

MERGER CORNER

The Priest Co-Conveners and Core "Team representing Immaculate Conception Church, St. Teresa of Avila Church, St. Michael Church and St. Mary's Church have been working toward the merger of our four parishes since last October.

One of our most important tasks is communicating with our fellow parishioners and we want to improve upon that area. We are hopeful that the creation of this "Merger Corner," which we intend to be a regular feature of your parish bulletin and parish website, is a step in the right direction.

We will soon be asking members of the four parishes to serve on committees to help facilitate the merger. Among the committees that will be established are: Liturgical Committee, Social and Parish Life Committee, Ministry Committee and Finance Committee. Other committees will be formed as we move forward. We look forward to working with our fellow parishioners as members of these committees.

As an update:

- Father Ariel Hernandez, one of our Priest Co-Conveners, presided over an informational meeting for all parishioners on Jan. 4 at St. Teresa of Avila Church. Father Ariel introduced the Core Team and the deacons of the four merging parishes, provided an overview of the merger opened the floor to questions and concerns.
- The Priest Co-Conveners and Core Team met with the Parish Pastoral Councils and Parish Finance Committees of the four merging parishes on Jan. 7 at St. Teresa as part of an orientation phase of the merger. The financials of the four parishes, including the challenges of merging the four parishes financially, were discussed. Also, in advance of the meeting, each Parish Pastoral Council was given a Parish Overview Worksheet to complete. The Parish Pastoral Councils and Parish Finance Committees from each parish met separately during the meeting to consolidate their responses. Afterward, a spokesperson from each parish presented the information to the assembly and copies of this information were given to Father Ariel. These responses will be helpful in the merging of the four parishes.
- Members of each parish who work with parish bulletins and websites met with a Core Team committee to give a report on their operations and discuss the bulletins and websites in relation to the merger. As you may have noticed, information from each parish is starting to be included in all bulletins. Also, all websites will have links to other websites of the merging parishes. One idea being discussed is that in the short-term, all bulletins will have a center insert with the same shared information. When the merger is complete, will have one bulletin that will be the same for all, but with a center insert that will address the particular events/concerns of each church building.

- The Priest Co-Conveners and Core Team participated in leadership training sessions in January and February.
- A Unity Hymn Sing, in relation to the merger, was held at St. Teresa on Feb. 20 and was well received by all who attended. News of the gathering was covered in the Catholic Star Herald and The News of Cumberland County. It was such a huge success, we intend to hold another. If you were unable to attend the first, we hope you will attend the next Unity Hymn Sing.
- A Parish Family Breakfast, the work of a multi-parish committee, will be held March 15 from 7 a.m. to noon in the basement of St Teresa. Announcements and tickets have been distributed to the four parishes.
- Many have asked when the merger will be completed. We are still working on a timeline, and no formal date has been established. However, it is reasonable to expect that the merger will be completed by Easter 2010.

If you have any questions about the merger, please feel free to ask one of the Priest Co-Conveners or a Core Team member. The Priest Co-Conveners and Core Team members are listed below.

We thank you for your prayers and support as we move through this process.

Priest Co-Conveners:

Father Ariel Hernandez and Father Michael Goyette Core

Team Members:

Frank Catalana, Manuel Sandoval, Maribel Santos, Pat Hannum, Ed Hilt, Mike Takacs, Darrin Krug, Marie Krug, Paul Wolfe, Ann Budde, Sandra Johnson, Robert Malestein.