

Archdiocese of Louisville Parish Planning Process 2025 - 2026

CASE STATEMENT

There is a desire among faithful Catholics in the Archdiocese of Louisville to have parishes alive and growing where priests and other church personnel are available to offer support and pastoral care in times of sorrow and joy. They want quality formation and education, inspiring worship, opportunities for service, and a vibrant social community.

To meet the changing needs of parishes and parishioners, in 2005, all parishes of the Archdiocese of Louisville actively participated in a comprehensive study to plan sustainable futures for their local communities. Now, twenty years later, parishes are once again asked to engage in a study to consider how best to approach renewal, and sustainability, for their ongoing pastoral care.

The 2025 - 2026 Parish Planning Process is designed to address organizational issues impacting parishes.

1. The available number of priests to serve parishes and parishioners.
2. The number aging and underutilized facilities and properties.
3. Changing demographics - population trends.
4. Stewardship of resources

Following are significant issues and data points representing critical information for parishes to review:

1. Population Demographics

Catholics in the Archdiocese of Louisville during the decade 2010-2020:

- Registered Catholics decreased 20%
- Unregistered Catholics likely increased by an unknown percentage
- Infant/minor baptisms decreased 25%
- 72% of registered Catholics are in Jefferson County/ 28% in other counties

Overall population change in the Archdiocese during the decade 2010-2020:

- Total population increased 6%
 - Ages 19 and under decreased less than 1%
 - Ages 65 and over increased 35%
 - Hispanic/Latino population increased 66%
-

Overall population projection in the Archdiocese for the decade 2020-2030:

- Total population projected to increase 5%
- Ages 19 and under projected to increase 1%
- Ages 65 and over projected to increase 24%

2. Parishes and Masses (includes Missions and Shrine):

Number of parishes in the Archdiocese:

- 1989 = 138
- 1997 = 126
- 2001 = 122
- 2010 = 111
- 2025 = 110
- Of 110 archdiocesan churches, 57 are in Jefferson County/ 53 in other counties

Parish Sunday Masses (includes Saturday Vigils):

- 159 Sunday Masses celebrated weekly in Jefferson County
- 109 Sunday Masses celebrated weekly in other counties
- Average of 2.44 Sunday Masses per parish across the Archdiocese
- Nationally, fewer than 25% of Catholics regularly attend weekend Mass

3. Priests Serving in the Archdiocese (includes Missions and Shrine):

Pastor assignments in the Archdiocese:

- 43 pastors assigned one parish
- 25 pastors assigned two parishes
- 5 pastors assigned three parishes
- 1 deacon assigned pastoral administrator for two parishes

Priests with parish assignments in the Archdiocese:

- 57 archdiocesan priests
- 35 non-archdiocesan priests
- New federal rules are a complicating factor for international priests with R-1 visas

Archdiocesan priests age bands (excludes non-archdiocesan priests):

- 29 = ages 49 and under
- 14 = ages 50-59
- 21 = ages 60-69
- 47 = ages 70 and over

4. Parish Finances, Facilities, Schools (includes Missions and Shrine):

Financial health of parishes ranges from thriving to struggling:

- Sunday collections have been relatively flat for several years
- Covid-era federal grants/subsidies masked underlying financial deterioration
- Sharing a pastor is the only way some parishes can afford a priest assignment

A large number of parishes have older buildings, and many are historic:

- Buildings, equipment, systems are inefficient due to age
- Excess/unused buildings due to declining membership
- Burden of high maintenance/repair costs - trending toward unsustainable
- Some cannot afford the growing list of deferred maintenance/repair issues

A few parishes have newer, larger campuses/buildings:

- Construction debt obligations are an ongoing challenge
- Larger, modern buildings have higher operating expenses and capital replacement costs

School enrollment changes for the 5-year period 2019-2024:

- Pre-K enrollment increased 21%
- K-8 enrollment increased 2%
- High school enrollment decreased 4%

Elementary school finances and sizes (excludes independent schools):

- Most parishes with an elementary school provide some degree of subsidy
- Financial health of elementary schools ranges from stable to struggling
- Current K-8 enrollments of our 33 parochial/regional elementary schools are:

400+ students: 10 schools

300-399 students: 7 schools

200-299 students: 6 schools

100-199 students: 7 schools

Under 100 students: 3 schools