



St. Mary's Parish Council Minutes – October 10, 2018

7:00 pm meeting called to order by Tom Rechen

In Attendance: Father Matera, Tom Rechen, Sean Hughes, Meg Keating, Daria Mauro, David Croke, Larry Christian, Leon Rippel, Betty Bible, Tim Sullivan, Gavin Hughes, Chris Becker, Lily Fleming, Kathleen Keating, Lori Oleasz.

Absent: David Croke, Rick Lenz

Opening Prayer by Fr. Matera

PASTOR'S REPORT

1. Construction is on schedule. Trusses are in place, irrigation and electrical work being done. The road work behind the school is progressing nicely, and this weekend there will be a display in the church updating the parish as to where we are.
2. Saint Mary's School has been awarded a blue ribbon.
3. Next weekend is Witness Weekend, the third Sunday of the month. Four more parishioners will give testimonies about their faith.
4. October count has begun.

REACHING NEW AND YOUNG FAMILIES

- Open House is given at Rectory to families whose babies were just baptized.
- Welcome letters are sent to new families.
- Women's Guild hosts couples night out; babysitting in Parish Center can be considered.
- Faith-based family activities, such as the puppet show that Lori Oleasz coordinates, should be increased.
- Lori Oleasz suggested that catechists can encourage their families to attend various activities.
- Kathleen Keating suggested that St. Mary's School could possibly help a parish volunteer who is willing to coordinate a parish activity for families with young children. This could be an opportunity for the school to reach potential preschool families.

- All should be ready to invite others to volunteer in a ministry.
- Lori Oleasz suggested a Kindergarten Religious Education class can be added to the program next year, and Father Matera agreed.

DEVELOPING VIBRANT MEN'S GROUP—Sean Hughes

- Three components are important: Spiritual, Service, Fellowship
- A Mission Statement will be important to create.
- Men's Retreat at Saint Mary's –Leon Rippel will talk to Dr. Gerry Graham
- Father and son events may be an idea to explore.

AD HOC COMMITTEE MEMBER FROM SAINT BERNARD

- The need for this was made apparent after the Archdiocesan Listening Session.
- Tom Rechen checked Article 7 of the by-laws, which allows for Ad Hoc members.
- This would be for a period of time, and does not need to become a standing, permanent post.

STANDING COMMITTEES

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION—Chris Becker

- Religious Education Committee met Sept. 20, 2018.
- At least two new members are needed.
- Program is off to a strong start, and transitions from Campus Connection construction are going well (parking, drop off/pick up, traffic patterns)

Lori Oleasz, Director of Religious Education Grades 1 to 6 reported that many families moved and birth rate is down. Ten new catechists joined this year and all are a strong addition. On March 30, 2019 Lori will speak at the Archdiocesan Faith Formation Congress and catechists will attend.

Kathleen Keating, Coordinator of Religious Education Grades 7 to 10 and Youth Minister reported that Focus Groups provided teens with the opportunity to be part of the planning process for the upcoming year with IGNITE Youth Ministry. "LOFT" Night will begin this Sunday, October 14, 2018 and will focus on a Biblical theme. "LOFT" stands for "Living Our Faith Together". These are unique sessions built into Middle School Religious Ed and High School Confirmation Preparation Program. Teens gather in Parish Center for faith-based activities and presentations. The response to these sessions has been positive.

SOCIAL ACTION AND OUTREACH –Leon Rippel

- **House of Bread** A sizeable donation of kitchen supplies were collected at last month's supplies collection. Including cleaning supplies, paper goods and non-perishable foods. John Cerreta delivered the boxes of supplies to Hartford. The House of Bread staff told him to pass along their sincere appreciation to everyone at St. Mary's.
- **Immacare - Contact: Tracey Roderick** Meals continued throughout the summer. There were plenty of donations. The next meal will be on Monday, October 29.
- **Mercy Housing Shelter - Contact: Ted Molloy** A meal was prepared and served on Sept. 2nd.
- **Simsbury Food Pantry** On Sunday, October 28, we will have our monthly food collection of canned goods, pasta, and other non-perishables at all Masses. The collection for was September was generous. Bob Moran is a reliable volunteer in our efforts in collecting and delivering the items to the Simsbury Pantry every month.
- **Upcoming collections** will be for items requested by the shelters and will be scheduled in 2 or 3 weeks. Shelters need frozen meatloaves, XLG men's T-shirts, winter clothing and personal items, etc.
- People of St. Mary's are very generous and keep inquiring about how they can contribute. We are always open to suggestions.

ADULT ENRICHMENT AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT –Betty Bible

- An inventory of library books was completed, and there are more than 800 items.
- A new category of books on Our Blessed Mother is being created.
- A dehumidifier is needed for the library.
- New titles will be ordered in 2019.
- Use of library on weekends and after 3:30 p.m. is proposed.
- Sunday, October 21 coach Rick Collins will speak at 8:30 and 10:30 on how sports affect family life.
- Sam Kelly, founder of Fierce Athlete.org will speak in 2019.
- Tapestry Choir Concert will be scheduled.
- Sandy Everett was to speak in October on the meaning of the stained glass windows in our church, but this has been postponed.
- Speakers for November and December will be confirmed.

FINANCE COUNCIL REPORT –none given as Rick Lenz was absent.

SCHOOL BOARD – Tim Sullivan

- Saint Mary’s School was recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence by the Department of Education. Father Matera and Mrs. Williamson, principal of Saint Mary’s School, will travel to Washington D.C. in November to receive this award.

YOUTH REPORT—Gavin Hughes and Lily Fleming

- Vacation Bible School was a fun experience for the children of our parish.
- Steubenville East Conference made a positive impact on all teens who attended and they are looking forward to attending next summer.
- Calcutta Project continued throughout the summer and is scheduled for this academic year. Teens prepare meals in the Parish Center kitchen and serve them at Immaculate Conception Shelter in Hartford.
- Focus Groups met three times recently to prioritize ideas for the fall calendar for IGNITE Youth Ministry. Some of the fun ideas are: Scavenger hunt for home care items for kits that will be donated to shelter through the Calcutta Project; pumpkin picking and hay ride; pizza comparison and movie night; bake cookies and send to college students who were confirmed at St. Mary’s and seminarians studying for the Archdiocese of Hartford.

LITURGY FOCUS DISCUSSION

What are we doing right? What can we improve?

- Father Matera asks all of us “Why do we go to Mass on Sundays? Is it an obligation or is this important and central to our lives?”
- Have parishioners introduce themselves rather than just greet each other.
- Sports takes up a great amount of time for families.
- We all can welcome new families to help people feel they are part of our community.
- One suggestion was to have Mass(es) for the blessing of teams to encourage families to attend.
- The Witness speakers, Women’s Guild, creating a Men’s Group are all seen as positive initiatives to help parishioners feel connected.
- We will take a look again how the music at our Masses is viewed by all. Teens mentioned that music helps them pray during Mass at Steubenville and are interested in this conversation.

CLOSING PRAYER—Night Prayer from Liturgy of the Hours led by Father Matera

