

**Church of St. Paul - Comfrey  
Administrative Council Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at 6:30 p.m.**

**Members present:** Msgr. Lozinski, Fr. Andy Michels, Dan Davis, Judy Augustin, Marianne Schotzko, Linda Kelly, Jim Schwab, Dale McMullen, Matt Eischen, Matt Grausam, Nellie Richter – Secretary

**Members absent:** Jim Rathman, Darrell Platz, Connie Kelly, Denice Evers

**Meeting called to order at 6:38 p.m. by Matt Eischen, Vice-Chairman.**

**Liturgy of the Hours Evening Prayer was led by Msgr.**

**Agenda additions:** New Business – Parish Letter; Religious Education.

**Administrative Council Meeting Minutes from September 19<sup>th</sup> presented. No corrections/additions. Motion to approve by L. Kelly, seconded by McMullen. Carried.**

**Old Business:** Nothing on Building Maintenance and no Church roof bids received as of yet. Concrete pad by back garage was completed prior to the Church Dinner and worked well.

**Council/AFC Representative:** Marianne Schotzko was thanked for accepting both.

**Cemetery:** Request is still out there regarding Council transferring funds to the Cemetery Operating Fund/Perpetual Care accounts. Fire proof file cabinet – Jim Rathman was going to check with Doug Callanan – tabled for now.

**Capping off Church's old chimney and caulking around shingles, and to check the Rectory roof – tabled for now as Dale McMullen ran out of time before cold weather came. He will check out when/if weather warms up enough to do safely.**

**September and October Financials presented by Matt Grausam. Adult Sunday offerings are down so we are not meeting our budget. Josh Sellner's (Maintenance) monthly expense will be taken out of the budget as he won't be doing anything for Comfrey. The \$11,885.60 check written to SESM is for 3 months of Msgr., Fr. Andy, Business Office, DRE, benefits, etc. Nothing collected for Rel Ed Tuition this year – last years was \$290. More discussion to follow under New Business.**

**Council likes the new format of the Financials. Various questions by Council on July and August Postmaster checks written. Would like to have the interest rates and maturity dates of Assets, if possible, on the Balance Sheet. Would also like to receive the Financials prior to the meeting – Grausam will try, but depends on when bank statements are received and when meeting date is set. L. Kelly has issue with July check written to Postmaster as there are check numbers out of sequence. Grausam will look into this. Grausam presented the 2019/2020 Budget Comparison sheet. Questions on various AFC Allocations and the percentage breakdowns for the 4 parishes (2019-20 FY SESM – 71%, Morgan – 13%, St. Paul's – 9% and JM – 7%). Approval of Financials tabled until next meeting.**

**New Business:** An ad should be placed in local newspaper for a Maintenance person. Matt Eischen agreed to be the contact person regarding maintenance issues that arise until someone takes the

position. New shelves in church kitchen (by Matt Eischen) and sink/faucet (by McMullen's) are very nice additions to the kitchen.

**Liturgy:** Augustin reported that choir is practicing for Advent.

**Environment:** Schotzko said the committee is making plans for Advent and Christmas. White material for altar is needed.

**CCW:** Schotzko mentioned that the shelving and sink are very much appreciated. CCW members are planning to prepare meals for shut-ins/elderly on December 6<sup>th</sup>. Funeral luncheons/Circles – one circle in particular does not get many members to help. Options would be to go down to 3 circles, have hot meals catered, or form a funeral circle. Will discuss this at the July Executive Meeting. Christmas Potluck planned for December 5<sup>th</sup>, with AFC CCW's invited as well as New Hope ladies. Replacement kitchen items (spatulas, etc.) will be purchased with the church paying the bill.

**Religious Education:** Dan Davis – No Building Facilitator for JM (now) or St. Paul's (starting in January). This position's job description would include being available if a teacher gets ill, contacting parents if a student is not in attendance and DRE/teacher not told prior to class. We have a person(s) that does the opening/closing of the church already. Classes start on January 8<sup>th</sup> at Comfrey.

**First Communion** will be May 3<sup>rd</sup> at St. Paul's for our 1 second-grader. Will put the snow cancellations in bulletins again regarding Wednesday morning masses and Religious Ed classes. Schotzko suggested at the last AFC meeting to send out letters to the inactive families and let them know about the Religious Ed classes. No indication on the JM/SP papers that were sent to the parents earlier this fall that there is a tuition charge for the year. Dan will send a letter stating this as an oversight: Will go with \$20/child with \$50/maximum per family, same as last several years. Program is going well.

**AFC Report by Schwab:** Outline of future 4<sup>th</sup> Plan for Parishes – reduce parishes to 50 (17 parishes to close/merge in next 2-3 years). Morton will be doing an online auction. Clements Church had their auction on October 28<sup>th</sup> with some items going to the Philippines. Hector church and others also closing/merging. Next AFC Meeting will be a Joint meeting with all 4 churches in our AFC of the reps/Councils/Trustees/Staff on Tuesday January 28<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. at SESM. The Christmas gift this year to the parishioners will be a book on the subject of our suffering church.

The AFC Budget was handed out – questions on each AFC church paying for 25% of Fr. Andy's costs when Morgan has more masses during weekday (2) and then he spends time at their Catholic School, when JM and SP only have 1 mass each. Could Fr. Andy spend more time here visiting shut-in's/Brickstone Manor after Wednesday masses? Arlene Helget visits shut-in's now and she could use help, etc. Fr. Andy will try to coordinate some visiting on Wednesdays. Schwab also mentioned the AFC Mission will be November 17, 18 & 19 at SESM in evening. Our church and JM will be serving bars after presentation Monday night. Schotzko asked if the hours to type the weekly bulletin are 15 per month or week? It is per week. Many things to coordinate every week.

**Cemetery:** No report – next meeting will be Thursday, November 21<sup>st</sup> at 6:30 p.m.

**Church Dinner:** Linda Weber gave a report on how things went, chair people needed in order to continue doing this fundraiser, etc. Maybe have more sauerkraut made next year to sell in the Country Store and more sausage as well (sold out day after Church Dinner). Msgr. said that the

people for take-outs stood in line too long and the applesauce served in basement was not good. Eischen did state that we are still getting people to attend despite the wait.

**Emergency Preparedness Plan:** Richter attended a meeting in Olivia regarding what Catholic Mutual Insurance Company would like parishes to do. Cameras at various entries and areas in church, churches need to be locked at night, side entrance church doors locked once church services begin (only can do if panic bars are on doors), ushers trained to be watching entrances, people, etc. Trying to get something coordinated between our church, New Hope Church and Comfrey Police for a presentation and possible training to interested people. It is something that every parish should have in place.

**Funeral Visitations in Church:** Msgr. prefers that the visitation not be in church at all as it is more work for the Funeral Home, especially when visitation is at funeral home in evening and then moves to the church prior to the funeral, and that is what the Funeral Home is intended for. Casket closure done at the Funeral Home prepares the family for the funeral and gives the family more privacy for this final viewing. Church should be more sacred and not turn into a community center. The casket/cremains are now placed in the back of church behind the pews. L. Kelly asked about when a larger group is expected for a visitation and we have winter or other inclement weather and the Funeral Home space cannot accommodate, then the church works much better. Isn't the church supposed to be welcoming? Schotzko understands the reverence of church but having the casket and family in back of church isn't working. Fr. Andy said that when visitations used to be up front, there were issues with plants and placement of the casket.

**Parish Letter:** Schotzko explained that back in May, she and Becky Brown got together to write a letter to parishioners stating that we needed people in the pews as well as contributions, since the Prairie Catholic had churches that had 80 people or under in attendance per mass looking at possible closure or merging. Msgr. will go thru the letter, but wants it to be more informative and positive with wording changed. Council feels we need to tell it like it is to get our people in church and that we are responsible for ourselves and something needs to be sent sooner than later. Schotzko read the letter. Letter would be signed by the Parish Council and Trustees and would like it sent before Christmas. Msgr. will revise and send back to Schotzko.

**DMA Project for 2020:** Decided to go with Church Roof replacement – 20% of what is donated to the DMA comes back to our parish.

Dan Davis talked a bit about the priest shortage – Bishop LeVoi does not want a priest to say more than 3 masses per weekend and that needs to be taken into account as the priests are stretched very thin. Msgr. stated that even if a parish is financially viable, what will close a parish is one without baptisms or kids in Religious Ed programs (our church's future), vibrant music and services, adoration, spirituality, etc. Need to bring back the presence of the Eucharist.

Next meeting will be January 16<sup>th</sup> or 23<sup>rd</sup> (Note: Date later set for Tuesday, January 21<sup>st</sup> at 6:30 p.m.).

Motion to adjourn made by L. Kelly, seconded by Schotzko.

Meeting adjourned at 8:48 p.m. following closing prayer.

Respectfully submitted, Nellie Richter - Secretary