

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHOLIC CHURCH

New Freedom, Pa. 17349

Parish Pastoral Council Meeting

Date: January 18, 2022

Attendance **Present:** Father Mark Wilke, Sister Jane Keller, Bo Gifford, Mary Glass, Gary Grant, Dennis Sarpen, Susan Mareck, Diana Morrison (late) and Karla Coombes
Absent: Deacon Fred Horn, Barbara Bittner, Chris Wood,
Excused: Father Josh Cavender, Anthony Carlton, Janice Elsen

The meeting was opened by Dennis Sarpen at 7:05 pm

Opening Prayer: Offered by Father Wilke

Review of Minutes: Motion by Bo Gifford, seconded by Sue Mareck to accept the November 16, 2021 minutes as submitted. Discussion: None
Vote: All in Favor; No Opposed. Motion carried.

PARISH REPORT/BUILDING & GROUNDS COMMITTEE: Father Wilke

It has taken four months, but we are moving forward according to the Diocesan Manual. In several weeks we will be polling the parishioners as to selection of carpet, tile and parking lot repair or resurface. Their input will be used to make final decisions. There is a Renovation Committee of 7 people working on looking into painting and refreshing the campus.

Dennis Sarpen asked that in looking at paving if improvement in exterior lighting could be added.

Gary Grant asked when the last time a Town Hall Meeting was held. The last one he could remember was with Fathers Capitani and Nugent. Father Wilke responded that in addition to the upcoming one, another would be scheduled.

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL REPORT: Susan Mareck

Diocese has authorized parents to make decisions regarding the use of masks for their children. If exposed child must stay home for 5 days and then can either attend school with a mask for 5 days or stay home another 5 days.

Catholic Schools Weeks starting January 30 – Will have 6th grade readers at each Mass. Events planned for each day and it should be a fun week.

Received EITC funds in amount of \$85,000.00 toward Scholarship funding.

Have 175 students total with preschool or 123 in school with two new students to start on Monday; about 25 are non-Catholic. Will have open house this weekend for registration.

There are no requirements for vaccination for adults however 75% of adults are fully vaccinated. We had 25 children positive for COVID in October and since Christmas we have had 3 positive cases with one more (a brother) to be added.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION REPORT: Sister Jane Keller

Following same guidelines for COVID as school. Last Sunday (with the snow) we had 25 families present at 11:30 Mass.

1. Continued gratitude to our generous Catechists and Aides who assist with Rel. Ed.
2. Our Good Shepherd Catechesis provides the basis for our Faith Formation and Sacramental Prep. Both level I and Level II Formation classes are calendared for Spring and Summer for new Catechists.
3. Sacrament Prep classes, Parent Meetings and upcoming Retreat Days are combined for school and Rel. Ed. Families, encouraging a greater unity in our parish community.
4. Family Prayer sessions are held in conjunction with Mass attendance on Sundays. Grade 1 families met on Sunday, 1/9 and Grade 2 families will do so on Sunday, 1/23.

5. An “instructional Mass” was held in November for all Grade 2 students and their families. An Instructional Mass was also offered for our RCIA/RCIC candidates.
6. First Reconciliation will be celebrated with our Grade 2 students and their families on Saturday, 3/5.
7. RCIA and RCIC candidates will celebrate the Rite of Sending and Call to Repentance on Sunday, 3/6. Later in the day, our Catechumens will meet in Harrisburg for the Rite of Election with Bishop Gainer.
8. Planning is underway for our upcoming Sacrament Prep Retreat Days:

Grade 7 – Sat. 3/19	Grade 8 – Sat. 4/2
Grade 1 – Sat. 3/26	Grade 2 – Sat. 4/30
9. Confirmation is scheduled to be celebrated on Sat. 4/23 here at St. John’s. First Holy Communion will be celebrated on Sat. 5/7.
10. Our Spring Fundraiser will kick off on Wed/Thurs 1/26 -1/27. Forms will also be available for our congregation, inviting all to participate.
11. Our school students and Rel. Ed student participated in the K of C “Keeping Christ in Christmas” art contest. Winners were selected and awarded.
12. Rel. Ed continues to join with the school in support of all fundraisers, spirit nights, programs and projects whenever possible.
13. Our Rel. Ed Staff works together with the school in setting guidelines for the safety and well being of all our students. We share the same Diocesan guidelines.

YOUTH MINISTRY REPORT: Chris Wood (1/11/22)

- 2022 started off well with our first Youth Adoration in a while. Fr Wilke led with myself and Bob Menefee doing some music. Many of the teens went to confession during the Holy Hour. We plan to offer this monthly during our 1st Saturday meeting of the month. It was particularly beautiful in the church with the teens spread out and the candles lit with the lights low. We prefer this to be for the teens only. Let it be their time.
- We have a 2022 schedule sketched out. This document is mainly just for myself and the core team. Parents never seem to want to commit

to anything too far out so I tend to only update them with what's happening in the coming weeks.

- We are working on a plan to do a series of day trips on Friday's during summer in place of our normal Saturday evening Teen Night's. Some examples:
 - Seton Shrine and Grotto Day trip with lunch at Chubby's BBQ
 - With Mass and Confessions
 - Hershey Park (this has been requested every summer since I started)
 - Daily Mass at Holy Spirit Palmyra to begin the day
 - Codorus Park w/ outdoor Mass and lake activities
 - Could possibly have confessions available and maybe a time of Adoration outside if that is allowed???
 - Looking for an idea for a 4th day trip, somewhere within an hour or less drive preferably.
 - We will attend the Main Campus 5 Steubenville Youth Rally like every year. July 15th-17th.
 - End of Summer All Night Lock In which is a tradition for us.
 - This will begin with the 5pm Saturday Mass followed by Adoration and Confessions afterward if Fr Wilke or Fr Josh are available
 - The rest of the night is a mad sprint of games and activities all over the campus
- We should be going snow tubing in February but we may have an issue with the place requiring proof of vaccination status to go inside the buildings. Bob and I are fully vaxed but most of our teens are not and likely will never be. We are working on a plan B if this is the case.
- Mount 2000 was cancelled due to low registrations and COVID complications. This is another big bummer. Mount 2000 is personally my favorite of all the retreats. We had 6 teens signed up who would have greatly benefited from this. We are working on creating a day trip for the group the Saturday of the Mount 2000 weekend. February 12th. The most powerful parts of these retreats are Mass, Adoration and Confessions so we hope to create something that includes those. The group of teens who signed up are all mature

spiritually for their age so I am praying over the possibility of a retreat with some discussions on the interior life as well as Mass, Adoration and Confession.

- REVIVE Youth Ministry is going really well. We have a good core group and they tend to invite friends which is the main way we grow. Our main curriculum continues to be the Lifeteen Liturgy Support program which does a deep dive into the weekly readings with discussion questions and videos. It's a great resource for us (and it is also very cheap). Through this liturgy support program and the offering of regular Adoration and Confessions we hope to achieve our goal of instilling proper Catholic tradition and culture into these teens while also helping them form a personal relationship with Jesus so this culture and tradition actually means something to them.

EVANGILIZATION COMMITTEE: Barbara Bittner

No report

PASTOR'S REPORT AND COMMENTS: Father Wilke

Survey throughout the Diocese showed our elementary school near the top of students to receive Baptism while enrolled in school.

Attended meeting relative to building the synod process. Deacon Carl Freidhoff will take the lead for the Synod of the People of God. Plans are in late March to have bulletin articles. Each parish will produce a two-page summary to be submitted to the Diocese for a final report. National Conference will then go forward for the Holy Father's three-year process. Per the Holy Father, this will not be a synod of Bishops but of Diocese gathering. Events are to be framed by prayer and not just speaking. Father asked that we keep Deacon Carl in prayers for this process.

Sister Jane thought this a great opportunity to engage in question and positive thought on Church.

Dennis Sarpen asked how parishioners would be made aware. Father stated there would be bulletin and website announcements. Want small groups instead of large gatherings.

FINANCIAL REPORT: Karla Coombes

LOANS

Balance on Education Building Loan as of 12/31/21 is \$138,938.

Balance of 2019 YR Deficit Loan as of 12/21/21 is \$50,967.

Total loan Debt is \$189,905.

CASH BALANCE

Estimated G/F Cash Balance as of 1/18/22: Positive cash balance of \$676,965.

This is so high because of the 2nd SBA PPP loan that was received back on 3/2 in the amount of \$239,690. As well as some of the 1st SBA PPP loan and a few recent very large bequests.

UNDESIGNATED SAVINGS

Parish General Savings as of 8/31/21: \$55,035.

DIOCESAN ANNUAL CAMPAIGN (DAC) as of 11/16/21

- Goal for 2021/22 is the same as last year o \$192,003.
- We have 2 weeks left to collect.
- The actual payments collected are \$135,927.
- We are currently \$56,076. short of the goal.

- Outstanding pledges of \$2,695.01 of which all of it is past due.
- If we are able to collect all the outstanding pledges, we will still be \$53,381. Short of the assessed amount.
- I had budgeted a shortfall of \$71,184.
- The donations have come from 307 gifts with an average gift of \$451.

FAITH DIRECT (was closed down as of 12/31/21).

VANCO

Enrollment is to 115 families

With average weekly collection for the first 2 weeks of January is \$5,491.

Father Wilke stated that the generosity and stewardship of the parish is great.

GENERAL DISCUSSION: Council

Parish Council – All nominations are to be submitted in writing to Dennis Sarpen.

Bo Gifford stated that the K of C will be removing all wreaths from cemetery by mid February. They wish to retrieve the wreaths for possible re-use. Phil will be notified. The K of C “Keep Christ in Christmas” was great with appropriate prizes. K of C is working on a food drive with Walmart hopefully on 4/9. St. Vincent de Paul made a financial contribution.

Dennis Sarpen asked if the school had a record of how many students were from public schools. Sue did not have that info, but will look into it and get back to the council. She did state that the students from public school last year due to COVID have stayed and that scores are good.

Diana Morrison stated she will be in touch with Father for the Eucharistic Holy Hour.

Next Meeting: February 15, 2022

Closing Prayer by Father Wilke

Meeting closed by Dennis Sarpen at 7:40 pm

Respectfully Submitted:
Mary Glass