Parish Council Minutes 9-24-25

PRESENT: Fr Tom, Dcn Rob, Dennis Redding, Tes Sanderlin, Mike O’Neil, Don Clemmer, Cynthia Crosby, Pam Bennett, Gloria Perkins, Tony Hasselschwert, Katie Eckrich, Cathy Krouse, Matt Smith, Jerry Witte, Joe Eifried, Jared Hoy, Cheryl Prater

1. **Ecumenical/Interfaith visits. Beacon Heights Church of the Brethren:** Saturday, Oct 2, 7 pm – would be good to have a good crowd. We’ll get a tour, learn about the Anabaptist tradition, will have choir there. Two pastors are very enthusiastic about our visit. Please talk this up.
2. **Wed Coffee and Donuts:** no October plan yet, will get back to Fr Tom. Would welcome more help from council members, though the workload is light. Is after 8 a.m. Mass on Wednesday (a TBD date this month)
3. **Cardinal Fest:** Perfect weather, tremendous crowd, no apparent problems. Wristband sales for kids was significantly higher, from some 800 to over 1,000.
4. **50th Anniversary of Church Building, Jan 25:** No action on this yet, but we’ll put together video, have prayers at Mass, etc.
5. **World Marriage Day Feb 9:** also on back burner
6. **Church security:** Hiring fulltime former police officer to be present during school, starting in October. We have had officers during drop-off and pickup; will also start locking church during school Masses. Parents have raised concerns in wake of Minnesota shooting. Ushers have SOP in place. Question of how to explain officer’s presence to students without scaring them – but he probably won’t be in uniform, will be introduced to students, wearing St Charles badge, etc.
7. **Spiritual events**
   1. Divine Cenacle prayer group has been well attended and gotten good reviews
   2. Bible Study, Saturday mornings -- very good turnout the first Sunday
   3. Catholic apologetics, Tues evenings – hasn't started yet
   4. OCIA – 20 people starting in program this year
   5. Marriage Encounter, Sept 27/28 -- ten couples are signed up
   6. New item from Gloria Perkins: Shema Culture doing ecumenical event with Bishop Rhoades for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity at St Jude’s (Sunday, Jan 18 at 5 pm); this year’s liturgy put together by Armenian Church and will be carried out joint liturgical celebration. We want to see wide representation of churches.
8. **Diocesan Synod 2026 Parish Consultation Phase**

Nov 2026 will be diocesan Synod, with limited number of attendees. Priests who are regional vicars will attend, as will one representative from each parish. One weekend will be Grand Center, the other at Notre Dame. Discussion questions will focus on the mission of the Church in our diocese. We are all the Body of Christ, can all be inspired by the Spirit, and need to listen to each other and grow. Topics: evangelization, catechesis, liturgy, spiritual life, vocations, outreach. At end of sessions, there is shared prayer, and all ideas and thoughts have been compiled to put together document reporting out.

Before the synod, every parish will have a Parish Consultation. At St. Charles we plan on 2 p.m. on Sunday, February 15. We will invite as many as possible to this event, where we will share prayerful reflections on a round of questions. This event will take place in the Hession Center. The diocese is also organizing these consultation events at jails, nursing homes, centers for homeless people, and universities. We as church need to listen to each other, contribute, and see where we’re coming from and where the spirit is leading us.

On Wed., Jan. 28, a few weeks before the Parish Consultation, we will have a Prayerful Opening. At the 6:30 evening Mass we will have preaching about the synod and prayers for the process. At the end of Mass we will distribute booklets with the discussion questions for the Parish Consultation. It is expected that those who attend the parish consultation will have prepared thoughts before coming.

Throughout the year we will offer petitions at Mass and use a prayer card, probably left in the pews. The goal is that the Holy Spirit will lead us.

Casey Ryan is our parish Point Person, organizing events with the diocese. Gloria Perkins offered to organize music for the Prayerful Opening. We will need an RSVP system to get basic idea of how many people are showing up. Facilitators and notetakers need to be recruited and trained in an appropriate number. Perhaps have a parishioner really invested in Synod give talk at end of Masses.

1. **Building Project proposal:** We received a large bequest a year or two ago and have had many ideas suggested for using the funds. Fr Tom has been deliberately delaying decisions while other big projects are underway and ideas are weighed. With much discernment, Fr Tom proposes that we build a relatively small building which would be used for funeral luncheons, OCIA and various other parish meetings. Our OCIA currently meets in a basement room with poor handicap accessibility, little parking, and awful bathrooms. Funeral luncheons are now held in the Hession Center; this area is sometimes unavailable because of school functions, and since it is part of the school building, we have to allow strangers into the school building while serving luncheons. We are imagining a simple open space which could be divided, with a kitchen, bathrooms, and storage. When not in use for parish meetings, this building could be offered for parish families to hold rehearsal dinners, baptism parties, or other family events. The most workable location on our property seems to be south of the church building and northeast of the rectory. We would probably keep the building under 10,000 square feet. We would likely need to hire a part-time person responsible for scheduling, set-up, cleaning and stocking the building.

Fr Tom also notes that we need to be generous with money; he would like us to have a long-term plan of giving money to parishes and causes in need. We might approach the diocese again with the request that some of our bequest be put into a charitable endowment.

**Other business:**

Tues Nov 25 is the interfaith Thanksgiving celebration at Achduth Vesholom.

Cathy Krouse pointed out that our parish welcoming packet probably needs updated.

Next meeting: Nov 5, 7 pm