

Collaborative Parish Council Meeting December 20, 2023

In attendance: Mary Camuso, Father Darin Colarusso, MaryJo Farelli, Deacon John Kobrenski, Kerin McLoughlin, Trish Rafferty, John Santarpio, Joe Serwatka, Jane Shawcross, Henry Theberge, Mark Ward, John Waterworth, Ellen Wholley,

Fr. Colarusso opened the meeting with a prayer at 7:06 pm. The minutes of the September meeting were accepted. Father asked for a volunteer to assume the **Recording Secretary** role. Jane Shawcross volunteered. The **calendar** of upcoming meetings was reviewed. The council meets bimonthly on the third Wednesday of the month. The next meeting will be held on February 21, 2024.

Father spoke of his health and treatment after his cardiac arrest. The fact that he needs to avoid stressful situations impacts the parish. He will not be on call at the hospital, he will avoid becoming upset with parish finances and avoid heated discussions with parishioners.

To address the fact that **neither parish is financially viable**, new giving cards have been printed which will be placed in the pews in the new year listing the various ways to support the parishes. Online giving, one-time gifts using the QR code on the card, the legacy program, and registering for envelopes are all included on the card. St Lucy receives approximately \$5K in online giving per month, St Monica's approximately \$10K. The online giving address has been simplified.

Father said there needs to be staff changes because we can no longer pay for low performance and things not getting done. He estimates that **personnel adjustments** will be made by June of 2024.

The two parish CCD programs have been consolidated considering the low number of students. There are 90 children registered from St. Monica and 46 from St. Lucy. Fifty-two CCD children will receive their First Communion this year. The 9th and 10th grade Confirmation program has a total of 46 students.

The possibility of needing to close one of the collaborative churches was discussed at length. The total number of people now attending weekend masses in all 3 churches in Methuen is only 1000. Several council members felt both churches need to hear the hard truth. The suggestion was made that parishioners could help in that regard.

Parish Life: The Lessons and Carols program on Sunday 12/17 was a great success. There were 200 people in church, 180 of whom went over to the school for a Potluck Dinner afterwards. There was a successful contemporary music adoration service as part of the Confirmation program with about 100 people in attendance.

Approximately \$10K was donated to the Christmas Gift Card Program and the St. Lucy Fair raised about \$10k.

Father was asked what the plan is moving forward. He said the plan is to get more money in and to make spending as efficient as possible. The new giving card, the emphasis on donating 5% of income, holding a Spring Gala and Fall fairs, and personnel adjustments are all in the mix. We all need to evangelize to get more people in church.

Joe offered to help with replacing the blown-out lights in St. Monica church, but a licensed professional with high ladders must do that work. To save money, it will be done when there are more lights to replace.

Although the CPC bylaws recommend looking for a new slate of candidates at this time, Father would like to keep all the **members of the current council on for at least another year**. The members present concurred.

Motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:32 pm after a closing prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Shawcross