

Parish Pastoral Council Notes — June 4, 2019

[with thanks and deep appreciation to Jeanne Mooney for her invaluable notes]

In Attendance

Anne Bell, Jack Best, Kathy Best, Lisa Bianculli, Barbara Bruce, Fr. Jeffrey Chichester, Bill Crandall, Eleanor Czarnecki, Greg Dankey, Jacob Fuhrman, Moriah Gerhard, Jim Gulley, Duncan Harris, Paul Hogan, Amy Johnson, Cathy Kamp, Debi Land, Mary Ann Lovelock, Mary Maley, Jeanne Mooney, Mike Nesbitt, Marleen Riley, Judy Roth, Ned Sayegh, Carolyn Schlageter, Fr. Jim Schwartz, Sr. Rosemary Sherman, Ellen Smaglo, Steve Smith, Vera Tannous, Nancy Veronesi, Patrick Vogt

From Holy Spirit: Barbara Bauman, Dcn. Ray Garbach, Bob Quinn, Mike Schifano

Pastor's Report

Fr. Jim

- We welcome the opportunity to be of service to each other

Budget Reviews & Approval

Patrick Vogt, Business Manager

- Voted for conditional approval, pending approval of Finance Council at June 24 meeting
- Two keys to the budget: church collections and school enrollment
- Church collections down 2 ½ %, smaller decline than experienced in other parishes
- School budget based on enrollment of 251 students; now at 215, continues through August
- Reduced expenses by outsourcing maintenance
- CMA is a non-operating line item; 15-20k shortfall this year. Same goal for next year.
 - Diocese overall is at 92% of goal (800K shortfall)
 - St. Joseph's CMA results are similar to other large suburban parishes

Catholic education

Amy Johnson, Principal of St Joseph School

- Currently our PreK - Grade 6 enrollment is 220 students, which is short of our budget. We are taking a pro-active approach by creating an enrollment Advisory Team which includes Fr. Jim, me and parents from the school and adults from our parish. Our goal is to look at new initiatives including marketing to increase enrollment
- Our declining enrollment is reflected in all of the Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Rochester. Thank you for your prayers and positive words as we work to make a change, and help St. Joseph School to exist for many years to come.
- Budget depends on number of registered children; will be revised if needed
- Enrollment continues through the summer, especially Pre-K classes
- Almost every area Catholic school has experienced declining enrollment
- Parents who intentionally seek faith-based education vs. avoiding inadequate public schools
- Offering 50% discount on Kindergarten tuition to attract families in discernment

- Invite your prayers, positive conversations, ways to work with parishes without a school

Sister Parish Collaboration:
Church of the Holy Spirit & St. Joseph's Church
Lead by Fr. Jim

- Continues with shared staff: Fr. Jim, Fr. Jeff, Patrick Vogt, Deacon Roger DeBell
- Retain the charism of each, welcome individuality
- We encounter God in our love for one another – live this out in sharing our resources
 - Opportunities to meet, i.e. Soup Supper & Stations at Holy Spirit
 - Faith Formation programs
 - Shared Parish Council
 - We honor, respect, and pray together

Large Group Sharing
Ned Sayegh, Mike Schifano

- 1. What are your feelings and concerns as we talk about collaboration between the two parishes?**
 - St. Joseph's is a large, vibrant community. Parishioners of Holy Spirit fear their parish will be "gobbled up" and no longer exist down the road. They fear their charism will be diluted within a shared community. They don't want to become a "little St. Joe's."
 - Fear of how a combined parish council will work.
 - St. Joseph's is a welcoming parish. We don't want to "gobble up" anyone. It hurts to hear that people think we will do this.
 - Make sure all voices are heard. Size of parish does not determine what ministries and activities you want to work on. Make the transition slow will help reduce fear and resistance to change.
 - The Diocese of Rochester will decide for us if we don't manage the transition for ourselves. If we work together now, we can choose our path and create a plan for ourselves. Our pastor, Father Jim, will eventually retire. If we plan now, we avoid leaving the planning to a new pastor who doesn't know us as well. We need to work it out for ourselves; "the table needs to be set" for the next pastor. If we don't work on collaboration, someone else will do it for us.
- 2. What is gained when we work together?**
 - St. Joseph's and Holy Spirit can learn from each other. We need the strength of both places
 - Important to keep "financially positive."
 - Flexibility is the key to flourishing.
 - Much benefit to be gained from working together. We are all Catholic Christians. We share the same faith, expressed in different ways. Same message, same faith; Christ is the center. One faith; one Baptism for both parishes.
 - Gain cost savings, more comfortable, understanding each other's strengths, new ways to do ministry, realize we are not different, our mission is Jesus.
 - One benefit of working together for confessions: observed 20 people still left in line at Holy Spirit. If times were staggered, anyone still waiting in line could have received the sacrament at St. Joseph's.

- Positive feelings about the collaboration. Make sure all voices are heard. Parishes have different personalities and demographics. Want to preserve and respect each parish's traditions. Need to welcome new people and new roles. Welcome new perspectives from new people involved in the parish.
- Fear of the unknown, or opportunity to embrace the new. Can be good for all of us.
- Familiarity will help us all feel welcome.
- Maintain distinct charisms and collaborate.
- Eliminate redundancies.
- Hold ourselves accountable and respect each other
- We can have the best of both worlds. We will be stronger from this collaboration; We are better together. We can create ministries, liturgies, and service together

3. What do we worry will be lost?

- Concerns that Holy Spirit will “lose their identity” and traditions.
- Holy Spirit fears losing families who will attend St. Joseph's if their children go to school there.
- People don't like change. Worried that communication will be garbled. St. Joseph's has a younger vibe because of the school. Holy Spirit appeals to an older generation.
- Don't want Mass times to change. Worry about losing masses on-site.
- Will each parish maintain its own finances and parishioner database? Will we be “thrown into it” or will it be done gradually? How can liturgical integration happen, especially on Sundays? What to do about duplicate ministries? 2 parish councils, 2 worship teams = exhaustion

Next Steps

Cathy Kamp, Dcn. Ray Garbach

How did we get here? Review of the journey thus far.

- Father Ed Palumbus spoke to a joint staff meeting of Holy Spirit and St. Joseph's about how to proceed. A small group including staff members of both parishes has met and continues to work on a one-page draft of the Planning in Process for our Sister Parish Collaboration. Thus far, St. Joseph and Holy Spirit have started to work towards merging our Parish Pastoral Councils and will be meeting this summer to discuss how to plan our next steps.
- After tonight's meeting, a document will be formed with the results of our discussion. We will hear all voices and communicate to all those who need to know. The vision and feelings expressed with help determine our next steps together.
- The Diocese of Rochester has sent a clear affirmation of the connection between our two parishes. Right now, we have the luxury of non-urgent preparation; it would be a mistake to miss the opportunity to work together as sister parishes.
- The staff of both parishes has discussed plans to create one Faith Formation program, encompassing Summer Intensive, Home Family, and Classroom programs based on the strengths of each parish. Faith Formation staff will meet over the summer to continue planning.
- Communication will be of utmost importance through this process. Together we will speak with one voice about our collaboration.