

**St. Eugene Congregation
Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 24, 2024**

Present: Deacon Stan Lowe, Parish Director, James Wawrzyn, Chair, Kathleen Roling, Vice Chair, Kathleen Kirchner, Worship Liaison, Preston MacQueen, Stewardship Liaison, Sally Lautmann, Human Concerns Liaison, Tim Lambert, Finance Liaison, Heidi Quinn Formation Liaison,, Eileen Placek, Trustee, Bill Hudson, Trustee
Guests: Phil LaRosa, Director of Operations, Daniel Gabler, All Around Great Guy and Child of God

Excused: Kate Gould, Secretary, Amy Fussman, School Liaison

Pastoral Council Chair, James Wawrzyn called the meeting to order at 7:00pm and led us in prayer.
Deacon Stan, Tim Lambert and the council members introduced themselves and shared something about themselves.
The minutes of November 8, 2023, were approved by consensus.

NEW BUSINESS:

PARISH DIRECTOR REPORT:

- Bishop Jeff Haines will be visiting our school on February 1, 2024, for a full morning.
- In February we will start a new rotation of pastors. Fr. Tonny Kizza and Father Mike Bertram will share mass celebrations at St. Eugene and St. Monica. Father Michael Courchaine will also be helping out.
- Deacon Stan advised that the investigation being conducted is well underway and he is hoping for a decision and conclusion relatively soon. Deacon Stan advised them that he wants to get it right, done fairly and get it done rather quickly.

LOVE ONE ANOTHER CAMPAIGN:

- The campaign is on hold for now. The Parish Council debated what might be a good time to move forward without conclusion. Deacon Stan will be speaking with the Archdiocese to find out what their direction to us is. Current pledges have been validated and people are actively making their contribution payments. What is open for discussion and decision is when to relaunch the campaign to seek additional supporters.
- We had a goal of roughly \$1.9 million. We have received approximately \$750,000 in bonafide pledges. Our share is approximately \$436,000. As pledge payments are being made, we are receiving our share. So far, we have received approximately \$81,000, which is in a restricted fund bank account.

SANCTUARY PROJECT:

- Phil LaRosa reported that he has been over- sighting the committee. Phil spoke with our rep at the Arch who said he will be speaking with the Archbishop about our plans.
- We have selected a contractor/architect
- We can not sign the architect contract until we get approval from the Arch.
- Father Mark did sign the proxy for this and submitted it to the Arch. We need the Archbishop to sign off on this.
- It was discussed that to have a successful well guided design and development phase, we need pastoral leadership so perhaps we should wait.
- Phil also reported that he wants to move forward with the Fire Panel, HVAC, and Security systems. We need to get a proxy from the Arch in order to spend the money to move forward on these projects. The Arch has not been adequately responsive. The Fire Panel is a priority because this phase four project is needed to get up to code. The HVAC system work is a priority not only because of the age of our current systems but recently we had no heat in the gym due to a boiler issue. Without addressing the HVAC we might expect continuing unplanned problems.

SNOW DAY PROCEDURE:

- Father Mark put in a policy on how we would handle snow emergencies for the school, parish and office. Deacon Stan reviewed it and concluded that it is a good policy. No changes will be made.

The council debated its role and ability to influence matters before the parish. Several members made observations from their perspective.

COMMISSION REPORTS:

HUMAN CONCERNS:

- The committee on racism has broadened their appeal to include justice in the church.
They are working on finalizing a rebranding of the committee's name.
- Our web site has applications up on the web site for grant requests. People are encouraged to submit requests for qualifying organizations.

FORMATION:

- Joyce Swietlik has done a great job reorganizing and driving improvements.

STEWARDSHIP:

- Working on cleaning up all of our data. We have yet to decide which software platform we will use.
- Organizing events for a volunteer appreciation event as well as a new parishioner lunch on February 18, 2024.
- Created a calendar of events that is now up on our website.
- What can the stewardship committee do to contribute to the overall main initiatives?
- We need more people to serve on this committee. Council members are urged to ask people to volunteer.

FINANCE

YTD December had a Net Operating Surplus of +\$31k
This is (\$29k) under budget (unfavorable)
This is (\$84k) less than last year(unfavorable)
<p>We are halfway through our fiscal year and we ended with a Net Operating Surplus of \$31k. We budgeted for a surplus of +\$60k for this point in time, but we fell short by (\$29k). Compared to last year, we had a surplus of +\$115k at this point in time and we are well below that. This is not positive news. The School is +\$72k over budget (unfavorable) and Administration is +\$15k over budget (unfavorable). This is, however, a slight improvement over last month. Some categories in the school budget were recast to better reflect budget versus actual spending.</p>
<p>The Administration department shortfalls remain due to the CPA firm costs and salary and benefits. The school should be able to provide insights into their shortfalls, but from what I can see, school tuition, school annual fund, and the auction are coming in unfavorably (\$40k) but most likely due to timing and should smooth out over time. Salaries and benefits +\$25k and supplies +\$9k account for the remainder.</p>

Compared to the YTD budget, the offertory came in (\$11k) under budget. While we missed our target, offertory came in dead even when compared to the month of December last year and came in \$37k more than YTD last year. Tuition and Program Fees are coming in unfavorably at (\$9k) under budget with School Tuition coming in (\$27K) under budget and Religious Ed tuition coming in under budget by (\$7k). Extended care and other school related revenues making up the difference of +25k over budget. Rental Income came in under budget and will continue to come in under budget by \$1k per month due to the vacancy of the Rectory. Other revenues, and Fundraising Income are coming in favorably at +\$10k over budget. Salaries and Benefits expense is coming in 2% over budget or +\$18k due to various reasons such as salary adjustments post budget due to market analysis, new hire salaries, and hourly staff working over budgeted hours along with overtime hours. Supplies and Purchased Services came in favorably at (\$7k) under budget. B&G came in +8k over budget. Other expenses came in favorably at (\$9k) under budget.

Compared to prior year, total contributions are just (\$1k) less than last year. Offertory came in favorably at +\$37k more than last year, however, one time Miscellaneous Donations (\$31k) and Annual Fund (\$10k) are less than last year. Tuition and Program Fees are coming in favorably at +\$33k more than last year which is in line due to increased tuition and an increase in school enrollment. Other Revenues came in +\$38k more than last year due to the +\$27k from last year's auction meet the need item and Bank investment income +\$10k. Fundraising Income also came in favorably by +\$9k compared to prior year. All major categories of operating expenses came in more than last year with a total variance of +\$158k. Salaries and Benefits accounting for \$82k and Supplies \$46k and B&G +\$29k making up most of the rest.. School Viewboards were a large component.

BUDGET PROCESS:

- The fiscal 2025 budget process is kicking off.
- Members of the budget subcommittee will each have specific tasks.
- We are seeing cost inflation in many areas. These and other budget assumptions were agreed to.
- The goal is to have an approved budget by the end of March.

WORSHIP:

- Have not met recently.
- Had a very well executed and attended Lessons and Carols event.
- The committee needs a schedule for Holy Week. Deacon Stan will work on this.

SCHOOL:

- Open house will be this weekend.
- The Annual Fund has raised \$103,000 compared to \$121,000 at this time last year.

- The auction will be April 13th at Shully's. Need 20 volunteers to execute the event. Chairs are Beth Anderson and Hillary Glasner.
- Continued progress is being made on the due diligence phase for the SNSP program for special needs scholarships.

ROSTER:

Final updates and corrections to be made then James will forward it to Mary Martone and others.

Sally Lautmann volunteered to write a procedural statement on writing, approving, submitting and publishing meeting minutes for all councils and committees.

NEXT MEETING: The February 14, 2024 meeting was rescheduled to February 7, 2024 at 7:00pm. The meeting will be a joint meeting with St. Monica's Pastoral Council in Mackin Hall.

We will host hospitality.

The meeting closed with a prayer at 9:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Hudson on behalf of Kate Gould, Secretary

VISION:

At least twice during the meeting, the primary driving objectives, initiatives or pillars of Father Mark's vision as expressed through parishioners during town hall meetings was referred to. For convenience, those are reprinted below...

Build my community in a way that educates my children and myself in our faith. Tell me what is going on and what choices I have in programming and fellowship. Make my Mass experience more reverent and return full participation in the Holy Eucharist. Spend my money well, be accountable to it and do what you say you will do.

Build Community

Formation of young and old

Communication/transparency/financial accountability

Make Mass more reverent

Joint Pastoral Council Meeting

February 7, 2024

St. Eugene Narthex 6:30pm

Members Present: Fr. Tonny, Fr. Reesman, Eileen Placek, Bill Hudson, Phil LaRosa, James Wawrzyn, Kathleen Roling, Amy Fussman, Tim Lambert, Kathleen Kirschner, Preston McQueen, Heidi Quinn, Luke Junk, with members of the St. Monica Pastoral Council

Members Excused: Kate Gould and Sally Lautmann

- I. Opening Prayer- Fr. Reesman
- II. Executive Director Report- Rebecca Jones
 - a. New Principals in both schools-SES Nicolle Schroeder, SMS Lynn Leroy
 - b. Curriculum
 - SES Professional development for the staff February 9th
 - SMS working to vertically align curriculum.
 - c. Enrollment
 - SES 23-24: 179 (10% increase), 24-25: Re-enrollment and new registrations going well. Anticipating 188
 - SMS Consistent with previous year, reenrollment begins, anticipating 400-405
 - d. Open Houses
 - SES 17 tours, 15 applicants with more pending 3k – 4th
 - SMS 25 tours, 37 new applications 3k – 7
 - e. Annual Fund: SE \$109,435 and SMS \$36,541 (current numbers)
 - f. Auction
 - SES Auction will be April 13th 2024. Meet-the-Need category new color copier
 - SMS Harvest Ball (Nov) raised over \$400,000
 - g. Special Needs Scholarship Program (SNSP)
 - SES intent to join March 1st 2024
 - SMS school commission would like to explore for the 24-25 year
- III. Formation Director Report- Joyce Swietlek
 - a. Reorganized department since March 2023, changes are positive

- Child, Youth, and Adult ministries were reorganized from separate silos to a combined department reporting to Joyce
- Offering mission trip for middle school students, “Love Begins Here” staying within the Archdiocese
- Adding back the Children’s Liturgy of the Word
- Baptism program reworked, new volunteers added
- Adult Programming, Emmaus 90
 1. Small group formation Thursday night 25 people
 2. Women’s group forming on Tuesday mornings
- Evangelical Catholic training, Monday evenings
- RCIA, no new candidates, 3 adult confirmands
- Compass group for young mothers twice a month
- ManCave ministry once a week
- Corpus Christi procession, *will need assistance*
- Summer confirmation program and Totus Tuus returning
- Parish Mission planned in October 13-15th partnering with the Franciscan Ministry in Stuebenville, 3 day event, held at St. Monica
- *Goal for this year to build the Christian Formation Commission*

IV. Introduction Activity Ice-Breaker

V. Other Business-

a. Fr. Reesman Report

- Met with the parish and school staff, shouldering heavy workload without the leadership of a pastor
- Deacon Stan Lowe left post as an administrator due to the time commitment
- 187 parishes in Archdiocese, 60 pastors short, no margin for a shortage
- Phil LaRosa will be operating as Parish Administrator
- Canonical Process- Investigation has concluded, initial report sent to the Archbishop
- Fr. Reesman recommends that Fr. Mark does not return to SM and SE parishes due to the challenge of returning to divided parishioners

- How do we move the parishes to the next chapter?
 1. Continue budget process and programs as usual
 2. Wait until the next pastor for any new investments (no proxy power),
 - a. SE LOA project will be paused
 - b. Emergency expenditures can be approved through Fr. Reesman and parish trustees

- b. Temperature of Parishes and Stewardship Strategies
 - Mass attendance and giving:
 1. Has there been a significant drop in mass attendance since Fr. Mark has been on leave?
 - a. Based on limited reporting, 2016 to 2024 SE 37% drop, SM 40% drop
 - b. Data on mass #s not available to compare last year to current
 - c. SM council identified that pews seem significantly emptier and that parishioners did not respond well to certain visiting priests
 - d. SE giving is up YTD, SM giving is down \$100,000
 2. Discussion on how to increase parishioner engagement
 - a. Volunteer fair with all committees present
 - b. Member of Pastoral Council available after mass to answer questions and listen to feedback

- c. Communication Methods
 - How can we best use methods of communication?-bulletin, pulpit announcements, mailed letters, parishioner testimonials, etc
 - New Associate Director Claire Drefcinski has joined the staff and will be managing marketing and communications
 - Pastoral Council transparency in meetings minutes
 - Bill Hudson suggested the book *Why They Follow: Lessons on Church Communication from That One Lost Sheep* from the founder of Flocknote as a resource for staff and leadership
 - When and how should we announce the next steps of the canonical investigation?

1. Council members discussed the timing of making an announcement to the parishes and were in favor of waiting until an official decision made by the Archbishop

d. Worship

- Visiting priests will be Fr. Mike Bertram, Fr. Leon, Bishop Haines for February
- Lent plans - SE director of liturgy Matt coordinating with choirs

VI. Closing Prayer

VII. Optional Social