

St. Mark's Parish Pastoral Council

October 14, 2015

In Attendance:

Arsenault, Sr. Mae	Breen, Fr. Don	Hache, Charles
Beyea, Dianne	Carey, Pat	Murphy, Dave
Bourque, Peter	Ellis, Wendy	Stroud, Anne

Absent:

Alexander, Stephanie	Johnson, Kayla	Losier, Loryn
Drummond, Mavis	Joyce, Ian	Northrup, Rick
Isaacs, Denise	Lawlor, Bill	

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chair, Dave Murphy at 7pm.

The opening prayer was led by Dave Murphy.

An error in item # 6 "New Business" of the Minutes was pointed out by Fr. Don. The correction was made and the Minutes were then approved on a motion by Pat Carey and seconded by Charles Hache.

Business Arising from Minutes:

1. Review notes of brainstorming session: prioritize items and develop an action plan.
 - 1) Copies of the document "Brainstorming Session from Parish Pastoral Council Meeting of Sept. 16, 2015" were circulated to members who did not have copies with them.
 - 2) Dave Murphy initiated discussion by stating that the main issue identified in our brainstorming session was a communication problem. Dave made available a document he had prepared in which he prioritized the "Summary" items in the document. Anne Stroud had prepared a document entitled "Grouping of Brainstorming Items" which divided the "Summary" points into four categories: "Communication", "Youth", "Parish Council" and "Other". Both of these documents will be e-mailed to all PPC members to aid in the setting of priorities at the next PPC meeting.
 - 3) Dave Murphy stated that an annual report should be one of PPC's priorities. Dave submitted sample annual reports from two NS parishes, which he obtained via the Internet. These will be shared with PPC members.
 - 4) Dave Murphy raised the issue of falling youth attendance at church. Wendy Ellis stated that one way that St. Mark's supports youth is through the Steubenville program, including hosting a launch party, and subsidizing the cost for youth to attend the conference. Attendance is expensive, costing \$325 for the three day weekend event. Wendy also addressed the on-going problem of parents dropping off children at Religious Education classes, but not attending mass as a family. She mentioned that the parents of Grade Nine students signed contracts to attend mass with their children, but many do not follow up their pledge. Peter Bourque asked what other non-Catholic churches are doing to attract youth. Fr. Don stated that many of those churches had more financial resources (tithing) and were able to hire youth ministers. Charles Hache mentioned that we must also compete with sports for the time of the young people.

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- 5) After much discussion, it was felt that PPC would be better able to make an action plan, if the number of items being considered was reduced; therefore, PPC members were tasked with reviewing the original brainstorming document along with the documents prepared by Anne Stroud and Dave Murphy. Members are to select 1-2 priority items from the groups "Communication", "Youth" and "Parish Council" for discussion at the next PPC meeting.
2. Communication: "Did you know that..?"; suggestions for development of a Powerpoint presentation about Parish Pastoral Council (PPC).
 - 1) Discussion took place about the best time to show a Powerpoint presentation. Pat Carey suggested that a presentation be shown in the Spring, when PPC is trying to recruit new candidates for the PPC election. Wendy Ellis stated that, in her experience, running Powerpoint presentations prior to the start of mass, is not effective. People arrive late and/or tune out. Wendy suggested that it is preferable to have a speaker for a 2-3 minute presentation near the end of the mass. Fr. Don concurred.
 - 2) Pat Carey stated that is important for PPC to communicate to parishioners the on-going need for funds, as the Building Fund winds up. Fr. Don advised PPC that a member of the Finance Committee will speak at each mass on the weekend of October 24/25. A financial report will be presented, and parishioners will be encouraged to sign up for the existing pre-authorized donation program. Parishioners will also be asked to consider continuing their building fund donations to establish a contingency fund for future maintenance and repairs.
 - 3) No decision was made as to the content of a Powerpoint presentation about PPC.
 - 4) PPC wishes to proceed with the "Did you know that...?" proposal. Information for inclusion as bulletin items and/or inserts should be obtained from the various ministries at St. Mark's. Anne Stroud will draft a sample letter for PPC to review. Wendy Ellis stated that the "Did you know that...?" items could also be posted to our parish website.
 - 5) Dave Murphy brought to PPC's attention that the existing booklet containing ministry information for parishioners needs to be updated.

New Business:

1. Parish website: Update from Wendy Ellis; reach consensus on PPC information to be included.
 - 1) Wendy Ellis informed PPC that the build of the website is mostly complete. Once it is complete, the consultant assisting Wendy will meet with her to do the hand off and create a subscription for the website. This will cost about \$10-15 per month.
 - 2) Waivers have been received to allow posting of photos of children in the Religious Ed. portion of the site. All but 12 parents agreed to this and signed waivers. The children will not be identified by name, and the photos will be used on Facebook and Twitter only, not other less secure groups.
 - 3) Response has been poor to a blanket request sent by Wendy to various ministries requesting information and photos for the website. To date, Wendy has received ministry scheduling information, and some information/photos has been received from Little Rock Scripture Study and the Music Ministry.
 - 4) Wendy will create a Google calendar and populate it with a list of ministries, schedules, contact information and event dates, times and locations.
2. Create list of Parish ministries to be invited to make presentations to PPC.
 - 1) Charles Hache requested that PPC members receive a list of all ministries via e-mail so that a decision can be made as to which groups to invite. Anne Stroud will obtain this information from Dianne Belyea.

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- 2) Anne Stroud will invite Jean MacDonald to speak about the refugee sponsorship group at the November PPC meeting.
- 3) Mavis Drummond may provide an update regarding the grief support program, "Seasons of Hope" at the November or December PPC meetings.
3. As Remembrance Day falls on the second Wednesday in November this year, our next meeting will be held on Thursday, November 12 instead. PPC will meet immediately following the 7pm mass that evening.
4. Fr. Don provided PPC with an update regarding the efforts of a group of (primarily) St. Mark's parishioners to sponsor a refugee family. Members of St. Alphonsus Parish are also involved. Possession of Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) status is a requirement for refugee sponsorship. As the Diocese of Saint John is not currently an SAH, the group will initially operate under the umbrella of the Halifax Diocese, until our own diocese can re-activate its previous SAH standing that has lapsed. Funding to support a family for a year must be in place before a sponsorship application can be accepted. The approximate cost to support a family of four for a year is \$27,000, of which the Government of Canada will cover half. Our parishioner Jean MacDonald, who is the group chair, will speak at the masses at St. Mark's on the weekend of October 17/18 to inform parishioners and gauge if there is a sufficient level of commitment to proceed with sponsorship. Anne Stroud will invite Jean to update PPC at our November meeting.
5. Wendy Ellis informed PPC about an on-line guided training program for catechists called "Echoes of Faith 3.0". Wendy has been designated as a mentor catechist. The program consists of 14 modules, including theology and methods, and one module directed specifically at adult faith formation. It is not restricted to catechists, and others involved with liturgy may benefit, as well. If there is sufficient interest, the Diocese may purchase a block of access codes, which would provide one full year of access following activation of each code.
6. Dave Murphy brought forward a letter received by PPC Chair, Rick Northrup, regarding the Pastoral Lay Ministry Formation Program. Fr. Don indicated that St. Mark's was already aware of the information and that it had been communicated to parishioners via the bulletin, announcements, etc. No further action was required.
7. Fr. Don offered Charles Hache the condolences of PPC upon the recent death of his mother, Dee Hache, who was a long time, and well respected, parishioner of St. Mark's Parish. Fr. Breen informed PPC that several donations had been made to St. Mark's Building Fund in her honour.

The meeting was closed with a prayer led by Anne Stroud.

Next meeting will be held on Thursday, November 12 at 7:30pm.

Meeting will be chaired by Rick Northrup.

Opening prayer will be led by Sr. Mae Arsenault.

Closing prayer will be led by Dianne Beyea.

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