

Summary of Proposed Canon
on
Diocesan Stewardship and Parish Vitality

- The purpose of the proposed canon is to strengthen the Body of Christ in the Diocese of Washington by helping support and revitalize all communities of faith, ensuring that they have the necessary capacity to achieve spiritual and financial health.
- The proposed canon includes standards that define parish vitality and viability of mission, financial health, and operational capacity. These standards include but are not limited to: adherence to the Constitutions and Canons; financial resources adequate to fund ongoing operations; effective governance and stewardship, including sound financial practices that preserve long term assets for future ministry.
- The Diocesan Council may initiate a Health and Vitality Assessment of a parish at the request of the Bishop, Standing Committee, or a member of Diocesan Council.
- Health and Vitality Assessments would be conducted by an independent and representative Assessment Committee appointed by Council and comprised of such members as the Council considers appropriate, chosen to provide the necessary knowledge as well as diverse perspectives.
- In conducting its assessment, the Assessment Committee may speak with clergy and lay leaders of the parish, parish employees and members, external advisors and auditors. The committee would also be given access to any and all books and records of the Parish.
- Parishes undergoing a health and vitality assessment must participate in the assessment by cooperating with the Assessment Committee, and if the parish chooses, by meeting with Diocesan Council.
- Upon completion of the assessment, the Assessment Committee would submit a report to the Bishop and Diocesan Council. The Parish undergoing the assessment would have an opportunity to respond to the Assessment Committee's report.
- Upon receiving a report from the Assessment Committee, Diocesan Council may recommend further action that would include, but is not limited to: counseling for the parish and its leadership; a change in clergy or lay leadership of the parish; assumption of parish assets and operations by the Diocese; a change in parish status; a merger of two or more parishes; and, closing a parish.

- Council would make its recommendation to the Bishop, who may accept the recommendation, may decline to proceed with the recommendation, or may seek a revision from Council of its recommendation.