

St. Cletus Parish Council Meeting Minutes  
February 21, 2023

**In Attendance:** Fr. Jim Benz, Carol Callahan, Zeonia Christy, Angie DeGooyer, Lori Geisman, Valerie Heien, Jan Joeckel, Carolyn Martin, Chrissy Poulter, Jim Streit, Mary Jane Young, Deacon Mark McCarthy

**Absent:** Fr. Mark Whitman, Rick Bates, Gwen Williams

Meeting was called to order shortly after 7:00 pm in the Rectory basement. The Council will continue meeting in this space until further notice.

Jan Joeckel opened the meeting with a prayer.

Approval of the January 2023 meeting minutes. 1<sup>st</sup> motion, Chrissy Poulter, 2<sup>nd</sup> motion, Jim Streit Motion passed.

Parish Council Formation: Carol led activity on the final chapter of the Living Joy book. Carolyn Martin suggested we use the Archdiocese materials "Preparing for Mission" for our next formation activity. It has 6 sections and focuses on evangelization. Carolyn participated in a Eucharistic Miracles event in Kansas City and was impressed by one of the speakers who would be dynamic leader for the Archdiocese. We also have local talent we could draw on. In the ATN plan, St. Cletus remains a stand-alone parish, so it is vital that we continue evangelization efforts to bring Catholics to church.

#### **Old Business**

The Peace and Justice Ministry parish-wide initiative on welcoming parishioners in the LGBT community is on hold. The ministry is planning a small group book study of about 8 people. Fr. Benz will email the council information on the book title. Several parish council members are interested in attending.

Members of the Peace and Justice ministry recently went to Jefferson City representing St. Cletus. The legislature was debating a bill on LGBT issues at the time of their visit and there was an endeavor regarding the death penalty, though it is unclear what the group from P & J aimed to accomplish during their visit. The parish council's policy to inform Fr. Benz before publicly representing St. Cletus was shared with ministries who are posting on the website. Going forward, it needs to be made clear that the policy includes in-person activities by ministries as well.

The TV in the gathering space is not staying connected to the computer. Chrissy has researched a solution that requires an app and a player box that we need to purchase. The cost is about \$250. The app connects a person to the TV remotely at which time they can control the connection and the content through a website. Chrissy will continue to work on getting the TV working properly.

All Things New Update: St. Cletus is a stand-alone parish in the latest model which will likely be adopted. Use of parish buildings and the school structure has not been announced. Currently, we have about 3,000 parishioners and are distributing about 800 communions each Sunday. Consensus is that our parish must be proactive in our efforts to evangelize to bring more people to the Catholic church, and we must focus more widely to collaborate with parishes in our planning area to ensure that we do not face further shrinkage nor future mergers. Ideas for these efforts include using the strategies we will learn at the evangelization workshop coming up on March 3, working with the Legion of Mary who has offered to go door-to-door to meet parishioners who are not coming to church, and using the pillar structure of our strategic plan to accomplish more outreach efforts. Fr. Benz offered to draft a letter to all parishioners with follow up phone calls, similar to the outreach we did when Covid protocols were in effect.

Evangelization Workshop: Lori offered to coordinate the refreshments for the workshop. Several parish council members have signed up to attend and several more will attend to assist with food. The diocese plans to repeat the workshop at All Saints in St. Peters. We hope to learn strategies we can implement for future outreach efforts.

Pillar Updates:

Worship: Mary Jane is officially on the Worship Pillar. Zeonia reported that they are regrouping soon to evaluate their tasks which focus heavily on youth involvement and retention.

Service: Jan reported that they have been hard at work getting the ministries on the website. After the Evangelization Workshop is over, a suggestion was made to re-institute the all-ministry meeting or have a day long ministry retreat in the summer. We could invite a speaker such as Brian Miller from the Archdiocese to facilitate.

Formation: Fr. Mark's "Come to the Feast" talks were well attended and well-received. Walking with Purpose women's bible study is in its 4<sup>th</sup> session. Blaze for middle school girls is up and running. Only a few people signed up for the discussion groups for the Living Joy Book, but other groups are doing the book study on their own. RCIA puts their topic in the bulletin weekly and has invited all parishioners to attend.

Administration: Jim reported that since Joe Goegel left for his new job, the finance tasks have been divided between Mary Reich and Marilyn Mennemeier. Joe Egerer is taking care of facility management. The school budget was increased by 6% by the archdiocese due to increased costs across the board. Our school classrooms could handle 400-450 students if our building is identified by the ATN process as a school site.

#### New Business

Greeters and Ushers: We want to get greeters back at the masses to welcome people to mass. Jim and Mary Jane agreed to coordinate the greeters. Fr. Benz approached Dan Peters to coordinate this effort. We would pass the baskets again.

Youth Council: Several years ago, we discussed creating a Youth Advisory Council that would engage youth from 7th-12th grade and provide input to the Parish Council. Currently, youth ministry efforts focus on high school age youth with some outreach to 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders, such Pray and Play which was recently started. We discussed doing more outreach to younger students as well as improving communication with parents and the parish at large. Communication about Life Teen activities through Facebook would reach more parents and might also reach our PSR parents. Zeonia will write up bullet points for Fr. Benz to discuss with our youth minister so we can move forward on creating a youth council and strengthening our youth outreach with the advent of all things new.

Fr. Benz reports: Brenda Peterson is coordinating the Living Joy book study groups. Everyone can sign up for the videos that accompany the book. Fr. Benz printed instructions in his parish email. He will be putting discussion questions in the bulletin for groups that are meeting on their own. The suggestion was made to put an announcement in Fr. Benz's weekly email to ask groups doing the book study to contact Brenda Peterson so we can track how many groups have formed. These groups could be put in a drawing for free snacks to encourage them to call Brenda. Fr. Benz met a new set of parishioners from Nigeria. He thought they might have a good story to share of why they chose St. Cletus as their parish. Bishop Carlson is scheduled for our parish mission in March. Fr. Benz will be retiring in June and does not know where he will be assigned at that time.

#### Miscellaneous

Parish Council members signed up as a group to assist with the March 10 fish fry.

The meeting ended with a prayer led by Jan Joeckel.

Next meeting is Tuesday, March 21 at 7:00pm in the Rectory basement. March prayer will be led by Carol Callahan

Respectfully submitted by  
Carol Callahan  
3/5/2023