



## Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Listening Sessions

### **What is a Parish Listening Session?**

Each parish in the Archdiocese of Detroit will hold two listening sessions open to the public in the spring of 2026. These listening sessions are intended to gather feedback from parishioners about potential pastorate models—or groupings of parishes led by a pastor – involving their parish. Feedback during these listening sessions will be shared with the Core Planning Team and with Archbishop Weisenburger for his discernment.

### **What happens during these sessions?**

Each parish will be presented with several models. Each model will propose different groupings of parishes that form [pastorates](#) within that specified geographic area, also known as a [planning area](#). After the presentation, a facilitator will moderate the discussion as members of the community are invited to share their feedback on the models presented. A member of the parish community, identified by the pastor, will act as the scribe for the listening session and record the feedback to ensure that it is accurately captured and submitted.

### **How should I prepare for my parish listening session?**

First, pray: The most important thing we can all be doing as we approach this time of listening in our parishes, is to pray. You can find a number of prayer opportunities on the Restructuring website or commit to including the process and everyone involved in your personal prayer time. Many parishes will host opportunities for communal prayer in the time leading up to your listening sessions, and we encourage you to join your faith communities to pray together when you are able.

Next, read your Parish Workbook: [Parish Workbooks](#) will be posted to the Restructuring website beginning March 4, 2026. These workbooks provide historical information, demographics, data and trends about each parish in the Archdiocese of Detroit for the purpose of providing transparency and informing the archdiocesan restructuring process. The data in these workbooks has been reviewed and validated by the priests at each parish. Understanding this information helps each of us enter this time of discernment with a deeper sense of awareness around the need for restructuring.

Finally, reflect: Take time to name your feelings about restructuring. Are you feeling anxious? Fearful? Angry? Excited? Take these feelings to prayer, and ask the Lord to open your heart to be receptive to where he is leading your parish and the entire Archdiocese of Detroit, so you can

commit to arriving at your parish listening session in a spirit of Docility to the Holy Spirit. While this process is difficult and may have us feeling any number of negative emotions, we can ask the Lord to help us arrive with open hearts and open minds, and to place our trust in the Holy Spirit to guide the process.

### **Where did the data in my parish workbook come from?**

The information in each parish workbook has been reviewed by the priests at each parish for accuracy. Each parish was also offered the opportunity to add contextual information to aid in understanding the data presented as it relates to parish history and other factors of influence.

Some of the information in your parish workbook may be surprising or concerning to you. It's important to remember that this process is not reliant entirely on data alone. Many factors were considered by the priests who developed the models you'll see, including cultural considerations, different geographical areas, the gifts or charisms of each parish community.

### **How many listening sessions should I attend?**

Everyone is encouraged to attend one session at their parish. Two options will be offered at each parish for convenience. Everyone in the archdiocese has the opportunity to attend one listening session at their parish and the chance to fill out the online survey, if they choose. Some people may choose to only do one option – attend the listening session or fill out the online survey – or neither, but that is up to them.

### **Should I attend another parish's listening sessions, especially if our parishes work together?**

#### **What if my parish works closely with a parish in another planning area?**

It is not necessary to attend a session at another parish, even if the parishes are closely connected. If someone has feedback about another parish, whether they are in the given planning area or not, that can be shared at the listening session they attend.

For example, if a parishioner wanted to give feedback that Parish A is not in their planning area even though the two parishes work closely together, that feedback can be given at the Parish B listening sessions as well as via the online follow-up survey.

#### **What if I can't attend? Is there a virtual option?**

There is no virtual option for attending the listening sessions; however, there will still be time to review the models and share your feedback. Once all of the parishes in your planning area have completed their listening sessions, an online survey will be made available on the Restructuring website where all members of the lay faithful can review the models again and submit feedback, even if they were unable to attend a listening session in-person.

This survey will be sent to everyone who attends, and will also be shared by your parishes and available on the Restructuring website for everyone. So even if you attend the listening session, if you get home and realize you have more feedback to share, you will have the opportunity, within a few weeks of your listening session, to respond to the online survey.

**What if we don't have enough people attend our listening session? Will that impact future decisions in the restructuring process?**

Attendance at each session will not be quantified. The number of people you have at your listening session does not impact how the models will be discerned in the future. If you have 4 people, 40 people, or 400 people, the purpose of the listening session remains the same: to give the people of God opportunities to see the proposed models, understand their context, and provide feedback. Your feedback is an important step in this process – not because any decisions will be made in these sessions – they won't; but because your firsthand experience in your communities will help us in the discernment, refinement, and adaptation of the models to better serve you and your communities.

**What kind of questions will the facilitators ask at these sessions?**

Your facilitator is a local volunteer, who has given freely of their time and talents to serve the Church in Detroit. They will present the models for your parish and then ask you for your feedback on each model. They might ask things like: What do you like or dislike about this model? What works well? What is missing? What else might be needed to make this model better? Please remember that the facilitator's role is not to defend or change any models presented at a Listening Session; they didn't create the models you're reviewing either. Their role is to provide space for everyone to share their feedback. Please be kind to them!

**What kind of feedback can I give?**

Every parish in the Archdiocese of Detroit will experience change in some way as a result of this process. The feedback we're asking for now, is which of the proposed changes would better serve the people of God. What we shouldn't do is come to these sessions ready to argue that nothing should change about the way our parishes are structured. The rationale behind the need for Archdiocesan Restructuring has been shared in a message from Archbishop Weisenburger, on the Restructuring website, and in the Parish Workbooks.

As a reminder, the models shown at the listening sessions are not final decisions. They are a starting point to begin conversations and solicit the input of the lay faithful to better inform Archbishop Weisenburger's discernment process. To support this process, you can share feedback on what works or does not work in a given model, provide additional context about your community, or make note of collaboration points between parishes. Contextual notes about your parish have also been shared in the [Parish Workbooks](#).

**Where did these models come from?**

The models shown at your parish listening sessions began with the priests of the Archdiocese of Detroit – men who know you, who celebrate the sacraments with you every week, and who walk with your families in moments of joy and sorrow. They see the pastoral strengths of your parish, but they also see the broader realities: the number of priests we have, how they are currently assigned, attendance trends, financial pressures, staffing needs, and the demands of sustaining parish life across our Archdiocese.

In January, they came together for three days, and entered into a time of prayer and collective discernment to develop these “first drafts” using their lived experiences and firsthand understanding of your parishes to discern these potential pastorates. But this was just one step in the process. Now it’s up to you to hear these models and give us your honest feedback.

**What happens to all the feedback from the parish listening sessions? How can I be sure that my feedback is taken into consideration?**

Every comment shared through listening sessions, the online survey, and other avenues, will be read and prayerfully considered. From there, we will identify common themes and shared experiences from the people of the Archdiocese.

This listening is one important part of a broader discernment that also includes practical information such as Mass attendance, demographic trends, priest availability, and parish finances. Listening helps deepen understanding and guide wise pastoral judgment, but it is not a vote or a mandate; decisions about future parish structures and collaboration will be made through prayerful discernment by the Archbishop, informed by the full picture of parish life across the Archdiocese of Detroit.