



# St. Noel ~ Divine Word

## CLUSTER NEWS

VOLUME I, ISSUE I, PAGE I

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**St. Noel Church**  
 35200 Chardon Road  
 Willoughby Hills, Oh 44094  
 440-946-0887

**Divine Word Catholic Church**  
 8100 Eagle Road  
 Kirtland, Ohio 44094  
 440-256-1412

## Vibrant Parish Life Clustering Planning Process

For eight months now the Cluster Planning Team for St. Noel—Divine Word has been meeting in response to Bishop Lennon’s May 2007 letter calling all the parishes of the diocese “to a new and revitalized mission employing the rich resources of the Church for the sake of building up the Kingdom of God, evangelizing all peoples, and sanctifying the faithful everywhere in our diocese.”

The task of our cluster planning committee was to first identify the resources and realities within our cluster. This first stage of the process involved honest and detailed sharing, prayerful reflection and an openness to a renewed understanding of the mission of our local Church.

Our Cluster Planning Team has discerned what we believe to be a responsible plan for the cluster and we are eager to share this proposed plan with the communities of Divine Word and St. Noel. According to diocesan guidelines we have scheduled presentations to our respective Staffs, Parish Pastoral Councils, and Parish Finance Councils.

On June 11, 2008 at 7:30 p.m. we will hold a Clustering Commencement for both parish communities at The Banquet Center at St. Noel, 35200 Chardon Rd., Willoughby Hills to share the proposed plan with our parishioners and entertain feedback from those assembled. If you cannot be present at this gathering, please avail yourself of the feedback form on page 7 of this newsletter, or the feedback form which will be distributed through the parish bulletins. Your insight and wisdom is a vital part of this process. The opinions of those most directly involved in and responsible for day to day ministry in our parishes and that of the wider community will be taken into consideration by the plan-

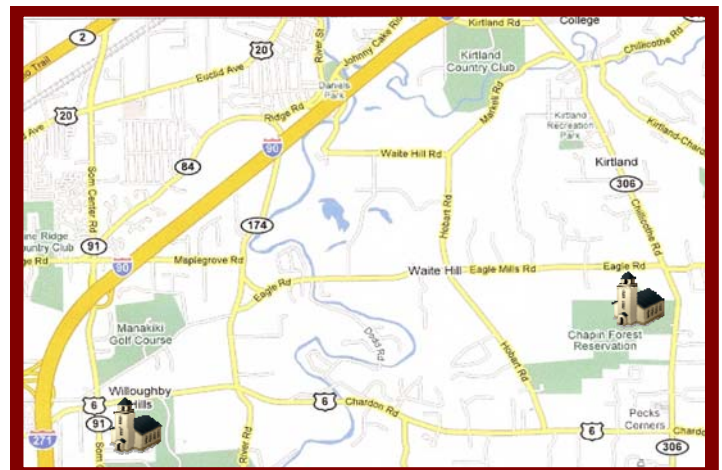
ning team and will help us fine tune the proposed plan which will be submitted to Bishop Lennon by September 15, 2008.

With the assistance of the Vibrant Parish Life II Task Force and his staff, the Bishop will take our recommendations into consideration.

In February Bishop Lennon will make public the definitive plan for pastoral ministry in each of the 69 clusters. By the end of June 2010 these plans will be fully implemented and the entire diocese will be poised to move into the future with a more vibrant, stronger, and energized pastoral ministry.

May God bless this clustering process.

*The CPC Team*



# Composite Summaries of Parish Strengths

The St. Noel — Divine Word Cluster brings several ministries reflecting two strong parishes who desire to offer vibrant worship and serve those in need.

Liturgy is at the heart of both parishes and provides the means for both communities to hunger for knowledge of God and to imitate the service of Jesus Christ. Our educational programs offer people the opportunity to know their faith and better understand the Church. Our parish cluster has the common strength of Social Justice and we provide our parishes with many opportunities to serve the needs of others.

These strengths reflect our parishes' longing to make the presence of Jesus Christ tangible in the lives of our people.

## ST. NOEL values these programs

### EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Generations of Faith  
 Good Shepherd  
 Vacation Bible School  
 (past collaboration with Divine Word)  
 Adult Education Programs

### LITURGY

Music and Choir  
 Funeral Planning  
 Liturgical Ministries  
**SOCIAL JUSTICE OUTREACH**

Food Pantry  
 Outreach  
 Educational Programs

## DIVINE WORD values these programs

### SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Second Grade Preparation  
 Parent Preparation  
 Pre-Cana  
 RCIA

### PARISH GROUPS

Holy Name Society  
 Our Lady's Guild

### SOCIAL JUSTICE

Ministry Center at St. Philip Neri  
 Outreach at Ministry Center  
 Outreach in Kirtland Community

## Key Realities, Trends, and Implications for Pastoral Care

### DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

#### Population Growth

2000-2007—4.7%  
 2007-2012 Projected— 2.6%

#### Median Age

Current—45.5  
 Projected 2012—47

#### Average Household Income

Current Average—\$84,760.  
 Projected 2012 Avg.—\$91,173.

#### Current Population

89.8% White  
 5.7% Black or African American  
 .9% Latino  
 3.1% Asian  
 .1% Native American Indian

### IMPLICATIONS

Over the next five years, populations will remain stable. The income of our parishioners may increase somewhat. The increase in mean age may indicate a growing number of older parishioners in need of pastoral care. Sacramental needs of younger families remains stable.

### SACRAMENTAL STATISTICS

Over the past ten years, the combined number of Baptisms in our Cluster have gradually decreased.

1996—142  
 2007—66

A similar trend is noted in the number of marriages.

1996—90  
 2007—37

The numbers of deaths have widely varied over the years.

1996—27  
 2002—63 \*  
 2007—45

\*(highest # for both parishes)

### FINANCES — 2006-2007 Fiscal Year

#### Total Income

DW—\$686,087.  
 SN—\$1,036,670.

#### Total Expenses

DW—\$645,843.  
 SN—\$947,715.

#### Total Indebtedness

DW—\$60,000.  
 SN—debt retired 2008

### STAFFING

#### Each parish has

a Priest/Pastor,  
 a DRE/Director of Faith Formation,  
 a Parish Secretary,  
 a Pastoral Associate  
 or Coordinator of Parish Life,  
**The parishes will be sharing**  
 a Youth Minister.

#### Divine Word has

a Director of Parish Operations,  
 a Membership Coordinator,  
 a Maintenance Person,  
 a part-time Music Director,  
 and a part-time Housekeeper.

#### St. Noel has

a full-time Music Director,  
 two part-time Office Assistants,  
 two part-time Assistants to the DRE,  
 a part-time Custodian,  
 a Banquet Center Manager,  
 and a part-time Banquet Center Asst.

#### Facilities

Each parish has a Church, a hall,  
 a rectory, and meeting rooms.  
 St. Noel has a banquet center.  
 Neither parish has a school.

## Coordinator of Youth Ministry for the Divine Word / St. Noel Cluster

### How Clustering Works

In November of 2007 the Cluster Planning Team composed of members of both St. Noel & Divine Word made their first recommendation in the clustering process.

While both parishes highly value youth ministry, neither parish could support a full time youth minister. It was clear to the clustering coordination team that the youth ministries of the two parishes would be stronger if they were combined and directed by a full-time person. This recommendation was accepted by the consultative groups in both parishes.

To that end a search committee of 4 members from each parish was formed to design a joint job description and to interview candidates for the position. After a five month search, we are now happy to announce that David Napoli will join our staffs on July 1, 2008.

### Dear Friends,

I am very thankful and excited to serve you as the new Coordinator of Youth Ministry for the Divine Word — St. Noel Cluster.



I have had a love and passion for youth ministry ever since I was a teenager, and have worked in it full time now for several years.

It brings me great joy that I will be able to continue in this ministry at such a welcoming place. I look forward to meeting all of you and becoming a part of your community.

I ask that you pray that this ministry be fruitful, joyful, and a blessing to the whole cluster community.

I look forward to July.

May God bless us all,

*David Napoli*

### Meet David Napoli

Our new Cluster Coordinator of Youth Ministry grew up in the Finger Lakes region of New York. After participating in a parish pilgrimage to the Holy Land at the age of sixteen, David worked as a volunteer youth minister in his home parish. In 2004 he received a bachelor's degree in Theology from Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio. He served for three years as a youth minister and director of religious education in St. Paul parish in Greensburg, PA. He then developed a youth ministry program for a cluster of three parishes in the Boston area.

For the last year David has been a pre-theology student, discerning whether God was calling him to the priesthood. He has determined that his vocation is to serve the church not as a priest but as youth minister.

As our cluster search committee interviewed David, we were impressed by his knowledge of our faith, his experience in youth ministry, his sincere desire to serve the church, and his attractive personality.

David will be relocating to Cleveland and beginning his ministry with us on July 1<sup>st</sup>. It will be a blessing and joy to have him as a part of our parish communities.

## Joint Youth Ministry Program

as a part of proposed cluster plan to be submitted to Bishop Lennon



One of the four proposals which our cluster committee wishes to present to Bishop Lennon concerns the youth ministry in our parishes.

Both Divine Word and St. Noel value active youth ministry programs for both junior-high and high school youth. Yet because of the size of our parishes and complexities of teen-age life, both parishes struggle to keep youth regularly involved.

Therefore, the cluster committee has proposed to merge both youth ministry efforts into one program. By joining the two programs, the resulting ministry will benefit

from increased size and enthusiasm and be better positioned to serve both youth who are presently involved in the life of our parishes and also to those who presently do not worship regularly with us.

To achieve this goal Divine Word and St. Noel have hired a full-time coordinator of youth ministry. He will arrive this July, be a member of both staffs, and have an office in both parishes.



Once the coordinator is in place, he will work with adults from both parishes to design and implement programs to reach out to both junior-high and high school youth.



***“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.” Proverbs 22:6***

# Social Justice Effort

as part of proposed cluster plan to be submitted to Bishop Lennon

## CLUSTERING FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

Both of our communities take very seriously our Bishops' reminder that social justice is "integral to the Gospel, not optional!" So it should be no surprise that the CPC is proposing a joint effort in this area.

A committee of six people, three from each parish, has already been formed and will meet for the first time in early June.

Our focus will be to prayerfully identify an effort or project in the area of peace and justice that

neither community has yet undertaken and that both Divine Word and St. Noel would see as a valuable contribution to the building up of God's reign.

We will use 2008 to brainstorm, plan and consult with you and then launch our effort sometime in 2009, possibly sooner.

It is our hope that this effort will plant the seeds for more collaboration in the future, realizing that we can do more together than we can separately!



***"Let justice flow like a stream and righteousness like a river that never goes dry."***  
(Amos 5)



***"For I was hungry and you gave me food, . . . whatever you did for one of these brothers or sisters of mine, you did for me."***  
(Mt. 25:35-41)



## Themes of Catholic Social Teaching

The US Conference of Catholic Bishops provides the following guidelines:

### Life and Dignity of the Human Person

Every person is precious, people are more important than things, and the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person.

#### Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

We are called to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first.

#### The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers

To protect the dignity of work, the basic rights of workers must be respected — the right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, to the organization and joining of unions, to private property, and to economic initiative.

#### Rights and Responsibilities

Every person has a fundamental right to life and a right to those things required for human decency. Correspondingly, every person has duties and responsibilities to one another, to our families, and to the larger society.

### Solidarity

We are one human family whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. We are our brothers' and sisters' keepers, wherever they may be.

#### Call to Family, Community, and Participation

**Family:** Marriage and family are the central social institutions that must be supported and strengthened.

**Community:** Economics, politics, law, and policy directly affect human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community.

**Participation:** People have a right and duty to participate in society, seeking together the common good and well-being of all, especially the poor and vulnerable.

#### Care for God's Creation

We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God's creation.

***"If you want peace, work for justice."***  
Pope Paul VI

## Formation of Evangelization Committee as a part of proposed cluster plan to be submitted to Bishop Lennon

In Bishop Lennon's letter to all of the 69 clusters in May 2007 he stated clearly that "the foundation for the work of all clusters is the Church's essential mission to evangelization and re-evangelization."

St. Noel and Divine Word both have a strong interest in reaching out to those who do not currently or regularly practice their faith.

These may include those who have stayed away from the church for personal reasons, those who are simply lax in their attendance, or those who have no faith life at all and are asking questions about Catholicism.

Together, we believe that a team formed from both parishes can find effective ways of reaching out

and ministering to these people.

This will not only fulfill Bishop Lennon's call, but it will also answer Jesus' command.

***"Go therefore  
and make disciples  
of all the nations,  
baptizing them  
in the name  
of the Father  
and the Son  
and the Holy Spirit."***

MATTHEW 28:19

During the fall of 2008 we plan to assemble a joint team of between 6 to 10 people who will brainstorm

ideas for bringing people back to the faith and encouraging attendance at liturgy and participation in community life.

The team will determine how it will be trained, strengthened, and bonded spiritually. From that base they will present plans connected with evangelization during the year of 2009 with a particular aim for Lent.

***"Always be ready to give  
an explanation to anyone  
who asks you for a reason  
for your hope, but do it  
with gentleness and  
reverence..."***  
(1 PETER 3:15-16).



### Bishop Lennon Talks about the Primacy of Evangelization & Re-Evangelization In the Parish Clustering Process—excerpted from <http://dioceseofcleveland.org/>

On Saturday, April 26, 2008, the Most Reverend Richard G. Lennon, Bishop, Diocese of Cleveland addressed a gathering at St. Basil the Great Parish in Brecksville. The bishop provided a Vibrant Parish Life II update regarding the on-going Parish Clustering process which emphasized evangelization and challenged those who are comfortable with the status quo. A video is available on Diocese TV.

Bishop Lennon emphasized that the foundation for the work of all the clusters is the Church's essential mission of evangelization and re-evangelization. "All that we do must lead to bringing the gospel message into every human situation and helping all people to come to an encounter with the living Christ. We are called to connect the gospel message with the culture of our time and engage the lives of people who are practicing Catholics, no longer active Catholics, those un-churched, and to all people of good will."

"At his Ascension, when Jesus, the Savior of the world went back to heaven, his final words to his disciples were, 'Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to everyone.'"

"The final mandate of Christ — Evangelization."

"The Catholic Church is called to bring the living Christ to all people. It's not only for priests,

consecrated religious, or ordained deacons."

"It's for every single person who has been baptized and especially those who have been confirmed."

#### EVERY CLUSTER WAS ASKED TO

- \* Strengthen evangelization and social and community services especially for the poor.
- \* Provide a welcoming presence for the culturally diverse population in your area.
- \* Strengthen the community services that serve the surrounding neighborhoods.
- \* Engage all of the faithful in Sunday liturgy.
- \* Re-evangelize inactive parishioners and increase the low mass attendance figure.

"Two common factors in the stories of Catholics who have returned to the faith are the grace of God at work and the agency of someone who was living their faith in a way that peaked their interest and to which they responded. Sometimes it was a spouse, a family member, a neighbor, or a coworker; but every single person can point to one or more people who were living their lives in a way that was inviting. Not showing off, just being faithful."

"If Vibrant Parish Life doesn't bring a marked change in the zeal that's in people's hearts to bring others into an encounter with the living Christ, then it's been a lot of work for very little gain."

SEE DIOCESAN TV ON THE WEBSITE FOR THE LIVE VIDEO

## Joint Social Gathering Initiative Proposal as part of proposed cluster plan to be submitted to Bishop Lennon

Our pastors, Father George Smiga and Father David Woost, are strongly committed to the developing relationship between St. Noel and Divine Word.

In 2001, we were all asked by our shepherd, Bishop Anthony Pilla, to "do all that is possible to sustain and enhance the vibrant parish life to which Jesus calls us." He recognized that all of us, as individual parts of the Body of Christ, are at our best when we come together to accomplish more than we could individually.

To address the continuing needs of our church, he emphasized the importance of collaborating with one another, opening our hearts and believing, without exception, that each of us has something to offer.



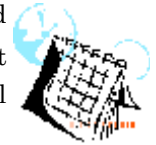
Collaboration is easy and exciting when we are able to surface the gifts of the Spirit in one another, and find God's plan among our own thoughts and ideas.



To set the stage for collaboration between our parish communities, and to celebrate our commitment to one another, our plan is to gather members from both churches for events where we can meet one another, share faith, and grow in our knowledge of each other's strengths and needs.

Later this summer, teams from both parishes will bring our communities together, merging our summer picnics and celebrating our faith in God and our belief in one another.

Please mark your calendars for **Sunday, August 17, 2008,** at 12:00PM, and join us for this first ever joint social



## Bishop Lennon's Charge to the Divine Word / St. Noel Cluster

### THE BISHOP'S CHARGE

In a letter dated May 28, 2007 Bishop Lennon presented the four following issues and challenges for the Divine Word—St. Noel Cluster to address:

~ Continue to explore collaborative possibilities to strengthen pastoral care in an equitable manner.

~ Strengthen evangelization and the social and community services that serve the surrounding neighborhoods.

~ Engage all of our faithful in regularly attending and participating in the Sunday Eucharistic Liturgy.

~ Continue to support *Church in the City* partnerships through cluster-cluster cooperation.

### DIVINE WORD / ST NOEL CLUSTER PROPOSAL

Our Cluster Planning Committee Team has discerned the following four areas for presentation to Bishop Lennon in our proposed cluster plan:

- ~ Joint Youth Ministry Program
- ~ Social Justice Effort
- ~ Evangelization Component
- ~ Joint Social Gathering

This newsletter has highlighted each of these issues, offering a description of the issue, the key goal in the upcoming years, the resources and structures to support this goal, the financial plan and budget, and the basic timeline.

Please take the time to review the proposals and share your insights with us on the form provided for you to offer feedback.

Your comments will be taken seriously as we fine tune the proposed plan for submission to Bishop Lennon.

## Meet Your CLUSTER PLANNING COMMITTEE Team

### *Divine Word Catholic Church*

*Fr. Dave Woost,  
Pastor*

*Maureen Brennan,  
Representative at Large*

*Joe Koehler,  
Parish Pastoral Council Representative*

*Linda Monitello,  
Director of Religious Education*

*Paul Rupert,  
Finance Council Representative*

### *St. Noel Church*

*Fr. George Smiga,  
Pastor*

*Alice Hinkel,  
Pastoral Associate*

*Marianne Slattery,  
Director of Faith Formation*

*Sharon Waltermire,  
Parish Pastoral Council Representative*

*Ray Wymer,  
Finance Council Representative*

## St. Noel-Divine Word Cluster Plan Proposal Feedback Form

If you cannot attend the Cluster Commencement, please use this form for feedback on any proposal.  
Return the form to your parish office or by mail to the parish address on page 1.

JOINT YOUTH MINISTRY	EVANGELIZATION
SOCIAL JUSTICE EFFORT	JOINT SOCIAL GATHERING INITIATIVE
BLESSINGS	CONCERNS

# CLUSTER COMMENCEMENT

The communities of Divine Word and St. Noel Church  
will gather for a  
Cluster Commencement.

Join us at the  
Banquet Center at St. Noel  
35200 Chardon Road  
Willoughby Hills, Oh 44094  
Wednesday, June 11, 2008 at 7:30 p.m.  
no R.S.V.P. required



*Refreshments provided*



*We welcome your feedback*



**Saint Noel Church**

35200 Chardon Road  
Willoughby Hills, Ohio 44094-9193

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