



FATHER FRANCIS XAVIER PIERZ AREA CATHOLIC COMMUNITY,  
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### **Why are We Being Asked to Change?**

The current reality illustrates the trends that inspire the future: We must adapt to the changing demographics.

- The overall population in our diocese has increased 7% since 2010 while the number of Catholic parishioners has decreased from 22.4% to 16.6%.
- Ages 7-42 make up 45.7% of the population. Sacramental and Catholic household numbers have decreased since 2010.
- Mass attendance declined 33.1%.
- Weddings declined 45.9%.
- Baptisms declined 44.7%.
- First Communion declined 37.8%.
- Confirmations declined 35.5%.
- Registered households declined 19%. As stewards of God's gifts we must use them more effectively.
- Average church utilization for weekend Masses is 39%.
- It is a struggle to find and retain qualified, faithful employees because of increasing pressures and limited compensation. Clergy, staff and laity are bearing a heavier administrative burden than in the past.
- In 1999, the diocese had 97 priests serving 140 parishes; today there are 62 priests serving 131 parishes.
- The average number of parishes per priest is 2.4 (U.S. average is 1) while the median is 3. Four out of five parishes are operating with a consistent budget deficit from annual giving (plate and envelope).

### **Guiding Principles**

#### *Missionary Discipleship*

As baptized Catholics, we are all called to the evangelizing mission of the Church. Rooted in this mission, together we are guided by a desire to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ in the world by living and sharing a life of faith.

#### *Sacramental Life*

The sacraments are outward signs of grace that God gives to people to help them live a life close to Jesus. We are guided by an invitation to encourage the full, conscious and active participation of the faithful in sacramental life and prayer of the Church.

#### *Engaging the Laity*

God has given each person a unique set of gifts and charisms to live out their individual vocation. Through revitalized prayer and formation opportunities, encounters with family, friends, co-workers and neighbors, we can welcome new faces into the fold. We are guided by our strengths to stimulate renewal in the Church.

#### *Listening as a Way of Being Church*

The Holy Spirit calls us to pray, listen and discern together what God is asking of us today. By listening to each other, we are guided by learning to best respond to the spiritual needs of all people in our diocese.

#### *Prudent Stewardship*

All our resources — human, structural, financial — are gifts from God. With a deep sense of gratitude, we are guided by the use of resources to achieve our shared mission in a healthy and responsible way.