

St. Mary Pastoral Council November, 2014 Meeting Minutes

Date: November 12, 2014
Time: 7:00 – 8:30 PM
Place: Large Meeting Room (2nd floor)

Meeting Invitees

Pastoral Council members, Msgr. Michael Rose, Fr. Marcin Nowicki
Per Article VI of the Pastoral Council Bylaws: *All meetings of the Pastoral Council are open to all parishioners and members of the parish staff.*

Meeting Attendees

Pastoral Council: Susan Zybert, Bob Terry, Tim Rivard, Sheila Seed, Ellen O'Connor, Mike Nelson, Jorge Fernandez, Jim Farrell, Bob Doiron, Kurt Brenner

Ministries: Maria Lemieux (Finance Ministry)

Parish Staff: Msgr. Michael Rose, Fr. Marcin Nowicki

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 PM by Jim Farrell, Vice Chairperson of the Pastoral Council (Council Chair Jim Heald was unable to attend). The Council opened the meeting with a thoughtful prayer offered by Sheila S. The October, 2014 Meeting Minutes were read and accepted with minor revisions.

Finance Ministry Report

Msgr. Mike introduced Maria Lemieux, who provided a comprehensive report regarding the Parish finances. The presentation was prepared in advance of an upcoming release of financial statements to the Parish (in the weekly bulletin) as well and an upcoming appeal for additional regular giving through weekly collections.

Maria reported that a review of weekly collections clearly shows that giving increases immediately following a specific appeal by the Pastor, then tends to decline steadily (even without accounting for the effects of inflation on the value of dollars collected in 2014 vs. dollars collected in, say, 2004). One noteworthy point Maria made was that, in absolute terms, collections in 2014 were in fact lower than in 2006.

The Council also received information about the Capital Campaign, which began approximately eight years ago. Essentially, Maria reported that the outstanding loan balance is approximately \$1M, while outstanding pledges amount to only approximately \$100,000. She provided a useful illustration concluding that, in the absence of additional receipts to retire the debt, the outstanding loan balance would flatten out in 2015 and then begin to rise.

The Council had several questions for Maria and for Fr. Mike. Among them: How does St. Mary Parish stack up against other parishes in the Diocese in terms of cash reserves? What should we consider an optimal level of reserves? What level of giving would it take to pay off the construction/renovation loan over the next few years? What level of giving is appropriate for St. Mary's? How might that be achieved? These were discussed, but no conclusions were reached at this meeting.

Bob Doiron asked Fr. Mike to consider reconstituting the Capital Campaign. This topic was tabled until our December 10 meeting.

Pastor's Update

Parish sign project -

- Fr. Mike reported that the investigation into permitting requirements was quick and easy (there weren't any prohibitions to affect the project). A Holly Fair sign is already up. New signs will cost \$100 apiece.
- All agreed that this seems to have been a successful project and thanked Fr. Mike for his actions.
- Susan suggested that we should put in temporary spot lights on the sign, since the evening traffic rush is dark and many would miss the sign if it's not lit up.

Evangelization & Adult Faith Formation

Fr. Andre Patenaude (Fr. Pat) offered a Healing Mass on October 19th at St. Mary's. Over 400 people from the Cluster Parishes of Shrewsbury & Boylston attended the Mass and concert. Vi Jefferson did a great job organizing and publicizing the event...comments from attendees included: "wonderful," "excellent"...

Fr. Mike reported that 22 parishioners attended the first installment in the new series of Adult Faith Formation events. The theme for the evening was "What Makes Us Catholic?" and the discussion was led by Fr. Mike. The next event will center on a review of the ideas described in Matthew Kelly's "Rediscovering Catholicism."

The October 22 Feast Day for Pope St. John Paul II was celebrated in the Parish by Rosary prayer in several languages that represent the diversity now found at St. Mary's. Prayers were offered in Spanish, Hungarian, Tagalog (a language spoken in the Philippines), Malayan, and a dialect spoken in Nigeria.

On October 25-26, a pew count was conducted and it showed a slight increase over last year, but a decline of about 10% over the past five years. It was noted that there was a smaller Confirmation class this year, which correlates to relatively smaller class sizes in Shrewsbury and is believed to be a temporary phenomenon, since the lower grades have higher numbers of students.

New meetings on the topic of cultural diversity were planned for Wed., Nov. 19 and Sun., Nov. 23. Fr. Mike will moderate and lead discussion. Fr. Mike is looking for Pastoral Council members to attend and provide feedback (general impressions, actions, ideas).

Other Items:

The discussion of the subject of organizing a "Men's Meeting" was deferred until the next meeting. Kurt B. and Jim F. will lead the discussion.

Suzan Z. described a John Boucher book she has been reading and mentioned that an event including traditional Christmas carols and Scripture will be run by Susan, Rick Vacca and Sue Landry on Friday 12/12 at 6:30pm.

Ellen O'C brought to the attention of the Council that she had been approached by a small group of parishioners who are interested in evaluating and proposing new acoustic upgrades to the church. The group

would like to research and present their findings at an upcoming Council meeting. Ellen will invite them to the February, 2015 meeting.

Susan Z. recommended that we add 1 extra collection per month to help retire the Capital Campaign loan debt.

Welcome Table Assignments

December 7: Blanchard & Terry

Meeting Calendar

- The next meeting of the Pastoral Council term will be held on December 10, 2014.
- On the fiscal 2015 calendar, Pastoral Council meetings will be held on:
 - September 10, 2014
 - October 8, 2014
 - November 12, 2014
 - December 10, 2014 (Parish Ministry leaders invited)
 - February 11, 2015
 - April 8, 2015
 - June 10, 2015

Our meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm by Jim F. after a motion by Bob T. and a second by Mike N.