

SPIRITUS CHRISTI PARISH COMMUNITY FORUM
September 27, 2023
Minutes

Meeting Start Time: 7:03 pm

Opening Prayer - Colleen Farley

Introduction of Staff - Colleen Farley

Staff Present:, Rev. Myra, Mike Ramich, Fr. Jim, Rev Celie, Mark Bennett, Aaron Lynch, Mike Boucher, Ruth Cowing, Eileen Hurley (online: Lauren Urzetta).

Meeting Overview, Framework - Trevor Carney

Numbers attending: 29 on zoom, 51 live = total 80

Pastor's Report

- Several funerals
- Began Adopt a Family
 - Within a day or two we closed as we reached the limit
- Discussed decision of HOPE to shut down the hospital because of danger to Dr Toney and Bourne
- Held a brunch for Migrant workers
 - Follow up with parishioners to see how we can help
 - Lydia Rodriguez has been helping by giving rides
 - Turned Renaissance Room into clothing closet
 - Collecting gift cards along with Adopt the Family
- Had Religious Education family liturgy
- Had Parish Ministry Fair
 - Heard lots of people say "I didn't know we did that"
 - Food collection ministry was a highlight
 - Named many of the ministries
- Help monthly Across the Miles Small Christian Ministry
- Lauren, Rev Celie and Aaron led a Young Adult Retreat. Aaron described:
 - Spent Sat talking with Mental Health Center
 - Lunch with men at Grace of God
 - Went to Baden Park and learned about SPARC
 - Visited Prison Ministry learned about their gardening project

- Dinner at Jennifer House learned about the women
- REI Ed classes began Sept. 24
- Offering space to GBI (Guaranteed Basic Income). Finished first 175 people enrolled in the GBI.
 - One woman looked forward to not having everything stop - Losing cable, losing lights, not having food for end of the month.

Mike Ramich Report

- Financial report available in handout
- We don't usually talk about church financial needs
- When we do it is about the outreaches
- Used Grace of God as an example
- All of people are so supportive of the ministries
- Church Finances tonight - went over handout
- 5 yr history: Over 5 yr period Sunday collections have gone up \$100 weekly
- Expenses have increased an average of 7%
 - Personnel expenses and rent increases
 - Rent 7% annually
- This isn't sustainable
- How were we able to do that
 - We were able to get ½ million dollars from COVID money but that is now gone.
- Sunday collections are 90% of money in the church

Questions

- What about Grant money? Answer - It is tougher with churches many don't give to religious organizations
- Rev Myra
 - Model talk
 - For 24 yrs the outreaches have been the primary child and the church is secondary child
 - How do we want to become financially secure and is our 25 yr anniversary an opportunity to rethink this?
 - What if 350 families thought about giving \$25 additional in the collection each week?
 - Hired a grant writer but this will take a long time to get results
 - We have to decide if we are going to invest in us and invest in our outreaches

- Those dollars will help us do religious ed and marriage prep
 - It is going to take giving this the attention that it needs
 - So we can have the longevity to do what we want to do in the community
 - It is important to say where we are and where we want to go
 - During talk about new church there was anxiety about finances
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- Parishioners
 - We have had \$200,000 from govt for COVID
 - Without it we would have been in the red for \$100,000
 - Is there anything about the cost that we could decrease?
 - Mike Ramich
 - Part of the reason for buying is that we would have more control over our own building
 - Hochstein raised rent 5%
 - Part of motivation to looking for our own space
 - Have capital savings to use
 - We didn't talk about it early enough
 - Rev Myra
 - The money needed to invest in livestream increased our parish expenses
 - Parishioner
 - I think it is alright to tell us what we need. We have a story for all the ministries and we have a story for this. I think it is alright to ask - I think people will respond
 - Rev Myra
 - I think it is something that we can do in this parish
 - Parishioner
 - Now that Child St is off the table are we looking at other properties?
 - Rev Myra
 - She wants to have the conversation to be clear what we are doing and have the staff empowered
 - Talk about what the models are and take it to the parish
 - Want to have the teams be empowered to be looking and bring information
 - Parishioner - Mike on Stewardship Committee

- He is concerned that something may be happening to the church like what happened in 2002 when Salem raised the rent 50%
- Don't have transparency with DUPC either
- With the 11 schools closing in the Rochester School Districtg - are these possibilities? They have parking, cafeterias, auditoriums, classrooms, etc.
- Rev Myra has mentioned she is friends with the Mayor
- He doesn't want us to get caught short again and have to move in an emergency situation.
- Parishioner
 - Is it true that the Diocese of Rochester would not rent or sell to this Parish?
 - Rev. Myra - She does not think that they would
 - DOR is in Bankruptcy and a lot of their affairs are going to be handled by court
- Parishioner

Move conversation to rent vs buy:

 - Fr Jim
 - What Rev Myra said that asking for 350 people to give \$25 - Rev Myra put out the ask
 - Parishioner
 - Good to have the ask
 - How much help would each person give?
 - Complete a pledge card
 - Could be different levels - ie. \$5-\$25
 - Parishioner
 - Remember that at the last PCF we asked the Visioning Board to come and bring ideas.
 - Rev. Myra - We are going to ask a consultant to help. It is overwhelming to have 2 visioning board members compile all the information
 - At the last forum some people didn't understand that we had a Vision and Mission statement - it is part of our documents for our church. We will be publishing them
 - Parishioners
 - I have not heard you talk about money
 - I think you should not shy away from needing money

- Parishioners should know we need money. We should not just look at people who are giving but also people who don't give to start giving.
- In past there was a call when there was an immediate crunch to ask for people to give - \$250 for those who can and then work on giving \$25 a week
- What motivates me is how much I spend on other things that I should be giving to the church. I am not in the business but count how much I pay for streaming services or Starbucks. If people looked at it that may help people to think and remind us all that we are using money in ways that are irrelevant. It is honest to talk about money.
- Likes being told \$100 monthly rather than \$25 weekly
- Rev Myra
 - Want to connect it to our 25th anniversary. If they want to give more that's fine but some can't give that much
- Could we consolidate our masses?
 - Each of our masses has its own character and own relationships
 - Can we get DUPC on Sunday? No.

New Business - discussed future of the church

- Parish Models
 - 2 models
 - With Child Street asking you to shift from leasing model to ownership model
 - We talked about pros and cons of both
 - Rent
 - We didn't have to be responsible for maintenance or other issues
 - We got to enjoy interfaith relationships
 - DUPC doesn't have stable leadership at this time
 - Ownership
 - Have a space to call our own
 - Possibility of having a neighborhood location
 - REI Ed in one building
 - Have autonomy to use the space as we wanted
 - Rev. Myra - had a funeral and we had to book when Rev Myra wasn't able to be there because that was only time we could book DUPC.

- We can connect with other churches on a different level
 - Overtime costs would be reduced
 - Stay here for 5 yrs we would be spending another \$1 mil
 - It is supported and recommended by staff stewardship committee and others in parish
- In May we voted to pursue Child street property
 - Last year we were homeless for 3 months due to Hochstein renovations
 - We voted that we could send in a LOI
 - Rev Myra thought it was implied that we could continue to look at other properties
 - We should have a vote to vote for a full Parish Vote, if we should look at an ownership model
 - That is why we are bringing this to PCF
 - People thinking about bringing communities together when looking for a building
- Parishioner
 - Does the model include looking at moving into a neighborhood in the city?
 - Should that be part of the motion
- Rev Myra
 - Yes it would be in the city
- Parishioner
 - If we are going to own we need a committee to get capital for building
- At a prior meeting we discussed looking to build new. (Was added to the motion.)

MOTION

PCF Chairperson - John O’Gorham

We are voting to have the full Parish Vote

Leaders and facilitators are not able to give the motion

Kathleen Tranelli gave the motion as amended -

“To have this group vote to move forward with an All Parish Vote to move from a leasing model to a ownership model for a building or property in an inner city neighborhood”

Jim Dillon - Secondary to the motion

All in favor 48 live, 20 online = 68 total.

Decline 0 declined live, 2 declined online

Abstaining 0 live 0 online
Motion passed with 68 votes yes vs. 2 declined.

Discussion - Should be done as a separate vote later so it doesn't get confusing

Rather than a proposal, how about a committee to investigate how to finance?

We need a Project Manager. When we think about building or starting a new project, we should start with a plan in place

Parishioners agreed with that - We need requirements of what we need, where do we want to be 5-10 years from now.

How do we take this to an all parish vote to make a decision that will be thoughtful? if I heard this on a Sunday without understanding? Some real thinking should go in to how we present this to the parish.

Steps and rationale that we have gone through to make this decision

- Rev Myra
We will give information to give to parishioners so they know why it makes sense.
AAron - One thing we are asking as a staff is that you trust us - we don't have to decide in this PCF how to do this. We as the staff can do the little stuff - trust in the staff
Working with Ruth to get all minutes online so everyone can see

Closing Prayer - Colleen Farley

Meeting End Time: 8:24 pm

Meeting Facilitators: Trevor Carney, Colleen Farley, John O'Gorman

Notetakers: Bridget Casselman, Colleen Farley

Parish Community Forum Facilitators:

Trevor Carney

Colleen Farley

Matt Liston

John O'Gorman

Kim Winden

Dave Winden

