

## **Education Commission:** minutes from the May 14, 2014 meeting:

Present: Peggy Casing, Janet Gerhard, Denis Naeger, Jennifer Neill, Connor Payne, Suzie Phillips, Fr. Stan Ulman and Tom Wietchy.

Absent: none

### Agenda

1. Movie night for teens/families (Denis)
2. Review of plan for high school formation program (Suzie)
3. Communities of Salt and Light (from Sr. Grace)
4. New members and goals for next year.

## REPORTS

At this point, no Preschool report has been submitted

### MOVIE NIGHT

Denis will offer a six-week series of movies on Thursday nights (East Overflow), from 6:30-8:00. Featuring videos from “Spiritual Cinema Circle” the discussion will be adapted to the demographic of the group. There won’t be any charge for the event, and families, singles, etc., will be encouraged to bring dinner/snacks as they see fit. (Feast and Flick) This event will be best for older kids, but families with young children won’t be turned away. Pre-registration will not be mandatory, but appreciated. Denis is offering this as a generous gift to the parish (no stipend)

### HIGH SCHOOL

To the best of our knowledge, Ss. Cyril & Methodius Church is the only place where a structured, textbook based high school program is being offered. Connor offered feedback from a young adult perspective. He doesn’t feel that teens would be receptive to a textbook based program. He appreciated the formation he received through SMYG, calling the structure of SMYG, phenomenal.” He feels that it prepared him for the panel discussions, liturgy participation, and other spiritual opportunities that he has participated in at Grand Valley State University. The prayer, scripture and action-based opportunities were key to its success (the SMYG program).

Conversation turned to how we reach the 70% of teens that aren’t coming, how we talk to teens about the “hot” topics, and a question centering around (and asking Connor), “What do teens want to know about?” He suggests having professionals come in to talk to teens about how the integrate faith into their work, family, and social lives. It was suggested that a survey (possibly through “Survey Monkey” might allow students to respond anonymously, thus more honestly, about the issues that concern them.

It was encouraged that we support and “push” the Middle School Program (MSP), SMYG, and Agape for college students, and other young adults living in the area.

### SALT AND LIGHT

Regarding structures... discussion came up (Denis) regarding SMOTH “avoiding” health care benefit expenses by cutting hours for staff members. This is a structural injustice. Peggy will check with Chris to find out more information. [later insertion: No hours were “cut.” Part-time employees are being offered the opportunity to opt-in for health care for the first time in SMOTH history, and hours are simply being held to their previously agreed upon levels.]

In our Prayers of the Faithful, we haven't made it a regular practice to pray for those that are divorced and separated, LGBT, etc.

Our priests should talk about these topics as part of their homilies, articles, etc.

We should be mentoring youth regarding the importance of social issues.

There is a struggle between politics and religion. Clarification is needed on the role of the Church.

It was strongly suggested that we discuss the controversial topics, removing the "veil of silence." There should be respect for those of differing opinions, allowing opportunities to hear the other's perspective.

Pertaining to question #4: We need to provide an awareness of the needs of those in our area, and opportunities for service and interaction that will raise that awareness. A question was asked: "How do we get assistance to those that really need the assistance?" Also, "Does not giving health benefits "fit" in a community that is striving to work for justice?"

#### NEW MEMBERS

There wasn't enough time to address this topic.

Respectfully Submitted,

Peggy Casing