

St. Margaret Mary Parish Pastoral Council Meeting minutes for September 12, 2023

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

Absent: Susan Stonesifer

The meeting opened at 7 pm with a prayer led by Fr. Max.

Clarity questions

There was a brief overview of the four clarity questions from the Amazing Parish framework, as they relate to SMMP. The goal of these is to refine the vision and mission of the parish:

1. Why do we exist?
2. How do we behave?
3. What do we do?
4. How will we succeed?

There will be a retreat for staff and parish council members on October 28 to go deeper into these questions. Details will be announced at a later date.

Council President's Report

Steve Novotny gave the council president's report, the aim of which is to highlight important items for the council to focus on this month. Goals include:

- Healthy teamwork, with the encouragement to be open and honest and bring up questions
- Centering on prayer (starting and ending meetings with prayer, and integrating prayer into meetings in other ways)
- Integrating business processes that translate well to the parish council meetings
- Listening to parishioners and being a constructive voice for them
- Identifying metrics and other ways to assess progress on goals and continuous improvement. This also includes identifying concerns and solutions.
- Creating council subcommittees for tasks such as organizing the SMMP volunteer appreciation dinner.

Attendance for the October staff-council retreat was assessed.

A Google Drive has been established for the parish council. Members were requested to check if they have access to it.

Pastor's Report

Fr. Max gave the pastor's report on the following topics:

Staff

Mike Voirol is the new full-time facilities manager and has been working at SMMP for a few weeks. He reports to Matthew Ernst, the business director.

Kathryn Severyn and Katie Matar are job-sharing a new part-time position, as administrative assistants to Kelly Reznicek (director of adult faith formation).

Mary Sears is job-sharing the receptionist position with Millie Gredlics.

All-staff meeting

The all-staff meeting this month focused on how we will achieve our goals as a parish, specifically, helping people find new life in Christ.

Other

Fr. Max would like to standardize categories for reports between the Parish Leadership Team and Pastoral Council, and would like the council to provide input on this.

Registration

There were 130 new families who registered at St. Margaret Mary Parish last year, some of whom moved to the parish and some who returned.

Registration is mostly done online due to the large number of registrants. We are hoping the Welcoming Committee can do more in-person interaction or make phone calls after new parishioners register. There has been positive feedback on St. Margaret Mary from people attending the parish picnic.

There is interest in getting demographics on who's registering, ideas for increasing outreach in registration and making it easier for people to register.

Steve and Mary will discuss registration further.

Eucharistic revival

The Eucharistic Revival will be a big focus for the parish this year. Fr. Max would like the council to help galvanize this, and members were encouraged to attend and personally invite people to events. Another way for members to help is to wear the new name tags that were ordered for council and staff members, so that people know who they are and can easily reach them if they have ideas.

Fr. Brian Geary will be giving a talk on September 13. The next big event after that is the Eucharistic miracles exhibit, which is on September 22 to 24. There was discussion on how to get the word out. Ideas included:

- Emailing parishioners and using app notifications if available
- Adding the event to the weekly email sent out by All Saints Catholic Academy to parents (Kelly Metzger will email ASCA about this)
- Fr. Max will check with the staff to see how they were planning to get the word out.

Signs:

St. Margaret Mary Parish will be getting signs for the outside of the parish so it is easier for parishioners, visitors and delivery drivers to know where to go. Fr. Max showed prototypes and requested initial feedback from the parish council on the signs, which was positive overall. There was discussion on the purpose and clarity of the signs and proofreading. Fr. Max will check with Matthew Ernst on whether the print on the signs is on both sides and whether a previous prototype includes directions to the Green Trails entrance from Naper Boulevard.

Narthex:

There was discussion on making updates to the narthex in the future. In the short term, this would entail adding benches so families who bring their children to the narthex have somewhere to sit. Kelly and Lise will get input from families on this, and Fr. Max will check with the parish's insurance company to make sure that there are no concerns from them about adding benches.

There was also discussion on whether to put clear glass in the doors leading to the sanctuary so that people in the narthex can see into the sanctuary during Mass. This will be discussed more at a later date. There was further discussion on radical hospitality and how the narthex can reflect that. Topics included ways to make families with small children feel welcome.

In the long term, other updates could be made, such as putting sacred art on the walls or making renovations. Parish council members are encouraged to check out what other parishes are doing for their narthexes and report back with ideas.

Volunteer appreciation dinner:

The parish council organizes this event for volunteers each year, with Steve and Lise serving as this year's chairs. Date options (late January) were discussed, as well as areas to oversee (catering, volunteers, music, decorations, setup times).

The most immediate priority is to form a subcommittee to discuss this more outside tonight's meeting and to get a budget approved. All interested council members are invited to meet on September 19 for further discussion.

Secretary:

Jennifer Nolan was unanimously voted the new secretary for the parish council. There was discussion on developing the role of the secretary and the ways it is unique from the recording secretary, who transcribes meeting minutes. The role entails the following:

- Running meetings if the president and vice president are both unable to attend
- Working with the recording secretary on how to communicate the minutes to the rest of the parish, including what specifically to publish and when to do so.

It could also be expanded to encompass more communications responsibilities, such as reviewing the minutes to determine whom to follow up with on specific action items. The action items from the minutes will also be described in more detail for the council in a separate list so there is a more concrete sense of what to do.

Lise will help out with further defining the role, as she served as the secretary last year.

Other updates:

The Charitable Contributions Committee requested to know how much money is available for them to disburse to charities that they work with. There has been \$5,000 budgeted for this quarter, and this amount will be given to them, as the council approved it. Mary will get additional feedback and information from the CCC on this topic and talk to Steve about it after the meeting.

The All Saints Catholic Academy board meeting is September 26. They need more adult volunteers for events; volunteers should complete safe environment training and background checks before starting. Anne will add this item in the next Administration Commission report.

Final edits are being made to the parish annual report. The report is a fairly recent practice, as it started in 2020.

Commission reports have been sent to the council members via email. There were no additional questions or topics of discussion on these.

Fr. Max closed the meeting with prayer at 9:30 pm.