

ST. MARY'S CHURCH
PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES
NOVEMBER 20, 2008

The meeting was called to order by President, Roseanne DeFrancisco at 6:37PM.

The following members were in attendance: Father Jay, Tina Bidic, Theresa Bifulco, Roseanne DeFrancisco, Kathie Downie, Rich Falk, Joan Frith, Deacon Chris Nichols, George Olivio and Joe Webb.

Opening prayer: Roseanne DeFrancisco

A correction was made to the October minutes. Deacon Chris Nichols reported for Youth Group, not Joe Webb as was written. A motion was then made by Joe Webb to approve the October 2008 minutes with this correction. It was seconded by Joan Frith. The corrected minutes were approved.

OLD BUSINESS:

Our Christmas ornaments should arrive by November 21st. Joan Frith, Roseanne DeFrancisco and Kathie Downie all volunteered to help sell them after the weekend Masses.

NEW BUSINESS:

There will be a Blood Dive on January 29, 2009. We will be having sign-ups for donors the weekend of January 17 & 18.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Social: Lunch with Santa will be held on Saturday, December 6th from Noon – 3PM. Kristen Weiss will chair this event for us. It was mentioned that we could possibly sell ornaments at that time.

Social Concerns: Our annual coat drive ended on November 17th. The food and coats collected were then given to Catholic Social Services for distribution. Our food drive will continue until December 15th. Our Giving Trees will be in place on Sunday, November 30th. Thanks to Joe Webb and his 6th grade CCD class for making the ornaments for the trees. Gifts can be dropped off in church until December 15th.

Vocations: No report

Youth: Turnout at the meetings has remained light. Rich Falk will be re-joining the Youth Group in December. It was suggested that we should think about consolidating youth groups with our merging parishes. This suggestion should be brought to the attention of our core group members.

Evangelization/Ecumenical: Servants of the Church will be meeting on Monday, December 1st. the "Called and Gifted" Program is underway.

Fund Raising: Our Spaghetti Dinner realized a profit of \$6,224.73. George Olivio reported that we dealt with Shop Rite this year instead of Eatmor Market, and that everything worked out great. They gave us a 10% discount on the entire bill. They also sold us the cans of crushed tomatoes at cost. The TV Raffle is set for Sunday, December 14th at 11AM.

Liturgical: The Liturgy Committee will be meeting on Tuesday, December 2nd at 7PM. Tina Bidic reported that she had been contacted by a representative of Dutch Neck Village regarding their annual Walk of Lights. The choirs from the local churches have been invited to sing during this yearly event. They would be expected to perform for one hour. Due to various circumstances, our choir declined at this time.

Maintenance: A faulty sensor in the boiler at church has been replaced. A support piece in one of the front pews has cracked and needs to be replaced. It is not hazardous, but it needs to be repaired. George Olivio asked to have Mike Proso, our maintenance man, check on all of the kneelers.

Publicity: Beth Takacs has recently had surgery on her shoulder, so a calendar for December is questionable.

Religious Education: No report

COMMENTS FROM FATHER:

Our core group met on November 18th, but we are not privy to what transpired at that meeting. Father Jay will be attending the meeting after next. Father Ariel Hernandez met with Father Jay to give him a “run-down” of what is happening with the merger. He told Father Jay that weekend Masses at St. Teresa’s, Immaculate Conception and St. Michael’s will be changing beginning January 1st. St. Teresa’s will have a 5PM Mass on Saturday and a 10:30AM Mass on Sunday. Immaculate Conception will not have a Saturday evening Mass; instead they will have two Masses in English on Sunday – 7:30 & 9AM. They will also have two Spanish Masses on Sunday at 12:30PM and 7PM. St. Michael’s will have only one Mass on the weekends – 9AM on Sunday. There will only be one Midnight Mass for Christmas and it will be held at St. Teresa’s. The RCIA programs, as well as the Altar & Rosary Society and Sodality of these three parishes have been combined. Father Jay does not know if the Parish Councils of the other three parishes were consulted with all of these changes or not. The priests’ residences will most likely be either at St. Mary’s or Immaculate Conception. Father Ariel said he has no objection to Father Jay residing at St. Mary’s until his retirement and possibly beyond that if it is financially feasible. Father Ariel asked Father Jay about the possibility of St. Mary’s dropping its 8AM Mass and changing the Saturday Mass to 4PM. Father Jay said he would bring it up at our meeting for Parish Council’s approval. Concern was immediately expressed by several of the Council members. The first concern was why we need to make these changes now, when all of the priests are still in place. Was this a core group suggestion or Diocesan suggestion? Is it being done due to energy conservation? How will the collections be handled? Is it being implemented due to light Mass attendance? (St. Mary’s Masses are all very well attended). Our understanding of a primary worship site is that the weekend Masses were not to change. Are we being asked to eliminate a Mass out of fairness to the other parishes? How does eliminating Masses bring all of us together? The feeling of Parish Council is that we are not comfortable with this change right now. We need to be informed as to where we are going and what is expected of us. It appears to be change just for change sake. Until the merger is complete, we are all still separate parishes. We would like to have one of the co-conveners come to a Parish Council meeting to address these issues. Our “comfort level” might increase if we were to have more contact with one of the conveners.

The parish council members of the four combining parishes will be invited to a future meeting with the co-conveners. Each council member is being asked to fill out a questionnaire which will be brought to that meeting. If a member cannot physically attend, they must make arrangements to have the questionnaire submitted.

Father Jay, Marilyn Szalay and Kathie Downie also had to answer a series of questions dealing with the make up of our parish ministries and events. A financial profile of each parish must be made available for the next core group meeting.

We are making progress with our Commemorative Book/DVD. Six interviews have been completed. Rich Falk asked if the transcripts from these interviews will be included in the book version. He also stated that the number of pages, as well as color vs. black and white copy will factor in when determining the cost. Rich has been invited to the next meeting, which will be held in January.

Closing prayer was led by Father Jay, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:34PM.

Next meeting – Thursday, January 15; 6:30PM in the rectory.