

MEETING: 5/18/2023 4:30 PM – 5:30 PM

Council: Jim S, Dan-VP, Michael, Barry, Lisa, Deb, Bob-President; and minutes by Leslie

Absent: Lynne, Louise

Staff: Fr. Mike, Fr. Simon,

Guests from Parish Finance Council: John Roehm, Bryan Brady

Pastor, News, Action Items, Topics: Fr. Mike led the meeting.

Tentative follow-up meeting electronically, June 1, 2023 at 4:00 PM

The NEXT COUNCIL MEETING to be determined in the parish office.

The Following news and topics were presented by Fr. Mike

- Fr. Mike welcomed John Roehm and Bryan Brady members of our Finance Council to Parish Council members. They came to the meeting to share with council members the financial outlook for our parish.
- Keeping in mind the financial course of the parish since June 2019 and projected span to June 2023, several areas of need were discussed among council members. One challenging area of need is seen in a decline in parishioner Mass attendance (some attributed to pandemic and post pandemic experiences), low growth in receiving new parishioners into our parish and in general, a need to see growth in parishioner engagement in our parish community service. Looking into the future and the financial health of the parish another challenging area of need is to increase our revenue and to determine what areas/ways we can possibly decrease expenditures.

Building and Fundraising Update:

Michael will be meeting with the building committee to keep them informed of the status of our pledge contributions. We have contributions coming in since January 2023 to add to our 1.4 million cash pledges. Although the finances may not be coming in at a pace we'd like we are waiting while we continue to work on achieving our goal for the rectory.

The following points/questions raised to consider when working toward the formation of the Outreach and Connection and Revenue Enhancement ministries:

- Deb met a number of families considering joining the Parish after the Saturday 5 pm Mass who shared their enthusiasm for St. Bernard's parish.
- Fr. Mike said he gets a huge positive reaction from parishioners regarding their perception of a friendly parish through the Welcoming Committee at Mass who are members of the hospitality ministry.

- Fr. Mike feels the effects of Covid when large numbers of parishioners were watching mass on TV has resulted in people choosing to stay at home to watch Mass rather than attend Mass.
- Bob feels we need to know why they are not returning after Covid.
- Barry mentioned 15 to 20 new parishioners per month are entering St. Bernard's. Also, Clairveaux Community Life magazine reaches out to 1800 households.
- Deb spoke of a successful ministry operating in a former parish she attended which had a meeting once per month with new parishioners. At these introductory meetings discussion/information on "financial giving" was presented.
- Lisa inquired if there is any communication with new parishioners to inform them of the ways available to make their financial contributions.
- Jim and Mike inquired about the revenue coming in through electronic giving and in person plate giving at mass.
- Fr. Mike said the weekly bulletin is a means of communication for parishioners and in it a way for giving through Faith Direct is communicated.
- Lisa inquired about employee related expenses and if there was any room for cost reduction in this area.
- Fr. Mike said we follow Diocesan guidelines for staff expenses and he didn't see any cost reduction potential emanating within this area.
- Dan suggested a way to address depletion of mass attendance since Covid and increase parishioner growth maybe to have a Director of Evangelization here at St. Bernard's. This person would focus on addressing these specific needs. This is a position held in other parishes that can be explored as to its effectiveness for parishioner growth. Dan stressed the need for data to help determine how to effectively engage in an outreach ministry. There may be parishioners with that skill set at St. Bernard's.
- Bryan and John from the finance council provided hand-outs with suggestions for meeting these needs.

Submitted by: Leslie Arnison (recording secretary)