



St. Bernardine and St. Luke Grouping - Renew My Church Update: March 12, 2021

Discernment Process

St. Bernardine and St. Luke Parishes engaged in the Renew My Church (RMC) review and discernment process over the past few months. The Grouping Feedback and Discernment team (GFDT), which was made up of members from each community, met to review and discern the future parish structure for the area. Our deepest appreciation goes to the GFDT who prayerfully discerned the parish grouping structure during this challenging time of the pandemic.

Based on their meetings and feedback gathered from the larger parish community, they submitted feedback to the archdiocese. The Archdiocesan Standards and Recommendations Commission, which includes representatives from across the Archdiocese of Chicago, reviewed the feedback and other information, including financial summaries and parish trends.

Cardinal Cupich and Bishop Manz are grateful to Fr. Kuca, Fr. Szmyd and the Grouping Team who gathered throughout the past few months, and all parishioners who offered feedback through the recent discernment process.

Outcome

In the past few weeks, Cardinal Blase J. Cupich, archbishop of Chicago, the archdiocese's auxiliary bishops, and the archdiocese's Presbyteral Council met to discuss the Commission's recommendation. Based upon those discussions and prayerful consideration, Cardinal Cupich made the following decisions regarding the parish structure in the St. Bernardine and St. Luke grouping.

- **Effective July 1, 2021, St. Bernardine and St. Luke will unite as one parish with two worship sites, a new name, one pastor and one pastoral team.**
 - Both St. Bernardine and St. Luke will continue to host a regular schedule of Masses and the specific schedule will be determined by the pastor in consultation with parish leadership.
 - St. Luke will formally be designated the parish church where the united parish's sacramental records will be kept.
 - Unless otherwise desired by the local community, the united parish's name will be St. Luke and St. Bernardine Parish, in alignment with the grouping team's preference for the new parish name to reflect a combined name.
 - There are no changes to St. Luke School.
 - Fr. Stan Kuca will serve as pastor of the newly unified parish. The Archdiocese of Chicago's Priests' Placement Board will work with the newly unified parish and Fr. Kuca to discern the best assignment of an associate pastor(s).

Additionally, the Commission recommends an annual review beginning in 2024 regarding the sustainability of two campuses. This way the united parish can focus on unification for the next three years, prior to the start of the annual review.

Parish Structure Rationale

- Uniting as one parish allows the two communities to bring together ministerial leadership and stewardship for administration, facilities, and most importantly evangelization.
- The St. Bernardine campus provides a large gathering space which can be used to enhance and expand ministry and outreach.
- Moving forward with two campuses addresses concerns about demographic differences as well as the psychological barrier posed by the 290 Expressway.
- The demographic differences between the two current parishes may provide strong enough reason to continue both sites permanently.
- A future review vs. immediate review allows the space for the communities to unite as one parish and then take a fresh look at the two campuses in the future.



Next steps

- The archdiocese's Renew My Church Accompaniment Team will also work alongside the pastors to ensure that the faith communities and staff members are supported through this time of change.
- The newly-united parish community, will embark upon the next phase of renewal, focusing on strong evangelization to the world around us – particularly in Forest Park and River Forest. St. Vincent Ferrer Parish will also embark upon the next phase of renewal in the River Forest community.
- The renewal process calls us to become a stronger, more sustainable presence for the future capable of reaching more people in their work of making disciples of Jesus Christ, building communities with one another and inspiring witness in the world around us.