

SJC Parish Pastoral Council
Meeting Minutes- Nov. 8, 2016

Present: Father Ed, Liesl Wuest, Brian Larson, Marianne Duffy, Lynne Schofield, Kevin Haggerty, Chuck Zech, Mary Chollet, Debbie Traini, Susan Hackett, Neil Sheehan, Carly Tolson, Deanna Benner, Maureen Wortz

I. Opening Prayer – Liesl offered a family prayer.

II. Pastor’s Report

Convent Update

A. Father Ed shared that the parish had retained a professional estimator, who is preparing an estimate on new construction of a Parish Life Center. The Parish Life Center Committee believes that due diligence requires obtaining this estimate, to fully inform the parish’s decisions on the project going forward.

B. Debbie Traini reported that the parish would have to address the building’s asbestos problem, regardless of whether the building is ultimately demolished, replaced or renovated, as any option will disturb the asbestos-containing materials now in place.

C. The plan will eventually require the Archdiocese’s review and approval.

D. Fr. Ed said he hoped that the plan could be presented to the parish by the spring.

E. Mary and Father Ed emphasized that the primary goal of the project is to provide space for the growing needs of our many ministries. Both noted that competition for ministry meeting space is now causing friction within the parish and hampering some initiatives. Mary also noted a critical need to provide a private residence for the pastor.

III. Ministry Report

A. The new parish financial statement was distributed. The Council congratulated the Finance Committee on the report’s clarity and presentation. In response to a question, Fr. Ed reported that the parish’s contribution to the school has declined significantly in recent years.

B. Mary also reported on the new Mass attendance numbers, collected annually by the ushers during the October Masses. Highlights:

i. Our Mass attendance for October 2016 averaged 1,071 per weekend.

ii. The new figure is down 7% from October 2015. Mary noted that October 2015 immediately followed the World Meeting of Families and the visit of Pope Francis. In fact, attendance in 2015 count was 24% higher than in 2014, suggesting a “Francis Effect” boost in Mass attendance. Mary also noted that PREP met every Sunday counted in 2015, which drives up Mass attendance.

- iii. Despite the one-year dip, Mary noted that our Mass attendance remains up 10 percent over 2014 – a showing that Fr. Ed praised, noting that Mass attendance is flat or declining at many parishes.

IV. Brainstorming Session (II)

The Council continued its brainstorming session of ideas and concerns to address this year. After reviewing the ideas discussed at the last meeting, the following ideas were discussed:

- A. More activities with our Sister Parish (St. Katharine Drexel): It was suggested that we establish a weekly or monthly collection for SKD's Food Cupboard. Although there was general support for this idea, Father Ed noted that it could conflict with the food collection for the Bernardine Center and that we would need volunteers to coordinate and deliver the food. Kevin and Marianne volunteered for this initiative and will set up a meeting with Mary to plan.
 - B. Noting all of the good work that the parish does for Chester initiatives, a suggestion was made to post thank-you notes from the various organizations, specifically including the Bernardine Center notes above those food collection bins.
 - C. A recommendation was made to spotlight our Ministries in the Bulletin, including pictures of Ministry leaders and possibly a short interview with the leader. (It was also suggested that our priests, deacons, sisters and teachers should be included in this article rotation.) Mary noted that while she has begun a weekly brief highlight, space for longer articles would be a challenge. Photos of ministry leaders will be added to future Bulletin posts. Other suggestions were made to post such interviews on our Facebook page.
 - D. Regarding Facebook: It was noted that our Facebook page relies more on reposted content than on original content that shows off our parish. A recommendation was made to solicit the help of a teenager / young adult to assist with the Facebook interviews. Neil agreed to contact Terry Lynch, the administrator of our Facebook page, about assisting with Facebook.
 - E. A lengthy discussion was begun about how to encourage parish involvement and Mass attendance by our teenagers, young adults, PREP families and other non-participating parishioners. Soliciting feedback via anonymous surveys, mandating meetings with PREP parents, and establishing focus groups were discussed. It was agreed that the Council will discuss this further at its next meeting.
 - F. Chuck Zech reminded Council members that they should be proactively soliciting input from, and listening to, parishioners – and bringing those ideas and concerns to the Council meetings.
- V. Lynne closed the meeting with a prayer for post-election hope and unity.

Submitted by Marianne Duffy

Next meeting: 6:45 p.m. Jan. 10, 2017

Minutes: Deanna
Opening Prayer: Fr. Ed
Closing Prayer: Neil