

Minutes of Parish Council Meeting
October 13, 2009, 7-8:40pm

In attendance: Alexandra Murphy; Eileen Estilo; Fr. Patrick Goodwin; Rick Arellano; Thomas Sullivan; Barbara DeLuca, Paul Canales, Chris Olofson, Mary Kate Hallock

Guest: Dick Cadenasso – Finance Committee leader

Dick Cadenasso presented the Parish Finances. Details and Dick's observations of the budget are fully outlined in his three page summary.

Discussion points included:

- The Parish is operating at a cash deficit of over \$30k even though we are operating within budget.
- Plate collections are lagging, but were over budgeted – electronic funds transfers last year increased plate collections, but the increase was a one-time event
- Bequests are down possibly due to negative church image, and we did not receive the Bishop's appeal rebate this year.
- Expenses and income related to our new facilities are still being determined.
- Over the years, our expenses will continue to increase – we pay better salaries and offer more programs.
- Cash investments are strong

Dick's recommendations:

- Inform the staff that we should curb expenses where we can
- Try to increase collections by going to parishioners. Let them know that we are operating at a deficit and remind them that our expenses are continually increasing.

The Finance Committee will start preparing the 2010 budget immediately, with a goal of having a draft at our November meeting. Suggestions and input are welcome – please pass information through Tom and/or Fr. Patrick.

A discussion followed about how we might work with parishioners to increase plate collections. Possibilities included another push for Electronic Funds Transfer, tithing a percentage of annual income, fundraisers for the church, and republish the suggested weekly donation or amount required by school families to be considered "in parish". (Alex looked this up in the school's Parent Handbook after the meeting – it states "\$600 to the parish of the course of the school year, May 1-April 30". This has not changed in at least 5 years, probably longer.)

After much discussion, it was suggested that we develop a strategy for communicating our financial needs to the parish. It could include FAQ's, visual aids and pie charts to help everyone understand how and where money is spent. From there, we can ask for necessary assistance which may include a suggested percentage of income, and/or increasing the amount required to be considered "in parish". Chris Olofson and Rick Arellano will head this effort. Alex Murphy will offer assistance on the school side.

Father Patrick reflected on successes:

- There are 21 candidates for the Ignatian Exercises
- Faith Formation groups have increase; our confirmation group is up to 40
- Cursillo remains strong
- WINGS has asked for some assistance in growing – they are having trouble bringing in new, younger parents.

Tom recapped our goals for the year developed at the retreat, and our progress to date.

1. Increase parish spirituality through increased participation
2. New support ministries
 - Singles, single parents, funeral reception; Alex and hospitality will work on getting some of these off the ground.
3. Parish/School Integration
 - Barbara has agreed to look at how other schools and communities are doing it, and how we can improve. We'll also create class liturgies once a month to get more school participation at mass. Details on that are below in Liturgy notes.
4. Community Support – Genesis & Make Oakland Better
 - Tom is working to connect Mario Starc with Silver White in the Genesis group to see if we can't create synergy there. Genesis plans to focus on Healthcare and Transportation.

Status Reports

- Liturgy, Mary Kate
 - We are already planning for Advent and Christmas. We will attempt to piggyback on the success of the September retreat, and contact newcomers to get involved with advent or Christmas activities.
 - Four people are sharing personal faith experiences at mass; faith stories may bring others in
 - We'll ask Judy to put a note in weekly newsletter to promote Advent and opportunities for participation.
 - We'll create a monthly mass in which the liturgy is done by each grade at the school. Faith Formation kids will also participate. Teachers, Faith Formation Teachers and Liturgy staff will all work to make this happen. Our expectation is that it would start in November.
- Faith Formation, Eileen
 - We had 25 people at the September retreat. Rather than individual speakers, we presented a panel discussion which was very well received. The ministries were presented and the retreat was closed with a guided meditation. We received good feedback. Next time, we could be better at promoting the event, and we need to tighten up childcare so that we have adequate resources. We might consider a spring retreat for new families, too.

- The Ministry Fair will be discussed at the next meeting, but there was a lot of positive feedback about the groups that developed as a result of the last one. Additionally, it was suggested that school families be offered the opportunity to sign up for ministries on the first day of school and on Back to School night(s). Alex can help look into this.
- Welcome/Hospitality, Alex
 - Since December, we have 38 new families registered in the Parish. 16 of them are also new to the school. All but the most recent have been assigned a Buddy Family. On Sept. 27, we held a social for all new families at both the parish and the school, and their Buddy Families. It was attended by approximately 140 people - mostly younger families with a strong showing from existing school families. It was a nice event that combined school and parish interests, and we recommend continuing that tradition. The Hospitality committee is due to meet, and we will discuss the possible new support ministries.
- Stewardship, Rick
 - Debbie Gunn of the Diocese will come talk to us.
 - Rick and Chris will work on marketing for Stewardship
- Outreach, Paul
 - Unlike the past, we are using all the Outreach budget. We are supporting efforts at Elizabeth House, St. Mary's, St. Jarlath's, and St. Elizabeth's. We've put a request process in place and have been able to provide funds.
 - There are good community involvement opportunities that Laura Bennett is offering for Elizabeth House
 - St. Elizabeth's high school was very appreciative of financial assistance – enrollment was down 75 students this year. We've helped with their auction and St. Theresa parishioners have made a difference at their events. The 8th grade will also assist in the future.
 - There is ongoing involvement with our 4th grade students and St. Mary's; the 4th grade will be helping with Thanksgiving there, too, and work with them through the spring.
 - Marianne Stehr is heading up the Medshare effort and has gotten good support.
 - We should list the groups supported by Outreach in the bulletin so that our parishioners know where our efforts and money go.

Tom closed the meeting by handing out our current mission statement. Father Goodwin asks that we look at it, and make suggestions for paring it down to one sentence at our next meeting. Need to rewrite the Mission statement – it should be one sentence.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40pm

Action Items:

Rick & Chris – draft a communication to the parish with an analysis of our funding, expenses and income.

Alex – contact potential organizers of Singles and Single Parent support ministries.

Tom – Report on initiation of funeral reception ministry

Barbara – report on the type and style of integration of two successful parish-school communities.

MaryKate – Schedule/facilitate a monthly mass liturgy by each combined school and faith formation grade.

Eileen – recommend time frame and format of ministry signups and possible spring retreat.

Paul – develop an Outreach groups list for communication in the bulletin; plan St.Mary's Thanksgiving dinner prep with school.

Chris – Review current parish communications (bulletin, web, etc.) and recommend announcements for the Catholic Voice, Montclairion and Oakland Tribune.

All – Review/rewrite the parish mission statement