

St. Mark's Parish Pastoral Council

May 9, 2018

In Attendance:

Beyea, Dianne
Brown, Sandra
Burns, Fr. Owen
Carey, Pat
Carvell, Trinda

Doherty, Bob
Ellis, Wendy
Glasgow, Mary Alice
Howe, Marilyn

Isaacs, Denise
MacDonald, Mike
McGrath, Lawrence
Stroud, Anne

Absent:

Arsenault, Sr. Mae

Connors, Michele

Johnson, Kayla

The meeting was called to order by Chair Pat Carey at 7pm.

The opening prayer was led by Denise Isaacs.

The meeting commenced with a presentation from the Building Committee by Bob McLaughlin. Peter McGinn was also present to represent the Finance Committee. Council had recently referred two items to the Building Committee concerning the feasibility of heat pumps and programmable thermostats. Bob provided Council with information regarding our current heating and ventilation systems and some history of past and current challenges. Points covered included the following:

1. The current roof unit for the church foyer is used to provide air conditioning and fresh air only. Heat could be added, but the current unit is not efficient and electrical work would be required, making the cost prohibitive (about \$20,000 + tax).
2. Mini-split heat pumps with separate thermostats may be an option, so the Building Committee will undertake a review regarding their feasibility.
3. A back-up oil furnace would still be required with heat pumps, in order to maintain the appropriate temperature in the church when it is very cold outside.
4. Digital thermostats were previously tried in the church; however, they were damaged by too many people attempting to adjust them. There are new improved models which could be installed with a lock-out (a combination would need to be entered in order to adjust the temperature setting). These thermostats cost about \$560 each, but could be a good option. The Building Committee will look into this.
5. A heat pump downstairs provides air-conditioning and heating until December. Bob recommended that electrical back-up be added with the oil furnace in the downstairs system.
6. Insulation has been added in the church building, where possible, but not all areas can be beefed up without undertaking major construction.
7. Previous work carried out resulted in our annual heating bill dropping from \$22,000 to \$14,000.

In the discussion that followed, the following questions and comments were made:

1. Fr. Burns noted that there will be a need to be able to override thermostat settings, because not all events held in the church are regularly scheduled or follow a normal timetable.
2. Bill Stroud mentioned that heat loss could be reduced by closing the upstairs doors to the stairwells. Bob McLaughlin added that the addition of mini-split heat pumps in the stairwell is not feasible.

Minutes by Anne Stroud.

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3. Mary Alice asked about the installation of glass in the front vestibule. Bob explained that this would affect air flow, as the return for the air-handling system is in the foyer.
4. Mike commented that heat pumps are good for residential use where they provide 24-hour heating, but the church building requires sporadic heating.
5. Denise asked about the age of the current furnaces. Bob responded that one is from 2010 and the other from the 1990's.

Bob McLaughlin and Peter McGinn were thanked for attending our Council meeting. (I have not received Bob McLaughlin's presentation notes, but will add them to the minutes as an attachment if he provides them.)

The minutes of the April 11, 2018 meeting of Parish Pastoral Council (PPC), were approved on a motion by Lawrence McGrath, and seconded by Denise Isaacs.

Business Arising from Previous Minutes

1. **Appointment of a second youth member to PPC:** Update: As Kayla was not in attendance, Anne provided an update sent by Kayla via e-mail. Kayla has contacted Michelle Sullivan, who has expressed an interest in serving as one of our youth members. Kayla has invited Michelle to attend our June 6 meeting/social. Fr. Burns stated that he will approach another potential youth member. If that person is not interested, Trinda also has a potential member in mind whom she is willing to approach on behalf of council.
2. **Parish celebration of the Feast of St. Mark on April 25:** Update: Mass was celebrated by Fr. Burns, Fr. Aaron Knox, and our founding pastor, Fr. Kevin Barry. Fr. Don Breen was unable to attend. About 40 parishioners attended. Following Mass, those in attendance enjoyed cake and tea and coffee in the foyer.

New Business

1. **Becoming more environmentally friendly:** Trinda: Due to the length of the April meeting, this item had been deferred to our May meeting. A document entitled *How Styrofoam is Bad for the Environment* had been previously provided to Council members. Council recently received a timely letter from St. Mark's Catholic Women's League (CWL), which was read by Trinda. In the letter, the CWL requested that Council enact a ban on the use of Styrofoam in our Parish. During the ensuing discussion, the following comments and questions were noted:
 1. Concern was expressed that in situations where there are few volunteers, it creates too much work to wash all the dishes used. Wendy spoke about her difficulty in getting volunteers to help at functions. Pat stated that the Men of St. Mark's are not willing to forgo the use of styrofoam. (An event attended by 250 people would require 2 crews to wash dishes as there is not sufficient hot water.) It was suggested that we encourage all groups to avoid using styrofoam, but allow them to self-manage.
 2. Denise mentioned that the CWL dessert buffet will use regular dishes and wash them.
 3. Fr. Burns stated that we may need to make people aware that dishes are available for their use.
 4. Mike inquired about the cost of replacing styrofoam cups with paper cups. These are more expensive, and Lawrence pointed out that paper cups used for hot beverages have an interior plastic coating and so cannot be recycled/composted. Paper cups could be used for cold beverages.
 5. It was noted that we do not compost. As the church is an institution, this service is not provided by the Town Of Quispamsis. We should look into the cost of obtaining this service.

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As Council is pastoral, rather than administrative, it was felt that we cannot ban the use of styrofoam, but that we can discourage its use. We can also set a good example for other groups and parishioners. Pat will respond to the CWL and provide a copy of his response to Council.

- 2. Date and format of June PPC meeting:** It was confirmed that the Liturgy Ministry will meet on June 13, and that PPC will meet on June 6. Our Council meeting will begin at 7pm, ie. directly following Mass. We will conclude our meeting about 7:30pm, so that we can join members of the Liturgy Ministry for food and fellowship. Members are asked to bring appetizers, cheese and crackers, etc. to share. The Parish will provide beverages. There will be no alcoholic beverages provided, as we hope to have our new youth member(s) in attendance. The focus of our June meeting will be to introduce new members for the 2018-19 term and to elect the 2018-19 PPC Executive. Wendy would also like to take member photos.
- 3. Results of Survey re: Parishioner Preferences for Weekend Mass times:** Wendy provided Council members with a handout showing the results of each survey question. She also ran a Power Point presentation. 410 people responded to the survey. This is a very good response rate and is actually more people than normally attend the weekend Masses at St. Mark's. This can be attributed to the fact that the survey was available on-line and was also e-mailed to the parents of the students enrolled in our Religious Education program. It was noted that the best attended Mass is currently that celebrated at 5pm on Saturdays, and that the 9am Mass on Sundays attracts slightly fewer attendees than the Mass held at 11:15am; however, attendance is fairly well distributed between the 3 Mass times currently offered.

As the number of parishioners currently attending weekend Masses at St. Mark's does not warrant 3 Masses, Council recommended that we move to having one Mass on Sundays and that that Mass be held at 10am. It was noted that it may be challenging to reschedule the Religious Education classes; for example, it may be difficult for younger children to sit through Mass following earlier classes and youth may not wish to attend early morning classes; it has proved difficult to attract Catechists for Sunday evening classes. Lawrence asked whether Religious Education classes could take place after Mass, and discussion took place regarding the number of parents that may be scheduled to work at noon on Sundays. Bob asked about the possibility of holding classes on Wednesday evenings. Because weekday classes tend to interfere with other activities, and because the classes may run too late for younger students, Wendy has not had a positive experience with weekday evening classes in the past- while parents sign up their children, attendance is poor. Wendy stated that she has not made plans yet for Religious Education for the Fall. She advised Council to select the best Mass time, and that she would work with the new schedule. There may be other educational models to consider. Wendy will discuss this with Fr. Burns.

Council also discussed the best time to implement the decision to hold one Mass at 10am on Sundays. Anne mentioned that Mass attendance tends to drop over the summer months. She believes that eliminating one Sunday Mass by July will make it easier to ensure sufficient members of our liturgical ministries available to serve at each weekend Mass. **Council recommended that one Mass be held on Sundays at 10am commencing on July 1.** Fr. Burns concurred.

If Council members wish to provide any further input, please do so before May 23.

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Fr. Burns advised Council that he is moving forward with the establishment of a Mass on Sunday evenings, most likely at 7pm. This will not be ready until sometime in the late Fall of this year. He is willing to celebrate Mass at this time for 6 months even if attendance is low initially, in order to give it time to establish itself. This Mass will offer high energy "praise and worship" music performed by a group of musicians separate from the regular choir. They will be using different equipment (The budget for music at this Mass will be separate from the budget for our established Music Ministry and it has already been approved by the Finance Committee). Bill Stroud has already received quotes for equipment. Mike suggested that renting or "lease to purchase" options also be investigated. Wendy advised that the Sunday evening Mass should not be referred to as a "Youth Mass", as current members of our ministries will be invited to become involved and that all St. Mark's parishioners will be welcome to attend.

Fr. Burns also made Council aware of an issue affecting the Music Ministry and asked for our support in this matter. In January, the Liturgy Ministry decided to support the use of noisemakers for Little Church only. After discussion with the Music Ministry, the use of noisemakers was permitted until Lent, but it has been now re-affirmed that they are appropriate for use only for Little Church.

- 4. Communications from New/Potential Parishioners:** Fr. Burns: This item was added to our agenda during the course of the meeting. Fr. Burns has received 2 communications recently via our website. The 2 e-mails received were read to Council by Fr. Burns. Their focus was upon reverence, including the location of the Tabernacle, choir, and altar boys/youth involvement. As a Tabernacle will soon be installed behind the altar, there was little discussion about this point. A discussion followed regarding the use of altar boys and youth involvement.

Lawrence asked why there were no youth altar servers at St. Mark's. Bob responded there had been a "Procession Ministry" available to younger students (carrying the cross and candles) and a ministry of altar servers for those in Grades 7-9. The altar servers worked with mass coordinators, not on their own, and wore a cross, but no vestments. Bob indicated that it was an early decision at St. Mark's not to have altar boys. Sandra spoke positively about her own experiences attending Mass at churches with altar servers and children's choirs. Marilyn inquired whether Bishop Harris would permit girls to act as altar servers. It was stated that in some parishes in our diocese girls currently serve at the altar. Fr. Burns believes that the establishment of a ministry of altar boys could foster a culture of vocations for young men in our Parish. He stated that there have been no vocations to the priesthood from St. Mark's since our founding back in 1978. Fr. Burns also stated that statistics show that the number of boys participating in an activity decline when girls are also included. He cited the Boys Scouts as an example of an organization that has experienced such a decline. A number of questions were posed for Council, including: "Are we willing to accept an all-male group of altar servers?"; "Do we need to do something else for girls?"; "Who would organize this?". As the establishment of a ministry for youth altar servers is not imminent, no resolutions or decisions were made.

Updates re: Parish Ministries:

- 1. Peru Committee:** Anne mentioned that the Peru Committee is hoping to hold a Bake/Plant Sale on Father's Day.
- 2. Catholic Women's League:** Denise informed Council that the CWL was holding a dessert buffet and silent auction on Friday, May 11. Tickets are \$5 each. She also noted that the CWL will be hosting a Palliative Care Vigil with prayer and guest speakers at St. Mark's on Thursday, May 24.

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The event will start with Mass at 9am. Participants are to bring their own "brown bag" lunch. All are welcome to attend.

Discussion of *Divine Renovation* survey results: Council members had previously received a copy of the survey results. 12 of 16 Council members participated in the survey. The average time taken to complete the survey was about 20 minutes. Wendy provided a handout, which she introduced by reminding us to be respectful of the opinions of those having different experiences than ourselves. Council will review these survey results again in the Fall. Members are asked to find a positive area we can feed and a weak area we can try to improve. Fr. Burns suggested that we review the results of the Disciple Maker Index Survey in the Fall, as well. Council members are also reminded to read *Rebuilt* by Michael White and Tom Corcoran over the summer break.

The closing prayer was led by Mary Alice Glasgow.

Next meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 6, 2018 at 7pm in Room 1. The meeting will be followed by a social with the Liturgy Ministry at about 7:30pm.

Opening prayer to be led by Bob Doherty.

Closing prayer to be led by Michele Connors.