

Message from Parish Cluster 23 Planning Group

The Cluster Committee has met with the council and commission leaders of four of the five churches in our cluster in order to better understand the strengths, weaknesses and vital aspects that each church would like to see maintained through the clustering process. The final visit of this kind is scheduled for January 30th at St. Anthony's Church in Westbrook. Once these visits are complete we will be seeking parishioners' insights regarding these same questions. We are aware of a desire among parishioners to balance the "business" end of clustering with the spiritual needs of the people. It is our hope that these meetings will give us the information we need to incorporate these different aspects. Your input is important.

We also recognize that people have questions about the discussions between St. Joseph's College of Maine and Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in North Windham. The following is a summary of a letter that was recently issued, addressing the possible joint venture between the two:

St. Joseph's College of Maine has outgrown its current chapel and is looking at options for creating a new "free-standing" chapel. At the same time, Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, which is less than five miles away from the college, is in need of a number of repairs and is also faced with a need for a larger church and parish center. The possibility of joining resources and building one structure to serve the spiritual needs of both organizations has been proposed.

Representatives from OLPH and St. Joseph's College are exploring the idea. At this point, there are more questions than answers. If the committee decides it is mutually beneficial to move forward, there will be a series of open meetings for members of both communities, to obtain their input.

The Cluster Committee would like to emphasize that no decisions have been made yet and that we will be staying abreast of any developments and considering their potential impact on the cluster. We will make every effort to keep you updated on the progress of this exploratory committee's work in addition to any other cluster information. Look for updates posted in your bulletins and on bulletin boards. We hope to be speaking to congregations more as our work progresses and will also be posting information on church websites. As always, we encourage your questions and comments. Please see any of your representatives with your questions.

Members of the committee include:

Rev. Reginald Brissette	Rev. Lawrence Conley	Rev. Norm Carpentier
Rev. Joseph Daniels	Bernie Filieo	Russ Champagne
Leo Lambert	Dick Peterson	Lynn Shorty
Donna Libby	Jessica Hart	Elaine Rioux
Pat McHatton	Sharon Williams	Dr. Martha Corkery
Lisa Champagne		