

Mary, Mother of Mercy, Parish Council Meeting of 3/9/2017

Present: Michele Barr, Fr. Bernard, Donna Brandow, Gerald Frank, Susan Houseknecht, Charlotte Huyler, Phyllis Kaiser, Cathy Millspaugh, Andy Morpurgo, Amy Panek, Jessica Portillo, Kathleen Rourke, and Barbara Willers

Excused: Ron Singer, Nancy Shumway, Jeanie Wiggins, Fr. Brendan

- **Opening Prayer:** Stations of the Cross with Benediction

- **Minutes:** Minutes of our Jan. 12, 2017, meeting were moved and seconded to be accepted as written. The general consensus was that the council liked getting a draft of the minutes within a week or two of the meeting.

- **Committee reports:**
Committee chairs kindly shared electronic copies of their reports with Council members prior to the meeting.

Witness committee (social action):

- See report from committee. Comment that it was appreciated how they did an explanation of the backpack program in the various local communities.
- Personal care items: This appears to be an ongoing collection in each of the churches. All three churches have a box so people can drop off items. Both HC and St. F. have a special month (May) for this collection.
- Rice bowls: These are available every year at St. J. and St. F. Father has them but hasn't put them out yet. He will give them to the Rel. Ed. students first. St. F. does a "Food for Poor" instead. A suggestion was made that we consider doing the Rice bowls at all three churches next year.

Fellowship committee (social activity and communication):

- See report prepared by the committee
- The committee suggested that we do some sort of ceremony dedicating our parish to Our Lady of Mercy. As this could involve other groups, such as Rel. Ed. students (Word) and some sort of liturgy (Worship), it is something the three groups need to discuss together. Part of the discussion included the idea of doing something separate in May, such as a May crowning of the statue of Mary, with the children. Often parents provide treats and coffee afterwards. As a separate event, maybe deciding on one day a year to celebrate our parish, beginning with a dedication. Father said he could not find a formal feast day for Mary, Mother of Mercy. Aug. 15, Assumption feast day, was suggested for our purposes. The three committees will consider and get back to us with a proposal.

- There was some miscommunication between Fellowship and Worship regarding a soup supper to accompany the Stations. Both chairs will work to enhance future communications between their committees.
- There was some discussion between the Word and Fellowship committees about doing some sort of adult catechesis with the book *Consoling the Heart of Jesus*.
- Communications: the Easter schedule has been posted in various local newspapers. Brief discussion about what newspapers might be available for additional postings.
- There was a comment about when you search for the Mary, Mother of Mercy, website it shows Trumansburg in the results. Kathleen will ask the diocesan web person about this. It was explained that the diocese maintains the database for the website, not Trumansburg.
- As per the bulletin, now that the design for the new bulletin has been finalized it is hoped that Mary, the parish secretary, will take on this weekly task as it is part of her job description.

Word committee (education and evangelization)

- The committee has largely focused on children's faith education this year and acknowledges a need to work on developing adult catechesis.
- Andy is chair of the committee but is also serving as de facto Religious Education director. He will be meeting with the teachers to review the year and see what worked and what didn't. He hopes to try to find someone to coordinate adult faith education and someone to be the coordinator for religious education. Both would be volunteer positions.
- Father congratulated Andy and his team for doing an amazing job this year, especially given the number of kids. Andy in turn congratulated Gerry for doing a great job coordinating the confirmation program.
- First communion will be May 21 for the seven St. James kids and June 4 for the two children from St. Francis. First penance for will be next week. Usually there is a coffee hour after the first communion services, sponsored by parents. Fellowship Committee may want to help coordinate this.
- Stations for kids was discussed. There have been various degrees of attendance in the past. No date for this year has yet been decided. If it does happen, Andy has booklets for the stations.

Worship committee (liturgy)

- See full report
- St. Francis has received a new sound system.
- Stations will continue to be held on Thursdays at 7 p.m. at St. Francis. Holy Cross opted to do their own and made their own arrangements on Wednesdays with 7 people in attendance. St. James didn't know this was an option and had been trying to go along with the parish stations at St. Francis.

- While the subcommittees of music and liturgy have met, the Worship committee itself has not yet had an opportunity to meet.
- Music subcommittee is still looking for pianos, especially for St. James, though there is not complete agreement on the need.
- Holy Cross needs a working wireless microphone. There were problems with the one they have while Fr. was on vacation. This is a subject for Holy Cross's buildings and grounds committee to review and resolve.
- Any needs of the music ministers should be presented to the pastor who will take them to the finance council, or building and ground committees, as needed.
- Three or four people from St. Francis and Holy Cross have requested that confessions be scheduled before Mass.
- Father will consider request to has an extra early Mass at St. James on Easter morning.

Building projects and finances:

Father reported that the parish is "just" making it financially month to month. Kathleen reported that the Finance Council had their first meeting last week, now that the parish is one corporation. The group looked at the various bank account statements and discussed how they are being combined into one. Right now there will be an account at the Community bank, which has offices in Ovid and Interlaken, and the main account at the Trust Company in Trumansburg. By having an account in each village, it expedites the deposit of the collections by the counters, and funds can be transferred between the banks to facilitate payment of bills.

There was a request that we post our income in the bulletin, either monthly or quarterly. Father thought it would be best if there was an easy way to show both income and expenditures. This is worth considering once the accounts are combined.

The CMA is still separated into three churches but Father is considering it as having one combined goal. Right now Holy Cross has achieved 113% of its goal, St. James 72%, and St. Francis 68%. The parish is contacting those at St. James and St. Francis who have not yet contributed.

Fire inspectors are due at each church and the three buildings and grounds committees should be aware of this.

The flood repair plans for the basement hall at St. James needs to be revised.

It was reported that someone fell on the steps at St. Francis. Father asked to be informed of the person's name and contact information. The building and grounds committee for St. Francis may want to consider adding anti-slip strips to the steps.

The guidelines for the parish council has been adapted to include language about our alternate members. This will be shared with the council as a whole.

Next meeting:

Our next meeting will be Thursday, April 6, 2017, at 7:00 p.m. at St. Francis Solanus annex. Though we had discussed skipping an April meeting but the guidelines outline April as the month when we look at our membership and see what gaps need to be filled.

Comments from Father:

In closing Father reminded us that our role is to be of counsel, not to be workers, "even if many of you are."

Closing prayer: Diocesan prayer read by Cathy.

Respectfully submitted by Kathleen E. Rourke ~ FINAL