

**St. John the Evangelist
Parish Pastoral Council
Meeting Minutes
September 18, 2007**

Attendees:

Fr. Tom Powers
Steve Ulian
Kathi Aldridge

Sister Evelyn Ronan
Jane McDaid Murphy
Sally Miller

Ed McCourt
Joe Tierney
Peg Creonte

- 1. Opening Prayer and Reflection**
- 2. Review and accept minutes from May '07 meeting**
- 3. RENEW Program – Fr. Tom**

Fr. Tom gave a high level introductory description of the RENEW program. The program has been in existence for decades, and encourages parishioners to participate in difference types of sessions for reflection and spiritual renewal. It aims to involve all parishioners interested, and provides a framework for drawing participants into deeper relationships with Christ. Community building and parishioner networking are natural outgrowths of the program. The archbishop is encouraging parish participation, though it is optional for all parishes.

The program is carried out and led by parishioners, not by parish staff. There is a structured training program for the volunteer leaders. The program is flexible; parishes can structure the program as it best fits within their parish.

There was discussion around how this would either integrate with or conflict with other active programs in the parish, and the challenge of getting leaders given the time commitment required.

This program will be discussed further in future meetings.

4. Informational Update

Parish Census – Peg Creonte

We received 558 responses (approximately 1/3 of parish) to the parish census, which is consistent with the response received with other mailings. All data was entered over the summer by Roz.

Data included:

- major cleanup of envelopes; ~120 removed from list; ~30 added
- significant increase in new/updated email addresses

- 45% either preferred email communication or were indifferent between USPS and email; comments included "whatever is less expensive to the parish"
- Significant data cleanup; Roz feels that we are at a very good point with very few duplicates (<10) and very clean address data

Approximately 6 "remove us from your files" requests, all due to moving, etc; no issues noted with reaching out via the census

Next step: Post a notice in the bulletin to encourage those who have not yet responded to do so.

Parish Picnic – Steve Ulian

The Parish Picnic was once again a great success. Steve Ulian and his group of volunteers ran a wonderful event, with participation that exceeded the expected 250 parishioners.

Fr. Tom suggested that next year we could have a “Newcomers Table” to have a gathering spot for those who are new to the parish and don’t know other attendees.

Overall, a “wonderful spirit” as noted by Sr. Evelyn, and a great community-building event.

5. Diocesan Planning Report – Sr. Evelyn

“In January 2006, Cardinal Sean O’Malley identified three areas of pastoral life that he considered particularly challenging for the archdiocese today – Faith Formation, Marriage, and Pastoral Planning. He appointed a committee to study each area and charged each committee with bringing its findings and recommendations to him and to the Presbyteral and Archdiocesan Pastoral Councils.”
taken directly from the Pastoral Planning Committee Report, Spring 2007

Sr. Evelyn provided copies of the Pastoral Planning Report and discussed its findings. A major point within the report is that within the next seven year, the number of active parish priests is forecast to drop significantly. Vicarates (with approximately 15 parishes within each) are projected to have just 10-12 active priests available. The archdiocese needs a comprehensive plan to address this in a proactive manner.

There was general discussion around the greater involvement of lay people in the business of the parish as a trend that is growing throughout the country. Once the council has had a chance to review the report, this topic will be put on the agenda for a future meeting.

6. Nominations for PPC – Fr. Tom

Nominations are due by month-end. PPC members will assist in calling those who have been nominated to ensure that they would be willing to serve on the council and to answer any questions. Names will be drawn on Oct. 14; new members will attend the October meeting.

7. Lower Falls development – Fr. Tom

The developer of the Lower Falls project has requested a meeting with Fr. Tom to discuss plans. Joe Tierney volunteered to attend the meeting with Fr. Tom.

8. Next meeting: October 16, 2007.