

August 9, 2016

Dear Friends in Christ,

Many of you have been following the development of a new mission strategy for our diocese. Following the diocesanwide listening process that began in January, the Phase III Mission Strategy Drafting Team, in collaboration with our bishops, has been pondering what was heard in those listening sessions, along with other information about trends in the wider church, changing demographics in eastern Massachusetts and the challenges of being church in the 21st century.

The drafting team is pleased to share with you this draft mission strategy. It is not complete: now we need your help to make it better reflect God's call to us today as we are hearing it together. Over the next two weeks there are several opportunities (detailed below) for you to share your thoughts with the team.

In the Phase III team's discernment of a draft mission strategy, three major themes emerged: *Reimagining Our Congregations*, *Building Our Relationships* and *Engaging Our World*. All three of these feel both exciting and challenging, bringing together the many insights shared in the listening process. With your help, the team can now refine the draft to a mission strategy that speaks to us across our diocese as a people of God.

When and how can I read the draft mission strategy?

The draft mission strategy is now available online at www.diomass.org/new-mission-strategy.

How can I share my response to the draft mission strategy?

We will gather your feedback through online and phone surveys from Aug. 9 to Aug. 22. Please access the survey online at tinyurl.com/draftforum and by toll-free phone at **1-855-208-5877**.

We will also hold six forums to present the draft and invite further conversation:

[Draft Mission Strategy Forum: Roxbury](#)

Sunday, Aug. 14 - 3:00 - 4:30 p.m.

St. Cyprian's Church, 1073 Tremont Street, Roxbury

[Draft Mission Strategy Forum: Salem](#)

Monday, Aug. 15 - 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Grace Church, 385 Essex Street, Salem

[Draft Mission Strategy Forum: Barnstable](#)

Tuesday, Aug. 16 - 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

St. Mary's Church, 3055 Main Street, Barnstable

[Draft Mission Strategy Forum: Attleboro](#)

Tuesday, Aug. 16 - 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

All Saints' Church, 121 North Main Street, Attleboro

[Draft Mission Strategy Forum: Quincy](#)

Wednesday, Aug. 17 - 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.
Christ Church, 12 Quincy Avenue, Quincy

[Draft Mission Strategy Forum: Ayer](#)

Sunday, Aug. 21 - 3:00 - 4:30 p.m.
St. Andrew's Church, 7 Faulkner Street, Ayer

What kinds of feedback would be helpful?

The goal of our mission strategy process has been for members of our diocese to hear the many voices in our diocese and discover who we are together as diverse people knit together in one body in Christ. The drafting team wants to know if we have overlooked any important perspectives. You can help by sharing with the team any important information about our church or our world that you believe is missing from the draft strategy. Finally, it's important to learn together from the report. Please tell the team: What connections do you see? What new vision for our diocese can you imagine in response to the hopes and concerns that have been raised?

What will happen next?

- We will incorporate your responses into a proposed mission strategy for review by Diocesan Council and then presentation for adoption at Diocesan Convention in November. The proposed mission strategy will be available by late September.
- If approved by your lay delegates and clergy at Diocesan Convention, this plan will become our mission strategy for the next three years.
- The bishops and Diocesan Council will also be naming a Phase IV Implementation Team this fall to carry forward with the work of bringing our new strategy to reality.

What can I do to help?

Please encourage your communities to read the draft mission strategy, discuss the ideas and recommendations, and share your responses this month.

Thank you for the passion and thoughtfulness you bring to this work. We are grateful for this opportunity to engage in honest conversation and build stronger relationships among the people of our diocese. It is exciting to witness the ways the Holy Spirit can use this process to call us to grow in faith and mission.

Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine!

Mission Strategy Phase III Drafting Team

The Rev. Dr. Meghan T. Sweeney, All Saints' Church, Attleboro (co-chair)

Win Treese, St. Elizabeth's Church, Sudbury (co-chair)

The Rev. Canon Libby Berman (diocesan staff liaison)

Billy Boyce, Grace Church, New Bedford

George Chu, Church of the Good Shepherd, Dedham

The Rev. Dr. Kate Cress, Church of Our Saviour, Somerset

The Rev. Dr. Lisa Fortuna, Diocesan Hispanic-Latino Ministries Committee

Hilary Greene, St. Mary's Church, Barnstable

James Houghton, Church of Our Redeemer, Lexington
The Rev. Thea Keith-Lucas, Chaplain at MIT
The Rev. Philip LaBelle, St. Mark's Church, Southborough
Lucinda McClain, St. Stephen's Church, Lynn
Victoria Perez-Gonzales, St. Luke's-San Lucas Church, Chelsea
The Rev. Deborah Phillips, Grace Church, Salem
Douglas Unkel, St. Andrew's Church, Ayer
Clark Warner, St. Bartholomew's Church, Cambridge