The meeting was held at the new parish center at Saint Mary’s and called to order at 7:03 pm

Role call of council members:

Angie McMaster (co-chair)  Ray Wagner  Jessica Hagg (youth)
Cliff Mann (co-chair) (absent)  Chickie Rigazio  Paul Therrien
Father Brian Mahoney  Paul Sidari (absent)  Rachel Beechin (youth)
Laura Conte  Scott Davidson  Julianna Magbonzi (absent)
Matthew Larson (youth) (absent)  Julie Seitter  Karen Drake
Matthew Pontbriant (youth) (absent)  Lori McDonald (absent)  Laura Zatta (absent)
Peter Lando (absent)  Ross Drew (absent)  Mike Condor

1) The meeting began with an opening prayer led by Father Brian.

2) The group reviewed and approved the January meeting minutes.

3) Although Julianna was not present, she submitted the topic of ‘Teaching safety within our parish community’ to be discussed. After a brief discussion in favor on how this could be introduced to our community, Father Brian suggested we table this discussion until she is present. One possibility is adding this item as part of our religious education programs.

4) Mike Condor brought up an issue about the donuts offered after the 8:30 Sunday morning Mass at Saint Johns. He stated that at times there is not enough resulting in some children going home disappointed. It was reported that some families are sending one parent downstairs to the parish hall after communion to reserve them for their families. Father Brian stated it is not an issue to order more donuts. Within the next couple of weeks the order will be adjusted dependent upon what is going on each Sunday morning. On the weeks religious education classes are held after that Mass, more donuts will be ordered.

5) An update on the Solar Project was discussed next. Father Brian stated that this project is currently on hold but is still in favor of perusing this at some point. He would like to see other local parishes do this first to see how these panel grids look and perform. Another determining factor could be an increase in cost due to the new 30% tariff on panels being made outside the country.

6) Karen asked about the ‘Best Lent’ ever program. Father Brian reported that he has purchased an internet based program called ‘FORMED’ at a cost of $900 ($450 per parish). This program provides movies, daily reflections, spiritual emails, etc and is already being used for the baptismal preparation program. To promote this, a card will be passed out during Ash Wednesday and weekend services which will show everyone how to login and use this service. A Lenten retreat is also scheduled for last week in February at Saint Mary’s.

7) Last week, a small newsletter was mailed to all parishoners. It has been reported that not everyone has received it. Father Brian stated that this is probably due to these newsletters being sent out as bulk mail. Those outside the parish area will hopefully receive their copy soon as the post office does not guarantee a specific time of delivery on bulk mail service. A possible solution for the future is to mail these newsletters first class mail for those parishoners who do not live in Chelmsford or one of the surrounding towns. Another possible solution discussed was the use of ‘flock notes’. In order to accomplish this, parishoners need to provide their parish with an email address. Father Brian reported that 50% of parishoners have supplied emails.
8) The Mass schedule survey which was done in the Spring of 2017 was the next agenda item. Father Brian and Julie have spent much time recently going through these surveys and have come up with some ideas. Father Brian would like to create a subcommittee comprised off four members from the Collaborative Parish Council, two from each parish, to try and figure out how new Mass schedule would best work when the time comes. Nothing is going to change immediately by should we go down to two Priests, the possibility of reconfiguring the Mass schedule could be as follows: Two Saturday afternoon Masses (one at each parish), four Sunday morning mass (two at each parish), one evening Mass at St Mary’s. The end result is the elimination of one Sunday morning Mass at Saint Marys and the Sunday evening Mass at Saint Johns. All in all, Father Brian is very impressed over the past couple of years on how members of both parishes in the Collaborative have been supporting each other both in time and monetarily in bringing these parishes closer together.

9) With the noticeable wear and tear on the floors and pews at Saint Johns, Julie asked if there is a replacement plan being thought about in the near future. Father Brian stated that, due to building regulations, we need to be careful as more space is required between pews should they be replaced. This would result in reducing the seating capacity by approximately 200 at Saint Johns. This project will be looked at further in a couple of years.

10) Jessica Hagg spoke about the Aqua Run organization she is deeply involved with. Their goal is to raise awareness and money in order to make others aware of the lack of clean water over 800 million people are without in our world. What we take for granted, many must struggle to attain, even in our own country. The funds raised will be passed along to charitable organizations who work towards providing to those in need with this basic human necessity. In order to bring this to the attention of our parishes, Aqua Run will be promoted within our religious education classes and posted in the weekly bulletin.

11) The council members were then invited to openly share what their thoughts were on the 3rd chapter of the book the ‘Four signs of a Dynamic Catholic’ which they have been assigned to read. Below are a few comments from those present.

Ray stated how material consumption has overtaken our society. Many people put more priority into attaining materialistic items in life rather than other aspects of life which should be more important.

To add, Father Brian stated the simple fact that the number of self-storage lockers has grown enormously over the past couple of decades validates Ray’s statement.

Karen and Julie both expressed concerns on how ‘relativism’ has also taken over society in the fact that faith is not talked about openly anymore. People have ‘free will’ and feel they can do almost anything they want without consequences.

Scott suggested that people need to get answers to our faith. We should give them the tools to find the answers and then let them get the answers themselves as this will be more rewarding for them and show more interest in our faith on their part.

Chickie commented that when someone asks her what our faith is made up of, she directs them to the Apostles Creed. This is a ‘great’ summary and basis of our faith.

Father Brian gave his opinion that the younger generation’s communication skills do not have enough of the human element. Face-to-face interaction with others is becoming less and less due to everyone use of electronic devices and wanting their own private space. Families are smaller now resulting in everyone wanting/having their own bedrooms and private spaces. When there is opportunity to communicate face-to-face, many still choose to use an electronic device.

Due to many living by and tolerating ‘relativism’ in our society, Karen commented on how people are offended about truths and common sense which they will not acknowledge.

Chickie explained how she used to be a little reserve in openly discussing her faith with others outside the parish. She no longer has this concern and lets the Holy Spirit guide her tongue and has received a lot of positive feedback.

Due to time constraints, the discussion was stopped and will continue with reviewing chapter 3 at the next meeting.

12) Round Table topics of discussion

This item was ‘tabled’ until the next meeting.
Meeting adjourned at 8:35pm

Next meeting Sunday March 4th, 2018 at Saint Mary’s new parish center – 7 pm

Respectfully submitted

YBIC

Ray Wagner