

**Mary, Mother of Mercy,
Parish Council Meeting of 11/09/2017**

Present: Fr. Bernard, Donna Brandow, Shirley Cleere, Gerald Frank, Scott Hamula, Lydia Kurkchi, Gerry Messmer, Cathy Millspaugh, Andy Morpurgo, Richard Pell, Kathleen Rourke, and Barbara Willers

Excused: Charlotte Huyler, Pam Jasikoff, Janice McLaughlin, Roy Murdough, Jessica Portillo, Jeanie Wiggins, Fr. Brendan

Absent: Michelle Humulock

Guest: Eileen Heptig

• **Opening Prayer**

• **Minutes:** Minutes of our Sept. 14, 2017, meeting were accepted with corrections.

• **Committee reports:** Committee chairs, excepting Worship whose chair was out of town, kindly shared electronic copies of their reports with Council members prior to the meeting.

Witness committee (outreach, social action):

- There will be a bulletin announcement Nov. 12–27 about a drive to replenish shelves at Ovid and Intelaken food pantries in preparation for Christmas baskets.
- A bin for collecting winter clothes is still to be delivered to St. James.
- The mitten/hat tree will be set up at St. James and the gifts placed there will also go to Catholic Charities in Ithaca.
- Donna and another committee member will attend the Seneca County Social Action committee meeting next Monday in Waterloo.

Fellowship committee (social activity and communication):

- Phyllis Motill recommended that we use the Ovid Sportsman Club for our spring dinner dance. It was asked how rustic the venue is and the reply was that it looks ok in the photos with a large room. Another reported that the management there “are just good folks to work with.” The band is uncertain. They still need to firm up an April date and are meeting on Dec. 6 to finalize date and other matters.
- What they did for the November holy day they will repeat for the December holy day. In Nov. Holy Cross ended up with a harvest dinner.
- We don’t yet know how many people signed up at the ministry fair. Jessica will publish the results at a later date.
- A party or reception will follow the children’s Christmas pageant. It was suggested that instead they do a Christmas party some other day, possibly after religious ed. Classes.
- It has been suggested that the parish should have a presence on Facebook. Eileen thinks this would be a good idea and needs a couple of people to maintain it. “Geneva has a really nice page.” Scott will act as administrator for our page and get it up and running. Committee chairs will also be administrators, as will Fr. Bernard and Eileen.
- The logo for our new parish has been finalized and samples were shown to council members. The final version has a red flame on a dark blue backdrop, minus rays of light.

Word committee (education and evangelization):

- Religious Education classes will start Nov. 19 at 9:30 a.m. at St. James church. They need to get in 11 sessions, each of 50 minutes-1 hour in length.
- The summer program needs to be emphasized more in coming years. Some children didn't attend this past summer and will do home work programs with test to make sure kids are learning from the books provided.
- All books follow the guidelines of USCCB and the NY State Bishops for religious education curriculum. The committee will make sure all the kids meet all of the 30 required hours (15 hours were covered during the summer program). Meanwhile the committee will figure out how to do make-up sessions as needed for kids who miss classes.
- After kids are confirmed there are often follow-up programs at other churches to keep the kids involved. A Catholic Courier article about "Life Teen liturgies" was passed around. This is a nice idea in theory but the Word committee is already stretched thin. They would need someone to spearhead any additional duties, like a youth ministry coordinator. The diocese requires such a person to be certified. We need someone with energy and good rapport with kids to take this on.
- There are presently 8 kids in each of our two confirmation classes this year.
- 7-8 seniors are doing Christmas buying for shut-ins. Marina and Eileen are coordinating this.
- There was a brief discussion among council members regarding the Hands of Christ award.
- As per the parish mission, this may possibly happen with Fr. Francis Pompei, OFM. The committee will look into possibly having a mission during Lent.

Worship committee (liturgy):

- On All Souls' Day Father recited the names of the parish deceased. It was nicely done with candles.
- Envelopes with the names of parishioner's deceased family members were collected and placed on each altar wrapped in purple ribbon for remembrance during Masses throughout the month of November.
- Ministry fair results: We are still collecting the names of possible ministry volunteers from each of the three churches. Thanks to the Fellowship committee for enticing people with excellent food.
- There will be an Advent reconciliation service at St. Francis at 7 pm on Nov. 30. This will help people prepare for Advent, which starts Dec. 3. Format still in formation.
- Sundays of Advent we invite people to participate in the lighting of the Advent wreath. Advents booklets of reflections have been ordered.
- Churches will be decorated for Advent with a purple theme.
- The committee has been trying to figure out a difficult Christmas Mass schedule as the fourth Sunday of Advent is Dec. 2⁴ Christmas Eve. Father asked that this discussion be put on hold.
- The times are set for the Feast Day of Immaculate Conceptions: December 7- Vigil at St. James the Apostle at 7:00 pm and on December 8 a 9:00 am mass at St. James, a 12:15 pm mass at St. Francis, and a 6:00 pm mass at Holy Cross. When asked the Fellowship committee said they would be able to provide mini-socials after each Mass.
- The Liturgy committee met on Oct. 25. We are looking to get copies of the liturgy magazine; presently two copies are available to the parish. The liturgy committee is meeting again next week.

- We need to publicize the local Ecumenical services to get more Catholic participation: Nov. 19 at 2 p.m. in Ovid and Dec. 3 in T'burg.
- New Year's Day is not a holy day of obligation this year.
- There was a general discussion about how best to get people back into the church. The numbers of people who follow a traditional religion are decreasing everywhere. Trumansburg Area Church ministers have discussed this repeatedly. It is a cultural problem and a world-wide societal problem. People have lost faith in God. "Not going to church is becoming an epidemic." Not being allowed to mention religion in schools adds to the problem. One person suggested that we start with individuals talking with other individuals to invite them to church or to discuss faith. Another person suggested a community of churches dialogue with video night. *Word on Fire* is one movie that could be used. Schools don't schedule sports on Sunday mornings in general, but others do, or they need the morning to travel to distant sporting events.

Building projects and finances:

- A balance sheet to show money on hand will go out to parishioners in the next few weeks. It will be a one-sided sheet with both report and numbers provided by David Zellinger. Fiscal reports showing more detail will be available to interested individuals at the back of the churches. It was suggested the report be posted on the web page. The web person will need a copy of the report, preferable as a PDF file, in order to do this.
- Father reported that there is a general decrease in the regular collections.
- A question was asked about what our policy is regarding excess furniture or machinery. If you want to get rid of it, it was suggested an item be written up that can be placed in the bulletin.
- Ideas or input for lighting at St. F. was referred to that church's building and grounds committee.

Other business:

Father reported that he had received a recent call from the Provincial. Due to medical issues with priests providing Spanish ministry in Brooklyn and New England, Fr. Brendan, as of Dec. 4, has been assigned to be pastor of St. Michael's in Brooklyn. There will be no replacement for him here in our parish. Changes will need to be made to all the Mass schedules, including the daily Masses. Father will talk with Fr. Brendan and then make a proposal to the Council. Parishioners will be notified of Fr. Brendan's reassignment this weekend.

Father reported that 50% of diocesan priests in Rochester diocese are over 70 years old; 34% are over 75. The church is in crisis mode.

As per our schedule, the 8:15, 9:30, and 11:00 Mass schedule presently on Sundays can be done by one priest but it is hard to maintain in one parish that is 40 miles long and includes three churches. Father has noticed that people are more likely to go to St. James as part of the parish than people are to go North. People from HC are going to St. James, mainly for the Sat. PM Mass. The Saturday Mass is available based on Jewish practice that a day begins at sundown.

Fr. Brendan's last day is Dec. 3 and the council agreed that we should do something for him after the last Mass that day.

Next meeting: Jan. 11, 2018

Closing prayer

Respectfully submitted by Kathleen E. Rourke ~ final draft