

St. Bridget Church

Parish Pastoral Council and Finance Council

Joint Meeting

January 31, 2006

Attendees

Bill Collins – Parish Financial Administrator
Mark Gregory – Finance Council
Neil Drozeski – Chair, Finance Council
Suzy LeSage – Recording Secretary
Bradley Nott – Finance Council
Sally McMullin – School Finance Leader
Carol Markow – Finance Council
Anne Carroll – Principal St Bridget School
Charlene Bechley – Assistant Principal St. Bridget School
Stephanie Larson – Parish Leadership Facilitator/ Parish Vision Facilitator
Tom Lawrence
Father James Glass
Michael Siewers
Sister Bernadette – Christian Formation
Theresa Lee – Christian Formation
Kathie Alexander
Monsignor Bill Carr
Mike Kehoe
Mike Kozak
Siobhan Dunnavant
Lindley Maloney – Christian Formation
Leslie Strickler – Communications Leader
Denyelle Mehfoud
Anne Wineburg – Christian Formation
John McCulla, Chair, Parish Council

Opening Prayer – Kathie Alexander

Christian Formation Update:

The Christian Formation Team gave a presentation to the Joint Council. The Committee has recently assessed the Lifetime Learning Journey of Christian Formation at St. Bridget's. They found many programs across ages, but the programs may not be utilized as fully as they could be. The Committee is recommending adding staff to more fully support the programs; to enhance the program offerings; and offer a centralized leader – paid full-time – across Christian Formation.

The Committee is comprised of a diverse group of catechists, parents, staff, etc. They have been meeting weekly and have reviewed all program offerings, defining plus/ deltas.

In Youth Programs, we have Youth Liturgy, Christian Formation classes, and all youth activities and Youth Advisory Council. It is in this area the Committee sees the need for a full time Youth Minister.

Within Christian Formation, there includes Christian Formation Intergenerational, Vacation Bible School, etc. The committee is recommending a full time coordinator for all these activities and have this person

coordinate all First Reconciliation and First Eucharist (sacrament prep) programs, oversee Children's Liturgy of the Word, provide evening VBSs, add music to K-5 formation classes, and coordinate retreats.

Children's Liturgy is currently overseen by a paid PT position. The committee feels this is working well. They recommend a general leader to provide coordination with the other programs. They would also like to increase volunteers in this area. They are also suggesting providing this service during the Youth Mass on Sunday evening.

Adult Programs are currently offering an Intergenerational Program, Scripture Classes, and Adult Formation. There has been feedback to bring back 'Small Christian Communities', cover and discuss current topics, create an Adult Formation committee, provide adult time during Youth meetings, programs for re-entering or alienated Catholics. Provide young family support groups, and bring back the Elizabeth Community (a family outreach program).

Overall, the group believes having a centralized leader over these four areas, as well as a FT (versus PT) Youth Minister would be greatly beneficial to the management and success of our Christian Formation. This would equate to essentially a 1.5 FTE increase.

Additionally, the committee found some general observations. St. Bridget's needs a more hospitable atmosphere for Christian Formation (i.e. a place where supplies can be stored, an environment that is prepared and ready for the children, etc.). There was a suggestion to better 'market' and communicate Christian Formation offerings. They'd like additional nursery availability during Adult Programs.

The Council suggested ensuring all these positions have job descriptions, qualifications, educational backgrounds, etc. (both current and desired) laid out. There was also a suggestion to bring forth the 'problem statement' of these areas to ensure the suggested solution of additional hiring/ restructuring is the correct solution. There was discussion that many of the potential programs could bring forth excellent volunteer opportunities for parishioners.

Parish Committee Updates:

Communication Committee – Leslie Strickler (owns Etre Communications) gave an update to the Councils on the Communications committee. Her background includes 17 years of marketing, publishing and communications. The group has undertaken a parish-wide survey, and Leslie gave a preliminary report. 1510 surveys were returned. 94% read the Mass bulletin; 63% read The Bridge; 26% read the website. The bulletin is also the parish's main source of information. 22% of respondents use Mass announcements as their main source of information. There were many suggestions to improve the website, to better understand the 'chain of command' when there is a request something from the parish; they want more of a bridge between the school and parish; want more of Monsignor Carr; inspirational stories of staff and parishioners; more visual representation than just the picture of St. Bridget's building; hungry for more spirit and inspiration; there were suggestions for email correspondence (the Council gave suggestions for easily enabling email correspondence). Generally, younger parishioners want more web communication; older parishioners only want to read The Bridge. ***Michael Siewers offered to send the Young Adult email subscription to Leslie as a good example of strong web/ email communications.***

Stewardship – Monsignor delayed the fall stewardship drive so he could better understand what is happening in this parish. February will be Financial Stewardship month. Margaret Crossen and Mary Jane Houge (and Kim Lapkin) will be coordinating our stewardship drive during the month. Monsignor stated that over the next 6 months he will be looking at ways our parish can begin improvement (his first 6 months were spent just listening and learning). A census report will be sent the first week of February. A cover letter with a financial report will be sent the second week of February. The third week, Monsignor is attempting to get parishioners to give talks regarding their own stewardship experiences. The final week of February Monsignor and Father James will give their own take on stewardship.

Parish Vision – John McCulla, Monsignor Carr, and Stephanie Larson compiled some suggestions for steps over the next several months, and she passed those around the Councils. The leadership of the parish needs input from the parish leadership councils and the parishioners at-large (through a parish survey, etc.)

Volunteerism – The Council was provided a role description for a Coordinator of Volunteers, which would be a new position in the parish – a volunteer position itself – to coordinate all parish volunteers, connecting parishioners with opportunities to serve. Feedback in this area should be directed to Monsignor Carr. The Council and parish will be looking for someone in the parish to step forward.

Financial/ Census Update:

Neil gave an annual update on parish finances to the Joint Council. He stated that the Council has been performing internal controllership reviews, with recommendations for both the school's and parish's financial processes. Additionally, he stated that the Finance Council has been leading efforts to create an Investment Policy for St. Bridget's.

The school runs a \$2.4MM budget, it is overall very well financially run, expenses are closely managed, and they enjoy a dedicated revenue stream (tuition payments).

On the other hand, the parish financial administrator is projecting a \$150K loss this fiscal year for the church. Our revenue collection is basically flat over the past 6 years, yet our expenses have continued to increase. Specifically, this year, our costs are up against budget on associate organist fees, household expenses, and sanctuary supplies. A balanced budget for the next fiscal year is due to the diocese on May 15. The church will be required to borrow money from its \$370K Capital Reserve – and pay back interest – to cover this year's expected operating expense shortfall.

The church's Capital Reserve sits at \$370K (was \$512K a couple years back), while the school's is \$618K (which is up 100% in the last 3 years). The church lost \$27K on Traylor Drive; lost \$37K on Morningside; and rectory renovations will cost ~ \$200K.

The church's Endowment fund (invested money) sits at \$145MM, with \$60K restricted gift directed toward a common stock purchase. The school has a \$28K scholarship fund.

St. Bridget's has 2600 families registered. 68-70% use the envelopes. 50% of families pledge an annual contribution, with an average of \$978/ family (some are far more, some are less). 227 families have children in the school; <20% of families are older than 70 years of age. Of our 2600 families, 290 give more than \$1000, or \$20/ week, to St. Bridget's Church each year.

With declining collections and increasing expenses, St. Bridget's is not saving enough in its Capital Reserve to fund our building and physical plant's depreciating assets.

The Joint Council discussed the history of giving and raising money in our parish. They also discussed some ways to help motivate our parishioners to give enough to keep our parish running well and to increase giving to be on par with where we should be as a parish of our size. Some suggested that parish collections will increase when volunteerism and overall parishioner involvement increase. A capital Campaign is something that will probably need to happen, but it would be at least a year away.

Other:

Denise Hoffer has volunteered to run the PPC Elections this Spring.

The closing prayer was given by John McCulla

Next Meeting: Wednesday, February 15.