



## Parish Staff and Parishioners' Frequently Asked Questions: Establishment of New Deaneries, Effective July 1, 2026

### **1. What are deaneries, why do they matter, and how are they changing?**

Each parish in the archdiocese is assigned to one of 15 geographical groupings called a deanery. After a year's worth of work and consultation, Archbishop Bernard Hebda signed a decree that takes effect on July 1, 2026, creating a new set of 15 deaneries ranging in size from nine to 19 parishes. The new deaneries are categorized as primarily rural, suburban or urban. Priests in a deanery elect a representative to the Presbyteral Council, which is required by canon law to advise the archbishop on various matters. The deanery priests are also to meet regularly to provide feedback to their representative on matters discussed at the Presbyteral Council, promote collaboration among their parishes, share best practices, and provide one another with fraternal support. In coming years, plans will be developed within deaneries to more effectively utilize resources to fulfill the Church's mission of making Jesus known and loved.

### **2. Why are there primarily urban, suburban and rural deaneries?**

These categories of deaneries recognize that while the reality of each parish is unique, there are substantive differences between the realities of urban, suburban and rural parishes. As a result, each of these categories will have different criteria for vitality and viability as we go through resource use discussions in the coming years.

### **3. How was this new configuration developed and approved?**

As a first step in the Renewal of Structures Initiative that will eventually involve all parishes in the archdiocese, a Deanery Boundaries and Groupings Committee, consisting of nine priests, was established by Archbishop Hebda in spring 2025. The committee's charter was to develop initial recommendations and an implementation plan for realignment of deanery membership that: 1) promotes effective collaboration between parishes, and 2) segments deaneries as primarily rural, suburban and urban.

The committee developed a proposal that was approved by a consultative vote of the Presbyteral Council, to suppress the current deaneries, effective June 30, and to establish new deaneries effective July 1. Archbishop Hebda adopted this proposal with several small modifications to parish deanery assignments through a [decree](#) he issued on May 26, Memorial of St. Philip Neri.

### **4. What will the new deanery configurations be?**

A listing of the parishes assigned to new deaneries is found in Archbishop Hebda's [decree](#). A provisional map can be viewed at [this link](#). A more official map will be forthcoming.

**5. Will these changes to deaneries be just a redrawing of the lines?**

The new deanery configurations are intended to be an operational reset as well, one which fosters an era of greater collaboration within deaneries for the purpose of more vigorously proclaiming and living out the gospel. Currently, the degree of collaboration varies significantly among deaneries. The hope is that going forward, there will be meaningful collaboration in all deaneries so that we can more effectively serve all people in the pews and more effectively reach those who need to be evangelized. It will also be within the context of deaneries that deeper collaboration/restructuring discussions will occur in the coming years.

**6. Will parishes which collaborate already be able to continue to their collaborations if they are not in the same deanery (anymore)?**

Certainly! Existing collaborations that cross lines of the new deaneries should continue and even expand, as appropriate, as long as they continue to be helpful for the mission of the Church. The new deaneries are intended to help parishes in similar situations to support one another, learn best practices from each other, and share resources. This will hopefully expand the horizons of collaborations and that many new collaborations will prosper.

**7. Are you expecting that the collaboration will be limited to priests or will happen more generally?**

The desire is that not only priests within a deanery, but parish staff and parishioners within deaneries will engage in greater collaboration. There have, historically, been limited collaborations between parish staff engaged in specific ministries within deaneries. For instance, at one time, school principals within deaneries met. The Council of Catholic Women have also had deaneries even longer than the priests. The 1974 deanery configuration was based on the CCW deaneries.

**8. How will the change of deaneries impact parishioners and parish staff on July 1?**

On July 1, there should be little or no impact upon parishioners. This change, at first, will be limited to which other priests your pastor meets with on a monthly basis and where they meet.

**9. How will the change in deaneries impact me as a parishioner and parish staff member over time?**

As the months and years unfold, however, the new deaneries will hopefully lead to new and a wider range of ministries and opportunities to interact with people from other parishes.

For instance, plans are starting to be developed for opportunities for parishioners to come together on a regular basis to pray for renewal in their deanery.

We anticipate that new ministries will emerge as parishes collaborate, share best practices, and provide resources for ministries on a deanery-wide or at least multi-parish basis that they could not on their own. As a result, perhaps children in small, parish-specific faith formation classes might get to interact with more students from additional parishes. There could be opportunities for young adult or widow ministry that might be infeasible for a parish to do, but a group of parishes can.

Furthermore, over the coming decade, each deanery will have discussions on how to better use the limited resources in that deanery. These discussions are anticipated to begin in the urban deaneries, then in the rural deaneries, and finally in the suburban deaneries. These discussions will lead to deepened collaboration between parishes.

## 10. What are the best ways for my parish to thrive?

Each of us has a responsibility in helping our parish to thrive. We can each do the following:

- 1) Pray! Pray for renewal in your parish. Pray for your pastor. Pray for more vocations to the priesthood, diaconate and consecrated life. Pray for your fellow parishioners (even those you find annoying). Pray for all the people in your parish boundaries, that they will come to understand God's love for them and their need for Jesus. Pray for the people you know who appear to be far from God and for the wisdom on how you can help make Jesus known and loved in their lives. Pray for your neighboring parishes (even historical "rivals"), that you will be able to collaborate well with them and make each other stronger as a result into the future. Pray for unity grounded in Christ in our archdiocese. In prayer, ask the Holy Spirit what God is calling you to do, personally, to live out the Catholic faith – which includes helping others come to know Jesus.
- 2) Read or listen. Read or listen to Archbishop Hebda's pastoral letters *[You Will Be My Witnesses](#)* and *[Only One Thing Is Necessary](#)*. In them, our shepherd lays out what he has discerned, after much prayer and consultation: how God is inviting our archdiocese to respond to the times in which we live.
- 3) Act – Archbishop Hebda's desire is that every Catholic be part of a small group. If you are not in one already, join a small group at your parish. Take actions described in the pastoral letters that touch your heart as you read them. Invite people you know to come to your parish or get involved. Live as a credible witness of Jesus, following what he taught. Living a truly Christian life attracts many people.
- 4) Be generous – with your time, talent and treasure. We are a body of Christ. Each of us is called to use the talents given to us to support the work of Jesus. And we live in a world in which money is needed for the resources to fulfill that mission.

## 11. What if I have more questions?

You can visit [this page](#) to reach out to the Archdiocesan offices.