

## St. Christopher Parish Pastoral Council Minutes

October 15, 2024

### **Opening Prayers**

The Parish meeting opened with our traditional faith sharing and prayers. The Gospel for the upcoming weekend liturgies for the 29<sup>th</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**

- Council's meeting minutes for September 17, 2024, were amended, appended and approved. They will be posted on the St. Christopher Parish website.

### **Ministries Issues and Concerns**

#### **Religious Education**

- Director of Religious Education, Sharon Armstrong, will be presenting information about the success of "The Way" at a Diocesan workshop this week. This middle school focused curriculum has a proven track record for success in the St. Christopher PSR program.
- The Sunday morning Children's Liturgy of the Word program is growing in attendance.

#### **Ladies Guild**

- The Raise Your Spirits event was celebrated Thursday evening, October 10<sup>th</sup> for women of the Parish and their friends. About 35 attended. Numbers were reduced due to competition from a Rocky River High School game and a Cleveland Guardians play-off game. The Ladies Guild plans to continue to host the event annually.
- Ladies Guild again will provide prayer cards in the pews during the upcoming Advent season.
- The refreshed and updated Ladies Guild website now includes access to a monthly novena and a woman of the month feature. For November, the Novena will be for the United States. The woman of the month will be Dorothy Day.

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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.

## **Walking With Moms in Need**

- The Parish monthly donation envelope for community charities will be expanded to include Walking with Moms in Need. The Parish online donation system similarly allows for targeted giving to community charities. Those who donate online have an option to continue receiving envelopes by mail or not.
- The upcoming **Belltower Beacon** will feature an article focused on a Sister's Haven and Zellie's Home "success story" in serving the WWMIN ministry.

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

- The Journey to Success fundraiser raffle is underway. Students and their families are encouraged to participate to raise funds for St. Christopher School. To date, the fundraiser is halfway to their goal of \$30,000.
- PATHS raffle tickets will be available for sale in the Gathering Area after the weekend liturgies October 26 – 27.
- The traditional Trunk or Treat Halloween celebration for St. Christopher School children will include all Parish children this year. The event will be celebrated Thursday, October 24<sup>th</sup>. The cost to participate is \$10 per family.
- PATHS annual fundraiser auction will be staged under the banner "Knight at The Oscars" on Saturday, February 1, 2025. PATHS is interested in garnering increased involvement and support for the auction from the entire Parish community.

## **Social Concerns**

- Halloween candy will be collected the weekend following Halloween from PSR families, School families and Parishioners for donation to those in need.
- The Thanksgiving food collection is being spearheaded by Mary Haggard, a Social Concerns committee member, and Pastoral Associate Melissa DiFini.
- The annual Christmas GIFT program will begin in Advent which is notably early this year – starting Thanksgiving weekend.
- Melissa DiFini issued an appeal for drivers to transport bins of food, household cleaning products, and personal care items donated by Parishioners. To date nine volunteers stepped forward. Donations are delivered to St. Colman Church every 2 weeks.
- St. Colman Church staff will provide their 2025 Neighborhood Meal calendar to Melissa DiFini in November. This will identify the Saturdays next year when volunteers will be needed to provide Neighborhood Meal service.

## **Social Concerns Future**

- Chris Rosati recently sent a letter to Social Concerns Chair, Jeanette Nappier. On behalf of Parish Pastoral Council our letter offered:
  - Highlights of the values of our Social Concerns committee.
  - Issues Social Concerns faces now.

- Recommendations to sustain the viability of Social Concerns achievements and to establish a path forward for future accomplishments.

### **J+Walkers Youth Group and Young Adults**

- Activities are underway.

### **SCP Weekend**

- A Parish-wide survey is underway now to allow for Parishioner feedback and input. A QR code is posted on the St. Christopher Parish website to elicit survey responses. The survey completion deadline is October 26<sup>th</sup>.
- An immediate concern is to establish a firm date for SCP Weekend in 2025. Survey respondents' input will be factored into whether or not to leave the date as tentatively scheduled, August 22 – 24, 2025.

### **Parish Meet and Greet**

- A Meet and Greet event will be held Thursday, October 17<sup>th</sup>, in the Parish Center from 6:30 to 8:00 PM. All parishioners are welcome.
- Melissa DiFini sent invitations to 70 new Parishioners offering an opportunity to learn more about Parish ministries and connect with ministries' leadership. The goal is to inspire more involvement in Parish activities. To date, 58 people have signed up to attend the Meet and Greet – including 4 new Parishioners plus Parish staff and representatives from our Parish ministries.
- Ministries that are invited to participate include:

Ladies Guild	PSR
Liturgical Ministers: Lectors/EMs/Ushers	Social Concerns
Music Ministry	St. Christopher School
Parish Pastoral Council	Walking With Moms in Need
PATHS	Youth Ministry

### **Father John Updates and Concerns**

- Technology update:
  - The Parish computer system conversion from ACS to the Ministry Platform is underway now.
  - A St. Christopher Parish phone app will be available in the future.
- The repair work and construction in the Church is complete. Insurance covered storm damage expenses. The outdoor St. Christopher statue damaged by the August tornado is being replaced. The base of the statue was not damaged.
- The sign fronting Detroit Road will be upgraded by Christmas. A new LED board will be fitted into the existing stone structure.

- The Christmas Mass schedule has been finalized. Christmas Masses will be celebrated as follows:
  - Christmas Eve – Tuesday, December 24<sup>th</sup>
    - 4 PM in three venues: the Church, the Parish Center, and the Gym
    - 6 PM and 10 PM in the Church
  - Christmas morning – Wednesday, December 25<sup>th</sup>
    - 10 and 11:30 AM in the Church
- The annual Parish census in October 2024 registered weekend Mass attendance increased about 20% over last year. Approximately 1100 Mass participants still represents fewer than pre-Covid when weekly Mass attendance numbered 1200 – 1300.
- Angel Scholarship Fund: A reminder “push” will be made before year-end to ensure that parishioners are aware of this opportunity to donate money to St. Christopher School and realize an offsetting tax benefit from the State of Ohio.

### **Parish Pastoral Council**

- Parish Meet & Greet
  - Parish Council will be represented by Bill Bough, Kathy Rohn and Chris Rosati. In addition, Council members Sarah Rish, Julie Mallett and Mary Horvath will be present representing other Parish ministries.
- December meeting
  - Council’s regular business meeting in the month of December will be replaced with a social gathering to celebrate Christmas together with our spouses. As is our tradition, we will gather at the Rectory on our usual meeting date – Tuesday December 17<sup>th</sup>, at 6:30 PM. Council members will be invited to bring an appetizer, dessert or wine to share.
- Annual Retreat
  - Kathy Rohn and Larry Murtaugh, who were both instrumental in organizing a Saturday day of recollection for Parish Council in the Spring, offered to start planning for a 2025 retreat. The hope is that once again we can gather on a Saturday in Lent from about 9 AM to 2 PM with Mass and a box lunch incorporated into the day.
- Parish Donut Sundays
  - Our first Parish Donut Sunday after many years was held on Sunday, October 6<sup>th</sup> in the Parish Center after the 8:30 and 10 AM Masses. Attendance exceeded expectations and the premier event was deemed to be successful.
  - Julie Mallett worked with Parish staff including Office Manager Dawn Bloom, and Communications Coordinator Colleen McKenna to ensure advance promotion in the Parish Bulletin, Parish website, and other Parish communications channels and on social media.

- Dennis Haas oversaw ordering, purchase and pick-up of the donuts. Dennis, Bill Blough and Cheryl Selak coordinated the day's activities: preparing coffee, serving donuts, coffee, juice, and water and ensuring that those who volunteered to help greeted parishioners, kept order and ensured everyone's well-being. They ensured that the Parish Center was left clean and tidy at the end of the event.
- One unintended "conflict" occurred: Donut Sunday and a Family Halloween fun event which Pastoral Minister Logan Feldkamp coordinated were both inadvertently scheduled at the same time on Sunday morning. This proved to be a valuable happenstance: we collectively discovered that Donut Sunday and Family fun events pair exceedingly well, having them in the same venue. There is now consideration for scheduling a December Donut Sunday to coincide with Santa's visit to St. Christopher Parish. Julie Mallett offered to collaborate with Logan Feldkamp if a December Donut Sunday comes to fruition.
- One notable change is recommended: the addition of several round tables and chairs to accommodate those who find accessing the cafeteria style tables and attached benches challenging (or impossible). The tables should be situated near the stage – close to the action – for those who need them.
- Based on the first Donut Sunday experience, a written "task list" will be developed for future reference. Dennis Haas, Cheryl Selak, Bill Blough and Mary Horvath will collaborate on this assignment.
- PATHS has volunteered to host the next Donut Sunday. November 3<sup>rd</sup>. Sarah Rish and Al Melton on behalf of Council volunteered to work with PATHS. PATHS members are eager to use the occasion to raise awareness of their upcoming auction event "Knight at the Oscars" in February.
- 2025 Donut Sundays will be scheduled on the first Sunday of the months of February and March. Easter will be celebrated in April; First Communions will be celebrated in May.
- Parish Pastoral Plan Discussion
  - Council resumed discussion of Goal 2F: Improve the experience of weekend Mass as a means of increasing parishioner engagement.
  - Members weighed in with alternative ideas for addressing this goal:
    - a dedicated meeting to finish this up and identify action items;
    - a division of this goal among subgroups.
  - Council members shared their perspectives reflecting on this goal:
    - St. Christopher priests, staff, ushers, and parishioners are becoming increasingly welcoming in greeting each other at Mass. The welcoming spirit is growing.
    - People are looking for deeper spiritual meaning in an increasingly secular world.
    - People want a relationship with God and with each other.
    - People are looking for strength. Faith is immutable. We need to own what we stand for.

- Walking with Purpose is a reflection of this.
- Our life goals are to find salvation for ourselves and to help others find salvation.
- Parish staff – Gayle Cilimburg, Melissa DeFini, Logan Feldkamp – are empowering lay participation. This gets people involved, rather than just a few people running Parish ministries.
- In November Parish Council will turn our attention to the Parish Pastoral Plan's Goal 3: Enhance the experience of liturgical music at Mass.
  - Mayumi Naramura, Music Ministry Director, will attend this meeting to facilitate this discussion.

### **Concluding Comments**

- Additional agenda suggestions are welcome.
- Julie Mallett will lead the closing prayer in November.

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

Bonnie Twitchell offered our Closing Prayer. Reading and reflection of the Parish Mission Statement concluded the meeting.

### **Next Business Meeting**

Tuesday, November 19, 2024  
7 – 8:30 PM – Parish Center  
Parishioners are welcome to attend.