

## St. Mark's Parish Pastoral Council

September 14, 2016

### In Attendance:

Arsenault, Sr. Mae  
Beyea, Dianne  
Breen, Fr. Don  
Carey, Pat  
Carvell, Trinda

Drummond, Mavis  
Ellis, Wendy  
Glasgow, MaryAlice  
Hache, Charles  
Howe, Marilyn

Isaacs, Denise  
Johnson, Kayla  
Lawlor, Bill  
Murphy, Dave  
Stroud, Anne

### Absent:

MacDonald, Mike

The meeting was called to order by Chair, Pat Carey at 7pm.

The opening prayer was led by Fr. Don.

Anne circulated sheets for members to confirm their contact information and to sign up to lead opening or closing prayers at upcoming PPC meetings.

Pat welcomed the new PPC members who were present. He then provided an overview of two documents that were distributed: "St. Mark's Parish Council Constitution and By-Laws" and "Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines". Please refer to these documents for more detailed information. It was emphasised that attendance at PPC meetings is critical, as without a quorum motions cannot be passed.

Fr. Don emphasised that Bishop Harris would like to see a PPC functioning in every parish. Fr. Don reminded us that we all need to take responsibility for our Church, so that "we will continue to grow together as a parish".

Minutes of the PPC meeting held on June 8, 2016 were approved on a motion by Bill Lawlor, and seconded by Sr. Mae Arsenault.

### Business Arising from Previous Minutes:

#### 1. Communication: On-going PPC initiatives:

- 1) **Parish website:** Update by Pat Carey: Pat remarked that last year's Council flagged improved communication as a priority. It is important that information flow both ways-from the various ministries and parishioners in to PPC and from PPC back to ministries and parishioners. Dianne continues to receive e-mails via the website. Fibre-op has recently been installed at St. Mark's. Pat continues to update the website, and any ministry with updates and events to be added to the calendar section, should forward them to him.
- 2) **Media Ministry:** Update by Pat Carey: Pat explained to our new PPC members that the creation of this new ministry was an initiative undertaken by last year's Council. If we are to improve communication, we need to gather information and photos to keep our website and publications current and relevant.

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- 3) **"Did you know?" Program: Progress to date and next steps:** Update by Anne Stroud: PPC agreed by consensus that our "Did you know?" (DYK) program has been successful and that it will continue at regular intervals. "Did You Knows" are distributed in the form of bulletin inserts, as well as being available on the parish website. As Wendy planned an insert focusing on Religious Education for September, the previous PPC had agreed to postpone the next "DYK" until later in the Fall. We already have material available from a presentation made to PPC in May by Helen MacDonald and Fran Hickmott about the Catholic Women's League. Anne will check with Helen MacDonald in order to determine whether she would prefer PPC to hold the CWL insert until January (which is their recruitment month) or issue it in October. Anne suggested that Chris Little be invited to speak about St. Marks library program at the October PPC meeting. Council were in agreement and Pat will contact Chris to issue an invitation. Pat informed PPC that a library open house was being held on September 18.
2. **Designation of PPC members as liaisons with specific active parish ministries:** Anne Stroud. This item was deferred to our October meeting due to time constraints.
3. **Youth Ministry:** Update by Kayla Johnson: Kayla is taking a new approach to youth ministry at St. Mark's, whereby the youth themselves take on more responsibility for activities. She reported that she had not made much progress over the summer in implementing this ministry, as the religious education program is not active over the summer break. Kayla will focus on interesting students in Grades 8 and 9 in this ministry; however, due to the requirements of the Responsible Ministry Protocol, a team of 3-5 people over the age of nineteen will be needed to help plan/ organize/attend youth events. As with many other ministries, the team will be required to have current police checks on file with the Parish Office.

Kayla will develop a short survey for Grade 8 and 9 students to complete. She will discuss this with Wendy. Kayla may attend the religious education classes during which the surveys are to be completed. The survey will consist of directional questions. For example, students may be asked questions like "Which days work for you?" or "List activities which interest you." Trinda stated that direction by the youth is more empowering, and that this lack had been a drawback of Life Teen. Bill suggested that those involved in running Life Teen be contacted to provide information about past efforts and activities. Students could also be asked on the survey whether their parents would like to be involved. Mary Alice commented that kids today don't mind having parents involved provided that the parents don't take charge of discussions. She cited the youth ministry at St. Benedict's Parish in Halifax as an example of this.

**Report on Regional Pastoral Council (RPC):** Update by Rick Northrup: Rick circulated minutes from RPC meetings held on May 7 and June 4, 2016. The May meeting was primarily a brainstorming session, while the June meeting functioned as a dialogue with Bishop Harris, who attended the meeting.

RPC was created in response to the Diocesan Plan, and it is designed to assist our bishop, in the same way that PPC is in place to assist our priest. RPC consists of 15 members, including 3 youth representatives. Two members hail from St. Mark's Parish: Rick, who is the Chair, and Kayla Johnson, who is a youth representative. RPC aims to positively engage key players: Bishop Harris, priests, PPCs and the Regional Model Working Group. It is intended that there be three RPCs in our diocese: Saint John area, Fredericton area and Miramichi area. There is currently no RPC in Miramichi.

RPC has made improved communications their priority. RPC will reach out to existing PPCs in order to establish two-way communication. RPC needs to know what PPCs are thinking and PPCs need information from RPC in order to provide useful input. Our Diocese is very diverse, including both large

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and very small parishes, rural and urban parishes, parishes in close proximity to one another and parishes that are more isolated. Many parishes are facing significant challenges, and not all parishes have PPCs. In some parishes, as at St. Mark's, PPCs are active and structured to meet the definition of a pastoral council, while this is not the case in some other parishes. RPC will initiate communication with all existing PPCs, as well as encouraging the priests and parishioners of parishes without PPCs to establish them.

Rick reported that he is also a member of a separate body called the Regional Model Working Group. This group has been tasked with doing a comprehensive review of this region of the diocese in order to identify regional models for the consideration of Bishop Harris.

### **New Business:**

- 1. Parish Fun Day held September 11:** Update by Kayla Johnson: The Fun Day was very successful, although it was not as well attended as last year's event, likely due to poor weather. Most activities were held inside. Some new games were introduced, and the children had fun. Fr. Don mentioned that our sponsored Syrian family, the El Zohbis, attended. He thanked Kayla for being an exceptional leader and for sharing her gifts with our Parish.
- 2. Results of Diocesan Discipleship Survey:** Presentation by Wendy Ellis. Wendy distributed a handout which focused on the results of questions in three categories: Identity, General and Frequency. Regarding the survey itself, Wendy pointed out that the responses from our diocese represent a small slice of a very large survey. In addition, our diocese was the only Canadian diocese that participated-the others were all American. There were 213 responses from parishioners of St. Mark's, and about 6,000 from our diocese as a whole.

The survey is an engagement survey, not a satisfaction survey, but responses do show how likely respondents are to recommend their own parishes to others. There are six key driver questions, with the strongest driver being recommendation of the respondent's pastor. Wendy stated that unless you "strongly agree" with a survey statement, you are not considered to be a "promoter". This prompted lots of discussion. Trinda indicated that she seldom checked "strongly agree" on any survey. Anne indicated that she felt those who "agree", rather than "strongly agree" are actually telling us that "things are Ok, but...". In most categories, the results from St. Mark's were statistically consistent with other parishes in our diocese. St. Mark's was rated higher than the diocese as a whole in connecting people to a community. Fr. Don emphasised that the survey results presented real opportunities for growth in our parish. In particular, Fr. Don mentioned that parishioners were looking for guidance in praying with scripture and in establishing small faith-sharing groups.

- 3. Invitation to a ministry Chair to speak at October PPC meeting:** Council agreed with Anne's suggestion that Chris Little be invited to speak about St. Mark's lending library. Please refer to "Business Arising" re: "DYK".
- 4. Suggestions for future PPC initiatives?:** This item was deferred to our October PPC meeting due to time constraints.

The meeting was closed with a prayer led by Anne.

### **Next meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 12 at 7pm.**

Meeting will be chaired by Pat Carey. Minutes will be taken by Anne Stroud.

Opening prayer will be led by Sr. Mae Arsenault

Closing prayer will be led by Marilyn Howe.