

2024-2034

On April 7, 2024, Bishop W.T. McGrattan of the Calgary Catholic Diocese accepted the ten recommendations (three strategic and seven implementation) from the East Lethbridge Catholic Parish Assessment Project (ELCPAP) with respect to the future of All Saints Parish in Lethbridge, Alberta. Specifically, guidance was provided on the issues of improving parish unity and determining dedicated church space. In addition, an overarching recommendation provided for the adoption of a formal ten-year strategic plan for the Parish by the All Saints Parish Council. That plan, and its supporting implementation subcomponents, is described below.

All Saints 10 Year Strategic Plan: 2024 -2034

Beginning in 2024, the Parish Council of All Saints will guide the implementation of a formal ten-year strategic plan that will significantly impact the future of the parish with the overall priority of strengthening parish unity. Key components include:

Three Strategic Initiatives:

1) Parish Structure and Church Space

Parish Structure

All Saints Parish will retain its current structure as a single parish in East Lethbridge.

a. Rationale

Based on the feedback and analysis from the ELCPAP research, a decision has been adopted to maintain All Saints as a single parish. Other alternatives– including reversion to a multi-parish structure -were considered and ultimately rejected. The option of a single-parish structure offered the highest probability to minimize further parish fractionalization, avoid further compounding the priest capacity issue, and omit duplication and increased expenses from the administration of separate parishes.

Church Space

Over the ten-year time frame of the strategic plan, All Saints Parish will migrate to a two church parish consisting of a new Church and a moderately upgraded St. Patrick's Church. The building of a new church is conditional on the recommendation caveats declared by Bishop McGrattan on April 7, 2024 (those being a Professional joint oversight of the new church scope, planning, and construction between the Diocese and the Parish, and approval by the Diocese of a formal fundraising plan, plus the success of the fund raising)

a. Rationale – New Church

Based on the feedback and analysis from the ELCPAP research, a new church building is not needed now, but will be in the future as the older church buildings become too costly to maintain. A new church building will best address the “needs” identified by parishioners. None of the existing churches can fulfill all the needs. All Saint Parish currently has \$7 million dollars on deposit with the Diocese that has been raised for the purpose of building a new church. From both a legal and a moral perspective, these funds can be used for no other purpose than to build a new Church.

b. Rationale – St. Patrick's Church

Based on the feedback and analysis from the ELCPAP research, the historical decision to close St. Patrick's Church significantly contributed to a long term schism amongst All Saints Parishioners, and that a decision to keep St. Patrick's Church open in some form was foundational to rebuilding parish unity. Additionally, the Diocese had been instructed by the Vatican to open the church for limited use and did so successfully on March 17, 2023, after its ten year closure. Any recommendation to issue a new closure decree for St. Patrick's was rejected out of concern for future parish unity. In addition, significant operational maintenance costs were to be unavoidably incurred to maintain the church for very limited use. Lastly, an external professional engineering assessment found the edifice and the rectory to be in acceptable condition that required only normal maintenance for buildings of that age.

In consideration of the above factors, a decision was made to make moderate capital investments to make better use of the facility by moderately modernizing St. Patrick's Church and rectory. Church investments include adding main floor handicapped washroom facilities and improving main floor accessibility with the addition of a ramp. At the same time the frequency of masses would be expanded to Saturdays of each month, subject to priest and volunteer availability. By restricting church space use to the main floor, significant costs could be avoided for basement and kitchen renovations.

The church will continue to be able to fulfill its primary spiritual purpose into the future, but will not offer masses for special occasions, wedding, or funerals.

2) Church Buildings – St. Basil's and Assumption

Investment in five-year maintenance plans for Our Lady of Assumption and St. Basil's will keep both churches adequately maintained and will extend their usefulness for at least ten years (i.e. to 2034)

a. Rationale

Based on the feedback and analysis from the ELCPAP research, the church buildings are in acceptable condition for buildings of their age and can continue to remain so given prudent investment in required maintenance. Fundamentally, the church buildings must be maintained to sustain the parish in the event that the five-year fundraising campaign for the new church is delayed. In addition, the church buildings cannot be closed prematurely because the space is needed for All Saints Parish to function pending the success of the fundraising campaign to build a new church.

Once the new church is built and operational, church services from both edifices will be transitioned to the new building, and there will no longer be a need to maintain these two ageing churches. St. Basil's will be phased out before Assumption because there are more handicapped washroom facilities at Assumption.

3) Parish Unity and Needs Mitigation

Formal written plans are required to guide, monitor, and consolidate change efforts with respect to two major long term parish projects. A formal plan is needed to guide "cultural change" in order to strengthen Parish Unity and, in addition, a formal plan is needed to guide the Needs Mitigation process to address the identified needs gap within the parish.

a. Rationale

Based on the feedback and analysis from the ELCPAP research, a window of opportunity exists for the parish to heal and strengthen itself while a new fundraising campaign is undertaken for the New Church. Without a formal plan to guide such activities to improve "Parish Unity" and address "Parish Needs", this

opportunity to move forward will be at risk of being lost. In addition, these plans need to harmonize with the Diocesan Renewal Initiative so that all efforts align and leverage off each other to expedite and anchor desired changes. The Parish Council is both accountable and best positioned to mandate and oversee the implementation of those plans, supported by a structured Annual Review Process.

Seven Implementation Initiatives:

1) New Church

New Church – Launch Major Fundraising Drive over 5 years

a. Rationale

A starting point was needed to begin to assess projected possible costs for a new church. An example design was chosen to provide an order of magnitude cost estimate. This does not mean that this is necessarily the design that will be selected. A separate joint Diocesan/Parish New Church committee will be created with a mandate to assess feasibility, location, scope, costs, and schedule for the new church construction.

The next major step for the fundraising drive will be to confirm a concrete fundraising goal that is based both on the feasibility study as well as the draft design for the new church. The intent is to make clear to potential donors what the new church will look like and what it cost in order to give them a higher level of confidence when making their pledge and donation decisions.

While the fundraising target is not confirmed at this time, it is certain to be in the category of a “major” fundraising drive. As such, the Bishop has agreed to this recommendation with the caveat that the fund raising must have joint oversight from the Diocese and the Parish. In addition, as part of the same caveat, the Bishop has requested that a professional fundraising firm be engaged to manage the campaign. The selected firm will be accountable to provide professional fundraising processes and expertise. In addition, that firm will also be responsible for project due diligence as well as recommending methodologies to significantly expedite the entire fundraising initiative.

The All Saints New Church Fund currently has approximately \$7.3 Million on deposit with the Diocese. (Active fundraising to this account has been suspended for the last decade.)

2) St. Patrick’s Church and Rectory

Moderate upgrades for modernization combined with increased frequency for celebration of mass. In addition, moderate modernization for the rectory

a. Rationale

Once the decision was made to keep St. Patrick’s open in some fashion to begin to heal parish unity, it became clear that certain modernization upgrades would be required to do so. Accessibility to the church has been a longstanding issue which needed to be addressed as well as the lack of a handicapped

washroom on the main floor. One option that needed further feasibility evaluation was the possibility of using an external ramping design that could avert the need for elevator replacement. Additional engineering and quotes are required to inform decision-making on those issues.

A budget of \$600,000 has been projected for modernization work both to the church and to make needed modernization upgrades to the rectory. Key upgrades within the budget for the church include replacing the front steps for accessibility, eliminating the elevator, installing a main floor handicapped washroom, and making needed repairs to preserve the stained glass. Key upgrades within the budget for the rectory include repairing the sunroom roof, upgrading the kitchen, possible upgrading of the flooring and replacing the existing garage with a new garage.

The intent is to expand mass celebration on a monthly basis in the modernized church. There is a desire to offer a Saturday Morning Mass, for Our Lady, for the Lethbridge community to fill a missing pastoral need as that option currently does not exist. Even as solutions are found for Church accessibility and availability of handicapped washrooms, persistent familiar challenges will continue to exist because of the downtown location of St. Patrick's. Security and lack of parking will continue to be issues that need resolution. Additionally, one of the largest constraints to the intent to expand mass frequency on Saturday mornings at St. Patrick's is priest availability for additional masses and a need for volunteers. The Deanery is currently exploring alternative solutions to these challenges.

The rectory has been assessed as being in acceptable condition for a building of its age, but will require some additional maintenance to extend its usefulness. While options had been considered to raze the rectory to provide additional church parking and purchase new accommodations for the priests, those ideas were rejected for several reasons. From the outset it is believed that there was a huge benefit for church security purposes to maintain residency on site. In addition, costs of new accommodations were prohibitive, and it was much more economical to modernize the rectory.

3) St. Basil's Church

Adequate maintenance expenditure and lease additional parking

a. Rationale

St. Basil's Church has been assessed as being in acceptable condition for a building of its age. The intent is to invest in adequate maintenance expenditures for the building over the next five years with the objective of extending the edifice's useful life for ten years (i.e. to 2034).

A maintenance budget of \$250,000 has been projected for capital maintenance for the church over the next five years. Key upgrades include site paving/concrete maintenance, sacristy/canopy roof assembly, wheelchair lift, sloped metal roof replacement, and exterior window replacement.

In an effort to address the need for expanded parking at St. Basil's, a lease has been signed to rent 40 parking stalls at Eagles Hall. While it is hoped that this will be a long-term solution, the lease may need to be renegotiated as the owners of Eagles Hall are reportedly thinking of selling the property.

4) Our Lady of Assumption Church

Adequate maintenance expenditure

a. Rationale

Assumption Church has also been assessed as being in acceptable condition for a building of its age. The intent is the same as at St. Basil's, i.e. to invest in adequate maintenance expenditures for the building over the next five years with the objective of extending the edifice's useful life for ten years (i.e. to 2034).

A maintenance budget of \$250,000 has been projected for capital maintenance for the church, office, and hall over the next five years. Key upgrades include Church/Office/Hall canopy and roof assembly, relocate Hall roof exhaust fan, church furnace replacement, and hot water tank replacement.

5) Parish Unification

Parish Council to develop a five-year Unity Plan

a. Rationale

Based on the feedback and analysis from the ELCPAP research, of all the many challenges and opportunities facing All Saints Parishioners, unity of the parish is of prime importance. At the same time, it is noteworthy that fundraising and construction of a new church is projected to take a minimum of five years. This provides a window of opportunity for the parish to adopt a formal five-year plan to lead cultural change to strengthen parish unity. The Parish Council is best positioned to create an inter-church guiding coalition with a mandate to improve Parish Unity and be accountable for its implementation.

Essentially, building parish unity is a cultural change process. As such, the probability of success is greatly heightened by the implementation of a formal cultural change plan overseen by an interchurch guiding coalition reporting to the Parish Council. The Unity Plan thus becomes a project that is subject to an Annual Review Progress that will allow the council to make needed mid-course adjustments.

In 2023, the Diocese initiated the Diocesan Renewal project with objectives and principles that overlap significantly with both ELCPAP and the All Saints Implementation Project. With a formal plan to harmonize all the initiatives, there is a significant opportunity to leverage and expedite their respective goals. At the same time, there is an opportunity to avoid project waste related to redundant and/or misaligned efforts and competition for resources.

A key input for the Unity Plan will be the Needs data collected, and the learnings gleaned, from the Option Generations Committee. Their findings are recorded in the Option Generations Report authored by that team. It is also imperative that we build on activities that have already been implemented in the parish that have been focusing on unity.

6) Needs Mitigation

Parish Council to develop a five-year Needs Mitigation Plan

a. Rationale

Based on the survey feedback and analysis from the ELCPAP research, there is a gap between prioritized parishioner needs (liturgical, pastoral, social justice, and family life) and current state of affairs. Based on feedback, none of the churches can currently fulfill all the needs. While a new church, once it is built, is intended to provide some redress, there are many low cost initiatives that can be planned and executed now to reduce the needs gap in the interim. A comprehensive five-year plan, tightly coordinated with both the Unity Plan and the Diocesan Renewal Project, can deliver some interim quick wins to help accelerate the change process and consolidate progress.

A key input for the Needs Mitigation Plan will be the data collected and the analysis from the Needs Mitigation Committee. Their findings are recorded in the Needs Analysis Report authored by that team.

7) New Church

New Church approval contingent on Professional Fundraising Campaign and Joint Diocesan/Parish Oversight (feasibility/scope/design/location/cost/schedule)

a. Rationale

The cost and complexities of building a new church today entails more risk than the same project did only a few years ago. Some recent Diocesan new church build projects, have shown that rising construction costs, supply chain project delays, and escalating contingencies coupled with fundraising shortfalls, have added significantly to Diocesan financial risks. The Diocesan response to manage these increased risks has been to prudently declare a much higher threshold for due diligence on new builds and major renovations. This higher due diligence threshold now demands joint Diocesan/Parish oversight of these projects coupled with external professional third party project management.

The new church for All Saints Parish has been approved by the Bishop with two main caveats. Firstly, that a professional fundraising campaign be designed and executed to support a major fundraising drive. The firm dollar target for the campaign will be determined based on both the outcome of a feasibility study and on the design of the new church.

The Bishop's second caveat is that the new church adopts the higher Diocesan due diligence standards for a new church build. This entails rigorous joint oversight by the Diocese and Parish for the project. Specifically, this includes a professional third-party feasibility study that will provide recommendations with respect to scope, location, design, cost, and schedule for the new church build.

If these caveats can be successfully addressed and the fundraising and building of the new church proceeds as planned, then once the new church is built and operational, there would no longer be a need to maintain St. Basil's and Our Lady of Assumption. In an estimated minimal time frame of five to ten years, these churches would be phased out with important religious artifacts from the two churches being incorporated into the new church. St. Basil's would be phased out first due to the availability of more handicapped washrooms at Assumption.

If these caveats cannot be successfully addressed, and the fundraising and building of the new church are delayed, the contingency plan is that both St. Basil's and Our Lady of Assumption will be adequately maintained until sufficient funds are raised.

The intent is to continue to operate and maintain St. Patrick's Church into the future primarily as a liturgical edifice dedicated to spirituality.