**St. Thomas More Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes**

November 14, 2019

6:30 pm – 7:30 pm; General Meeting

Call to Order: 6:37 pm

Members in Attendance: Fr. Chuck Adam, Pam Bourjaily, Ann Elsbecker, Karen Hanson, Ann Houlahan, Spencer Knight, Mick Langguth, Barb Lopez, Leigha Rios, Shirley Schneider, and Norma Ward.

Members Excused: Annalee Bartels, Tracy Clapp, and Keith Less.

Members Absent: Dimy Doresca

Opening Prayer – “Growing More in Faith” Campaign

God our Father, grant success to the “Growing More in Faith” campaign. The psalmist tells us, “If the Lord does not build the house, in vain do the builders’ labor.” Help us to remember that you are source and strength for all we do.

Lord Jesus our Savior, your apostle Paul praised the Thessalonians because their faith was growing more and more and their love for one another was increasing. Bless the St. Thomas More Parish Community as we work to open our hearts and expand our worship space for the future growth of our parish.

Holy Spirit inspires us by the generous example of those from previous generations who have passed the faith onto us. Challenge us by the sacrifice of our patron, Saint Thomas More, teacher and martyr. Inflame us with your love so we may grow more and more into a community that serves you and grows in love for one another.

We pray O God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, you who live and reign forever and ever.  Amen.

1. Items of Business
2. September 12, 2019 Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes were approved.

1. Comments from Father Chuck Adam:
2. Thank you to all who assisted with the Fall Clean Up on Sunday. Spencer reported that everything was finished in about 1.5 hours.
3. Father requested that we keep the youth who are going to NCYC in our prayers. They will be commissioned this Saturday.
4. We have surpassed our ADA goal of $101,000 and have collected pledges totaling $107,000 as of today. This is about the same percentage of participation as last year.
5. The Finance Council approved the bid from Streb Construction for the parking lot. The plan is going to be completed in 3 phases. The intent is to have it cemented with an intermediate gravel lot.
   1. Adjusting our current parking lot to add 40 spaces.
   2. The land to the north of the church will be cleared and prepared for 150-200 parking spaces and an exit/entry will be extended to Dempster. This also includes the removal of several thorny locust trees.
   3. The last phase includes a circular drive coming right in front of the church with a covered walkway and more handicapped parking.
6. “Growing More in Faith” campaign update: Father reported that 300 contacts were made via letter or phone calls on Sunday afternoon. This netted $100,000 in pledges towards the campaign. Next step is to mail 1000 letters to everyone in the parish who hasn’t been contacted through a reception or a previous letter. Katie Schneider is also working on a script for individuals to speak after communion at all masses to exemplify some easy ways to find the money in your budget to give to the Growing in More Faith Campaign. Father made the point that everyone can be a part of it, no matter the amount given. Members agreed about the importance to wear our campaign “buttons”.
7. Items from Pastoral Council Members:
   1. Bulletin Welcome Statement: Ann E. opened the discussion by sharing information from the discussions on the “Building a Bridge” book by Fr. James Martin. Goal is to be more inclusive not only in our welcome statement in the bulletin but also in revisions to the parish mission statement.
   2. Group finalized and approved the following Welcome Statement: ***NEW PARISHIONERS: We welcome you to St. Thomas More. We are committed to providing a worship space and community for all people and from all walks of life, from all races, ethnicities, sexual orientations and gender identities. We are happy you are here. We are all on a spiritual journey, trying to find our way. All are welcome to join us. To register, please see the Pastor after Mass or stop by the Welcome Table in the gathering area.***
   3. It was also noted that in the recent *Catholic Messenger* where the discussions on *Building a Bridge* wereshared with others in the diocese, that this is what the Catholic Church teaches.
   4. The group members proposed each representative will bring the Mission Statement examples to their Commission meetings after Advent. Once the commissions have completed their review and the Pastoral Council has approved the “draft”, it was proposed that the “Mission Statement” be placed in the bulletin and allow parish members to give their feedback to Pastoral Council members.
8. Old Business/Reports and Commission Meeting Minutes:
   1. Pam discussed the Worship and Spirituality commission’s activity regarding the “prayer” from “Our Lady of Lourdes.” (See September Pastoral Council meeting minutes for background information.) She noted that there was interest in using it for Lent as long as it didn’t conflict with the “Growing More in Faith” prayer. Barb also said she would ask the “Our Lady of Lourdes” parish for permission once we had an approved version. This may become a “spring project” since Lent starts on Feb 26.
   2. Shirley Schneider talked about preparations for the Steve Angrisano Retreat/Concert on December 1 and how they were getting volunteers to sit at tables, able to sell CDs before and after the program. Mick noted that Mike and Mary Kelley had sent a request for ushers for this event.
   3. Ann H. updated the group about the Protective Accompaniment Training program at the Iowa   
      City Catholic worker House on Friday, December 6 from 9 am to 5 pm. This is effort is being sponsored by the Diocese of Davenport. Father Peter Dougherty from the Diocese of Lansing, Michigan is the lead trainer. Ann H. asked the members to go to the   
      Sign-Up Genius to volunteer for assistance with the training program and the 2 meals that are being provided.
   4. Leigha announced that 4 new families joined in October and were being contacted by Welcome Committee members with either an email or phone call. There is also a Welcome Meal being planned by the Church Life/Family Life Commission in January for all those who have joined since August 2019. She also said that thy have sent personal letters to parish members to ask if they would be interested in joining the ministry and committee. There is also a Sign-Up link from the menu on the STM home page. As a member noted, “this ministry is doing great things!”
   5. Ann E. wanted to share that the Stephen Ministry was reaching out to the Pastoral Council for ideas on how they could get more information out to the parish about the Stephen Ministry. A member suggested a “Frequently Asked Question and Answer” promotion that could go in the bulletin on a regular basis to help parish members know what it is, how do I request a Stephen Minister, how do I become a Stephen Minister, etc.
   6. Father Chuck read a nice thank you from a homebound parish member. Pam requested Pastoral Council members to volunteer for this ministry to share a prayer, a scripture reading and communion. Please contact Pam if you are able to volunteer for this ministry.
9. New Business: Review of Mission Statement Options will continue at our January meeting
10. Next Parish Council Meeting: January 9, 2020 at 6:30 pm.
11. Closing Prayer: Prayer from St. Theresa of Avila read by all the members.
12. Meeting adjourned: 7:23 pm.