

**ST. MARY CATHOLIC CHURCH  
PASTORAL COUNCIL MINUTES**

November 16, 2023

*--Living Our Faith, Sharing Our Joy--*

The Parish Pastoral Council meeting began at 6 pm in the CCC. Members present were Tom Oscar, Sandy Bishop, Mary Luedke, Pete Pintens, Levi Spaeth, Bear Wadzinski, and Fr. Louis. Members absent: Mary Bailey, Michele Wingate, and Doug Duchac. Others present: Jan Huseby, Ann Jelinek, and Jeff Walker.

Fr. Louis led the opening prayer.

Bear read the mission statement.

Minutes from the September 28, 2023 meeting were reviewed. Motion to approve was made by Mary L. Second by Bear. Motion carried.

Staff reports were reviewed and discussed.

- Jan gave an update on the status of the volunteer profiles. Tracy is working on the design of the graphics to be included in the weekly bulletins to spotlight the volunteers who've agreed to participate in the project.
- All agreed that the Confirmation Mass was beautiful and appropriate to be held in conjunction with All Saints Day. Bishop Powers would prefer another date in the future, however, because of scheduling issues.
- Jan reported on the progress of the Advent Choir rehearsals and remarked on how many people are involved in preparing this gift to the community – not just the singers, instrumentalists, and choir leaders, but also the volunteers who will be preparing and serving the food for the reception, greeters/ushers, those helping to spread the word to promote the event, and many others working behind the scenes to make the concert successful. All together, there are more than 100 people involved!
- Ann updated the Council on the needs of Our Sisters' House and the challenges of providing support to the residents who live there. The shelter has been at nearly full capacity recently, so the need for food, cleaning supplies, linens, meal preparation, etc. has also increased. Volunteers are needed to fill many roles at the shelter, and Council members are asked to help to spread the word and/or get involved in this vital community ministry that relies entirely on grant funding and donations.

The October 2023 financial statement was reviewed and discussed.

Old Business:

1. FORMED update/roll-out – Marianna wasn't able to attend tonight's meeting, so we'll look forward to getting an update at the December meeting. Council members are interested in knowing how many people have accessed the site and how we can continue to promote the available resources and make it easier for people to set up their accounts/logins. Fr. Louis stressed the importance of marketing, and all thought that ongoing promotion through social media is important.
2. Confirmation, All Saints Day, and All Souls Day – See above in Staff Reports. Additionally, Jan mentioned that although there was a very low attendance at the All Souls Day Mass of Remembrance (approx. 25), it was a beautiful Mass and continues to be a source of hope and healing for those who are grieving.
3. Advent Choir Update – See above in Staff Reports.
4. October 6<sup>th</sup> Walk for Virtues report – Juanita wasn't able to attend tonight's meeting, but she shared in her written report that this year's Walk for Virtues was a great success. The walk is also a fundraiser for the school and resulted in proceeds of \$572.
5. October 8<sup>th</sup> influenza vaccine clinic report - Ann reported on the success of this year's flu clinic and praised Tyler Stevenson (owner/pharmacist at Tomahawk Pharmacy) for his willingness to hold the clinic at St. Mary's. Attendance was minimal after the 11 am Mass, so the clinic will wrap up earlier next year.

New Business:

1. January 31<sup>st</sup> Faith Night update (define target audience) - This topic will be discussed at the December Council meeting.
2. Mass attendance analysis – Laura prepared a helpful report with graphs showing average Mass attendance in the 10 weeks since the Mass times were changed in September, average yearly Mass attendance comparison for 2022-23 and 2021-22, and detailed analysis by Mass times. Discussion followed, with the following comments/observations.

- Mass attendance has rebounded slightly after Covid.
- The 9:30 am Mass time is the most popular time, with attendance having decreased at the 11 am Mass time.
- Fr. Louis mentioned that Mass times will be evaluated again after Easter.
- There are likely many reasons for the overall decrease in Mass attendance, including Diocesan, statewide, and national trends, families juggling competing priorities (more sports and recreational activities being scheduled on Sundays and more overnight/weekend out-of-town events), and lack of sound catechesis of parents. Discussion continued about ways our Council can be involved in outreach to parents and young families, evangelization, and strengthening programming, ministries, and activities of the parish. Fr. Louis stressed the importance of ongoing prayer and continuing to build on what has been started.

#### Other Business:

1. Winter usher volunteers needed – Bear again noted the lack of ushers and how the lower numbers are affecting our ability to meet people’s needs in church. Tom requested that we get the word out about the urgent need for ushers – maybe through an announcement in the bulletin and/or in one of Fr. Louis’ newsletters or mailings to parishioners. It was noted that one-on-one contact is probably the best way to get people engaged in ministries. Council members were encouraged to reach out people they know to ask about their willingness to serve.
2. Ministry Fair discussions – Tom noted that we need new ideas/models for promoting and increasing participation in the many ministries of the parish. Council members were asked to continue to think about new approaches that could be tried.
3. Need for accessible restrooms in the back of the church – Jan asked that this issue be brought to the Pastoral Council for discussion. All agreed that continued use of the basement restrooms, especially by elderly parishioners and those with young children, is less than ideal, and the feasibility of remodeling the back of the church (“cry room” area) into accessible restrooms should be explored. Additional needs for a hospitality/gathering area and meeting space were identified and could perhaps be included as part of a longer range plan. As a next step, staff will reach out to a local engineer who has advised the parish on other building projects to request that he do a walk-through of the space. After an initial determination of the feasibility of the project, Fr. Louis will convene a committee work on the project.
4. Fr. Louis led a discussion about the three Diocesan planning documents that were

shared with Council members via email. Bishop Powers is asking each parish/parish cluster to form a committee regarding planning for the future. Specifically, the committee will be asked to do the following:

- Identify what “maintenance” needs should take place in order to go on “mission.”
- Reflect on the questions from page 1 in the *Recalibrating Maintenance for Mission* document and/or utilize the resources from *Approaches for Realizing Positive Change and Transformation* or *Parish Discipleship Pathways*.
- Report to Christine Newkirk or any of the Diocesan planning team members as to what process we’ll be using. Ask for assistance if needed.
- Some form of discussion and beginning planning should take place before December 10<sup>th</sup>.

The following Council members volunteered to be part of the committee: Mary L., Levi, and Tom. All Council members were asked to identify others who may be interested in serving on the committee – perhaps a recent confirmand?

Sandy led the closing prayer and the meeting was adjourned at 7:15 pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 21<sup>st</sup> at 6 pm in the CCC.

Minutes submitted by Sandy Bishop.