

St. Mary of the Hills Parish Pastoral Council

February 18, 2017

St. Mary of the Hills: Live, Learn, Serve

Present: George Phillips, Jay Fedewa, Susie Phillips, Bill Hill, John Hundiak, Hugh Buchanon, Clem Valot, Carol Gunther, Julie Tyszka, Cheryl Garneau, Sam Guerra, Meghan Schuler, John Schuler, Father Stan, Denise Kay

OPENING PRAYER (George Phillips)

PRESIDENT'S THOUGHTS (George Phillips)

George talked about the need for reflection and constant improvement as a parish. He related several stories that have come to his attention lately: stories of good things we as a parish are doing, of how some newcomers find us welcoming, and how others attend and leave. In the commitment to excellence, we should examine what we have done in the past, and how we have changed. There are trends in attendance, retention of the youth, and the ongoing difficulty of engaging new volunteers that we need to address. The point is: we should not settle for acceptance. If we settle, that is rationalization for decline. Do we want St. Mary's to be the spiritual home for the two square miles around us? If so, we need to look at continuous improvement, and getting new volunteers by winning people's hearts.

OLD BUSINESS

MINUTES

January meeting minutes were approved as written.

PARISH COUNCIL 'MEET AND GREET' AFTER MASSES

George thanked everyone for supporting the "meet and greet" activities. There has been tremendous support from multiple volunteers, and the participation has continued to grow. We have been able to hand out Parish Council surveys, Stewardship surveys, the one-pagers, and had several parishioners express interest in becoming new volunteers. Well done!

TOP TWO STRATEGIC CONCERNS

1.) “We have parishioners with a lot to offer who aren’t as involved as they should be”

Proposal: Create three leadership positions within each commission/committee to be a “trustee” or “Core member” in order to provide continuity and leadership within the commission, to the parish council, and to help recruit new members.

Discussion: We have had good discussion the last several months. George updated the one-page role definition with the comments from last time. George recommended that we roll this out on a trial basis. This year, 2016-17, could count as “year-one.” George and Father Stan clarified that after their term, the core members could still remain on the commission. Bill Hill also asked that the language in the role definition be changed from Parish Council would “approve” to Parish Council would “welcome and acknowledge” the new core members.

Status: With the two changes above, the Core Member role was approved by the Parish Council.

2.) “We let most aspects of our culture “evolve” rather than deliberately creating a parish culture to support our vision.”

Jay Fedewa played some short videos from the three days of the Synod. These videos are available on YouTube through the AOD website. Father Stan also summarized that the Synod was a hopeful and joyful gathering, and everyone brought up multiple issues to support evangelization. It was a remarkable event – with over 400 people gathering, discussing and worshipping together. We are still expecting a letter from the Archbishop on Pentecost, but there has been intermediate information summarized by the Archbishop as well. Also, the February 6 Vicariate Council meeting was well attended by the Synod representatives from each member parish, and the synod attendees expressed gratitude for the leadership of the Archbishop, and excitement about the great discussion and common themes that emerged from the Synod discussions.

NEW BUSINESS

ROADBLOCKS FOR JANUARY CHAPEL LEADER (WORSHIP)

Mary Pat Soisson covered the Worship Commission “Deep Dive” during the chapel talk. Worship has the job of supporting weekly mass and other periodic events that take place through the year. They have the need for multiple pockets of volunteers, such as Altar Servers, readers, Eucharistic ministers, prayer writers, etc. See the “Deep Dive” presentation from the Worship Commission. Worship also did a beautiful job leading the Chapel prayer service with music, scripture, and silent prayer.

INTERIM COMMISSION/COMMITTEE GOALS FOR 2017

George reminded the commissions of the goals:

(1.) The “1 Pagers” of what the commission is about, for recruitment, adding two new members to each Commission. These “1 Pagers” are being distributed at the monthly meet-and-greet after mass, and the information is getting out to parishioners, and “getting legs.”

(2.) For this month, George has asked each commission to devote some of their meeting time on February 18 to these 10 ideas, and identify one or more that they can adopt.

- Evangelization concentrated their discussion on #7 “Prayer Partner Ministry” during mass – of reaching out to people we see at mass and praying for each other’s needs. George gave an example of this contact happening recently by a parishioner asking about a person who sits nearby every week, and discovering that there was a definite health need there.
- Worship talked about the ideas extensively. One way to provide prayer after mass would be the 15-minute prayer service after weekend masses in the chapel – perhaps with a theme, as was done recently for “addiction.” The vision would be for people to get used to this idea, and know that they can join and prayer is available. There would be a need for a coordinator after all the masses. This kind of hospitality would be a real DNA changer. And there would be a lot of cross-over between multiple groups: ushers, evangelization, youth groups, and family groups doing this ministry together. We don’t want people walking away thinking “gee, they are really cold.”
- Fellowship talked about the benefit of a training session about hospitality for all volunteers: to get to the DNA, we need to flow this down to all. One suggestion would be to have this training periodically, about the importance of being friendly and warm, and providing a genuine greeting to all who attend mass. We need to educate all the pockets of volunteers. It is little things that can make a big impact, such as opening a door, body language of the volunteers at the desk.

RELIGIOUS VOCATIONS SUPPORT PROJECT/EVENT (Susie Phillips/ Sam Guerra)

A plan for supporting religious vocations was discussed at the Education Commission meeting and reported on by Sam and Susie. This should not be a one-time event. It should be a multi-faceted information and event program. It should include making parishioners aware of programs from the AOD, such as “discernment weekends,” and it should include prayer support, such as an upcoming “15 minute prayer service” after mass. We could bring back the vocations chalice. We should not forget religious vocations beside the priesthood, including religious sisters and brothers, and the lay ecclesial ministry. We should also include those discerning at an older age. We could use an upcoming coffee and doughnuts to show a video or distribute literature. It was also suggested that we request help from our seminarian, Tom Merlo. A poll of the SMYG attendees in the past showed that they were not interested in attending a special vocations event, but did like Q and A with Father Stan, so a future visit for Q and A with one or more priests and other religious might be fruitful. The Education Commission can provide a more detailed update in March.

SMOTH LENTEN PREPARATION/PROGRAM (Father Stan)

Father Stan said the theme is a “40 day challenge,” with a weekly reading for each week of Lent. The readings will tie into the RCIA program, and have a weekly theme. There will be a specific “ask” on each Sunday – asking parishioners to identify something, name something, and do something. There will also be a challenge related to Christian Service, this year supporting LifeSpan, and Christian Service will be highlighting life from pre-birth to natural death, and the circumstances where we can advocate for life: the unborn, prisoners, immigrants, euthanasia, etc. We are also promoting Matthew Kelly’s Dynamic Catholic program, “Best Lent Ever.” It is in the bulletin and website, and Meghan will add to Facebook and make sure it is available thru the parish app.

COMMISSION REPORTS

Christian Service	Bill Hill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Lent, CS is supporting Right to Life/ Life span. • There is a request for a prayer service after a Sunday mass with the theme of supporting LifeSpan. • There is also a plan for a Lenten discussion after mass around Pope John Paul’s encyclical on human life. • February 25 dinner is coming up with 23 people scheduled to discuss Christian Service and have dialogue between parishioners on the subject of Christian Service. • There was also discussion about bringing funeral lunches back. Bev Schuler is re-contacting the previous teams and holding a meeting to re-energize the ministry. Using new avenues of communication, such as text and email may help energize since missed phone calls was one of the roadblocks in the past.
Education	Sam Guerra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education discussed the Education one-pager, which Sam is finalizing. • Religious Education reported that they were going to try shorter Bible Study programs instead of a long one (the example was a 6-week study vs. current 24 week program), to encourage and enable people to join. • Agape has their Mass and Bash on March 11, and is encouraging more St. Mary’s attendance. Theology-on-Tap has been moved to Saint John Fisher. Coney’s and Conversation is ongoing. Couples ministry is ongoing, and “Fowling” event is planned March 26. Spring Retreat is at St. John of the Cross in March as well. They are looking at coordinating with SMYG on some future events. • Social Media update: have 112 Followers on Twitter.
Evangelization	George Phillips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ChristLife is in the “Following Christ” module with the retreat here on February 25. Sharing Christ will start after a short break, and run through May. • NightFever is scheduled for June 28, the night of the Rochester Hills Fireworks. A lot of volunteers are needed: greeting people on the street, at the door of the church, and those who accompany the visitors to the altar to light a candle. • Also on June 28, we will have the SPSE booth at Borden Park. Volunteers are also needed. Jay noted that last year, it was gratifying how many people were happy to see the Catholic Church represented. • We are planning to have a St. Paul Street Evangelization table at the next meet-and-greet and give information about the next Basic Evangelization Training, which will be taking place on April 8 at St. Collette’s in Livonia. • Link to register for St. Paul Street Evangelization Training, April 8: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScOcmYdbecCvy5ileEdnlR0vfTBTkXjJR2YSJyazEkVXIixRA/viewform
Fellowship	John Schuler	<p>Euchre party will take place on March 18, organized by Marlene DeBrosse. Cost is \$10 for food and fun. Sign-up is at the coffee bar to help with planning, but registration is not required.</p>
Finance	Donna Kopinski	<p>Did not meet. Their meeting is planned for the week of February 20. Commissions should send their budget proposals to Arnie soon.</p>

HFRS	Cheryl Garneau	<p>Recent fundraiser with auction was successful. There was also good fellowship for those affiliated with the school.</p> <p>The January 22 Open House was successful as well. Cheryl thanked St. Mary's for their support. 48 families visited that day, with 23 being first-time visitors, and information was gathered in the new electronic registration system. The number one source in getting the word out to prospective families is the parish bulletin. There are already 80 students registered for Kindergarten and other re-enrollment is starting. Enrollment continues to be strong.</p>
Pontiac Area Vicariate	Susie Phillips/ Hugh Buchanan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the February council meeting, synod representatives from the member parishes were also invited. Attendance was about 25 people: council representatives, synod members, and pastors. The enthusiasm for the synod, gratitude to the Archbishop, and anticipation for Pentecost was very great. • We also had a guest speaker: Doris Brandt, from Guest House, an addiction treatment center for Catholic Clergy. • Pete Keating from CCRT thanked all of the parishes for their support this past year – particularly the collections from the “Giving Tree” and other programs. • Father Kean talked about the recent Right to Life March in Washington, and the large attendance this year. John Hundiak noted that the march has gotten so big that the parade route was made longer to accommodate the marchers. • Father Kean has also prepared a preliminary vicariate budget and will be sending it out to the pastors. • Kim Boismier noted that Agape will be transferring to volunteer leadership, and Agape is making preparations for the next phase.
Seniors	Julie Tyszka	<p>Seniors had a meeting with a representative from American House. On March 8, they will tour the Piquette Avenue Ford plant with lunch after.</p>
Stewardship	Carol Gunther	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carol Gunther, Sister Grace and Marlene DeBrosse attended the Hospitality conference in November. • Carol wanted to emphasize that if a group needs a specific skill set in a new volunteer need, they can ask Laura Corrion to parse the survey results. • Stewardship will also be looking into quarterly new-members dinners, and will be looking for support from other groups in various ways, including speakers at the new member dinners. There was also discussion about a future offertory (financial giving) program. • Clem also explained that the volunteer skills survey is available on the website, so it can be filled out there if anyone has not already done so.
Worship	Hugh Buchanan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worship discussed the Hospitality initiatives (see above). Worship offered to become the home for this ministry. • Hugh also talked with Matt O about the upcoming Youth Mass in April. Some positions are filled, but there is a need for Eucharistic Ministers. • George asked that someone give Matt a heads-up that the chapel leader and deep-dive group for next month is Youth.
Youth	Matt Ongcapin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The plans for the Youth Mass are ongoing. • George also complimented Matt and his family for their musical performance at the recent Chili Cook-off.

CLOSING PRAYER (Father Stan)

COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Meeting minutes are due within **one week** from the meeting, please email: Jay Fedewa
jfedewa0467@wowway.com

REMAINING MEETINGS

SMOTH Parish Council Meetings	Parish Council Prayer Leader and “Deep Dive” area for the Chapel Opening Prayer
Mar. 18	Youth
Apr. 22	Christian Service
May. 20	Staff
Jun. 17	Finance

Group	Chairperson/Leader	Secretary	Representative to Parish Council
Christian Service	Bill Hill	TBD	Bill Hill/ Cheryl Bida alternate
Education	Sam Guerra	Tom Wietchy	Sam Guerra
Evangelization	George Phillips	Susie Phillips	George Phillips
Fellowship		Loretta	John Schuler
Finance	Donna Kopinski		Donna Kopinski
HFRS	Cheryl Garneau	NA	Cheryl Garneau
Pontiac Area Vicariate	Hugh Buchanan and Susie Phillips	NA	Susie Phillips
Seniors			Michaeleen Dolinski (Alternate: Julie Tyszka)
Stewardship	Carol Gunther		Jim Armistead (Carol Gunther, alternate)
Worship		Mary Pat Soisson	Hugh Buchanan
Youth		NA	Matt Ongcapin