

Helena Deanery Proposed Plan



Parish Input Process

The plan that you find below is the result of the work of a Planning Committee composed of parish representatives and Pastors/pastoral administrators from each parish in the Helena Deanery who gathered to look at the reality of providing quality pastoral care with fewer priests to serve our Diocese in the future.

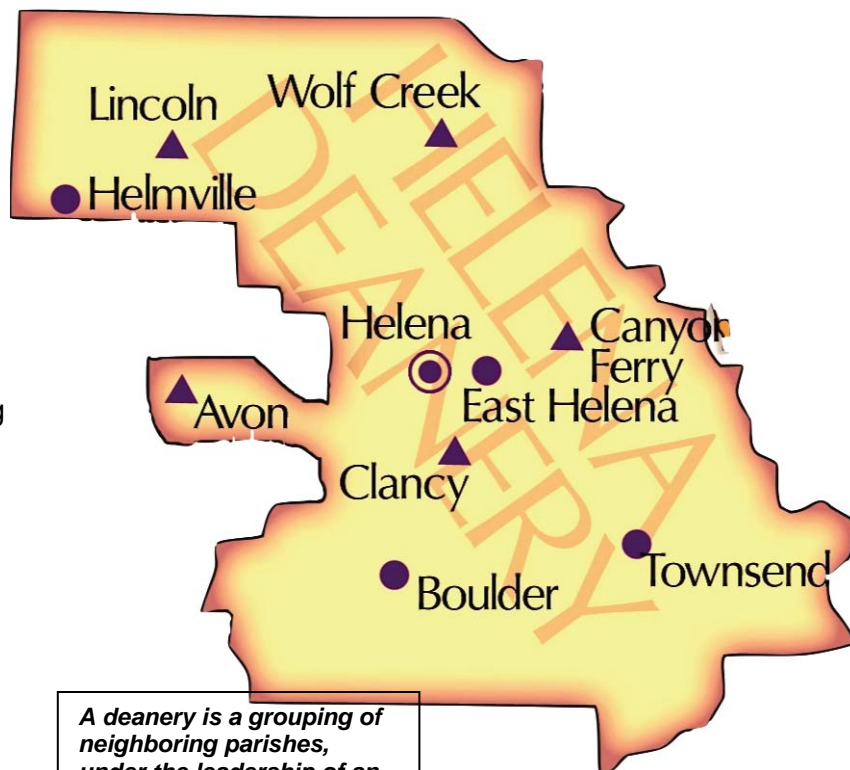
The following plan is a possible roadmap for the future and, if adopted, would be used as it became necessary.

You are asked to read and prayerfully consider the plan, and make any comments or recommendations to the Planning Committee on the form provided.

For your study there is provided:

1. Copy of the Proposed Plan (below);
2. A map of the Deanery (above);
3. Listing of the average weekend attendance for the parishes/missions of the Deanery;
4. A form for returning your responses to the Deanery Planning Committee (Please turn this completed and signed form to your parish by **February 8, 2012**);
5. For more information, please plan to attend your **Parish Input Meeting—watch your bulletin for details.**

Helena Deanery Map



A deanery is a grouping of neighboring parishes, under the leadership of an area priest appointed as Dean, joined together to foster common pastoral care for the people of God in those parishes.

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The Planning Group for the Helena Deanery made every effort to ensure that parish communities maintained their identity with sacramental ministry provided at each site. This Deanery planning group wanted the planning to be flexible to be able to adapt to the reality that would be present when parts of the plan needed to be implemented. There are options provided in this plan that make it more flexible.

Our Lady of the Valley in Helena (with a mission in Wolf Creek) will remain as it is as long as the priest assigned there serves part-time as pastor with other duties.

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The plan envisions two priests at the **Cathedral** (with a mission in Avon) and foresees the possibility that **Helmville and Lincoln** may be added into the Cathedral cluster as that becomes necessary. It would also be possible that, if Avon, Helmville, Lincoln were part of a priest-sacramental minister's assignment, that the Cathedral could be clustered with either Boulder or Townsend parishes as that becomes necessary.

When the diocese can no longer provide a resident priest for **Boulder** (St. Catherine and St. John), it is envisioned that it will be clustered with a parish in Helena or East Helena. The clustering parish would be decided when that becomes necessary. If it is economically feasible, there will be a pastoral administrator (either full or part-time) appointed to serve the parish.

When the diocese can no longer provide a resident priest for the parish in **Townsend**, it is envisioned that it will be clustered with a parish in Helena or East Helena. The clustering parish would be decided when that becomes necessary. If it is economically feasible, there will be a pastoral administrator (either full or part-time) appointed to serve the parish.

Saint Mary in Helena maintains a priest and, as it is necessary, will cluster with either Boulder or Townsend.

Ss. Cyril and Methodius in East Helena (with missions in Clancy and Canyon Ferry) maintains a priest and, as it is necessary, will cluster with either Boulder or Townsend.

There was also a possibility discussed that **Saint Mary in Helena and Ss. Cyril and Methodius** would be clustered under one pastor but with a pastor and associate (two priests) serving these parishes.

All sites in this Deanery and throughout the Diocese will be part of a yearly on-going process to study their sustainability. Some of the aspects of this study will include a yearly look at: Parish Mass attendance, annual offertory income, debt retirement (if any), parish plant maintenance, parish and diocesan financial obligations met. It will also consider parish vitality and engagement. This study will be completed each year and any adjustments needed to the plan will follow.

Average Weekend Mass Attendance

“October Counts” (Average weekend attendance): Each year the diocese asks each parish and mission to do a hand count of all those attending Mass on three weekends in October. October is chosen as there is no holiday or celebration that might take people away from their parish. If there are local reasons to change this to a more “normal” weekend, we encourage pastors to do so. The numbers for the three weekends are sent to the Diocese and the average of the three is taken to get the usual number actually attending Mass on a weekend in each site. Below you will find the statistics for the 2010 “October Counts” in the Helena Deanery.

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Helena Deanery "October Counts" 2010

Cathedral – Helena	2044
St, Theodore -- Avon	40
St. Mary -- Helena	522
Our Lady of the Valley -- Helena	478
Sacred Heart Mission -- Wolf Creek	18
Sts. Cyril and Methodius – East Helena	446
St. John the Baptist – Clancy	54
Our Lady of the Lake -- Canyon Ferry Lake	33
St. Catherine – Boulder (with St. John's)	95
St. John the Evangelist Mission	**Church of Occasional Worship
Holy Cross Parish – Townsend	131
St. Thomas the Apostle -- Helmville	59
St. Jude the Apostle -- Lincoln	39

* **“Clustered parishes”**: A clustered parish has a priest as its pastor; however the priest may live at another location and will serve as pastor of more than one community. The goal is that by clustering parishes, the identity of each parish will be maintained.

** **“Church of Occasional Worship”(Oratory)**: Churches are designated as such by the Bishop for the benefit of some community or group of faithful ; Mass is not celebrated regularly on weekends but is celebrated at least once per year, usually on the feast day of the Church. Church maintenance, repairs, insurance, upkeep is financed by the local community.