

St Joseph Parish Council Meeting

January 17, 2016

John Quallen opened meeting at 10:00 a.m. with a prayer by Monsignor Mike. Carolyn Rousseau took roll call. Present were: Andy Canata, Joe Dahrouge, Tom Daly, Phil Janchuk, Bill Jennings, Pat Keegan, Betty Kirby, Elaine LaPierre, Jack Laviolette, Kathleen Maloney, Nina Mastrangelo, Scott Nugai, John Quallen, Donald Rochelo, Carolyn Rousseau, Joe Ryan, Bernadette Scapin, Joe Tournier, Michael Wheeler, Deacon Pat Baldasaro, Ray Costello, Michele Madden, Pat Momnie, Jeff Vincent, Fr. Mike Shershanovich.

Andy Canata reported that Mike Schirripa had a stroke, is at Berkshire Place for rehab, and is in good spirits. Joe Tournier corrected a typo of his name in the November minutes—the amended minutes were accepted.

ACTIVITY UPDATES:

Religious Education—Betty Kirby reported that we have 134 students enrolled in CCD. Two were added last week. The Christmas Pageant was presented by the children on December 20, 2015 at the 9:00 Mass. It was very successful—the few minor mistakes by the children only added to it. More than usual participated this year and the children really enjoyed it. A special First Communion was also held that day for a new student. Classes resumed on January 10 and all went well. Upcoming activities: Student confessions will begin on January 24, 2016 and be completed on February 7. First Penance will be held on Saturday, February 6. Saturdays work well for this. February 7 will be Commitment Sunday for Confirmation students. It will also be “Souper” Bowl Sunday and the students will collect donations at the 4 p.m. Mass on Saturday and the 9:00 Mass on Sunday.

Pastoral Ministry—Pat Momnie and Fr. Mike celebrated Masses at the Adult Day Care, Berkshiretown, and Providence Court. The elderly loved the Christmas ornaments given to them. Calendars and Mercy prayer cards are being handed out and names will be available in church on February 6 and 7 to take to send Valentines to shut ins.

St. Anne’s Society—Gerry Dahrouge reported that the group takes a hiatus in the winter, but in December a tea was held and the Berkshire Hillsmen entertained.

Maintenance Committee—Jack Laviolette said that a list of items to be done had been devised. The front fence was damaged by a car and Fr. Mike questioned the cost of fixing it. Jack will look into prices to repair, replace or remove it with Berkshire Fence. (We are responsible for first \$2000.00.) The gutter side of the rectory has suffered ice damage. These items are pending.

Convent Disposition Status—Ray Costello said progress is at a tortoise pace but there is continued movement on 2 paths—the Historical Commission and Demolition permission. The Historical Commission toured in the fall—required an updated Form B, history of convent from

a historical view. We resubmitted demolition permission and it will be on their agenda at the meeting on January 25. Hopeful for results. The diocesan lawyer strongly recommends that we go for the permit right away. The diocese was asked if we could use local architect Karen Hunt who designed the parish center. We could have demolition plans in about a week. Estimated cost is 100 to 150 thousand dollars. There are some salvageable materials—the staircase is carved black walnut which cost \$1500.00 in 1897.

Meals on Wheels—Ray reported that under the umbrella of Take and Eat there are 37 diverse groups in Western Massachusetts. 50,000 meals a year are served. There are 3 groups in Pittsfield—St. Joe's Sharing Our Roots has been doing this for 11 years, they were the 3rd group to be organized. St. Mark's is about the same and Our Lady's Kitchen began in 2005. 65 people are involved at St. Joseph, they feed 110-120 each month and get good feedback.

Twelfth Night Summary—Elaine LaPierre announced that 161 attended the reception at the ITAM. She mentioned that the Liturgy was beautiful, and that the Kings and Pages were exceptionally reverent this year. The Mass, with its sung Proclamation, inspiring music and homily, and our Bishop, Monsignor, Priest and Deacon all on the altar is a very special beginning to the evening. All who attended enjoyed the meal, dancing and the traditional cookie service later in the evening. 34 door prizes were won by the attendees.

Pastor's report—Monsignor Mike said that with the resignation of Paul Guillou as cemetery foreman, 9 were being interviewed for the position. The old cemetery commission has been disbanded and a new one with all professional people is being formed with a representative from every parish. White Engineering has been hired to help with water drainage problems, we have 5 years to do repairs.

Parish updates—St. Mary's is at a standstill, there is activity with Holy Family with some offers but lots of contingencies.

Evangelization update—Bishop McDonnell, priests and deacons participated in a mass at the jail. The Year of Mercy was opened on Christmas Eve with a blessing of the main door of the church. Confessions are offered from 6:30 to 7:30 every Wednesday. 16 people have signed up for the pilgrimage in March. Father Mike suggested for the Bishop's Evangelization Program that on the first Sunday of Lent we start using name tags so that we can put a name to the face and be able to recognize parishioners. He uses Facebook to welcome and reach out to many. Would like to get a committee together to do Parish census to learn of the needs and concerns of parishioners.

Other business:

Outreach—Bernie Scapin suggested a blurb in the bulletin to make people aware that they should notify rectory if someone is in hospital, etc.

Fr. Mike mentioned that there were so many comments on the beauty of the church at Christmas and thanked those who made it happen.

20-20 Club—Jeff Vincent has tickets, letters will go out in February. He is looking for more people to sell tickets.

Holy Name—Joe Dahrouge reported that it was planned to be at St. Joseph on February 14 to hand out coloring books to the First Communion children. When he was told that there was no CCD that day he replied that they would have to reschedule.

Jack Laviolette announced that there would be a Mass for the Unborn, supporting all life, at 11:30 on January 24. He asked that we save the date, February 26, for a Fish Fry from 5 to 6:30.

Andy Canata said that there would be a Blue Mass again this year on May 22.

John Quallen commented that an awesome job was being done with our website. Mike Wheeler hopes to have the opportunity during Lent to do special editions. Kathy Maloney suggested putting the CCD schedule on it. Online participation for giving is about the same.

Fr. Jim Joyce is retiring as pastor of Sacred Heart Church and Fr. Mike will head it for a while, until a new pastor is in place. Deacon Jim Hager is retiring after 33 years.

To answer a question from Bill Jennings as to what the Finance Committee is doing to reduce deficit (besides Fr. Mike's letter) Ray said that each member is sent a monthly report monitoring debt. We are hopeful to be positive at end of this year. Raising awareness has helped. Key word is HOPEFUL.

Closing remarks from Fr. Mike—Upcoming events are a penny social that John Arasimowicz is running, also a Paint and Sip event will be held. Fr. is thankful for all that brings us together and reminded us of the acts of kindness we will do during this year of mercy.

The meeting was closed with a prayer at 10:58 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine J. LaPierre