

**Church of St. Patrick**  
**Parish Council Meeting**  
**Tuesday, December 5, 2017**

**Present:** Father Thomas Barry

**Members Present:** Monica Blum, Susan Chudwick, Susan Collins, John DiTommaso, Ed Fisher, Tom Gleifert, Karen Mastella, Patricia McLaughlin, Mike Netkovick, Kate Noe, Tim Pedrotty, Marie Macaro, Bev Montresor, Jeff Pingpank

**Ex Officio:** Eileen Dignazio, Deacon Bill Farrell, Deacon Bob Barry

**Absent:** Fernando Macaro, Rita Monahan, Matt Plona

1. Opening prayer: Kate Noe
2. Approval of November Meeting Mins.  
Motion to approve by Susan Chudwick, seconded by Tim Pedrotty, motion carried.
3. Pastor's discussion:
  - a. Father's Christmas gift to parishioners this year will be a prayer missal/booklet. His Christmas letter to parishioners has been mailed ahead of schedule.
  - b. Father expressed concerns that Holy Family Monastery is doing fundraising and assembling a youth choir. It is acting like a parish but isn't a parish and is not being taxed by the diocese as a parish.
  - c. Father attended a meeting with the Archbishop and priests in Stamford. Parish needs an evangelical effort to have outreach to new parishioners, especially to young adults (late teens thru early 20s). This is the theme of the 2019 archdiocesan synod. Need programs to attract young adult participation, including a welcome to mass, better music/instrumentals, a quality liturgy, and homilies with pertinent messages. Need to consider these as we look to our facilities addition. Parishes should have a 5 year plan.
  - d. Archdiocese endowment declined significantly over recent years, so the tax on each parish will be increased. New endowment goal is \$100MM. We have an exemption because we will be raising funds for the church addition.
  - e. Ray (architect) was in attendance. The church expansion plan will be presented informally to the town historical commission at its December 12<sup>th</sup> meeting. The town planner will assist us in determining property owners with properties adjacent to or within 500 feet of the church property and the church will send a letter to these residents notifying them of our building plans. This proactive letter, when sent before a notice of hearing, makes for better relations with the immediate residential community and usually results in cutting potentially negative attendance at the hearing. It is estimated that the construction will take approximately 14-16 months, with possible ground breaking in the spring of 2019, assuming we have the required 60% of the building costs in hand to proceed. Fundraising committee will be formed and fundraising will likely start in Aug-Sep 2018 following the archbishop's annual appeal.
  - f. There are stained glass windows that may be available from an episcopal church in Waterbury. They are compatible with the windows at St. Patrick and would be a nice addition to the new building. The windows are free, just need to cover the cost to move them.
  - g. Father reviewed mass attendance and parish income from 2013-2017 (to date). There was a 16% drop in parish attendance in 2015 for two reasons: the shift from religious education classes to the GIFT program which was announced in October 2014, and the announcement of the church addition in September 2015. A recovery in attendance has been occurring and we are on track in 2017 to

hopefully re-attain our pre-2015 level of attendance. It should also be noted that mass attendance in November 2017 has not dropped, but there has been a noticeable reallocation from the 5:00 mass to the 11:30 mass as a result of the mass time change from 4:30 to 5:00. This has been especially favorable for the adult choir that sings at the 11:30 mass.

4. Ministries Updates:

a. Religious Education - Eileen Dignazio:

- i. The Living Nativity was performed at the Tree Lighting by a cast of 32 children. A few of the children, who participated in the Living Nativity will reenact the Gospel as it is read by Deacon Bob at the 3:30 Mass on Christmas Eve.
- ii. 81 children are on the list for Christmas Stockings for Covenant to Care. This is in addition to the Giving Tree, coordinated by Pat Jepsen. All donations will be picked up December 17th after 12:30.
- iii. The GIFT committee is looking at ways to revitalize the GIFT program since the numbers have declined. Eileen suggests keeping the Friday night session at Porter Memorial and catered by Gnazzos, basically no change as this is the most heavily attended session and too big for the church facilities. For the Saturday and Sunday sessions, move them to the church hall which will save money and hopefully also increase attendance by aligning the timing closer to masses when people will be here anyway. Instead of at 9am, Saturday's session would follow the 5:00 mass and would start with a pot luck dinner. Sunday's session would follow the 11:30 mass rather than at 2pm. Questions and concerns were raised and discussed, and the idea was generally well accepted but the council was not yet prepared to agree with making changes for the February GIFT sessions. Mike asked Eileen to write up a proposal with a few options to be reviewed at the January 2018 meeting.

b. Youth Ministry – no update.

c. Knights of Columbus – Ed Fisher

The Knights will donate 52 Christmas baskets to be delivered by the town on December 21<sup>st</sup>. Each basket feeds a family of 4. This is up from 42 baskets last year.

5. New/Old Business:

Parish Council Election: We have 3 nominations and 3 vacancies. Motion was made by Susan Chudwick, seconded by Tim Pedrotty, that if no additional nominations are made by the deadline of Sunday December 10, 2017, midnight, the parish will forego the expense of mailing ballots to parishioners, and instead the Parish Council will vote on the nominees. The motion was carried. Father will also designate 3 new high school juniors from the Peer Ministry group to replace the current youth Parish Council representatives.

6. **Closing prayer:** Mike Netkovick

7. **Meeting Adjourned:** @ 8:50 pm

8. **Next meeting:** Tuesday, January 9, 2018\*.

9. **Respectfully submitted:** Susan Collins

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