

St. John Neumann Pastoral Council

December 9, 2015 @ 7:00pm

AGENDA

1. Opening Prayer

2. New Business
 - Welcome to new Council Member
 - Advent Day of Reflection
 - Food Sunday
 - Angel Tree
 - Other New Business

3. Updates & Continuing Business
 - Call to action: Based on Pope Francis' Encyclical on Environment
 - Promoting volunteers to Catechetical ministries

4. Commission & Council Reports
 - Finance Council 1st quarter report (Todd)
 - Comisión Hispana Report (Adela & Luis)
 - Liturgical Council (Pat)
 - Stewardship Committee Report (Tom)
 - Specific/Immediate Ministry Issues and Needs (All)

5. Other Items of Concern or Interest to the Council

6. Closing Prayer

Council Members

PRESENT: Fr. Sunny, Cathy Karlsen (Chair), Deacon Mike Hayward, Pat Hodges (Liturgical Council Rep), Ann Basile, Jeff Newman, Matt Champagne (Secretary), Adela Duran, Buihe Okenu, Mike MacFarlane

ABSENT: Tom Studer (Stewardship Council Rep), Todd Pull (Financial Council Rep)

PROCEEDINGS

1. OPENING PRAYER

We recited the Prayer for Pope Francis.

2. NEW BUSINESS

A big welcome to Mike MacFarlane who has joined the Pastoral Council!

Advent Day of Reflection. On December 5, SJN co-hosted (with St. Stephen's) an Advent day of reflection entitled: *"Waiting for the Lord with Wisdom from St. Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross and St. Thérèse of Lisieux"*. The featured speaker was Dr. Keith Egan, Aquinas Chair in Catholic Theology Emeritus at Saint Mary's College and adjunct full professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame. It was a successful event with more than 100 attendees.

Food Sunday & Angel Tree program. Amy Krysiak will submit a bulletin announcement in early January to summarize the results, but here is her report submitted to the Council:

"The parish assisted 100 families (356 individuals) for both Food Sunday and the Angel Tree. The success of the programs is due to the overwhelming support of the parishioners led by the pastoral team! Please extend my thanks to the Parish Council. I so appreciate the council members' willingness to pass on the details of the program with each ministry. This support has made a tremendous difference specifically in the Angel Tree."

Fr. Sunny said he was so impressed with the generosity of our parishioners. "A great way to celebrate Christmas – by sharing." Cathy reported on the gifts she had purchased on behalf of the Pastoral Council's "adopted" family.

3. UPDATES & CONTINUING BUSINESS

Call to action: Based on Pope Francis' Encyclical on Environment.

The Archdiocese responded to Pope Francis's Encyclical *Laudato Si'* by gathering a team of scientists to create an Action Plan and form "green teams" at each parish. With the release of the Action Plan in late November (see: <http://www.georgiabulletin.org/news/2015/11/archbishop-local-scientists-release-laudato-si-action-plan-urge-care-for-our-common-home/>), the next step is the Educational Campaign at SJN to train and help transform the way parishioners interact with the planet and one another. See pages 7-8 for a reprint of "On Care of Our Common Home".

Our team will be led by Susan Varlamoff, Director of the Office of Environmental Sciences at the University of Georgia, and co-author of the Action Plan. Fr. Sunny envisions the Gardening Ministry to be very connected to this effort and that volunteers be sought from many ministries. Cathy will send a PDF version of the Action Plan to all ministry leaders to distribute.

Promoting volunteers to Catechetical ministries. It was decided that this issue be postponed until April when we gear up for next year's ministry action.

4. COMMISSION & COUNCIL REPORTS

Finance Council Quarterly Report

The 1st Qtr Report for Fiscal Year 2016 (July 1, 2015 – September 30, 2015) was read to the Council:

Revenue vs. Expenses:

- YoY Offertory collections - above 0% at \$308K vs. \$309K.
- Total Income - 2% above budget: \$502K vs. \$492K
- Total Expenses - 15% below budget: \$327K vs. \$386K
- YTD Net Income \$175K
- Large Outstanding invoices:
 - September 2015 - Archdiocese of Atlanta Assessment, School Subsidy: \$37.6K
 - July 2015 – Catholic Mutual Group Property and Liability Insurance \$39.4K

Marian Chapel Campaign: (as of Oct 31st)

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|-------------------|----------|
| Total Pledges | \$870K |
| Other collections | \$290K |
| Total Income | \$1,160K |

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|-------------------|--------|
| Pledges Collected | \$459K |
| Remaining Pledges | \$411K |

- The debt balance remains at \$300K.
- The total project cost including the remaining debt is estimated to be \$1.6M.

2015 Archdiocese Annual Appeal

- Goal: \$110K
- Total pledged: \$164K
- Projected total collected: \$125K
- Potential benefit to SJN: \$15K

It was also noted that SJN passed their financial audit. Deacon Mike gave an update on the building: the naves have been cut out, the ceilings are in, 3 statues are arriving this weekend and the chapel chairs are all here! Fr. Sunny reminded all that the dedication of the Marian Chapel will be February 5 with Bishop Talley presiding. The Plan is to finish the chapel by the end of January.

Comisión Hispana Report

Brothers and sisters in Christ: Prayer should be an important part of our lives as Catholics; prayer needs to be a part of our lives (and our schedule) during this Advent season as we prepare for the coming of Christ. Prayer is a powerful way of reminding us what we should be doing as part of our

Advent preparations. We should be making a concerted effort to love; that we need to increase both our knowledge and our perception of what it means to be a good Catholic, a good steward, a disciple; that we must sort out what is really of value.

Our ministries are fully committed to Advent Season and the celebration of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

* Nocturnal Adoration cancel their meetings for the month of December, they are busy with the Novenas and Posadas.

* Altar Servers worked hard to get new vestments including albs, cassocks, cinctures and surplices, Father Abel blessed them on November 22nd. They are total 20.

* Lectors ministry added 2 members, fully concentrated in the Advent and Christmas season.

* CRSP women are in charge of the novenas for Our Lady of Guadalupe.

* CRSP men will do a play about Our Lady of Guadalupe history.

* Extraordinary Ministers will have a training at the beginning of January, also for the renewal certification to their actual members.

* Prayer group brought singer Eric Ramirez to praise our Lord and all sales where for our new building.

* The rest of the ministries are actively participating and planning for Advent and Christmas activities.

Adela added that the ladies of the parish spent time cleaning the kitchen in Reynolds Hall and that the young adults did much work with the homeless over the Thanksgiving holiday. She will look for more volunteers to the new Welcome Ministry and Green Team.

Liturgical Council

The Liturgy committee is finalizing the Services for Advent, Immaculate Conception (December 8), Our Lady of Guadalupe (December 3 - 11), the Advent Penance service (December 21), Christmas, and feast of Mary the Mother of God (January 1).

Lectors, altar servers, ushers, and all others are signing up for the many celebrations so that everything will be covered.

We are talking about having a commissioning for the new and current lectors, possibly the fourth week of Advent. (This will become an annual blessing similar to the one we have at the beginning of the school year for catechists). We are also considering doing this for Altar Servers and other ministers for the liturgies, yet to be determined.

Confirmation will be on January 23 and the Catechist day of Formation is February 5. We have already started working on the liturgy for the dedication of the Marian Chapel.

Stewardship Committee Report

The Stewardship Committee met on December 9 and this report was provided:

1. Summary of Finances for Advent Gifts – “Rediscover Jesus”
2. Advent by Candlelight brought in approximately \$1,600. Subtracting the speaker stipend of ~ \$300, the purchase of table marker stands ~\$100, the gifts to the guests ~ \$200 = net \$1,000. Add the \$1 donations for the Books ~ \$640. Cost of Books was \$1500. We more than covered the cost through the Advent by Candlelight and donations - no Stewardship account money was spent!

3. We discussed the areas that need some advance preparation:
 - Buy/Order Candy Canes and assemble with the candy cane story. (Debbie will buy the candy canes; when they come in Mary Lou will let all know and set up a time to come and attach the Legends.)
 - Kathy: 3000 candy canes to put together this weekend and distribute
 - Assemble 40 Welcome Packets for the Welcome Table in the Narthex, including a letter from Fr. Sunny, parish calendars, Book/Gift, list of Ministry Contacts, welcome (pew) card
 - Get a permanent drop box for the Pew Cards. (Cathy is willing to purchase it from Hobby Lobby.) Terri said she would check it regularly.
 - Next meeting in 2016, we will pin down a “registration protocol” so all newcomers get greeted and followed-up with.

4. Other 2016 Ideas –
 - Live Your Faith through Generosity of Time/Talent/Treasure
 - Stewardship of Vocations – Priest Appreciation Day & supply donuts & coffee or some hospitality. Possibly a Vocations Day/Workshop where individuals can learn more about different orders and religious life.
 - Parish Picnic/Potluck to celebrate a year of generous sharing of Talents/Service – reserve Lilburn City Park for the beginning of June (Saturday afternoon/evening); perhaps Stewardship Committee could provide the main meat?
 - Get volunteers to assist/rotate with Catechism Café on Sunday mornings. “Facilitate” – NOT TEACH! Keep the theme of Live Your Faith going with a Works of Mercy DVD series?
 - Dynamic Catholic Book Club will read The Joy of the Gospel, Pope Francis’ first encyclical on living mercifully.
 - Earth Day Celebration (April 22) or Recognition with the initiation of a conservation plan. Perhaps a grounds “Work Day” for the parish.

Specific/Immediate Ministry Issues and Needs (All)

Requests were made and reminders given about welcoming, parking, and bulletin issues surrounding Christmas Masses.

5. OTHER ITEMS OF CONCERN OR INTEREST TO THE COUNCIL

Several new ministries need to be assigned to Ministry Leaders including *That Man Is You*, Prison Ministry, *Family Promise* and the Young Adults groups.

This Friday is the last meeting for That Man Is You group in 2015. The next session starts January 13.

6. CLOSING PRAYER & ADJOURNMENT

Deacon Mike led us in prayer. The next meeting will be held Wednesday January 20, 2016 at 7pm. Father will be on retreat and cannot attend.

Ministry Reports – November/December 2015

Discipleship: Buihe

Adult Evening Bible Study (Ann Hayes)

Right now we are on break. In January we will begin a 6 week study of Bishop Barron called "Priest, Prophet, King". Our study of Mary in the fall was very successful.

No Reports

Advent by Candlelight (Mary Lou Schwaner)

Dynamic Catholic Book Club (Mary Lou Schwaner)

Prayer Chain/Warriors (Janet Adkins)

Rosary Cenacle Prayer Group (Anne Feaster)

Small Faith Communities (Lenten Longings) (Mary Lou Schwaner)

Seven Deadly Sins/Seven Lively Virtues: (Mary Lou Schwaner)

Lord, Teach Me to Pray - Faith Groups (Chris Rowe, Terri Kucharzyk & Mary Lou Schwaner)

Adult Education Classes/Faith Formation (Deacon Greg Ollick)

Cursillo/Ultreya (Jeff Carr)

Divine Mercy Prayer Group (Laura Whittington)

Donuts & Discipleship (Mary Lou Schwaner)

Catechism Café (Cath. Adult Faith Enrich.) (Mary Lou Schwaner)

Women's Catholic Bible Study (Judy Butterick and JoAnn Stoddard)

Support: Ann

Knights of Columbus (Dominick Druda)

- The breakfasts are doing well - November had over 150 meals served (One of our best) and December had around 120. We have Breakfast in January scheduled for the 10th. (Second Sunday) We need to spread the word!
- December 12 is breakfast with Santa - we are ready to go.
- We have a Steak Dinner planned for Saturday, January 16th 5:30 - 8:00 in the SJN School
- Donuts are scheduled for December 20 and January 24 at SJN Church (Reynolds Hall) after 9:00 & 11:00am Masses
- We are sponsoring 4 families for Angel Tree
- Fish Fry preparations are in the works - to be in Reynolds Hall during the Lenten season

Facebook (Nancy Fadeley)

Our Facebook church page is running along nicely. It reaches many people and people are engaged. I started the page for the Men of Faith group and Ken Fehner is running it beautifully! He is adding men to the group -- it is a private group and thus invite only. Ken's posts are very positive and I think this is a great tool for the guys to keep up to date on Catholic issues - especially those pertaining to be the man of God they are called to be.

Jason Gambon runs the LifeTeen page and keeps that up to date --- mainly for the parents. Since it is used mainly by parents, I usually update that page. Teens don't necessarily use Facebook like they used to --- it's Instagram or snapchat. LifeTeen does have a twitter & Instagram account as well. Jason does a great job with the material posted on those sites.

Our Young Adult group also has a page. I help maintain it at this point along with our real young adult :) ---- Robert Snipes. This page is not private because we want young adults able to access information if they are 'surfing.'

I would welcome any groups emailing me if they would like for me to post information about their ministry, etc. Most of the information I put up comes from the bulletin.

Nothing to Update

Fall Festival (Skip Holland)

Outreach: Jeff

Special Needs Ministry (Scott Sowers).

Christmas party hosted 125+ people and it was incredible. We served a pot roast and chicken supper with all the trimmings. We had awesome deserts, played bingo, watched an interactive video of Polar Express, had a live Nativity play from the SMILE clients, danced and sang Christmas Carols and everyone got a picture with Santa Claus to put in a frame that they decorated. Everyone had a good time!

Thank you to all our wonderful volunteers, especially to our young people, Grace and Maddy who were Santa's Elves; and Mae, Josh and Colin our all around helpers, and a big thanks to Gregg and Rosemary Costello and their daughter Kelly for their culinary skills and hard work in the kitchen!

On a sad note we had an accident that put a damper on the party. Sharon's mother, Gloria Kelly, fell and broke her right femur. We had five or six wonderful nurses on hand, so she was in great hands. She was taken to Gwinnett Medical Hospital where she had a rod and 2 pins put in her leg. She is doing well and in great spirits considering. Please pray for her speedy recovery. She sends everyone her love! Father Sunny visited her with Communion and the anointing of the sick and prayed with her. She was so happy to see him and just loved his visit. Thank you so much Father Sunny, you are the best!

Nothing to Update

Bereavement Group (Bette Lind)

Fellowship: Cathy

Mike MacFarlane will now serve as liaison to the Fellowship ministries.

Laudato Si' – On Care for Our Common Home

An Action plan for the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Atlanta

Energy Conservation and efficiency

- Have a home energy audit; calculate your home's carbon footprint.
- Make home energy efficiency second nature.
- Consider solar energy systems.
- Use the outdoors efficiently, especially for cooling the house and drying clothes.

Purchasing and Recycling

- Reduce, re-use and recycle.
- Embrace simple living.
- Use supplies made from natural, recycled or recyclable materials.

Buying and Sharing Food

- Buy locally grown food.
- Join the local food movement.
- Buy organic and naturally grown food.
- Shop carefully and use cloth shopping bags.
- Eat lower on the food chain (fruits and vegetables.)
- Don't waste food.
- Compost food scraps.
- Avoid drinking bottled water.
- Support your local food bank and pantry.
- Grow food in your backyard, schoolyard, or parish garden

Transportation

- Carpool whenever possible
- Consider driving an alternate-fueled or highly fuel-efficient car.
- Be mindful of vacation travel and its carbon footprint.
- Remember the simple things about fuel efficiency.

Water Conservation

- Minimize indoor water use by not letting water run and taking shorter showers.
- Minimize outdoor water use with water-wise landscaping and rain barrels.
- Upgrade your plumbing
- Reconsider your landscaping.

Creating Sustainable Landscapes

- Connect the landscape with urban forests
- Create a water-wise landscape
- Plant trees.
- Consider a community garden.
- Reduce lawn size.
- Become a Georgia Master Gardener.
- Prepare the soil well and compost.
- Become a citizen scientist.
- Plant native plants.
- Create a meditation garden
- Use correct planting procedures.
- Minimize chemical use.
- Create a wildlife habitat.
- Plant for pollinators.

What our Parish can do

Parish Activities and Education

In *Laudato Si*, the Holy Father "challenges us to examine our lifestyle." He urges us to work together and educate each other on the issues he raises in his encyclical. Environmental education, he says, "seeks also to restore the various levels of ecological equilibrium, establishing harmony within ourselves, with others, with nature and other living creatures, and with God. Environmental education should facilitate making the leap towards the transcendent which gives ecological ethics its deepest meaning."

Form "Green Teams"

There are several ways in which schools and parishes can begin to educate their students, staff, and parishioners on the most important environmental issues. One way is to form a parish "green team," creation care team, or environmental ministry, which would take the lead in not only implementing specific practices, but in developing environmental education materials for Adult Education programs, Young Adult groups, Social Action Committees, and other ministries. Georgia Interfaith Power and the Franciscan Action Network have resources available for development of Green Teams. In schools, students could form Green Clubs, St. Francis Clubs, or *Laudato Si* Clubs that might serve as role models and leaders for other students. Green Clubs in our Catholic schools can take the lead in creating gardens, composting, recycling, and environmental awareness, working with science, religion, and art teachers to better put *Laudato Si* into action. "Good education plants seeds when we are young, and these continue to bear fruit throughout life," says the Holy Father.

Bring in expert speakers

Parishes could enhance their Adult and Young Adult Education programs with speakers who are expert in various environmental fields. Raising environmental awareness "needs educators capable of developing an ethics of ecology, and helping people, through effective pedagogy, to grow in solidarity, responsibility and compassionate care." In Georgia, there are many such people of all faiths who can speak to climate science, agriculture, recycling, creation care spirituality, gardening, and water conservation.

These folks are in Georgia's biggest businesses such as in the Home Depot Eco-Options Program and the many sustainability programs at Coca Cola, as well as our colleges and universities, and state and local governments. The Archdiocese of Atlanta also provides lists of speakers who can visit parishes for Adult and Young Adult education.

Speak from the pulpit

As the Holy Father pointed out, we Roman Catholics have a long and rich Biblical and magisterial tradition of "the Gospel of Creation." Pastors and deacons could draw from this tradition in homilies, letters, parish bulletins, and blogs to help parishioners "realize that their responsibility within creation, and their duty towards nature and the Creator are an essential part of their faith" [36]. Many of the writings of St. John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI, or "Respect for the integrity of creation" in *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* are helpful starting points for messages about the importance of respecting and valuing God's gift of nature and the natural environment.