

NATIVITY PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday – April 28, 2009
6:30 P.M. – Nazareth Room
Church of the Nativity

Kevin Wolf led the Pastoral Council in Evening Prayer at 6:34 p.m.

Chairperson Leon Senn called the meeting of the Pastoral Council to order at 6:46 p.m., pursuant to notice.

Council Members Present:

Fr. Kevin Boucher, Fr. Gary Luiten, Duane Koble, Terri Dahl, Bonnie Faller, Betty Hund, Brenda Lang, Joe Miranowski, Abby Rheault, Greg Schmalz, Leon Senn, Joel Simons, Kevin Wolf, Corporate Secretary Mykal Nester and Corporate Treasurer Michael O'Leary

Council Members Absent: Ken Jablonsky, Bev Nesler, Chenise Nesler and Ed Schwind

Minutes from the 03/03/2009 Special Parish Council meeting were provided prior to the meeting and accepted by unanimous consensus. Chairman Leon Senn thanked the council for arranging their schedules to attend this additional meeting that was held in March.

Heating Plan for Nativity School

Duane Koble reported that he had met with Cindy Hutchins and informed her of the council's recommendation that a contingency plan be prepared in the event the boiler would fail. Cindy's proposal was mailed prior to the meeting for review by the council. Because a change can be traumatic to elementary students, her proposal was to continue to hold school on the parish campus on a short-term basis. The boiler could be fixed within a 2-3 day timeframe; therefore, students could be rotated between the church, cafeteria, gym, music and youth room. If the situation involved the loss of a building, a second contingency plan would involve placing students at other schools in the community. Kevin Wolf will contact FCSN and Duane Koble will follow-up with the Fargo School District regarding this idea. Cindy Hutchin's contingency plan as presented by Duane Koble received unanimous consensus.

Greg Schmalz questioned procedures if the swine flu would become an issue in the community. Duane confirmed that Nativity would be an overflow facility for MeritCare's staff and patients and that the procedure is already in place in the event of a pandemic.

Nativity Anew II

Fr. Kevin thanked the Pastoral Council for guiding the discussion regarding the aging boiler. The exercise did accomplish the following:

- Prompted the architect to provide actual costs for a new heating system.
- Did move the project into design phase, for which the architect has been compensated.
- The fact that it would be a 20-year payback for the ground source system.
- Recognized the fact that currently we have no air exchange in our building, whereas the new heating system includes air exchange, which is not just a replacement, but a significant improvement to our current system. Therefore, to compare the new cost and estimated utility costs with current utility costs might provide a good argument to go with a ground source heat.
- Is heating the intake air with natural gas our only option?

- No matter what is done now or in the future, any work done will be according to any new building code requirements.

Parish Long Range Plan Status

Fr. Kevin reported that the plan is still at the Deanery level from the data gathered; and stated that nothing is needed to be done at the parish level.

Anniversary Celebrations

- **Parish's 50th** – Fr. Kevin reported that the committee had not met. Duane noted that the next step is for the committee to appoint a chairperson. The committee to date consists of Fr. Kevin, Duane Koble, Cindy Hutchins, and list of names that Kathy Bourdon has on file.
- **Fr. Jack Davis' 40th** – Fr. Gary reported that the committee had not met. The event is scheduled for June 14, 2009 with a Mass at Nativity and reception following at the Fargo Holiday Inn. Fr. Davis and his choir have been on tour in the U.S. since April 14th. They will be looking for host families when the choir arrives in Fargo.
- **Msgr. Allan Nilles' 60th** – Fr. Kevin reported that although the committee had not met, an early bird invitation had been mailed to key people to mark their calendar for this event on June 21, 2009. Evening Prayer will be held followed by a dinner reception at Nativity. The event will be noted in the Voice. Msgr. Nilles has provided many pictures for the event and Terri Dahl said a scrapbook would be compiled of memories collected from those who know Monsignor Nilles.
Fr. Kevin added that Monsignor Nilles is the longest ordained priest in the Diocese and was recognized at the Chrism Mass.

Other New Business

Duane Koble reported that Discernment Sunday tends to be rushed in the fall. Therefore, he asked that there be some discussion in the spring before the council breaks for the summer. Fr. Gary had reviewed the 2007 and 2008 notes and said that attendance had been an issue both years, but there are many people in the parish with gifts that are not being reached. Fr. Kevin added that Nativity is the only parish he knows that uses a discernment process; whereas, most parishes choose committee membership only through elections or Time & Talent sheets.

The current process was discussed and the following points were noted for consideration:

- Recruiting people to attend Discernment Sunday needs the most work. Suggestions included personal invitation and following up shortly after the Time & Talent sheets are completed.
- Duane asked for a group of 3-4 members to draw up a "Discernment Plan Timeline" and to work with the Parish Liturgical team to set a date. The following members volunteered to be on the Discernment Committee – Fr. Kevin, Duane Koble, Leon Senn, Greg Schmalz, Kevin Wolf and Fr. Gary. Leon Senn said he would e-mail the committee when they will hold their first meeting.

Pastor's Comments

Fr. Kevin provided his report by e-mail and commented on the following parts of his report.

- ◆ Has enjoyed the Adult Formation experiences; i.e. Pre-Lenten Mission, Eucharistic Adoration presentation, the Great Bible Timeline Adventure series.
- ◆ Attendance for reconciliation continues to increase; therefore, Fr. Kevin is considering adding

additional times. He also noted that the reconciliation rooms are not in an easy location for people to find, so this concern will be taken under advisement.

Associate Pastor's Report

Fr. Gary recognized Greg & Paula Schmalz for completing the training as a Shepherding Couple.

- ◆ Fall Festival on October 4th – Reported that at their first organizational meeting the decision was made to hold the same raffle as last year with tickets to be sold again for \$50. They are in the process of securing prizes and Karl Nesler made an early Fall Festival announcement at the past Sunday Masses.
- ◆ RCIA – 52 third graders received Confirmation and First Eucharist on April 26th; and six people were baptized at the Easter Vigil.
- ◆ Pastoral Ministry – This summer Fr. Gary reported that he would visit more of the elderly in the care facilities; and will be working with the youth on their service projects.

Stewardship Council Liaison Report

Mykal Nester reported that the parish's first quarter budget reflects a \$60,000 loss due to decreases in offertory, bequest & donation income, and investment income. The Care & Share fund is growing and a portion of the fund will be moved into an interest bearing account. A review was done of the terms and setup of the restricted funds kept at the Catholic Development Foundation; and it was determined that these funds are long term investments and should continue to be treated as such; therefore, no changes were made to the fund. Duane Koble will meet with Eide Bailly to determine how to record income or loss from the endowment fund account.

Director of Administration's Report

Duane Koble thanked all those who were involved with the flood effort, including the Nativity Staff. A journal article on "The reason for declining Mass attendance" was included in the council mailing from Duane for the members to read. He asked that this issue be placed on next month's meeting Agenda for discussion. Duane also highlighted the following from his report that was e-mailed prior to the meeting:

- Have had positive feedback regarding the Catholics Coming Home program. Holy Cross in West Fargo was a partner in the program. Costs for the program were offset by a \$250 grant.
- There was a circulating pump failure off the main boiler in March due to water in the old water heater not being emptied out and resulting in the bottom rusting out. Repairs were made to get the system back in operation.
- An annual fire inspection was completed in March for the 1970 part of the campus. Batteries were replaced in the Exit signs to meet code requirements. The 1960 building portion of the campus will be inspected later this spring.
- The snow removal company has fixed damage from snow removal this past winter.
- Twice a year the lighting in the worship space is replaced and Fritz Electric donated their time and labor to complete this task, which is always a challenge to complete. It was noted that the lighting needs to be adjusted on the crucifix and additional lighting be considered for the statue of Mary.
- God's Gift of Appeal goal for 2009 is \$118,000. 71% of the goal has been pledged and 69% collected to date.
- Duane's report included a list of budget conservation measures as an example of practicing good stewardship within the community. Some of those measures included programming

thermostats, using T-8 fluorescent bulbs, weather stripping outside doors, etc. He also emphasized recycling, reusing and reducing as the campus works on its journey of “going green”.

- Nativity received five computers from Bank of the West as a gift to a non-profit organization, and will be used as needed on the parish campus.
- A Benevolence Restricted Flood Fund has been established as reported by Mykal Nester, and the parish is in the process of identifying those who need assistance.
- The roof project has been finished as per the Nativity Anew II Building Project. The roof was declared leak-free after doing a test by flooding the roof. A 20-year warranty is in place and the bill will be paid upon receipt.
- At the last Stewardship Council meeting, a decision was made to research the formation of a Stewardship Committee for the benefit of the parish community.
- On April 4th, a medical benefit was held for Rod Stecher at Nativity to assist with expenses incurred for his cancer treatments.
- First Congregational Church hosted the Easter Party for a second year. Nativity assisted with food.
- Duane thanked the Parish and Liturgical Team and volunteers for their stewardship during Lent, Holy Week and Easter.
- A Time & Talent sheet was created for parishioners to sign up and help those affected by the flood.
- Leon Senn reported that the current tape drive is failing on the internal computer server and that he had met with Duane and Frank to discuss a new backup procedure. Separate internet connections to the church need to be done so that the church does not lose its connection when the school makes a change. Therefore, the recommendation is to move to a hosted backup system. Security issues are another concern, so a committee is being put together to review the various technology issues of the parish. If anyone is interested in being a part of this committee, please contact Leon Senn or Duane Koble. Besides computer knowledge, a level of expertise regarding computer technology would be helpful. Betty Hund suggested this need be mentioned in the bulletin.
- Stewardship Council Chair, Mike O’Leary is obtaining bids for the campus grounds, including weed control and lawn application. Four applications versus two for weed control would be the ultimate goal if there were sufficient funds to do so. The Knights of Columbus are assisting with the cost of the project.
- Duane provided a copy of the letter regarding the Knights of Columbus collaborating with Habitat for Humanity. A mailing will be sent to volunteer to assist with this project. A portion of the funds from the KC’s 2009 Calendar Raffle will be used towards this project.
- A flyer was included with Duane’s report for the All-Parish Walk-A-Thon on April 29th to raise money for the Heifer Project. Another flyer for Nativity’s 6th Annual Spring Salad Buffet on May 13th was also provided to the council. Proceeds from the salad buffet will be matched by grant money from Catholic Aid up to \$500.00 to support the Nativity Adult and Youth Faith Formation programs.

Terri Dahl noted that the Liturgical Commission commissioned Jim Lepine to make a new candleholder for the Easter Candle, as well as six new candles for the altar.

Committee & Commission Reports

Due to Lent and the flood fight, the following committees and commissions did not meet in April and therefore, had no report for the Parish Council:

- Buildings & Grounds Committee
- Deanery Representative
- FCSN
- Health Advisory Commission
- Liturgical Commission
- Social Justice Commission

Liaison Reports were provided from the following:

- **Parish Faith Life Commission** – Joe Miranowski reported that their discussion focused on welcoming new parishioners to Nativity, the registration and orientation process, and working on some new ideas that they hope to implement by August.

Joe also shared two thoughts from their meeting:

“Let’s laugh more this year.”

“It takes so little to make such a big difference.”

- **Staff Representative** – Abby Rheault asked the council to refer to her Staff Report dated 02/24/2009 regarding the mandate from the Diocese to help Catholic immigrants within our parish community. She asked for time at this meeting to review and discuss the 13 comments in this report. Discussion covered the following points:
 - Transportation should be available to any parishioner in need.
 - Issue of public transportation not being available on Saturday after 5:00 p.m. and not available on Sunday.
 - The insurance company does not accept 2-person vans for coverage.
 - Sr. Juliana, Dave Opsahl and Dale Craft have been active in this ministry; but are there other ministries within the church that could help with the issue of transportation? In addition, are there funds available to assist with this ministry?
 - Every parish is called on by the Diocese to identify those who are in need of transportation.
 - Could transportation be provided for one Mass instead of trying to accommodate all Masses?
 - Could the FCSN bus be utilized? However, a bus could be difficult for the elderly; and a person must be licensed to drive a bus. Could the church rent the bus from FCSN for one Mass?
 - Add this need for drivers on the Time & Talent sheet. But if using your own vehicle, must be aware of child restraint laws, etc.
 - Could this need be studied on a citywide basis? Could a neighborhood search be conducted for volunteer drivers?

Abby stated that there is no staff person available to study this transportation issue, to organize the list of those in need of transportation and a list of drivers, and scheduling. The parish needs to be alerted to this need.

Suggestion was made to consider using taxi services.

- Would a voucher system work for a taxi ride and the person pay a small stipend?
- Possibly use a voucher system throughout the Diocese.
- Does the Senior Ride Service run on Sundays? They charge a \$2.00 fee for those 60 or older.
- On the other hand, could someone donate a car and then immigrants could drive themselves?

Abby will share these suggestions with the staff and the taxi suggestion will be taken under advisement. Council members were asked to think about the transportation issue for the elderly and immigrants and bring any other ideas to the Parish Council meeting in May.

- **Youth Ministry** – Leon Senn reviewed Chenise Nesler’s report in her absence.
 - Youth groups have had their final meetings.
 - The Walk-A-Thon on April 29th will be held inside if it rains.
 - Summer church softball league teams are being organized.
 - The youth is excited for Vacation Bible School and a possible mission trip this summer.

Announcements

Chairman Leon Senn announced that the Pastoral Council would meet on May 26, 2009.

There being no further business, Chairman Leon Senn led the Council in closing prayer.
Meeting adjourned at 9:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Lang

Recording Secretary