

ACC Planning Council
Meeting Minutes - August 3, 2021
7:00 St. Francis Xavier Gathering Place
Annunciation, Sacred Heart, St. Francis Xavier, St. Stephen
One in Christ -- Area Catholic Committee

In Attendance:

Joan Krause, Jean Bemboom, Frank Rajkowski, Stef Rothstein, Leonard Popp, Candice Koopmeiners, Jeff Brunn, Shirley Scapanski, Chuck Spychala, Fr. Tom Knoblach, Tom Offerdahl, Marie Pangerl

Absent: Fr. Ron Weyrens, Dcn. Joe Kresky

Welcome and Prayer: Stef opened the meeting with prayer.
Members introduced themselves.

Leonard questioned the date published in the bulletin for the upcoming Stewardship event. After further discussion, it was clarified that the date for the event will be September 12 because the St. Francis Xavier festival, even though it will be "Light," is scheduled for September 19. The date in the bulletin was published to be on the 19th. A correction will be made

Minutes were reviewed with the following changes:

- The location of the National Stewardship Conference was taking place in Wichita, KS not Alexandria MN.
- The minutes noted that Frank Rajkowski resigned, however, he will stay until there is a replacement from the current Parish Council. The bylaws were changed to require an active Parish Council member. He is no longer an active member. It was requested that a replacement be made by the next meeting. Tom Offerdahl will see to it that this happens.

Chuck moved to approve the minutes with these changes, they were seconded by Frank. Passed.

A.C.C. Planning Committee Transitions .

Articles of Organization & Bylaws (for reference)

Welcome new members:

Stef - Introduced and welcomed Marie Pangerl from St. Stephen and Tom Offerdahl from St. Francis Xavier. Stef explained: You will learn very quickly that we are looking at the future planning of what this becomes and what this is. We have always approached this from the foundational understanding that we are here as recommenders for plans that will help to connect and help to share the resources and support from all four parishes. We are working on what transitions of new members will look like. A number of us

have been here almost three years now. We are looking at ways that our work will continue, welcoming new members to come on board with new ideas and new insight.

Develop Transition Table/timetable

Stef - At the June meeting we talked about some type of spread sheet explaining when people became members, when their term would normally be complete and how we bring new members on so that there would be a "layering" of members so there isn't a majority of members exiting with a new crew coming on board. We need someone on this committee to work on what that might look like. At this time, all but two members were officially at the end of a three year term, however, several have indicated that they would be willing to stay on for another year, some more, in order for the timeline to be filled. Frank - As discussed, at the June meeting, at the first renewal, there would be 4 that would have a 1 year term, 4 would have a 2 year term and 4 would have a 3 year term. After that, they would naturally be staggered. That way, not all will be leaving at the same time.

Joan - What if someone no longer wants to remain on the committee?

Frank - Then there would have to be someone new from their parish to take their place. Leonard - If we select a month that we would renew and if someone drops out earlier and someone fills in, they are filling in for that person till the end of the term and then would continue to serve three years. Tom - Volunteered to be one of the three year term people.

Fr. Tom - The pastors appoint the members. So if you wish to continue or discontinue, just let either Fr. Ron or myself know.

Leonard - If a Parish Council member is no longer on the Parish Council, could they continue as a member of ACC until a new person has been appointed?

Frank - A new PC member would need to be appointed immediately because the by-laws state that at least one member of the ACC must be an active Parish Council member.

Fr. Tom - The goal of that provision is that we have a good connection between the overall goals and how they are implemented and good communication. Information from the ACC meeting can then be communicated to the PC council members at their meeting.

Stef - Overview of discussion: we could put forward a strategy where there is a one, two or three year term once the current members term comes due in December and that would allow for it to happen from here on OR as we come to the end of our terms, we go to Father and let him know if we wish to continue and if so for how long.

Leonard - What month would we select as the end of our term?

Candice - Suggested January 1 of each year.

All members agreed.

Review of Progress Toward our goals

Joan - Each committee within this committee has set their own goals. It is always good to review those goals. It would be the work of each committee to report on what the SMART goals were, how they are doing and how they move forward. Once that cycle happens, we are not done. We then need to look at other things that need to be addressed.

Frank - Some things may be done. Maybe there are other things to be done.

Leonard - The committee suggests and develops a new goal but it is the ACC that decides on whether it is a good goal or not. Isn't that what this group does?

Fr. Tom - The ACC group should propose and monitor progress. Some parishes may have slower progress or even different goals depending on their resources.

Leonard - After a period of time, the committee should report their progress or analysis back to the ACC. It may be necessary to either change the goal or whatever.

Joan - Referred to a diagram that was presented at the training. It showed the planning process which is this council's purpose. They are things such as gathering information, focus, identify concerns, create objectives, implement, evaluate and then do it again. That seems to be where we are at right now. Some committees have done the work they need to do and now it's time to maybe identify other issues and concerns. We started with four goals and we know there were more to address. We chose those that we thought were reasonable and went with them.

Frank - Some things like Evangelization and Stewardship will be ongoing. Young Adult was to try to do something to generate interest in the four parishes. Maybe there are other things we can do. That is where this committee can focus on where other needs may be.

Stef - Summary - On the updates, we should be asking each of the four committees to report the progress of the original SMART goals that were set forth. If there are other needs, whether through feedback or a common need, that could be proposed here and then have someone to spearhead and grow that idea. That may become another committee or another focus.

Fr. Tom - If we could receive a report from each committee as to where they are at, we could all then review it before we have a conversation as a whole.

Joan - If the goals have been accomplished, we can maybe look at other goals or things that fall under that committee that we haven't talked about. Then we would develop another smart goal. Frank - Is there a need to have some things be uniform within the four parishes or is that something we don't need to worry about?

Fr. Tom - Initially, it was determined that some things such as ministry training is best done at each parish because of the sites and traditions and volunteers.

Stef - Does the ACC decide what is next, or how will continued goal setting and planning work?

Frank - As a planning council maybe we should help determine if there is a need but if things are going well, the committees themselves should be a part of planning next steps.

Fr. Tom - I could see it a benefit to get a common understanding of the different devotions, liturgical opportunities and prayer styles across the ACC such as the daily rosary or the Divine Mercy Chapel or Adorations. However, we don't all need to be doing all of these at each parish. If they are available in the other parishes we should make sure all know when and where they are happening. Joan - Another example would be such things as the station of the cross. Maybe having them at different times and not only on a Friday. Move things around so there are different opportunities for people to attend. Not sure if the council would have to do that.

Fr. Tom - We are still getting to know our parishes and their customs and traditions. Stef - Summary - We all agree that a summary report would be helpful. Because we have representatives from the four committees here tonight, can we safely say we can have a report ready by the October meeting? Let's have it ready so they can be reviewed before the October meeting. And then we can review at least annually in October.

Joan - One more thing. Because I was not at the last meeting. I did not see anything in the minutes from the last meeting regarding a Parish Mission. From the Stewardship Committee we talked about whether it would be good to do a Parish Mission for all four of our parishes.

Fr. Tom - Prior to joining ACC, I had discussed having a Parish Mission for the 6 parishes I was serving. Because of COVID and other complications, that never happened. I contacted the same group I was considering called **Faith on Fire Ministries** from Nashville. One of their specialties is working with combined parishes. I did reach out to them but have not yet heard back from them. If they do not respond, we will look at other possibilities. We were looking at the Lenten season to have the Mission, however, that is already very tight on the time frame to get anyone here. Regardless if this happens now or later, the idea was to have a common, spiritual experience that focuses on why we are doing any of this. What does it mean to be the Church in relationship with Christ and hopefully to celebrate some of the diversity that we see in the ACC and what holds us together in a common faith. There are a lot of logistics. Most Missions are four nights. It is nice that we have the four parishes to work with. However, if we ask each parish to take a night, it may be difficult for the smaller parishes to accommodate the number of people, especially if it's a good turnout.

Joan - Doing something at each parish would be a great idea. We would have to look outside the box.

Fr. Tom - If anyone knows of another source, please let us know. Eventually, if this works out, we will need another committee.

Stef - Progressive Dinner - This will come!

Joan - We did have a committee working on the progressive dinner a few years ago. It would be great to see something like that. Hopefully things will open up again.

Fr. Tom - Would there be interest in having a Mission? All agreed it would be good. If not the group I will try to contact again, maybe someone else. And maybe not this Lent but certainly one in the future.

Updates of Committee Work

Stewardship:

Joan - I will be attending the National Stewardship Conference in Wichita, KS. A total of 10 people from the Sauk Centre and Alexandria areas along with Fr. Mathew and Fr. Greg will be attending. The Stewardship committee met June 22. We finished the book on Stewardship. Talked about doing a time and talent survey. Not sure of time. Maybe wait till after the September 12 retreat. Hopefully after the retreat, people will get focused on stewardship. We will be reading Start With Jesus. We need to work on Stewardship messages in the bulletin. We continue to work on the upcoming retreat. Hoping that Tom will take Adam's place on the Stewardship Committee. Joyce O'Driscoll did attend the last meeting, however, she is feeling that she would like another person to work with her from the parish. Tom indicated he would be willing to help her. It would be good to have one more person available.

Stef - The next time the Stewardship Committee meets will be just before the September event. We have an invitation that will be ready. Just a reminder, this is not an "invitation only" event. It is for anyone in our parishes but certainly any current leaders of our parishes or people who just need to be asked and encouraged to attend. Everyone is welcome.

Fr. Tom - Because you know the parishioners the best, please extend the invitation to them.

Young Adult

Fr. Tom - A young Adult Coordinator, Jason Prigge, has been hired. A lot needs to be worked out. He needs help from all the parishes. He needs people to help him formulate a plan with parish leadership. He will be reaching out to the parishes. Please offer your help as well.

Frank - It would be great to have him speak at each Mass and introduce himself to the people and reach

out in that way to all four parishes. Sacred Heart has a group that has started to some degree. Be sure the information is in the bulletin. And when he is planning things, be sure to extend the invitation prior to any events through the bulletin and maybe an announcement at Mass.

Shirley - He will need all of us and more to help him get to know the people.

Fr. Tom - The age range for youth ministry is around 18-35 years. There are different needs for all these ages. It is a big job. Jason is the coordinator of the Young Adult Ministry. He cannot do it alone. He will need cooperation and willingness from the parish to make this work. And we have to remember this will take a little time to really get this off the ground. I will be sure to pass these comments and suggestions on to him.

Evangelization

Shirley - We met July 15th. We continue to read and discuss the book *Start With Jesus*. We did look at our smart goals. The assembly of the Team is completed. We are addressing resources that are ongoing. If you find a good resource please add it to the web site. We discussed the surveys, outreach, brainstorming examples, etc. We will meet after September 12. All this will be in our report.

Worship/Spirituality

Leonard - Mass times were set but there was a change. When we are in our meetings, when decisions are made and all are in agreement with the decision, those who were and who were not present need to be communicated to about the decision or any changes. My concern is what will happen when or if we do not have people to fill in for the Extra Mass on Sunday at St. Francis.

Frank - For right now, we have a temporary situation as long as we have priests that are willing to help out with Sunday Masses.

Fr. Tom - Not sure what will happen. We have priests who will be on sabbaticals, some may have medical situations, so retired priests are filling in for them as well. The retired priests are a resource but they too are getting spread very thin. I do not know how long this situation can last.

Joan - I feel the biggest piece of your discussion is communication. If a decision is made in the meeting and then there is a change, that change should be communicated. We understand that it is the right of the pastor to make a final decision, but please just communicate that to the council. Tom O - Expressed real concern that we need to take care of our priests so that they do not get burned out. The fact is, we may need to make some major adjustments to Mass times. Is it something we keep pushing off or do we address it now. We may need to monitor and take attendance at all Masses so we have a much better idea of what our real attendance is. We are seeing more people returning to church now that things have been improving since Covid.

Fr. Tom - Regarding the Mass times and the possibility of an additional Mass added at St. Francis Xavier after Labor Day I will definitely discuss with Father Ron the concerns of this committee and try to have some type of answer as to what will be happening.

Joan - Maybe we should stick with what we have set as far as Mass times and not announce anything more before Labor Day.

Jeff - When we first discussed the Mass times, we realized there would be those who were not happy with the Mass times within their parish. A possible solution to that would be to let people know that they should find a Mass time that is more favorable and then attend it at one of the other ACC churches.

There are only so many Masses that the Priests are asked to say on a weekend.

Fr. Tom - Every ACC is experiencing the same problem. The diocesan guidelines are that a priest is to say only three Masses on a weekend, however, when you add in funerals and weddings, etc., this becomes difficult to follow.

Parish Council Updates

Annunciation - Meeting in September

Sacred Heart - Meeting August 17

St. Francis Xavier - Not sure of Date 4th Thursday of the month?

St. Stephen - Meeting August 24

Pastor Updates -

Stef - Bringing forth a question from St. Stephen parishioner: Who pays Mass Stipends when it is not Fr. Tom or Fr. Ron?

Tom O - Each Parish pays for their own subs. Each Parish shares the sub priest.

Fr. Tom - We have adjusted the mileage issue so St. Stephen doesn't get hit the hardest. That was a compromise. Overall, the intent is to average this out for all parishes.

Joan - Ministry Day - Saturday, October 23. MEA Weekend.

Fr. Tom - They want to celebrate ACC. They hoped that each ACC could talk about their plans and successes.

Leonard - Had a hat and t-shirt that showed the ACC churches. Suggestion was that these may be available for sale at upcoming festivals, etc. More discussion followed.

Fr. Tom - Lets see what we can do to get some t-shirts together for the upcoming events throughout the ACC parishes' festivals if possible

Our next meeting will be Tuesday, September 7th at 7:00pm at St. Stephen

Meeting adjourned at 8:35

Closing Prayer

Minutes submitted by Aggie Schulte