

## St. Christopher Parish Pastoral Council Minutes

January 16, 2024

### **Opening Prayers**

The Parish Council meeting opened with our traditional faith sharing and prayers. The Gospel for the upcoming weekend liturgies for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time was read aloud and reflected on by each individual Council member. Personal intercessions were prayed. We concluded Opening Prayer with collective participation in the Responsorial Psalm for the Sunday liturgy.

### **Welcome and Approval of Minutes**

- The minutes of Council's November 28, 2023, meeting were approved. Minutes will be posted on the St. Christopher Parish website.
- Council welcomed Pastoral Staff to tonight's meeting as we embark on examination and discussion of the St. Christopher Pastoral Plan:
  - Fr. Lito Clemen, Parochial Vicar
  - Melissa DiFini, Pastoral Minister
  - Terri Pastura, Pastoral Associate

### **Ministries Issues and Concerns**

#### **Religious Education**

- First confessions are upcoming this Saturday and next Tuesday, January 20<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> for 2<sup>nd</sup> graders and their parents.

#### **Ladies Guild**

- A social evening is planned for Monday, January 29<sup>th</sup>.
- The book club is an ongoing Ladies Guild activity.
- The Honorable Donna Congeni Fitzsimmons, recently retired Rocky River Court Judge, will be presenting her experience as the lead prosecutor in the federal court trial of the Cleveland Mafia "Taking Down the Mob". Tentatively scheduled for Thursday, April 17<sup>th</sup>, the event will likely be open to the Parish at large.
- A Lenten reflection of the stations of the cross "Through Mary's Eyes" will be scheduled for a date yet to be determined.

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#### **Mission Statement**

We are the people of St. Christopher Catholic Church, a Eucharistic community of faith dedicated to . . .  
**Welcome, Celebrate, Care & Grow.** . . . in the image and likeness of Jesus.

## **Social Concerns**

- The Christmas GIFT program at St. Christopher engaged significant Parish involvement in collecting donations for local charities. 875 GIFT tags were created; 792 were chosen – 156 more than in 2022.
- Christmas in July will collect donations for a charity during the summer. The target charity has yet to be selected.
- The Lenten Soup Supper will be held with the leadership of Director of Religious Education, Sharon Armstrong. Social Concerns will use the occasion to offer three raffle baskets. The three baskets will offer (1) family games; (2) fair trade items; (3) gift cards. Social Concerns is seeking gift card donations for the gift cards basket. Tickets will be sold the weekend of March 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>.
- Sunday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, Stations of the Cross will be offered with a focus on the environment.
- The Social Concerns Committee is actively recruiting new members. PSR students are lending a hand with Social Concerns events.

## **Youth and Young Adults**

- The J+Walkers youth group was the targeted charity for the Parish GiveCatholic fundraising event on Giving Tuesday. Results surpassed the \$25,000 goal to support faith-based youth experiences.

## **PATHS [Parents & Teachers Helping Students]**

- The annual PATHS fundraiser for St. Christopher School is scheduled for Saturday, February 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Parish Center. This year participation in the auction and raffle activities will be extended to include those not in attendance at the evening event.

## **Father John Updates and Concerns**

- Keeping the Faith  
The ongoing collaboration between St. Christopher and St. Angela Parishes is being documented now for presentation of a firm proposal to the Diocese.
- State of Ohio EdChoice Scholarship Program  
The EdChoice program has offered amazing financial help to St. Christopher School through the participating Parish families. Funding to the Parish families approaches \$500,000. This increase in State support will enable a reduction in the subsidy the Parish contributes to the School. Tuition levels are being raised and the second child discount is being eliminated.
- The State of Ohio Angel Scholarship Fund  
The Angel Scholarship Fund provides tuition assistance for students to attend Catholic schools. Ohio taxpayers can gift the Angel Scholarship Fund and offset their gift with an equivalent Ohio State income tax credit up to \$750 (individual) and \$1500 (married couple). Parishioners are asked to designate St. Christopher School as the recipient of their Angel Fund giving. Giving to St. Christopher School in 2023 has increased to some \$180,000 – up from \$130,000 in 2022.

- **Lent**

Ash Wednesday coincides with Valentine's Day this year, February 14, 2024. Lenten activities planned will include:

1. A book discussion
2. A Parish Soup Supper
3. A discussion regarding religious icons
4. Stations of the Cross

Details regarding dates, times, places, etc. will be provided soon.

### **Parish Pastoral Council**

- **Parish Council Retreat**

- Father Tom Dragga has been enlisted to facilitate the annual Parish Council Retreat. Father Dragga is the Pastor of Church of the Resurrection in Solon. He has a background in teaching theology and providing religious workshops, including his ministry at the Diocesan Seminary.
- Larry Murtaugh, Kathy Rohn and Al Melton continue to work on planning the Parish Council Retreat in terms of content and the logistical details of the day.
- The Retreat will be held at St. Christopher on Saturday, March 9<sup>th</sup>, from 9 AM to 2 PM. Lunch will be included.

### **Pastoral Plan Assessment**

- Chris Rosati verified that all Council members had received the binder of information regarding the St. Christopher Parish Pastoral Plan for review prior to tonight's meeting.
- The Pastoral Plan began with a Parish-wide survey in October 2018 under the guidance of David DeLambo, a consultant in leadership and development. The survey yielded a gratifying and unexpectedly high level of Parish participation and resulted in the establishment of a set of seven goals:
  1. Improve welcoming and community building activities
  2. Increase the percentage of parishioners who are highly active
  3. Enhance the experience of liturgical music at Mass
  4. Articulate a clear sense of mission and purpose for the parish
  5. Train and empower parishioners to receive electronic communication from the parish
  6. Enhance the visibility and level of engagement in our Church in the City partnership with St. Colman
  7. Change the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation to 8<sup>th</sup> grade
- An open round-table discussion of Goal #1 ensued. A diverse and varied array of comments and perspectives surfaced and were discussed. Following is a list of ideas that were considered, (The ideas are numbered simply to facilitate reference, not to reflect their order of importance.)
  1. The new parishioners welcome-and-interview process is ongoing. All new parishioners are registered by staff personnel. Covid precluded in-person registrations but the process has transitioned from phone back to in-person meetings between a new parishioner and a staff member.

2. Staff may offer a newly registering parishioner a church tour.
3. A review of church ministries with a follow up in 1-2 weeks will help identify new parishioners with an interest in volunteer service.
4. The new Realm database will capture the interests of parishioners. Parishioners will be able to access their own profiles. In May, Realm access will be introduced to the Parish. Realm can be tailored for the ministries. Ministry leaders will need to keep their on-line presence timely.
5. A Time and Talent weekend might help match parishioners with ministry volunteer opportunities.
6. Parishioners primarily access the Church when they have a specific need, e.g. Baptism, wedding, PSR, School
7. A "senior night" might be useful for low-tech parishioners not facile with on-line communications.
8. Some 10-15 new parishioners register monthly with staff on-boarding.
9. "Adopt a family" might match a new family with an existing family. A quarterly welcome dinner could match existing and new families with a staff member.
10. It might be useful to have a list of activities and areas of involvement that parishioners can pursue.
11. It is important to appeal to parishioners to enrich their Parish life.
12. The Summer Weekend should be considered as a parish ministry.
13. A new parishioners social evening might be welcoming.
14. Idea: ping parishioners to update their profiles.
15. Coffee & the Word might be made available in the Rectory. The Rectory basement could be used.
16. A missing component is a daily spiritual message from the Parish. People hunger for Christ and the word of Christ.
17. Parishioners can be reached with new content every week.

### **Concluding Comments**

- Additional agenda suggestions are welcome.
- Bonnie Twitchell will lead the closing prayer in February.

### **Closing Prayer and Mission Statement**

Mary Horvath led the group in closing prayer with a New Year's Blessing by Joyce Rupp. Reading and reflection of the Parish Mission Statement concluded the meeting.

### **Next Business Meeting**

Tuesday, February 20, 2024

7 – 8:30 PM

Parishioners are welcome to attend.