

## **Parish Pastoral Council Meeting**

**Nov. 29, 2018**

### **Assisi Room of the Rectory**

*Members in attendance:* Fr. John Dillon, Anna Breece, Alicia Church, Debra Crone, Justin Fitzgerald, Arleen Hall, Daniel Koscinski, Christine King, Ann Pierre and Travis Tomon.

*Others in attendance:* Deacon Jim Datovech, Deacon Dan Finn and Communications Coordinator Melissa Egan.

On Nov. 29, 2018, the Parish Pastoral Council learned the results of an Architectural Feasibility Study that identified multiple enhancements St. Francis of Assisi Parish could potentially undertake with \$1.4 million it has amassed through past building fund campaigns and investment income.

Deacon Jim Datovech, who is spearheading the church facility enhancement project for Fr. John Dillon, reported to the Pastoral Council that the church can complete several renovation projects that would address deferred maintenance, add meeting space, modernize the nave and enhance the auditory and musical experience in the church. "It came down to take care of what needs to be taken care of," Deacon Jim said.

The study, conducted by architectural firm Duane, Cahill, Mullineaux & Mullineaux, P.A., showed that 16 projects could be done with the \$1.4 million St. Francis of Assisi Parish already has in hand from the past Forward in Faith Campaign undertaken by former St. Francis Pastor Rev. Lee Fangmeyer and the "God's Co-Workers, God's Building" Campaign undertaken by former St. Francis Pastor Rev. David Beaubien. The bulk of these funds had originally been raised for a two-story building to be primarily used for Religious Education classrooms, But, since the parish's demographics have changed so much in the past dozen years, the Architectural Feasibility Study instead considered general enhancements that could improve the church, as a whole.

The projects identified by the architectural firm that could be largely completed with the funding already in hand included:

- Repaving and restriping of the parking lot
- Adding exterior lighting
- Building a covered entrance to the Parish Center
- Ensuring the church site is safe and secure through hard and soft measures
- Repairing the church roof
- Building a new emergency stairway near the altar so people can exit from the altar side.
- Upgrading the interior finish
- Replacing the flooring in the Gathering Space
- Repairing the dividers in the Parish Center
- Refurbishing the kneelers and pews
- Enhancing interior lighting and adding controls

- Installing video monitors
- Buying a new sound system
- Replacing the piano
- Replacing the organ

Deacon Jim said the committee advising Fr. John operated on the premise of how do we do the most we can do. The next step is for Fr. John and Deacon Jim to meet with archdiocesan official Bob Messer to get further guidance on which projects can be done in the short term.

“We’ll pick and choose how we start this,” Deacon Jim said. “But we’ll probably start with the roof and the parking lot.”

Under old business, the council also discussed several issues of note, including the work of a Safety Ad-hoc Committee and a Ministry Fair Planning Subcommittee. Regarding the Safety Ad-hoc Committee, Fr. John reported that a Montgomery County Police Officer toured the church site with Fr. John, Deacon Jim Datovech and Director of Religious Education Susan Anderson to identify what safety improvements the church could make. Most of the recommendations focused on church staff making sure to use and enforce use of current security measures already in place, such as keeping doors locked.

Fr. John acknowledged that the shooting on Oct. 27 at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, PA, galvanized him into action to see where the church’s security weak links are. “I was little disappointed that there were not best practices for active shooter training,” Fr. John said. “I’m still interested in pursuing that.”

Regarding the Ministry Fair, Pastoral Council member Ann Pierre reported that the council sub-committee is looking to choose a date and a theme. She said the committee wants to show that the parish has a cross-section of ministries represented. Some Pastoral Council members expressed concerns about some ministry leaders not opening up their ministries to new people and ideas. Council members also discussed the need for a ministry oversight committee to ensure those contacts between especially new volunteers and ministry coordinators are happening.

In other business, the council also had a lengthy discussion about what more the parish can do to help parishioners process the sexual abuse crisis. On the heels of the Four Courageous Discussions session held Nov. 18, Pastoral Council member Chris King said she felt like the church needed to take some action.

“Because we had the [Four Courageous Conversations] discussion, people were pretty vocal that we should do something,” King said. “They want to see something done.”

Council member Debra Crone took a different perspective, saying “it’s not helping” to be continually talking about the sexual abuse revelations that went public last summer.

After some spirited debate, Deacon Dan Finn set a diplomatic note. “We have to ask ourselves, ‘How do you build the faith community to be stronger?’”

Council members also heard a report from St. Jude’s Regional School on recent school happenings, as well as the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner and Dance, which will take place at 6:30 pm Saturday, Feb. 2.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 pm.