

St. John the Evangelist Parish Council Minutes 2/23/10

The St. John the Evangelist Parish Council met on February 23, 2010, in attendance were Fr. Tom Powers, Sr. Evelyn Ronan, and members Norm Boucher, Maryellen Denning, Mimi Eldridge, Pat Feige, Mary Gotgart, Mike Holownia, Susan Jablonski, Bob Kelliher, Julie Pernokas, Mike Racette, John Salvati, and Jim Stokes. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM.

“Parish Conference”

Using the Parish council as a “testing ground”, Fr. Powers circulated the draft of questions and a description of the format to be used in the Parish conference scheduled for March 14, 2010.

The theme for the conference will be “Disciples on a New Road” taking its focus from Luke’s Road to Emmaus. The keynote address will be delivered by Fr. David Couturier, the Archdiocesan Director of Pastoral Planning.

Following the keynote the attendees will be separated into small discussion groups of 10 to 12 people. Each group will have an assigned facilitator, who will have been provided with discussion topics and questions relating to the topics.

A discussion ensued during which thoughts were offered and additional questions posed.

- Struck by a number of thoughts driven by the priest shortage from the earlier breakfast meeting, among them where will the authority come from, the meaning.
- As people transition into new roles there will necessarily be a long preparation process, filling the vacuum will take a long time.
- How will people respond to what another has to say
- Will there be a background explanation for those who have yet to understand the issue
- Marketing will require everyone’s help, all committees and boards will be enlisted, intergenerational participation is crucial
- This is a unique opportunity, an invitation to participate in the evolution of the Church

Planning Group Update

Council President Mike Racette, the PC’s Liaison with the Parish Planning Group, reported on a discussion with PPG member Mike Nilles, who noted that the PPG, had expanded by adding 4 members and now is a 10 member group.

Members have met with Fr. Couturier, as well as with groups from other parishes adding this to their preparation for the Conference; the members generally have their hands full.

Holy Week Schedule

Given that our next meeting is just prior to Holy week Fr. Powers introduced the schedule for the week and posed the question, what thoughts do the planned events provoke?

The week's events were reviewed from Palm Sunday through Easter.

- Palm Sunday will include a passion play
- Monday will have the annual joint reconciliation event. This year's being held at St. John's. The event will continue despite the archdiocesan focus on reconciliation this lent and the resulting every Wednesday evening availability for reconciliation
- Wednesday the church will be open
- Thursday has many focal points including the annual washing of the feet marking the event in the Gospel of John, which emphasizes a service component. The washing is called the mandatum. Thoughts were offered on how to shape the group of parishioners participating, opening it up to all possibilities and ministries and ages, possibly using the Conference as a way. The goal is to end up with a cross section of the parish.
- Friday there will be no mass. At noon there will be the carrying of the cross with people gathering at 12:00 at the church. At 3:00 the formal Stations of the Cross will take place. At 7:30 there will be a formal liturgy with Communion distributed from what was left from the Holy Thursday service, given that no mass will have occurred.
- Saturday will be the Easter Vigil Service that is comprised of 4 parts lighting the Easter Candle as a reminder of our Baptism, and the receiving into the Church those not baptized and those baptized in another Christian denomination.
- Easter Sunday will have 2 masses at 11:00, which will once again raise the seating issue which really means encouraging people to make room and volunteer their assistance.

Fr. Powers suggested that thoughts would be helpful, particularly if anyone had seen something that was done somewhere else that had been moving.

Parish Photo Book

Mimi and Pat presented the fruits of their labors and circulated a detailed comparative analysis of the two Providers Olan Mills and Lifetouch. While the two were comparable in many respects Olan Mills for reasons of cost, the number of activity pages the flexibility of group photos, sign up process, and layout was the recommendation.

Suggestions were offered among them, would there be any sharing in after market revenue, what was the security beyond password protection regarding the on line directory, etc.

Mimi and Pat were commended for the great job done.

Energy Audit, Inventory and Parish Technology Update

The Finance Council is continuing to pursue a recycling contractor, particularly one that services other parishes. As a Finance Council aside to this discussion, it was noted the Haiti earthquake collection officially amounted to \$36-\$37,000.

In our broader use of energy, our main concern is with the church's HVAC system and its complexity. A few year's ago there was a needed 20,000 investment. Given the success of the grand annual collection of this year, as we approach next year the goal of not deferring necessary maintenance will be a priority and the HVAC system will top that list.

Regarding technology, the parish has established a Twitter account, which number will be placed in an upcoming bulletin. Fr. Powers incisively described the ins and outs of Twitter to the many Luddites around the table, noting that we will all be tested via the "Tweeting" of the 3/14 conference!

Eyes and Ears

This regular segment of the meeting is a time in which any member is encouraged to raise any issues or comments that we have heard from the parish at large. Fr. Powers changed the format by asking one side of the table to address the most significant conversation or comment or observations recently heard or felt by each of us regarding the parish.

The commentary included the energy observed at a recent St. Paul's youth event. The observation led to a discussion of youth leadership, the challenges faced in finding a youth minister, the seeming cyclical nature of a youth ministry. Fr. Powers made note that a parishioner has given a donation to enhance the musical dimension of confirmation class, which could tie into the search for a youth minister. While a full

time youth minister is very hard to find, he suggested that the parish could pursue a part time position.

Another observation focused on how we might enhance our support form healing. It was noted that critical to this would be breaking down the glorious isolation within which we all live and trying to figure out how to communicate what we know about who might be suffering within the parish in an appropriate manner and then be better able to offer an appropriate response. In any event we will continue do what we can within such limitations.

Further discussion focused upon the generally pleased attitude of parishioners toward St John's existing simultaneously with a more attenuated feeling that persists toward the archdiocese and the wider church. This will present a real challenge in light of the changes on the horizon.

Maryellen pointed out her sense of happiness at hearing Pope Benedict's response to the Irish Bishops. It was noted that with the scandal now in full bloom in Europe more serious attention will be paid, with a lot riding on the forthcoming pastoral letter to be sent to the Church in Ireland

Adjournment

With thanks to all the meeting adjourned at 9:11 PM