

St. Michael's Parish Council Meeting

June 20, 2023

I. Call to Order & Opening Prayer

Janet Burns called the meeting to order. Emily White led the opening prayer.

Janet welcomed the two new Parish Council members: Laurie Kraemer and Craig Knutson.

II. Organizational & Routine Matters

- **Roll Call: Present:** Fr. Courtright, Janet Burns, Jeri Anderson, Laurie Kraemer, Craig Knutson, Craig Pfau, Lori Swinney, Katie Graham, Mary Ann Whalen. Also attending the meeting were Emily White & Marie Vetter.
Absent: Tim Brooke, John Santangelo, Sean Valentine, Rhonda Varriano, Tom Helbling
- **Approval of Minutes:** Lori Swinney motioned that the May meeting's minutes be approved. Seconded by Laurie Kraemer. Minutes approved.

III. Reports of Representing Organizations

- **Altar Society:** Mary Ann Whalen reported that the Altar Society met on May 24. The ladies helped with the Parish Picnic on June 14. There were more than enough salads this year. The pickup of their homemade doughnuts (sold by preorders) will be on June 22.
- **Men's Club:** No report.
- **Knights of Columbus:** Craig Pfau reported the Parish Picnic had to be held in the church basement because of poor air quality outside. However, it went well! There was a great turnout & more tables needed to be set up. Phil Kraemer & other KC members helped with the Bingo.
- **Bridge Builders:** Lori Swinney reported that the Bridge Builders haven't had a meeting since May. Their executive secretary, Diane Jilek is moving to Bismarck. (Her husband will be the music director at the Cathedral there.) Marie Vetter is going to be the new executive secretary for the Bridge Builders.

IV. Reports from Parish Boards and Councils

- **Board of Education:** Katie Graham reported there had been some committee meetings but the Board itself was meeting June 21. There will be a new Board of Education representative on the Parish Council next fall. Marie Vetter mentioned that St. Michael's School is implementing a strategic plan for parent involvement and RE would like to do that, too. We want to ask more of the parents—have higher expectations from them—maybe a “covenant”.
Vacation Bible School will run from July 31 through Aug. 3. Mollie Bye is heading it up. A lot of people have signed up. (Sacred Heart is having theirs that same week, but in the mornings.)
- **Finance Council:** Tom Helbling was unable to attend the meeting but had emailed members his report.
 - He said the Finance Council had met earlier that day.
 - The parish had received an Estate Gift from Mike McGurran: \$13,932. This was contributed toward the down payment on the new school bus.

- The High School students had raised an additional \$4413 from the envelopes on the board in the back of the church. They also helped with Mother's Day flower deliveries at Wy's Floral.
- The school paid out \$3486 in scholarships (Jeffries & Richmond Funds) to 6 graduating 5th-grade students going to attend Sacred Heart in the fall.
- The stained glass windows on the east side of the church are finished. Another \$24,500 has been paid toward the windows. We still have the bell towers and rose window over the choir loft to complete.
- May's Income-Expense was \$32,633. Year-to-date Income-Expense was \$35,116.

- **Pastor's Report:**

- ☐ Fr. Courtright reported that a long-time teacher at St. Michael's School, Kim Flanagan, is retiring after 43 years of teaching in Catholic schools. She's even a former USA Catholic School Teacher of the Year.
- ☐ The School Bill that would have given tax credits to parents sending children to non-public schools passed in both the ND House & Senate this spring. Our Principal Sara Dudley even went to Bismarck & testified in favor of it. However, Gov. Burgum vetoed it. He said it didn't help the rural schools. We'll now have to wait two years for the next legislative session to try again.
- ☐ Fr. Courtright encouraged all Parish Council members to attend the Church Leadership Workshop sponsored by the Diocese. It is scheduled for Thurs., July 20, from 1 to 5 pm in St. Michael's church basement.
- ☐ Our new associate, Fr. Darrick Leier, is scheduled to arrive July 5.

V. Old & Current Business:

- **Stations of the Cross:** The painting of the stations is underway. However, the pedestals might not be done this summer.

VI. New Business:

- **Religious Education:** RE Director Marie Vetter talked about some proposed changes in the Religious Ed program here at St. Michael's. She has already met with the Board of Education to discuss these possible changes. She said it would be nice to foster more community between the RE community and the parish as a whole. Some parents just have their children come Wed. evenings, but other than that, the families aren't really involved in the parish. Also, she said the current program is maybe textbook heavy and a little dry. Maybe Religious Ed for grades K-5 could be moved to Sunday mornings after the 9 am Mass. Perhaps everyone could gather in the gym and then go to different stations. Middle school (grades 6-8) could meet together on Wednesdays. Maybe middle school could collaborate with the high school for speakers. Perhaps once a month there could be an apologetics-type talk—maybe after the 5 pm Mass. Perhaps the talks could involve everyone in the parish. Perhaps there could be "Family Catechesis" nights. Also, maybe we could have "Praise & Worship" nights—separate from the Mass. Sacramental preparation would continue on Wed. nights. Marie said these are just ideas proposed—the actual changes haven't been decided on.

Fr. Courtright commented that perhaps the kids could have class once a week and then a "Family Class" would be held once a month.

Some Parish Council members commented that a number of families are out-of-town on the weekends for their children's sports. However, the Council members were supportive in exploring these possible options to improve our parish's Religious Education program.

- **New Hymnals:** Our Music & Liturgy Coordinator Emily White spoke about the hymnals the parish uses. These are the hymnals in the pews. Right now St. Michael's uses the *Breaking Bread* hymnal which most parishes use. She would like to switch to the *Source & Summit* missal. (Both of these books are hymnals & missals combined.) Emily has found that, when picking out the songs for our liturgies, the *Breaking Bread* hymnal has some hymns that are not quite theologically correct. The *Source & Summit* has a greater selection of traditional hymns and hymns with more liturgical correctness. Also, people might find that missal easier to read because the font is larger. If we did get the new missal, we would want to order it before the prices increase July 1. (The *Source & Summit* missal/hymnal is cheaper than *Breaking Bread* and looks nice, too.) We would start using it the first Sunday of Advent. If we did make the change, posts would be put in the bulletin and social media about why we are changing.
- Parish Council member Jeri Anderson was thanked for her years of service on the council. She & Tim Brooke (who was absent) have just finished their terms.
- The council decided not to meet in July or August, but will wait until Sept. for the next meeting. New officers will be elected then. Someone asked how items can be put on the agenda. It was suggested that the secretary could be emailed or the items just brought up at the meeting.

VII. Adjournment and Closing Prayer

Fr. Courtright led the closing prayer. A member asked if maybe there was a prayer for the Eucharistic Revival that we could say at our meetings. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Ann Whalen