

MISSION ACTION PLAN REPORT

A Mission Action Plan (MAP) is designed to be a living process, intended to adapt and grow as the Holy Spirit guides our diocese, parishes, and missions to more fully embrace the callings God has for us. In 2024, we entered a pivotal phase with the launch of MAP 2.0 — a process that builds on the foundation of the first MAP, inviting us to explore deeper and imagine more boldly how we can partner with God to deepen faith, join God's mission, and care for God's world.

Parish MAP 2.0

Seventy-five percent of parishes in the Diocese of Niagara participated in the initial Parish MAP process, introduced in 2022. The stories from parishes actively implementing the initiatives from MAP 1.0 are filled with energy, enthusiasm, and renewed hope. While some parishes continue working on their original goals, others are ready to enter a new phase of listening to God, each other, and their neighbours.

In June, the Parish MAP 2.0 resource guide was released. MAP 2.0 focuses on reviewing the first MAP goals and deciding whether to continue, adapt, or stop the initiatives that were chosen. Parishes are then prompted to explore how they can deepen their commitment to the initiatives they choose to continue. Finally, they are invited to discern what new, bold, missional initiatives God may be calling them to pursue.

Several parishes are currently engaged in the MAP 2.0 process, and those that have not yet undertaken a MAP are strongly encouraged to do so. The process and actions that result from it have proven to be life-giving not only for parishes but also for the broader communities and neighbourhoods in which God has placed them.

Diocesan MAP 2.0

Over the last year, we have been in a time of discernment and engaging in the MAP 2.0 process to renew our diocesan objectives and strategies. In 2019, the diocese initiated the first MAP process, which resulted in a plan, approved by Synod Council in 2020, that has guided and focused our ministry initiatives for the past five years. Since then, significant changes, including the challenges of the pandemic, have prompted us to reflect on how we engage in God's mission going forward. Despite these challenges, we not only met the goals set in 2019 but exceeded expectations by embracing new directions and opportunities that God sent our way.

As part of the MAP 2.0 process, we have gathered feedback through focus groups and surveys to assess our implementation of the 2019 MAP and identify priorities for the next three to five years. The feedback has been positive, with a strong consensus that we have achieved our 2019 objectives in the three focus areas: igniting and strengthening faith, reimagining diocesan culture, and prioritizing social justice. Respondents affirmed that these focus areas still align with God's calling for our diocese but expressed the need to refresh the ways in which we carry out this calling. In other words, while our "what" remains unchanged, our "how" is changing to better meet the current hopes and needs of our parishes, missions, and the communities to which they belong.

Vision and Mission Statements

The feedback we received suggests that our current vision and mission statements should remain in place until the next MAP as they continue to accurately reflect our identity and calling. There is one minor revision to the diocesan mission statement; “share stories” has been replaced with “join God’s mission” as a way of emphasizing our strong commitment to being a missional diocese.

Vision: Called to Life – Compelled to Love

Mission: Ignited by the irresistible love of Jesus and renewed by the Holy Spirit, we partner with God to deepen faith, join God’s mission, and care for God’s world.

Renewed Priorities

Three priorities consistently emerged from the feedback we received. While these priorities are already central to our work and ministry as a diocese, it is important that we articulate them clearly and explicitly, positioning them as central to MAP 2.0, and using them as guiding principles for the coming years.

Christ-Centered: Our top priority in MAP 2.0 is to keep our eyes firmly fixed on Christ. By maintaining our focus on Jesus, and his irresistible love for us, we can be confident that we are following God's path and fulfilling God mission.

Hope-Filled: We are committed to making the diocese a place where hope is embodied, cultivated, and shared. In these challenging times, marked by disillusionment and hopelessness, MAP 2.0 reflects our deep commitment to being a place where the hope we have in Christ and the inbreaking of God’s kingdom are woven into the fabric of our identity.

Missionally-Focused: Our future as a diocese relies on both strengthening existing parishes and developing new, contextual missions and missional initiatives that emerge from the gifts, needs, dreams, and desires of the wider community. MAP 2.0 focuses on supporting our current parishes to be missionally engaged with their neighbours while also building new contextual missions that partner with and serve those who have left church or have never belonged to a church.

MAP 2.0 Details

The chart following this report outlines the details of the Diocese of Niagara’s updated Mission Action Plan (MAP). As you will see, the first and third objectives remain unchanged, while the second objective has been revised to better reflect the current missional stance of the diocese. Our strategies have evolved from being broader in 2019 to more specific in 2024 as the path God sent us on 5 years ago has become clearer. The verses from Jeremiah that are the focus of the 150th Synod remind us of not only God’s plans to lead us into a fruitful future but also the importance of prayer, listening and seeking God’s will. Our ongoing engagement with Mission Action Planning reflects our commitment as a diocese to listening for God’s direction and adapting our ministry to align with God’s unfolding mission.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the diocesan MAP 2.0 process. Thank you also to all the people in parishes and missions who are committed to engaging in the MAP process and living out its goals in your local contexts.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Emily Hill
Parish Development Missioner

Vision:
Called to Life - Compelled to Love

Mission Statement:
**Ignited by the irresistible love of Jesus and renewed by the Holy Spirit,
we partner with God to deepen faith, join God's mission, and care for God's world.**

Objective and Strategies	
1	<p>Create and implement opportunities to ignite and strengthen faith</p> <p><u>Strategies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Grow the Niagara School for Missional Leadership to equip lay and ordained leaders for missional ministry.B. Hire a coordinator to support and enhance faith formation initiatives within parishes and missions.C. Provide resources, guidance, and support to parishes and missions to build relationships with and start initiatives for those who have left church or have never belonged to a church.D. Nurture lifelong discipleship and spiritual growth with a specific focus on the faith formation of young adults.
2	<p>Strengthen the missional culture of the diocese and support contextual mission</p> <p><u>Strategies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Develop parishes that both nurture existing worshipping communities and start new contextual missional initiatives; a mixed ecology model.B. Invest resources to grow existing and new missions in the diocese, with a focus on long-term sustainability through responsible financial stewardship.C. Share missional stories to spark imagination and inspire new possibilities for ministry.D. Promote stewardship best practices, encourage entrepreneurial and creative approaches to sustain and expand ministries, and maximize the use of assets such as church buildings to support missional endeavours.
3	<p>Prioritize social and environmental justice</p> <p>The Gospel calls us to work to transform unjust structures, uphold the dignity of every human being, and safeguard the integrity of Creation. While we are called by God to challenge all forms of injustice, our diocese will place particular emphasis on promoting anti-racism initiatives, combating human trafficking, supporting migrant farmworkers, addressing the homelessness and housing crisis, fostering truth and reconciliation, and confronting the climate crisis.</p> <p><u>Strategies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Provide tools, strategies, and resources for prayer and advocacy for parishes and missions to amplify our collective voice.B. Prioritize partnerships by fostering collaboration and collective action among parishes, missions, community partners and ecumenical organizations to further God's justice.C. Cultivate a lived faith that promotes justice initiatives to address unjust structures while attending to the spiritual needs of our neighbours.