

**Mary, Mother of Mercy,  
Parish Council Meeting of 1/12/2017**

**Present:** Fr. Bernard, Donna Brandow, Gerald Frank, Susan Houseknecht, Charlotte Huyler, Phyllis Kaiser, Andy Morpurgo, Jessica Portillo, Kathleen Rourke, Ron Singer, Jeanie Wiggins, and Barbara Willers

**Excused:** Michelle Barr, Cathy Millspaugh, Amy Panek, Nancy Shumway, Pam Jasikoff ?, Fr. Brendan

**Guest:** Eileen Heptig

- **Opening Prayer:** Father Bernard led the opening prayer.
- **Minutes:** Minutes of our Nov. 10, 2016, meeting were moved and seconded to be accepted with corrections.
- **Sense of Parish:** No comment from some. Others reported as follows:
  - more people at some churches
  - St. James is discouraged by all the changes, feel they gave up a lot with little gain, loss of office was “final blow,” feel that a strong preference is given to the other two churches to St. James detriment, fear of future
  - St. James people are not happy with 11 a.m. Mass as it is too late in the day. Miss parish office.
  - HC ministers like the one Mass better, less coverage needed. Confirmation kids find it “eye-opening on how it is growing in size” with more participants.
  - Need more mixing between the three churches, mainly positive feedback about growing as a parish
  - People feel St. James is favored over St. F. and HC. Problems with scheduling
  - Problems with Thanksgiving at St. J. over St. F. which is more central
  - St. J. perspective is that is lost quite a few people with the merge and change in Mass times, maybe they went to Immaculate?
  - St. J. many are unhappy with loss of 8 a.m. Mass and are surprised at number of people, 12 at least at the 8:30 a.m. Mass at Immaculate, people who used to attend either the 8 a.m. or the 10:30 a.m. Masses at St. James. They don’t like the 11 a.m. Mass time. How to get an early Mass time back at St. James? One person has tried the Mass at St. F. and HC and didn’t like some of their practices (ex: “forced” to hold hands during Our Father).
  - People don’t like 11 a.m. Mass, too late. Former 8 a.m. Mass people miss being together as community. See former 8 a.m. people at Immaculate.
  - Numbers have decreased, loss of people and money
  - One Sunday St. F. has five altar servers, which was great!
  - Equal distance to Immaculate and St. Fr. from T’burg so why are people going to Ithaca over Interlaken? Some prefer quieter Mass. Great singers at Immaculate.
  - Like St. F. because it has a close family sense, “so neat!”

Discussion about why, if money is now combined, no longer separate, why list different church on checks?

Reply- Good to keep track of which church is being supported, ease of transitions, make sure individual church income matches money spent, deposits continue to be separate. Does putting a church in memo line create a legal requirement that that money be spent at that church? Eileen will look into this last question.

• **Committee reports:**

Committee chairs are reminded to share electronic copies of their reports with Council members prior to meeting.

Fellowship committee (social activity and communication):

- see report prepared by the committee
- The St. James Women's guild met in November and will be continuing its donations as in the past, including sponsoring a family for Christmas.
- The Parish of Mary, Mother of Mercy, dinner/dance to celebrate the merging of the three Catholic churches was held on Friday, October 28, 2016 at the Trumansburg American Legion from 6:00 to 10:00 p.m. with the Tarps providing the music. Over ninety people were in attendance and a \$20 profit was realized.
- Brief discussion about how to get Mass times for major holidays (Easter and Christmas) included in local newspapers, including diocese's, for both Seneca and Tompkins counties.

Word committee (education and evangelization)

- see printed report of committee
- Christmas went well.
- No confirmation classes in February due to scheduling and super bowl Sunday.
- RCIA – there are four students in instruction with Fr. Bernard
- General discussion about a book to used during Lent. The M. Kelly book, *Rediscover Jesus*, is inexpensive (\$3 a copy). Father feels it is too superficial.
- Pope Emeritus Benedict has a Holy week book with study guides, *Jesus of Nazareth: Holy Week, Entrance into Jerusalem to the Resurrection*. A bit deep so a copy with a study guide is recommended. Is a bit pricey (\$15.13 for hardcover) so maybe ask people to buy the book themselves in advance of discussion group?
- Parish mission: Andy will take it back to committee for discussion. It may be too tight to try and get one in for Lent.

Witness committee (social action):

- See printed report from committee
- Handout provided of people served as part of the community Christmas project for Seneca County. 350 households served, 1418 people, including gifts for 33 foster care children.

- Hand and mitten tree at St. James was good. Suggestion that it should start in the fall, for distribution before the cold weather.
- no reports on how many people did the reverse Advent box.
- Souper Bowl of Caring, the first Sunday in February – results will be distributed to our local food pantries.
- A bulletin announcement is being prepared to support the South Seneca Backpack program during three Sundays in February.

#### Worship committee (liturgy)

- See full report
- Parish of Mary, Mother of Mercy, won't be hosting a Thanksgiving ecumenical service again until 2020 as it rotates with the local (South Seneca) churches.
- Trumansburg Area Churches (TAC) sponsors an annual gathering of local church choirs for a concert in celebration of Christmas. This year the event was called: "Season of Songs" and was held on Sunday, December 4, 2016, at the First Presbyterian Church. Our choir was a mix of all three churches. CD is available from Fr. Bernard.
- Christmas vigil – attendance seemed low but not sure why. "Was wonderful!"
- The prayer service celebrating the close of the Extraordinary Year of Divine Mercy was held on November 12, at St. F. Church. Ten to fifteen people were present. It was a nice way to end the year of Mercy.
- Parish choir is growing. They will resume practices this week, preparing for Lent and Easter
- A subcommittee has been formed – Liturgy Planning Committee. They met the first time last night. There will be no special celebration in January but did discuss two in February: Candlemas and St. Blaise (blessing of throats).
- General discussion of ideas and Mass times for Ash Wednesday. It was suggested that we purchase Magnificats for Lent, so people can take them home and reflect during Lent. Will be available after services on Ash Wednesday.
- Diocesan Day of Reconciliation: The diocese is asking that the Sacrament of Reconciliation be available from Noon until 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 28. Only one priest will be available, Fr. Bernard, who will be at the Parish Center.
- A communal celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be celebrated on Monday of Holy Week at 7:00 p.m. at the Parish Center with music.
- Schedule for Triduum: Holy Thursday, 7:00 p.m. at Holy Cross; Good Friday, 3:00 p.m. at St. Francis Solanus; Easter Vigil, 8:00 p.m. at St. James the Apostle. For Easter Sunday the regular Sunday Mass schedule will be followed.

- Additional Lenten services: Stations usually have the same handful of people at both HC and St. J. in the past. Will now be at St. F. on Thursday with a suggestion that there be soup before and benediction after. The children in the Religion Education Program of St. Francis, in the past, have gathered on a Friday of Lent in the afternoon for the devotion of the Stations of the Cross. Will this happen this year ??? St. F. needs to confirm they have enough books for the stations. Maybe borrow from St. J? Suggested that there be music as people move from station to station and that each church might provide music one week at a time.
- There is a music ministry meeting scheduled for Feb. 2. Brief discussion of state of music ministry in parish. Request was made that we purchase pianos for HC and St. J. General discussion: about needs of HC and St. J, trouble with organ at HC, more people available to play piano than organ (“if you have a piano there, people will show up to play it”), difficult to coordinate between singers on floor and organ in back, St. J. just got rid of a piano a few years back and may have a spare organ in basement.
- Sound systems: St. F. has received three bids and are in favor of one of them - that one, needs some tweaking before final approval, they may need another speaker and microphone. HC is working ok using Jessica’s equipment. At St. J. the acoustics are pretty good, but not sure from organ loft. Need Finance Council input before any major purchases.

**Building projects, finances, and staffing:**

Eileen introduced as the parish business manager. She reported on numbers of parishioners at the churches for weekend Masses and provided a handout of the numbers from July 2016-December 2016 for HC and St. J. She didn’t have the numbers for St. F. but was informed on how to obtain them. Between HC and St. J. we have lost \$9k in collections for the first six months of the new parish. Some discussion followed on why this might be happening.

**Next meeting:**

Our next meeting will be Thursday, March 9, 2017, at 7:00 p.m. at St. Francis Solanus annex. We won’t meet in February as Father will be away most of that month.

**Comments from Father:**

Change in general is upsetting, especially a major change like the merge. It is a bit like Trump’s problem, lack of respect for the office. Need to get that back. We need to keep sight of our direction and on positive things to keep balance. No way we will go back to three parishes. This is the way it is going to be so try to keep a positive approach.

**Closing prayer:** The Glory Be

*Respectfully submitted by Kathleen E. Rourke ~ with Fr. B’s changes*