

Parish Cluster 23
Bridgton, Fryeburg, Gorham, Westbrook and Windham

How will my church and parish be different, and how will it affect me?
Frequently Asked Questions

1. How will my parish be affected?

Parishes as we know them now will be different in that they will be working cooperatively with several other parishes or formed into a new combined parish. Worship sites (church buildings) will remain open and most of the current activities in place at those worship sites will remain.

2. How many priests will be assigned to our parish cluster?

For parish cluster 23, we will have one pastor and two additional priests. The pastor will be assigned by the Bishop. Priests may or may not live in one facility and will travel to the worship sites as necessary. The priests will share the Masses and sacramental duties at each worship site. Mass schedules will need to be adjusted in some worship sites to accommodate the availability of priests. Weddings, funerals, baptisms, confirmations, and other services will ordinarily be celebrated in the local worship site – the records and files relevant to these events will be maintained in the parish cluster's central office.

3. Where will the "Parish Cluster" administrative office be located?

In a location central to the cluster and more than likely in existing facilities. Part of the work of the Parish Cluster Planning Committee is to make those types of decisions based on discussions and feedback from existing parish communities which will ultimately lead to what is best for the cluster parish and its members.

4. Will the general public be allowed some input in this process?

The Parish Cluster Planning Committee is made up of members of St. Anne, St. Anthony, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, St. Joseph, and Our Lady of Perpetual Help and are familiar with all aspects of concern for our individual parishes so as to represent all its members fairly and effectively. It is not possible to have unlimited participants, however, any parishioner interested in speaking or communicating to one of the committee members should feel comfortable doing so.

5. Who came up with the models for organizational design, and does the parish cluster planning committee have to work within these models?

Four models for new parish structure were devised by an Evangelization Steering Committee and approved by the Bishop. The Parish Cluster Planning Committee must work within these models in making their recommendation for which administrative model would be best for our Parish Cluster. Each model has advantages and disadvantages, with no "one size fits all" solution. Determining which model will work for our Parish Cluster will be dependent upon but not limited to such factors as the distance between existing parishes, size, cultural and ethnic identities, economic and spiritual vitality, and specialized ministerial needs. Strengths of existing parish communities must be preserved and enhanced in the process. The Parish Cluster Planning Committee will be making a recommendation to the Bishop by June 2006. At that time, the recommendation will need to be reviewed and approved by the Bishop before an implementation timeline is identified. Implementation is not the responsibility of the Parish Cluster Planning Committee.