Clustering*

<u>Participants:</u> Episcopal Vicar, Cluster Pastoral Planning Committee, Director of Pastoral Planning, parishioner observers

<u>Agenda:</u>

1. Welcome, Opening Prayer and Introductions
   Minutes of previous meeting
   Report on efforts to share information with parishioners
2. *Parish Resource Study* reports
3. Prioritize strengths and limitations
4. Initiate discussion regarding plan for clustering
   Archdiocesan Guidelines
   Episcopal Vicar's expectations for the cluster
   Ways to preserve the strengths and address the limitations
   Impact on each parish
   Next meeting: Date: _____Place: _____Time:_____
   Prayer Leader: _____
5. Tasks to be completed by each Parish Council or a sub-committee by the next meeting:

   Review the strengths and limitations of the cluster
   Review statistical reports affecting the proposed cluster
   Identify and address impact of clustering on the parish
   Review Starter Ideas for Cluster Plan
   Discussion with parishioners
   Review other cluster agreements
   Prepare a draft of the *Plan for Clustering* (can be done by sub-committee of the CPPC)

6. Closing Prayer

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**STARTER IDEAS FOR CLUSTER PLANNING**

The following items are intended <u>only</u> as starter ideas to assist in the development of a Cluster Plan. They should be considered only as samples. They may be helpful in providing wording for your own cluster plan. Your own creativity, hopes, local reality and needs will lead you to develop recommendations that are practical and solid, as well as farsighted and mission-oriented.

Solid recommendations are grounded in:

1. the individual and collective history of the cluster.
2. a firm grasp of the present reality of the cluster.
3. attentiveness to *Vision 2000*: *Community*, *Word of God*, *Leadership* and *Families*.
4. a faith community that is not afraid to dream a desired reality and ask "why not?"

*Community*

In order to strengthen and deepen the quality of liturgical practice and spiritual growth, we recommend:

1. That we share with other parishes in sponsoring a liturgist to assist parishes, clusters, or the entire deanery in developing this area of ministry. (For example: continuing education on the Church documents, formation for liturgical ministers, consultation for parish liturgy committees, etc.)
2. That we develop a deanery liturgy team to advise parishes in strengthening the quality of liturgical celebrations.
3. That we establish or strengthen communal celebrations of the sacraments of Reconciliation and Anointing.
4. That we reschedule Mass times to make better use of the presider's energy and ability to move from one site to another. (For example: staggered Mass times among neighboring parishes, alternating sites for Saturday Mass, reducing the number of Masses not well attended; rotating a weekday Eucharist from parish to parish, etc.)
5. That we provide for communion services in the absence of a priest (either within the faith community or shared interparochially).
6. That we initiate plans to request a Pastoral Administrator for our faith community.
7. That we initiate plans to hire a Pastoral Associate for our faith community.
8. That we establish a deanery clearinghouse to coordinate and distribute information about opportunities for spiritual direction, retreats, prayer groups, etc.
9. That we establish a cycle of retreats in the deanery for specific groups. (For example: men, women, seniors, young adults, families, persons with disabilities, etc.)
10. That we coordinate among parishes in the deanery to keep at least one church open for extended hours.

In order to strengthen our response to the needs of each other, we recommend:

1. 1. That we share with other parishes in sponsoring an ongoing pastoral care plan for new/returning members that extends past the time of the rite of initiation or the outreach program.
2. That we take action to welcome persons with disabilities into the life and ministries of our parish. (For example: family or caregiver support groups, ministry to the frail elderly or homebound, escorts, catechesis for persons with mental disabilities, accessible facilities, assisted listening devices, sign language interpreters, large print materials, etc.)
3. That we twin with another parish for mutual enrichment and expansion of an awareness of the universal Church. (For example: rural with urban, rural with rural, urban with urban; local with elsewhere in the U.S., local with Third World, etc.)
4. That we share with other parishes in sponsoring activities that express commitment to justice. (For example: continuing education and action on social and political issues; addressing rural life or urban neighborhood concerns; response to basic human and social needs; a periodic special collection for the poor of the area; a social justice fair; an annual multicultural liturgical experience, etc.)
5. That we encourage the development and support of family ministers and the many programs available to strengthen families.
6. That we develop or strengthen a cluster network for youth ministry and programming to involve youth in the life of the church.

7. That we periodically celebrate liturgies for youth in the cluster.
8. That we share with other parishes in plans to address the needs and concerns of young adults, both single and married.
9. That we co-sponsor a professional nurse to address the health needs of the parishes in the deanery/cluster.
10. That we identify one or more institutions in our deanery and coordinate schedules with other parishes so as to make better use of our ministers who serve these. (For example: hospitals, jails, nursing homes, shelters, etc.)
11. That we initiate or strengthen participation in local ecumenical activities. (For example: pulpit exchange, seasonal services, civic gatherings, addressing issues of common concern, etc.)
12. That our cluster sponsor an interparish human needs committee.
13. That we establish a cluster-wide program for evangelization and outreach to those who may wish to be welcomed back into the parish. (For example: Sponsor a "We Miss You" or "Re-Membering Church" project.)

In order to take greater ownership for the faith community, its resources, and its planning, we recommend:

1. That we reaffirm the current relationship between a parish and its mission or request a change.
2. That we request a reconfiguration of parish boundaries.
3. That we request a reconfiguring of this deanery territory, a creation of a new deanery, or a consolidation of this deanery with one or more others.
4. That we develop a creative alternative for parish leadership and staffing in our deanery. (For example: team ministry, pastoral administrators, deanery/cluster shared staff, etc.)
5. That we sponsor a financial manager to serve a cluster of parishes.
6. That we identify those parishes that our faith community would like to plan with in order to address long-term issues of pastoral leadership and parish vitality.
7. That we request that one or more parishes in this deanery merge or consolidate with one or more others.
8. That we request that our parish church become an Oratory and that this faith community become part of another parish.
9. That we request a new parish be established in this deanery in a specific area.

### *Word of God*

In order to develop how we pass on the faith in various forms to all age groups, we recommend:

1. That we hire a Director of Religious Education to assist the cluster or the entire deanery in developing this area of ministry. (For example: coordination of interparochial programs for various ages, training of catechists, direction of OCIA teams, etc.)
2. That we sponsor a cluster approach to OCIA.
3. That we initiate plans to open or consolidate schools, or school sites, or selected school programs/levels within the cluster. (For example: regional schools, etc.)
4. That we establish or strengthen a regional school endowment fund to assist students in these schools.
5. That we provide opportunities for parents of those attending public schools to be updated in the Catholic faith.
6. That we sponsor opportunities for faith development of school and religious education faculties, and parish staffs and pastoral ministers.

### *Families*

1. That we co-sponsor a minister of marriage preparation for the parishes of the deanery/cluster.
2. That we encourage the development and support of family ministers and the many programs available to strengthen families.

Questions to be asked in considering ideas for recommendations:

- Why are we considering this (what are the underlying values or beliefs)?
- Is it important, urgent to do this?
- Are we ableto do this (do we have or can we secure the resources)?
- What are some of the risksinvolved (What might we need to let go of; what might we need to take on)?
- What are some of the *benefits* (What new life/vitality might be realized)?
- What do we lose by not doing this?

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Archdiocese of Dubuque
Cluster Pastoral Plan

Parishes Included in This
Plan:

Date

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**On the Way to a Cluster Plan**

**Introduction**
The purpose of the Cluster Plan is to initiate the planning process for the future vitality of the parishes involved. Parishes involved in a cluster are asked to share more than a pastor. Programs, personnel and pastoral ministries can be strengthened by the sharing of these resources among the parishes. This preliminary Cluster Plan is a first step. The further development of the cluster will be an ongoing activity of the cluster that may take three to five years to accomplish.

The Cluster Plan will be used by the Archbishop and Episcopal Vicar to approve the continuation of this particular cluster. It is expected that the Cluster Plan will indicate a model of clustering the parishes wish to pursue. The model should address the strengths and limitations identified by the cluster parishes. It should also address some practical and immediate concerns such as a workable Mass schedule, educational programs, financing of shared costs and some means of decision-making and communication.

These worksheets are designed to help the Cluster Plan Writing Committee to address the concerns. The Cluster plan outline is on page 69. The Writing Committee may find the "Starter Ideas for Cluster Planning" helpful (p. 59).

Plan of **Action**

- Appoint a writing committee.
- Begin with a review of the strengths and limitations of the cluster.
- Discuss ways the strengths can be supported and the limitations addressed collaboratively.
- Review the demographic information; what information is learned from the data? what questions are raised?
- Designate those areas that can be accomplished collaboratively.
- Select a few needs that can be addressed almost immediately. Make plans to collaborate on them.
- Use the worksheets to guide your work.
- Complete the Cluster Plan.
- Present the proposed Cluster Plan at the third meeting of the Cluster Pastoral Planning Committee (CPPC).
- Parish Councils review the proposed Cluster Plan and approve and/or make recommendations for changes.
- Parish Councils review the revised plan and sign the plan.
- Plan is presented to the Episcopal Vicar.
- Provide for an ongoing planning committee.

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Cluster Pastoral Plan

**Worksheets**

After reviewing and discussing the strengths, limitations and demographic information on the parishes and area, develop goals that the parishes can pursue to strengthen the cluster and the ministries of the parishes. The topics listed here follow the committees of the parish councils.

1. Worship and Spiritual Growth

- Determine times for Mass and worship sites.
  This process might be helpful:
    - List present schedule of all weekend and daily Masses in a format that invites comparison.
    - List Masses that are less than half full as indicated in the annual October Count of Mass attendance. Note capacity of churches.
    - Come to an agreement on a Mass schedule and develop a time frame for implementation.
- Events, programs and projects to foster spiritual growth that may already be in place and ready to be shared or need to be initiated.

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2. Parish/Cluster Life

- Programs and activities that will involve two or more of the parishes.
- Methods of welcoming and inclusion of all parishioners.
- Structure for communication among the parishes.

3. Board(s) of Education

- Individual parish boards or a cluster board.
- Staffing of the programs with qualified leadership and catechists.
- Total number of students: preschool, elementary, high school.
- Adult formation programs.
- Provision for handicapped persons in education and formation programs.
- Training of catechists.

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4. Social Concerns

- Identify present projects that could be strengthened by parishes collaborating.

5. Leadership and Administration

In light of good stewardship, consider the following areas:

A.  Human Resources - consider the following:
- professional staff already employed in each parish of the cluster.
- determine what aspects of pastoral care must be done only by clergy.
- support staff already employed in each parish.
- ways the cluster could effectively collaborate on the use of staff.
- ministries available in each parish.
- ways the cluster could effectively collaborate in ministries.
- ministries that are not offered, but for which there is a need.
- how the cluster could collaboratively provide for these needs.
  B.  Facilities - consider the following:
  - the buildings existing in each cluster.
  - the condition of the buildings in the cluster.
  - ways in which the cluster could collaborate in the use and care of buildings.
  C.  Finances - consider the following:
  - financial health of each parish.
  - financial health of the cluster.
  - ways in which the cluster could collaborate on the use of finances to provide needed or desired services.
  - ways of adjusting services to available finances.
  - encourage sacrificial giving.
  D.  Non-Parish Ministry
  - As models or strategies are developed to address the ministry needs of the cluster, please take into consideration the non-parish ministries in your area that need to be covered, e.g., hospitals, nursing homes, prison, campuses, etc.

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**Cluster Plan Outline**

Parishes included in plan:

1. A general description of the proposed cluster model
Include:

- Mass schedules and sites.
- staffing for the cluster.
- method of sharing costs of the cluster.
- use of buildings to serve needs of cluster.
- cluster decision-making process.
- communication structure.

2. Description of those activities/programs and projects planned for the cluster
Include:

- strengths and limitations of the cluster and how they will be addressed.
- those activities that are now in place as well as those the cluster is planning, e.g., cluster youth ministry program, cluster baptismal preparation program, OCIA, outreach program.

3. Develop a demographic picture of the cluster
Include:

- number of families in cluster (by parish) ages, e.g., % of population under 15; 20-50; 50-70.
- potential for growth.

4. What could this cluster look like in 5 years?

5. How will planning be continued in this cluster?

*Please include copies of all data resources used in developing this plan.*

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**Signatures of Pastors and Parish Councils**

In the name of our parish, we present this Cluster Plan to our Episcopal Vicar and to the Archbishop. It contains our commitment to pursue together in good faith, the future of our parishes. We have as our common goal the revitalization of our parishes and the growth in holiness of our parishioners.

Names of Parish

Pastor

Parish Council Members


Names of Parish

Pastor

Parish Council Members

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Names of Parish

Pastor

Parish Council Members


Names of Parish

Pastor

Parish Council Members

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Names of Parish

Pastor

Parish Council Members

Recommendations to the Cluster Planning Committee


Signature _____
Archbishop of Dubuque



Signature _____
Episcopal Vicar



Date _____

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Archdiocese of Dubuque
Cluster Pastoral Planning
Six Month Report


Cluster Name

Cluster Contact Person

Date of Report


1.  How often does the Cluster Planning team meet?



2.  What specific recommendations are you currently working on?



3.  What concrete steps have been taken to develop and implement your cluster's plan?



4.  Have other issues surfaced as you continue to plan and collaborate? If so, what are they?

5. Are there areas of concern with which you feel further assistance/direction from the Pastoral Planning Office or other Archdiocesan Offices would be beneficial?

Please return this report to: (Dean) _____

by: (date) _____

**Parish Resource Study: Physical Plant**

Parish City

Completed by Date

*(Please complete the information for each parish building.)*

| | Building Type* | Size (sq. ft.) | Condition (general state of repair, safety, handicap accessibility, lighting, acoustics, space and energy efficiency, etc.) | Present Use | Possible Alternative Use(s) | Projected Capital Expenses | Projected Needs |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | | | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | | | |

*Building Type: C - Church, S - School, R - Rectory, CR - Classroom building, O - Other (please name)*

| | Building Type* | Size (sq. ft.) | Condition (general state of repair, safety, handicap accessibility, lighting, acoustics, space and energy efficiency, etc.) | Present Use | Possible Alternative Use(s) | Projected Capital Expenses | Projected Needs |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | | | | | | | |
| 5 | | | | | | | |
| 6 | | | | | | | |
| 7 | | | | | | | |

*Building Type: C - Church, S - School, R - Rectory, CR - Classroom building, O - Other (please name)*

**Parish Resource Study: Physical Plant**

Parish City

Completed by Date

Does the parish have a cemetery? No Yes

If yes, please state the amount of money in the cemetery Perpetual Care Fund: $

Name of person in charge of the cemetery:

**Additional Comments:**

*Please attach a site diagram of the parish property(ies).*

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Something to Think About!

| WE CAN'T | WE CAN |
|---|---|
| It's too complicated | Let's look at it from another angle |
| We don't have the resources | We can find a way |
| There's not enough time | We'll look at our priorities |
| We've tried that before | We're in a different place now |
| There's no way it'll work | Look at the possibilities |
| It's a waste of money | It's worth the investment |
| We don't have the expertise | We'll get some help on this |
| It's a risk | It's an opportunity |
| We've never done it before | We have the chance to be first |
| What we have is good enough | We can make it better |
| It can't be done | It'll be a challenge |
| Let somebody else deal with it | It's up to us |
| It's contrary to our custom | Anything is possible |
| It will never work | Let's give it a try |
| We can't | We can |