

Pastoral Council Meeting Notes
January 17, 2024

Present: Fr. Andy Switzer, Colin Hayden, Christine Wiegman, Shana Harris, Patrick Green, Gil Sateia, Connie Bonner, Derrick Gallager, Brendan Jarrell, Vanessa Santiago.

Not present: Becky Tokarcik and Fr. Andy announced that Heather Garcia had accepted a position on the council but was unable to attend this month due to family obligation.

Roles: Pastor: Fr. Andy; Co-chairs: Colin Hayden, Christine Wiegman; Prayer leader: vacant (led by Colin Hayden today); Recorder: vacant (minutes taken by Christine today)

Opening Prayer: led by Colin Hayden

- Fr. Andy read from scripture (John 15: 1-10) and gave a reflection on the vine and the branches demonstrating a way of being church and reminded the council on the importance of being centered in scripture and prayer in our work

New Roles:

Christine announced to the council that Bill Sagle had submitted his resignation from the council in email the previous week after discernment and prayer. (His letter is attached below.) Fr. Andy stated that he had spoken with Bill who was affirming of the pastoral council's work and reiterated his process of discerning a different role for himself in parish life. Christine reflected on the gifts that Bill brought to the council and that his roles as prayer leader and recorder of minutes would have to be taken up by others on the council. Brendan offered to take notes starting next month and Connie offered to be his back-up. Christine reviewed the process of taking notes, submitting them to the co-chairs and Fr. Andy for review and then submitting them to the whole council and Beth Yates (who keeps them for parish records) and Rosanne Hutton (who posts them on the parish website). Fr. Andy explained the role of prayer leader to help the council reflect on the month's agenda and their role in the life of the parish. Vanessa offered to lead prayer.

Christine brought up the retreat that was hosted for new members in June of 2021 and suggested that the newest members of the council may benefit from one in which they can learn about the history and purpose of and model for pastoral councils and gain access to the "Revisioning the Parish Pastoral Council" workbook. No date was set for this.

Vision:

Fr. Andy presented the importance of the council articulating the vision of St. Agnes parish and stated that that starts with knowing who we are. He asked for members to use one word to describe our parish: Inclusive, Accepting, Welcoming, Unpretentious, Family, Talented, Openness to Spirit, Joyous.

Fr. Andy asked Derek who has a background in teaching leadership to speak to the process of developing vision statements. Derek stated that a vision points to "principles and standards we can operate by that are larger than any one of us." The vision is different from our mission statement and should give us direction like a compass without being rigid. Derek talked about creating a vision board that reflects goals while also maintaining openness and achieving things that move us forward. It was decided that the council will begin working on this at the next meeting. Brendan stated that keeping the spiritual aspects foremost will be important in the process.

Updates:

Gil updated the council on the status of his search for a coordinator for the next **parish directory**. The bulletin announcements asking for volunteers to coordinate have not born fruit. Gil mentioned personally inviting a parish member rather than just a bulletin announcement, and making an announcement before Masses on an upcoming Sunday was also mentioned. Fr. Andy brought up one parishioner who he thought may have talents in this area and stated he would speak with that person before the next PC meeting. Derek also mentioned that he had spoken with Joe Yates about having the youth help with sign up or set up for the project. It was also brought up that including photos of the various activities and celebrations may be helpful.

Brendan gave an update about the progress on the new **gathering space** as he is the liaison for that endeavor. He reported on the process of going through the diocese, fundraising, the finances. They will also speak with other people in the community and diocese about the building process – lessons, ideas, setbacks, successes, etc. He also stated that in the synodal way, the committee would have a parish-wide survey to assess the needs and ideas for the space from people of all stages in life. And Fr. Andy reminded us that synodality is a part of our way of life – listening before moving forward.

Fr. Andy and Colin updates the council on the **Religious Education Congress** in Anaheim in mid-February for which the parish received a donation for several people to attend in order to build up leaders within the parish. Colin and his wife, Amy, who is involved with confirmation and Melanie and Ed Turner who lead RCIA will attend along with Fr. Andy. Colin reported that he and his wife are very excited about the experience and growing their faith and invigorate their service to the parish. Gil asked about the National Eucharistic Congress that was mentioned in the diocesan weekly e-newsletter and the process for getting free tickets. Gil will look into attending that.

Fr, Andy updated for the **Shepherd University outreach**. So far 3 churches (New Street Methodist, St. Peter's Lutheran and St. Agnes, with the Presbyterian church still considering) have committed to providing weekly meals on Mondays from 5-6pm. Fr, Andy reported that some students report food insecurity. Feb 5th- Methodist will host. February 12th – Lutheran's host. February 19th – Catholic's host. Derrick Gallager and Shana Harris will be the liaison's for our parish for the time being.

New Items:

Fr. Andy and Vanessa reported on **Hispanic ministry**. Fr. Andy mentioned his upcoming trip to El Salvador that Bishop Brennan recommended him for due to the increasing Latino migrant population in the Eastern Panhandle. Vanessa said that she is just beginning to talk with a few others in the parish who speak Spanish. Several council members asked about need for this at our parish as St. Joseph and St. James have Spanish speaking priest/sisters and offer Mass and other services in the Spanish language and not having access to a Spanish speaking priest may be a problem. Fr Andy said that we will need to find ways to minister to this population as some have called the parish asking for help.

Fr. Andy brought up **Lent planning** and that the Vatican has asked parishes to address 2 more questions by the end of May. Fr. Andy is working with Synod team (Eileen Dooley, Eileen Elliott and Helen Harris) to address make a plan for implementing this in the parish. Other ideas for Lent will be discussed at the next meeting.

Gil let the council know that he has placed the new, larger **Suggestion/Comment/Question box** for any parishioner to address Fr. Andy who will address the items in the box.

Next meeting will be February 21 at 6:30 in the parish hall.

Bill Sagle's email:

William Sagle

From: williamsagle@aol.com

To: Andy Switzer, Andy Switzer, Christine Wiegman, Colin Hayden

Tue, Jan 2 at 11:23 AM

Fr. Andy, Christine, & Colin,

The Holy Spirit seems to be nudging me in a different direction. After much contemplation, prayer, and introspection, I feel it is time to discontinue my term on the Pastoral Council. I do not leave in any disagreement or with frustration. To the contrary, I leave because the council and the St. Agnes community are in thoroughly competent hands. I fully embrace Father Andy's methods and vision for an inclusive, progressive, and dynamic parish. Leadership of the council could not hope for more adept and proficient leadership. Christine and Colin, you are superbly qualified and prescient leaders. The council itself is composed of sincere and capable individuals who truly have the best interests of the parish in heart and mind. You see, quite simply, I feel that there is little left for me to offer in my council role and, with the Holy Spirit's guidance, want to pursue other ways to serve.

Please know that I am profoundly grateful and sincerely humbled for having the privilege to serve with you. Thank you for enduring my attempts at recording our meetings. And, Father Andy, thank you for allowing me to share some of my prayers with the council. Your uncritical confidence in me has contributed beyond measure to my spiritual growth.

Pray for me as I discern new roles within the parish as I will pray for each of you. Please express my gratitude and love to the council. Thank you for understanding and respecting my decision. As you know, I am a rather low-key person and ask only that you make my decision known to the rest of the council for me. You can feel free to share this letter with them if you would like to do so.

With love, profound respect, and prayerful support always,

Bill Sagle