

## St Thomas Parish Council Meeting minutes, June 30, 2015

Present: Fr Bill, Fr Todd, Rod Gauvin, JoAnn Thiefels, Paul Thiefels, Dave Williams, Marie Williams, Deacon Jim, Monica Pope, Mary Cavnar, Bill Cavnar, Moira Cullen, Cathy Dowling

Absent: Frank Lum, Naomi Corera

Minutes from our last meeting were approved.

Church Restoration: Two members of the Parish art committee (John Michael Muller and Sean Jana) were present to give an update. There are around 9 church restoration companies that have been contacted regarding further painting in the church. The committee will be meeting with the first potential vendor, Red Fern Studios, in July. Ideas for the church include: a dome mural of the Risen Lord, side murals, rebuild of the baptistry, a new statue (potentially St Thomas), possible restorations of original murals. The committee is using a USCCB document: Built of Living Stones. Fr Bill would like to start restoration in the Spring of 2016 if possible. At the end of planning there will be a parish-wide presentation of possible choices.

Neighborhood Ambassadors: Fr Todd would like to implement this as a continuation of the small group effort in the spring. New members in the church would be contacted, and maybe visited, by a member with a welcome packet. An invitation could be made to new members such as "come to mass with us" or "join us for a neighborhood barbecue"

St Thomas Grade School Town Hall held in May, 2015: The biggest issue that seemed to concern parents at the meeting was academic excellence. Marie shared that there was an emphasis on current problems in the school, but no discussion of how to increase enrollment. Also, Marie wondered if we could go to a true tithing model in the parish which would allow parish children to attend school tuition free. Cathy shared that in her opinion, our current Principal, Theresa Marshall, is the best principal we've ever had. There are current issues with gossip, especially in the younger grades. How do we stop that? As council members, we will sign a card at the August meeting for Ms Marshall showing her our support and our prayers for her.

Debt Retirement: We started with a debt of \$2.5 million, which is now down to \$70,000. We will hold a party for the parish after the Sat, 4:30 mass on the Feast of Christ the King, Nov 21, 2015.

Facility needs: Now that we are about out of debt, we need to consider facility repairs. Items such as the north part of the parking lot, later the rest of the parking lot, the school roof, and tuckpointing of the church, esp near the choir loft.

Development director: Fr Bill is in the process of interviewing candidates for the part time position.

Diocesan Capital Campaign: Bishop Boyea is going to hold a feasibility study of such a campaign. This would cover "extraordinary needs", such as the city of Flint which is experiencing very difficult economic times currently. Some feel that money is not going to help the problem, it is a problem of deep spiritual oppression.. A Diocesan representative will collect feedback.

Alpha program: Every Wednesday evening, from Sept 30 to Dec 16 (except the week of Thanksgiving), the parish will run this 10 week program. It includes a meal, video and small group discussions. It is aimed at current Catholics who need to be re-energized in their faith and non-believers. The emphasis is that there is "no pressure" whatsoever placed on participants. The key to success is hospitality. Small group will be the same for the 10 week course. More information can be found by searching "alpha course" on the internet. Moira will talk to Our Lady of Good Counsel about their experience with it. It has been very successful there and Fr John ricardo is creating an Alpha 200 course. We aim for about 200 people in attendance. There will be a group meeting on Sat or Sun for those parents with small children. Our teens will also do the course once a month. Hosts and helpers need to be chosen carefully and will attend a training session in August.