



Catholic Community of Central Fall River

**Good Shepherd Church | Saint Stanislaus Church | Saint Anthony of Padua Church
Cathedral of Saint Mary of the Assumption**

“Pastoral ministry in a missionary key seeks to abandon the complacent attitude that says:

‘WE HAVE ALWAYS DONE IT THIS WAY.’

I invite everyone to be bold and creative in this task of rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelization in their respective communities.”

- Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*

GOALS OF THE COLLABORATIVE

Our goal as a collaborative is (*from “Introducing Strategic Planning”*):

1. Forge a new vision out of the needs and aspirations of many.
2. Support our pastors, to enable “priests to be priests.”
3. Listen to the concerns of our lay people.
4. Bring back those frustrated or fallen away from the Church.
5. Allow laity to contribute their considerable time and talent in meaningful and productive ways.
6. Find those with extraordinary passion and skill to do great things.
7. Engage clergy and laity in productive ways that show results.
8. Renew our mission to change lives.
9. Develop needed resources, financial and human.

FIRST TASKS:

GREIVING LOSS, HONORING OUR HISTORY

The most important initial task is walking with the parishioners of the closing parishes and helping them to grieve the loss of their beloved spiritual homes. This isn’t easy and emotions are high. We want to honor their histories and legacies, and find a way to bring those legacies with them into the new collaborative.

CREATING WELCOMING COMMUNITIES

It won’t be enough to simply say to members of closing churches, “Join another one.” We need to be explicit and public in our welcome of these fellow Catholics. To the best of our ability, we need to create a true sense of welcome

MOVING FORWARD:

THE ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN – CREATING A UNIFIED ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

To make better use of the resources of the communities involved, we will create a single administrative staff to oversee the care of all churches. We would like to centralize secretarial, financial, and buildings maintenance positions under a single umbrella for the collaborative. This will also give us a consistent approach to these areas.

THE PASTORAL PLAN – CREATING A UNIFIED PASTORAL TEAM

The heart of this endeavor is the pastoral outreach and evangelization. We need a new evangelization that includes both re-envisioning the way we evangelizing the existing population of each church community; and becoming a community that “goes out” and brings in new groups of people. This task of (re)evangelizing will touch every aspect of parish life, specifically:

1. Liturgy – Our celebration of the Eucharist is the heart of who we are. Any renewal needs to begin with a renewal of the quality of the worship life of the community. Are parishioners inspired by worship? Are their hearts and souls being lifted to heaven? Does the quality of the music, preaching, lectoring, serving assist people in their prayer or detract from it?
2. Adult Faith Formation – We will create a program of adult faith formation for all adults in the collaborative, not solely RCIA.
3. Faith Formation of Youth – Do our programs serve to not only educate in the ways of faith, but evangelize for faithful living? We will consider models of faith formation with a greater focus on an evangelizing catechesis that reaches not only young people, but their parents and the parish at large.
4. Outreach to Youth and Young Adults. We will initiate the nationally recognized LifeTeen and Edge programs for junior and senior high school aged students, as well as create a more specific outreach to young adults. This will include the establishment of a Sunday evening youth Mass, as well as service opportunities in the city for young people.

CREATING A UNIFIED SACRAMENTAL SCHEDULE

There are currently 16 daily Masses, and 17 Vigil and Sunday Masses within the four churches of the collaborative. This is far more than is needed and only serves to separate the community into many small enclaves while running the clergy ragged. Additionally, a large number of them occur at the same time (e.g. 5 – 4:00 p.m. Masses, 4 – 10 a.m. Masses). To help create a sense of united community between all involved churches, a new Mass and Confession schedule will be created that respects the number of clergy available and the needs of the community, and in the end will have a greater variety of times with fewer Masses. We plan on the new schedule beginning the First Sunday of Advent (see Proposed Collaborative Mass Schedule).

HONORING OUR PARISH TRADITIONS

Some have expressed concerns that being part of this collaborative means that each individual community will lose its treasured traditions. This could not be farther from the truth. We are not trying to create a generic Catholic Church, but rather we are trying to build something diverse and vibrant that will include, and if anything, expand each of our treasured traditions. Whether it is the delicious foods associated with our various cultures; or the important spiritual feasts and social gatherings – we will not only keep them, but now also invite the broader community to celebrate them together.

ALL COMMUNITY ASSEMBLY AND BEYOND

Tonight we come together as a collaborative community for the first time. Our goals are simple: 1) Get to know each other; 2) Share our questions and concerns; 3) Share our dreams for the future; 4) Pull together some committees which will meet through the winter and Spring. Suggested Committees:

Administration
Spirituality, Prayer, and Traditions
Faith Formation (adult and youth)
Youth and Young Adult Ministry