ARCHDIOCESE
of DETROIT

Round 2 Draft Model Publication
Frequently Asked Questions

Model Refinement

What happened in refinement?
After the post-listening session survey closed, all of the feedback received was reviewed and considered, including feedback from priests, key parish leaders, the scribes from your parish listening sessions, and all of you who completed the online survey. Additionally, over the last several months, we've received thousands of emails and phone calls with suggestions, additional context, and feedback related to the models.

The restructuring team, along with various consultative bodies, made up of priests, deacons, lay ministers and parish staff, gathered in late September to refine the Round 1 draft models in response to the feedback received. The model refinement process resulted in 30 new Round 2 draft models (two new models for each planning area). These Round 2 models will be published on restructuring.aod.org in late October.

How were participants for model refinement selected?
Participants were selected based on their involvement in and exposure to the restructuring process to date. Most are members of the modeling team, restructuring commission, and/or project workstreams. The group includes priests, deacons, parish staff, and lay leaders who collectively bring a range of perspectives and familiarity with the pastoral and practical realities of the planning areas.

During the workshops, participants reviewed the feedback gathered through the parish listening sessions, evaluated the Round 1 draft models, and discerned how those models should be refined into the Round 2 draft models. The Round 2 draft models will now move forward as the next step in the broader discernment and restructuring process.

Who participated in the model refinement?
We want to be transparent about how participants were selected and the perspectives represented, while also protecting the integrity of the working sessions. For that reason, we are not publishing individual participant names.

This encouraged participants to engage candidly in the refinement process without being viewed as representatives of a particular parish or constituency or being contacted or lobbied outside the workshops. We believe this strikes the right balance between transparency about the process and creating an environment where participants can thoughtfully consider the parish feedback and make the difficult decisions needed to develop the Round 2 draft models.

Round 2 Draft Models

Are the published Round 2 draft models final?
No. When the Round 2 draft models are published in late October, priests and Key Parish Leaders will be asked to share additional feedback. Once additional feedback has been reviewed, additional refinements may occur, and the recommendations will be made to Archbishop Weisenburger. It is important to note that Archbishop's final decision could still vary from what is shown in either the Round 1 or Round 2 draft models.

How can I share feedback if I am not a Key Parish Leader?
Parishioners should communicate their feedback on the Round 2 draft models by contacting their Key Parish Leaders. Priests and Key Parish Leaders will be provided suggested methods for collecting parishioner feedback.

Why don't the Round 2 draft models include the number of priests assigned to each pastorate?
At this stage in the refinement process, our primary focus is to align the pastorate groupings based on the feedback received from the Faithful. The feedback received through parish listening sessions, in the online survey, and other consultative bodies led to a number of changes and regrouping of pastorates based on parish affinities, geography, and collaboration. These new grouping will require a deeper look into priest availability and the needs of these newly formed communities. The number of priests to be assigned to each pastorate will be determined as pastorate model recommendations are finalized.

Why don't the Round 2 draft models include the number of Masses or the Mass schedule at each parish?
The number of Masses at each parish and the Mass schedules within each pastorate are reliant upon the language needs in different communities, the number of priests assigned to each pastorate, and, most importantly, a concerted effort to ensure accessibility to the Sacraments across the Archdiocese. Once Archbishop Weisenburger announces his decisions regarding new pastorates,

Mass schedules can be evaluated to best serve each community and provide access to the Sacraments across the Archdiocese.

Why was my parish previously shown in round 1 as a "standalone" parish, but now it's shown in a pastorate with other parishes?
After further review of the feedback received as well as financial, sacramental, and geographic data, Archbishop Weisenburger and the Modeling Team discerned that the pastorate structure facilitates improved collaboration among priests, parish staff, and ministries. For this reason, all parishes in Round 2 models are shown in pastorates. The only parishes not shown in pastorates are those parishes identified as serving specific ethnic communities, locations where religious orders have been assigned to care for a particular parish community, and the Cathedral of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

Timeline/Process

Who makes the final decisions?
Ultimately, the final decision will be the result of Archbishop Weisenburger's prayerful discernment. Archbishop Weisenburger receives regular updates about the restructuring process from the restructuring team and continues to provide prayerful direction to the process. Several teams and consultative bodies that include clergy, lay ministers, parish staff members, and Curia members, work together to provide insight and recommendations to the Archbishop for his discernment.
No Weekend Masses/Mergers

My parish was shown as having weekend Masses in all of the Round 1 draft models, but now it's shown as having no weekend Masses in at least one of the Round 2 draft models. Why? What does that mean?
It is important to remember that both Round 1 and Round 2 draft models are not final decisions. As such, when the Round 1 models were shared with priests, Key Parish Leaders, and the Faithful at their parish listening sessions, a great deal of feedback was received in response to those first drafts. The model refinement workshops took into consideration thousands of comments, suggestions, and considerations, as well as financial, sacramental, and geographic data about each planning area. After prayerful consideration and deliberation, the Round 2 models emerged as alternatives that better reflect the needs of the communities within each planning area. These changes do not mean that any particular parish is closing; rather, it indicates that the feedback led the model refinement teams to consider alternative models and seek additional feedback.

What does "no weekend Masses" mean?
One of the recurring themes received in feedback from the Faithful was that the phrase "no weekend Masses" in the Round 1 draft models raised questions about what that would actually mean for the future of these communities.

As we move into the next stage of refinement, we heard the need to provide greater clarity. In the refined models, you will continue to see some locations identified as having "no weekend Masses." For those locations, this means they would be merged with another parish, or with other parishes in the pastorate, to form a single, unified parish community.

It is important to note that a proposal for a site to no longer host regular weekend Mass does not reflect a lack of faith, participation, or value in its community. A number of different factors were considered in development and refinement of the draft models.

What criteria were used to determine which worship sites retain weekend Masses?
The Archdiocese of Detroit includes six counties across southeastern Michigan. Our landscape includes suburban, rural, and urban communities, with many ethnicities, languages, and cultures living and worshipping within its boundaries. Weekend Mass sites were carefully identified by the model refinement teams based on a number of factors, including, but not limited to financial and sacramental data, building conditions, geographic proximity, parish affinities, priest availability, cultural considerations, demographic trends, and travel patterns.

Where will parishioners go if their church no longer offers weekend Masses?
In most cases, the feedback provided by the Faithful directed the formation of different pastorate groupings based on neighboring parishes where parishioners felt they would be most likely to attend Mass, or where collaboration and sharing of ministries is already in place. While the formation of pastorates aims to unify parishioners at parishes who will eventually merge, we know that it is not always the case that parishioners will go to Mass at a neighboring church.
Regardless of where members of the Faithful attend Mass, the importance of demonstrating hospitality and receptivity to new members will play an important role in welcoming others as parish transitions occur.

Where will proceeds from the sale of parish property go?
In cases where one or more parishes merges and it is determined that a property will be sold, the proceeds from that sale go to the newly formed parish to support ministry and outreach, ongoing maintenance and upgrades to the remaining buildings, and other operational expenses. Unless a debt is owed, no proceeds from property sales go to the Archdiocese of Detroit.

What will happen to parish savings, debts, endowments, and restricted donations when it is merged with another parish?
Generally, when one parish merges with another, all of its assets, including financial, physical, and personal property, as well as any debts or other obligations, become the responsibility of the parish that remains in existence.

Can a former worship site still host weddings, funerals, or private prayer?
In some cases, yes. In other cases, the pastorate will begin the process of closing those buildings to

reduce the administrative load on the priests as well as reducing the financial strain of caring for an additional facility.

What happens to parish records and sacred objects when a parish is merged or closed?
The Archdiocese of Detroit continues to follow a thorough process to care for the transfer of parish records and sacred objects. In most cases, parish records are relocated to the parish with which it is merged. Similarly, it is customary that select sacred objects be moved to the parish with which it is merged.

Ministries

What happens to parish employees, councils and ministries when parishes merge or close?
The Archdiocese of Detroit will work with outgoing and incoming pastors to support the development of a pastorate staffing structure that best utilizes the gifts of parish staff members who desire to continue working in the new pastorate or continue in ministry within the Archdiocese. Ministries at each parish will be evaluated and the pastor and pastorate staff will work to discern a plan for enhanced ministry collaboration and consolidation to best serve the parish community. The Archdiocese of Detroit will provide support to new pastors to fill vacancies with qualified candidates who may have been impacted by the reduction in workforce and/or seek new work opportunities.

Once parishes have merged, new councils may be formed to include members from previous councils and/or new members, depending on the needs of the newly formed parish and pastorate.

What is the Archdiocese doing to help parish staff members who lose their jobs due to restructuring?
While it is true that some pastorates may result in some duplication of roles, new pastors are encouraged to take time in prayerful discernment to help determine a staffing structure that will best serve the needs of the new pastorate community. In many cases, pastors may realign the roles or responsibilities of some staff members in a way that matches the parish staff members' skills with ministry needs within the new pastorate.
The Archdiocese of Detroit will provide guidance for pastors regarding staffing and ministry structures and support for parish staff through these transitions.

What will happen to Masses celebrated in languages other than English? What about personal parishes serving different ethnic communities?
Each parish serving different ethnic communities was considered individually based on its ministry to a particular ethnic group, the languages in which Mass is celebrated, and the sustainability of the parish based on its financial and sacramental data, population shifts, and priest availability, among other factors. Some of these parishes were identified to continue serving their communities as

"standalone" parishes, whereas others were found to serve a wider group of people outside of their own ethnicity, and will be placed in a pastorate with other parishes in the area.

What will happen to Hispanic ministry at parishes that are closed or merged?
During model refinement, modeling teams reviewed survey feedback and demographic data and trends to identify parishes or pastorates in the geographic areas where Hispanic ministry would be most likely to thrive by providing Mass and other ministries in Spanish and English, referred to in the Round 2 draft models as Hispanic Ministry Hubs or Outposts. Spanish Masses would cease at other non-Hispanic Ministry Hub or Outpost locations.

What is a Hispanic Ministry Hub or Hispanic Ministry Outpost?
A Hispanic Ministry Hub is a parish within a pastorate that has been identified as a potential location to act as the main center of Hispanic ministry for a particular region or planning area. As a ministry hub, this location would employ bilingual staff, utilize and provide bilingual resources for all aspects of parish life, including bilingual priests. These locations would offer Spanish Mass and provide coordinated pastoral care, religious education, sacramental preparation, and community life for the Hispanic community.

These locations were identified based on feedback, demographic data, travel patterns, and sacramental accessibility. In some cases, more than one parish within a single pastorate was considered an ideal location to provide regular Spanish Mass. Those locations are referred to as Outposts. All Hispanic ministry and operations would flow from the Hub, however additional ministry offerings could be provided at the Outpost as a secondary location.

What is the Archdiocese doing to increase the number of vocations to the priesthood?
The Archdiocese of Detroit Office of Priestly Vocations has demonstrated **stability** in seminarian enrollment over the past few years. On Priesthood Sunday (September 27, 2026) the vocations office launched a new campaign to promote prayer for priestly vocations focused on Jesus, our merciful and faithful high priest. Prayer cards and posters have been made available to parishes across the archdiocese. You can read more about this new initiative here. Additionally, the Office of Priestly Vocations regularly hosts discernment groups and dinners in every region of the Archdiocese and serves to assist priests and the lay faithful in promoting vocations in their parish communities.

Catholic Schools

What happens to the parish's Catholic school if its parish loses weekend Masses and eventually merges with another parish?
A parish's Catholic school is the ministry of the parish and will therefore become a ministry of the newly formed parish after the merger.

What happens to Catholic schools if there is more than one school in the same pastorate and the parishes remain open?
In most cases, multiple schools within a pastorate will continue to function as they do currently with oversight from the pastor and the team of priests assigned to care for the pastorate.

How will regional Catholic schools be supported if the parishes currently supporting them are in different pastorates?
Parish support for regional Catholic schools can and should continue to be a ministry of parishes within the region. The merging or grouping of parishes into pastorates should not preclude a parish from providing financial support for a regional Catholic school.

Priest Reassignments

Why does my priest have to be reassigned even if my parish is healthy?
The rationale behind what we anticipate will be a significant movement of priests has been discussed extensively with our clergy. We have also consulted with several dioceses that have undergone similar restructuring efforts, as well as priests currently serving in those dioceses. Consistently, their recommendation has been that all priests move as part of the transition.

There are several reasons for this approach. First, it allows us to look at the needs of the Archdiocese as a whole and match the gifts, talents, and experiences of our priests with the needs of the pastorates they will serve. Second, it provides both priests and parish communities with an opportunity for a fresh start as these new pastorates are formed.

Most pastorates will consist of multiple parish communities led by one pastor, with other priests serving as parochial vicars (commonly known as associate pastors). If priests were to remain in their current assignments and one of those priests was named pastor of the newly formed pastorate, it could create challenges for both clergy and parishioners. Parishioners might naturally continue to look to their longtime priest for leadership, and the pastor could be perceived as favoring the community from which he originally came. These dynamics can make it more difficult to build trust across the pastorate and to lead the newly formed community effectively.

We recognize that this aspect of the restructuring may be difficult to understand and accept, particularly given the strong bonds that often develop between priests and parish communities. Our goal is to position both our priests and our pastorates for long-term success as we seek to continue serving the People of God throughout southeast Michigan.

Parish Boundaries

What happens to a parish's boundaries when it is closed or merged?
In most cases, the boundaries of parishes being merged are combined to form a new parish boundary. It is likely that as parishes merge, a review and potential redrawing of parish boundaries can take place, so boundaries can better reflect current population patterns, parish life, and pastoral realities of the newly formed pastorates.

Why do some parish boundaries appear to be disproportionate in relation to others?
In some cases, parishes shown with no weekend Masses are the result of previous mergers, so their boundaries may appear in an unusual shape around the parish church building due to the closure of other churches and **the combining of** those boundaries over time.

Why do some pastorates include parishes that do not have contiguous boundaries with each other?
In very few cases, feedback from the Faithful and other factors supported the formation of a pastorate that includes parishes whose boundaries are not contiguous. After implementation, additional consideration will be given to reexamining parish boundaries where needed.

Mass Locations and Accessibility

My planning area shows more than one parish with no weekend Masses that are right next to each other. Doesn't this create a "desert" area where there are no Masses?
While the development of the Round 2 draft models included discussion about the distances between different parishes and the likelihood of parishioners traveling to different locations for Masses, it was also noted that in many cases, the majority of registered households do not live within the parish boundaries.

In some cases, the Round 2 draft models differ in the church buildings identified to continue offering weekend Mass in order to collect more feedback on travel patterns and the likelihood of parishioners traveling to different locations. Once additional feedback has been received, additional consultation or refinement will include a more detailed review of distances between parishes and Mass availability within different areas.