

**St. Monica Facilitation Team
Meeting Minutes Jan. 24, 2023**

Attendance: Connie Chau, John Curran, Father Ray Fleming, Kathy Garrant, Mary Fran Kolbuc and Bob Passalugo
Excused: Meg Lute

The meeting was held at the rectory with zoom virtual attendance option.

1. Opening Prayer: A prayer in memory of Bishop Emeritus Matthew Clark.
2. Review and approval of the 10/17/22 Meeting minutes: Seconded and approved unanimously.

3. Father Ray's Updates:

- **Current Mass Schedule** is difficult. Simply getting from place-to-place consumes valuable time. Continue with the current arrangement until a better one is possible.

- **Diocesan Bankruptcy proceedings**: Nothing new. More will be known after a 1/25/23 meeting involving the plaintiffs' and the Diocesan attorneys.

- **Financial Situation**: Fr. Ray says that this topic is the main concern for today's meeting.

The Finance Committee indicates that the parish is "well over budget" for this current fiscal year. This includes salaries, benefits, expenses and buildings projects. Their prediction for Fiscal Year 2023-24 is not expected to get better. The Finance Council feels that we must do something to a) grow the parish in membership and b) increase plate collections & contributions.

The Finance Council and Father Ray ask the Facilitation Team to come up ways to "grow the parish." There was FT discussion about general church-going trends both locally and nationally. COVID-related and other factors have decreased attendance. For some families, organized sports activities now meet socio-emotional needs and consume precious weekend time. Need to reach out to parishioners not seen over an extended period. Increasing parish finances could involve new ideas to encourage bequests to the parish.

There was discussion of the potential sale of the former St. Monica School to the Rochester Academy Charter School that now leases the building. The parish is requesting its own professional appraisal of the school building and the Charter School group is doing likewise with its own appraisal. The parish is asking for a letter of intent and pricing information from the Charter School. Too soon for results yet. The Diocese is aware of the proceedings for later legal involvement to resolve the matter.

The Facilitation Team requests information from the Finance Committee on the annual maintenance costs for the school (*what would the savings be, if the building were sold?*). The Team also asks the Buildings, Grounds & Safety committee for information about upcoming and foreseeable costs for building repairs and updates for the 75 year-old structure. (*What are the anticipated major expenses for the school building and church-related facilities?*)

Action Item: The Finance Committee needs to meet TUESDAY February 21, 2023 at 6:00pm with the Facilitation Team at the rectory to share information and ideas.

There was a roundtable discussion about welcoming new parishioners. A distinction was made regarding being *welcoming* (a more passive approach) and being *inviting* which is a continuous active effort to create the conditions that make people *want* to come to St. Monica. Recent intergenerational Youth Faith Formation events and community basketball outreach were given as examples regarding how to invite people to join St. Monica. Previous re-growth initiatives pointed to the need to engage young fathers.

St. Monica needs to reach out to new neighbors with personal invitations (difficult due to tracking new rental households). Restore and maintain efforts to reach out to long-term residents at the Staybridge Suites and University of Rochester students living in the neighborhood. St. Monica now has a new UR contact person to engage. The Assistant Director Graduate, Family and Off-Campus Housing participated in the recent Dr. Martin Luther King activities held at St. Monica.

There is a need to increase bequests. This needs a programmatic effort. John Curran proposed and will research developing a workshop series dealing with long-term financial planning and care. It would be a mutually-beneficial opportunity for both parishioners and the parish. Parishioners would be guided as a group by a professional to address personal financial planning topics and long-term care while being encouraged to include a bequest to Saint Monica Church to sustain its own goals over time. Needs Finance Council feedback and suggestions.

4. Committee, Ministry and Activity Updates:

- *SWEM Christmas Basket* distribution: The activity used the parish parking lot, garages and driveway. Proceeded smoothly. Need strong persons to move boxes next time.

- *Teaching Mass* (Faith Formation); good attendance; informative.

- *Dr. Martin Luther King Jr Day Coat Distribution 2-4pm*: (Youth Faith Formation). Very good level of participation by parishioners prior to and during the activity. Over 200 coats distributed with a steady drop-in of persons seeking coats. The activity used the narthex area and was followed at 5:00pm with a second separate MLK activity involving a partnership of the 19th Ward Community Association, University of Rochester and St. Monica. The event produced and displayed luminaries spread in a loop from Sawyer Street to Brooks Avenue. Looks promising for future collaborative activity

- *2023 Ash Wednesday*: the focus will be on daytime drive-through distribution of ashes.

- Buildings, Grounds & Safety: One of the school's boilers needed an expensive re-build. The school building is getting attention for plumbing leaks at various locations. Future plumbing updates are under review. Mold issues have gotten professional inspection. Surplus unneeded items are being removed from school storage locations. Electrical upgrades for the school are underway. A combination washer-dryer will be installed at the residential level in the rectory.

- Social Justice Committee: The former monthly parish collection envelope designated for SouthWest Ecumenical Ministries will be replaced by an addressed-envelope holder displayed in the narthex for continued support. This needs approval.

- *Blue Bags*: on hold for now.

- Possible Clothing Drive? The pros and cons have been discussed. COVID-related issues have made clothing donation and distribution difficult locally. Review at a later date.

- Creation Stewards: The winter season has been an opportunity to share environmental care information in the bulletin.
- Flower-planting at St. Monica: The spring 2022 activity involving parish youth and their parents worked well. Explore a similar activity for early-May 2023.
- *Westside Farmers Market*: Planning for 2023 has begun with an inventory of supplies.

New Business:

- **Possible temporary storage** of 19th Ward Community Association archival materials: The former office on Thurston Road has been sold and the 19thWCA is exploring new options for office operations and storage. Temporary secured storage at St. Monica is under consideration. Must follow St. Monica protocols for access. No decision yet.

Old Business:

- **COVID procedures**. No recent changes. Cleaning takes place twice weekly.
- **Hospitality Table**: This remains on-hold due to the compressed time in between Masses. It is hoped that this popular activity can return outdoors when good weather returns.
- **St. Monica Church 125th Anniversary**: Limited planning at this time. The goal is to have a commemorative dinner later in 2023 at a party house (fewer venues available presently). Continue the planning process and use it as an opportunity to invite previous parishioners as part of the “grow the parish” effort. Father Ray will ask additional parishioners to join the planning.

The Meeting closed with a prayer.

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NEXT FT MEETING will be a JOINT SESSION involving the **Finance Council**.

Date: **TUESDAY, February 21, 2023 at 6:00pm at the rectory** with zoom option.