

St. Gaspar Unified Parish Council/Unified Finance Council Meeting, 10-23-2024
Held at St. Paul Church, Englewood, OH at 6:30 PM

Attending Staff Members: Fr. Tony Fortman, Joe Hurr, Joan Macpherson, Matt Ruttle, Sue Seibert

Attending Parish Council Members: Becky Chestnut, Mike Boyd, Joyce Bachman, Kathy Wirrig,
Mark Casdorff, Mike Stoner, Brad Thobe, Katrekia (TT) Gambrell, Jeri Mechenbier, Gary Roeckner

Attending Unified Finance Council: Marty Blasko, John Kettler, Sherry Boyd, Bob Wagner,
Bob Chodkowski, Missy Grant, Mike Lee, Kevin Brown, Amy Wiedeman, Tim Becker, Rita Zimmerman

Fr. Tony opened the meeting at 6:30 PM with an opening prayer.

Barb Franz made a presentation re: Stephen Ministry. It is a non-denominational and confidential Listening ministry. This was adopted for use by Precious Blood Church in 2000. A group also began in 2013 at St. Paul Church. The three trained Stephen Leaders are Barb Franz, Diane Heulsman and Steve Lewis. They have completed additional training to be group leaders and trainers.

Stephen Ministers have 50 hours of training following an established program. They are commissioned by the church. Stephen Ministers are paired with a Care Receiver, male to male and female to female. The Stephen Leader meets with a potential Care Receiver, who can be referred to the service by someone who recognizes that he/she may need help to deal with, for example, the death of a spouse or a serious health issue. The Care Receiver can be a member of a parish or can be someone in the community, who agrees to have a Stephen Minister visit. Stephen Ministers are described as the "After People" who offer a non-judgmental listening ear, about an hour a week, to aid someone in working through their feelings during a difficult time. Barb answered a few questions about Stephen Ministry and offered a written description of Stephen Ministers. (Please see the attached one-page document). Discussion of possible implementation among St. Gaspar Family of parishes occurred. One person offered that the training addresses effective listening and communicating, which is valuable for one's life and family, as well as for Stephen Ministry.

Fr. Tony spoke about "Together Sunday" on November 24, 2024. Archbishop Schnurr is asking all parishioners in the diocese to invite Catholics who haven't been coming to church, to attend mass on that day. An invitation from a fellow Catholic may be what's needed to help bring people back to church. (Please see attached two-page document).

Fr. Tony spoke about the Parish Missionary Disciple Training program that is being offered through the Archdiocese of Cincinnati by the Catholic Leadership Institute. These six training sessions will occur in February, March and April 2025. St. Gaspar Family needs to have a commitment from 15-20 people, representing all 6 parishes, by November 15, 2024. "The Missionary Disciples may include a few staff members, Implementation Team and Envisioning Team members but that should not be the primary source of the membership base. The key qualities for participants should be: Faithful, Available, Contagious and Teachable". Fr. Tony described that members should be willing to humbly talk about Jesus and proclaim his death and resurrection. It is best for people to recommend parishioners who might be good at learning to better share their faith. Please get names to Joan Macpherson of those who agree to participate. (Please see the attached one-page document).

Under the guidance of the Catholic Leadership Institute, the St. Gaspar Family Envisioning Team formulated Purpose, Vision and Mission statements and Goals for implementation. It is now time for the Implementation Team to formulate ways to foster St. Gaspar Family's growth in these areas. The first meeting of the Implementation Team is on November 6, 2024. This is a 2-year program that develops concrete ways to welcome people, create vibrant worship, communicate well, and to serve the diverse community with faith, service and integrity.

In new business, there was discussion about how to gather reports from the six different parishes for concerns and needs to be addressed at the UPC/UFC meetings. Each parish will have to communicate among themselves, prior to the UPC/UFC meeting, to discern which items need to be put on the agenda to be discussed. Fr. Tony is more in favor of separating the UPC and UFC meetings on different nights, as it is difficult for him to be present to both groups to address so many issues at once. After further discussion, for our next meeting, Fr. Tony agreed to have the combined St. Gaspar Family UPC/UFC meet together for 30 minutes before breaking out into the two separate groups. We can decide then, if this is the best way to move forward. **The next UPC/UFC meeting will be on Thursday, December 5th, 2024** at the school at Emmanuel from 6:30 to 8 PM. At our next meeting, please bring individual church schedules, so the we can set our schedule for UPC/UFC meeting dates and building availability.

Fr. Tony offered a closing prayer prior to the break-out sessions of the UPC and UFC groups at 7:20 PM. Each group was tasked with selecting a Chairperson and a Recording Secretary.

This section of the report is from the Unified Parish Council break-out session:

We commenced with going around the room to introduce ourselves. Each person gave a short description of their number of years at their home parish, roles in which they served that community and their faith journey through local parishes or through moves and experiences at different parishes. Each person also told something about their work life (past/present), family, and particular talents developed over the years.

Discussion occurred regarding the CLI Parish Missionary Disciple Training. Some members thought that the time commitment for participation was a lot (30 hours) and that perhaps St. Gaspar Church Family was not quite to this point in moving through the Phases of development. Fr. Tony joined us and reminded us that the Diocese sets the Guidelines. Fr. Tony wants us to work at figuring out who would be willing and able to do the discipleship training from each of the six parishes, to meet the November 15th deadline.

Although each parish has its own personality, we are tasked with developing who we are, as the St. Gaspar Family of Parishes, to be a more cohesive community. There still needs to be facilities maintenance at each of the churches. We will have to do some compromising to decide how many events to hold within the St. Gaspar Family communities to avoid repetition and volunteer burn-out.

As a group, we decided to have Mike Stoner as Chairman. Becky Chestnut will be Vice Chairman. Kathy Wirrig will be the Recorder.

Each parish's UPC members need to find the description of their Parish Council and its function. At our next meeting, we will discuss the individual parish council descriptions, and compare them to the description that the archdiocese has developed. In that way, we can decide what the St. Gaspar Family Parish Pastoral Council should entail. Fr. Tony requested that each UPC member serve a 3-year term. Individual parishes should meet the week before the next UPC/UFC meeting to offer up needs and concerns. Mike Stoner suggested that each parish's UPC members report to Kathy Wirrig, who can gather the items for discussion to be included in the agenda for the next St. Gaspar UPC/UFC meeting.

Also suggested, is to have the names and photos of the UPC and UFC members published in the St. Gaspar Family Bulletin once a quarter, better allowing parishioners to bring needs and concerns forward.

Precious Blood School financial report will be presented separately, although it is part of the St. Gaspar Family. Of 217 students, only 10 are Catholic. It is hoped that some students may come back as adults.

Fr. Tony offered a closing prayer. The UPC portion of the meeting ended at 8:20 PM.

Kathy Wirrig, Recorder (ckemgd6@aol.com)