



Strategic Visioning Team
Final Recommendations
October 2023

In September 2022, the Bishop tasked us with creating a new strategic vision for the Diocese. This report offers our recommendations for moving forward together. In it, we offer suggestions for building structures that support ongoing collaboration and communication between our local congregations, as well as between congregations and diocesan leadership.

As we held listening sessions across the Diocese in late 2022, we heard a general consensus that congregations want to work together, as well as connect to their neighbors and wider communities. There was also much emphasis on doing justice work together—and proclaiming who we are as Episcopalians. Taking these comments, we formed working groups representing people across the Diocese to develop the following goals and initiatives. This vision represents a building of consensus from many voices that make up the incredible diversity of the Episcopal Diocese of Newark.

In addition, we believe that this vision focuses heavily on empowering lay people to do the work of the Church by connecting them to each other through the Regional Ministry Networks and through shared ministries, such as Christian formation and communications. We also emphasize creating opportunities for discipleship formation and leadership development for ministry and congregational life.

For each initiative, our recommendations include:

- The entities within the Diocese that are responsible for each initiative
- Suggested metrics to measure implementation and effectiveness
- A timeline with priorities for implementation and estimated costs

We are grateful for Bishop Carlye Hughes' invitation to lead the visioning process, and we hope that the members of the Diocese, and our leaders in particular, find these recommendations useful—and inspiring. We look forward to partnering with diocesan leadership and the rest of our members over the next couple of years to make this vision a reality, and we welcome feedback about the recommendations and suggestions for implementation.

In Christ,

The Rev. Raul Ausa, the Rev. Carrie Cabush, the Rev. Mark Collins, Nelson Diaz, Janelle Grant, the Rev. Miguel Hernandez, the Rev. Vicki McGrath, Jewels Quelly, Michele Simon, Belinda Stokes, and the Rev. Lorna Woodham

Report Digest with Impacts

Taking language from the congregational listening sessions in the fall of 2022 and other work done previously, the visioning team developed the following new mission and vision statements:

Mission: Join us in following Jesus Christ with bold acts of justice, peace, and love.

Vision: A world transformed, where all Creation knows God's life-changing love.

The team used the mission statement, and the priorities coming out of the listening sessions (Children, Families, Youth & Young Adults (aka First Third of Life); Communications; Congregational Collaboration; and Justice for People & Planet) to develop the following goals and initiatives that will move us towards those goals.

Mission Area: Join Us

Communications Goal One: Place communications and technology on an equal level to other areas of ministry and congregational life (such as finance and building and grounds) and offer opportunities for professional development in every congregation and faith community across the Diocese.

Initiative 1: Create a communicators group from people in the parishes who serve a communications role, as well as an advisory board of professionals in the field who can provide expertise and work on specific projects.

Initiative 2: Hire an intern to perform the day-to-day communications tasks.

IMPACT: All congregations will have someone with the skills to manage their communication needs, while the Director of Communications and Technology will have more time to be out in the field to increase capacity in congregations.

Communications Goal Two: Bring all RMNs, congregations and other associated faith communities to a base level of communications capacity and support them in building additional capacity, regardless of where they are in applying communication and technology tools.

Initiative 1: Identify or create a "Maslow's hierarchy" for communications tools and capacity.

Initiative 2: Audit existing websites and social media across the Diocese, and develop examples of informative, easy to navigate websites.

IMPACT: All congregations will have a higher level of competency in managing communications needs.

First Third of Life Goal One: Meet families and emerging adults where they are by offering new ways and places for them to serve.

Initiative 1: Endorse Cross Roads Camp as the diocesan base for the first third of life ministry to develop programming and partner with our local congregations.

Initiative 2: Create spaces and opportunities across the Diocese for people in the first third of life to share what is important to them.

Initiative 3: Develop recommendations to connect our emerging adults going off to college to chaplaincies and Episcopal congregations near them, and connect congregations to emerging adults who are attending college nearby.

IMPACT: Congregations will have a lot of support in connecting to younger generations in their communities, which will bring new vibrancy—and ministries—to the Diocese.

Mission Area: in following Jesus Christ

First Third of Life Goal Two: Elevate the importance of ministering to the first third of life age groups across the Diocese.

Initiative 1: Establish a Commission to cover ministry for the first third of life with sub teams to focus on specific life stages.

Initiative 2: Provide a forum for people in this ministry to meet regularly to connect.

Initiative 3: Hire a First Third of Life missionary.

Initiative 4: Provide training for people in this first third of life ministry.

IMPACT: Our congregations will grow in ministry (and possible numbers) by focusing their energies on ministry to these younger generations.

Congregational Collaboration Goal One: Build thriving faith communities, with emphasis on renewing and growing our ministries, by exploring new ways to do church—including collaboration on missional ministries and operations.

Initiative 1: Create a Commission for Congregational Life.

Initiative 2: Develop and train a team to guide and coach congregations and congregational collaborations.

Initiative 3: Identify or develop an assessment protocol for congregational/faith community vitality.

IMPACT: Every congregation will have access to direct support from diocesan leadership on growing in ministry and exploring new ways of being the Church.

Congregational Collaboration Goal Two: Build the capacity of lay leadership to engage in new Church models that allow flexibility and creativity in doing ministry, offering sacraments and managing operations.

Initiative 1: Provide both strong discipleship formation and leadership training opportunities to lay people across the Diocese.

Initiative 2: Develop 2-3 collaboration models and pilot 3-5 collaborations across the Diocese for a five-year period.

IMPACT: Lay leaders will have the skills and knowledge to manage congregational life with or without support of a priest, and congregations will save resources and energy by working with other congregations to manage many shared administrative and ministry tasks.

Mission Area: with bold acts of love, peace, and justice

Justice for People & Planet Goal One: Identify 2-3 key issues and engage in proactive advocacy to achieve systemic change in those areas.

Initiative 1: Create a Justice for People & Planet Commission (or expand the mission of the Commission for Justice & Peace) to act as an umbrella justice group.

Initiative 2: Develop a process for diocesan leadership to identify & approve large-scale issues to pursue.

IMPACT: The Diocese will be known as being active and engaged in gospel-driven justice issues across the region.

Justice for People & Planet Goal Two: Inform all congregations and its members of immediate opportunities and actions to take for social justice & creation care.

Initiative 1: Engage current diocesan bodies and committees to research & track issues and opportunities for action.

Initiative 2: Create systems to identify and communicate diocesan-wide actions & engage congregations.

IMPACT: The Diocese and individual congregations will build their reputations in engaging in critical issues of our time.

Justice for People & Planet Goal Three: All congregations commit to learn about & discern one justice or Creation care issue to act on for systemic change.

Initiative 1: Pursue formation and discernment for all congregations to understand our baptismal covenant's call.

Initiative 2: Have each congregation adopt a covenant expressing their commitment to work for systemic change in an area of justice and creation care.

Initiative 3: Develop support systems to assist congregations in sustaining justice and creation care work.

IMPACT: Congregations can use this engagement to evangelize and grow their congregations.

The Visioning Process

We started our work by engaging the services of a consultant, Katie Ong, who has done similar visioning work in the Episcopal Church, most recently with the Diocese of Missouri. Katie guided us through each phase, and gave us the tools to gather multiple voices from the local level and discern themes and priorities.

The first phase of the process included holding listening sessions across the Diocese. The visioning team contacted our 93 congregations and several target groups to schedule sessions during the fall of 2022. The visioning team collectively facilitated 71 listening sessions, with 66 congregations holding their own session—including a couple of sessions with congregations pairing up—while four other faith groups also participated. Another 10 congregations were represented in the two virtual listening sessions held in December 2022.

The issues discussed at the sessions included: treasures and assets; challenges, concerns, and opportunities; diocesan leadership support for our ministries and ways the Diocese might work together.

The main takeaways from those conversations included:

- Strong love for our faith communities—and the desire to make them thrive.
- The Covid-19 pandemic deeply impacted our congregations—and they are still feeling the impacts of it on attendance and engagement in community life.
- A desire to build deeper connections to neighbors and wider communities (particularly with younger generations) with guidance and support from diocesan leadership.
- A need for guidance on how to do things—such as dealing with building issues, meeting Church reporting requirements, and more.
- Requests for flexibility and creativity in figuring out how to support clergy, particularly in less resourced congregations.
- More opportunities to communicate and collaborate with each other through shared ministries and in other creative ways.
- Having a louder voice in our region on gospel-driven issues.

After reviewing and analyzing the many comments coming out of those sessions, the strategic visioning team proceeded by developing new mission and vision statements—based on the language coming out of the sessions—which the team would use to guide them in developing goals. A small sub team of the visioning team,

including the Director of Communications & Technology, met over the course of a few weeks to craft new statements, and the visioning team came to consensus on the following:

Mission: Join us in following Jesus Christ with bold acts of justice, peace, and love.

Join us - It's an invitation to all - how we interact in the world and a more active phrase for "we invite" or "we engage."

in following Jesus Christ - Indicates our Christian faith and how we work together/collaborate.

with bold acts of justice, peace, and love. - This is what we want to do together, and "with" implies that rather than only asking people to join what we are doing, we let those we invite to bring us into their own bold acts of justice, peace, and love.

Vision: A world transformed, where all Creation knows God's life-changing love.

A world transformed, - The world needs transformation from its current state.

where all Creation - We envision transformation for every living thing, not just humanity.

knows God's life-changing love. - this phrase implies that all Creation deeply understands and experiences God's love.

In addition to crafting the new mission and vision statements, the team also prioritized four areas that emerged from the listening sessions, which provided a focus for the goals in the new vision:

- **Children, Families, Youth and Young Adults**—evangelism and formation.
- **Congregational Collaboration**—particularly to strengthen our smaller congregations.
- **Communications and Technology**—explaining who we are to the outside world and connecting better internally.
- **Justice for People and Planet**—working together on gospel-driven justice issues.

For the next phase of the visioning process, the group split up into four working teams and invited more people across the Diocese to join them and create some goals and initiatives. The list of working team members can be found in [Appendix D](#).

These four working teams spent the next eight to nine weeks meeting weekly or bi-weekly (or some combination thereof) to review the remarks coming out of the listening sessions, develop goal language, and share ideas about how to reach those goals. As they continued to meet, the teams refined their ideas into initiatives and included cost estimates, assignments, and next steps. After reviewing the reports from the working teams, the visioning team pulled together the following recommendations. This document acts as a roadmap for diocesan leadership to move forward with implementing these ideas.

The Strategic Vision

Mission Area: Join Us

This area includes our invitation to our neighbors and wider communities, explaining who we are as the Episcopal Church, as well as how we evangelize. We strive to build relationships with and learn from those people around us. We do the work of healing and reconciliation together with our neighbors.

Goal One for Communications: Place communications and technology on an equal level to other areas of ministry and congregational life (such as finance and building and grounds) and offer opportunities for professional development in every congregation and faith community across the Diocese.

Initiative 1	Timeline	Assignment	Metric
<p>Create a communicators group of people that serve a communications role in their congregation (such as parish administrators) that meets regularly (and through a social media platform) to discuss common issues and share content and resources. In addition, create an advisory board of professionals in the field who can provide expertise on particular issues and work on specific projects, as needed.</p>	<p>Year One</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current "Geeks for God" team <p>To build membership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Vision's Communications & Technology working team members <p>Staff Liaison:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director of Communications & Technology 	<p><u>Implementation:</u> Questionnaires are returned and the list of communicators is set up and receiving communications and we have formed the Advisory group.</p> <p><u>Effectiveness:</u> 1. Having at least one communications contact in every parish and can receive the latest info 2. Having a group that wants to learn more</p>
<p>Why is this important?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This serves as both a communications support team as well as an advisory board for the diocesan communications staff It is similar to the current Stewardship group and Finance Directors group. This body will build the communications infrastructure across the Diocese. There will probably be overlap between communicators and advisory professionals, and this process will evolve. We need to market and support the Learning Center on the diocesan website (https://dioceseofnewark.org/learning-center) 			

Initiative 2	Timeline	Assignment	Metric
<p>Hire an intern to perform the day-to-day communications tasks, such as setting up the newsletters, updating the website, and handling social media posting.</p>	<p>Year One</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Diocesan Council ● Bishop ● Canon to the Ordinary ● Director of Communications & Technology 	<p><u>Implementation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hired and integrated into staff ● Successfully trained <p><u>Effectiveness:</u> Director of C&T is freed up to handle these strategic initiatives and more tasks are getting done and done better.</p>
<p>Why is this important?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Currently the Director of Communications & Technology is doing all of the work, including the more menial tasks. ● Having someone else to handle these tasks will free the Director up to focus on these more strategic efforts, like these new online gatherings (see other initiatives) to equip the congregations, some of whom will need a lot of help. ● Communication and technology needs are growing for our congregations and other faith communities, and they need more support in implementing strategies. ● The Director needs back up support in managing online gatherings and technology for events. 			

Goal Two for Communications: Bring all RMNs, congregations and other associated faith communities to a base level of communications capacity and support them in building additional capacity, regardless of where they are in applying communication and technology tools.

Initiative 1	Timeline	Assignment	Metric
Identify or create a "Maslow's hierarchy" for communications tools and capacity.	Year One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diocesan Communicators group Diocesan Communications Advisory Group <p>Staff Liaison:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director of Communications & Technology 	<p><u>Implementation:</u> Forming a hierarchy tool to work with.</p> <p><u>Effectiveness:</u> Being ready to move to <i>Initiative 2</i>.</p>

Why is this important?

- Congregations need basic communications capacity to let the public know about them.
- They need support and guidance in creating and using communication tools.
- Congregations are not aware of the communication tools that are already available to them.

Initiative 2	Timeline	Assignment	Metric
Audit existing websites and social media across the Diocese, according to the guidelines developed in Initiative 1, and develop examples of informative, easy to navigate websites.	Year Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diocesan Communicators group Communications Audit task force (to serve for a limited time) <p>Staff Liaison:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director of Communications & Technology 	<p><u>Implementation:</u> Finishing the audit for all congregations</p> <p><u>Effectiveness:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Making use of the information in the implementation of our other initiatives. 2. Noting where congregations are and seeing them move up a rung.

Why is this important?

- Websites need work, as do social media.
- We need to figure out where people are and get them to a minimum website and FB or other social media presence.

Goal One for First Third of Life: Meet families and emerging adults where they are by offering new ways and places for them to serve.

Initiative 1	Timeline	Assignment	Metric
Endorse Cross Roads Camp as the diocesan base for the first third of life ministry to develop programming and partner with our local congregations and diocesan leadership.	Year One	<p>For program development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New 1st Third of Life Commission (see Goal 2: Initiative 1) <p>For implementing programming:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross Roads ED/staff • Congregational lay/clergy staff and volunteers involved in these ministries <p>For communications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RMN conveners • Diocesan Communicators group 	<p><u>Implementation:</u> Cross Roads is advertised across the Diocese, including video testimonials and a master calendar which integrates Diocesan and Cross Roads initiatives.</p> <p><u>Effectiveness:</u> Greater engagement in Cross Roads programs and commensurate increase in financial support.</p>

Why is this Initiative Important?

- Cross Roads—in partnership with diocesan leadership—is in many ways an answer to what we want to do.
- It is an existing resource with developed programs (i.e., year-round retreats, camps) and trained staff who have experience working with youth, young adults, and adults.
- The Cross Roads Executive Director already has a long standing, positive relationship with diocesan leadership as well as clergy, lay leaders, and youth in our parishes.
- Cross Roads has the space to support programs and events for all ages.
- The diocesan leadership can offer direction and support through one central entity, rather than assuming all congregations can design and manage their own programming.
- This is the focus of Cross Roads Camp's programs - we don't need to reinvent the wheel.
- Although not all congregations have the funds to access the programs, Cross Roads can share best practices, offer support.
- We can create affordable options for programs.
- Due to the distance, we can develop programs for the Regional Ministry Networks, so that more congregations can participate.
- Through the RMNs, congregations can get the most up-to-date information on formation opportunities.

Initiative 2	Timeline	Assignment	Metric
<p>Create spaces and opportunities across the Diocese for people in the first third of life to share what is important to them and how the Diocese might support them.</p>	<p>Year One</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● New 1st Third of Life Commission ● RMN conveners - to host conversations ● Clergy & lay leaders - to identify whom to invite <p>Staff Liaisons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● New 1st Third of Life Missioner ● Cross Roads staff 	<p><u>Implementation:</u> Holding separate Listening Sessions for each group identified.</p> <p><u>Effectiveness:</u> Integrating that feedback into the Commission's structure and goals.</p>

Why is this Initiative Important?

- What we've been doing in the past is not connecting with this group today—things have changed with the pandemic and many other changes and opportunities that they have now on Sunday mornings.
- The old church model may not be effective in connecting to them and with other organizations.
 - Other groups like the Scouts have had similar issues and have made changes, and we can learn from them.
- It is also a way to address spirituality and mental health concerns/needs.
- We need to focus on creating safe spaces to gather and do things together (like sports) rather than worship or religious traditions.
- It gives any person in this group a platform to be heard and bring issues to light to address/resolve.
- We need to address the unique needs of this group in each congregation and build on existing ministries.
- We can still acknowledge the traditions but will evolve to meet people where they are and make it relevant.
- It provides opportunities to strengthen and build relationships between congregations, the RMNs and diocesan leadership to emphasize that we are one Church in many locations.
- It is a vehicle to identify emerging leaders.

Initiative 3	Timeline	Assignment	Metric
<p>Develop recommendations for every congregation to use that will connect our emerging adults going off to college to chaplaincies and Episcopal congregations near them, as well as allow congregations to connect to emerging adults who are attending nearby colleges and universities.</p>	<p>Year Two</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● New Diocesan 1st Third of Life Commission: Subteam on young adults ● Clergy and lay people with a passion for YA ministry ● College students from the Diocese <p>Staff Liaisons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Diocesan 1st Third of Life Missioner ● Cross Roads staff - who work with college students 	<p><u>Implementation:</u> Recommendations for how to engage with spiritual communities while in college are published and accessible to families across the Diocese.</p> <p><u>Effectiveness:</u> Our emerging adults in college are still engaged in the Church, and several congregations are actively serving emerging adults.</p>

Why is this Initiative Important?

- A gap exists when children go off to college - once they stop going to church with parents, they stop going to church.
- There is still a connection to the church during these important years of development, to help them grow.
- We can ease this transition into adulthood by offering continuing support.
- We should also have places to talk about discernment for ordination.
- This is another way, beyond accessing mental health services, to support our youth and emerging adults and give them an outlet for their spiritual and mental health.
- It also helps the parents, grandparents, other family members and lets them know that the Church is supporting them, as well.
- Offers another safe space to talk without judgment.
- We can still stay connected to our young people who go off to live, work or study somewhere else.
- Some congregations are already doing this work and can share best practices and connect to each other.

Mission Area: in following Jesus Christ

Formation as Christians and working together as one Church in many locations fall into this area. In building the future, we focus on connecting to and forming people in the first third of life, who are too often absent from our faith communities.

Goal Two for First Third of Life: Elevate the importance of ministering to the first third of life age groups across the Diocese.

Initiative 1	Timeline	Assignment	Metric
<p>Establish a Commission to cover ministry for the first third of life with sub teams to focus on specific life stages that include key voices representing each demographic.</p>	<p>Year One</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bishop • Current Diocesan Youth Commission 	<p><u>Implementation:</u> The new commission is up and running by early 2024.</p> <p><u>Effectiveness:</u> The Commission has created their charter and are moving forward by mid-2024 with their priorities.</p>
<p>Why is this Initiative Important?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These initiatives have a wider mission than youth, and we need diocesan leadership bodies that can oversee and evaluate these initiatives which cover such a diverse demographic. • The infrastructure, such as Diocesan Youth Commission, already exists. • Each congregation has unique needs, and we can have wider representation from more congregations. • It's for both congregational and RMN support. 			

Initiative 2	Timeline	Assignment	Metric
<p>Provide a forum for people in this ministry to meet regularly to connect with others, share ideas, programs, and other resources, and offer mutual support.</p>	<p>Year One</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Diocesan 1st Third of Life Commission ● Diocesan Communicators group <p>To identify who should be included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● RMN conveners ● Clergy, lay staff and volunteers involved in this ministry <p>Staff Liaisons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cross Roads ED and staff 	<p><u>Implementation:</u> Each sub team of the Commission has one forum scheduled for reaching out across the Diocese.</p> <p><u>Effectiveness:</u> Active involvement of lay leaders who report feeling supported and connected across the Diocese.</p>

Why is this Initiative Important?

- Allows more “professional development” of volunteers.
- Increases lay leaders who are knowledgeable about formation and ministry to these groups.
- Grows the next group of lay leaders in these ministries.
- Social Media is already out there and used across congregations.
- Provides a critical resource for people who are doing this ministry.
- Offers cost savings to our congregations by sharing resources with each other.
- Creates a shared calendar of formation activities across the Diocese.
- Connects to the Communications & Technology initiatives.

Initiative 3	Timeline	Assignment	Metric
<p>Hire a First Third of Life missionary to work with the new Commission, Cross Roads, RMNs and individual congregations/ faith communities on building relationships with these age groups.</p>	<p>Year Three</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Diocesan Council - budget ● Bishop and Canon to the Ordinary - hiring ● 1st Third of Life Commission ● Search Committee with representation from Cross Roads, Christian Formation ministry, and youth 	<p><u>Implementation:</u> The staff member is hired and implementing these initiatives.</p> <p><u>Effectiveness:</u> The staff person is on board and integrated into the life of the Diocese.</p>

Why is this Initiative Important?

- This work is beyond the scope for volunteers; it is a full-time position.
- A missionary can devote time to provide opportunities for relationship building and act as the bridge to work towards strengthening communities.
- Diocesan staffing should reflect the priorities of the Diocese—which have emerged from voices in the local congregations.
- There should be one point person on staff for these ministries and issues.
- It helps to strengthen the relationship between parishes and diocesan leadership, supporting the concept that we are one church.

Initiative 4	Timeline	Assignment	Metric
Provide training (either in-house or external) for people in the Diocese who minister with people in the first third of life.	Year Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st Third of Life Commission and sub teams <p>Staff Liaisons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st Third of Life Missioner • Cross Roads ED and staff 	<p><u>Implementation:</u> Recommended and required training for formation leaders identified.</p> <p><u>Effectiveness:</u> A training program implemented and offered to the entire Diocese by the end of 2024.</p>

Why is this Initiative Important?

- Offers more opportunities for professional development of our formation leaders and volunteers.
- Develops standards for our formation programs.
- Helps diocesan leadership to support clergy and lay staff and volunteers as their communities evolve and change.
- Builds a resource library that supports the training and ongoing programming.

Goal One for Congregational Collaboration: Build thriving faith communities, with emphasis on renewing and growing our ministries, by exploring new ways to do church—including collaboration on missional ministries and operations.

Initiative 1	Timeline	Assignment	Metric
Create a Commission for Congregational Life that will work in conjunction with the Canon for Congregational Life to implement the initiatives under this area.	Year One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bishop - to appoint co-chairs Canon for Congregational Life 	<p><u>Implementation:</u> A new commission is meeting and addressing these initiatives.</p> <p><u>Effectiveness:</u> Initiatives are launched and congregations are receiving the guidance they need to thrive.</p>

Why is this important?

- There is no diocesan leadership body that specifically focuses on collaboration and congregational development.
- The Canon for Congregational Life needs more support and an advisory body to develop new ideas and implement initiatives.
- There are a number of people in the Diocese who have the skill set and experience in working with congregations on ministry development and improvement.

Initiative 2	Timeline	Assignment	Metric
Develop and train a team to guide and coach congregations and congregational collaborations, under the direction of the of the Canon for Congregational Life.	Year One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commission for Congregational Life People who have training and done this work with congregations in the past <p>Staff Liaison:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canon for Congregational Life 	<p><u>Implementation:</u> Training of an initial cohort of 5-10 coaches</p> <p><u>Effectiveness:</u> Expansion into multiple teams that are actively working with congregations and collaborations that are growing in ministry.</p>

Why is this important?

- Congregations need continual guidance and access to information to make informed decisions about renewal.
- Many congregations have little knowledge about collaboration models.
- Congregations need more options for staying together as a community if they let go of their buildings.
- We need to build the capacity of lay and clergy leaders to do this work—and provide them ongoing support.
- Should be done in conjunction with *Initiative 1*.

Initiative 3	Timeline	Assignment	Metric
<p>Identify or develop an assessment protocol for congregational/faith community vitality, assess and be in ongoing conversation with at least 70 percent of the congregations in the next five years.</p>	<p>Year Two</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission for Congregational Life • Congregational Assessment teams (limited scope and time commitment) <p>Communication and recruitment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RMN conveners <p>Staff Liaison:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canon for Congregational Life 	<p><u>Implementation:</u> We have developed an assessment tool and are actively using it with congregations.</p> <p><u>Effectiveness:</u> We have a regular cycle of assessment and ongoing conversations with each congregation regarding their health and vitality.</p>

Why is this important?

- Many congregational leaders do not understand that they are facing decline.
- Lay leaders are burned out, because they have not been given the tools to do what they've been invited to do.
- We need to be more proactive in working with congregations before they experience serious decline.
- Congregations need objective and unbiased assessments of their function and vitality, which an outside observer can provide.
- We need to be in conversation with congregations early and let them know that there are many options.
- Financial information does not always denote vitality; there are other factors to consider.
- We have now developed seven areas of a functional congregation that show what it means to be functioning.
- The assessment is both quantitative and narrative.
- There is a link between the assessment protocol and the conversations that follow.
- This assessment needs to be done annually.
- We need a better way to journey with our congregations that decide they are ready to sunset their ministry together—especially to help them figure out what is next for their members.

Goal Two for Congregational Collaboration: Build the capacity of lay leadership to engage in new Church models that allow flexibility and creativity in doing ministry, offering sacraments and managing operations.

Initiative 1	Timeline	Assignment	Metric
Provide both strong discipleship formation and leadership training opportunities to lay people across the Diocese.	Year Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commission for Congregational Life Commission on Ministry <p>Recruitment for training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RMN conveners Congregational leaders <p>Staff Liaison:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canon for Congregational Life 	<p><u>Implementation:</u> We have a formation program and a leadership training program available to all congregations and an initial group enrolled and taking the training.</p> <p><u>Effectiveness:</u> Every congregation or congregational collaboration has a team who has been trained and is implementing the learned practices.</p>

Why is this important?

- We are all called to be ministers in the Church, and because the Episcopal Church is rapidly changing, now is the time to step into that role in a serious way.
- For people to be effective leaders in the church, they need to be formed as disciples; the efforts must be integrated.
- We need to integrate our faith into all aspects of our lives.
- The more people that are trained for leadership opportunities, and have opportunity for reflection and growth, they will experience less burnout.
- It is critical at this point to build strong lay leadership in our congregations—regardless of the size.
- As there are few clergy available across the Church, we need to build the capacity of lay leaders.
- Many lay people do not currently have the skill set to develop and grow ministries.

Initiative 2	Timeline	Assignment	Metric
Develop 2-3 collaboration models and pilot 3-5 collaborations across the Diocese for a five-year period.	Year Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Commission for Congregational Life <p>To communicate and encourage involvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● RMN conveners <p>Staff Liaison:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Canon for Congregational Life 	<p><u>Implementation:</u> We have implemented all three models in 3-5 congregational collaborations.</p> <p><u>Effectiveness:</u> We have congregational collaborations that are meeting and exceeding our assessment of congregational vitality from Goal One's Initiative 3.</p>

Why is this important?

- New models of collaboration are working in other dioceses and denominations.
- We need to experiment with what models work in our diocese.
- We can examine what has worked in the Diocese already and bring in what is working in other areas of the Church—including within other denominations.
- Models to consider:
 - Two or more congregations sharing a FT priest and deacon [and possibly other staff].
 - A larger congregation funds a PT priest that they share with a smaller congregation.
 - Two or more congregations sharing a Vestry, Treasurer, Music Director, Formation Director, Parish Administrator, Bookkeeper, and/or Sexton, etc.
 - Mission-based ministry collaboration - working together on a shared vision: housing for vulnerable groups (unhoused, teenage mothers, LGBTQIA+, youth), feeding people, eradicating medical debt, etc.

Mission Area: with bolds acts of love, peace, and justice

Finally, this area reflects what we do together as the Church: we act out in the world. People will know us for what we do—and this work is essential to creating the transformation in the world that we seek. We also believe that this is an important way to build the Church.

Goal One for Justice for People & Planet: Identify 2-3 key issues and engage in proactive advocacy to achieve systemic change in those areas.

Initiative 1	Timeline	Assignment	Metric
Create a Justice for People & Planet Commission (or expand the mission of the Commission for Justice & Peace) to act as the umbrella group that will communicate efforts of the various diocesan justice groups and implement the initiatives in this priority area.	Year One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bishop - to appoint co-chairs • Commission for Justice & Peace 	<p><u>Implementation:</u> A new commission is meeting and addressing these initiatives.</p> <p><u>Effectiveness:</u> Initiatives are launched and congregations are receiving guidance.</p>
<p>Why is this important?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need better communications between the various justice-oriented groups in the Diocese. • We need a system to communicate to the wider Diocese about the activities of these groups. • The Commission for Justice & Peace covers multiple justice-oriented issues already and could help with communications. 			

Initiative 2	Timeline	Assignment	Metric
Develop a process for diocesan leadership to identify & approve large-scale issues to pursue.	Year One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Justice for People & Planet Commission 	<p><u>Implementation:</u> We are active as a diocese on at least two issues.</p> <p><u>Effectiveness:</u> All will know what we stand for and believe.</p>

Why is this important?

- Listening Sessions gave us details on the issues of interest.
- The Peace & Justice Commission has also identified issues and ways to address them.
- We can pull our collective energies and gifts together to enact lasting change.
- Systemic change will outlast us.
- There is no Creation Care focused body currently and there may be other areas to consider.

Goal Two for Justice for People & Planet: Inform all congregations and its members of immediate opportunities and actions to take for social justice & creation care.

Initiative 1	Timeline	Assignment	Metric
Engage current diocesan bodies and committees to research & track issues and opportunities for action.	Year One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Justice for People & Planet Commission ● Commission for Justice & Peace - as they have experience. ● All Justice ministries - to identify opportunities ● Advocates for other issues. 	<p><u>Implementation:</u> All justice groups are engaged in tracking issues and creating actions.</p> <p><u>Effectiveness:</u> We develop and share resources and information, regularly updated, with members of the Diocese.</p>

Why is this important?

- This is the work that the Commission for Justice & Peace is already doing
- Other diocesan groups have knowledge of a wide variety of issues.
- We have many groups already involved in specific justice issues and they need more visibility across the Diocese:
 - Commission for Justice & Peace
 - Anti-Racism Commission
 - Racial History Committee
 - Racial Justice & Healing Commission
 - Anti-Sexism Task Force
 - Commission on Hispanic/Latino Ministry
 - Prison Ministry of EDN
 - UBE, Newark Chapter
 - The Oasis (LGBTQ+ Ministry)

Initiative 2	Timeline	Assignment	Metric
Create a system to identify and communicate diocesan-wide actions and priorities to pursue in a timely manner & engage congregations in taking action.	Year Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Justice for People & Planet Commission Diocesan Communicators group 	<p><u>Implementation:</u> A communication system is up and running.</p> <p><u>Effectiveness:</u> Congregations have access to a database for tracking involvement, resource lists, and ongoing trends and information.</p>

Why is this important?

- We need a unified system for getting information out across the Diocese, rather than duplicating efforts.
- We can link people across congregations who are passionate about and engaged in similar issues.
- Builds the sense that we are One Church in many locations.

Goal Three for Justice for People & Planet: Have all congregations commit to learn about & discern one justice or Creation care issue to act on for systemic change.

Initiative 1	Timeline	Assignment	Metric
Pursue formation and discernment for all congregations to understand our baptismal covenant's call to act for love, peace & justice for people & planet.	Year Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Justice for People & Planet Commission 	<p><u>Implementation:</u> All congregations have been contacted and are being supported in launching this work.</p> <p><u>Effectiveness:</u> All congregations are pursuing formation & discernment.</p>

Why is this important?

- It shows commitment to justice across the Diocese.
- Affirms and helps us to live into our baptismal vow
- All congregations should be engaged in this work.

Initiative 2	Timeline	Assignment	Metric
Have each congregation adopt a covenant expressing their commitment to work for systemic change in the areas of justice and creation care that the entire Diocese is supporting—or in another area of their choosing.	Year Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Justice for People & Planet Commission <p>To communicate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RMN Conveners Congregational leadership 	<p><u>Implementation:</u> Each congregation has been given the information and is being supported in these conversations.</p> <p><u>Effectiveness:</u> Each congregation adopts its own covenant.</p>
<p>Why is this important?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We need visible signs of our commitment to justice for all people and our planet. It will give us more opportunities to engage people beyond the church—as a demonstration that we are doing this work. 			

Initiative 3	Timeline	Assignment	Metric
Develop support systems (that also build momentum & accountability into place) to assist congregations in sustaining justice and creation care work.	Year Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Justice for People & Planet Commission Commission for Congregational Life (coordination) 	<p><u>Implementation:</u> A support system is up and running</p> <p><u>Effectiveness:</u> Congregations are actively using it.</p>
<p>Why is this important?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diocesan leadership needs to support congregations in this work. It won't happen unless there is consciousness raising effort and support to make this happen. We can ensure that ministry continues beyond the current crop of Episcopalians that is doing this work—it's systems planning. Congregations do not need to reinvent anything, we can share ideas and resources. 			

Appendices:

- A. Cost summary - page 25
- B. Timeline for Implementation - page 27
- C. Existing diocesan groups and new groups to form for implementation - Page 38
- D. Strategic Visioning Team & Working Team members - Page 39

Appendix A: Cost Summary

The costs per year listed below reflect the amount of funds needed in each year to implement the initiatives. Some of the costs will be recurring, particularly for funding staff positions, but others are a one time cost, marked with an asterisk in the Timeline section. Costs are fully explained under each initiative in [Appendix B: Timeline for Implementation](#).

Year One	Item	Cost
One-time	First Third of Life Goal One, Initiative 2 - Hospitality costs	\$ 5,000
	Congregational Collaboration Goal One, Initiative 2 - training for coaches	\$ 50,000
<i>One-time costs Subtotal</i>		\$ 55,000
Recurring	Communications Goal One, Initiative 2 - Communications intern	\$ 30,000
	First Third of Life Goal Two, Initiative 2 - Social media group costs	\$ 2,000
<i>Recurring costs Subtotal</i>		\$ 32,000
TOTAL Year One		\$ 87,000

Year Two	Item	Cost
One-time		
<i>One-time costs Subtotal</i>		\$ 0
Recurring	Comm. Goal One, Initiative 2 - Communications intern - 3.5% COLA	\$ 31,500
	First Third of Life Goal Two, Initiative 2 - Social media group costs	\$ 2,000
	Cong. Collaboration Goal One, Initiative 3 - for assessment team travel	\$ 2,000
	Cong. Collaboration Goal Two, Initiative 1 - training and other support	\$ 10,000
<i>Recurring costs Subtotal</i>		\$ 45,500
TOTAL Year Two		\$ 45,500

Year Three	Item	Cost
One-time	First Third of Life Goal One, Initiative One - Cross Roads improvements	\$ 50,000
<i>One-time costs Subtotal</i>		\$ 50,000
Recurring	Comm. Goal One, Initiative 2 - Communications intern - 3.5% COLA	\$ 32,610
	First Third of Life Goal Two, Initiative 2 - Social media group costs	\$ 2,000
	First Third of Life Goal Two, Initiative 3 - CFY & YA Missioner (if clergy)	\$125,000
	Cong. Collaboration Goal One, Initiative 3 - assessment team travel	\$ 2,000
	Cong. Collaboration Goal Two, Initiative 1 - training and other support	\$ 10,000
<i>Recurring costs Subtotal</i>		\$171,610
TOTAL Year Three		\$221,610

Appendix B: Timeline for Implementation

ED Newark Strategic Vision Implementation Timeline - 2024 - 2026	Year One - 2024	Year Two - 2025	Year Three - 2026
Communications Goal One - Initiative 1: Communicators Group			
Communications Goal One - Initiative 2: Hire a communications intern			
Communications Goal Two - Initiative 1: Identify or create a "Maslow's hierarchy"			
1st ToL Goal One - Initiative 1: Endorse Cross Roads Camp for first third of life ministry			
1st ToL Goal One - Initiative 2: Create spaces and opportunities for people in 1st third of life			
1st ToL Goal Two - Initiative 1: Establish a C,F, Y & YA Commission			
1st ToL Goal Two - Initiative 2: Provide a regular forum for people in this ministry			
Congregational Collaboration Goal One - Initiative 1: Create Commission for Congregational Life			
Congregational Collaboration Goal One - Initiative 2: Develop and train coaches			
Justice for People & Planet Goal One - Initiative 1: Create a Justice for P & P Commission			
Justice for People & Planet Goal One - Initiative 2: Develop a process to pursue issues			
Justice for People & Planet Goal Two - Initiative 1: Research & track issues for action			
Communications Goal One - Initiative 2: Audit existing websites and social media			
1st ToL Goal One - Initiative 3: Develop recommendations to connect adults going off to college			
Congregational Collaboration Goal One - Initiative 3: Identify assessment protocol for vitality			
Congregational Collaboration Goal Two - Initiative 1: Provide formation & training to lay people			
Justice for People & Planet Goal Two - Initiative 2: Create system to identify diocesan-wide actions			
Justice for People & Planet Goal Three - Initiative 1: Pursue formation for all congregations			
1st ToL Goal Two - Initiative 3: Hire a First Third of Life missionary			
1st ToL Goal Two - Initiative 4: Provide training for people in this ministry			
Congregational Collaboration Goal Two - Initiative 2: Develop 2-3 collaboration models to pilot			
Justice for People & Planet Goal Three - Initiative 2: Have each congregation adopt a covenant			
Justice for People & Planet Goal Three - Initiative 3: Develop support systems for congregations			

YEAR ONE:

- **Communications Goal One - Initiative 1:** Create a communicators group of people that serve a communications role in their congregation (such as parish administrators) that meets regularly (and through a social media platform) to discuss common issues and share content and resources. In addition, create an advisory board of professionals in the field who can provide expertise on particular issues and work on specific projects, as needed.
 - **Cost:** \$0 - Time cost
 - **Assignment:** current "Geeks for God" team; Communications & Technology working team members (to build membership)
 - **Next Steps:**
 - Develop a questionnaire to find out who is handling the communications needs in every congregation and faith community.
 - Ex: Do you have a communication person (FT, PT or volunteer)?
 - How often do you use social media or update websites?
 - Find out what members of the Diocese are doing communication and technology work professionally.
 - Hire the Communications Specialist.
 - Set up a Diocesan Communicators email list.
 - **Resources:**
 - Episcopal Diocese of Maryland - [Communicators group](#)
 - [join the communicators group questionnaire](#)

- **Communications Goal One - Initiative 2:** Hire an intern to perform the day-to-day communications tasks, such as setting up the newsletters, updating the website, and handling social media posting.
 - **Cost:** \$30,000 starting in 2024 (30 hours a week at \$20/hour)
 - **Assignment:** Diocesan Council; Bishop; Canon to the Ordinary; Director of Communications & Technology
 - **Next Steps:**
 - Develop a [job description](#)
 - Share with Visioning Team
 - Share with Bishop and Canons, then governing bodies
 - Post the job opening and interview candidates
 - **Resources:**
 - [Episcopal Communicators Network](#)

- **Communications Goal Two - Initiative 1:** Identify or create a “Maslow’s hierarchy” for communications tools and capacity.
 - **Cost:** \$0 - Time cost
 - **Assignment:** New Diocesan Communicators group; New Diocesan Communications Advisory Group
 - **Next Steps:**
 - Research what other dioceses and other denominations have done related to basic communications tools for churches.
 - Prepare a resource list with examples of good websites and social media accounts—especially those from less resourced congregations.
 - Develop a checklist of capacity for each tier.
 - **Resources:**
 - [Episcopal Communicators Polly Bond Award winners](#) - 2023
 - Example of local congregational news shared on local media outlets: Christ Church, Hackensack - Spring 2024 news media ([The Voice - May 17th](#))
 - ADA Accessibility
 - ADA.gov - [Guidance on Web Accessibility](#) - March 2022

- **First Third of Life Goal One - Initiative 1:** Endorse Cross Roads Camp as the diocesan base for the first third of life ministry to develop programming and partner with our local congregations and diocesan leadership.
 - **Cost:** \$50,000* capital improvement funding in Year 3 (and potentially greater annual investment).
 - **Assignment:**
 - For program development: New Commission
 - For implementing programming: Cross Roads ED/staff and congregational lay/clergy staff and volunteers involved in these ministries
 - For communications: RMN conveners & Diocesan Communicators group
 - **Next Steps:**
 - Brainstorm / come up with a visibility / marketing initiative that is effective in sharing information about the Cross Roads currently existing ministry opportunities.

- Have a focused initiative to get elementary and middle school aged children to camp, and take advantage of the studies which cite that upper elementary aged children form life-long faith habits.
 - Develop and market opportunities for older youth and emerging adults.
 - Develop direct communication between Cross Roads and the Diocesan leadership structure (i.e. diocesan staff and various leadership councils).
 - Begin conversations on how Cross Roads and diocesan groups share resources.
- **First Third of Life Goal One - Initiative 2:** Create spaces and opportunities across the Diocese for people in the first third of life to share what is important to them and how the Diocese might support them.
 - **Cost:** \$5,000* - Hospitality and advertising costs
 - **Assignment:**
 - New First Third of Life Commission
 - RMN conveners - to host conversations
 - Clergy & lay leaders - to identify whom to invite
 - **Next Steps:**
 - Meet with RMNs conveners about working with their congregations on inviting people to these conversations.
 - Identify people to invite (former youth members, children and grandchildren of current or former members, pre-school families, etc.)
 - Find the information from the Fall 2022 listening sessions and follow up regarding what the Diocese wanted to do in youth ministry in 2017 or 2018.
 - Identify how many separate Listening Sessions we want to have.
 - Develop questions to ask them.
 - Schedule events in each RMN and work with RMNs and congregations to send out invitations and market the events.
 - Review findings of these listening sessions with Diocesan Commission to inform structure, goals, and event planning.
 - Offer regular service and worship opportunities for those in the first third of life at the diocesan, RMN, and congregational level based on interests and needs expressed during these listening sessions.
 - **Resources:**
- **First Third of Life Goal Two - Initiative 1:** Establish a Commission to cover ministry for the first third of life with sub teams to focus on specific life stages that include key voices representing each demographic.
 - **Cost:** \$0 - time cost
 - **Assignment:** Bishop and Canons; current Diocesan Youth Commission
 - **Next Steps:**
 - Determine the mission and name the Commission.
 - Integrate the current Diocesan Youth Commission into this new one.
 - Create a job description for the umbrella commission and its sub teams
 - Identify and invite candidates that represent the diversity of the Diocese.
 - Send out an open invitation to people to be interviewed.
 - Appoint members to serve.
 - Schedule regular meetings for the commission and develop a charter.

- Prepare a presentation for November 2024 Diocesan Convention on progress.
 - Issues to address:
 - The first third of life has many tiers to be considered individually and collectively. As this work unfolds, each tier should be appropriately addressed.
- **First Third of Life Goal Two - Initiative 2:** Provide a forum for people in this ministry to meet regularly to connect with others, share ideas, programs, and other resources, and offer mutual support.
 - **Cost:** \$2,000 - Social media group membership costs
 - **Assignment:**
 - New Diocesan First Third of Life Commission
 - Diocesan Communicators group
 - To identify who should be included RMN conveners:
 - RMN conveners
 - clergy
 - staff and volunteers involved in this ministry
 - **Next Steps:**
 - Survey youth and formation leaders about what resources they already use to stay connected and what support they'd find helpful at the diocesan level.
 - Meet with diocesan communications team to learn about tools that are available.
 - Decide on the format each sub team of the Commission will use to connect with the diocese on a regular basis (in-person meetings, virtual meetings, social media group, etc).
 - Work with RMNs to identify those who should be invited to participate.
 - Recruit leaders for each group.
 - Schedule regular meetings/implement social media groups.
 - Develop an annual event (at Cross Roads or elsewhere) to recognize people in this line of ministry.
 - Issues to address:
 - Community of St. John the Baptist (especially Oblates) to include in the sub teams
- **Congregational Collaboration Goal One - Initiative 1:** Create a Commission for Congregational Life that will work in conjunction with the Canon for Congregation Life to implement the initiatives under this area.
 - **Cost:** \$0 - time cost
 - **Assignment:** Bishop - to appoint co-chairs; Canon for Congregational Life
 - **Next Steps:**
 - Identify the people in the Diocese who have experience in this ministry.
 - Recruit co-chairs.
 - Develop a mission for the new commission and a job description for members.
 - Recruit and appoint additional members.
 - Schedule initial meeting to review mission and the initiatives under this area (Congregational Collaboration).

- Schedule regular meetings to check progress of implementation and adjust the plans as necessary.
 - Resources:
 - TBD
- **Congregational Collaboration Goal One - Initiative 2:** Develop and train a team to guide and coach congregations and congregational collaborations, under the direction of the Canon for Congregational Life.
 - **Cost:** \$50,000* - This would fund training for 10-15 people, an initial cohort of coaches. Training would last a full academic year with classes 1 day/month and readings/exercises between classes.
 - **Assignment:**
 - Commission for Congregational Life
 - People who have training and done this work with congregations in the past
 - **Next Steps:**
 - Determine if some members of the Commission for Congregational Life - can be a part of this first cohort of trainers.
 - Determine whether the diocesan School for Ministry can provide this training or Identify a training entity that will equip the coaching teams with the skills to do this work.
 - Identify collaboration models, best practices and resources that coaches can share with congregations, so that people are not reinventing the wheel.
 - Identify congregations in each RMN that would benefit from coaching for collaboration and hold initial meetings with them.
 - Pick congregations or collaborating congregations [up to one in each RMN, depending on the number of coaches in the initial cohort] for the pilot phase and match coaches to each one.
 - Resources:
- **Justice for People & Planet Goal One - Initiative 1:** Create a Justice for People & Planet Commission (or expand the mission of the Commission for Justice & Peace) to act as the umbrella group that will coordinate efforts of the various diocesan justice groups and implement the initiatives in this priority area.
 - **Cost:** \$0 - time cost
 - **Assignment:** Bishop - to appoint co-chairs; Commission for Justice & Peace
 - **Next Steps:**
 - Meet with the Commission for Justice and Peace to determine if they are willing to expand their mission to play a coordination role.
 - Meet with all of the other justice groups to learn what they are doing and what support they need.
 - If forming a new commission, appoint co-chairs
 - Identify people in each justice group to sit on the new or expanded commission.
 - Consider asking some of the groups to meet together then go into Zoom breakout rooms to do the work of their respective justice groups.
 - Work with Diocesan Communicators group to set up a forum for meetings.

- **Justice for People & Planet Goal One - Initiative 2:** Develop a process for the Diocesan leadership to identify & approve large-scale issues to pursue
 - **Cost:** \$0 - time cost
 - **Assignment:** Justice for People & Planet Commission
 - **Next Steps:**
 - Define Creation Care for a common understanding across the Diocese.
 - Look at the issues from the Listening Sessions and coming out of the Peace & Justice Commission's work.
 - Determine what role the RMNs can play.
 - Create a means for broad-scale participation in developing & executing strategy
 - Design a plan for execution, with buy-in, engagement & action across the diocese.

- **Justice for People & Planet Goal Two - Initiative 1:** Engage current diocesan bodies and committees to research & track issues and opportunities for action
 - **Cost:** \$0 - time cost
 - **Assignment:**
 - Justice for People & Planet Commission
 - Commission for Justice & Peace - as they have experience.
 - All Justice ministries - to identify opportunities
 - Advocates for other issues
 - **Next Steps:**
 - Identify service programs to engage members and increase awareness
 - Identify coalitions and advocacy partners in key issue areas
 - Establish relationships between parishes, organizations to encourage activism.
 - Identify and promote key areas for activism.
 - Identify and cultivate organizations and partners for activism.
 - Figure out the funding piece of this - do we need convention resolutions - creative funding.
 - Determine if there are other sources of funding, like Trinity Wall Street.
 - **Resources:**
 - TBD

YEAR TWO:

- **Communications Goal One - Initiative 2:** Audit existing websites and social media across the Diocese, according to the guidelines developed in Initiative 1, and develop examples of informative, easy to navigate websites.
 - **Cost:** \$0 - time cost
 - **Assignment:** Diocesan Communicators team; Communications Audit task force (to be appointed by the Diocesan Communicators team and serve for a limited time)
 - **Next Steps:**
 - Develop a mission statement and job description for the audit team
 - Recruit members for the Communications Audit task force
 - Contact RMN conveners about starting this work by region—to pilot one

- RMN, then roll it out to the rest.
 - Develop examples of both websites and social media to illustrate what information should be easily accessible:
 - Episcopal Church, town, phone number, worship schedule, etc.
 - How often are they posting on social media—and for what purpose?
 - Review the websites and social media accounts of all congregations and other faith communities across the Diocese in the church directory.
 - Resources:
- **First Third of Life Goal One - Initiative 3:** Develop recommendations for every congregation to use that will connect our emerging adults going off to college to chaplaincies and Episcopal congregations near them, as well as allow congregations to connect to emerging adults who are attending nearby colleges and universities.
 - Cost: \$0 - time cost
 - Assignment: New Diocesan Commission: Subteam on emerging adults
 - Clergy and lay people - with a passion for young adult ministry
 - College students from the Diocese
 - Next Steps:
 - Contact the Episcopal Young Adult and Campus Ministry Council Rep for Province II.
 - Identify clergy and lay people who are passionate about college-age ministry and connect them to the new Diocesan Commission subteam.
 - Survey congregations about where their emerging adults are going to college or trade school.
 - Identify and contact the congregations/Regional Ministry Groups and chaplaincy programs at those colleges identified in Step 1.
 - Develop resources for families and congregational leaders to use to connect their emerging adults to congregations and chaplaincy programs at their colleges and universities.
 - Invite our emerging adults who are working, in the military, studying college, training in trade school, or working to come back to their congregations to share what they are doing and learning.
 - Resources:
 - [Episcopal Young Adult and Campus Ministry](#)
- **Congregational Collaboration Goal One - Initiative 3:** Identify or develop an assessment protocol for congregational/faith community vitality, assess and be in ongoing conversation with at least 70 percent of the congregations in the next five years.
 - Cost: \$2,000/year - Travel costs for assessment teams
 - Assignment:
 - Commission for Congregational Life
 - Congregational Assessment teams (limited scope and time commitment)
 - RMN conveners - communication and recruitment
 - Next Steps:
 - Form and train teams to do the assessments—collaborating with the coaching cohort from *Initiative 1*.
 - Review the baseline of seven elements of functionality that the Bishop and Canon for Congregation Life developed, as well as other existing assessment tools

- Meet with RMN conveners about marketing the assessment service to its congregations.
 - Choose at least one congregation in each RMN for the pilot assessments.
 - Form a special team that will journey with congregations that decide to sunset.
 - Resources:
 - [Renewal Works](#)
 - Episcopal Diocese of Maryland - [Congregational Vitality Committee](#)
 - Episcopal Church Foundation - [Congregational Vitality Assessment](#)
- **Congregational Collaboration Goal Two - Initiative 1:** Provide both strong discipleship formation and leadership training opportunities to lay people across the Diocese.
 - Cost: \$10,000/year - for training and other support
 - Assignment:
 - Planning and implementation:
 - Commission for Congregational Life
 - Commission on Ministry
 - Recruitment for lay people to take formation and training opportunities:
 - RMN conveners
 - Congregational leaders
 - Next Steps:
 - Determine whether the diocesan School for Ministry can provide the leadership training; they can definitely provide the formation resources.
 - If needed, research lay formation and church leadership programs and organizations.
 - Compare pros, cons and costs.
 - Survey congregations about current church management needs.
 - Identify and recruit lay leaders in each RMN to take the training.
 - Identify lay specialists for church management areas (bookkeeping, archives, audits, etc.) to provide guidance and help tailor practices for congregations.
 - Engage the training and schedule the lay leaders for training.
 - Match congregations with lay specialists for support.
 - Survey congregations and lay specialists about their experiences.
 - Resources:
- **Justice for People & Planet Goal Two - Initiative 2:** Create a system to identify and communicate diocesan-wide actions and priorities to pursue in a timely manner & engage congregations in taking action.
 - Cost: \$0 - time cost
 - Assignment:
 - Justice for People & Planet Commission
 - Diocesan Communicators group
 - Next Steps:
 - Activate communications channels
 - Identify roles, players, processes for flagging action opportunities
 - Consider additional staff to manage databases, resources and communications

- Determine whether deacons might take a role in managing these systems.
 - Resources:
- Justice for People & Planet Goal Three - Initiative 1: Pursue formation and discernment for all congregations to understand our baptismal covenant's call to act for love, peace & justice for people & planet.
 - Cost: \$0 - as this initiative evolves, there may be some costs
 - Assignment:
 - Justice for People & Planet Commission
 - Next Steps:
 - Determine how to engage the justice groups to start this work.
 - Peace & Justice Commission
 - Anti-Racism Commission
 - Racial History Committee
 - Racial Justice & Healing Commission
 - Anti-Sexism Task Force
 - Commission on Hispanic/Latino Ministry
 - Prison Ministry of EDN
 - UBE, Newark Chapter
 - The Oasis (LGBTQ+ Ministry)
 - Get agreements, generate ideas, get buy-in for pursuing this
 - Design the process and timeline to engage congregations & RMNs
 - Define roles for each committee, commissions, staff, etc.
 - Research and provide resources to congregations for formation.
 - Offer tools to promote discussion and formation of action steps.
 - Determine which resources are needed to organize, design, deliver...
 - Create a group that addresses Creation Care and Environmental Justice.
 - Resources:

YEAR THREE:

- First Third of Life Goal Two - Initiative 3: Hire a First Third of Life missionary to work with the new Commission, Cross Roads, RMNs and individual faith communities on building relationships with these age groups.
 - Cost: \$125,000 - for a clergy person, includes pension and benefits
 - Assignment:
 - Diocesan Council - budget
 - Bishop and Canon to the Ordinary - hiring
 - New First Third of Life Commission
 - Search Committee with representation including Cross Roads, Christian Formation ministry, and youth
 - Next Steps:
 - Form Search Committee
 - Create job description
 - Approve position and funding in the 2024 (or 2025) budget
 - Post job in appropriate outlets
 - Choose candidates for first round interviews
 - Create interview questions and interview candidates via Zoom.

- Narrow list of candidates and do a second round of interviews.
 - Bring in top 2-5 candidates for in-person interviews.
 - Hire the top candidate to start at the beginning of FY 2024 (or 2025).
 - Resources:
- **First Third of Life Goal Two - Initiative 4:** Provide training (either in-house or external) for people in the Diocese who minister with people in the first third of life.
 - Cost:
 - Offer a fee based program with diocesan subsidy.
 - Increase the budget currently for DYC, as this covers a larger scope.
 - Assignment:
 - New First Third of Life Commission and sub teams
 - Next Steps:
 - Survey congregations on formation programs, curriculum used, volunteer training offered, etc.
 - Determine what training is needed, what we can provide in-house, and what external programs we can recommend.
 - Clarify what training is required by the Church Pension Fund.
 - Identify or develop appropriate training programs that are offered to all people in the Diocese.
 - Resources:
 - Episcopal Church - [Safe Church, Safe Communities](#)
 - Episcopal Church - [Faith Formation](#)
- **Congregational Collaboration Goal Two - Initiative 2:** Develop 2-3 collaboration models and pilot 3-5 collaborations across the Diocese for a five-year period.
 - Cost:
 - Congregational and diocesan budgets would cover collaboration costs—collaborations are meant to be financially sustainable.
 - Assignment:
 - Commission for Congregational Life
 - RMN conveners (to communicate with congregations and encourage involvement)
 - Next Steps:
 - Research and examine potential models and identify 2-3 models to pilot.
 - Develop the support system necessary for each collaboration model.
 - Working with RMN conveners, communicate with congregations about this pilot opportunity.
 - Identify and work with congregations that would be a good fit for this pilot phase.
 - Come to consensus with each group of collaborating congregations about the model they want to pursue.
 - Identify a coaching team to work with each group and implement the appropriate support system.
 - Resources:
 - Diocese of Maryland
 - Diocese of New Jersey - collaboration of [historically black congregations](#)
 - Lily Foundation [grant programs](#) on collaboration

- **Justice for People & Planet Goal Three - Initiative 2:** Have each congregation adopt a covenant expressing their commitment to work for systemic change in the areas of justice and creation care that the entire Diocese is supporting—or in another area of their choosing.
 - **Cost:** \$0 - time cost
 - **Assignment:**
 - Justice for People & Planet Commission
 - To communicate: RMN Conveners & Congregational leadership
 - **Next Steps:**
 - Define intention of “covenant.”
 - Determine how to involve existing commissions, committees
 - Sensitize & educate about key SJ issues for attention
 - Agree on Diocesan expectations, define covenant
 - Determine the required resources
 - Make Sample covenant language available.
 - Determine timeline for deliverables
 - Notify congregations of expectations, social justice focus
 - Identify issue(s) of importance (each congregation).
 - Reach out to congregations to provide support
 - Shape a process for developing & adopting their covenant (each congregation).
 - Draft and adopt a covenant (each congregation).

- **Justice for People & Planet Goal Three - Initiative 3:** Develop support systems (that also build momentum & accountability into place) to assist congregations in sustaining justice and creation care work
 - **Cost:** \$0 - time cost
 - **Assignment:**
 - Justice for People & Planet Commission
 - Commission for Congregational Life (coordination)
 - **Next Steps:**
 - Identify and share models.
 - Engage and activate peer advisors, support groups and RMNs.
 - Figure out the costs for developing and managing these systems.
 - Consider staffing needs - role for deacons.
 - Consider whether to create an umbrella justice group for coordination.
 - Work with RMNs to define their role in managing the support systems.
 - Create data sharing agreements for congregations.
 - Determine ways to entice congregations to participate.

Appendix C: Existing diocesan groups and new groups to form for implementation

Diocesan leadership groups already established:

- Anti-Racism Commission
- Anti-Sexism Task Force
- Commission for Justice & Peace
- Commission on Hispanic/Latino Ministry
- Cross Roads
- Diocesan Council
- Diocesan Youth Commission
(to be merged with new commission)
- The Oasis (LGBTQ+ Ministry)
- Prison Ministry of EDN
- Racial History Committee
- Racial Justice & Healing Commission
- Regional Ministry Network conveners
- Union of Black Episcopalians, Newark Chapter

Staff Liaison

CR Executive Director

Director of Administration

1st Third of Life Missioner
[new]

New diocesan leadership groups to form:

1. Diocesan Communicators group
2. Diocesan Communications Advisory Group
3. Communications Audit task force (from group 2)
4. Commission for Congregational Life
5. Congregational Assessment teams (from group 4)
6. First Third of Life Commission
7. Justice for People & Planet Commission

Staff Liaison

Director of C & T

Director of C & T

Director of C & T

Canon for Cong. Life

Canon for Cong. Life

1st Third of Life Missioner

Appendix D: Strategic Visioning Team & Working Team members

Strategic Visioning Team

Name	Congregation	Regional Ministry Network
The Rev. Raul Ausa	Trinity, Allendale	Benedict of Nursia
The Rev. Carrie Cabush	Calvary Summit	Evelyn Underhill
The Rev. Mark Collins, <i>Co-leader</i>	All Saints, Glen Rock	Augustine of Hippo
Nelson Diaz	Church of the Epiphany & Christ Church, Orange	Florence Li Tim-Oi
Janelle Grant, <i>Co-leader</i>	St. Paul's Paterson	Augustine of Hippo
The Rev. Miguel Hernandez	Holy Trinity West Orange	Florence Li Tim-Oi
The Rev. Vicki McGrath	All Saints' Millington	Harriet Tubman
Jewels Quelly	St. James Hackettstown	Harriet Tubman
Michele Simon	St. Paul's, Englewood	Augustine of Hippo
Belinda Stokes	St. Paul's & Incarnation, Jersey City	Absalom Jones
The Rev. Lorna Woodham	St. Andrew & Holy Communion, South Orange	Florence Li Tim-Oi

Children, Families, Youth and Emerging & Young Adults working team

<i>Co-leader</i> , the Rev. Carrie Cabush	Calvary, Summit
<i>Co-leader</i> , Nelson Diaz	Church of the Epiphany and Christ Church, Orange
<i>Co-leader</i> , Belinda Stokes	St. Paul's and Incarnation, Jersey City
Heather Allen	St. Clement's, Hawthorne
Anthony Briggs	Cross Roads Camp and Retreat Center
Donna Caputo	Grace, Rutherford
Kathy DeWalt	St Lukes, Montclair
Militzia Diaz	Church of the Epiphany and Christ Church, Orange
Susan Fuller	St Paul's, Morris Plains
Dana Leach	St Peters, Essex Fells
Kristen Lee	Christ Church, Ridgewood
Althea Maynard	St. Paul's and Incarnation, Jersey City
Paul Nobleman	St Lukes, Haworth
Holly Petro	Church of the Messiah, Chester
Tamra Petrona	St Agnes & St Paul's, East Orange

Communication and Technology working team

<i>Co-leader</i> , the Rev. Mark Collins	All Saints', Glen Rock
<i>Co-leader</i> , Janelle Grant	St. Paul's, Paterson
Nerissa Boccino	St. Peter's, Morristown
Lynda Dickey	Christ Church, Hackensack
Nina Nicholson	Director of Communications and Technology
Thomas Reynolds	Christ Church, Bloomfield/Glen Ridge
Chris Whitaker	Christ Church, Short Hills

Congregational Collaboration working team

<i>Co-leader</i> , the Rev. Raul AUSA	Trinity, Allendale
<i>Co-leader</i> , the Rev. Vicki McGrath	All Saints', Millington
<i>Co-leader</i> , Jewels Quelly	St. James, Hackettstown
The Rev. Canon Margo Peckham Clark	Canon for Congregational Life
Jill Commings	Grace Church Van Vorst, Jersey City
Mary DePinto	Grace Church Van Vorst, Jersey City
Merica Dermody	Church of the Messiah, Chester
Bernie Milano	Trinity, Allendale

Justice for People & Planet working team

<i>Co-leader</i> , the Rev. Miguel Hernandez	Holy Trinity West, Orange
<i>Co-leader</i> , Michele Simon	St. Paul's Church, Englewood
<i>Co-leader</i> , the Rev. Lorna Woodham	St. Andrew & Holy Communion, South Orange
Jody Caldwell	Redeemer, Morristown
Paula Cappel	St. Andrew & Holy Communion, South Orange
Rosie Grant	St. Paul's, Paterson
Valyrie Laedlein	St. George's, Maplewood
The Rev. Grant Mansfield	St. George's, Maplewood
Laura Russell	All Saints, Hoboken
Marguerite Smith	St. Peter's, Mountain Lakes