

ST. JEROME PASTORAL COUNCIL JULY 18, 2024, MEETING MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by Chairman John Hopkins at 7:02 pm.

Members present: John Hopkins, Chairman, Paul Baumgartner, Angee Clark-Hellon, Sr. Linda Mary De Lonais, Jan Gremaud, Kelly Houston, Dan Jackson, Fr. Kevin Laughery, Tom Mines, Brenda Neumann, Betsy Weinel, Gail Wolff

Members absent: Amanda Detmer, Greg Schrage

Opening Prayer was offered by Fr. Kevin Laughery.

No corrections to the June Minutes. Motion was made by Dan Jackson and seconded by Jan Gremaud to accept the Minutes; motion carried; Minutes approved.

Election of Officers 2024-25: Jan Gremaud made a motion, seconded by Kelly Houston to accept the proposed slate of Pastoral Council officers for 2024-25: Dan Jackson, Chairman; John Hopkins, Vice Chairman; Gail Wolff, Recorder. A vote was taken, motion carried and the new slate of officers was approved effective July 1, 2024 for two-year terms. Dan Jackson presided over the remainder of the meeting.

Monthly Reports

Pastor: Fr. Kevin reported on the Eucharistic Pilgrimage having attended the Eucharistic hand-off by Bishop Michael McGovern from the Diocese of Belleville to Bishop Thomas John Paprocki, Diocese of Springfield, in Collinsville on July 8. Fr. Kevin traveled to Quincy on July 9 where a large group of pilgrims processed to honor the death of the Venerable Father Augustus Tolton at his gravesite.

Fr. Kevin reported on his trip to our sister parishes in Guatemala and also visited the sea city of Izabal Puerto Barrios where he was part of a celebration there. The entire country of Guatemala has had a Eucharistic celebration, and Fr. Kevin felt this was a continuation of our Eucharistic pilgrimage right now. The 40 water purifiers that St. Ann's CCW donated to Santa Antonio Maria Claret were distributed to homes in remote villages where their water supply is river water. He was amazed at the new parish church that was built and Fr. Jorge is hoping to have it dedicated in October. They had a "Sunday experience" on this trip participating in three Saturday and Sunday Masses. Lucy and Erin were wonderful travel companions and will undoubtedly encourage others to have this experience.

Written Reports: No one had questions on the written reports regarding Faith Formation, Liturgy & Music, Youth Ministry, Bookkeeping and St. John Neumann Catholic School.

Old Business

Eucharistic Pilgrimage: Betsy reported that she and her children attended the Eucharistic Pilgrimage in Collinsville and said it was beautiful with the unity, power and worship demonstrated by all those there. Several St. Jerome parishioners also attended. Jan added that the broadcast of the pilgrimage could be seen and heard on several TV, radio and livestream outlets. It was so uplifting, alive and beautiful.

Parish Census: Dan Jackson distributed a detailed report stating that 304 letters to absent parishioners were sent in June. So far, we have 16 responses: 8 keeps and 8 drops. 288 families are unverified. Angee, Brenda, John and Gail volunteered to help the census committee make up to two calls to invite unverified families back to Mass.

August 17-18 Ministry Fair: John has been reaching out to ministry chairs and feels that the August fair is doable. Angee offered her help. Brenda has contact information. A suggestion was made by Tom to have a parish staff table where people could volunteer their talents for electrical, plumbing, computers, lawn mowing projects, etc. Light refreshments will be served after each Mass; it's donut Sunday weekend.

Tuesday Faith Sharing Letter: Pastoral Council Minutes were included with the July 14 bulletin. Minutes were also posted on the website. Finance Council may be doing the same thing. Email addresses for both Pastoral Council and Finance Council to accept questions and comments from parishioners are posted in the bulletin and in the Friday email. Dan will check Pastoral Council emails regularly. Amanda Dotzert will receive the Finance Council emails.

Liturgist/Music Director Search: John reported that interviews with two individuals went well, with calls to several other candidates. The search team made a recommendation to Fr. Kevin to make the final hiring decision. Steve Shininger (who doesn't play organ) will return to play piano this weekend. Sr. Linda Mary stated that Steve assimilated very well with the choir and was ready to help us again. Danielle Boulanger is interested only in part time (maybe 20 hours per week) as she has a full-time job as music director and teacher of liturgy at Fr. McGivney High School. There may be availability issues to have St. Jerome and St. James covered for Masses and funerals. Back-up musicians would be necessary, including Steve Shininger, Steve Stack and Mother of Perpetual Help based on availability. John and Fr. Kevin will discuss after this meeting.

New Business

Centennial Campaign: Dan stated that, driven by our meeting with Katie Price and joint meeting with Finance Council to determine a program, we need to address our spiritual infrastructure to spur us on to greater discipleship and evangelization to attract young people, and especially families, to our parish. We cannot decide today which programs would be most effective. We can take a bit of a shortcut—we need these types of programs; and we can get Katie to help us ballpark what these programs will cost, putting those dollars into the Capital Campaign along with all the things that Finance Council wants to do and move forward with the Capital Campaign. Meanwhile, we can use all of that time to pick the right spiritual programs with a lot of Diocesan help.

Jan distributed spiritual needs suggestions submitted from various ARISE groups and the Tuesday Faith Sharing group. Dan recommended that whatever programs we choose should not be an add-on to existing staff, not be additional responsibility. Leader-led outside programs will provide someone for us. Some of these spiritual programs last three years. After that time, perhaps parishioners could step up and lead the next program. Some of the ARISE and the Faith Sharing groups want to continue with something as they have bonded so strongly with each other. Some groups are still meeting monthly to keep the momentum going. This is the small faith community activity that Father has talked about, that organic development.

Tom expressed concern about the Vitality Study regarding Campaign Priority #3 that states the Parish is currently \$30K in debt to the Diocese for properties and insurance. Betsy explained that this is likely part of our annual payment to the Diocese for insurance, benefits, etc., that may not be yet due. So, 'debt' may not be the right word. Tom brought up another concern about an incomplete 'season of stewardship that was conducted years ago.' Campaign Priority #4 stated that 'the parish does not meet the recommendation of 3-6 months of operating expenses in the savings account.' That is correct. Another point in the Vitality Study indicated that the primary fund of \$16,570.78 cannot be tapped, but the \$4,997.67 deferred fund can be used. Betsy confirmed that this primary fund is the endowment for the St. John Neumann Scholarships.

On Leadership, Operations and Messaging, page 4, Katie Price stated that the staff is on the larger side for a parish of this size. Dan asked if Katie was considering the staff for both St. Jerome and St. James. This study was for St. Jerome only. St. James had its own study. Betsy pointed out that four people on the staff of seven are part time. What is the vitality of the parish? How many baptisms, adult baptisms, confirmations, marriages? How do we compare with other parishes? Betsy provides this information to the Diocese but has not seen a comparative report. Dan requested and Betsy agreed to compile four years of that data and distribute it to the Council.

Tom and Paul discussed the feasibility of expanding the Narthex and what that might entail regarding cost and compliance with codes. This will require much further discussion.

Dan reminded the group that our primary focus is the spiritual infrastructure of the church. Jan added that this is more important than the financing right now because we must build from that point up. We need to focus on a one-on-one relationship with the Lord. Dan trusts that the spiritual component drives the physical component.

Deferred maintenance is an ongoing issue requiring funds. Brenda discussed several long-time areas of concern.

Staff Job Descriptions: Gail met with Betsy, who had found some staff job descriptions from 2013. These older job duties need to be considered along with the current job description drafts in order to accurately describe job duties, responsibilities and requirements. Betsy will meet with Fr. Kevin to determine what he wants each staff position to cover.

Miscellaneous

Dan wishes to make the meetings one hour long. However, additional more less-urgent items will be included on the agenda in a "Parking Lot" section to be discussed if there is time. At present, these items are: 7 Pillars Responsibilities, Long-Range Strategic Planning document discussions, Pastoral Council Goals. Gail added that the 7 Pillars and Long-Range Strategic Planning documents are in the Pastoral Council binders that everyone received. Dan would like to develop Pastoral Council Goals and asked the group for suggestions on what it would like to accomplish. Angee suggested that prior to the meeting, that the Pastoral Council members submit their ideas to Dan.

Tom would like to see a representative from McGivney High School come to us once a month or every two, three months. The students have to put in community hours, and this would be a great opportunity for Brenda to liaison our group with McGivney. Have them give a report on what's going on at McGivney (what Kelly now does). Invite them to come in and talk to us. Dan announced that Kelly Houston will be serving two roles going forward. She is going to be a Pastoral Council voting member and the St. John Neumann representative. Kelly added that this needs to be updated in the Bylaws. Dan and John did not think that her serving two roles would be an issue.

There being no further business, the closing Prayer was offered by Betsy Weinel; and the meeting adjourned at 8:19 pm.

Next meeting scheduled August 1, 2024, at 7:00pm, Wayland office.

Respectfully submitted,
Gail Wolff, Recorder