

Parish Transition Team  
Meeting Summary  
March 12, 2025

**Attendees:** Brother Ed, Maggie, Mike, Graceanne, Joan, Liz

**(No meeting notes for March 12 as the transition team discussed the listening sessions. Notes will be produced after the parish-wide meeting on March 18, 2025.)**

Parish Transition Team  
Meeting Summary  
February 19, 2025

**Attendees:** Fr. Mike, Brother Ed, Maggie, Mike, Graceanne, Joan, Rebecca, Michael

**Agenda:**

1. Debrief from Joan on Burmese Listening Session (just informal update, no need to prepare anything formal)
2. (Additional) Prep for Listening Sessions - Mike
3. Hospitality support at Monastery - Mike and Maggie
4. Food and flea market - Joan
5. St. B OLV annex. - Maggie
6. Learning from Nativity parish
7. Running action items

**Discussions:**

1. **Debrief from Joan on Burmese Listening Session (just informal update, no need to prepare anything formal)**
  - a. Listening session went well. 9 adults attended. Joan summarized some initial themes: 1) how they felt as members of the community at OLV, 2) possible programs that could support them, 3) what they can contribute to parish. She will provide more detailed notes. Key need to identify is how to translate information so they are aware of events and opportunities to serve.
2. **(Additional) Prep for Listening Sessions - Mike**
  - a. Hospitality
    - i. Good for food this week? Yes! Maggie is on it!
    - ii. Next week - need to send message to Bakery Express or OLV Pantry gets rescue from Giant. They mainly get sweets. Mike could reach out to them for Monastery listening session. Graceanne will connect me with a contact.
    - iii. Mike will contact Katie and Lisa for a list of ministries to share at the listening session. Check the website as well.
    - iv. Don't forget the BUILD community event on March 13th.
  - b. Advertisement
    - i. Flocknotes - DONE
    - ii. Website - DONE
    - iii. Mass - Fr. Mike will include
    - iv. Flyers print?- they will be put in bulletins.
    - v. Special groups - youth (after listening sessions)
3. **Hospitality support at Monastery - Mike and Maggie**
  - a. Person stepped down. Will need to recruit and can rely on Maggie's team to learn best practices.
4. **Food and flea market - Joan**
  - a. Food fair is an event where groups bring foods and sell them. Profits are

generated to the parish. Also consider flea market - rent tables. Open up to the neighborhood, similar to St. Benedict's Fall fest. Maggie suggested talking to someone who's run these events to learn best practices. Graceanne can help. Mike will add this idea to listening session notes so the broader population can engage with the idea.

**5. St. B OLV annex. - Maggie**

- a. There is an annex at the gift shop at OLV. Could we sell resources seasonally there? Possibly talk to Mark about space about having a gift shop. Graceanne shared St. B's isn't that far away. They are also having a grand reopening. Another option is taking it on the road like Graceanne has done with St. Mark and St. Francis Assisi. However, it's a lot of work. They are also wondering if there is a need for this. People today don't buy material items like they used too (most go to Amazon). Graceanne said Hispanic populations are outlier in that they still purchase materials goods like sculptures. Books, CDs, and pictures don't sell. Medals, rosaries, and sculptures do. One idea is to have a list of materials (catalog) and have them available at campuses so people can order them.

**6. Learning from Nativity parish**

- a. Michael asked if people are interested in reaching out to Nativity to learn from their work supporting a growing parish. Mike has a contact at Hopkins we can use. Brother Ed also has a contact, but also shared we should be realistic that it took them years to build what they have. We should not expect to replicate it immediately, but we can implement ideas from them to build on our work. Fr. Mike shared Nativity is hosting an evangelization workshop on June 3rd. He will share information.

**7. Running action items**

- a. Plan Listening Sessions - In Process (See details above)
- b. Brainstorm categories for shared calendar - In Process
- c. Need a plan to move sacramentals from closing parishes - TBD
- d. Define how to maintain unique parish traditions - TBD

**Next meeting via Zoom: March 12, 2025 at 6:30pm**

**(No meeting notes for March 12 as the transition team discussed the listening sessions.)**

**Parish Transition Team**  
**Meeting Summary**  
**February 5, 2025**

**Attendees:** Mike, Michael, Joan, Liz, Fr. Mike, Maggie

**Agenda:**

1. Update on Unity Mass
2. Listening sessions
3. Running action items

Next meeting via Zoom: February 19, 2025

**Discussions:**

**1. Update on Unity Mass**

- a. Hospitality - Maggie has it put together and recruited people to help and identify donations. Bakery Express donuts, coffee, etc. Katie is asking for fruit and water donations. There will be no mass at 11 at Monastery or 12:30 at OLV so we are expecting a good crowd.
- b. Liturgy Committee (Liz) - on the liturgy side, they are looking for requests on lectors and Eucharistic prayers. Singing responses in Spanish, Burmese, and English. Presenting Virgin Mary statue from Burmese population. Katie is working on the program.

**2. Listening sessions**

- a. Schedules:
  - i. Burmese folks will meet 3-4pm on February 15th.
  - ii. OLV on Feb 23rd at 11:30am. Maggie will reach out to Mark to reserve OLV Hall.
  - iii. Monastery on March 2nd at 12:15pm. Back of Church.
  - iv. Zoom March 5th at 7pm.
  - v. Spanish listening session TBD. Liz is recruiting Spanish speakers.
- b. Facilitators:
  - i. Mike will facilitate the discussion. Looking for someone to take notes (need two committee members for each event. 1) someone facilitating discussion and 2) someone writing and taking notes.
- c. Materials:
  - i. Large post-it notes; markers, mic? Food to encourage attendance. Maggie can reach out to Bakery Express (3 dozen). She has urns for coffee. Mike can bring water.
- d. Structure:
  - i. Give introduction to event and goals (Fr. Mike will provide welcome; Mike will introduce goals of session and logistics of how they will work.)
  - ii. Start with small group discussion to encourage everyone to contribute. "Spent 20 minutes in groups of 3-4, ideally with people that you did not come with or you know," to answer any of the following questions to

generate ideas. We will then spend time afterwards collectively hearing from each group."

1. Introduce yourselves in small groups
  2. How do you want outsiders to describe our parish?
  3. What do you love about your parish?
  4. What impact do you want our parish to have in our community?
  5. What services/programs do you think we need? Why?
  6. What are the biggest challenges facing our parish?
- iii. Whole group report out - Facilitators listen to what is shared, document, and connect themes.
  - iv. Allow people to submit questions about implementation so Fr. Mike can answer them through another channel.
  - v. Give everyone a piece of paper when they arrive to allow them to answer this question: What skills or experiences would you like to contribute to the parish? What are you interested in helping with?

### **3. Running action items**

- a. Installation Mass Logistics. DONE
- b. Pick Date for Unity (First Mass) - DONE
- c. Unity Mass Planning - In Process
- d. Plan Listening Sessions - In Process
- e. Brainstorm categories for shared calendar - In Process
- f. Need a plan to move sacramentals from closing parishes - TBD
- g. Define how to maintain unique parish traditions - TBD

Parish Transition Team  
Meeting Summary  
January 30, 2025

**Attendees:** Mike, Rebecca, Joan, Graceanne, Charlene

**Agenda:**

4. Unity Mass
5. Listening sessions
6. Action items

Next meeting via Zoom: February 5, 2025

**Discussions:**

**1. Unity Mass**

- a. A Unity Mass is scheduled for February 16th at 10:30am at OLV campus. Monastery 11am Mass that day will be cancelled. The group discussed ways to honor each merged parish. Idea is to have a presentation of different parish sacramental records with one person from each parish walking them up.
  - i. Graceanne will represent St. Benedicts (She used to manage them).
  - ii. Fr. Mike can find someone for Transfiguration
  - iii. Dr. O will find someone from Monastery... she can ask Gayle.
  - iv. Liz can find someone from OLV
- b. Planning committee will work with Joan to connect with the Burmese community. They have Burmese mass scheduled for 2:00pm.
- c. Another suggestion was to take time before mass starts to invite everyone to introduce themselves to someone you don't know.
- d. Joan suggested adding a multilingual component. Rebecca said there are plans to sing a bi-lingual song at communion.

**2. Listening sessions**

- a. **Goal:** to connect members of the merged parishes and provide input into the future vision of the parish. This data could be used by parish board to eventually write a new mission statement, identify parish values, and eventually a strategic plan.
- b. The committee does not want to repeat the mistakes of the AOB in how they facilitated community input during the Seek the City Initiative. The committee is committed to providing multiple opportunities/formats for input and report out to ensure transparency and maximum participation.
- c. **Dates:** The group felt we should hold visioning sessions at each campus likely after the second mass on Sunday (11:00 at Monastery; 10:30 at OLV) and one online on a weekday evening for convenient options for those who want to attend from home and outside of busy weekend. Joan also offered to lead a discussion with Burmese population. The group would like to include Hispanic speaking members as well. Someone suggested Liz's sister-in-law speak Spanish.

Graceanne shared that Barbara Hurtado (barbara24034@yahoo.com 561-596-7209) also speaks Spanish.

- i. Tentative dates OLV on Feb 23rd at 11:30 and Monastery March 2nd and 12:15 and one on Zoom during week in early March. Use the hall/gym at OLV. Monastery hold in church?
- ii. We can hold additional suggestions based on demand from those articulating that can't attend any of the events.
- d. **Facilitators:** we need two committee members for each event. 1) someone facilitating discussion and 2) someone writing and taking notes.
- e. **Materials:** large post-it notes; markers, mic? Food to encourage attendance.
- f. **Structure:**
  - i. Give introduction to events and goals (Fr. Mike? Transition committee member?).
  - ii. Start with small group discussion to encourage everyone to contribute. "Spent 20 minutes in groups of 3-4, ideally with people that you did not come with or you know," to answer any of the following questions to generate ideas. We will then spend time afterwards collectively hearing from each group."
  - iii. Introduce yourselves in small groups.
  - iv. Should we review mission statements and highlight what we like about each one (not what we dislike) to identify how to merge them?
  - v. How do you want outsiders to describe our parish?
  - vi. What impact do you want our parish to have in our community?
  - vii. What services/programs do you think we need? Why?
  - viii. What are the biggest challenges facing our parish?
  - ix. Whole group report out - facilitators listen to what is shared, document, and connect themes.
  - x. Next steps?
- g. Give everyone a piece of paper when they arrive to allow them to answer this question: What skills or experiences would you like to contribute to the parish? What are you interested in helping with?
- h. **Survey?:** We could also send a survey to all parishioners to answer the questions above if they don't attend.
- i. **Advertising/Recruiting:** Use Flock Notes, Bulletins, unity mass, mass announcements, email?; ask people if they can't make it to send in ideas via email. hold additional sessions. Recruit through ministries... maybe ask Choir and youth groups to have their own conversations. Maybe contact these groups to help us plan and recruit. Recruit them to a Zoom prep meeting. Set them up for the ministry fair as well. <-- need lead
- j. **Open Questions:**
  - i. How do we report out afterwards to broader parish? How do we ask members to identify things they think are important and/or are interested in to help with prioritization?
  - ii. Categorize ideas into themes: growth, service, external/internal

- iii. How do we prioritize ideas suggested or aggregate them into a common vision? (maybe let people place three stickers on their favorite ideas after future masses... Select three things/rank all on a survey afterwards?
- iv. Who ultimately executes action on the ideas? Parish board? They would more responsible for developing and leading strategic plan, but what about values and mission statement?
- v. What's the food budget? - work with Fr. Mike
- vi. Who's willing to help facilitate?
- vii. Should we give people paper/online survey to provide input?

### **3. Action items**

- a. Installation Mass logistics - DONE
- b. Pick date for Unity (First Mass) - DONE
- c. Unity Mass planning - in process
- d. Language components
- e. Reps from each parish (see above)
- f. Plan Visioning Sessions - in process
- g. Brainstorm categories for shared calendar - in process
- h. Need a plan to move sacramentals from closing parishes - TBD
- i. Define how to maintain unique parish traditions - TBD

**Parish Transition Team**  
**Meeting Summary**  
**January 8, 2025**

**Attendees:** Michael S, Mike R, Fr. Mike; Rebecca, Liz, Joan, Graceanne, Brother Ed

**Agenda:**

1. Prepping for Installation Mass/First Mass
2. Websites/Communications
3. Parish conversations to engage our combined communities to envision our future
4. Action items

**Discussions:**

**1. Prepping for Installation Mass/First Mass**

- a. January 18th is the Installation Mass. We talked about this being a first Mass, but the Archbishop prefers that they not be combined. We can still have combined traditions represented at Installation Mass, however, it is fairly scripted. Fr. Mike will find people from each parish to ensure representation. There is a reception afterwards.
- b. First Mass will look at the parish calendar to identify a date for the first mass since the archbishop does not want to combine it with Installation Mass.

**2. Websites/Communications**

- a. OLV Facebook page has new landing page:  
<https://www.facebook.com/olvictorychurch>. Combined branding of combined campuses. Taking "parish" off Monastery Facebook site and focusing on campus terminology. Eventually combine sites. Flocknotes have been merged so only one will go out. Katie Jenkins will manage. Website is being worked on. Don't want to lose history of Monastery that was written and published during Capital Campaign. Working on combining bulletins. Need to explore what to keep. Jim said OLV is more news/info and Monastery includes more prayers and spiritual messages. Liz said OLV liturgy campus has done more of spiritual work that we can include.

**3. Parish conversations to engage our combined communities to envision our future**

**a. Ministry Prayer Morning**

- i. Group discussed holding a reflection/prayer morning with representatives of various ministries from all four parishes to explore how ministries can work together, complement services/outreach, and identify where redundancies may exist.
- ii. Brother Ed has experience in leading spiritual ministry including helping groups working together. That will take time to fully develop, but he is happy to help as he is able.

**b. Ministry Fair**

- i. Group also discussed hosting a ministry fair to help parishioners identify opportunities to get involved. May want to have multiple ministry fairs so people can attend if one event conflicts with their schedule. Possibly conduct like poster sessions and ask reps of different ministries to develop visuals using a common template. Michael shared this should be tied to masses to maximize attendance.
- ii. Rebecca shared that another parish from a different diocese gave new members a survey to identify people who have skills/strengths to recruit for ministries. How can we identify a list of ministries to include?
  - 1. Graceanne interested supporting ministry fair. We have people from all over involved at the Neighborhood Center from different walks of life and religions.
  - 2. Rebecca's first interest is with the ministry fair (evangelization second).
  - 3. Joan is interested in supporting the ministry fair.
- c. Envisioning OLV Parish's future evangelization and mission**
  - i. The group also discussed hosting a series of conversations on the future of evangelization and mission of the merged parish. Fr. Mike suggested including Marquis from BUILD since he has work in organizing people to serve. February 4th possible. Liz suggested guiding questions: Who are we and what are we doing? What does it mean for us to be servants of Christ?
    - 1. Mike is interested in this.

#### **4. Action items**

- a. Identify representatives from all four parishes for Installation Mass
- b. Pick Date for First Mass
- c. Plan Visioning Sessions
- d. Brainstorm categories for shared calendar
- e. Need a plan to move sacramentals from closing parishes - TBD
- f. Define how to maintain unique parish traditions - TBD

**Parish Transition Team**  
**Meeting Summary**  
**December 18, 2024**

**Attendees:** Maggie, Liz, Mike R, Michael S, Graceanne, Fr. Mike, Joan

**Agenda:**

1. Short-term transitional tasks (next month)
2. Long-term transitional tasks (next 2-4 months)
3. Operational tasks
4. Administrative
5. Action items

**Discussions:**

Mike led a brainstorming session to identify upcoming work and prioritizing the tasks. The first set of items are tasks/responsibilities related to the transition that the committee will oversee.

**1. Short-term transitional tasks (next month)**

- a. Prayer for Merger - DONE
- b. Calendar - Mostly DONE (but need to develop new tags for events)
- c. First Mass - January 18th
- d. Traditions/Parish Representations (ideally before new Mass)
  - i. Fr. Mike is coordinating the transitions of sacramentals from St. Benedicts and Transfiguration. - DONE
- e. Rebranding/Coordinating Communications
  - i. Bulletin
  - ii. Flock Notes

**2. Long-term transitional tasks (next 2-4 months)**

- a. Parish Visioning Activities - this is a chance for our merged communities to come together to discuss our vision for the new parish.
  - i. Mission Statement
  - ii. Listening Sessions (both with internal communities and external communities)
  - iii. Needs analysis informed by listening sessions
- b. Welcome Packet (listed as long-term because it should reflect visioning activities of parishioners)
- c. Rebranding/Coordinating Communications
  - i. Website - this is categorized as long-term because it will take more time
- d. Language translation (Spanish, Burmese) of website, social media, etc.

**3. Operational tasks**

This list includes the ongoing work or new programs/events proposed to meet the needs of internal communities and external communities of Southwest Baltimore.

- a. Evangelization to SW Baltimore as part of the goals of Seek the City

- i. Outreach to former parishioners and existing members of St. Benedicts and Transfiguration - this was seen as related to evangelization
- b. Ministry Fairs/Gift Assessment to help new and existing members identify how to serve in the parish.
- c. Young Adult Outreach
- d. Grief Sharing
- e. Tutoring Program
- f. Pantry Outreach
- g. Homebound Outreach
- h. Spanish Mass
- i. Community Garden
- j. Internet Access at St. Benedict's Neighborhood Center

#### **4. Administrative**

- a. Fr. Mike shared the AOB is still dealing with the transition of financial systems so the formal merging of parish financials will not happen until later this year.

#### **5. Action items**

- a. Work with Liturgy Committee on First Mass
- b. Plan Visioning Sessions
- c. Brainstorm categories for shared calendar
- d. Need a plan to move sacramentals from closing parishes - TBD
- e. Define how to maintain unique parish traditions - TBD

**Parish Transition Team**  
**Meeting Summary**  
**December 4, 2024**

**Attendees:** Maggie, Liz, Mike R, Rebecca, Graceanne, Fr. Mike, Brother Ed

**Agenda:**

1. The Monastery's appeal
2. Welcome packet
3. First Mass planning
4. Next B.U.I.L.D. meeting and SW Baltimore Community Work
5. Hospitality
6. Outreach to sick and homebound
7. Grief Share
8. Calendar
9. Action items

**Discussions:**

**1. The Monastery's appeal**

- a. Mike shared in the spirit of transparency that several Monastery parishioners submitted an appeal to the Dicastery of the Clergy regarding the recent decrees. This does not change the work of the transition committee. Regardless of the outcome, we are all committed to the goals of the Seek the City, most notably to, "reassert, strengthen, and adapt pastoral ministry, evangelization, and outreach in Baltimore City for the 21st Century." Our communities are called by the Archdiocese to evangelize and minister to Southwest Baltimore City.

**2. Welcome packet**

- a. We need in-person meetings to look at material and finalize messaging. The topic raised a broader case about messaging to our current parishioners. The group felt it would help to hold listening sessions. Liz highlighted the benefits of a retreat. If we want to have a more missionary outreach in the parish then we need to meet people where they are and inspire them. People want to be helpers. Maybe we could have a retreat to help people come to a new vision. The group then had a discussion about the need or not for a new vision statement for our parish.
- b. Mike acknowledged there are tangible things we have to do in the short-term (e.g., plan a first mass) vs. longer term organizational change to envision who we are in our new parish while working towards the goal of Seek the City. At the next meeting: December 18th, the group plans to brainstorm the short-term and long-term goals. Brother Ed offered to share information on the process used by synodality for change as a possible model. Mike also mentioned the Kotter Model for organizational change.
- c. Brother Ed added in a separate topic that is relevant to this one, that video could be a helpful way to communicate to our community.

### **3. First Mass planning**

- a. January 18th. Held at OLV. 4:00pm Mass. There will be a celebration afterwards. Hopefully have representation from each parish during the ceremony. Liz and Rebecca offered to be involved for OLV and Monastery. Graceanne suggested Bob Kolarek from St. Benedict. Fr. Mike will talk to Transfiguration members on Friday.

### **4. Next B.U.I.L.D. meeting and SW Baltimore Community Work**

- a. There is a listening/Action planning session on 12-11-24 at St. Joseph monastery from 6:30-8pm.
- b. This meeting will be to discuss updates about the Beechfield Recreation Center, the field and to identify next steps. Also we will be discussing the planning of a traffic calming action along the Frederick Ave corridor to address safety calming measures and code enforcements, trash clean up and to listen to other issues.

### **5. Hospitality**

- a. Beginning with January, 2025 Hospitality we will be hosted once a month on the 2nd Sunday of the month. Held a team meeting after November 24 hospitality and members thought that because of the many other activities and opportunities that already exist for parishioners to get to know each other, hosting hospitality once a month is adequate. Maggie has updated letters with new hospitality dates and they have been taken to Bakery Express for free donuts. One of our team members has agreed to pick up donuts for our scheduled hospitality dates, December 8th then 22nd. Starting January 12th, we will host hospitality after the 10:30am Mass only.
- b. New dates have been sent to Jim McDonnell to put onto calendars. Have had inquires about expanding hospitality to 8 and 12:30pm Masses, I agreed only if we can get additional volunteers to host these masses, if not will continue once a month only after 10:30am.
- c. After January 1st will put an announcement in the church bulletin asking for hospitality volunteers, no volunteers no expansion. Also, will ask Katie Jenkins to have an announcement made for more hospitality volunteers along with other announcements she makes at the end of Mass.

### **6. Outreach to sick and homebound**

- a. Maggie reported she is networking with Barbara Naudin. Barbara is conducting visitation to nursing homes and a few home visits. Barbara contacts Maggie to recruit additional volunteers for home visits. Contacted Joe Jauquet Religious Ed catechist and he will have children make 25 Christmas cards for extraordinary ministers to take with them when making home/nursing home visits.

### **7. Grief Share**

- a. The following information was taken from a Grief Share brochure and gives you an idea about how the program works. It is a Christian, Bible-based grief support program which is a 13-week cycle comprised of three parts: Video, Discussion and Workbook. The purpose of the 13-week-cycle is to take you on a journey of grief from Mourning to Joy, with the help of God's grace and mercy, and His ever present nature by your side in your time of need. Each week is a different topic for viewing and discussion, and the topics range from the rollercoaster of emotions to being stuck in grief; anger at God to what to do next. The presenters in the videos are comprised of pastors, theologians, psychologists, therapists, and everyday people like you and me. The program is free; however, we do ask for a donation of \$20 towards the cost of the workbook, to replace the supply for future sessions. Children are not allowed, as the focus needs to be on yourself and other participants attending, not distracted by little ones. Registration is limited to 8 participants to give ample opportunity for each participant to share during the discussion portion of the sessions. Registration must be done on-line at: [griefshare.org](http://griefshare.org). Once you get to the website, click on the tab for "find a church", enter zip code: 21229, and Our Lady of Victory should pop up.
- b. I recently met with a volunteer from OLV, Andrea Craig, who is interested in becoming a co-facilitator and will sign up to take online training sometime in January. We are not limited to the number of facilitators we can have; however, there needs to be no less than one facilitator for every 4 participants. I will schedule a meeting with Fr. Mike to discuss what needs to happen before this program can be offered at OLV.
- c. I have completed the 13 week-cycle required to become a facilitator however, I plan to take an additional three hours training for group Leaders sometime in January. My hope is to offer Grief Share to OLV parishioners starting September, 2025. In the meantime, I am currently registered as a facilitator at St. Mark until I can begin offering the program at OLV.

## **8. Calendar**

- a. The group discussed coordinating on new categories for the shared calendar. Rebecca will send out an email to have the group brainstorm asynchronously categories and then work with Jim to add them.

## **9. Action items**

- a. Brainstorm short-term/long-term goals at next meeting
- b. Brainstorm categories for shared calendarNeed a plan to move sacramentals from closing parishes - TBD
- c. Define how to maintain unique parish traditions - TBD
- d. Future topic: Integrating Burmese and other communities more fully into parish

**Parish Transition Team**  
**Meeting Summary**  
**November 20, 2024**

**Attendees:** Maggie, Charlene Liz, Joan, Mike R, Rebecca, Michael S, Graceanne, Jim McDonnell (guest)

**Agenda:**

1. Updates
2. Online parish calendar
3. Integrating Burmese population
4. Epiphany celebration

**Discussions:**

**1. Updates**

- a. Prayer cards have been completed for use. Will begin the First Sunday of Advent in both parishes.
- b. When will be the first Mass of the newly formed parish? January 25th @ the 4pm mass. Archbishop Lori will be here to install Father Mike as Pastor. Makes sense to celebrate it then with this celebration.
- c. Welcome packet - Father Mike has something that OLV has used in the past. Will ask team members to help with it.

**2. Online parish calendar**

- a. Jim is the business manager at OLV and manages the calendar. He shared information about the technology and best practices used to manage the parish calendar. He is retiring at the end of the year (no one has applied for his position yet). The calendar application is Calendar Wiz:  
<https://calendarwiz.com/olvcalendar>. Benefits of the tool include the following.
  - i. You can link to it from multiple sites. It's cloud-based so there are no updates or patches needed. It's cheap (\$25/month). It's mobile/phone friendly. You can subscribe to the calendar. It can export to other tools (e.g., Google or Outlook calendar). Anyone can login to see it (special private events). Only con is that it doesn't print well, but there are not many print requests anymore.
- b. Calendar Wiz allows 20 event categories, but you can buy more if needed. Jim assigns categories to specific locations (e.g. church, hall, conference rooms). There is currently a category for the Monastery. Events can be published public or private (need login). Private events are usually reserved for things like visiting priests using a space.
- c. You can tag events with multiple categories. There might be interest in this so we can not only tag the location, but the type of event (e.g., volunteer event, music practice) so that users can filter on event type. To be explored later.
- d. Jim runs a point on the calendar (i.e., everyone sends him information to post) to ensure consistency in how events are published. It also prevents conflicts that

can arise from two people posting events. He recommended keeping one calendar manager in the future. He requests that people write or email a request so he can track them (don't tell him in person). He usually enters requests within 24 hours. Future managers may want to set expectations for how fast events will be posted (1 week lead time even if it can be done faster).

- e. Parish leaders used to gather in May for a calendar meeting to coordinate regular events across different groups. That meeting has not occurred for a while, but things have continued smoothly. Jim negotiates when there are conflicts to move dates as needed, however, there are fewer conflicts with school closed.
- f. The general priority for scheduling is: 1) parish events, 2) parish organizations, and 3) outside organizations (e.g., hall rentals). This led to a side conversation about hall rentals increasing recently, especially quinceañeras. They charge \$3,500/ night for quinceañeras and allow them to run 5pm-midnight with access at 10am to decorate. Start after Mass. Groups can have alcohol. They hold 2-3/month. It's a popular space because they can hold 300 people. They've hired an event coordinator who speaks Spanish to act as liaison.
- g. In a discussion about how to use the tool, it sounds like we could assign more Monastery locations to the tool to advertise events (e.g., BUILD meetings, Angel Tree Delivery). St. B's Neighborhood Center will schedule their locations through their own calendar tool, but will add their events to parish calendar when they want to invite parish communities to join (e.g., volunteer events). The parish calendar would serve as a way to advertise events for St. B's but also identify possible conflicts for events as they plan them (e.g., Bull Roast conflict that occurred earlier). It does not sound like Transfiguration campus will be open to us to schedule events, but categories could be reserved for Transfiguration if we can access the space.
- h. The group proposed sunsetting the calendar subcommittee as anyone can send Jim (and eventually his successor) to post. There is also no plan to explore alternative hosting platforms to Calendar Wiz.

### **3. Integrating Burmese population**

- a. A side topic discussed and identified for future conversation is integrating Burmese community into the broader parish community. It only recently started advertising the Burmese masses in the bulletin. The tutoring program is growing. We could almost consider them like another parish to integrate. Joan also suggested considering how to make the other communities of color more welcome and integrated. Consider dedicating a future meeting to this topic.

### **4. Epiphany celebration**

- a. Liz shared that the liturgy committee discussed a fun celebration for Epiphany we could host across location. It's based on gifts from around the world; after each mass that weekend, we could host snacks or treats from around the world. They plan to reach out to Jim to post it on the calendar.

Parish Transition Team  
Meeting Summary  
November 6, 2024

**Attendees:** Fr. Mike, Maggie, Charlene, Joan, Mike R, Michael S, Graceanne

**Agenda:**

1. Joint work
2. Parish communities
3. Next steps

**Discussions:**

**1. Joint work**

- a. We are already beginning to do joint work: parish picnic, religious ed, prayer service.

**2. Parish communities**

- a. Our task is complicated because we are trying to make connections among parish activities, but we are unique compared to other parish mergers. Transfiguration folks are going to parishes/churches closer to their home. St. Benedict parishioners have been attending OLV since the parish closed a year ago. So we aren't expecting much.

**3. Next steps**

- a. **Welcome Packet:** Fr. Mike has ideas of things to include. Maggie talked to Mark Hopkins, and he said Kathy Clark was working on it. Fr. Mike will talk to Kathy about it. Mark was also going to talk to Knights of Columbus about hosting a monthly welcome breakfast.
- b. Preserving and moving traditions. Prayer to share.
- c. First mass. Archbishop Lori would like to visit for an installation mass for Fr. Mike as pastor. We can combine it. We can possibly hold that on January 25th.
- d. Community work in Southwest Baltimore. Possibly invite Marquis of BUILD to get people involved. This can start now, but will take longer than the others. Mike is willing to help Marquis set this up.
- e. Maggie is doing outreach to homebound. Grief sharing would be nice to share as well. She is managing hospitality. Discussed holding a potluck at St. Benedict's Neighborhood Center to encourage people to visit and then got more programs there.
- f. Joan is open to translating at events. Consider timing of events to encourage more young people to participate.
- g. **Shared Calendar:** Jim is retiring, but Fr. Mike can find a new person to manage it. Fr. Mike will ask Katie to connect communications between Monastery and OLV and St. Benedict's Neighbor Center. Shared Calendar can also help us identify what spaces are available at different times.

- h. Leave paper at Transfiguration about joining Monastery or OLV. Make language less recruiting and more welcoming.

**Parish Transition Team**  
**Meeting Summary**  
**October 30, 2024**

**Attendees:** Brother Ed, Joan, Graceanne, Maggie, Michael S, Rebecca, Liz, Debbie, Mike R

**Agenda:**

1. Combined calendars
2. Parish traditions
3. Hospitality
4. New business

**Discussions:**

**1. Combined calendars (for coordinating public event purposes)**

- a. OLV has a calendar tool which can be a useful platform to share about major events happening at each of the communities throughout the calendar year. Fr. Mike in discussion with the OLV calendar manager on a preferred communication channel and point person for sharing events.
- b. St. Benedict Neighborhood Center has its own internal calendar for some of their events that don't need to or shouldn't be shared in the combined calendars page. Their public events are shared with OLV and the Monastery to be shared in flocknotes.
  - i. St. Benedict will continue to hold its fundraising events since it's a self-supporting 501(c)(3). Their activities will continue since it's not part of the parish merger, although they would like to advertise events on combined calendars to raise awareness.
  - ii. There might be value in having separate fundraising so we maximize impact (3 bingos instead of one).

**2. Parish traditions**

- a. Monastery has traditions that will continue as a worship site
  - i. Angel Tree
  - ii. Live Nativity
  - iii. Others to be listed
- b. Transfiguration
  - i. To be shared
- c. OLV, St. Benedict, Monastery
  - i. Reciting the St Michael prayer after Mass
  - ii. Moving to the middle of the church to proclaim the gospel to all four directions during certain holy days
  - iii. Dressing up little kids as saints around Halloween
  - iv. Walking Stations of the Cross through the neighborhood on Good Friday
  - v. Soup and sandwiches on Fridays during Lent (gotta remind people no meat)

- vi. Seven Last Words of Jesus on Good Friday (we have the booklets for that in the sacristy)
- vii. Different Stations of the Cross meditations on each Friday in Lent
- viii. Advent wreath making sessions
- ix. Home Outreach - Maggie shared that the home outreach program is ready. She's got a team. Main challenge is getting referrals for who to visit. Suggestion to work with offices to identify ways to get referrals to homebound. Maggie said the contact number is in the bulletin, but will call parish offices to remind them of service available. Another suggestion is to talk to Religious Ed to recruit children for developing cards
- x. Several people said they would like the bells rung at the consecration. OLV Liturgy Committee is open to it. Plan to take it to Fr. Mike, and if approved, then begin training. Monastery rings the bells at consecration
- xi. Some traditional hymns sung at Mass are a desire

### **3. Hospitality & Welcome**

- a. Hospitality is doing well. Women of Victory have been greatly helpful. Maggie's going to local stores to ask for donations. Mark Hopkins is coleading with Maggie. Challenge is identifying new members. Could ask new members to stand up during the start of Mass so existing members can greet them after Mass. Maggie said a new welcome packet is being developed.

### **4. New business**

- a. Is there a need to clarify the decision-making process and the role of the Merger Committee, members of the faith communities, pastoral staff and pastor in the process?
  - i. This was an open discussion. Some members are looking for clarity on what are responsibilities of the transition team (e.g., decision making power, a working group making recommendations).

Parish Transition Team  
Meeting Summary  
October 16, 2024

**Attendees:** Annette, Liz, Brother Ed, Joan, Mike, Debbie, Fr. Mike, Graceann

**Agenda:**

1. Reports on home parish discussions
2. Working sub-committees
3. Upcoming events
4. Action items

**Discussions:**

**1. Reports on home parish discussions**

- a. **OLV** met on October 8th. Started hospitality outreach recruitment to help welcome new members. For communication, the hope is to share condensed notes from meetings across our groups. Food pantry is an opportunity for collaboration. Merger support team members from OLV needed clarity or guidance on what kind of support is exactly needed from them: Is there something volunteers could do? OLV will have a transition discussion on October 17th.
- b. **Monastery** met on October 10th. About 100 people attended. Discussion of what a worship site and explanation of changes to take place on December 1st. Fr. Mike answered questions about the Decree.
- c. **Transfiguration** met and discussed communication plans. About 8 people showed up and discussed closing. Shared logistics of ending contracts (e.g., phone, energy, etc.) that will be handled by Fr. Mike. They have a food bank that people walk to that will hopefully be supported in a way that is accessible to these individuals. Overall, they have about 450 people come to the food pickup events. Fr. Mike will follow up about ongoing plans. There is concern the parking lot will be fenced off, but that will likely not happen soon because Headstart will remain until June 2025.

**2. Working Sub-committees**

- a. **Combined Calendar:** Led by Joan with Rebecca and Charlene - Joan developed a shared calendar using Notion app. Will explore other platform options as necessary.
- b. **Communication:** Led by Fr. Mike with parish administrative staff. Plan to combine Flock Notes and Bulletins as things move forward. Graceanne felt that when they are combined that could be a communication channel to various communities.

- c. **Prayer:** Led by Brother Ed with Rebecca and Annette - developing prayer. Brother Ed shared several with the Subcommittee. Fr. Mike will look tomorrow and try to have something ready for the OLV meeting.
- d. **Parish Traditions:** Liz, Anette, and Graceanne - Group discussed these will likely continue at OLV and Monastery. Focus is how can we engage St. Benedict and Transfiguration about what traditions they would like to preserve since the churches are/will close. Annette will discuss Transfiguration. Debbie shared that Transfiguration had beautiful nativity. Graceanne said most people from St. Benedict transitioned elsewhere already because closure occurred a year ago, however, Graceanne will talk to those who are coming to Bull Roast.
- e. **Transfiguration Community:** Fr. Mike is the lead. Closing mass on November 24th is open to the public. Reception is open only to Transfiguration parish members.

### 3. Upcoming events

- a. October 17 - OLV parish meeting
- b. October 20 - Joint Parish Picnic at OLV (starting at 2pm)
- c. October 23 - Joint Seek the City update meeting at Monastery (starting at 6:30pm)
- d. October 30 - Transition Team Meeting via Zoom
- e. November 6 - Transition Team Meeting via Zoom
- f. November 17 - Bingjoe at Monastery
- g. November 20 - Transition Team Meeting in-person

### 4. Action items

- a. Develop combined calendar - Rebecca, Joan, Charlene, and a rep of Transfiguration
- b. Form a sub-committee to continue conversation and planning around the radio station
- c. Provide a physical sign-up option for Transfiguration members to opt in to Flocknotes or phone communication and invitation to future events
- d. Contact St. Benedict members about how to opt in to Flocknotes - Charlene
- e. Connect St. Benedict staff with Marquis Howard from BUILD - Fr. Mike
- f. Need a plan to move sacramentals from closing parishes - TBD
- g. Ask Transfiguration and St. Benedict community how to maintain unique parish traditions - Graceanne and Annette

**Next meeting: Wednesday, October 30, 2024 at 6:30pm via Zoom.**

Parish Transition Team  
Meeting Summary  
October 2, 2024

**Attendees:** Joel (for Annette), Liz, Charlene, Brother Ed, Joan, Rebecca, Mike, Maggie, Fr. Mike, Joel, Grace Ann

**Agenda:**

1. Update on the Decrees
2. Communication
3. Relationship and community
4. Incorporating parish traditions
5. Meaning of worship site
6. Action items

**Discussions:**

1. **Update on the Decrees:** the [Decree that was issued September 29, 2024](#). Fr. Mike explained that the decree is a provision of Canon Law that allows individuals to appeal in writing the decision to close a parish. In this case, individuals have ten (10) days to appeal. The Monastery will ask AOB to correct misinformation in the Justification section of the Decree. St. Benedict may ask AOB to explain its change in thinking with regards to St. Benedict (a year ago, AOB completely closed the parish. Now they are asking it to merge with OLV).
2. **Communication:** the need to streamline communication among the four communities across multiple channels (websites, Flocknote, Facebook, etc.). There are some issues that need to be addressed. Once it was closed, St. Benedict funded its Flocknote independent of AOB. Parishioners have dispersed to other churches. St. Benedict will provide OLV its list of names in order to try to contact them. Transfiguration does not use Flocknote. Fr. Mike will talk with Fr. Ty about this aspect of communication.

**Reaching out:** the appropriate time to reach out to parishioners of St. Benedict's and Transfiguration. Many from St. Benedict's have already transitioned to OLV or to the Monastery. The representative from Transfiguration suggested waiting until their last Mass.

**Combined calendar:** the need for a combined calendar that could be shared on Google Calendar was agreed to. Rebecca Obniski (Monastery), Charlene Cowan-Sola (St. Benedict) and Joan Huai (OLV) will work on this. To be confirmed who would be the point person from Transfiguration.

3. **Relationship and community:** with regards to Transfiguration final liturgy, guests are welcome. The reception, however, is for parishioners only. Guests are welcome to attend Mass at Transfiguration on Sundays, but need to remember they are guests. Recruiting the members of Transfiguration at this time is inappropriate. Fr. Mike and Fr.

Ty will concelebrate in October. Fr. Mike will provide the parishioners needed information.

4. **Incorporating parish traditions:** there is a desire to maintain cultural and parish traditions and events as we merge. For example, maintaining the Afrocentric liturgies of the Transfiguration community, the Pentecostal multicultural Mass at OLV. These are part of the community's identity.
5. **Meaning of worship site:** the description of a 'worship site' given by AOB is very vague. Likely this means keeping church specific programming as it is. It also recognizes that parishioners will probably want to stay with the parish they presently attend. The focus will likely be on shared programming, for example, picnics, charity events, service to the community and BUILD activities.

The critical question that needs a lot of attention is how do we become 'Eucharistic missionaries' as described in the Eucharistic Vision for the City Church of Baltimore proposed by Seek the City to Come.

In many ways St. Benedict's has already been doing what a Eucharist missionary community does. The irony is that St. Benedict's has been doing what AOB now wanted everyone to do. The future of St. Benedict's Radio Station (WVTO-92.7 FM) needs to be studied and looked at creatively for its potential.

6. **Action Items:**
  - a. Develop a combined calendar (Rebecca, Joan, Charlene)
  - b. Form a sub-committee to continue conversation and planning around the radio station (TBD)
  - c. Provide a physical sign up option for Transfiguration members to opt in to Flocknotes or phone communication and invitation to future events (TBD)
  - d. Contact St. Benedict members about opting into Flocknote (Charlene)
  - e. Connect St. Benedict staff with Marquis from BUILD (Fr. Mike)
  - f. Plan to move sacramentals (TBD)
  - g. How to maintain unique parish traditions (TBD)

**Next meeting: Wednesday, October 16, 2024 at 6:30pm at OLV.**