



# Reunification Discernment



## Considering Reunification: a discernment resource

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### Reunification

#### Advantages

- Increased collaboration in ministry and participation in God's mission with greater strength, yielding a greater impact in our communities (more people, greater breadth of expertise)
- Security for the future: the continuation of a vibrant ministry in Jesus' Way of Love for the next generations of church goers, achieved by making careful changes in administration
- Strengthened Beloved Community initiatives (Joint Racial Justice Commission / UBE Chapter expanded into DioBeth / Latinx Ministries / Creation Care / Anti-gun Violence efforts)
- Increased savings (one convention, one clergy conference, unified systems, processes etc.)
- Increased financial stability for the long-term
- Cost of operations will decrease
- Ability to maintain a full staff to serve parishes (Congregational development, Transition, Financial support, Investment Oversight and Financial Management, Formation, Children Youth and Families, Safe Church, Communications, Grants Administration, etc.)
- Updated Policies, Bylaws and Canons (extensively reviewed by Chancellor Team)
- Shared support for the Stevenson School and Kajo Keji New Hope Initiative
- Regional (dispersed) leadership allowing for local response to immediate pastoral and parish needs across the diocese
- Larger pool of candidates to populate canonical bodies (Council, Standing Committee, Commission on Ministry, Disciplinary Board)
- Spiritual vitality- a theology of abundance, not scarcity
- Vision matches that of Presiding Bishop Elect and General Convention 81

#### Adjustments

- Intensive efforts needed to bring together Staff, Financial Systems, and new Leadership Bodies (flexibility and openness to new ways of functioning)
- Potentially longer travel time to meetings that require in-person participation
- (Dio CPA) adjustment to a dispersed leadership model (Dio Beth already employs this method successfully)
- A shift in the visitation calendar of the bishop (if only one bishop and 119 parishes) the calendar will extend to 3- year from 2-year cycle.
- Representation at triennial General Convention will shift from two deputations (lay and clergy deputies) to one. (If we have 2 bishops, both will retain voting privileges)
- A new name for the diocese
- Letting go of some comfortable practices or familiar engagement



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## Staying Separate (Not reunifying)

### Advantages

- Comfort. Business as usual
- No immediate change in episcopal leadership

### Causes for Concern

- Unsustainability of several parishes in a 5-7 year window that will lead to parishes closing and a decrease in size of both dioceses. This would affect:
  - The ability to have a full diocesan staff
  - The ability to offer robust diocesan services to parishes (unless there are Fair Share increases to enhance budget from remaining churches and make up lost income from closed parishes)
  - Eventual move to part-time bishop effecting less episcopal availability
- Ongoing challenges of filling volunteer positions for boards, councils and committees due to smaller numbers of people and aging population
- Need to hire a new bishop in Central PA after 2027
- Spiritual weariness from continued efforts at managing decline