ANNUAL COHORT PROGRESS REPORT
For Year 2

Please submit this report to the Planning Office by May 15 for review by the Diocesan Implementation Commission

COHORT #: 8  COUNTY: Mercer

PARISHES IN THE COHORT:
St. Alphonsus, Hopewell; St. George, Titusville; St. James, Pennington

MODEL DIRECTIVE: □ Linkage  □ Merger

Parishes involved: St. Alphonsus, St. George and St. James

Are the parishes working together to prepare for or implement the linkage or merger?
Yes, all three parishes have been working well together on our linkage model.

What progress have we made toward implementing the new model?

We have made great progress in implementing our Linked model. In March of 2017, prior to our first implementation plan year, we pulled together forty volunteers and created four Linked subcommittees reporting to the Cohort 8 team, which are Faith Formation, Evangelization, Social Concerns/Justice and Communications. The majority of those same volunteers on all five teams are still working together today as we go into year three planning, which indicates the level of dedication and enthusiasm they have for this process. We have learned that together we are stronger than when we were apart. There is great synergy among our three parishes with our newly established Linked identity as “The Catholic Community of Hopewell Valley”. We have produced some encouraging results which include a new combined web site, a combined bulletin, a combined Religious Education Operating Model, combined family catechesis education with children and parents, combined sacramental preparation for confirmation, combining nine social concerns ministries for more effective outreach, a combined photo directory, combined trifold brochures, establishing a new YES (youth engagement stewards) ministry, establishing a major Linked annual social event for six hundred parishioners, resetting our ten Mass weekend schedule, with only two of the Masses offered at the same time and having our six deacons rotate across our three parishes.

What obstacles or challenges have we encountered?

We are challenged with having our average parishioners fully embrace and engage in the FIOF process and with helping them understand the advantages that linkage provides for our parishes. We are also challenged with communicating to those parishioners who don’t regularly attend Mass on a weekend.
OVERALL:

How has our work to implement the model directive made a difference in the Cohort parishes?

The new Linked synergy we have created as “The Catholic Community of Hopewell Valley” has given us renewed hope for the future. The implementation process has created additional energy across all three parishes, starting with the cohort and working through many other committees and ministries.

What impact do we perceive our work is having relative to the 5 goals of Faith in Our Future for the Diocese?

We have shown that with our new Linkage model of leadership, we are stronger together than when we were apart. The new synergy as “The Catholic Community of Hopewell Valley” has strengthened and enlivened our parishes and ministries. We have improved our stewardship by working together, such as eliminating the need to rent classroom space for religious education ($10k annual savings), and having one music director, instead of three. We have established collaborative relationships, such as combining nine social concerns ministries and identifying six more to combine this year, which consolidates our resources and makes our social outreach more effective.

As we continue to implement the Bishop’s Directives, we request assistance with the following areas:

We need training and support with the Parish Soft data base software so we can more easily produce ad hoc reports to sort parishioner data files for useful purposes.
ANNUAL COHORT IMPLEMENTATION YEAR 2 PLAN
2018-2019

THIS REPORT IS DUE TO THE DIOCESAN IMPLEMENTATION COMMISSION
ANNUALLY ON MAY 15th

DATE: May 1, 2018

COHORT #8   COUNTY: Mercer

COHORT PARISHES, CITIES/TOWNS: St. Alphonsus, Hopewell; St. George, Titusville;
St. James, Pennington

Bishop O’Connell’s goals for FAITH IN OUR FUTURE are the following:

1. **Strengthen and enliven** the parishes of the Diocese as well as Diocesan-sponsored
organizations and ministries.

2. Explore **new models of leadership** in parishes and ministries in institutional settings (schools,
colleges, hospitals, nursing homes, prisons, etc.) in order to address the challenges presented by
the anticipated retirement of a large number of clergy and religious over the next ten years.

3. **Improve our stewardship** of personnel, finances, and facilities and other parish and Diocesan
resources.

4. Establish **collaborative relationships** among the parishes and ministries of the diocese that will
build upon the gospel to re/evangelize the local church, especially those who live on the fringes
of the church, as well as those who do not yet know Christ.

5. Provide for pastoral ministry to **Hispanic Catholics**, the fastest growing segment of our
Diocesan population, within our parishes and organizations.

Please incorporate the Bishop’s Goals into your Implementation Plans in Values, Vision and/or
Goals, Objectives or action steps.
IMPLEMENTATION COHORT VISION AND VALUES STATEMENT

Note directions for arriving at Value, Vision, Goals, Objective, and Action Plans for the future are in the Implementation Guide for Faith in Our Future Section Six

OPTIONAL COMMON MISSION STATEMENT

IF YOU WORKED ON A COMMON MISSION STATEMENT FOR YOUR COHORT PLEASE WRITE IT HERE

VALUES

AS A COHORT WE ARE COMMITTED TO OPERATING OUT OF THE FOLLOWING VALUES OR GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR ACTION:
Our Cohort Values include the following:

We will work together:
- in a spirit of prayer and ongoing discernment
- with respect for each person, each viewpoint and each culture
- strengthening the communion and sense of community among us
- with charity, generosity, patience, persistence, honesty and humility
- engaging the full participation of all parishioners
- as brothers and sisters co-responsible for the mission of the Church
- hopeful about our future

VISION

AS A COHORT WE HOLD THE FOLLOWING VISION WHICH WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE ACCOMPLISHED IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS.
Our Cohort Vision is:

Our parish cohort, “The Catholic Community of Hopewell Valley”, made up of St. Alphonsus, St. George and St. James parishes, has a unified vision of Faith, family and communion through Christ.

We celebrate a diversity of gifts and talents among our parishes which we use to connect with each other and respond to the needs of the community where we worship, live and work. We promote stewardship as a way of life as we work with all of our families to create a more just and peaceful world.

Inspired by the Holy Spirit and embracing the Gospel, we meet people where they are. We ignite the flame of faith in each other’s hearts as we journey together toward our loving and merciful God, revealed both in the sacraments and in the ordinary circumstances of life.
ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
(Second year: July 2018 – June 2019)

DATE May 1, 2018

COHORT #: 8  COUNTY Mercer

PARISHES IN THE COHORT: St Alphonsus, Hopewell; St George, Titusville; St James, Pennington

Which Models are you working on?  Linkage

BISHOP O'CONNELL’S MODEL DIRECTIVE: Continue current Linkage Model for all 3 parishes.

LINKED FAITH FORMATION COMMITTEE (“LFF”)

GOAL: Continue to establish a unified Religious Education Operating Model, so that the communities we serve feel welcome in and familiar with a program that serves all, but retains the unique character that each location offers.

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<th>ACTION PLAN</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective(s)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>A. Collaborative Catechist Training</td>
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<td>B. Collaborative Catechist Meetings</td>
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### C. Centralize Administration of Religious Education

1. Define a central office location within the Linked Parishes
2. Build-out office location with desks and resources to support the 3 Directors of Religious Education
3. Define Class Schedules to include multiple attendance options
4. Centralize Religious Education administration by utilizing on-line registration only
5. Create local parish attendance records from centralized on-line registration repository

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<th>Directors of Religious Education</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a.</td>
<td>07/01/2018</td>
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<td>b.</td>
<td>07/30/2018</td>
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<td></td>
<td>c.</td>
<td>07/30/2018</td>
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<td>d.</td>
<td>07/30/2018</td>
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<td></td>
<td>e.</td>
<td>07/30/2018</td>
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### D. Define Uniform Curriculum for all grades

1. Implement Family Catechesis Curriculum for grades 2-5
2. Continue the Chosen Curriculum for grades 7 & 8
3. Incorporate grade 6 into Confirmation Prep Curriculum
4. Create two summer intensive study programs (day and evening options)
5. Combine parish Sacramental Retreats for Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation
6. Define the Religious Education Social Concerns and Justice Projects for Linked Parishes

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>2018-2019 School Year</th>
<th>Directors of Religious Education</th>
<th>Complete</th>
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### E. Remove financial cost at St. Alphonsus for rental of elementary school space

1. Research various class options based on new class schedules for school year 2018-19
2. Implement class offerings utilizing the Church & Administration Building

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*Complete; Begun; On-going; Delayed; Discarded; No Action*
DIOCESE OF TRENTON

LINKED FAITH FORMATION COMMITTEE (“LFF”)

GOAL: Implement Adult Faith Formation program within the linked parishes, utilizing the resources contained on the FORMED.org website, including general catechesis using programs like Symbolon and Catholicism. Implementation approaches can include parish wide, small groups, and individual study designed to increase the overall knowledge base and catholic awareness of our parishioners.

**ACTION PLAN**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective(s)</th>
<th>Action Steps</th>
<th>When? How Frequent?</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Status*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| A. Establish Symbolon Offerings throughout the year (Sept-Jun) | 1. Define the Class Schedule options for the linked parishes  
2. Define the location based upon the number of people enrolled in the session  
3. Enlist facilitators to lead session discussions  
4. Print out materials for each of the sessions | a. Semi-annual | LFF team | Discarded (replace with Small Groups approach in 2019/2020 plan) |
| B. Implement Study Sessions to prepare for Lent and Advent | 1. Consolidate all existing seasonal programs and utilize the offering from FORMED.org  
2. Implement parish-wide study program to take advantage of FORMED.org Lent Offering  
3. Implement parish-wide study program to take advantage of FORMED.org Advent Offering | a. Semi-annual Lent and Advent | LFF team | Complete |
| C. Implement Soup and Study Sessions on Catholicism | 1. Define the Class Schedule options for the linked parishes  
2. Enlist facilitators to lead session discussions  
3. Assignment of Soup Preparation for each session | a. 1st Sunday of month | LFF team | Discarded |
| D. Utilize Symbolon for Catechists continual education | 1. Define the Class Schedule options based upon catechist availability  
2. Enlist facilitators to lead session discussions  
3. Prepare the study material to support catechism training  
4. Print out materials for each of the sessions | a. Annual | LFF team | Discarded |
DIOCESE OF TRENTON

LINKED FAITH FORMATION COMMITTEE (“LFF”)

GOAL: Establish a formal program to adopt FORMED.org as the primary Catholic online resource, within the existing ministries and/or social concerns groups of the 3 linked parishes, in order to strengthen and enliven the Faith of our parishioners.

**ACTION PLAN**

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| A. Identify those ministries and groups that could utilize FORMED.org...    | 1. Obtain current ministries list from the Social Concerns & Justice Team  
2. Select a pilot collection of ministries/groups based on ease of contact (approx. 5 groups) | a. 7/1/2018  
b. 7/1/2018   | LFF team       | Complete      |
| B. Assign the Faith Formation team members to the selected ministries or...  | 1. Divide the pilot ministries and/or groups among the Faith Formation team members according to the members’ familiarity with that group | a. 8/1/2018   | LFF team       | Delayed       |
| C. Schedule visits to the pilot ministries and groups                      | 1. Contact ministry and group leaders  
2. Explain this goal and arrange to make a personal visit to the ministry/group meeting | a. 8/15/2018  
b. 9/30/2018   | LFF team       | Delayed       |
| D. Visit pilot ministries and groups                                       | 1. Attend their meeting  
2. Explain purpose for attending  
3. Bring recommended FORMED content examples  
4. Engage members and register on the spot as needed | 10/1/2018 –1/31/2019                                              | LFF team       | Delayed       |
| E. Assess the effectiveness of pilot and plan next tranche of ministries...| 1. Review meeting notes and compile new approach to tackle remaining ministries  
2. Select next collection of ministries and groups and repeat process | a. 1/31/2019  
b. 6/30/2019   | LFF team       | Delayed       |

* Complete; Begun; On-going; Delayed; Discarded; No Action
**GOAL:** Engender a spirit of mutual acceptance, cooperation, and Christian fellowship among our linked parishes so that we may better understand and meet the needs of the less fortunate.

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<tr>
<td>A. Calendaring of Social Concerns Events</td>
<td>1. Collect events calendar info from all 3 parishes 2. Determine events that need to be coordinated 3. Work with ministry leaders to develop periodic event dates that will be in sync with goals of the parish and the LLC 4. Establish a process for maintaining/updating the calendar of SC events that will eliminate conflicts and further benefit the mission of the LLC</td>
<td>a. Done  b. 7/1/2018  c. 9/1/2018  d. 1/1/2019</td>
<td>LSC team, Pastor  LSC team, Ministry Leaders  LSC team, Parish Admin, LCC team</td>
<td>1,2 Complete  3,4 Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Effective and Efficient collaboration of SC ministries</td>
<td>1. Identify SC ministries at all 3 parishes 2. Gather information on each (Leaders, membership, activities, etc.) 3. Assess status: active, somewhat active, inactive 4. Determine which ministries should be combined, linked, expanded, eliminated, or initiated 5. Prioritize, schedule and initiate plans for above actions</td>
<td>a. Done  b. Done  c. Done  d. 6/1/2018  e. 10/1/2018</td>
<td>LSC team, Ministry Leaders, Pastor  LSC team, Ministry Leaders, Pastor  LSC team, Parish Admin, LCC team</td>
<td>1,2,3 Complete  4,5 Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Provide Educational Opportunities for Parishioners on Catholic social teachings</td>
<td>1. Develop behavioral guidelines for a Catholic approach in all our social-outreach-related activities 2. Develop and provide educational offerings for all SC Teams on engagement actions in community outreach 3. Sponsor educational events related to Social Justice issues</td>
<td>a. 1/1/2019  b. 10/1/2018  c.12/15/2018</td>
<td>LSC team, Pastor  LSC team w/ LFF team, Diocese Resources  LSC team, LFF team</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
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DIOCESE OF TRENTON

LINKED EVANGELIZATION COMMITTEE (“LEC”)
GOAL: Increase collaborative efforts to evangelize externally and (mostly) internally so that we increase our faith and the size of our faith community.

ACTION PLAN

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<th>Action Steps</th>
<th>When? How Frequent?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Create and strategically employ</td>
<td>1. Create materials 2. Distribute/display/wear them at: a. Christmas &amp; Easter liturgies b. Various fellowship events of the parishes c. Community events with a parish table d. Linked “road trip” events e. To mark location of linked “field trip” events f. Parishioners homes</td>
<td>a. Finalize design, approval, and printing by early August 2017 b. Initial distribution as part of new parishioner info in August, 2017 c. Further distribution after that as described in action Step 2</td>
<td>Welcome/hospitality ministries of each parish, coordinated by the LEC</td>
<td>Brochures, grocery bags and T-shirts are Complete. Other items are Discarded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Use existing and new parish social events as opportunities for evangelization</td>
<td>1. Effectively advertise ALL such events of each parish to all 3 via all communication channels 2. Ensure prayer is included in each event 3. Use each event as an opportunity to highlight linkages</td>
<td>a. Designate and promote linked parish events, growing from 1 last season to at least 4 b. Provide visual reminders of the linked community through use of brochures, branded T-shirts, yard signs as appropriate</td>
<td>Individual parish teams, supported by the LEC</td>
<td>Complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Start a sacrament anniversary card ministry</td>
<td>1. Design, print cards 2. Get parishioner groups to add notes 3. Create database of sacramental anniversaries 4. Mail cards in monthly batches</td>
<td>a. Messages added to cards annually b. Cards mailed monthly</td>
<td>Religious Ed classes, K of Cs, parish assistants, and other parish organizations coordinated through the LEC</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Develop a focus on evangelization skills</td>
<td>1. Identify trainer, course material 2. Hold training session for LLC members and parish leadership 3. Design a mission program for linked community</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>LEC, LLC, parish teams, parishioners</td>
<td>Complete</td>
</tr>
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DIOCESE OF TRENTON

LINKED COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE (“LCC”) – Strategy / Publicity Team

GOAL: To create a comprehensive plan to support the “Faith in our Future” implementation teams in a way that creates community among three parishes, builds awareness in the broader community, supports the objective of improved efficiency and outlines oversight of communication efforts. This team will also investigate outlets to publicize the good work going on in the Cohort to both parishioners and the community at large.

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</table>
| A. Identify goals per platform | 1. Social media  
2. Mass media  
3. Parish websites  
4. The Catholic Community of Hopewell Valley website | 5/2018 | Strategy/Publicity Team | Complete |
| B. Develop an intake process | 1. Clear steps for other Community teams  
2. Clear guidance on what we may or may not include | 6/2018 | Strategy/Publicity Team | Complete |
| C. Develop schedule and process for internal parish updates | 1. Bulletin  
2. Social media  
3. Pulpit talks | Rollout in 9/2018 | Strategy/Publicity Team | Complete |
| D. Develop schedule and process for external publicity | 1. Media list | Rollout in 9/2018 | Strategy/Publicity Team | Complete |
| E. Prepare content | | 9/2018 and Ongoing | Strategy/Publicity Team | Ongoing |

* Complete; Begun; On-going; Delayed; Discarded; No Action
GOAL: Develop a shared website for “The Catholic Community of Hopewell Valley”. Attention will be paid to ensuring this site is welcoming, interactive and showcases happenings shared between our three parishes. This site should strive to draw viewers in by having current, relevant information, human interest stories, profiles of various ministries and people in our parishes. This site will be built on an eCatholic platform using standard templates.

### ACTION PLAN

| Objective(s) | Action Steps | When? How Frequent? | Responsibility | Status *
|--------------|--------------|---------------------|----------------|------------
| A. Identify shared site target audience and goals | 1. Research best practices 2. Reach consensus | 7/1/2018 | LCC and LLC teams | Complete |
| B. Define criteria for inclusion in the shared website | 1. Identify best practices for linked church website 2. Get agreement from stakeholders | 9/1/2018 | LCC, LLC, LFF, LEC, and LSC teams | Complete |
| C. Identify what additional resources will be needed to execute site with excellence (Photography, videography, writers, etc.) | 1. Identify roles 2. Identify content sources and owners | 10/1/2018 | LCC team, Shared Website sub-team | Complete |
| D. Populate site with desired content | 1. Gather content 2. Train content owners | 2/1/2019 | Shared Website sub-team, content owners | Ongoing |
| E. Plan and execute roll-out of new website for the three parishes | 1. Define steps and time-table 2. Update parish websites for new shared model | 3/1/2019 | Shared Website sub-team | Complete |

* Complete; Begun; On-going; Delayed; Discarded; No Action
GOAL: To create a combined calendar of events for the three parishes in our cohort. A combined calendar will allow staff, volunteers, ministry leads and parishioners to access information regarding parish events and activities. To develop a calendar that will allow various levels of access and can be segmented for various user groups.

### ACTION PLAN

| Objective(s) | Action Steps | When? How Frequent? | Responsibility | Status *
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Standardized email identities</td>
<td>1. Establish parish-based email identities and group mailboxes for calendar access</td>
<td>5/1/2018</td>
<td>Joe Bezek</td>
<td>Complete</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Calendar resource/policy setup</td>
<td>1. Define calendar ‘resources’ and reservation/ownership policies</td>
<td>8/1/2018</td>
<td>Combined calendar sub-team</td>
<td>Delayed</td>
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<tr>
<td>C. Combined calendar pilot</td>
<td>1. Pilot combined calendar across parishes and refine processes as needed for initial rollout 2. Upon successful pilot, move current calendar events to combined calendar</td>
<td>11/1/2018</td>
<td>Combined calendar sub-team</td>
<td>Delayed</td>
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<tr>
<td>D. Rollout of combined calendar to all parish websites</td>
<td>1. Pulpit/bulletin/website communications to all parishes 2. Continue to refine processes as needed</td>
<td>3/1/2019</td>
<td>Combined calendar sub-team</td>
<td>Delayed</td>
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* Complete; Begun; On-going; Delayed; Discarded; No Action
We have worked as a Cohort Implementation Team to evaluate our work and prepare this report.

Signatures:

**St. Alphonsus**
- Cindy Haney
- Tim McShea
- Ann Crow
- Sue Hansen

**St. George**
- Michael Ahearn
- Terry Evanko
- Gerry Sellner
- Terry Brennan

**St. James**
- Brian Barr
- Melody Muskell
- Chuck Sikorski
- Paul Kimaid

**Rev. Jarlath Quinn**

**Msgr. Michael Walsh**