

Elmira Planning Team
Meeting Minutes
January 11, 2017

Present: Lorie Brink, Fr. John DeSocio, Fr. Rick Farrell, Amy Finnerty, Armand Fusco, Melissa Kalec, Fr. Scott Kubinski, Tom Kubus, Ed Looney, Bill McCarthy, Mary Montanarella, Philomena Mrkus, David Quinn, Karen Rinefierd, Deacon Paul Sartori, Mike Smith, Jeff Schmidt

<u>Action Items</u>	<u>Who</u>	<u>By When</u>
• Ensure each church is counting Mass attendance weekly	Pastors	Ongoing
• Bulletin Articles	Karen	Ongoing
• Benchmark other parishes	Tom	1/4/17
• Send Mass Schedule possibilities to Karen	All	Done
• Invite Chuck Nocera of Catholic Charities to planning team meetings and provide him with agendas	Armand	Done
• Re-open the staff ministry assessment survey so additional staff members can complete	Karen	Done
• Contact individual staff members to create job descriptions indicating what they actually do	Karen	Done
• Ensure admin staff had opportunity to take staff survey	Dave	Done
• Identify what spaces we need to serve the Elmira community, prioritize expected salability of all buildings other than churches, develop scenarios for building usage connected to each building being sold	Dave, Jeff, Armand	February/ March
• Request "Senior Priest" status	Fr. John	Done
• Draft letter from planning team to Bishop	Karen	Done
• Request Bishop to approve clustering and start of merger process	Planning team	Done
• Measure pews for seating capacity	Mary, Armand	2/1/16
• Send Mass Schedule possibilities to Karen	All	Done
<u>New Items from January Meeting</u>		
• Set timeline for building usage tasks and send to Karen	Dave, Jeff, Armand	ASAP
• Send Mass schedule & location possibilities to Karen	All	2/8
• Reflect on the questions about how to handle 2017-2018 Pastoral Council and Finance Councils	All	2/15
• Pastoral councils and finance councils to discuss the results of the ministries assessment survey, complete the worksheet, and return it to Karen	Pastors, pastoral council/finance council reps on planning team	January/early February

Meeting commenced at 7:02

Opening Prayer by Fr. Rick

Housekeeping items

- Copies of Bishop Matano's letter of 1/9/17, in response to the planning team request that the three parishes cluster and the Bishop appoint a pastor and a parochial vicar when Fr.

- John moves to senior priest status, were distributed. The basic message is to continue in the planning process.
- Someone has approached one of the committee members and stated that he was going to fight a merger and is in the process of consulting a Canon lawyer. Karen reminded the planning team that the process of moving toward a merger will likely take about 18 months. We will be answering questions and soliciting input from parishioners over this time. We should make sure all people have all the available information and encourage them to attend the open meetings. Planning team members can expect to have parishioners come up to them with questions and comments. Our responsibility is to be transparent and to share the information we have. We need to make sure snowbirds get the information. One way is to encourage them to visit the pastoral planning part of the Elmira Catholic website regularly.
 - Karen raised several questions for reflection and eventual decision in light of the likely clustering of the three parishes in June:
 - What about Pastoral Council for next year? At what point should there be a single Pastoral Council?
 - What makes the most sense for joint Finance Council meetings?
 - What structures and practices will allow the priest appointed pastor to do well during the first year?
 - Planning team members should think about these questions and talk with others so that we can discuss this topic at the February meeting.
 - There was a suggestion that each current parish should have 2 Masses in the new Mass schedule to make changes equitable. (Right now each parish has 3 Masses.)
 - There is concern that St. Mary's will not have a priest. In actuality St. Mary's will have 2 priests—the pastor and parochial vicar. We will need to communicate what clustering and merging might mean for the three current parishes. The proposed changes will likely be most confusing to St. Mary's parishioners since they have always been a single parish. Blessed Sacrament and Christ the Redeemer parishioners have already gone through becoming a merged parish with multiple worship sites. While what is proposed might not be confusing for them, they might find being asked to go through a second parish reconfiguration difficult.
 - During January/early February the pastoral and finance councils will be looking at the results of the ministry assessment survey in their meetings. Pastors and pastoral council/finance council reps should send their council members the survey results summary and the worksheet supplied before the meetings so that they can prepare. The worksheet asks what are 5 things to safeguard and 5 things to improve? What are the things we need to do/resources needed to accomplish this? Send summary worksheets to Karen when they are completed.
 - **Setting parishioner church hall meetings:** These will have a different purpose than the October ones: 1) getting parishioner feedback on several possible Mass schedules, 2) answering questions about the possible merger of the three parishes and getting some initial input. Monday, March 27 at St. Charles Borromeo at 2:00-4:00 pm and 6:30-8:30 pm.
 - **Building Usage Subcommittee work:** The action steps to be taken: 1) identify what spaces we need to serve the Elmira community, 2) prioritize expected salability of all buildings other than churches, 3) develop scenarios for building usage connected to each building being sold. Dave, Jeff, and Armand will talk offline and get back to Karen with when they expect to complete each task.

Work on Determining a new weekend Mass schedule

Discussion/Comments

- The possibility of a 7:00 pm Saturday Mass was discussed. Saturday evening may be a good time for those with Saturday pm activities, including sports for young people, but would disrupt the priest monthly dinner. Some young people attend the 5:00 pm Sunday Mass.
- Evangelization is important and will require much more than a change in Mass times.
- 4:00 is the earliest possible time for a Saturday Mass.
- St. Mary's moved the 4:30 Mass to 4:00 because many seniors attend and do not want to drive in the dark.
- Are we trying to accommodate those that are currently coming or do we want a schedule that allows for Evangelization? There was a lengthy discussion regarding whether the new Mass schedule should be more accommodating of those who do not currently come to Mass or regular Mass goers. We will get input from the latter at the 3/27 parishioner town hall meetings.
- There was a suggestion that we may want to survey Holy Family and Notre Dame families as well as families connected to religious education and CYO.
- We may want to have a special Mass targeted for youth, either regularly or occasionally.
- There was a discussion whether there should be a 90 minute requirement between all Masses so one priest can cover all Masses if needed.
- It seems to be a good idea to not have any 10:30 Masses as not to play favorites since all three parishes currently have a 10:30 Mass.

Reaching agreement on possible Saturday evening schedules to present to parishioners

- Option 1: 4:00 pm and 5:30 pm
- Option 2: 4:00 pm and 5:00 pm

Reaching agreement on possible Sunday schedules to present to parishioners (assumption is that the 5:00 pm Sunday regional Mass continues)

- Option 1: 8:00 am, 9:30 am, 11:00 am, 12:30 pm
- Option 2: 7:30 am, 9:00 am, 11:00 am, 12 noon
- Option 3: 8:00 am, 9:00 am, 11:00 am, 7:30 pm

Homework in preparation for next meeting: each member to propose church location for each Mass schedule the planning team chose tonight (Karen will provide a template).

Upcoming meetings: Wednesday, Feb. 15 (Jeff agreed to take minutes because Tom will be away) and Tuesday, March 21.