

# Final Report of the Deanery Ministry Committee

Approved by St Francis Deanery Council, Nov. 29, 2011

The St. Francis Deanery Ministry Committee was created on September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2011 by Bishop Dennis Drainville to develop proposals for the implementation of the new model of ministry. The Rev. Wanda Dillabough was asked to chair the Committee; the Venerable David Oliver and the Rev. Fred Richardson volunteered to participate, and Ruth Sheeran, as Rural Dean of St. Francis, was subsequently asked to join the Committee. To date the Committee has met five times. The Venerable Garth Bulmer, who acted as consultant, attended the third meeting to discuss the project and clarify some issues.

The Committee has developed a ministry model which will involve administering the Deanery as one large parish – a multi-point, multi-clergy parish. The clerics and lay ministers will work together to provide services and ministry to the Deanery as a whole, and all the various congregations will benefit from their shared talents. The strengths and weaknesses of the team members will complement each other to produce a strong, mutually supportive group.

The many talents of the team members will be shared amongst all of the churches. For example, one priest may enjoy pastoral care while another may find it difficult and tiring. However, that same priest may enjoy administration, organizing and attending meetings. One priest may be good with youth while another may be a gifted teacher. One team member may be musically gifted while another may have a passion for mission. With the present model, a priest must undertake all of the tasks regardless of his talents or inclinations. In the new model, a priest will be able to contribute in the areas in which he is gifted and serve the whole community in the ways that he is best suited. The responsibilities will be shared, and everyone will benefit from the strengths and gifts of the various team members.

To ease the burden of the many administrative duties associated with managing a parish, there will be a Deanery Team Administrator who will assume responsibility for a number of these tasks. This will allow the priests to spend more of their time in ministry to the congregations.

The new ministry model will be phased in over two years:

- 1) January 2012 – May 30 2012 – St. George's Church, Lennoxville and St. Barnabas, Milby will become the fourth parish in the new model joining the Parish of EDV, the Greater Parish of St. Francis and the Parish of St. Anne's, Richmond. Cheryl Stroud will join the Rev. Wanda Dillabough in providing ministry to these four parishes. (During this period, the Venerable David Oliver will be taking the 8 am services twice a month. The Reverends Ruth Charleau, Fred Richardson and Barbara Wintle have volunteered to occasionally take Sunday services at St. George's, Lennoxville.)
- 2) June 1, 2012 – December 30, 2013 - A second priest will join the team as the Archdeacon of St. Francis. The other congregations and clergy will gradually become part of the team. Eventually the entire Deanery of St. Francis will operate as a multi-point, multi-clergy parish with a team of lay and ordained ministers.

The Deanery Ministry Team will provide leadership in the following areas: Sunday services, pastoral care, Bible study and education, music, social events, outreach and mission, stewardship, ministry to children, youth and young families. Efforts will be made to encourage the deanery members to think of themselves as one parish. These will include the publication of a regular newsletter, deanery services with potluck meals on the fifth Sunday, an annual deanery picnic, and an up-to-date website and Facebook page.

The current structure where the priest works exclusively with a parish will be replaced by a structure where all the clergy work with all the congregations. To increase this sense of community, the administrative responsibilities of corporation membership will be divided amongst the priests equally. The congregations will be redistributed periodically so that no one priest will be identified with a specific church.

The funding for the ministry team will be managed centrally with Church Society continuing as the payroll agent. There will be one budget for the whole Deanery, and the participating congregations will contribute to a central fund. The central funding model will increase the one parish notion as everyone will be contributing to the whole team and not to a specific priest's stipend. The work of ordained and lay ministers encompasses much more than Sunday church services, and the life of the Deanery includes many activities. This reality will be made clear by the way in which each church contributes financially.

The funding will be distributed amongst the congregations according to a formula based on available resources not on the number of Sunday services each church holds. The total cost of the ministry team will include the stipends for the full time priest as well as the honoraria and travel costs for the non-stipendiary priests.

The success of this ministry model relies on the continued active participation of the Deanery lay readers. They will be an integral part of the team and will be regularly scheduled to take services in the various churches. On-going training will be provided as part of the team's continuing education programme. According to current diocesan policy, the lay readers will be compensated when they are exceptionally required to take services outside of their congregations.

With the ministry team approach a sense of community will grow across the Deanery. Smaller, struggling congregations may find the courage to make the difficult decision to close as the members realize that losing their building will not mean the end of ministry and is not the end of their church. Their sense of loss will be mitigated as they realize they are part of a wider community, and they will feel safe and welcome in churches other than their own. There will be fewer churches, but they will be stronger and more vibrant.

With the number of participating congregations diminishing due to church closures, the expenses may eventually exceed the resources available from the parish incomes. However, the costs will be offset by the income freed up when congregations close and the annual interest payments on investments are returned for ministry in the area. At present this will include the incomes from Dixville, South Durham and Bishopton. As more congregations close, this source of funding will increase and will supplement the diminishing resources of the congregations still in operation. The members of the closed congregations will be assured that the investments are continuing to support ministry in the Deanery.

The ultimate goal of the new ministry model in the Deanery of St. Francis is to have a multi-point, multi-clergy parish made up of several vibrant, financially viable congregations composed of people who have come together and made another church their home.

The Rev Canon Wanda Dillabough (Chairperson), the Ven David Oliver, the Rev. Canon Fred Richardson, Ruth Sheeran (Rural Dean and secretary)