

Mary, Mother of Mercy, Parish Council Meeting of 4/6/2017

Present: Fr. Bernard, Donna Brandow, Gerald Frank, Susan Houseknecht, Charlotte Huyler, Pam Jasikoff, Cathy Millspaugh, Andy Morpurgo, Amy Panek, Jessica Portillo, Kathleen Rourke, Ron Singer, Jeanie Wiggins, and Barbara Willers

Excused: Michele Barr, Nancy Shumway, Fr. Brendan, Phyllis Kaiser ?

- **Opening Prayer:** Stations of the Cross with Benediction
- **Minutes:** Minutes of our March 9, 2017, meeting were accepted as written, with changes noted.

Diocese: The Diocese recently contacted Cathy for some information on our parish and the PC chair, which she provided. A copy of Vol. 5, issue 1, Spring 2017, of the Pastoral Council Update, highlighting the parish of Mary, Mother of Mercy, was provided to members. It is also available on the diocese [web site](#) and linked from the parish's [PC web page](#).

• **Committee reports:**

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

Witness committee (outreach, social action):

- See report from committee. The committee is working on personal care item collections and the Rice Bowls.
- Community Bank has a basket for donations of personal care items. Charlotte delivers them to the local food pantry. At St. James the items go to Catholic Charities in Ithaca.
- The committee may move their next meeting to June.

Fellowship committee (social activity and communication):

- See report prepared by the committee
- The committee is discussing a June 4 brunch to welcome back "Snow Birds." If you attend Mass that day at HC you are welcome to attend the brunch, though it is open to the entire parish.
- There was some discussion about the date as June 4 is also the date for First Communion at St. F. The committee will consider a different date in consultation with Kathy Sinkiewicz, who is helping to coordinate the brunch.
- This raised some discussion about why there are two different days for First Communion this year as St. J's is May 21. Apparently there were some conflicts with the families of the children involved. A suggestion was made that it be the same date for all the parish churches in the future. The teachers for next year will consider this suggestion.

Word committee (education and evangelization):

- See full report provided by the committee.
- The consensus was that all the teachers have done a great job with 50 students this year.
- The teachers had a review meeting on March 29 to review the year. It was agreed that having religious education in two different locations (St. F. & St. J) didn't work, partly due to Mass times not coinciding with the classes. In the future, having all the classes at St. J (where most of the students live) would work better.
- During the registration process there were complications in getting phone numbers and e-mails for the students and their parents. This is necessary in order to be able to contact the parents about class cancellations, changes, or class needs. The parish has a program with contact information, now combined into one parish, that should be useful moving forward.
- They are considering doing registration before this school year ends.
- Also being considered is a nominal fee of \$20-25 per family. No one will be turned away for inability to pay but this gets family more committed to the program.
- The diocese requires that there be 30 hours of instruction per year, using guidelines provided by the USCCB which must be followed. One suggestion was to do part of this during the summer months. It would be a full day with both education and recreational activities. The parents have not yet been surveyed about this proposal. Their response will be important. For kids who, due to vacation or whatever, cannot attend, there may be a computer-based program that can be done independently at home.
- There was a general discussion about this summer proposal. Continuity of instruction was raised, along with the fact that first communion students will need extra classes.
- It is not the religions education teacher's job to get kids to church. That is up to the parents.
- Trumansburg Area Churches is doing their usual palm Sunday procession. The St. J. religious education students will join in. This will be followed by a movie about the Passion.
- When the new PC convenes in June, there is hope that it will provide additional members for the Word committee.
- The committee is considering a series of summer movies for adult catechesis. It would begin with a brief introduction to the movie, the movie, a discussion, followed by coffee and cake.
- Life's So Sweet used to donate chocolate eggs for Easter. Now that they are no longer located in T'burg, not sure if they will continue this practice. Inquiries will be made.

Worship committee (liturgy):

- See full report
- Committee has been busy with Lenten services and Easter Triduum.

- They are still looking for altar servers and foot washing volunteers for Holy Thursday. They may include the confirmation kids in the ceremonial foot washing.
- Some discussion about the Triduum schedule, coordinating between the three churches.
- Reminder that there is a reconciliation service on Monday, April 10, at St. F. It will include music, readings, and the opportunity for confession.
- The next Liturgy Planning Committee meeting will be April 26. All are welcome to attend. They will be electing a new chair at that meeting.
- A request has been made that there be a centralized calendar for parish events. A few people would have ability to make changes to such a calendar, but all could view it (possibly link to parish web page). Not sure who will follow-up on this.
- There was some discussion about various dates for a parish festival, to celebrate our new parish. Reminder that the bishop had requested coming to the parish to celebrate a Mass here. Maybe during this event? There were a number of dates suggested, many Marian holidays in September. Suggestion that they consider a weekend in September (ex: second Sunday) versus an actual date.
- The worship committee needs to meet to discuss how best to work with subcommittees.
- Music subcommittee and parish choir will take a break until August, then start planning for Advent.
- Crowning of statue of Mary in May to be discussed.
- A request has been made from a couple of St. J parishioners about having a Mass with organ music occasionally (i.e.: once a month?) during the Saturday PM Mass. Jessica explained the difficulties in finding an organist. The search will continue.

Building projects and finances:

The CMA is within \$2,000+ of our parish goal. The number of people participating isn't where it should be. A suggestion was made that we factor into our budget a need to "donate" \$2K to the diocese as we seem to be short the same amount in the last two years. The diocese will bill us our shortfall in June.

The parish is constantly bombarded with requests to give a presentation in order to raise money through extra second collections.

The finance committee will probably meet in May. That will give the finance people time to look at our newly combined accounts and bills and come up with a budget proposal. Right now it is still not clear what is needed on a monthly basis for the new parish.

Building and grounds report- The basement floor at St. J is in process. A 4 inch pipe was installed on gravel to help with water flow into a new and larger sump pump. Pouring rain all day today and it seems to be working well. Next is to tear up old and broken tile and come up with a new covering, either tile, paint, or concrete.

Palms have been distributed to all three churches.

General discussion about the numbers of people at all the Masses. It is coming up to one year since our merge. We need to look at the total number of people attending Mass. Have the numbers gone up or down? Do we need to adjust Mass times?

Membership:

There are five members of the PC whose terms are coming up this year. They are invited to put their names in for consideration of a three year term. Michele is unable to renew her term, Ron has declined to serve after June, and Andy is interested in a three-year term. If your term is up, no need for a letter of resignation, just need to decide if you are interested in a three-year term or not. If you don't want to continue on the PC, please submit a letter (or e-mail) of resignation.

Elections will be held in each of the churches at the end of May. We had originally suggested the last weekend of May but it was pointed out that is a holiday weekend. Newly elected members will be invited to attend our June meeting, though their terms don't start until July 1.

During the June meeting new officers will be elected. The new officers will then choose committee assignments for the PC members, based on their preferences.

Comments from Father:

We are all pioneers starting out a new parish council in a new parish. A difficult job well-done.

Next meeting:

We opted to skip meeting in May. Our next meeting will be June 8.

Closing prayer: "You shepherd us in all our ways, O God. Open our hearts and minds to hear your Voice in our midst so that we may bring our community to trust and love. Amen."

Respectfully submitted by Kathleen E. Rourke