



Gates-Chili Catholic Parishes

Holy Ghost
St. Helen
St. Jude
St. Pius the Tenth
St. Theodore

Pastoral Plan for 2010 – 2015
November 2009

INTRODUCTION

Gates-Chili Catholic Council

In June 2008 the Gates-Chili Catholic parishes of Holy Ghost, St. Helen, St. Jude the Apostle, St. Pius the Tenth, and St. Theodore, formed the Gates-Chili Catholic Council. This council is composed of the five pastoral leaders and three parishioners from each parish. A liaison from the Diocesan Pastoral Planning Office is also part of the group. (See appendix B.) The Council's guiding philosophy is that as five individual faith communities we each have our own communal personality with different strengths, resources and limitations but we are also members of the same Church, baptized in the same Holy Spirit and are disciples of the same Lord.

The first purpose of the Council was to encourage and coordinate the efforts of the five parishes to use their resources more effectively in carrying out the Great Commission of the Lord Jesus. During the year 2008 – 2009 it created and oversaw three Standing committees charged to design and implement plans for shared ministry in the areas of Social Ministry; Faith Formation and Youth Ministry; and Adult Faith Formation and Spirituality. The results of these ongoing collaborations are detailed in appendix A.

The second charge of the Council was to draft a five-year pastoral plan for 2010 – 2015. In a letter dated November 15, 2004, Bishop Clark asked the five Gates-Chili parishes to outline a plan which should “continue to build appropriate collaborative ministries,” “respond to the circumstances caused by a declining number of priests,” and “discuss whether there are additional ways, individually and collectively, in which you could aid vulnerable urban or rural parishes or other ministries directed toward the marginalized.” In a letter dated March 25, 2009, Bishop Clark informed the Council that they should “expect the number of priests assigned to your [five] parishes to decline from the current five to four... in June of 2010.”

Vietnamese Catholic Community

St. Helen is the home parish for the Vietnamese Catholic Community. The members of this Community are parishioners of St. Helen's and, therefore, part of the Gates-Chili Planning Group. However, Bishop Clark has an agreement with the Congregation of the Mother Co-Redemptrix, a Vietnamese religious order, to provide a priest to minister to these Vietnamese parishioners. Currently, Fr. Joseph Canh, CMC, is serving the Vietnamese-speaking parishioners of St. Helen's. Bishop Clark made it very clear in his letter dated March 25, 2009, that when referring to the four priests available to the Gates-Chili parishes in June of 2010, he was not counting Fr. Joseph Canh, CMC as one of the four.

GATES-CHILI PASTORAL PLAN for 2010 – 2015

After many meetings with Council members, Parish Councils, and parishioners from all five parishes the Council developed the following plan.

Collaboration

Social Ministry; Faith Formation and Youth Ministry; Adult Faith Formation and Spirituality

- Each of the above three standing committees of the Gates-Chili Catholic Council will continue to meet and carry on the great strides they have made in shared ministry. (See appendix A)
- Each of the five parishes will support and promote the efforts of these three standing committees.
- Membership will continue to include people from each of the five parishes and where appropriate, professional parish staff.

Future Opportunities

- All five parishes will continue to work together to build relationships with one another, and keep building an alliance.

Parish Configuration

In light of the fact that in June 2010 the number of priests assigned to our five parishes will decline from 5 to 4, (not including the priest assigned to the Vietnamese-speaking parishioners of St. Helen's) we recommend the following:

- St. Pius the Tenth and St. Theodore will continue as single parishes, each one being served by its own pastor/pastoral administrator.
- Holy Ghost, St. Helen, and St. Jude will cluster on June 29, 2010 and be served by two priests, preferably a priest pastor and a parochial vicar (associate priest).
- Three Masses will be celebrated each weekend at the single parishes and two at each of the clustered parishes.
- It is our understanding that it remains the responsibility of Bishop Clark to arrange for the sacramental ministry to the Vietnamese-speaking parishioners at St. Helen's. With this in mind, one additional Mass in Vietnamese will be celebrated by this individual each weekend at St. Helen.
- When the cluster is formed, each of the parishes (Holy Ghost, St. Helen and St. Jude) will retain its own identity, ministry programs, and staff. However, the cluster parishes will begin to study the benefits of sharing staff, ministries, councils, and resources so that in time the cluster can become a single parish with multiple worship sites.
- All three churches in the cluster will be available for funerals and weddings.

- Holy Ghost cemetery will continue to be operated as currently structured.
- Ministry partnerships will be maintained and developed among all five parishes, not just those involved in the cluster, as reflected in Appendix A.
- The four priests assigned will work together to serve the sacramental needs of the entire Gates-Chili community along with their assigned parishes.
- The Gates-Chili parishes have been blessed by the ministry of retired priests living in our area. We appreciate their assistance during the times our assigned priests are away on vacation or retreat or are recovering from illness. We also welcome them as presiders at Eucharistic liturgies at other times when they are available.
- Currently four deacons are serving the Gates-Chili parishes. The ministries they provide in the areas of service, preaching, baptizing and marrying are greatly appreciated. The pastoral leaders will work with deacon personnel and the involved deacons so that their ministry may be continued. Ideally the deacons assigned to the new cluster will work collaboratively and serve all 3 parishes of the cluster.

Moving Forward

- The Gates-Chili Catholic Council will continue to meet to facilitate our parishes' shared vision and ministry.
- In January 2010 a Holy Ghost/St. Helen/St. Jude transition team will be formed to prepare for the clustering occurring on June 29, 2010. It will be composed of the three current pastoral leaders; a staff representative, a pastoral council representative, and a parishioner at large from each parish; and a diocesan liaison. The transition team will develop regular means of communication among the clustering parishes and various constituencies (e.g. parishioners at large, pastoral councils, finance councils, parish committees, parish staff). It will ensure that additional decisions which need to be made prior to the clustering are addressed with good processes and the appropriate people involved. The lay members of this team will continue to support the new pastor and parochial vicar through the first year of the clustering.
- The finance councils of the clustering parishes are beginning to meet together to share financial and facilities information.
- After Easter of 2010, but before the cluster is created, the new weekend Mass schedule will begin at all five parishes and will remain in effect for at least 12 months. The current proposed schedule is as follows:

Holy Ghost: Sunday 8:30 am and 10:30 am
 St. Helen: Sat. 4 pm, Sun. 9 am (Vietnamese Mass time to be determined)
 St. Jude: Saturday 5 pm and Sunday 11 am

St. Theodore: Saturday 4:30 pm, Sunday 9 am and 11 am
St. Pius: 3 weekend liturgies, times to be determined

- Details of the weekday Mass schedule for the cluster will be finalized once the new administration is appointed.
- It is essential that people be able to call or visit their parish's office and be dealt with as individuals who have a long-term relationship with their parish. Therefore, at least for the first year after clustering, each parish's office will remain in place.

CONCLUSION

Over the past three months all pastoral councils, parish staffs, and parishioners at large have had the opportunity to have their questions addressed and to offer their input. After making revisions the five parish councils were able to affirm the above plan as the one that best provides the region its sacramental and spiritual needs, thus improving the usage of resources (both personnel and assets), and more easily maintains the identity of each parish.

APPENDIX A

STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL

The Gates Chili Catholic Council has set up 3 standing committees to work with parishes. Each committee is intended to have 3 members from each parish, one of whom is a member of the Council, and if possible a professional staff member from each parish. The function of the committees for the next planning period will be to continue to work with the resources available with the goal of continuing to find and implement creative ways for the parishes to grow closer together and learn to work with each other. The committees are the following: Social Ministry; Faith Formation and Youth Ministry; and Adult Faith Formation and Spirituality. Each of the committees has developed a set of objectives or goals to work on in the next few years.

Social Ministry Standing Committee

The Social Ministry Standing Committee will work to provide a forum and means of inter-parish collaboration to expand charitable works and promote social justice. Each of the constituent parishes already engage in works of charity and social justice in accordance with the teaching and long traditions of our Catholic faith. Some of our parishes are active with organized, on-going charitable activities, while others engage in these endeavors on a more ad hoc basis. All five parishes will work together to maximize resources and results in carrying out the social mission of the Church.

The committee has already developed a pilot project in which all member parishes participate and provide resources. This endeavor provides an organizational template for future on-going multi-parish social ministry activities. The committee “adopted” Bethany House and Hope Hall School and provides them with an organized cadre of volunteers and resource assistance. This pilot project is considered a beginning; working together with pooled resources and diverse ideas, there is opportunity for further joint projects.

The committee proposes to continue to function by adding in, as ex officio members, the chairpersons or designee of each parish’s social ministry committee. The Standing Committee will maintain the existing inter-parish project, assist parishes with their individual projects as the need arises, especially where there is an existing expertise, expand and develop new inter-parish projects, and assist the member parishes in communicating Catholic social justice teachings.

Faith Formation and Youth Ministry Standing Committee

The Faith Formation/Youth Ministry Standing Committee will work to develop a way to jointly and co-operatively provide for the spiritual formation and sacramental preparation of children, youth and their parents. Each parish currently has a formalized program for Faith Formation and preparation for sacraments, although grade levels and formats vary by parish. Youth Ministry, on the other hand, runs the gamut from “none” to “limited” to “active”, varied by parish and grade level. The committee will work to maximize available resources and best serve the spiritual needs of all of our young people.

Youth Ministry has successfully joined efforts in several endeavors. Three “Jr. High Fun Fests” were held in Nov., Jan., and Feb. These fests began with Mass and concluded with an evening of “fun” for grades 5 – 8. Two were held at St. Jude and one at St. Pius, and were all well attended. It has been recognized that varying location, Mass presider and activity is important in promoting the “regional” mind-set. Sr. High has done less cooperatively due to scheduling difficulties. All parishes were invited to a Sr. High overnight retreat in Jan., and 4 of the 5 were represented. Two parishes joined forces for the Lenten “Way of the Cross” performance.

Each parish has been invited to join St. Pius in the Monroe County Catholic softball league for both Jr. High and Sr. High. There are plans for future joint “Fun Fests” at both the Jr. High and Sr. High levels. An invitation will be put forth for Youth Ministry activities taking place at each parish so that efforts can be collaborative.

Faith Formation moves forward with the programs that are currently in place in each parish. Confirmation has been celebrated jointly with three or four of the five parishes (St. Pius is too large) for several years. Our current experience in Faith Formation is that we have been unable to find a way to join programs, but will continue to work to consolidate resources in the future. This will be a long-term, on-going challenge.

Adult Faith Formation and Spirituality Standing Committee

Adult Faith Formation and Spirituality Standing Committee will work to assist the adults in our communities to be touched and transformed by the life-giving message of Jesus through the development of sustainable ministries that will meet the diverse and changing needs of our parishes and the communities we serve.

As a community we have successfully collaborated on three years of Inter-Parish Lenten Retreats. We have also shared and publicized Adult Faith Formation and Spirituality opportunities throughout our five Parishes.

The committee continues to focus on how to involve adults ages 18-35. The committee will also continue to work to support and encourage existing adult programs so that participation is enhanced and programs are successful. Additionally, diocesan-wide programs will be supported and encouraged in all of the parishes. The committee will work to encourage the development of additional programs that will lead to further spiritual development opportunities for the members of each of the parishes.

APPENDIX B

THE GATES-CHILI CATHOLIC COUNCIL MEMBERS

Holy Ghost

Fr. Thomas Nellis
Clayton Connolly
Mary Beth Strohm
Pat Waldmiller

St. Helen

Fr. Malachy Nwosu
Cindy Hay
Eleanor Kane
Ed Wurtz

St. Jude

Fr. Michael Schramel
Mary Ann Duffy
Gary Rigoni
Thomas Uschold

St. Pius X

William Rabjohn, Pastoral Administrator
Sam Ognibene
Jack Quinn (until September 2009)
Dr. Judy Shea

St. Theodore

Fr. Stephen Kraus
Connie Nye
Danny Phillips
Debbie Smardz (until August 2009)

Diocesan Liaison

Karen Rinefierd

Administrative Assistant

JoAnn Quattrocchi