

**Parish Council Meeting Minutes**  
**January 10, 2023**

**In attendance:** Joan Fulton, Geri Sicola, Mary Hennigan, Jim Casey, Catherine Mundy, Fr. Ray Chase, Mark Palmer, Aidan Helie, Lindsay Dierkes, Colleen McCahill, Peggy Shouse, Kate Volpe, Ray Heil

Absent: Craig Thornton, John Moore, Graham Yearley, Anne Freeburger, Denny McMullin

Meeting opened with a prayer.

Minutes from December were approved.

**Procedural requests:** Geri S. clarified the procedure for approving minutes: after initial edits and suggestions are made on the draft, final minutes can be approved by a majority via email.

**Pastor and Pastoral Associate**

Building repairs:

Regarding the historic board's request to seek a second estimate for louver repairs, Colleen spoke with our facilities and received feedback from other parishes' facilities that suggested this was not a good use of time. Therefore, we're moving ahead with the current company. Colleen added that in talking to facilities, an outside observer noticed we need a new roof. The tower is a niche project (seeking a second estimate goes outside of local boundaries and therefore increases cost) whereas the roof is a general contractor project. Capital Projects Manager of the Archdiocese Doug Johnson encouraged us to find other solutions before an entire roof project and to consider repairs and stopgap measures (which are already in place). Fr. Ray suggested there may be a change in this approach after the archdiocesan visit, and Geri added that noting the financial cost of constant repairs may also shift their current opinion.

Archdiocesan Updates:

Colleen and Ray attended an area meeting about the age of Confirmation. The meeting was a listening session; no decision was made. Conversations focused on fears and concerns regarding age, maturity, language, and readiness of the individual. All opinions, etc. were presented so that the archdiocese could make a decision. Lindsay asked what our personal policy is, to which Fr. Ray responded that the archdiocesan policy is more about grade level (9th = 13 or 14 years) but with flexibility. There are concerns about losing young people before they reach the age of confirmation. Colleen also commented on the concern that it has lost its sacramentality by becoming something you are graduated into rather than something to be lived into (like baptism). Currently about 5 students from our parish have begun the process of confirmation. Ray added (for consideration) that other Christian traditions offer the 3 Sacraments of Initiation at much younger ages. Fr. Ray reiterated that the session wasn't about making a statement or stating an opinion, but about sharing fears and hopes, such as the concern that Confirmation isn't supported once received. Catherine M. observed how we have

no youth program; Colleen said it is an aspect of the parish to which comprehensive attention needs to be paid in a critical way.

Seek the City:

The campaign is moving into the next phase centering on each parish's individual conversation.

Archdiocesan Visit:

Our Archdiocesan parish visit will take place on Tuesday, March 7. There will be a variety of people coming, including Bishop Lewondowski, and representatives from facilities, finance, mission, etc.

Proposed Schedule:

2-3:00 pm Liturgy celebrated by Bishop Bruce

3-4:15 Pastor meeting: Pastor only with Archdiocesan staff

Same time: Parish staff with significant volunteers and Archdiocesan staff

4:30-5:30 Parish, rectory, and property tour, guided by pastor or staff (principally Colleen, Tony, and Ray)

5:30-7 Working dinner with Fr. Ray, Parish staff, Parish Council, and significant volunteers, plus 8-10 invited parishioners. (Council will need to determine who those parishioners will be)

The working dinner is the pivotal part of the day, though the Archdiocese has provided no questions or agenda with which to prepare

When asked by Ray H. about his hopes for the outcome of this visit, Fr. Ray shared he would like the Archdiocese to see who we are as a parish. Geri said this underlines the need for a key point that we as a parish would like to get across to the visitors. She also questioned the need for a separate Seek the City conversation as this seems to be that same conversation; Fr. Ray agreed there is overlap, but that the visit is also about the Archdiocese learning about the parish itself.

Mary H. asked about who is invited to the Mass and suggested, along with Geri, how we can include the people who are invited to the dinner. She offered the solution of a prayer service open to all at the beginning of the visit, and then Mass for those invited to dinner.

Lindsay asked who counts as Council and whether committee members were included. Once Fr. Ray affirmed that it is our preference, Lindsay opined that having committee members seems best to fully know the parish. Peggy Shouse strongly supported this, and Mary H. added that it should also include corporators.

Jim clarified that dinner would be held in the basement.

Ray H. shared his hope that we can be proactive as partners in the event rather than it be an event that "happens" to us; the more we participate and make it our own, the less it feels "patriarchal". Fr. Ray reassured that he gets no sense of their being in control other than wanting to get a full scope of the community and listening and learning. Ray responded that he would just like to make sure we are not passive in the process since that is the kind of parish we are.

To that point, Colleen added that the liturgy should be representative of the parish—including music (some of whom are part of the parish staff anyway). Colleen confirmed that every parish or pastorate in the Seek the City will be participating in these visits, and Mary H. added that, considering how the Archdiocese handled discussions at the Seek the City listening sessions, they really are listening, and that it is a diverse group of parishes.

Mark P. suggested we submit names to Colleen and Ray for consideration and Geri wondered if there were criteria we should consider. Mary asked that we be cognizant of including representatives of the 6 o'clock liturgy. Jim queried whether the committee members count as the 8 additional invites; Fr. Ray responded in the negative. After tallying Council members at 36 (committee chairs, corporators, parish staff, plus 8-10 more parishioners), Mark P. raised the concern that more people might affect the "working" portion of a dinner. Geri surmised that 8 small tables would be necessary, with one Archdiocesan guest per table.

Fr. Ray said he'll gain clarification from the Archdiocese about how many people are anticipated by both sides. Geri asked that he also find out whether the working tables will be about dialogue with guests or more for their observation (which would be awkward). Once Fr. Ray gets more information, we can put names forward for invited guests.

### **Committee Updates**

Social Action: Ray H. shared that the Archdiocese has their annual social ministry convocation on Saturday, February 25, from 9-3 at Mercy High School. He hopes more people might be interested in attending. Fr. Ray offered to share the agenda for the day when we receive it. Colleen noted that Fr. Ray will be doing a presentation with Catholic Charities.

Church Reform: Jim Casey shared that an emergency meeting was considered in correlation to the Attorney General's report on the investigation of child abuse in the Archdiocese, but they've decided to wait until its actual release.

Education & Enrichment: They are meeting next week.

Liturgy: They are meeting in February.

Geri set a task for herself of sending out personal messages to committee chairs about regular reports.

### **Finding Our Why**

Mary H. shared that the new vision statement was published and put on the website. Mary hopes people will read the background paper, too. A report/debrief will be provided next month about the last meeting with GLP.

Geri re-introduced the idea of a retreat and council agreed on a full day retreat on Saturday, March 4. Catherine M. suggested a venue outside parish grounds. Agenda items include Phase 3 (when and how it gets moving; our understanding of consensus; who we are as a council; and which committees are invited to council) and preparing for the archdiocesan visit. Mary suggested that consensus and committees might come naturally from our self-understanding and Phase 3. Lindsay thinks a revisit to the constitution and what's not true anymore is more

practical than open-ended topics. Fr. Ray agreed that updating the constitution was something considered with the last parish council, too, and is much needed.

Ray H. highlighted the challenge facing St. V.'s is getting more people to come and that meeting that challenge should be a topic of the retreat. Peggy S. reminded how Amber Hendricks was leading council to extensively revise or rewrite the constitution (as Ray said) but got waylaid by synodal process. Colleen seconded Lindsay's point of making very directed, practical agenda items.

Geri's agenda summary:

- Look at constitution (what's true and not true)
- Who we are as council
- Decision about moving forward with Phase 3
- Archdiocesan visit

Mary H. stated the first two items are one and the same.

Mary H., Catherine M., Geri, Lindsay, and Joan agree to plan the retreat.

### **Parishioner Feedback**

When will coffee klatch be back in person? This will be addressed at next meeting

Further concerns about music, again: Geri clarified that one concern was choir was not lively enough. Peggy S. shared the observation that familiar hymns aren't being used and that some of the favorites are not utilized. Geri was unsure how choices for music are being made and if Sherry knows about the large binders of music that choir members have. Mark added his concern that there should be consensus/process to how music is chosen to which Jim replied that there is a process—songs follow the readings—and Sherry chooses songs with Peggy Meyer. Jim added that we may hear more Christian music that is not Catholic based (which we've done before). Fr. Ray and Colleen do want to meet regularly with Sherry. Geri suggested we keep this topic open and brainstorm how we can get Sherry more in sync with the parish's musical sensibilities.

### **New Business**

Livestreaming: Colleen is going to stop being the person doing the livestream by the end of March. A replacement is needed. We have not gone global, though the livestream does have value: both the synodal and FOW processes have shown there is a small but steady group who values it. Livestream visitors do occur, and there is a trickle of subscribers (though to what purpose unknown). Special occasion liturgies matter to far away parishioners or family members. To Colleen's perspective, livestream will continue to be necessary. She is not sure about the data to support that Is reduces the number of people in the actual church. She would like to see what changes may need to be made before finding a replacement and will be reaching out to a small group to determine those changes. A replacement may be a small cadre of volunteers.

Meeting closed with the Our Father.

