

St. Sebastian Parish Pastoral Council

Regular Meeting – 26 February 2015

IN ATTENDANCE: Father John Valencheck Rich Dobson, Member
Pat Clark-Varga, Chair Sara Beis, excused
Jan Alpeter, excused John Jewell, Secretary
Todd Dekatch, Member Jim Dietrich, Member
Rob Sveda, excused Brandon Foster, excused
Chris Montana, excused Candace Bates, Member
Cyndy Cook, Member Fr. Ed Leonard
Fr. Kovacina

Call to order at 7:00 PM by Council Chair, Pat Clark-Varga.

The Opening Prayer: Todd opening prayer (Lenten prayer).

Special Report:

- None.

Pastor's report (Father Valencheck):

- Someone made a sizable donation for artwork but contacted the artist before Fr. V. A 10' painting is on the way! Will be put on display but not sure where it will be permanently stored.
- Two short-term seminarians will be here, welcome them if you see them.
- Meeting with Julie Billiard School. Believe the property at end of Schneider Park would work, but need to know about expansion opportunities in that building.
- New head master for Arts Academy - Adam Keeler. Understands that it is a catholic Christian environment. Approximately 100 students in academy at the moment. His background is in guitar. His master's degree will be in performance.
- PCC and Foundation focusing on pulling together a 14-year plan for the parish.
- Staff (main administration staff) retreat day was held with the positives that we found from the Partners in Excellence query.
 - Ideas back to us -
 - Buildings/grounds – central offices for the parish. Offices are now spread out over three city blocks. Many offices across the street in a building we don't own.
 - Longer lines for confession.
 - AC for school.
 - More secure entrance for school.
 - STEM initiative.
 - And others...
- Encourage names mentioned to consider becoming a collection counter.

Finance and Marketing Committees:

Finance

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Marketing

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OLD BUSINESS

Minutes

- January meeting minutes approved on-line and sent to be posted.

Other

- Discernment of Officers: Nominations
 - Chair [will be Vice Chair for right now who will become Chair (July 1, 2015)]
 - Todd
 - Fr. V. motioned and Candy seconded. Todd will be Vice-Chair for right now and then convert to chair July1, 2016.
 - Vice Chair for 2015 [becomes chair July 1, 2016] – nominations open until end of April.
 - Candy
 - Secretary – nominations open until end of April
 - Cyndy

Discernment of new Parish Council Members

- Nominations need to occur now and continue to March 31st.
- John, Jan, Rich and Sara are rolling off June 30, 2015.
- Pat is receiving nominations and will make contact with the nominees to see if they are interested. Then they will be given the questionnaire to fill out for the Nominations committee to review.
- Nominations Committee:
 - Pastor (Fr.V)
 - Chair (Pat)
 - Vice-Chair (Todd)
 - 2 council members (Brandon, Cyndy, Jim)
- Nomination meeting needs to happen prior to April 15th and then make recommendations to PCC. Will adjust date due to Easter.
 - Nominations committee will meet April 13th and 15th in Church meeting room (basement).

Finance Council meeting

- Pat went to recent Finance Council meeting to give an overview of Parish Council.
- The current Chair (Joe Ruscak) seems interested in having an exchange between our two committees (he even suggested that we visit them twice a year to give them updates).
- (Sara) Had a comment for FC – communications for parish – website, bulletin, etc. Joe Rusak replied.
- Summary (Pat) - At the request of Joe Ruscak, Chair of Parish Finance Council, Pat attended their February 17 meeting and gave a brief presentation on the structure of Parish Council and what Council does, especially in regard to advising Fr. Valencheck; plus examples of matters that have been addressed by Council over the last six months and any areas of concern. Pat presented a statement from Sara, as Past Chair, in regard to improving and upgrading parish communications from a technical standpoint:
 - “While we are well aware of the shortfalls in the budget, I still believe that COMMUNICATION is a subject for which the Parish needs to plan an approach that

includes more than management by ‘volunteers.’ A part time person is needed who would address the Bulletin, the website, and other communication mechanisms for the parish. While Michelle [Huber, Marketing & Public Relations Coordinator] addresses communication from a marketing stand point (communicating content about the parish), this person would address communication with parishioners from the ‘logistic’ side - production of the Bulletin, production of any newsletters, the upcoming photo yearbook, the parish website (with the increasing amount of information that needs to be uploaded), and other electronic media that will be the ‘voice’ of the parish in the future.”

- Joe Ruscak responded via email (2-20-15) as follows:
 - As you are aware we had a long period of deficit spending and just in the past 2 years reached a point where we have funds for capital improvements.
 - We agree that expansion of the communication piece is warranted but are stepping slow in the area.
 - The addition of Michelle [Huber] was needed and has added a dimension we didn’t have prior.
 - Our concern remains head count, as it was head count and salaries, which brought about the deficits of 6 years ago. Hence we step slow through the process.

NEW BUSINESS

El Salvador Mission Trip

- The El Salvador Mission Committee held its first meeting February 24th. The Mission Board is the small decision making body for the group. The Mission Committee is open to anyone who is interested in supporting the goal of making a long-term positive impact in the country of El Salvador and building meaningful relationships between the people of St. Sebastian and the people of El Salvador. One of the many ways of accomplishing this goal will be mission trips, the next of which is scheduled for July of 2015. An e-mail address, website, and Facebook page have been set up for the group and questions can be directed to the Board Chair as well. A few goals that Jennifer Sullivan has, as the External Communications Chair, that Parish Council may be able to help with include having our website linked to the Parish website, the organization being included in the Ministry Booklet, and getting a spot in the Doughnut Sunday rotation.
 - Website: <https://sites.google.com/site/salvadormission/home>
 - Email: salvadormission@gmail.com
 - Facebook: Search “El Salvador Mission Committee.” Make sure to “like” and “follow” the page
 - Board Chair: Jason Nehez 440-497-7883
- Mission Board & Mission Committee - (Pat) - Should we add them to the list of committees that Parish Council touches base with? Yes.
- Todd volunteered to be the contact for them.
- They would also like to be part of Donut Sunday.

New Group Formation

- The Mother’s Group Concept came up. Jennifer Sullivan had brought it up. She takes care of Toddlers Open Gym (open to all even outside of parish). She swiftly was able to come up with interest in a Mother’s Group and who/how it would work.
- If there is someone who comes up with an idea for a group, etc. we suggest this process:
 - Have idea person contact the pastor with a short proposal.

- He will then refer the matter for input from Parish Council and/or Finance Council.

Partners in Excellence - Weaknesses

- Council was presented with an accumulation of information. Members will read through and discuss at the March meeting.

Other

(Jan via email to Parish Council members) I received a printed "thank you" signed by Fr. Valencheck, expressing appreciation to us for our service to the parish:

In the name of the whole parish, I want to thank you for your contributions to Parish Council. We appreciate your interest in this committee.

Your gift of time and the effort that you expend on this committee makes St. Sebastian a more desirable parish. You help to contribute to the pride parishioners feel toward their community. Please pass along my thanks to those who help with this group.

Sincerely in Christ,
Rev. John A. Valencheck

Pulse of the Parish

- As of right now we are at the 7-day inclement weather limit. Things related to will be determined as needed.
- (Candy) Starting a young ladies group at Hoban (vocations – broadly defined). Does dioceses have any resources for vocations for women.
- (Cyndy) Asked about a flyer (Future Church) that was on the bulletin board.
- (Pat) Comment about 1pm Mass – enjoyed it. They wished they had a mentor to be able to connect to the Mass more (background).
- New Mother's Group will meet Monday March 22nd to discuss the group, name, etc.

COMMISSION REPORTS

Please note that Secretary will endeavor to include highlights of commission reports if they are sent ahead by email and those reported during the meeting. If items are sent ahead, please be sure that the name of the Commission is on the report as well as the date of the report. Typed (paper) reports may be included by reference only.

Worship:

- (Jim) Jim Watson – Head Ushers. There is a folding table in storage room. (Fr.V.) If they need something like that, call Jen and she will have one of the guys move it.
- (Cyndy) Constantly recruiting (for extraordinary form) and there is interest from the Hoban boys.
- (Fr.V.) It is difficult here to “see” women in the religious vocation. There are some good resources that we might be able to bring in.
- (Fr.V.) Perhaps we might bring in TOR for a Lenten retreat and talk at the school next year.

Spiritual Life and Faith Formation:

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- (Candy) Parish School of Religion (PSR) – Melanie Francis
- The PSR students have been doing some social service projects. They collected canned goods for the hunger center. One class made prayer rocks for the shut-ins, and all the students made Valentine Day cards. These were distributed by Fr. Kovacina for the shut-ins.
- They received rice bowls and every year contribute to the missions. Fr. Kovacina spoke to all the classes about the missions and helping the poor.
- The 8th grade is preparing to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation and the 2nd grade is preparing to celebrate the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.
- The PSR has a lot of strengths, but I would like to see them have more opportunities to interact with the parish and the day school.
- A note from Jane Walker – “As a PSR teacher I wanted to let the Council know that my students really enjoy the visits the priests make to our classes. Fr. Leonard's Sacrament of Reconciliation was wonderful, and Fr. Kovacina's talks during Advent and now Lent were very positive influences on my 5th-graders.
- I wanted to thank the priests for their continuing involvement with the PSR students, because those impressions often last a lifetime (as I'm hearing, sadly, from former Catholics who had unpleasant experiences). Keep accentuating the positive!”
- (Candy) Children’s liturgy of the word would like to use mats instead of chairs.
- (Jan) Eucharistic Adoration: Chair Marga Bohm:
- The Advent concerts have been an excellent venue to bring parishioners and nonparishioners to Eucharistic Adoration. We also have more people coming to Benediction on Tuesday evenings.
- However, during the day there are still times when we need more participants. It helps greatly when our priests continue to remind us in different ways to come before the Blessed Sacrament.

Parish Life:

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- Ski Club
 - Ski club is now officially done, but the club members can use their access card for skiing all day any Sunday for the remainder of the season.
- Scouts
 - Feb.7th - Pinewood Derby was great.
- Athletics
 - Basket Ball wrapped up. 8th grade boys and girls and 6th grade boys made it to playoffs.
 - 3 v 3 tournament is sold out. First weekend in March.
 - 4 new side court backboards.
 - 126 students signed up for track (25 from Elms).
 - Shopping for a back-up controller for the scoreboard.
- (Candy) Director of Religious Education and Youth Ministry: Cathy Sivec
- Faith Lodge- We have our Lenten program in Faith Lodge during February and March. The Social Justice group will help with setting up and providing refreshments.
- RCIA- We participated in the Rite of Election on Sunday February 22, 2015 at the Cathedral.

- PSR – PSR is going well, preparing for sacraments
- CLOW- We are thinking about using mats for CLOW instead of setting up chairs every week.
- Confirmation – Confirmation retreat is this weekend. Please pray for the 69 Confirmandi attending and the 35 high school students helping with the retreat. Confirmation Mass is Friday March 13, 2015 at 7 p.m. in the church with Bishop Gries.
- First Reconciliation – The second graders had their First Reconciliation on February 7th
- First Communion – The First Communion meeting is scheduled for Monday March 23rd from 7-8:30 p.m. in the church. Parents and students attend. First Communion Mass will be Saturday April 25, 2015 at 11:00 a.m.
- Baptism – Our next Baptism session will be Monday March 9th from 7-8 p.m. in Byrider Hall
- Youth Ministry- The high school youth group will help run the 8th grade Confirmation retreat again this year on February 27th and 28th in Zwisler Hall. They will be giving four witnesses during the retreat.
- Our high school youth group will be attending the Steubenville Youth Conference June 12-14 and we have 19 students already signed up to attend. We will begin fundraising in March.
- (Cyndy) International Festival is looking for volunteers for the games for the event.
- (Candy) Do the junior high or senior high kids work at the festival?

Social Justice/Community Outreach

- Social Justice – Carolyn Varner
- No February meeting due to weather cancellation.
- Parishioners are invited to attend the Lenten program in Forest Lodge, led by various individuals, on the connection of the sacraments to our Lenten journey.
- (Jan) Giving Tree: Chair Meri Skiera: The final report for this committee was presented at the January Parish Council meeting.

School

- No report from Principal.
- (Jan – attended the State of the School address, summary):
- Mrs. Isabella and Dr. Savitski presented the “State of the School” on January 27th.
- Parents received information and updates on the following: Communication, Technology, School Safety, Academic Testing, the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, Math and Reading Curriculum, Challenge 21, and School Clubs.
- Highlights included:
 - \$46,000.00 grant awarded
 - Technology upgrades include: 1 PADS, and IPAD carts, 2 laser printers, smSmart Boards in Kindergarten and tech learning center. Meeting with an architect to determine best use of space.

- IOWA Test given in February. Now testing in every grade as opposed to only testing every other year. Yearly testing provides information in student progress in achieving benchmarks. Teachers have access to their class results. Weaknesses can be identified and curriculum adjusted accordingly.
- Riverside Testlets:
- Computerized system begun in December. Involves 30-minute lessons 3 times a week. 1 lesson in school, 1 in lab or accessible on IPADS. Can be used at home. Problem- solving approach in Math rather than a program emphasizing process. National trend in Mathematics is problem- solving approach to learning.
- Students take placement test first. Then individualized program for each student. Lessons are designed for student's weakness as well as on-grade level lessons.
- Results:
 - Students do better on standardized tests.
 - Program also builds reading skills. Students must be good readers to do math lessons.

Administration

- (Todd) Jen C. – working on 2014 Annual Report.
- (Jan) Academy of Culture and Arts:
- Judy Gillick, headmistress has resigned effective February 13th. She sent the following message to Parish Council:

“ . . . This last year has been very exciting, getting the Academy on its feet. However, the time commitment required has been too great for me to continue as a volunteer.

Regardless, I want to thank you for your warm welcome and support. I consider it a privilege to have worked with you. The work that goes on at St. Sebastian is truly special, and I am grateful to have been part of it.

I wish all of you futures full of blessings and joy.”

Other

Closing Prayer presented by Pat prayer. Meeting adjourned – 8:27 PM

Next meeting scheduled for 26 March 2015

Opening Prayer: Jan & Closing Prayer: Brandon.

Respectfully submitted,
John Jewell, Secretary