

Missoula Deanery Proposed Plan



Parish Input Process

The plan that you find below is the result of the work of a Planning Committee composed of parish representatives and Pastors/pastoral administrators from each parish in the Missoula Deanery. This group gathered to look at the reality of providing quality pastoral care with fewer priests to serve our Diocese in the future.

The following plan is a possible roadmap for the future and, if adopted, would be used as it became necessary.

You are asked to read and prayerfully consider the plan, and make any comments or recommendations to the Planning Committee on the form provided.

For your study there is provided:

1. Copy of the Proposed Plan (below);
2. A map of the Deanery (above);
3. Listing of the average weekend attendance for the parishes/missions of the Deanery;
4. A form for returning your responses to the Deanery Planning Committee (Please turn in this completed and signed form to your parish by **February 8, 2012**).
5. For more information, please plan to attend your **Parish Input Meeting**—*watch your parish bulletin for details*.



Missoula Deanery Map

A deanery is a group of neighboring parishes under the leadership of an area priest appointed as Dean, joined together to foster common pastoral care for the people of God in these parishes.

Missoula Deanery Proposed Plan

Areas where **no change** is recommended at this time:

- **Hamilton, St. Francis of Assisi** with a mission in **Darby**: Maintain a priest presence in Hamilton serving the south end of the Bitterroot Valley.
- **Drummond/Philipsburg** continues as it is currently served with a retired priest for weekend Masses and a pastoral administrator to coordinate services.
- **St. Ignatius, Arlee and Jocko** is currently staffed by a Jesuit priest for as long as the Jesuit Community can provide priestly ministry in those sites.
- **Gold Creek** would be officially designated as a “Church of occasional worship**”.

Missoula Deanery Proposed Plan

- **St. Mary in Stevensville** would remain as it is with one priest serving Stevensville and **Florence**. Continue to evaluate the Florence mission to see if it might become part of the mission in **Lolo**.

Long range: Study the location of **Blessed Trinity Parish** in relationship to the population growth in Missoula to determine the best placement for this parish. As need dictates and it is financially feasible, begin the process of locating and procuring land and relocating the parish community in the area where the Missoula population is growing and there is no Catholic church currently to serve. Redraw Missoula parish boundaries to reflect the potential “new” parish. **Lolo** continues as a mission of Blessed Trinity.

Future possibilities to implement as it becomes necessary:

- If there were one fewer priest in the Missoula deanery and the **Bonner/Seeley/Condon** corridor is impacted:
 - **One of the Missoula City parishes, Christ the King**, for example, could be clustered with **Living Water Mission, Seeley Lake**
 - **Another Missoula parish, St. Francis Xavier**, for example, could be clustered with **St. Ann’s in Bonner**
 - **Our Lady of Swan Valley, Condon**, may be a part of a larger discernment regarding the ministry of the **Sycamore Tree** and, depending on its outcome, could be served from there, or, as need dictates, it may designated a “Church of Occasional Worship**”.
- If there were one fewer priest in the Missoula deanery and the **Frenchtown/Alberton/Superior** corridor is impacted:
 - **One of the city parishes, Christ the King, for example**, could be clustered with **St. Mary Queen of Heaven Mission in Superior**
 - **Another city parish, St. Francis Xavier**, for example, could be clustered with **St. John the Baptist in Frenchtown** and **St. Albert Mission in Alberton** (assuming that there are two priests serving at St. Francis Xavier)
- If there are **two fewer priests** to serve in the Deanery and both corridors are impacted, revisit the connections to the Missoula parishes and include **St. Anthony, Blessed Trinity and St. Mary in Stevensville** in the cluster formation with the possible combination of the **St. Joseph Mission in Florence and Spirit of Christ in Lolo** missions.

Some considerations:

- Pastors in the Missoula area will need to study the current Mass schedule to see if the current schedule could be reduced. The Missoula area pastors will need to meet with an eye to creating space for some of the parishes/missions to be served from Missoula.
- Flexibility and adaptability are key in looking to the future. Clusters of parishes or parish/mission would be created to serve some of the outlying areas, as and when needed. This would also provide these areas with the resources of a Missoula city parish; i.e. Faith Formation, RCIA, etc.
- Explore the economic possibility of a Pastoral/Parish Administrator in the areas where there is no longer a resident pastor.

Missoula Deanery Proposed Plan

Mission ministry team

- The Missoula Deanery plan envisions exploring the formation of a **Mission Ministry Team** that would facilitate the pastoral care of the following parishes which would be established as a “Pastoral Unit”. Those mission parishes are: **Living Water Mission (Seeley Lake), St. Albert the Great (Alberton), St. Mary Queen of Heaven (Superior) and possibly St. John the Baptist, Frenchtown and St. Ann’s in Bonner.** It is envisioned that when it is no longer possible to provide a pastor in these areas, trained pastoral administrators would be assigned where appropriate and that sacramental ministry would be coordinated among the priests (active and retired) of the city of Missoula.
- The Mission Ministry Team would also be utilized and developed to help maintain the identity and vitality of the outlying communities.

The purpose of the “Mission Team” may include

- ❖ *To ensure the ongoing growth of ministry and vision for each of the mission parishes and to insure “quality pastoral care”.*
- ❖ *To maintain parish identity*
- ❖ *To develop all areas of parish life—Liturgy, Social Concerns, Faith Formation, Pastoral Council, Stewardship, administration, etc.*
- ❖ *To develop parish lay ministry, and to surface and train parish leadership*
- ❖ *To work as a team and to enable the resources of the Missoula Parishes to be of service to the mission parishes*
- ❖ *To organize and secure Sacramental Ministry and to develop and maintain a common approach to Sunday Eucharist and the celebration of the Sacraments*
- ❖ *To prepare the parish for Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest and to train and form presiders for that Rite on an ongoing basis*

All sites in this Deanery and throughout the Diocese will be part of a yearly on-going process to study their sustainability. Some of the aspects of this study will include an annual look at: Parish Mass attendance, annual offertory income, debt retirement (if any), parish plant maintenance, parish and diocesan financial obligations met. It will also consider parish vitality and engagement. This study will be completed each year and any adjustments needed to the plan will follow.

Other Observations by the Planning Group

- There is a need for on-going, planned, accessible training for parishioners in various areas of parish leadership.
- There is a need to identify persons with the skills necessary to assume leadership in parishes as Parish or Pastoral Administrators and to provide the appropriate training and support for them so that the parishes where a pastor is shared may have good leadership and remain vital and viable.
- Explore the “Ministry Team” concept as a way to provide leadership and pastoral care in a parish without a resident pastor and provide a conduit to assure sacramental care.
- Whatever plan is finally adopted it is understood that it will be implemented on an “as needed” basis.
- One of the drivers of this process is the reality of the priest shortage and the anticipated retirement of some of our senior priests from active ministry. Another is to provide quality pastoral care for our people – the aim of the Mission Ministry Team.

Missoula Deanery Proposed Plan

Average Weekend Mass Attendance

“October Counts” (Average weekend attendance): Every year the diocese asks each parish and mission to do a hand count of all those attending Mass on three weekends in October. October is chosen as there is no holiday or celebration that might inflate or deflate the parish numbers. If there are local reasons to change this to a more “normal” weekend, we encourage pastors to do so. The numbers for the three weekends are sent to the Diocese and the average of the three is taken to get the usual number actually attending Mass on a weekend in each site. Below you will find the statistics for the 2010 “October Counts” in the Missoula Deanery.

Missoula Deanery “October Counts” 2010

Saint Ann – Bonner	92
Living Water – Seeley Lake	44
Our Lady of Swan Valley – Condon	22
St. Michael – Drummond	27
St. Philip - Philipsburg	54
St. John the Baptist – Frenchtown	90
St. Albert the Great – Alberton	34
St. Mary – Superior	62
St. Francis of Assisi – Hamilton	417
St. Philip – Darby	63
Christ the King – Missoula	641
St. Anthony -- Missoula	452
St. Francis Xavier – Missoula	1617
Blessed Trinity – Missoula	182
Spirit of Christ - Lolo	74
St. Ignatius – St. Ignatius	141
Sacred Heart Mission – Arlee	86
St. John Berchmans – Jocko	15
St. Mary – Stevensville	279
St. Joseph – Florence	74

Definitions

* **“Clustered parishes”**: A clustered parish has a priest as its pastor; however the priest may live at another location and will be pastor of more than one community. The goal is that by clustering parishes the identity of each parish will be maintained.

** **“Church of Occasional Worship”(Oratory)**: Churches are designated as such by the Bishop for the benefit of some community or group of faithful; Mass is not celebrated regularly on weekends but is celebrated at least once per year, usually on the feast day of the Church. Church maintenance, repairs, insurance, upkeep is financed by the local community.