

St. Nicholas, Dacada Listening Session

Sunday, April 23, 2023

Those attending were invited to sign in. Those who signed in were

OLL Finance Council and Staff Members: Parish Director Deb Hamm, Finance Council Chair Bill Jensen, Finance Council members Katie Bichler and Andy Walsh.

OLL parishioners present: Paul and Kathy Schuessler, Dale Jacoby, Leon and Lisa Birenbaum, Rich and JoAnne Mueller, Don Feyereisen, Nancy Zimmer, Carol Depies, Herman Feyereisen, Jim and Bonnie Steffen, Paul Birenbaum, Kathryn Septstead, Betty Meyer, Kati Dimmer, Jeriod Dahm, Gary Jacoby, Leon Jacoby, Ryan Noll, Rita Horstmeier, Dennis and Denise Dimmer, Michael Yank

Non-parishioners present: Deb Poull, Cindy Oskey, Regina Bares, Barb Bichler, Dianne Anopt, Nicole Martin, Roy and Beth Yank, Ron and Beth Jentges, Mary Shaw

Including the Finance Council members present, there were a total of 40 people in attendance.

Bill Jensen, Finance Council Chair, opened the meeting with a prayer and an introduction.

Deb Hamm, Parish Director shared the following with the group:

- She thanked everyone for coming, and said that the Finance Council members were there to listen to the concerns of those attending, not to provide immediate answers.
- The money from the Rectory sale has been placed into the Our Lady of the Lakes general fund, since we have been one parish for 25 years this July 1.
- The Finance Council is actively seeking bids to potentially replace the heating system at St. Nicholas Chapel. When the bids are in and one is chosen as the best option, a proxy will be submitted to the Archdiocese. Deb reminded the group that the last time a proxy was submitted to change over the heating system at St. Nicholas chapel, it was declined.
- Some folks had asked days before the meeting whether there was ever any conversation about selling St. Nicholas Chapel. She stated that several years ago, the Archdiocese required all parishes and clusters to take a serious look at all of their buildings and grounds to see if they had a need for all of them and if it was fiscally responsible to keep them open. Parish leaders are asked to continue to look

at these physical resources on a continuing basis. That being said, there has not been any serious discussion about selling St. Nicholas Chapel.

- A huge thank you to Susan Risch and Terri Schueller for the countless hours they spent putting together a report on where the money from the Fr. Feyereisen memorial was spent. A copy is available in the OLL Parish Office for anyone to look at. The copy is to remain in the office.
- The School Building at St. Nicholas is only insured for cold storage and not for public events.

Bill Jensen then invited those in attendance to share their thoughts/ concerns/issues regarding the future use of St. Nicholas Chapel.

Jeriod Dahm asked why he couldn't Baptize his baby at St. Nicholas.

Deb Hamm explained that part of the theology of Baptism is that we Baptize children into a faith community. That means that the faith community should be present, and that our practice is to Baptize children during Mass. A prolonged discussion took place on this topic. Included in the discussion was past Baptism practices pre- and post-Covid, the fact that some families that Baptize their children don't want to sit through a whole Mass, some families in the congregation might not want to be at a Mass with a Baptism, mixed faith couples might feel uncomfortable during a Mass, some families might have a special connection with a priest or deacon who could do the Baptism, and that Baptisms could be handled on a case-by-case basis. Deb said she would speak to the Prayer and Worship Committee and Pastoral Council about this. *(At the OLL Prayer and Worship Committee May 8, it was stated that we will continue to strongly encourage that all Baptisms take place during Mass. In addition to having the faith community present, it makes the best use of our retired priests' time. However, if a family has a close family tie or relative who is a priest or deacon, we will look at each situation on a case by case basis.)*

One of the topics that received the most discussion was the wish to have a regular weekend Mass at St. Nicholas Chapel. Several of the attendees were in agreement that they want a weekend Mass. Discussion items included moving the Saturday night Holy Cross Mass to Dacada, adding a Sunday evening Mass, sending out a survey, maybe a regular Mass might bring back people who are going to Mass elsewhere (or nowhere at all), why can't we have a regular Mass at Dacada, why does Divine Savior get two weekend Masses and OLL has only one, shouldn't we have the 3 Masses at different Chapels, or could the Random Lake Mass move to Dacada, or could there be seasonal Masses?

Deb reminded the group that, when the merger happened in 1998, the Merger Decree from the Archdiocese stated that St. Mary's Chapel in Random Lake was the main worship site. With the Divine Savior merger, Holy Cross is the main worship site. Regular weekend Masses should take place at the main worship site. Some of the

attendees said we could change the decree (*after the meeting, Deb checked with the Chancery Office and this decree cannot be changed*). Other barriers to a regular Mass at Dacada are the priest shortage, and the fact that we don't fill up the Masses we currently have, and a lack of handicapped access.

Deb Poull asked if funds could be raised, can Dacada be made handicapped accessible. This reopened the discussion about a chair lift at Dacada. This conversation lasted for several minutes and Deb Hamm said she would bring it up again at the Finance Council. (*After a lengthy discussion at the OLL Finance Council April 27, the consensus was that there will be no chair lift installed at St. Nicholas Chapel and there will be no Mass added at St. Nicholas Chapel.*)

Denise Dimmer suggested that if we use the chapel more, maybe we can attract a priest. This precipitated a conversation about the priest shortage. Some asked if we could have a seminarian attached to our cluster. Deb stated that she had asked personnel at the Archdiocese last fall if that was possible, and was told "no". Seminarians and newly ordained priests are placed at parishes that have a full-time priest who is seen as a strong mentor for them, as well as a parish/cluster that has the finances for another salary. Deb talked about the fact that, although our seminary has a lot more seminarians, they are not all for our Archdiocese and some are in ESL (English as a Second Language), pre-theology and the College Program. This means that the number of seminarians in our seminary are spread over about a 13-year span, not the four years we generally think about.

Mary Shaw asked if we keep records on the parishes that each parishioner belonged to pre-merger. Deb said that is not data we keep.

There was a discussion about the possibility of having Adoration at St. Nicholas, especially in light of the Eucharistic Revival. Deb will bring this to the Prayer & Worship Committee. (*At the OLL Prayer and Worship Committee meeting May 8, it was decided that there can be seasonal Adoration held once a month at St. Nicholas Chapel. Deb Hamm will meet with Denise and a few other interested persons to train them on how to expose and repose the Eucharist for Adoration, and to determine what day/time of the month will be chosen. The day/time should not contradict the current days/times for Adoration in our cluster. Deb suggested beginning with a two-hour time slot for the Adoration. There will not be formal exposition or Benediction.*)

Leon Birenbaum stated that we need leadership that wants to have Dacada open and active.

Rita Horstmeier asked that there be longer announcements in the bulletin when devotions like the Stations of the Cross, Corpus Christi procession and others occur, and that there be more Mass announcements as well.

Denise Dimmer shared that her daughter works for a parish in the Madison Diocese. In Madison they are merging all their parishes and going from about 130 parishes to about 30 parishes. She said that in that situation everyone shares the pain. Pain should never be all on one side. *(Part of the discussion at the Finance Council Meeting revolved around the idea that all the pain is on one side. This suggestion is entirely inaccurate [just ask the people who were original members of St. Mary's, Cascade; St. Patrick's, Adell, and the families who had children in the OLL Catholic School when it closed.])*

Someone asked where they can get copies of these minutes. Deb Hamm said that, after they are finalized, they will be available on the Parish Website, in the Our Lady of the Lakes Parish Center and that copies will be sent over to St. Nicholas with the bulletins.

Deb also told folks if there were any other issues that had not been brought up at the meeting, people could email her (at the address in the bulletin) or drop a note in an envelope in the collection basket at Mass.

Bill thanked everyone for coming and the meeting closed with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Deb Hamm
Parish Director