

Respectfully submitted by Bill Mausser

St. Thomas More Pastoral Council Meeting

October 12, 2017; 7:00 pm

1903 Call to Order

Members in Attendance: Father Chuck Adam, Pam Bourjaily, Grace Christopher, Tracy Clapp, Ann Elsbecker, Ann Houlahan, Keith Less, Bill Mausser, Cathy Nepola, Larry Posey, Leigha Rios, Kim Schmitz, Norma Ward

Members Excused: Charles Heine

Members Absent: Riley Brunk

Guest: Tom Persoon, Mark Ray, Shannon Duffy

A. Sunday Scripture reading and prayer provided by Bill Mausser

B. Review of September 14, 2017 meeting –Motion for approval by Ann Elsbecker, seconded by Ann Houlahan to accept council minutes as written. Vote, all in favor, no nays, and motion carries.

Announcement: None.

C. Meeting Business

1. Comments from Father Chuck Adam

Discussion: Fr. Adam had hoped to report on the first weekend Annual Diocesan Appeal request. Unfortunately, he did not receive St. Thomas More numbers from the Diocese as anticipated. Anecdotally, Fr. Adam shared that we might be as high as 28% of our goal after our first weekend. Our goal is \$88,000 this year.

Action: This is a respectable opening to the Appeal. Our hope is that all households will contribute to their comfort. There will be more information to come when available. **(open)**

2. Remarks from Social Justice/Social Action related to its Fair Trade Sales.

Discussion: Mark Ray (commission chair for SA/SJ) and Ann Houlahan provided and updated their initial fundraising efforts from Social Action/Social Justice Commission, utilizing Fair Trade sale effort on October 7-8 this month in our narthex. SA/SJ started with the sale of coffee and tea that raised about \$400, which broke even and was an impressive first sale. They will reinvest this money and get additional Fair Trade products for next month. They are exploring other products for general sales in the future with chocolate also being offered next

month. Mark shared that SA/SJ has already donated coffee for use in the parish kitchen as a result of our first sale. Their mission remains to allocate more dollars as the commission has 3 main goals with Fair Trade. One is to promote awareness of the concept of Fair Trade. Secondly, they would eventually like to be able to only use Fair Trade coffee at STM gatherings - done. Third SA/SJ would like to be able to satisfy more monetary requests. The hope is to improve by at least \$1200 per cycle for donations, with there being 2 cycles per year.

Additional discussion occurred relating to a possible combined fundraising event between SA/SJ and our parish KC's organization. Keith reported the KC's have had success with past fundraising events so teaming up might prove to be successful for both groups. Keith plans on taking this back to the KC's for additional discussions.

Action: Social Justice/Social Action will continue its Fair Trade Sales in our narthex the first weekend of every month. There will be more information to follow when available.

Mark shared that SA/SJ will be having a Shelter House toiletry drive after the Thanksgiving holiday.

Mark last shared that SA/SJ are scheduled to present to the parish during its Spotlight weekend November 18-19, 2017. **(closed)**

3. Shannon Duffy report on Religious Education to the Council

Discussion: Shannon shared that we have 323 children in Faith Formation an all-time increase of 10 children over last year. We have 6 families (8 children) in a home school program. Shannon, he plans to check in with families at least twice per semester to encourage parents and support everyone during this time of learning. We have 84 children involved in sacramental preparation (which includes 18 from Regina. He is impressed with the extent of the parent involvement with their child's education and believes that close continual contact with these families will prove successful.

To assist with STM Religious Education program, we have 56 willing volunteers assisting with the program on a weekly basis. This includes both professional and non-professional educators. In addition, we also have 18 substitutes teacher's volunteers to assist with teaching thus preventing potential laps in learning opportunities.

The 1st meeting for First Sacramental preparation will be October 15th at 6 p.m. in the church. Our first meeting for Confirmation 2017/2018 (with 42 attendees) is underway. On October 15th, the Diocese of Davenport Jr. High Rally at Regina will be holding a "Stop Hunger Now" food packaging/partnering with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) 2-3:00 p.m. Shannon said the goal of each will be to partner the parent and the student so as the student prepares to receive their blessing of either reconciliation, first Eucharist or confirmation, it is viewed as a family journey, not just simply as student preparations.

Children's Liturgy of the Work (CLOW) needs volunteers to help children improve their understanding of the readings at Mass. These volunteers will complete the on-line Diocesan Protecting God's Children (VIRTUS) program, which is the same as all other volunteers participating in our STM programs. This program would specifically assist with children's religious education during Mass as adults listen to the readings and homily each week. If anyone knows of people who may be interested in this ministry, please let Shannon know so we might begin discussions. Also refer to the bulletin for additional information.

Norma asked Shannon what we could do to assist him and his volunteers in his endeavors. Presently, because he feels he is still in his learning phase he did not have a specific request, but rather asked that we please offer prayers for his volunteers, children and him that they may have a successful first year under his tenor. Norma shared that from our observations, we as the Council feel that under his guidance we anticipate seeing positive outcomes for our STM religion participants.

Action: Informational. Shannon will continue his year of learning to understand STM Religious Education Programs. He will regularly meet with volunteers, parents, children etc. Once understood, he will suggest changes but he must learn our process first. He asked the Council to let him know if there is anything he can do to enhance for positive outcomes. Change will happen, but feel free to check in with him after mass anytime to visit, inform or just ask how things are going. **(closed)**

4. Welcome Team Sticky note process with Tom Persoon to develop our Welcoming Ministry

Discussion: Tom Persoon and Norma Ward facilitated discussion the Council development of a Welcoming Ministry. Tom, as chair of our Stewardship Commission asked Council members what we wanted from the welcoming ministry. In the past Council members read and reflected on the "Rebuilt" text, as well as utilized concepts from Peter Block's text on "Community and Structure of Community Building" to formulate STM's vision of the future.

The Council wishes to begin developing a welcome ministry to improve communication with both active and inactive members of STM as well as visitors

to our Masses. Council's overall goal with the welcoming ministry is to make every person feel welcome from the moment they drive into our parking lot to when they exit. Secondly, we need to address how we utilize our talents placing our "gift of community into practice" when we welcome these individual to STM.

Discussion occurred as to what a parking lot ministry would look like and where the welcoming experience would be included—whether that be outside our front doors coming in, or in the narthex or as we enter our worship area. No decision was made and more reflection is required on this matter.

One common theme presented was the need for an informational table. A thought was to bring this table out after Mass (in the narthex) to permit interactions with a Welcome minister and mass attendants. This would provide real time feedback from the mass attendants (and to the Welcome ministers). This would include, but would not be limited to religious education information, information on joining our parish etc. This would require us to develop a quick reference or "frequently asked questions and answers" that could be easily provided for questions that are asked.

As an example of what we hope to accomplish, it was noted that on occasion Bill Graf with a friend, Ted, opens doors and greets parishioners at our outside front door and it appears to have a positive result. Also when Charles Heine attends, he also greets and opens the north door into our worship area. A simple greeting sets a tone. Thus, we must develop a plan and a script that accompanies our actions for standardization of our "welcome".

It was concluded for now that we want a two-layered approach:

1. Open the door
2. Invite with a smile and welcome by action and script.

Additional discussion incurred as to "who" should be included as a "welcoming greeter". Before Mass greeting has fallen to the ushers and Eucharistic Ministers by default although this does vary by Mass time. Although this might be working to a degree, their workload as they prepare for the Mass has led the Council to suggest that this ministry needs to be a separate unique offering that includes the Council and other commissions, families etc. A rethinking and restructuring is required to be successful. Presently, asking our current folks to perform this task with a new script might lead to a decrease in volunteers and lead to a negative intent of what we are attempting to accomplish.

Action: *Council members are asked to reflect on tonight's discussions. We would like to have Tom come back to continue our discussion. Norma will be offering an invitation to a representative from our other commissions, office staff etc. to come to our November meeting so we can get input from our commissions and what they might view as a "welcoming ministry" that we would be included as our vision evolves.*

To make every person feel welcome, we need to welcome open dialogue within STM before we present our vision to the parish. We want this “welcoming ministry” to also encompass the “ministry of hospitality” as all staff and commissions already do. Although this is not “new ground”, this should be a “new view” as to how we welcome parishioners to STM.

Our November meeting will be from 6:30- 0830 p.m. with pizza being offered.

The council was asked to:

1. *Reflect and think about what a script might sound like.*
2. *Reflect on where and how we want this ministry to evolve*

(open)

5. Help needed for Diocese of Davenport Jr. High Rally

Discussion: Grace Christopher asked for assistance from the council. On October 15, there is going to be a Diocese of Davenport Jr. High Rally at Regina. Participants are encouraged to bring canned goods to support the Iowa City food pantry. She does not know how large the collection may be or how many vehicles might be needed. She is requesting help with the transporting of the canned food from Regina on Sunday, October 15 to the Iowa City food pantry the next day as she and her fellow students are in school and are unable to deliver the canned goods.

The Regina program is not scheduled to be over until 3 p.m. By the time they sort and box the food it might not be ready for pickup until 7 p.m. or later, but she hopes to have a better time frame identified the day of the event.

Action: Tom, Keith, Fr. Adam and Ann Houlahan volunteered to work with Grace to collect and deliver the food to the Iowa City Food Pantry. **(closed)**

D. Reports: PC Liaisons share information from their commission’s August meetings:

1. Church/Family Life Meeting—Tracy, Kim, Bill or Leigha
2. Finance Council Report--Norma
3. Regina BOE Update
4. Religious Education/Faith Formation report
5. Social Action/Social Justice Meeting Minutes—Ann E, Larry, Charles and Ann H
6. Worship and Spirituality Meeting Minutes—Pam
7. Youth Ministry Report and calendars

Respectfully submitted by Bill Mausser

E. Plan for PC 2017-2018 New Business

1. Items from Pastoral Council members
2. Review of Stewardship Commitment form
3. Review of Constitution and By Laws
4. Selection of Pastoral Council Election Committee

F. Sunday Scripture reading and prayer assignment for next meeting, November 9, 2017 is Cathy Nepola.

G. Closing Prayer—Bill Mausser