

MEETING MINUTES: PASTORAL COUNCIL, NOVEMBER 21, 2021

In attendance: Fr. Kirk Slattery, Matt Trinca, Michelle Trinca, Alan Wesenberg, Melissa Wesenberg, Tyler Shiels, Samantha Shiels, Casey Saoit, Linda Popolano

1. Fr. Kirk opened the meeting with prayer.
2. Matt asked about the possibility of having Jesse Romero as a speaker for a parish-wide event sometime during 2022. Matt heard Jesse speak at the recent Inferno Men's Conference and was impressed by the energy and passion of the talk Jesse gave. In addition, Jesse is bilingual and can present in both English and Spanish. Jesse would charge a \$2,000 speaker fee, plus hotel accommodations and travel expenses. Fr. Kirk said there is an annual budget of \$5,000 for two speakers per year, usually one in the spring and one in the fall, and that Matt should follow up with Deacon Mike, as this would be a Faith Formation event.
3. We discussed the Parish Renewal videos we've been viewing at Revive Parishes, and Matt gave Fr. Kirk a brief summary of the Parish Renewal course. This can be summed up in two ideas, one is that everything needs to be intentional, and the other is that everything needs to be aligned with the parish's purpose.
4. Fr. Kirk informed the Council that attendance at Mass is now significantly higher than before COVID. Offertory collections are also up (19% over the pre-COVID year and 11% over the COVID year). The impact of The Work of Our Hands offertory enhancement campaign is still being calculated. The company that does all the printing and mailing of the commitment cards and literature and other work on the campaign charges \$10,000, but it has been well worthwhile as that cost is recouped in the cash donations that come in the very first weekend of the campaign.
5. Matt asked Fr. Kirk to elaborate on Father's thoughts on the mission of the parish. Father feels strongly that the Holy Spirit is guiding the parish, as he has felt from when Bishop Sheridan first asked him to come to St. Gabriel's only two years after his ordination to help St. Gabriel's parish recover from the trauma after accusations (highly exaggerated by the media) against the former pastor and the loss of one-third of the parishioners at that time. This guidance from the Holy Spirit continues to manifest itself in so many ways, for example, the building of the new elementary school, a plan that the parish did not initially create but that came in search of the parish. Fr. Kirk's effort is focused on creating a parish that doesn't only look inward, but also looks outward to the community, one example being Briarfest. He feels that the parish has grown and matured in leadership, but that now is also the time for another generation to step up. The school will be more and more the focus around which the parish will define itself, and the hope is that over the long term, we can follow the example of Catholic parishes in Kansas that have schools where anyone in the parish can have their child educated at the parish school for free, because the church community supports the school. In Kansas, this took 40 years to make happen, but it is a goal Fr. Kirk would like to aim for. The school advisory board has been formed, and the

architectural plans should be completed by the end of December. It will be designed to hold up to 450 students, and the total cost is estimated at \$27 million.

6. The Pre-School was to have started in February, but the plans for the teacher who was supposed to be hired, who was moving here from another state, have fallen through. The plan is that it is to be a Catholic Montessori preschool with an all-day curriculum to serve full-time working parents; it is not the intention to take enrollment away from the other diocesan Catholic preschools that have part-time or alternate days of the week schedules. In the current childcare space, there will be room for 20 preschool children. When the elementary school building opens, that will increase to a space that will hold 80 preschool children. At that time, the childcare room within the church itself will become a full-time daycare center for children age 2 and under.
7. The first presentation of the Rectory plans to the Diocese will be in January, and the hope is to break ground around July. Between the donation being made to fund the Mater Filius house and the sale of the rectory to the family who is funding the building of the school, there should be no or very little fundraising required for the building of the Rectory. The school benefactor family is purchasing the rectory so that it can be used as a home for the nuns who will be teaching at the school.
8. Alan asked about the original Phase III of construction plans for the expansion of the nave, which will cost approximately another \$6 million. Fr. Kirk said that the church is comfortable with the debt load currently carried, but doesn't want to increase it at this point; therefore, the nave expansion could be another ten years down the road.
9. Fr. Kirk also mentioned that the Sunday 4:00 p.m. Mass, recently re-instituted after being discontinued during COVID, needs to grow and mature into a full weekend Mass, with a choir and full liturgical volunteer support. He feels that the people attending that Mass need to step up and serve.
10. One thing everyone agrees would be helpful is having a second priest assigned to the parish, specifically a Spanish-speaking priest. Fr. Kirk said that St. Gabriel's is the only specified "Spanish center" parish that doesn't have a permanently assigned Spanish-speaking priest. However, Bishop Golka is aware of the difficulty this causes, and Fr. Kirk feels that they are on the same page about how this is something that needs to be addressed.
11. Michelle brought us up to date on her research into alternatives to the current website, especially since Jim Arlien (of Catchlight Pro) no longer wants to work on web design, but only on website maintenance and security. The parish's contract with Jim ends on May 23, 2022, and the contract with the current hosting site ends in September 2022. Therefore, a new website would have to be built, designed, and ready to go live by May. Michelle has thoroughly looked into E-Catholic, and has confirmed that their services are compatible with ParishSoft, with a monthly calendar, with posting bulletins, and with allowing staff multiple levels of access. The basic cost for their premium package is \$50/month with unlimited pages and 5GB of storage. To livestream Masses would be an additional cost, based on the number of viewers; however, it was discussed that a direct link to the church's YouTube channel could

avoid that extra cost. Michelle would create the website initially; who would actually maintain it is one of the open questions; this could be a new volunteer position. When the school is ready, it would have its own website, with a link from the main parish site. Michelle is also looking into a second website platform, Diocesan.com. This is the same company that hosts the MyParish app. With Diocesan.com, she would not have to design the website as Diocesan.com has its own design team. Michelle is still researching the cost with Diocesan.com. Fr. Kirk said that the MyParish app appears to be redundant, so that we could scrap the app when we have a new website. Michelle also asked about photos and videos for a new website, and, rather than using stock photos from either platform, Fr. Kirk would like all photos to be those from St. Gabriel's parish. Brian Shick was named as the parishioner who has done photography/videography work (for free) for the parish in the past and could help Michelle with those needs for the website.

12. Tyler mentioned the possibility of a volunteer coordinator to manage volunteers and to communicate with ministry leaders. The hope is that the new website could be a tool to guide people to where they want to volunteer. Perhaps, there could also be a website section or some other way to communicate to parishioners what the "greatest needs" of the parish are, at any given time. Along with this, it was suggested that perhaps there should be a Welcome message video from Fr. Kirk on the new website. Another open question is who would create and maintain a Spanish-translated portion of the new website.
13. Alan asked if pre-Mass Commentators are coming back. A discussion ensued in which Fr. Kirk said he does not like the term "Commentator". Also, with Rosaries said before Mass now, timing is a problem; the fact that in the past some commentators went off script was also a problem. Lastly, there are many people who like a period of silence just before Mass for silent prayer or to center their minds and hearts to get ready for Mass. Fr. Kirk feels that entering the nave for Mass people should be brought into the spirit of sacrifice and thanksgiving and that announcements before Mass (and at times, even after Mass) are not conducive to what they should be holding in their minds, entering or leaving. An alternative possibility that was discussed was having greeters or additional ushers at the two main doors to welcome people.
14. Tyler mentioned that some volunteer positions, such as Faith Formation teacher, require a far larger commitment of time and energy than many people have to give. This once again highlighted the need for additional volunteers so that a large burden of volunteer work doesn't fall on the shoulders of any one person. Tyler felt this burn-out may be a reason we have difficulty retaining volunteers in some areas. We also discussed the need to perhaps find one more member of the Spanish community to serve on the Pastoral Council, so that that significant portion of the St. Gabriel's community is fairly represented.
15. Returning to the topic of summing up the purpose of the parish in just a few words (as suggested in the Parish Renewal videos and as opposed to our mission statement, which is longer and more difficult to remember), Fr. Kirk said the school advisory council has decided on "Faith, Family, and Fidelity" as the

new school's statement of purpose. It was proposed that "Beacon of Faith", initially the capital campaign name, was and is a very fitting statement of purpose for the parish as a whole.

16. Michelle has looked at the introductory "the 99" videos and is now looking into the book which was formerly obtained for what was previously the Evangelization Team. It would require a good deal of planning and work, including three months of preparation after training a leadership team, before having a parish mission on "the 99".
17. A suggestion to change the PC voting procedure was discussed, whereby a married couple would count as one person for voting purposes. When Matt obtains the PC Handbook from Fr. Kirk, he can look at the policies and procedures, and the council can discuss the bylaws at a future meeting. Fr. Kirk said the only upcoming project with no PC input yet concerns the Shroud Ministry putting up a museum quality display in the narthex.
18. Our December meeting will be a virtual meeting on Monday, December 6 at 8 p.m.
19. Fr. Kirk closed the meeting with prayer.
20. Casey will lead the opening and closing prayers at the December 6 virtual meeting.

Approved by:

Fr. Kirk Slattery, Pastor

Matt Trinca

Matt Trinca, PC Chair

Approved on:
