



# THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF HOPEWELL VALLEY

**St. Alphonsus**  
Hopewell, NJ

**St. George**  
Titusville, NJ

**St. James**  
Pennington, NJ

The Linked Leadership Council (LLC) continues to work to promote the model of linked parishes under the direction of Bishop David M. O'Connell and the Diocese of Trenton's Planning Commission. The goal of linking parishes through The Catholic Community of Hopewell Valley is to strengthen and energize all Catholics in our area, sharing resources, time and talent across our parishes. The hope is that parishioners at St. Alphonsus, St. George and St. James will see and have a greater opportunity to participate in activities or services of interest to them. Additionally, the linked parish model broadens our pool of talent, concerns and volunteerism, giving us greater strength and effect in our ability to attract families and individuals to us as one Catholic family.

The LLC implementation team is broken down into four subcommittees: Linked Faith Formation, Linked Evangelization, Linked Social Concerns/Justice and Linked Communications. In May, we concluded our first year of implementation of the Linkage Model of our Catholic Community of Hopewell Valley. Each year, we are required to submit to the Bishop a review of the previous year's goals, along with future plans for the next year. We are in the process of finalizing those calendars now. The highlights of the goals and the achievements of this past year, along with future plans, include:

## **Linked Faith Formation**

2017-2018:

- Established an Education Operating Model for the three parishes
- Consolidated attendance and parent agreement policies
- Set uniform registration forms, fees and teaching materials
- Provided various schooling options; established catechists training opportunities.

Our 2018-2019 goals include:

- Encouraging catechists to participate in formal training
- Centralizing religious education administration location
- Establishing online registration only
- Implementing alternative education models – classroom, family catechesis, summer study
- Discontinuing St. Alphonsus' use of elementary school (thereby saving significant funds)
- Implementing an adult faith formation program

## **Linked Social Justice**

2017-2018:

- Established current ministries
- Assessed status of each and determined how they can be combined within the 3 parishes
- Developed an ongoing events calendar
- Provided educational opportunities for parishioners on catholic social teachings

Our 2018-2019 goals include:

- Establishing and maintaining ongoing events calendar
- Continuing determination of combining, linking, expanding, initiating or eliminating ministries
- Sponsoring educational events related to social justice issues

## **Linked Evangelization**

2017-2018:

- Created and distributed a Welcome Brochure throughout the 3 parishes
- Effectively advertised social events as opportunities for evangelization
- Established anniversary card ministry for sacraments

Our 2018-2019 goals include:

- Continuing advertisement of social events to all 3 parishes
- Using events to highlight linkage
- Developing branded items - T-shirts, etc., to promote The Catholic Community of Hopewell Valley
- Designing and printing cards for anniversary card ministry
- Developing training for evangelization skills
- Designing a mission program for the linked community

## **Linked Communications** (Strategy, Bulletin, Social Media, Website)

2017-2018:

- Established name and logo and branding guidelines for The Catholic Community of Hopewell Valley
- Defined ongoing communication and updates to parishioners
- Established one concise, readable and informative bulletin for all parishes
- Established and maintained a parish Facebook account
- Developed plan for email blasts
- Developed social media calendar
- Took inventory and standardized individual parish websites

Our 2018-2019 goals include:

- Developing a schedule and process for updates to bulletin, social media and pulpit talks
- Developing a media list for external publicity
- Creating a combined calendar of events for the three parishes allowing staff, volunteers, ministry leaders and parishioners to access information
- Developing a shared website for The Catholic Community of Hopewell Valley with assurance that the site is welcoming, interactive and showcases happenings shared among our three parishes

The Linked Leadership Council subcommittees welcome ideas and input from all parishioners. As Father Mike says, *"It is all about relationship, so each of us have to get involved. Because we are part of Linked parishes, it is a good time to step up and prayerfully consider in your spiritual life, what are ways you are called to get involved in helping make the Catholic Community of Hopewell Valley stronger for you, your family, your friends and community. Let us all start to engage with one another!"*

You may view the full, detailed plans approved by the diocese by visiting any of the parish websites. For more information about getting involved and sharing your time or talents to help build a strong, united and vibrant Catholic Community of Hopewell Valley, please contact one of the Linked Leadership subcommittee volunteers:

Linked Faith Formation: Chuck Sikorski, [csikorski@stjamespennington.org](mailto:csikorski@stjamespennington.org)

Linked Evangelization: Ann Crow, [acrow@stalphonsushopewell.org](mailto:acrow@stalphonsushopewell.org)

Linked Social Justice: Brian Barr, [bbarr@stjamespennington.org](mailto:bbarr@stjamespennington.org)

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