

Epiphany Parish Leadership Council Meeting Minutes

Date and Time: February 13, 2007, 8:30 p.m.
Location: Three Kings Meeting Room
Attendees: Robert Breitbach, Denny Dorsey, Julie Fisher, Eric Gunderson, Mike Lentz, Greg Mueller, Greg Phillippi, Robert Sanislo, Clyde Schultz, Tim Sullivan, Father Dennis Zehren
Minute Taker: Mary Beth Ineson

I. Minutes from January Meeting
January minutes approved with no changes.

II. Tuition Re-Instatement – Father Zehren
We have just completed our three weekends focusing on Stewardship. The final weekend is typically when the pastor speaks with gratitude to the parish. This talk was overshadowed by the decision to reinstate tuition at the school. This decision was a very difficult one to make. In his homily Father spoke with regret about the hardship this would make for some of the families in the parish. People are expressing concern that they don't want any cuts, but they also cannot afford the tuition. We are trying to balance these decisions.

Mike Lentz announced that after the last parent meeting the leadership realized they needed to re-visit the tuition scale. He met with Jane Carroll and determined they needed to bring a few more people into the discernment. The committee will be re-analyzing the tuition scale for families with multiple children attending Epiphany school. More information will be provided when it is available.

III. Open Mike

- Mark Jones, 2127 167th Ave. NW, Andover, 55304. He asked that the leadership keep in mind that even those that have 2 children in the school will be experiencing a hardship. Last year they were asked to give 10%, and now, by including tuition, they are asked to give almost 20% of their income. Has anyone thought to survey the school parents to see if they will be able to afford to keep their children in Epiphany school? Also, when discussing the fund raisers, please rethink the marathon. That was always the easiest thing he could do to raise money for the school.
- Mary Milless, 2090 127th Ave. NW, Coon Rapids, 55448 – She thanked Fr. Zehren for allowing those with concerns to come to the council meeting this evening. She is not just advocating for families with many children, but all families. If we lose one family to public or home schooling, they will not come back. We have more retired people than children in school. Fr. Reiser built the school first, which emphasized the importance of the school. She suggested a town meeting to invite people to provide ideas for helping the Church. Put Mary, the Mother of God, back in a place of prominence in the Church and Parish.
- Jennifer Teter, 10865 Killdeer St. NW, Coon Rapids 55433 – She was planning to enroll 7 children in the school next year, which would make tuition \$19,000 for her family. She asked the question if there are plans for any fund raisers for families that will be applying for financial aid. Thank you for taking a second look at the situation.
- Mary Novak, 2920 127th Circle NW, Coon Rapids, 55448 – Almost all the people in the school do not know about the Parish Council meeting. All the people in the school will want to know the answers to these questions. How will this information be provided to them. Clyde stated most of the questions were in the bulletin.
- Mark Sanislo, 662 121st Lane NW, Coon Rapids, 55448 – He has no children in the school, but he himself attended Epiphany School. There is a physical distance between

the church and the school. The distance may be more pronounced since this has happened. Are there ways to get the school more involved in Church activities – Choir, Readings, etc.? This may inspire people to make some contribution to the school by bringing the school and church closer together.

- Todd Krafty 10448 Yukon St. NW, Coon Rapids, 55433 – He thanked Fr. Zehren for all the work he is putting into this Parish. He would like to see a financial plan for the future. What is the long range plan to satisfy the debt? He has Jewish friends that are assessed 10% of their income by the Synagogue. Can we do something like this?
- Keith Schmidt 8100 151st Lane NW, Ramsey, 55303 – Fill out stewardship form this time of year and then forget about it. What about sending out quarterly statements stating this was your pledge and this is where you are in your giving. He hates to see stewardship fail after one year.
- Paula Huss, 11260 Uplander St. NW, Coon Rapids, 55433 – She has many concerns with stewardship and the shortfall. She has noticed that when the collection basket is passed, and many people are not giving. She doesn't know if it is due to ACH, but if people see other people do not give, they may not give themselves. Her sister belongs to the Living Word. As published in an article this week in the Star Tribune, they receive a lot of money in their collections. Every Sunday the pastor spends 15 minutes praying and teaching about the financial contributions. Perhaps Father could mention this at the end of the homily. She attended the finance commission this evening and found it very interesting. She would encourage everyone to take advantage of that ability. What is going to help us the most is prayer. The feast of St. Joseph is March 19th. The 30-day Novena prayer starts now. She had Novena cards to pass around. She also had a brochure regarding the morning offering. The brochure has all the intentions from the Holy Father for the coming year. We should all be praying the morning offering. These brochures should be given to all parishioners.
- Gary Fox, 13905 Palm St. NW, Andover, 55304 – He concurred with the quarterly statements. He also applauds the difficult decision of tuition. We have to balance the affordability with the quality of the education. He has been attending the finance commission meetings off and on. These members are doing an outstanding job. The sharing of information has been better in the last year than the last 40 years. The long term solution is Epiphany itself. The quality of the parish is what will make us strong and stewardship will be a piece of cake.
- Shawn Gutowski, 11818 Monroe Circle, NE, Blaine, 55434 – She requested the leadership not solve our financial situation on the backs of Epiphany School parents.
- Joe Gabler reminded the group that the Epiphany website has the e-mails of all the commission leaders. Anyone can contact these commissions through these e-mail addresses.

IV. Commission Reports

- Eric Gunderson – Thanked Greg Phillippi and the Activities Commission, where he attended this evening. Another key to resolving our situation is there are so many people that are new to Epiphany. We present are blessed to know the history of Epiphany and the quality of Epiphany. We need to reach out to the new parishioners, as they are questioning if they are making the right choice as they listen to the turmoil. We are here to serve. We can help the new people see the rich tradition of Epiphany. Just as we have risen above any difficulty in the past; we will rise above this as well.
- Operations – Robert Sanislo
We reviewed our long-range budget. Some things that were prioritized were having the \$40,000 job of filling the asphalt in the parking lot. Roof repairs can be postponed another year, but the commission would like to evaluate the life expectancy of our roof. The heating control will be getting some updating.

As for the Back to the 50's event at the Fair Grounds, he has no updates yet on the progress. History has told us we have not had much luck opening the diner up for this event.

The "Adopt a Room" has been turned over to the school

The last Saturday of March (31st) CPR training will be offered to all parishioners. It is \$30 and is a non-certification class for defibrillator training.

- Activities – Greg Phillippi
Clyde and Eric were both at the commission meeting this evening. The commission would like to put together a listing of the activities in the parish in order to provide information to new parishioners. Make a web page on the website. Also working on a "parishioner in the military" care package.
- Education – Robert Breitbach
The goal for the rest of the year is to work with the Stewardship commission to educate the parish and make sure stewardship is moving forward. Help in whatever way we can to move forward.

Protected children and youth initiative will be starting up the end of February through mid-April. The "adopt a room" program is being turned over to PTO. Vocation awareness is 4/21-4/22. They will have a monthly agenda item to increase vocations. Shawn will be working on this project. 180 candidates for confirmation.

- Stewardship – Joe Gabler
The commission at the meeting tonight discussed education, and a meeting between the two commissions is appropriate. The commission reflected on the tuition decision and how it affects our mission. We will all go home, pray, and discern our plan moving forward. Stewardship series next opportunity is February 19, at 7 pm in Hearth Room. Sr. Marion is also putting together a contemplative prayer meeting from 7:15 to 7:45 a.m. on Wednesdays during Lent in the Lending Library. The Parish Lenten retreat is March 3, 8:45 am to noon. Of the 5,000 families, 60% received an end of year statement to reflect their giving. This is significant when most parishes report a 25% rate.
- Finance – Greg Mueller
The commission focused on the budgeting process. The first budget is due at the next meeting on March 13. The group is meeting with all of the department heads to discuss their budgets at the next commission meeting. The Reiser Foundation has been in existence for the past decade. There is approx \$600,000 in the foundation. A percentage of that is required to be set aside. This principal cannot be touched by law. The endowment committee is going to look at the Reiser Foundation to determine if a disbursement needs to take place this year, and if the bylaws need to be adjusted.

The commission is meeting tomorrow with Bishop Pates. They fully expect him to request a repayment plan.

- Liturgy – Denny Dorsey
The commission is spending a lot of time lately with the booklets defining the liturgical ministries. Basic groundwork has been done in the past weeks. They are meeting this week to actually begin writing the booklets. This evening's meeting was determining the agenda for the coming meetings.

V. Fundraising Policy – Mike Lentz

The current policy adopted in December of 2005. He asks the Parish Council to review the policy on fundraising, understand it, and agree with it. Pay particular attention to the rational. The Sunday contributions need to be primary. Any revisions to the fundraising policy should go to the fundraising committee. The committees are listed on page 2 of the policy and are the chair (or representative) from each of the following commissions: Activities, Finance, and Stewardship. There are also two at-large members of the Parish Leadership Council. There are no staff members on the fundraising committee, so Mike asked that the Director of Stewardship and the Parish Administrator join the committee.

The committee will then review the policy and come back to the council with any recommendations. If it can be done in 30 days for the next meeting, that would be great. The timeline will be moved back to accommodate this policy review. Two staff members would bring consistency to the committee. Chairs should notify Clyde by the end of the week who will be the representative from the commission.

VI. Commission Structure

Mike distributed a recommended commission structure. The primary goal is to find a commission for every ministry. The second goal is to improve communication between these ministries and the commissions. The staff has been reviewing the structure. The council should review for discussion at next meeting. The new commission is Pastoral Care and Outreach. The activities commission is redefined to the Community Life Commission. Other ministries have been moved. The leaders should bring back to their commissions and discuss. The ultimate decision resides with the Parish Council regarding the commissions, but we need to make sure no ministries are missed, and if there are any ministries that need to be moved.

In light of financial situation, the fact that we have a new administrator, and that we have a new accountant, Mike proposed we freeze the commission structure of the finance commission so the three members who would be moving off will remain for an additional year. There is one vacancy on the commission which we will discern to fill. Greg stated that he (and he believes Bob) has contacted Father and accepted the invitation to remain for the next year. Jim Hayes has also agreed. Robert Sanislo requested this approval be added to next month's agenda. Tim Sullivan also echoed Mike's statement that continuity in that commission would be good for the parish.

VII. Discernment Timeline

The timeline had been distributed at the last meeting, and Mike distributed a revised copy at this meeting. The council should review, provide any changes, and approve. Terri Willaert will be facilitating the discernment meetings this year.

VIII. Adjournment/Closing Prayer

The meeting was concluded at 9:45 p.m. The next meeting will be Tuesday, March 13, at 8:30 p.m.