

St Margaret Mary (SMM) Pastoral Council (PC) Minutes 9/14/2021

Present: Fr. Dennis Bergsbaken, Holly Rhyner, Bill Bittner, Lance Ernsting, Pat Lowney, Greg Weyenberg, Eleanor Healy, Ellen Mommaerts, Andrew Braatz, Tony Geracie

Absent: Melinda Cranwell

Meeting held in Friendship Hall

Handouts: Meeting Agenda, Opening Prayer

Meeting called to order at 6:03 PM

Opening Parish Meeting Prayer, Gospel Reading, Discussion and Sharing.

New Members

Andrew Braatz and Tony Geracie were introduced as the newest members of the PC. Both gentlemen are married with children in elementary school.

Approved July meeting minutes as submitted. There was no PC meeting in August.

Thank you Notes

Greg Weyenberg suggested we thank Bill Wallingford for his excellent work on the Parish Beautification Committee. We also agreed to send a card to outgoing member Matt Scharenbroch for his service on the PC.

Pastor Update:

- Fr. Dennis welcomed our two new members to the PC
- Vaccination and Conscience protection from Wisconsin bishops: The Wisconsin Bishops have made clear that because we don't have any objections to COVID-19 vaccinations, there will not be religious exemptions granted by priests for those requesting them. However, the church recognizes that people have a right to their own conscience when making the decision whether or not to receive the vaccination. This is a conscience exemption, not a religious one.
- Neenah/Menasha Parish collaboration efforts: Steve Anderson is a facilitator contracting with the GB Diocese who has been working with the parishes. He has interviewed religious education staff at some of the parishes but not our staff. He has also met with people from St. Marys, St. Johns and St. Patricks. He will be meeting with staffs from St. Gabriel and St. Margaret Mary soon. Part of the delay is the more significant issues at the Menasha parishes.
- Feast of St. Margaret Mary is October 16th. Doug Brummel will be presenting at our parish on October 17 & 18 from 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm. He incorporates humor in an interactive way and helps us to learn more about our faith. Families of all ages, as well as the general public, are encouraged to attend. There is no charge for this event.
- **The Search** is a seven-week program that addresses life's questions. There will be small groups, with facilitators, offered at various days and times to fit the busy person's schedule. Being a disciple of Jesus is a lifelong commitment. This is a great way to continue to form your own faith. The Search Kick Off Weekend is October 2 & 3, 2021. The Search begins the week of October 10, 2021. Look for a Sign Up Genius

link to arrive in your email this week to sign up for a specific day and time. Post cards will also be sent out as well.

- Current COVID-19 protocols: feedback from parishioners is that they are happy that there is a section in the church where masks are required, as well as other areas where masking is optional.
- We were to have a visit from Father Bertrand DesForges, the pastor of St. Joseph, our twin parish in Haiti. That has been delayed. Fr. Bertrand is not vaccinated and cannot travel abroad. Only about 1% of Haiti's population is currently vaccinated.
- The Compass is currently available to all PC members. Andrew and Tony should contact Beckett Mathews to arrange for their new subscription.
- The open Pastoral Stewardship position has not been posted yet. At our last meeting in July, Eleanor Healy made a motion that we implement the Pastoral Stewardship position as soon as possible. It was second by Greg Weyenberg. All other PC members voted in favor of the motion. Fr. Dennis was tasked to review the financial impact to the parish and will get Juanita Harder to post the position. This needs to be acted on quickly.

Zephyr Connect Feedback

- Eleanor Healy commented that this event was well planned and organized. They asked the parishes to participate at this event and display tables were available for each to promote happenings in their parishes. Volunteers from each parish also sold 50/50 raffle tickets. Fr. Dennis did a gospel reading and prayer just prior to the 5K race.
- All Aboard Fundraiser, adult only, will be held at the High School and Middle School on October 16. This is a combined event for all elementary schools and will replace the individual fund raising events held at these schools. It will be interesting if this event raises more money than the sum of the individual school events held in the past.

Parish Annual Meeting

- Lance Ernsting covered agenda and reports to be distributed for Parish Annual Meeting following 9:30 AM mass on Sunday, September 19, 2021. Lance asked for volunteers to observe voting at ballot boxes for the next Secretary Trustee of SMM.
- Assignments are as follows:
 - 5:00 pm mass: Tony Geracie
 - 7:30 am mass: Pat Lowney
 - 9:30 am mass: Greg Weyenberg, Lance Ernsting
- Bill Bittner agreed to take minutes at the meeting
- Greg Weyenberg and Holly Rhyner to count / tally ballots after 9:30 Mass. Final count to be announced by Lance at end of annual meeting

Welcome Back Weekend September 25/26

- Lance Ernsting, consulted with St. Gabriel Parish on what they are doing for this weekend. Similar ideas where being pursued as SMM.
- Fr. Dennis will provide a welcome message at all three masses that weekend
- Lance solicited volunteers from PC to be greeters at all masses. Assignments are as follows:
 - 5:00 pm mass: Eleanor Healy, Andrew Braatz
 - 7:30 am mass: Pete Dulcamara, Melinda Cranwell?, other members of Finance Council?
 - 9:30 am mass: Lance Ernsting, Tony Geracie
- Lance Ernsting will send an email to Beckett Mathews requesting name tags for greeters

- Lance Ernsting will be bringing 500 chocolate cookies that are individually wrapped and will be distributed at the end of each mass. Greeters are asked to participate in handing out cookies as well.
- Eleanor Healy expressed an interest in resuming coffee and donuts after masses in the future. Used to have each parish committee volunteer to host each event
- Lance Ernsting will contact members of Finance Council to get additional volunteers to serve as greeters that weekend.

AYAF Update

- Eleanor Healy asked members of the PC if there are any objections to the AYAF Committee hosting a Wine and Cheese party in Friendship Hall on Saturday, November 13 due to COVID? Fr. Dennis had no objections. Funeral luncheons have already resumed in Friendship Hall.
- Eleanor Healy also indicated that the AYAF Committee would also like to gather to make infant blankets for Afghanistan refugee families. Fr. Dennis requested when ready, to solicit volunteers to participate beyond the AYAF Committee. Eleanor also asked permission to contact all Neenah/Menasha parishes and schools to have collections over a couple of weekends at all masses for personal care items for Afghanistan refugees. Permission was granted by PC to pursue both of these activities.

Homework Assignment for Next Meeting

Lance Ernsting asked that all PC members, on their own, come prepared for the next meeting with ideas on what things we can do to bring more people back to church. Each of us will present our ideas at the next PC Meeting. No idea is too large or small. He encouraged us to look at what other churches are doing to increase attendance during weekend services as well. Anything is on the table and this activity will be treated as a brainstorming session.

Human Concerns Update

Greg Weyenberg reported that the Human Concerns Committee will be sponsoring the Open Wide Our Hearts program in January. This committee also agreed to fund \$1,000 towards the cost of making the blankets for Afghanistan refugees referenced in the AYAF Update. Once again they will be conducting a student outreach program and are sending out gift cards to student parishioners who are away from home attending college. Finally, the Human Concerns Committee is asking the PC to solicit new volunteers for all parish committees. They expressed an interest in pursuing a sign up or Stewardship Sunday where parishioners could meet with members of various committees to learn more.

Action Items:

- Eleanor Healy to write thank you notes to Bill Wallingford and Matt Scharenbroch.
- Andrew Braatz and Tony Geracie to contact Beckett Mathews to arrange for their new subscription of The Compass.
- Fr. Dennis to ask Juanita Harder to post the Pastoral Stewardship position.
- Multiple actions for Parish and Annual Meeting and Welcome Back Sunday. See individual assignments in above sections.
- Ideas on what things we can do to bring more people back to church. **(All PC Members to present at next meeting)**

Closing prayer

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 PM.

Next meeting scheduled on Tuesday, October 12th at 6:00 PM in Friendship Hall.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Bill Bittner