

APPROVED April Parish Council Meeting Minutes

6:00 – 8:00 PM

Father began our meeting with a blessing.

Introduction

Attendees

- Father Toner
- 10 Council members present (Christine & Annette were absent)
- Kathy Scott – Parish Office

A motion was made and passed to approve the March meeting minutes.

Chairperson's comments

- Steve advised we would switch our focus from the Liturgy until after a Pastor or Pastor Administrator was permanently assigned. We will continue to focus on Outreach and Evangelization.
- Our Retreat will take place in July, and we will outline our strategies for the following period. New officers will be elected during the retreat.

Parish/Pastor's Report

- A part-time Bookkeeper and Office Assistant have been hired.
- Several candidates have been interviewed for the Business Manager position. Father will discuss this further with parish staff and anticipates a decision to be made by Wednesday (April 16).
- Father indicated an announcement of a new Pastor will take place soon. If he is to remain, he will be our Parish Administrator immediately. If another Priest is named that announcement will depend on his notification to his existing parish.
- Per the impact report - moving forward 10% of the offertory will be used for building and maintenance. The HVAC for the church is the next upcoming maintenance need to be addressed and done - \$170K.
- There is a \$150K budget deficit for next year this could get cut and come up even.
- The school cut their budget.

- Overall things are moving in the right direction. Attendance looks to be up. After a brief discussion we decided to have the ushers count attendance every Sunday for all masses during the month of May. Kathy Scott will prepare a sheet for ushers to record attendance. Father asked our opinion of renting the Commons for Sacramental events only (Baptism, Wedding receptions). Kathy Scott is looking into this and will present a cost analysis and report for further discussion.
- Costs would include, but not limited to:
 - Insurance
 - Maintenance
 - Any other items needed to use
- Father asked about the idea of renting the Commons for events. He indicated that the parish office gets requests occasionally. **The Council concluded that such rentals should be limited to those related to the sacraments (i.e. receptions) and for St. Mary parishioners use only.**

Council Discussion

- Rob Gabel advised the Knights to sponsor Donut Sunday on May 18th after the 7:30, 9:00 and 11:30 masses. The Parish Council will host the event, welcoming all attendees. The various ministries and clubs are welcome to set up a table in the Commons. Rob & Debbie will work on marketing this event.
- Parish Council was advised that the house near the school and church is no longer being considered for the St. Vincent New Beginnings Men's shelter.
- There was a discussion around how to advance Council recommended initiatives (i.e. hospitality team, multicultural parish picnic, etc.). Father indicated that staff will not be able to implement all recommendations and that Council would need to provide leadership. There was the discussion of the need to have "sub-committees" or similar, to start up and drive initiatives.
- Fundraisers – In order to manage the various fundraisers that go on throughout the year both in the school and the parish, **the Council recommended that future proposed fundraisers must complete an application with details on what, when, where, why and benefit for**

said fundraiser. Kathy Scott and Kristin Story will create the application.

- Ministries/Groups - With respect to all the ministries/groups having their own bank/funds. Father indicated that the parish will provide for their needs.
 - Ministries/groups would submit their annual budget at the beginning of the fiscal year (July)
 - Prior to a designated event the ministry/group would send a written request for the funds needed for that upcoming event.
 - The Knights would be exempt.

Evangelization and Outreach Discussion

The council began a discussion on the topic of evangelization and outreach. Some important needs that deserved more consideration were:

- Bringing people back to church/the parish that have left for various reasons including those that didn't return after Covid and some of the controversies at the Parish.
- Youth outreach – Current programs seem to focus on a very limited number of our youth. Can we reach out and engage/evangelize youth that are on the “margins” of our parish? Should we expand/restructure our youth groups and programs?
- Increase young adult outreach and programs – not much exists for those between high school and marriage/family life.
- Adult formation/education/evangelization – increase the knowledge and relationship with Christ of our adults.

Some initial ideas that were mentioned related to these topics were:

- Expand fish fry scope – very effective in pulling people in. Capitalize on that engagement.
- Use the courtyard more to connect with parishioners and the Delaware Community – for example have an Ice Cream Social on the 1st Friday in our courtyard during summer.
- Reinstitute the annual parish picnic- parish council to drive it.
- Have two or three council members to speak to the Pastor on needs and concerns we hear about – modify as we go along.

- More focus on outreach (parishioner recruitment) and evangelization (interest in becoming Catholic) at the Parish Festival. Using church tours were identified as one way to do this.
 - Evangelmercials, use “Catholics Come Home” materials
 - Restart the neighborhood network program
 - Do a new “Renew” type small group initiative.
 - Engage more with school and children’s house – there are a lot of non-Catholics with children in the school.
 - Get good data on who has left the parish/stopped attending Mass and do outreach to find out why (changed parishes or left the Church?)
 - Add multilanguage to more Parish communications and events
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- Ana informed us that she was involved with having more lay people to be catechists. Would like a more effective way to connect with other ministry leaders and parishioners. Father indicated that the rest of the Parish could learn important lessons about how to prepare lay parish members for ministry from the Hispanic community. Ana advised wanting us to bond more together with the rest of the parish community.

Respectfully submitted
 Cathy Bennett
 Written 4/21/2025