

Saint Thomas More Catholic Community

Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes

9 July 2009

In attendance: Fr. Joe Weiss, Peter Reis, Steve Thomas, Arline Datu, Joan Williams, Mike Sarafolean, Steve Wilson, Ryan Bean, Gretchen Tieder

Missing: Gloria Wilkie

The meeting started with prayer followed by introduction. Arline Datu just joined Pastoral Council so everyone introduced themselves. Arline has been chairing Social Justice, and she will continue to be a member of the committee though not as chair.

There was discussion of continuing introductions/social aspect to ensure that the council works well as a team.

The schedule of upcoming meetings was distributed. Fr. Joe would like to have meeting of Pastoral Council, Finance Council, and parish and school staff in August so that everyone hears all information at the same time. It will be on August 6th or 13th, and Fr. Joe will let us know within a week.

Contacts sheets for Pastoral Council, Finance Council and Parish staff were distributed.

Liaisons

Much structural work has been done – we've done finance – and now it is time to focus on commissions and liaisons to each.

Each council member will be a liaison to a committee/commission and attend another monthly meeting, usually the 3rd Thursday of the month. Will report back to the council three days in advance of the next council meeting and submit a written report to Fr. Joe. The council member will respond to and bring back questions regarding issues facing committees. We did not have liaisons last year and lost an opportunity for additional communication with the community. Reports will follow criteria listed on a handout. (As a reminder, all parishioners are invited to attend council meetings, except for executive sessions.)

In the bylaws, seven commissions are named. We are working on assimilating the ones we have and then will move to higher levels. For example, Education should cover the school and faith formation.

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Commissions are made up of chairs of committees. We need to ensure there is continuity as leadership and membership change. So when people join committees, it is clear what is expected. This will enable greater participation.

Faith Formation – entails faith formation of all, both children and adults. Includes, Liturgy of the Word, beginners faith formation for children and adults, sacramental prep, RCIA, Summit Salons and Little Rock.

Parish Life & Ministry and Social Justice (Sr. Joretta & Lonnie Ellis) – Dir of SJ used to have responsibility for advocacy and charity ministry. In last five years, more attention has been paid to advocacy/ Now the two are separate. Create continuity with leadership and process, so people know what is expected and enable more people to move up into positions.

St Luke's used to have a Ladies Club which raised money for functions like Dorothy Day. Used to have funeral luncheons. Not many members now as they have aged, so it needs to morph into something else. Loaves & Fishes needs to be passed on. Some of these issues need to be brought forth to Pastoral Council so the council can help create plans. We need to rely on committees to be leaders, especially in time of limited resources. Need to keep lists of volunteers that we **need** to use. Steve Wilson used a Grounds list for a recent clean-up.

Can we contact new members to help them get more involved? We need to be welcoming and be engaged with new members. Can we do one-to-ones for new members? The best thing we can do is help people discern if this is the right community for them.

Buildings & Grounds – looking at facilities and a long-range vision for campuses. Eventually everyone will be at the East campus. What can the east campus look like? Who do we want to be and what space do we need? They will work on a plan without putting everything on hold, i.e. maintenance. Bringing in a professional, who was recommended by the Archdiocese, to look at our facilities.

Communications – how to better communicate with the community. Working on gathering parishioners' stories. Needs to work with Parish Life. Currently, no staff person deals with Communications. Susan will probably work with communications when she starts next week.

School Advisory – work on development of school. More and more the school and parish need to be linked and work together. It is a long journey.

Each member indicated their first and second choices for which commission/committee they'd like to be the liaison for and Fr. Joe will let everyone know within a week.

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We might need to hasten the discussion of an education commission to ensure that all children are educated, whether they're in the school or not. It is time to tackle because the whole community needs faith formation, needs to go beyond confirmation, marriage and Sunday Mass (examples – Little Rock and Summit Salons). In October through March, professors from St. Thomas will be speaking on the Seven Principles of Catholic Social Teaching.

What are we doing to make people aware of what the strategy is and what committees are doing? Fr. Joe is working on gathering around the Seven Principles of Social Teaching and how they are linked to the Eucharist and how do they teach us to be more hospitable. Will go back to the staff to see how our actions or fitting into strategies. Each month there will be a topic, such as life, stewardship, justice, ecology, etc.

We should have a liaison to Finance Council.

We now have a process for Pastoral Council so we know when people are moving on and when we need new people. If we get this right, our parish will be more vibrant.

Other Updates

We have a new administrator who starts next week.

It has been so long since the parish staff got a raise. Can we find a way to remedy this? The school is able to raise tuition for raises. It is problematic.

We have had a shift in the way ministers function – ministers will oversee and not do all the work. Parishioners need to do more.

Peter provided an update on Stewardship. It started as a how to raise money quickly. In the fall it will turn to a conversation of journey and then what people will give.

Arline gave an update on immigration. Some form of immigration reform is expected on the federal level. An immigration road show was developed to visit parishes to educate about immigration and faith. Saint Thomas More will be one of the first parishes to use, and August 13th is a possible date.

Prayer and adjournment.