

SAINT BRENDAN PARISH: Pastoral Council Meeting

December 4th, 2014

CALL TO ORDER: Jason Swager opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

ATTENDING: Fr. Jim Northrop, John Bush, Ken Elliott, Linda Haptonstall, Jason Swager, Brigitte Blair, Desiree Engel, Reinaldo Aguilar

ABSENT: Chris Flynn

OPENING PRAYER: Jason opened with a prayer

MISSION STATEMENT: The Mission Statement was read as a reminder of what we are called to do.

Open Microphone: None

January Meeting Change:

- January's meeting will not be on New Year's Day. It will be moved to Thursday, January 8th (2nd Thursday) instead.

Pastors Report

- Upcoming: Lady of Guadalupe, Simbang Gabi, Las Posadas
- Penance Service was very well attended. Fr. Jim would like to have more priests at the next penance Service.
- Technology: update of the website being planned.
- Upcoming Good Shepherds, Good Leaders classes.
- St. Brendan Parish is catching up with the out-of-compliance Safe Environment requirements.
- Audio demo for the 3rd bid went very well; very impressed. Awaiting the actual bid. The bids, decision, and work won't be done in time for a new audio system to be ready by Christmas.
- Upcoming Lessons and Carols
- Thanksgiving Dinner went well. Some leftovers.
- School going well. The art teacher resigned for a full-time public position; new teachers being interviewed.

Eyes and Ears

- Reinaldo voice some concerns about the noon Mass: parents need to escort small children to restrooms; the Narthex is becoming a play room for unattended small kids. Cellphones need to be turned off. Church is messy after Mass; some snacking and eating going on. Asked Fr. Jim if he could mention proper etiquette and behavior, perhaps as part of the teaching Masses during the Advent season.
- Reinaldo reported that the Hispanic Commission was having some difficulties: hard feelings, conflicting opinions, members considering leaving the commission. Members of the council offered support and advice; growing pains are not uncommon, especial for a group its size. Fr. Jim and Reinaldo would look into the possibility of a retreat for that commission.
- From Chris via report:
 - Member of noon Mass choir (not Hispanic) was concerned about the “us –v- them” perception that pops up when the needs at the two language Masses are explored. The integration –v- assimilation talk from Deacon Jose was used to explain.
 - Interpreter for stewardship talk at the Spanish Mass expressed concern over the difficulty translating a message and raised the question of whether it connected with the Spanish speaking parishioners.
 - Concern about the finances, that the lack of information and transparency is leading to confusion and misinformation. Clean reporting that can be understood by the average parishioner should be available on a consistent basis. The bulletin numbers each week, more in depth once a quarter perhaps.
- John reported hearing parishioners concerned about the \$0/TBD values in the bulletin for Parish finances. Other council members reported hearing the same thing from other parishioners and ministries. Ken voiced concern that the Finance Council is being treated like a “punching bag”; Brigette/Jason mentioned that this isn’t something new that’s being asked for, but simply a continuation of what’s been the norm in years passed.
- John also reported a couple parishioners wondering about the “unknown priest” (Fr. Ron) who was serving. Wondering if the parish could have better informed the parish about him coming. Council was wondering what more could have been done? Fr. Jim had mentioned it at multiple Masses, it had been in the bulletin, Fr. Ron had been around the Narthex after Masses even when not serving.
- Desiree reported hearing from a school parent that was concerned about the mention of “school parents/families not attending Mass” and that the parent was concerned that it would cast the school in a negative light. The parent was also wondering where the information

came from. Fr. Jim confirmed the information was from him and summarized from what he heard from students at the school. When Seminarian/Deacon Brian was at St. Brendan, he also reported that a significant fraction of students said they hadn't gone to Mass when he taught on the readings.

LAISON REPORTS

Finance Council: Ken

- Short October meeting, no meeting in November due to Thanksgiving.
- Budget has been finalized.

Faith Formation: Brigitte

- No meeting yet.

Sister Parish Committee: Brigitte

- Reported that Fr. Johnnie had responded back to St. Brendan. He is enthusiastic to move forward with a Sister Parish relationship. This got very mixed reactions from the committee, who was now looking at other sister parish opportunities given the lack of response and the general reception at the last visit to Fr. Johnnie's parish. The committee is still discerning and discussing what to do and what recommendation to make to Fr. Jim. Request prayers for insight.

Stewardship: Chris absent, but had forwarded a report

- Commission member had concerns about website access; Chris said they were being looked into. John Philips reported having problems logging into the site to post financial data; Jason will address.
- Newcomer social getting larger; noted that too much food left over but at least it could go to Tent City.
- Request for PC/Finance/Stewardship joint meeting. Want to discuss parish plans.
- Thank you Tony Partington for your stewardship speech! Feedback: would like to hear more facts on the financial health of the parish, a state of affairs. Perhaps suggesting a course of action.
- Stewardships commission will focus on seeking someone from the Hispanic Community to give stewardship talk next year at the noon Mass to help overcome interpreting issues.
- Where is Stewardship as a Parish? Fr. Jim's report doesn't match with what is heard from John Philips who says it's not in the budget. Commission is frustrated since no answer is being heard.

Peace and Justice: John

- No update; no meeting; no word.
- Jason requested that rather than waiting to be notified; John should reach out and request an update.

Worship and Spiritual Life: Fr. Jim

- No meeting this month, but very busy with Advent.

Hispanic Commission: Reinaldo

- Reiterated concerns brought up during the Eyes-and-ears section.
- Also mentioned concerns about families leaving early after Mass. Council mentioned that's not just a Noon Mass problem, but is common at all Masses and all parishes. John mentioned that if the choir had a shorter closing song (one less verse perhaps), that it would help keep people in the pews just a minute or two longer.

School Commission: Fr. Jim filling in for Desiree who was working that night.

- Lots of focus on the accreditation process; a big thing for the school.
- No PTO report this time
- The Songs for the Christmas recital were approved; there have been some concerns in the past from parents when some secular songs were chosen. No apparent disagreements this time around.

Facilities: Jason

- More discussion on the audio bids; waiting for the audio demo associated with the third bid.
- Some concerns about the spring on the backside of the Church and how it might be hazard when it freezes over. Frank has cones out and is looking for a way to drain the overflow safely.
- The Church, Parish Office, School, Rectory inspection is fully completed. A report of items found and noted was circulated. There were no items of critical or highly important nature, although some of the issues found could be problems if not addressed in upcoming years.
- Representative from the School was present. Some of his questions:
 - When would the parking lot/field be addressed? Response from Facilities: when there was budget to cover it.
 - Why didn't the Capital Campaign cover the parking lot/field? Response: It was intended to, but fell far short of the \$3 million it was anticipating; the parking lot/field was the part wasn't completed due to that shortfall.
 - Will the Church be raising money to finish the parking lot/field? Response: Fr. Jim does not think he will be doing another campaign while he is here, but the School can also raise money.

The Auction or its own Capitol Campaign could be used to raise some of the remaining money.

- School has a request to use property across the street as a produce garden run by the students. (This came up last month in Facilities.) Response from the Committee back to the School: there is no water on that property, would cost to have water brought over (how much?), who would weed/harvest during the summer months, supervision of kids during school hours, who would clean up the place at the end of the harvest?

Discerned Parish Priorities

- The remainder of the meeting was discussion on discerned priorities. With no order or priority at this time, here is the initial list:
 - GPS (Facilities/maintenance/volunteer coordinator)
 - Engaging Parishioners (Attending Mass, personal visits/invitations to encourage w/o a financial agenda, encourage spiritual growth)
 - Youth and Teen Programs (Life Teen, Edge, VBS)
 - Keeping Faith Formation for Adults strong
 - Sister Parish
 - Enhancing Multicultural Community
 - Long range plan for leadership transition (Laity developed to lead)
 - How to bring more joy into the parish
 - Café (from Rebuilt, other Narthex improvements)
 - Enhance Community Meal
 - Identify our infrastructure for helping needy
 - Prayer tree

CLOSING PRAYER and ADJOURNMENT:

Pastoral Council closed at 9:10 with a prayer by Jason.