

## **Minutes of St. Jerome Pastoral Council Meeting December 14, 2015**



### **In Attendance:**

Father David, Father Rojin, Bob Yap, Jesse Yap, Kathy Coyne, Neil Dennehy, Missy Ely, Mary Ann Holowinko, Jeff Kress, Joe Licek, Samantha Lusniak, Lee Larchevesque.

Mary Ann led the Council in prayer and Jeff provided refreshments for the meeting.

### **Global Challenges for the Parish:**

Fr. David reported that a goal of tonight's meeting was a discussion of the 5 Global Challenges arising from the Fourth Synod of the Diocese, and coming up with a list of suggested candidates for our Parish Planning Committee. He summarized the process of data collection from our parish via a survey from the Catholic Leadership Institute, who will send a team to guide our Parish Planning Committee in crafting a plan for addressing the most important improvement we choose. We will focus on the one of the 5 challenges we deem most significant for our Parish. The Bishop's wants to address trends of declining attendance, participation, and other statistics relevant to the life of the Church and the Catholic faith; his goal is nothing less than a change in the longstanding culture of the relationship between a parish, its parishioners, and its priest, which seeks to give the parish more of a role in charting its course.

The 5 challenges are: Liturgy & Worship, Family Life, Evangelization, Leadership, and Catechesis & Education. After some discussion of the significance and interdependence of many of these, we took a "straw poll" to gauge which one we feel is the most important to our parish. The results:

Family Life (5) – Joe, Neil, Jeff, Lee, Mary Ann; Evangelization (4) – Kathy, Bob, Missy, Samantha; Liturgy & Worship (1) – Jesse; Jack voted by email for Catechesis & Education.

Our Parish Planning Committee, to be assembled by Fr. David by early January, will receive training from the Diocese. They will attend meetings to examine the data on our parish collected by the survey, and also meet with the Catholic Leadership Institute a few times. Names we generated as potential candidates included Dan Loch, Missy Ely, Anthony D'Souza, Len Mecca, Carol Oustafine, Kathy Mulford, Alison Valerie, Steve Silvi, Claire Budnick, Jack O'Melia, and Beth Olson.

### **Pastors Report:**

Confirmation took place on the second Sunday of Advent; all went well, feedback was positive, the Bishop was impressive, and Fr. David was pleased!

Christmas this year -- The 4PM Christmas Eve Mass is always a logistical challenge, but parking lot policing, ushering, Eucharistic ministers, are all in place. Of concern

is a need for better lighting for the parking lot and the church entrance. Fr. Rojin's first Christmas in America is sure to be a joyous event!

Emmaus Weekend will take place on MLK weekend; Claire is organizing this year. The goal is at least 12 youthful participants, which seems attainable due to a large junior class this year.

Night-In-A-Box was very successful, generating some great publicity for our young people and our parish in the Norwalk Hour and local cable TV coverage.

#### Building and Grounds Committee:

Joe Licek reported:

- Alex Sgoutas has been busy gathering estimates from electricians to solve **the church's inadequate exterior lighting problems**; Fr. David has an immediate need for illumination of the entrance nearest the rectory, and has been in touch with a parishioner who is an electrician about a solution ASAP; Neil knows him and will push for this.
- **Asbestos abatement** in the boiler room has resulted in removal of a considerable amount of insulation on the pipes, which must be replaced; Alex and Joe are working on this.
- The door to the tunnel needs to be locked; Joe and Woody will install this.
- ENCON has proposed a **conversion of our heating system from the current antiquated pneumatic air system to one more modern and electrically controlled**. Three thermostats will allow more efficient regulation of the heat in the church. The Finance Council has approved this expense and Fr. David has signed the contract!
- As part of the planning process ENCON needed a copy of the original plans of the church, so **a new Drop Box** was created to provide a means of electronic transfer of this data. Joe reported that we also have an older Drop Box, originally created and controlled by John Davis. Recognizing the need to consolidate cloud data storage, and regulate security of document storage, Joe suggested we condense and upgrade to one Drop Box, the professional edition, which for \$99 per year includes this increased capability, and volunteered to take charge of condensing and re-organizing our cloud storage.

Parish Financial Report: Fr. David distributed documentation of finances through 11/30/15. As of November 30th 2015, our deficit is running at \$13,500. Cash flow was helped by Karen Christensen's great job on the wreath and candle sales, which brought in over \$2,000. The Christmas collection will also provide a significant boost, and the June Raffle will help us catch up if necessary.

#### Parish Website & Smartphone App:

After researching and trying several alternatives, Fr. Rojin recommends we engage the services of Share Faith, which offers website and smartphone app creation and maintenance and provides us with much flexibility in keeping content up to date, controlling the look and feel of our data management. The cost is reasonable: \$41

per month (if paid annually). We will have the ability to upload audio and video of homilies, messages, any information we choose to stream to any smart device, accessed via a password-protected web portal.

Missy made a motion, which was seconded by Mary Ann, and unanimously approved, that we proceed with this project. Fr. Rojin will form a team involving Dan Loch, Jack, and Bill Sweeney, who is involved with our current website.

**Old Business:**

- Mary Ann reported that the **dome on the propane tank** is in place and needs only to be painted; Hocon will supply the paint; Joe & Alex will complete the project!
- Lee asked about plans for a **“retirement party” for Fr. Joe**. Fr. David reported that current plans call for a Sunday afternoon “Open House”, either 3/6 or 4/3, from 12-2 PM in the hall. Lee will seek input from the Saturday morning Men’s Group; a retirement gift is anticipated, and Lee and Joe will oversee this.
- Missy asked about a possible **pancake breakfast in February**. While nothing has yet been planned, Lee will seek input from the Men’s Group on Saturday.

Fr. David concluded the meeting at 8:20; Fr. Rojin led us in a closing prayer.

The next meeting will be held on January 11, 2016, at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Jeff Kress