St Charles Borromeo Parish Council

Notes 1-15-25

Present: Don Clemmer, Cynthia Crosby, Katie Eckrich, Tony Hasselschwert, Jared Hoy, Stephen Jahrsdoerfer, Cathy Krouse, Mike O’Neil, Cheryl Prater, Dennis Redding, Tes Sanderlin, Matt Smith, Fr Tom, Fr Bobby

1. Building Projects
   1. School Windows/portable classrooms: Nothing is happening now. Electricians are trying find an appropriate electrical source to heat the portable classroom units and then they must be used. This delay and inability to use the portable classrooms means the windows may have to be finished in the summer. This would create some risk that classrooms wouldn’t be usable if work isn’t completed by August. Meanwhile, the decorative panels for the new windows have arrived.
   2. The youth house project is moving along nicely. The main room is done. Work has started on the kitchen, and the bathroom and basement are next. An anonymous donor has agreed to buy the furniture. This will be a top-notch project when completed.
2. Christmas Liturgies –Mass attendance was up on Christmas Eve, a little down on Christmas Day. Seven racks of chairs were not enough on Christmas Eve, and the free books were gone by halfway through the Midnight Mass crowd. Two groups of carolers sang in the neighborhood and passed out the new parish brochure.
3. Tet at St Patrick’s -- Parish council looks forward to revisiting this beautiful event with worship, song, and food. St Patrick’s has a new pastor, and formal dress is not required.
4. Grief notes – A parishioner is sending notes to bereaved families after funerals.
5. Youth Jingle Baskets – The parish has received a lot of wonderful feedback to the teens who brought baskets to parishioners in assisted living (about 30 people), singing carols and visiting with them. Fr Tom has received moving thank you notes from some of these residents.
6. Catholic mental health ministry – Dr. Melanie Williams will lead a session Jan 29 (there will be cookies!) on getting a parish group started, partnering with the diocese (Mary Glowaski) with a grant from a foundation. This has been done in South Bend with success and is a response to the major mental health crisis facing society. This isn’t a clinical response but meant to prevent the need for it.
7. Safe environment audit – The auditor for child protection efforts came to St Charles this week and said the parish system for tracking and keeping current its 600-some trained and background-checked adults is one of the best organized in the diocese, a model that she plans to lift up elsewhere.
8. Ecumenical/interfaith visits – Following powerful parish visits to Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox (October 2023) and Trinity English Lutheran (October 2024), the council entertained options for future encounters. Options brought to the council included Temple Achduth Vesholom (Judaism), New Zion Tabernacle (nondenominational Black church near University of Saint Francis), and St John Chrysostom (Antiochian Orthodox). Discussion yielded suggestions including Dai Bi Temple (Buddhist) near State and Maplecrest (Matt Smith will pursue his contacts at Catholic Charities to see what is possible) and a former Church of God on Reed Rd (now a Hispanic church community) that Dennis Redding will inquire about. Fr Tom noted that he is in contact with the rabbi at the temple and has served on past committees with Bishop Crystal at New Zion Tabernacle.
9. Cross Catholic Outreach – This international org does charitable work to dig wells. A Lenten program at St Charles would sponsor the drilling of wells in Africa. (Rice Bowls will also be promoted.) The org would like to present at Masses one weekend, but Fr Tom – noting that other missionaries already speak at two weekends a year – is more inclined simply to do the promotion without a guest speaker.
10. Spiritual Companions/Home for the Dying – Roughly twenty parishioners attended a presentation on the vision of building a Catholic home for the dying and also a program for people to sit with the dying.
11. Website idea – Sparked by a welcome message on Trinity English Lutheran’s website, Fr Tom has composed and posted on the St Charles website a message to would-be newcomers, laying out what they could expect to experience on a visit to St Charles, in an effort to make the parish and the practices of Catholic worship overall more accessible and comfortable for first-timers.
12. St. Anne Home gala on Feb 25 – St Anne’s is holding its first annual gala fundraiser at Parkview’s Mirro Center. Bishop will speak at the event. Fr Tom would like to support the event. Council members supported sponsoring a table for St Anne residents from St Charles and sponsoring a table for 10, populated by members of the council. Cost of $2,500 for a sponsorship which includes a table.
13. 40 Hours Devotion – Fr Herb Weber will preach on the Jubilee Year of Hope. The parish had a positive experience with his last year with Cross Catholic.
14. Adult ed on Catholic Social Teaching – Fr Tom currently has two recommended presenters, one on the faculty of USF and one who is a high school teacher. Will continue to explore options, as Catholic Social Teaching is an important area that few people are aware of in their own church.
15. Parish brochure – completed and happily in distribution!
16. Door-to-door ministry in neighborhood – no discussion of anything active till warmer weather, but recent caroling efforts arguably modeled the work by showing up with brochures and not trying to sell anything. Tess Sanderlin recommended Fr Tom check with Legion of Mary to ensure against a duplication of efforts.
17. Coffee and donuts – will be after the 8:15 a.m. Mass on Wednesday, Jan 29. Will be announced in bulleting. Cheryl Prater offered to help.

Other items:

1. Tony Hasselschwert continues work on boxes for miscarriages. Has found two options – one cardboard, the other wood. Cost $3 and $10 respectively. Ministry “His Precious Ones” would be St Charles chapter, spun off of existing efforts at St Elizabeth Ann Seton.
2. Fr Bobby proposed addition of one day a week dedicated to Adoration, in addition the parish’s current Friday evening offering. It was suggested that we could use the chapel to avoid conflict with funerals. We will consider trying Adoration on Wednesdays during Lent between the 8:15 morning Mass and 6:30 evening Mass.

Next meeting: Feb 5