

St. Mark's Parish Pastoral Council

December 13, 2017

In Attendance:

Arsenault, Sr. Mae	Carvell, Trinda	Johnson, Kayla
Beyea, Dianne	Connors, Michele	Mike MacDonald
Burns, Fr. Owen	Doherty, Bob	McGrath, Lawrence
Brown, Sandra	Howe, Marilyn	Stroud, Anne
Carey, Pat	Isaacs, Denise	

Absent: Ellis, Wendy Glasgow, Mary Alice

The meeting was called to order by Chair, Pat Carey at 6:30pm.

The opening prayer was led by Marilyn Howe.

Pat welcomed two new Council members: Denise Isaacs and Lawrence McGrath. Denise and Lawrence will be completing the terms of former members, Mavis Drummond and Bill Lawlor.

Jean MacDonald, Chair of the Refugee Committee at St. Mark's, updated Council about this ministry. She began by providing some history for the Syrian Refugee Committee.

1. Syrian Refugee Committee: Over two years ago, our Parish made a commitment to sponsor a refugee family from Syria. Support from parishioners was overwhelming, with about 150 individuals/families giving \$240 each, either in a lump sum or as \$20/month. People and organizations outside of our Parish also provided financial support. The El Zohbi family arrived in January of 2016, with one day's notice! The family consists of parents, Mahmoud and Salem, and their four children. All of the funds raised for the sponsorship have been spent on the family; in fact, our Parish supported the family longer than required, so that all the funds raised were used. Although our parish no longer supports the family financially, committee members continue to provide tutoring and friendship. Two members recently delivered a Christmas tree to their new home. Mahmoud was able to work for a time with Home Star; unfortunately, a shoulder injury sustained while in Syria, made it impossible for him to continue with this physically demanding type of employment. His English skills still need to improve before he is likely to find other employment. The family is currently receiving Social Assistance. The children's English is good. The family recently relocated to Hampton to live in an apartment attached to the house being rented for Salam's sister and her family, who arrived on October 31 of this year. They have been sponsored by St. Alphonsus Parish. The two families are very happy to be reunited and Letitia Adair will watch to see if any other relatives appear on sponsorship lists.
2. Refugee Committee: The name of the group has been changed to reflect the Committee's decision to continue to sponsor refugees, and not to limit sponsorship to those displaced from Syria. Our Diocese now has SAH (Sponsorship Agreement Holder) status. Cases are becoming available, but funding must be in place and groups have only three days to commit to sponsorship. In the new year, St. Mark's Refugee Committee will approach our parishioners again regarding their willingness to sponsor another individual or family. One potential case is that of a young man living in a refugee camp in Turkey. His parents already live in Saint John. The cost to sponsor him would be about \$5000, as his parents would be able to supply his accommodations and food. The Knights of Columbus have donated \$1000, and the United

Minutes by Anne Stroud.

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Church in Grand Bay-Westfield has \$2000 left over from sponsoring a refugee family and would be willing to contribute it. This means that about \$2000 would need to be raised at St. Mark's. There may also be exit permit fees to cover. For example, Lebanon charges \$400/year that an adult refugee has lived in that country.

The minutes of the November 8, 2017 meeting of Parish Pastoral Council (PPC), were approved on a motion by Mike MacDonald, and seconded by Trinda Carvell.

Business Arising from Previous Minutes:

1. Revision of Parish Information Booklet: Update: Fr. Burns provided an update on Wendy's behalf and circulated the prototype. It was noted that the colour scheme used on the bookmark matches that used on our website. Wendy will obtain a new photo of the church building for the bookmark. It will be economical to print the bookmarks on off-white card stock. An on-line version can be created for our website. Council was desirous of proceeding with this project.
 - a) Anne stated that the bookmark was a good first step, and asked that we also consider developing a larger card to highlight opportunities to serve in ministries. She circulated a card used by St. Benedict's Parish in Halifax, as an example.
 - b) Anne also suggested that we look at obtaining some type of shelving, or other means of displaying the bookmarks in a prominent location in the church foyer.
 - c) A note regarding the purpose and location of the card could be placed on the screen with the announcements prior to mass.
 - d) It was noted that a "Welcome Team" should be in place, to make it easy to respond to potential/new parishioners who complete the back of the card. Andrea MacLean Holohan is currently the coordinator of the Newcomers Ministry at St. Mark's.
2. Appointment of a second youth member to PPC: Update: Fr. Burns shared an update provided by Wendy. Wendy assembled a list of five potential candidates for Council's consideration. After discussion, Council selected a candidate who is currently in Grade 11, and requested that Wendy contact them to confirm their willingness to serve a one-year term.

New Business: An opportunity exists for a group of young people from St. Mark's to attend a Seadogs Faith & Family Night in January. The cost would be approximately \$10/seat. Fr. Burns recommended that our Parish purchase a row of seats, then fill them. The tickets can be ordered, then picked up two days before the game. Kayla felt that this would be a great kick-off for youth ministry. Adults (aged 19+) are needed to accompany the youth, with 2 adults required/15 students. Kayla will develop an ad to recruit volunteers.

Updates re: Parish Ministries:

1. **Peru Committee:** To date, over \$2500 has been raised by the November book sale. A cheque for \$2300 was sent to the Sisters of Mercy. Anne circulated a thank-you card and postcards received by the Peru Committee from Sr. Rosemary Ryan. Upcoming initiatives by the Peru Committee include a quilt raffle, a February 10 concert by The Mark' Men, and a "Postcards for Peru" Lenten project.

Divine Renovation: PPC members discussed the material in Chapters 1-4 of the book.

The meeting was called to a close by Pat Carey.

The closing prayer was led by Fr. Burns on behalf of Wendy Ellis.

Council members attended a Christmas social gathering with members of the Liturgy Ministry.

Minutes by Anne Stroud.

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Next meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 10, 2018 at 7pm in Room 1.