

**St. Catherine of Siena parish Pastoral Council
February 14, 2015 – Minutes**

Members present: Father Robert Creagan, Father Stan Witek, Patrick Martin, Scott Betzler, Brett Merkel, Gretchen Merkel, Linda Furtaw, Janet Ingersoll, Nathan Whitford, Colleen Hoerman, Narsha Schultz, Nancy Dudasko, Jim Norman, Colleen Semler, Claire Pollack, and Gary Hunt.
Unable to attend: Chip Everett, Tammy LeFaive

Meeting called to order: 10:00 AM, opening prayer led by Patrick

November 15 meeting minutes were approved

Reports:

- 1) **Steward Reports** – A question was raised about the new Stations of the Cross and two being located in the Trinity chapel. Fr. Stan explained the intended journey and Narsha added they are to encourage parishioners to come into the chapel.
- 2) **Finance Council Report**, Linda Furtaw
 - a. Finances reported in the bulletin show a shortfall but do not reflect all the church's income. Christmas giving was \$6300 more than expected. Shortage is attributed to less people attending St Catherine's. Expenses are being kept in check. Snow removal is under budget so far. Church is still in the black and "limping along" per Linda.
 - b. Bishops Annual Appeal (BAA) is \$7300 short. Fr. Bob is sending letters to 50-60 active families that have not donated. Previous year's campaigns were completed in the fall. Our account must be reconciled by June 1st. Next year St Catherine's expected BAA contribution will go up to \$279K (+6%). Fr. Bob explained the increases are expected over three years. Finance council is preparing for parish shortfall next year.
 - c. Linda said the diocesan capital campaign is moving forward. Feedback was gathered through 52 priest interviews, 76 personal interviews, and 542 mailed or on-line surveys. Our group brought up concerns about possible reduced church collections and the 65% promised back to the parishes but Fr. Bob reminded us that we are all part of the diocese and how we count on them to train our priests and deacons plus provide Catholic school administration.
 - d. The next Finance Council meeting will be held in May.

Old Business:

- 1) **50th Anniversary Committee update** – August 10th 2016 is the 50th birthday of the parish. The committee has a timeline to include an opening mass and dates of many types of activities planned over one year concluding with the parish picnic in 2017. Volunteers will be needed to organize events. A new directory is in the works. Patrick suggested the council take on an event or two. Next is to generate a logo and begin the communication process.
- 2) **Partnerships with other parishes** – Fr. Bob said there are 59 parishes in the diocese but only 47 have pastors. He talked about the three priest age groups and attrition. We are supposed to partner with Mattawan and Marcellus to share youth ministries, RCIA and religious education but currently Fr. Mathew is not interested. "Right now it's just talk".
- 3) Town Hall Meeting November 17 – See finance council report above (2c.)

Communications:

- 1) **New ideas for gathering comments from parishioners** – In the past were phone calls, narthex table, and surveys.
 - a. Patrick suggested social media outlets like Facebook.
 - b. Colleen H suggested a Survey Monkey administered through e-mail or our web site.
 - c. A question came up about gathering all parishioners e-mail addresses.
 - d. Fr. Bob said we could solicit feedback from other parish groups.
 - e. Do we still have a suggestion box?
 - f. Gretchen made note that negative feedback is usually submitted anonymously (surveys). She suggested a “world café” where facilitators rotate between tables.
- 2) **Council Member Comments** – Patrick called on each council member to speak...
 - a. Colleen Somner brought up a need for kneelers or garden pads, others agreed. Fr. Bob said there are 4-5 parishes without kneelers and the bishop receives complaints. With any new construction or renovations kneelers are being suggested. Adding kneelers at St. Catherine would be a major project that could affect seating capacity. Gretchen will find out how a student parish in St Johns added theirs.
 - b. Nancy Dudasko is looking for small Christian community activities. Her examples were Bunco or euchre groups.
 - c. Colleen Hoerman suggested a special mass for public school kids. Fr. Bob mentioned life teen mass but agreed it might be a good idea, the bishop could be invited. She added that prayer books for the public school students could add uniformity.
 - d. Jim Norman wondered if adoration could be expanded. Fr. Bob said possibilities are being considered, maybe in the spring.
 - e. Nathan Whitford pointed out the “online giving” under the donate tab on St. Catherine web site says “coming soon, our vendor selection is in progress”. He also commented that while the new member dinner was nice other churches do more to welcome new parishioners like a home visits and manned mission tables.
 - f. Scott Betzler said we need to focus on being a welcoming church; the finances will take care of themselves.
 - g. Brett Merkel found it inconvenient to call or visit the church office during the day to set up direct payment.
- 3) **Pastoral Council Mission** – Fr. Bob explained the pastoral council’s mission is to advise the pastor on all parish issues spiritual, social, or physical.

Closing prayer was led by Patrick

Meeting was adjourned at 11:44 AM

Next meeting will be held May 16, 2015