

**St. Michael's Parish**  
**Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes**  
**March 15, 2016**

**OPENING PRAYER**

Father Tony began the meeting promptly at 6:30 pm with an opening prayer. In attendance were council members: Frank Bader, Gayle Bush, Mary Corcoran, Natasha Corcoran, Kristen Langdon, William Ramsey, Nancy Salazar, Joanne Schaefer, Mary Ellen Stevens, Helen Taylor, Erika Walker and Mary Ann Wood. Absent was Ray Aurelia. Trustees: Marty Lemmo was in attendance, Terry Taylor, absent. Tracy Langdon was also present.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes from the February 16, 2016 meeting were approved by Mary Corcoran, seconded by Joanne Schaefer.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Marty Lemmo reported on the letter sent by the finance committee to Bishop Scharfenberger on Feb. 12, 2016. This letter was in request for reimbursement for expenses incurred during Father Tony's absence. Father Tony also indicated that he had sent a letter to the Diocese in regard to current school assessment and Bishop's appeal assessment inquiries. As of today he has not heard back from the Vicar General on this issue.

**PASTOR'S REPORT**

Father Tony reported that the parish has now switched energy providers to Blue Rock Energy. Previously, the parish had both American Power and Gas as well as Agway for energy providers (both natural gas and electricity). National Grid remains the billing provider. This move to Blue Rock Energy will prove to be a significant cost savings to the parish, as the various rates that are charged by each energy company varies widely and both American Power and Gas and Agway were substantially higher than Blue Rock. After much discussion and clarification about the various rate amounts, including how when the parish went with American Power and Gas, which only provided a low one month introductory incentive rate but then after that period, the rate increased to the prevailing rate which the company charged, plus, how the parish had also apparently been enrolled in a 'green' option for energy (sourced from more Earth friendly means than not) which was a still higher rate than their regular energy/rate; it seems that the details of the contract were not carefully reviewed or discussed and who the individual was that was responsible for this according to the documents which the energy companies have on file (bookkeeper). Furthermore, there still remains the question as to whether or not the parish may receive any rebate or refund from American Power and Gas due to the 'green' option or their very higher rates that the parish paid in comparison to many other energy providers.

**NEW BUSINESS**

In regard to the matter of the parish's outstanding debt for the school assessment as well as the Bishop's appeal, which was addressed above, Father stated that he believed that the parish owed between \$60,000 - \$70,000 (cumulatively) for the school assessment to SMSA Catholic School for several years.

The March Money Madness calendar raffle was successful with the parish realizing approximately over \$1000.00 benefit.

Father Tony stated that he was pleased that our parish had a very good attendance for the first evening of prayer and reflection for lent presented by Sister Kitty Hanley. Next will be Sister Julia Mary Werner, on the topic of Mercy. The date for this is Wednesday March 15, 2016 at 7pm.

The parish is using a new e-mail service called Flock Note as a way of reducing paper mailings. Father wishes to have as many email addresses as possible from everyone in the parish to make this new service as effective as possible. Many other churches currently use this service as a more modern and additional way of keeping in touch with the parish. Father is sure this will prove beneficial.

**ISSUES REQUIRING IMMEDIATE ATTENTION**

Update on Building & Grounds/Utilities: Father reported that we are slowly moving along with the various projects – the repair of the walls that have been damaged of the gathering space. In addition, the parish is looking at replacing the windows in the school building (the current windows are the original windows from the 1956 construction of the school building). The parish has hired an architect firm, the only one which responded to the request for proposals which were sent out last summer. Architecture + will help us in the repair of the Gathering Space and provide professional guidance on the window replacement issue. In addition, the Diocesan Architecture and Building Commission (ABC) has been kept informed as to the status of these issues. At some point, new gutters will be installed around the majority of the Gathering Space addition outdoors to help prevent any further/future water damage to the walls. It is hoped that soon after Easter these projects can begin. For the window project, first an asbestos inspection needs to be completed by qualified asbestos inspectors before any replacement can begin. They plan on checking to see if there is any asbestos around the present windows.

The carpeting in the church was shampooed on Monday March 7.

Replacement of the boilers was briefly mentioned as well. The two old boilers which provide heat for the school and the church were installed in the 1970's as best as can be determined. One of the boilers has a small crack. Father informed us that this will have to be addressed at a later date. Other area parishes have replaced their older boilers using NYSERDA rebate programs and financing. More research is being done for this for our parish.

**Parish Ministries**

There has been some good response concerning the recruitment of new members for various ministries. There has been some sign-ups to and some have not received a response. Bill Ramsey questioned this. Father attempted to clarify that submitted forms should be and will be referred immediately to the proper ministry coordinator to contact the

new/additional person for their ministry. Furthermore, Father Tony announced that George Frost has concluded his exemplary service of over 50 (FIFTY) years of preparing the Lector and Eucharistic Ministers schedules. Father Tony expressed his deep and profound appreciation for all of George's faithful and excellent oversight of this important liturgical ministry for over five decades and thanked George for his dedication and kindness. The lector and Eucharistic minister schedules will now be done by Julie in the parish office, using a ministry scheduler computer program that is part of the parish census program. Julie will be the coordinator of the lector and Eucharistic Minister schedules starting in May, 2016 (*George had already prepared schedules through April*).

Father reported that there were approximately ten new members who have responded to the urgent request for new members for the Bereavement ministry. He indicated that in recent weeks, there were 5 funerals in just 9 days, and all but one of them had a bereavement reception which was a real challenge for the remaining teams to work in so short a period of time. A good suggestion was made to have an anonymous questionnaire available in the pews asking parishioners to share reasons why they have not or choose not signed up for any ministry.

#### Holy Week & Easter events

Very few responses were received with an interest to have an additional Mass on Easter Sunday therefore the Mass schedule will be just 8:00 am and 10:00 am on Easter Sunday. There will NOT be a 5:30 pm Mass on Easter Sunday. Father commented on the good turnout for the three parish soup suppers and complimented and thanked the various groups who hosted them. A schedule of Holy Week & Easter was included in last Sunday's bulletin.

#### 60th Anniversary Celebration

Those pastoral council members who were part of the special ad hoc 60th Anniversary Committee gave an update as to how things were progressing with the plans for this celebration. They met with the owner of the Tower Restaurant (located in the Travelers Insurance building) on Glen St. The owner is a member of our parish and the committee found him to be extremely helpful, informative and very generous. First the Tower offers a beautiful and spacious atmosphere overlooking the city and with views of the Adirondacks. It is more than large enough to accommodate a large number of people and has offers ample FREE parking in the adjacent parking garage. He was willing to work with the committee offering suggestions such as using the colors of St. Michaels, providing runners and centerpieces for the tables, offering to donate the appetizers and print the tickets, as well as all publicity material for the parish at no charge, provide a video projector that we may use and providing an entertainment planner. The buffet menu was discussed, and the date was tentatively agreed upon by the entire pastoral council for Sunday August 14 in the afternoon. Tickets would be sold available at mass and in the rectory. The cost of this special anniversary celebration is \$25.00 per person. The cost for children was not known at the time. It will be determined by the next meeting. There would be a cash bar available and entertainment for the evening was still being negotiated. A special dessert was discussed, as a parishioner wished to donate several cakes. An estimated count of 200 people is anticipated. A motion by Marty Lemmo to proceed with these plans was presented with the majority in favor. Father Tony stressed to the Council that he would be willing to speak with anyone in the parish who had any concerns about this 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary event (cost, location) etc. In addition to the banquet, those who do not wish to attend or cannot attend are welcome to join us for a special anniversary Mass and reception in the church hall which we hope can be scheduled for Sunday September 25th. The actual feast date for St. Michael the Archangel is always on September 29 (along with St. Gabriel and St. Raphael). Father Tony has sent a letter inviting both bishops to attend, and will invite all other clergy and religious who have been a part of St. Michael's in the past to attend all events too.

In conjunction, a long and energetic discussion took place related to the Parish Picnic, both in terms of this special 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary year and in general as to the format and structure of the event and the amount of people who attend. Many ideas and suggestions were presented to try to encourage more people. Among items that were surfaced for reasons why younger families and the youth do not come in the past focused on the conflicting school related sports that take place on Sundays more and more, to the detriment of any parish/church event – including Mass attendance, Faith Formation program attendance (religious education), etc. It is very difficult to attract young families to come for many reasons. It was decided to try to make some positive changes. For one, it was agreed by all of the pastoral council to change the name from Parish Picnic to Family Fun Day so that it might sound more enticing, and better represent the real intention of what the event is supposed to be about. Also, we will work hard to provide more advanced notice which would help, having flyers announcing the day, have a banner made by the children in our Faith Formation program in the hopes of soliciting younger families to attend and ask for their ideas, and other suggestions. Also, it was suggested that we ask the Confirmation candidates to take part in the Family Fun Day as part of their Christian service component and also reach out to all in the parish for their suggestions and ideas. Also, both the music and the games at the picnic were reviewed - what worked, what didn't. More games and ideas were brainstormed. Many games were discussed, both ones that have been used such as those last summer, and others used in the past e.g. mini golf, plinko, floating ducks, etc. Moreover, our new youth representative, Kristen Langdon, offered valuable insight and ideas about how to improve this annual parish event. For example, including the prizes which you can win be right on the games. Ultimately, due to time constraints, this topic was tabled to for further discussion. The date of the Family Fun day was agreed upon by all of the Pastoral Council for Sunday September 11, 2016, with due and appropriate consideration given that it is also Patriot Day and how the parish could honor and commemorate the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 9/11 in conjunction with the parish event. Ideas for some sort of tribute were raised, e.g., American Legion, Boy Scouts, Knights of Columbus, honor guard, bugler, our own resident Pipe and Drum Corp., and others. This will be discussed at a future meeting soon.

Dates for future meetings-Tuesday at 6:30pm. April 19, May 17

#### Closing Prayer

Meeting adjourned approximately at 8pm

Respectfully Submitted  
Helen Taylor, Secretary