

Meeting Minutes – St. John the Baptist Parish Pastoral Council Meeting – July 31, 2023

Present: Father Alan Wierzba (Pastor), Patty Myszka (Parish Finance Council Representative), Nancy Hackel (Evangelization Coordinator), Linda Mroczenski (Parish PCCW Representative), Michelle Hafferman (School Education Committee Representative and Corporate Board President), New members: Bonnie Nensfiel, Amy Thuot, David Bielmeier, Elizabeth King, and Jack Knetter

1. The meeting opened with a prayer led by Father Alan.
2. All members introduced themselves, sharing a little about themselves. Father distributed the "Diocese of La Crosse Norms for Parish Pastoral Councils". The council is to assist Father in making decisions but is not a decision-making body.

Elizabeth asked about paragraph 4 which recommends the frequency of meeting is every two months. Father said we meet quarterly but will meet more if there is a need.

Elizabeth also asked about Paragraph 5 which states the secretary is to prepare a summary of the meetings to be published in the bulletin. That has not been done previously. The approved meeting minutes will be on the parish website.

Father said at our next meeting, a chairperson should be elected. Also, Linda should decide if she wants to continue as secretary, or another person would be elected to be secretary.

3. A correction to the May 1, 2023, meeting minutes - #5. "...Regarding the **Sing** of..." corrected "...Regarding the **Sign** of...". With the correction, motion by Patty, seconded by Nancy to approve minutes of May 1, 2023, meeting.

Linda asked everyone to verify their email address, phone number and text number for future correspondence.

4. The proposed parish mission statement is:
"Saint John the Baptist Parish is a growing Catholic faith community whose members seek to and share a Eucharist love of Jesus Christ that is centered in prayer, Adoration, Reconciliation, education and community service."

Father asked for our opinion of it. Patty felt it should not be any longer. Bonnie said it covers what we do. Elizabeth said it touched on our norms. Father asked: "Is it true? Authentic? Is it who we are?" We discussed growth in numbers and growing in faith. The number of students in school is growing along with youth activities. Father asked: "Do we seek to live and share a Eucharist Jesus?" Patty felt the attendance at Adoration shows that the community is working on this. Michelle asked would Adoration continue after Father Alan leaves. Father said his goal for a parish was to have Adoration and Adult Education.

Father said the mission statement will guide how the parish moves forward.

Patty made a motion to vote on the mission statement. Linda asked that we consider the mission statement until our next meeting.

The mission statement will be on the parish website and perhaps on some printed materials. The school needed a mission statement for its accreditation and is on printed materials.

5. Father provided a handout regarding the Financial Status of the Parish. The bulletin has stated \$8,500 is the weekly average amount needed for the budget. The handout showed the extra funding received because of COVID and the School Choice Program, which was

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\$1,108,842.73 from 7-1-2019 to 6-30-2024 (including an estimate of \$117,586.00 for 7-1-2023 to 6-30-2024.)

Some people felt that since the parish will continue to receive School Choice funds and the number of students the parish has in School Choice has been consistent, it would have been more helpful to show the School Choice amounts separate from the COVID amounts.

Somehow the parish needs to meet the financial need – by increasing revenue and controlling costs.

The "Inspired by the Spirit" campaign was more successful than was expected. The amount the parish will receive if all pledges are paid is \$310,020.80.

Completed projects: Upgrading electrical in church and school; Fire alarms in school; Enclosing the Gathering Space in church; Adding a walk-in freezer and cooler in the church dining hall; Adding a new bathroom on the second floor in school; and purchasing a new lawn tractor.

Possible future projects: Fixing the parking lot; Removing two large trees and shrubs; Fixing the church bells; and, fixing the air conditioning in the rectory.

Father expects that the target for Diocesan Annual Appeal this fall will be \$38,000.

Nancy said church support is typically lower during summer months.

It was felt that parishioners do not sense the financial needs of the parish because the parish has been in the black for years and should be made aware – perhaps by speaking from the pulpit. But speaking from the pulpit only reaches those in the pulpit. But, are those not attending church supporting the parish financially? It was also felt that the church community needs to be aware that support is also needed in the form of time and talent, as well as financially. Can we appeal to those who are giving to give a little more? Can we ask those who do not contribute, to give a little? Is there a fee for Adult Education? Would those attending be able to afford to give?

It was asked if expenses were looked at, what would be cut? Our buildings and grounds have been well taken care of and that should continue.

It was asked if school tuition could be increased. Some people can afford more but not all. Father said he has raised tuition \$100 every year. It was asked if adding the 3K and 4K classes in school have helped to keep more students in our school. It is too early to tell for sure.

Father said that as a community, we need to make personal contact, reach out and be inviting, share our enthusiasm. If others see value in what is being done, they will support it.

It was noted that the plate collection is high.

The money requested for 3 new ciboriums has been donated. Should there be a request for specific project? Could getting the church bells fixed be the Parish's 125th Anniversary project?

When Father Streveler was here, he looked for 10 good eggs to contribute 10% towards a project.

For projects, do we look for people to donate or work at a discount instead of paying the going rate?

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The parish roster was reviewed to get updated emails and phone numbers.

6. Our parish will celebrate its 125th Anniversary in 2025. Committee members are: Linda Mroczenski, Karen Paul, Helen Filtzkowski, and Elaine Petrowski. Patty Myszka volunteered to also be on the committee. \$5,000 has been budgeted for the celebration in 2023 and \$10,000 for 2024. The celebration tentatively is on a Sunday with a mass celebrated by the Bishop and a dinner. A Parish Pictorial Directory is also planned.
7. Updates on Parish Pastoral Activities
 - (A) Youth Group: Adventure Camp was attended by 17 youth and 2 adults; there will be trip to the Geographical Marker near Poniatowski, with a talk by Father Alan and more activities at Holy Family; about 25 students attended the two-day Vacation Bible School at St. John's; a campfire was held on St. John's playground and more people attended than last year. The calendar of activities will be on the parish website.
 - (B) Grief Support Group: A series of meetings was offered in Spring but there was no interest. The series will be offered again in Fall.
 - (C) Technology: The new website went up today. There were 40 watching the livestream mass this pass Sunday.
 - (D) Evangelization: CCD, Fr. Alan's Bible Study, Children's Liturgy of the Word, Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, Summer Camp.
 - CCD – Classes will resume mid-September. The first and last Wednesday each month will be a large group gathering. The other Wednesdays are optional for some of the grades.
 - Bible Study will resume in Fall. 30-40 people regularly attended this past year.
 - Children's Liturgy will begin again in mid-September.
 - Catechesis of the Good Shepherd will be offered to St. John students in 3K, 4K and Kindergarten.
 - A two-day Summer Camp will be offered next summer. It will be in-house.
 - Upcoming for adults is: St. Therese of Lisieux's Little Way 33 Days to Merciful Love Group Retreat.
 - And, in January, a class on St. Joseph for the Family will be offered.
 - Michelle asked why the diocese no longer offers Totus Tuus. It is because there are no leaders. The session being offered in Marshfield is being led by a team from the Green Bay Diocese.
 - (E) School News: New Principal and teaching staff/aides, School Cook
 - Jessica Halvorsen is the new principal. Father prefers that she be a full-time principal. The 4K teaching position is now open. Teaching aides, full-time and part-time, are also needed.
 - The school cook position has not been filled, but there is a possibility for this position to be filled.
 - A bathroom for students was added on the second floor of the school.
 - Memorial money was donated for new playground equipment.
 - (F) PCCW and Holy Name Men
 - PCCW met in June to plan for July 2023 to June 2024. Upcoming is the Christmas Benefit Fish Fry, Raffle and Bake Sale – formerly the Christmas Bazaar.
 - Sign-up is now available for working the Hamburger Stand at the Edgar Steam & Gas Engine Show. The Holy Name Men get the supplies for this.
 - (G) Parish Homebound Ministry

Dorrie Martyn makes regular visits and/or phone calls. For the visits, she gives the person a prayer card, blanket and/or personal gift. As she is doing this, she is being given more names of people to contact. Dorrie also works on other projects for the parish.

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(H) Pro-Life

- The Diocese will offer attending the Pro-Life Walk in Washington, D.C. in January 2024.

(I) Family Life

- St. John's will be offering 3 NFP classes which can be in-person or on-line.
- Family Night may be getting a new name.

The next meeting will be Monday, October 23, 2023.

Meeting closed with a prayer and blessing.

Submitted by Linda Mroczenski