



How Do We Get There? Roadmap to our new parish

In the first week of February the Archdiocese of Seattle called all the pastors together to explain how the latter portion of the Partners in the Gospel project is going to proceed. As you recall, we have thus far had four listening sessions where we asked for your perspective on who we presently are and who we would like to become as we found the new parish. This period of broad input culminated near the end of the Christmas season in January 2026, when we shared with you our finalized parish vision statement, *Glorify God, proclaim the Gospel, and form disciples who love, live, and serve like Jesus Christ*, as well as a number of initiatives to concretize that vision and which will lead us to the founding of our new parish and beyond.

I know there have been a number questions, which I have endeavored always to answer truthfully and frankly, albeit I know at times imperfectly for lack sometimes of knowing the full picture myself, the outcomes not being predetermined. I also know that we unfortunately experienced declining participation in the listening sessions over the course of this process, and a persistent hesitancy by some folks to engage for various reasons. I also know that some people expressed a “wait and see” approach or intended to give their input or become involved at some later time. I have been trying to express through this process how important it was to overcome such hesitancies and share your perspectives, hopes, wisdom, and needs in the opportunities provided; I am very grateful to those of you who so faithfully and thoughtfully, and perhaps overcoming hesitancy, doubt, fear, or some other barrier, participated in the process that eventually produced our new vision and initiatives.

I've used the metaphor at times that it is important for us to get on board the train before it leaves the platform. Everyone is invited, but must board of his or her own accord, that I cannot prevent the train from moving nor force anyone to ride. I need to share with you all a both hopeful and challenging truth as we enter the “How Do We Get There?” phase: the train has now left the platform. This is hopeful in that it means that all the ideas and discussion and speculation is now going to begin bearing concrete fruit, but it is challenging because those who did not avail themselves of the opportunities in the initial steps will find that this phase of planning and rollout will shift away from open-ended consultations or listening sessions oriented toward shaping what initiatives and projects will be undertaken. Rather, while this latter stage has two moments where we will solicit feedback broadly, the format will be slightly different. One opportunity will be in the form of a presentation of the plan for the new parish with an opportunity for me to hear and answer charitable and constructive questions and comments or point out lacunae. The last opportunity will be one more open discussion to help discern the selection of the new parish's name. Now, the work ahead is long and complex, and I am going to continue to provide you updates so that you do not feel disconnected from the progress we will be making, but much of it will be done by smaller task-oriented groups rather than the general open fora of the last year and a half.

The Next Step – Ranking the Initiatives

In March, I am going to meet again with pastoral council members and we will begin the process of the back half of the Partners in the Gospel project that will culminate in the founding of our new parish. The Council will help me determine the priority and order of the initiatives we developed. Recall that the chosen initiatives themselves are the fruits the last phase, this task is very much the practical planning that begins implementation.

Some of these initiatives are more time sensitive because they are necessary tasks that must be completed before the new parish can be formed. Some of these initiatives are more complicated because they will rely on the results of other initiatives and we need to determine proper sequence so that all the information at our disposal when decisions are being made. Some of these initiatives will be organic continuations of things we have already been doing and will simply continue to do. Some of the initiatives will be prepared now, but will only begin in earnest in the first weeks and months of the new parish.

The Five Year Plan

Taking input from the Pastoral Council, the staff and I will begin the process of evaluating costs and impacts of the initiatives. For some initiatives that require a special body to be formed to make a recommendation that will shape the new parish, the body will be formed and consulted. We will make plans and choices about where and how programs will be operated, any construction or repairs that will be necessary and all the financial questions that brings (at which point the finance councils will also play a role), and yes: how many and where our Sunday Masses will be. This portion of the process is likely to be rather technical and potentially opaque feeling. As always, I will endeavor to be open and frank as I can be without stoking undue speculation, fear, or breaking confidences. All the while, of course, the ordinary life of the parishes will be going ever on.

At the end of this portion, I will publicly present a full community report explaining the completed plan to you and make myself available for questions and feedback. This will be an exciting but also difficult moment; I anticipate it is when it will become very real on an experiential level.

The Name and the Decree

After the community report has been presented, there will be a consultation opportunity around the name of the new parish; the goal is to request a name that speaks to the values and vision we determined over this past year and a half together, and what was discovered over the “How do we Get There?” phase. Remember that the parish is the territory that will encompass all our churches; The names of the individual church buildings will not and cannot change. The exact form and method of this step is undergoing some further consideration by the Archdiocese based on some initial feedback the pastors have provided.

In the end, I will submit the completed plan to the Archdiocese for review, ensuring that we will have planned for all that is needed and followed all legal, financial, and procedural due process requirements (these are big and irrevocable decisions and I am keenly aware of the need to be just and thorough). When that has been reviewed and prepared, I will write a formal letter to the Archbishop requesting the erection of our new, multi-campus, parish. The final step is his, drafting a signing the final legal decree.

In terms of timeline, the goal from the beginning has been the Summer of 2027. However, as this is not a pre-determined process, it will take the time it takes, even if a little faster or a little slower than the target. Whenever it may be, though, I will be here for you.

In Christ,

Fr Brian Thompson