

**St. Margaret Mary Parish Pastoral Council  
Minutes for Nov. 7, 2023**

Present: Fr. Max Behna, Mary Kienstra, Dan Lawler, Kelly Metzger, Lise Nauman, Jennifer Nolan, Steve Novotny, Bob Presnak, John Runger, Susan Stonesifer  
Absent: Anne Lysaught

The meeting opened at 7 pm with a prayer led by Mary Kienstra.

**Update on clarity questions**

The pastoral council reviewed the clarity questions with Fr. Max (the main ones are why SMMP exists, how we behave, what we do, and how we will succeed). The plan is for council members to take turns going through these at subsequent meetings.

The rally cry (area of focus) for the Parish Leadership Team (PLT) is building a firm foundation, and we are pretty close to doing that. We would like to have an overarching rally cry for the whole parish in the future. It would also be helpful for each ministry to develop their own.

We are continuing to navigate and get more clarity on who does what in implementing the mission and vision (new life in Christ through encountering, growing in and being Christ), among parish leadership (pastor, pastoral council, PLT, staff, deacons).

**Council President's Report**

Steve Novotny gave a report on the following topics:

**All Saints' Catholic Academy:**

Fr. Max is saying Mass at ASCA at 8:15 am on Friday November 10, and the council is invited to attend. Let Steve know if you are coming and if you want to principal to address any specific topics afterwards.

**Pastoral Council retreat (October 28):**

Attendees said it was well-prepared and well-done, and a good experience overall. There will be future communication on next steps.

**Annual report:**

Council members are encouraged to review the annual report. One sheet has questions and they can be discussed further outside of the meeting for time. Some numbers are being updated by the business manager, Matthew Ernst.

**Charitable Contributions Committee:**

The CCC requested approval for the release of second quarter funds (\$5,000). The final decision was to release it and if more details are needed or there are further questions, it can be discussed at another meeting.

There was further discussion on topics such as alignment with the parish mission (for the CCC and groups in general), increasing the visibility of the committee, and a recap of how the committee operates. There was also discussion of how other groups at SMMP determine which charities

receive money. An action item is to devote part of a future meeting to discussing this topic and exploring opportunities to be more efficient with the money we give.

**Christmas party for council:**

The idea was introduced and interest will be gauged outside the meeting.

**Google Drive:**

If members have problems accessing anything, let Steve know.  
There was a request to rename the folders for clarity.

**Pastor's Report**

Fr. Max reported on the following topics and answered questions.

**Signage:**

Indoor signs will be installed within the next 2 weeks.

**Narthex:**

Brad Metzger and the administration commission are working on procuring benches for the narthex. The type of bench has been decided, and size and quantity are to be determined.

There is not a set order date yet, but Christmas would be a good goal. Fr. Max will let Brad know.

There was brief discussion on options for reducing glare in the narthex windows.

**Alpha:**

Alpha starts at SMMP in February 2024. Kelly Reznicek provided an update in her report to the parish council, and members are encouraged to review this. The main preparations involve establishing three teams (hospitality, small group facilitators, and prayer). Kelly will identify and target what she needs assistance with, and include specific information on this in a report for the December pastoral council meeting.

There will also be an informational meeting on November 30 for anyone at SMMP interested in volunteering with Alpha. It would be good for someone from the council to attend the meeting so we are in the loop.

There was a question on whether Alpha will also be in Zoom; it will be in-person since dinner is a key part of the program.

**Synod update:**

It will take time to get clarity on what happened and what will happen in the Synod on Synodality. Next fall is the second of the listening sessions and there will be a report from the Pope later on with a more definitive answer on what will come from it.

**Mass for parishioners with hearing impairment:**

St. Margaret Mary was invited by the Diocese of Joliet to:

1. Host a Mass offered in American Sign Language at 6:30 pm each month, which will be offered by a visiting priest fluent in ASL. The start date is to be determined.

2. Host a formation session before that Mass at a location that is to be determined.

In addition, there will be an interpreter offering ASL at 11 am Mass at SMMP each week starting in 2024. Deacon Ken will discuss it further with the Christian Worship Committee and discern logistics.

**Staff updates:**

Sixteen people responded to the facilities manager job description, which may have been due to autumn timing, more information on the vision and mission, and more interactive elements. Phone screening interviews have begun, with in-person interviews to follow. Overall, the recruitment process has been going faster than anticipated.

Anita Wennlund is retiring from the sacramental coordinator position. Deacon Don Helgeson will be the new coordinator starting in mid-November.

**Music:**

Fr. Max is looking to start a music advisory committee to get an objective sense of how music is resonating with parishioners. Jessica is on board with this, and the hope is to assemble a representative group of parishioners. Fr. Max would like the pastoral council to help set this up.

**Other:**

The Men's Club has been looking for a spiritual leader or someone to offer spiritual guidance meetings. It was suggested that Kelly Reznicek be asked about this since she is the Adult Faith Formation director.

**Break at 7:50 pm (5 min)**

**Tabernacle**

Fr. Max has discussed the prospect of moving the tabernacle with the deacons and has their backing. After discussion and questions the consensus was that the council is also supportive of moving the tabernacle and will discuss strategies for communicating with parishioners about this prospect at the next meeting. The goal is for there to be widespread support among parishioners. Council members were encouraged to ask Fr. Max if they have other questions between now and the next meeting.

Questions and discussion topics included:

- How the tabernacle would look on the altar
- The possibility of buying a new tabernacle in the future (if this happened, the hope would be for donors to fund it. Any design would be done by an independent company experienced in working with churches)
- Reasons for the move (the Eucharistic revival; wider trend among parishes as a reminder of Jesus' presence in the Eucharist; parishioners have asked)
- Reasons why the tabernacle is in the current location (in the 70s and 80s it was common to put the tabernacle in another location to communicate that Jesus is also present in other parts of the Mass like the Liturgy of the Word) and why there isn't a large crucifix on the wall
- The long-term plan for adoration is for it to remain in the chapel

**Forming ministries in clarity questions**

The 6 clarity questions are:

1. Why do we exist (what is our vision)?
2. How do we behave (what are our core values)?
3. What do we do (what is our mission)?
  - a. Encounter Christ, grow in Christ, and be Christ
4. How will we succeed (what are our strategic anchors)?
  - a. We will be radically hospitable, joyfully Catholic and others-focused
5. What is most important, right now?
6. Who will do what?

The Pastoral Council's help is needed in providing formation for commissions, committees, and ministries in the questions above, with the goal of giving ministries clarity and helping to unify the parish. There was discussion and brainstorming about what this could look like, with topics listed further down the page.

It was determined that that documentation and training are the next steps, specifically:

- Create a Google Doc listing all the ministries and the people leading them as a first step
- Submit questions and discuss further on Zoom before the December meeting. The Zoom meeting will be open to anyone interested.
- Firm up a plan for forming the ministries in the questions by December for the parish leadership team (PLT) to review, so it can be executed in January.

We also determined that we will need to determine what it looks like for a ministry to be successfully formed in the clarity questions.

Discussion topics included:

- How the council and PLT will collaborate: the council will initiate a plan and send it to the Parish Leadership Team (Fr. Max, Deacon Don, Mary, Rochelle, and Matthew) for discernment and feedback. After the council gets the PLT's comments, the council will execute the plan.
- Language from clarity questions: We are encouraged to use language that is part of this rollout in our interactions with ministries (e.g. using the term "radical hospitality" when talking to small groups or volunteers)
- How to form ministries in the questions, since it is different than forming staff.
  - It needs to be an inclusive yet flexible approach (able to be customized to each ministry)
  - We discussed how to communicate to ministries; ideas included using Matthew and Rochelle's slides, workshoping, and more. The ultimate goal is to engage in bidirectional communication to involve the ministry leads as actively as possible (for instance, asking "How do you currently practice radical hospitality?").
  - Ultimately, the ministry leaders will be the ones who share with the volunteers
- Divine Renovation: the consensus is to offer it as needed, since it provides helpful context. It might be beneficial to advise reading the first two chapters.
- Amount of time needed to train ministries
- Assessing familiarity of ministries with the clarity questions (for instance, the language has been used in Welcoming Committee meetings), and discerning who needs what

**Other items:**

**Scheduled events and meetings:**

- The first training for Eucharistic ministers was November 6.
- The planning meeting for the appreciation dinner is November 14 in Room 8.
- A seminarian (Josh Solarz) will be speaking at all the Masses on the weekend of November 11-12.
- ASCA's performance of The Wizard of Oz is November 17 and 18.
- The parish annual appeal kickoff is November 18 and 19.
- The Welcoming Committee is sponsoring a chili cookoff on November 19.

**Volunteer appreciation dinner:**

Jennifer is coordinating the save-the-date in the bulletin and sent it to Julie Duffin, the communications director.

The planning subcommittee needs help with setup on Friday and Saturday morning and decorating on Saturday. One possibility is recruiting people beyond the council; Lise will email contacts.

**Meeting minutes:**

Remote approval was attempted; we will consider them approved for now. Susan and Dan will review them. There was a question of whether the minutes get approved if you weren't at the meeting.

**Conclusion**

Fr. Max led the pastoral council in prayer and the meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm.