

Parish Development Ministry Report

Joe Kormos Archdiocesan Assembly, 2021

The following is a summary of 2022 efforts.

2022 Parish Development Forum -- Online

The Online version of the Parish Development Forum was held from 10:00 AM to 5:15 PM on June 17 using "Zoom".

In addition to a significantly greater participation from Archdiocesan parishes, among the 110 Forum registrants there were participants from most OCA Dioceses as well as the Greek, Antiochian, Serbian, Ukrainian (US and Canada).



Forum Agenda

Theme

The Forum theme, *The Orthodox Parish as Vessels of Ministry: Increasing Our Capacity for Ministry* was chosen to be congruent with the OCA All American Council. (*Parishes as Vessels of Grace.*)

Feature Speakers

Keynote address, *Christian Life Discipleship and Ministry* was given by His Grace Daniel then Bishop of Santa Rose and now bishop of Chicago and the Midwest.

Tracks

The agenda included three parallel tracks each of which had three 50-60 minute segments. A final panel wrapped up the day. The track format provided many more topic interest areas.

Track A- Living Active Ministry: Multi-generational ministry; Being a Ministry of Presence to the Grieving; Creating Opportunities to See and Serve Parish Neighbors.

Track B- Re-Thinking Education as Ministry: Re-envisioning Parish Education, Education as Ministry and Service; Considerations for Effective Youth education.

Track C Leading and Coordinating Ministries: Building Your Ministry Toolbox; Thoughts and Tools to Kick-Start Your Ministry Mix; Making Ministry Happen Obstacles and Pathways to Ministry.

A case study in which participants discussed and planned for increasing ministry in a not-so mythical parish closed the day. Materials (texts, slides, handouts and videos) can be found at <https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1BPQ6h7LZkvJuGSwKavS49OF-GPUN1TRq>

Encore Webinars

To continue to help parishes build awareness and capacity for ministry, a series of encore webinar presentations of three popular Forum sessions (*Being a Ministry of Presence; Creating Opportunities to See and Serve Parish Neighbors; Three Stories of Challenges in Growing Parish Ministry*) were offered on three successive Thursday evenings in September.

Forum Planning Team

We will have opening(s) for Forum Planning team members for 2022. Please contact Joe Kormos if you are interested.

2023

The 2023 Forum will return to its original format of being held as an in-person event. Dates are July 13-15. Location will likely be at a parish near Cleveland OH.

Legacy Parish Assistance Program

In 2020 the Diocese began a Legacy Parish Assistance program. In January we visited Ss. Cyril and Methodius Church, Jeannette PA to review their progress.

Parish Pulse Newsletters

In 2022 we revived the regular publication of Parish Pulse email newsletters. Nine issues have been published in 2022. Articles have included:

- Tips for reviewing parish websites
- Re-publishing of Financial Audit Guidelines
- My Visit to an Orthodox Church
- The Orthodox Moment? And What Will We Do About It?
- Heating Up a Lukewarm Church
- Becoming Fishers of Men: Finding and Attracting “Fish”
- Guests *Should* Feel (Slightly) Uncomfortable
- Mechanisms of Change in Churches
- Open Letter to [Clergy](#) and [Laity](#) (flash back to 2014 Forum)
- Myths and Misconceptions of Ministry
- Good practices list for making Ministry happen
- Stewardship Good Practice Reminders
- What to Say and NOT Say when Comforting a Grieving friend.

We strongly encourage submitting names/emails addresses of parishioners and clergy for subscribing to this publication. This can be done here (<https://www.ocadwpa.org/newsletter>) or by contacting joekormos1@gmail.com .

Parish Visits/Workshops

An updated Parish Council workshop will be presented to St John the Forerunner Church in Canonsburg on October 22.

We are available to work individually with parishes on particular projects. These can be via online meetings, parish visits or ongoing telephone/email interaction. Topics might include: stewardship, vision and planning; parish administration; leadership; outreach and evangelization and others.

A Look Back

We recently reviewed some previous materials. A decent summary of the point of the Parish Development Ministry is:

<p><i>Moving From: Being Parishes Hallmarked by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Banquets & anniversaries• Youth camps• Bake sales & fund raising• Parish dues• Sunday Liturgy (only)• Ministry? --unknown• Parish Vision? – taking care of ‘ours’• The fallacy that all is well	<p><i>Moving to: An <u>Awakening</u></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Our parish is a living organism<ul style="list-style-type: none">-- Parishes can grow; Any parish can become healthy• <u>You are responsible</u> for your parish’s health; Work on one thing at a time.• Laity have a responsibility to <i>know</i> and <i>live</i> their faith• Ministry: <i>the Liturgy after the Liturgy</i>• Pay priests according to reasonable standards• Don’t accept mediocrity• Priest can’t & shouldn’t <i>do everything</i>• Stewardship based on personal Generosity and Gratitude• Parish conversation – Facing facts; what do we want to be like?• We’re not “diaspora”. We’re here to stay. “So, what do we intend to accomplish here?”
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Is it time to engage some fresh ideas or to build a new rhythm in parish life?

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