

## Minutes from the St. Gaspar Family Unified Parish Council (UPC) and Unified Finance Council (UFC) Meeting

12-05-2024, Emmanuel Church School at 6:30 PM

In Attendance: Fr. Tony Fortman, Deacon Brian Seibert, Sue Seibert (Admin), Joe Hurr (Business manager, North), Chris Lockhart (Business Manager, South) Joan Macpherson (Communications). UPC: Becky Chestnut (PB), Mike Boyd (SR), Joyce Bachman (SR), Kathy Wirrig (SP), Mark Casdorff (SP), Mike Stoner (Em), Tom Scarpelli (Em), Jeri Mechenbier (SJ), Gary Roeckner (SJ) UFC: Sherry Boyd (SR), Bob Wagner (SR), Bob Chodkowski (SP), Mike Lee (Em), Kevin Brown (Em), Amy Wiedeman (HT), Tim Becker (HT), Rita Zimmerman (SJ).

Absent: Pam Glover (PB), Brad Thobe (HT), TT Gambrell (HT), Marty Blasko (PB), John Kettler (PB), Missy Grant (SP), Ralph McEldowney (SJ)

Opening Prayer: Fr. Tony began at 6:30 PM with the “Our Father”

Financial Report: Per Fr. Tony, no report right now, since the UFC will meet together in a break-out group, shortly.

### Old Business:

Together Sunday on 11-24-2024 was Diocese-wide. Fr. Tony offered masses at St. Rita, Precious Blood and Emmanuel. He didn't see a significant difference in attendance at those masses. A few UPC & UFC members invited people to mass that day. Some members have invited others to parish events like a Fish Fry or a Christmas Concert. Discussion ensued regarding reasons that some Catholics have stayed away from church. Fr. Tony mentioned that for some, Sunday is a “catch up on chores day”. Some people fear having to go to confession before coming back to church and receiving the Holy Eucharist. Some have moral reasons to stay away, like being part of the LGBTQ+ community, and those affected by the recent stance of the Cincinnati Diocese to not support Girl Scouts any longer. Some have felt excluded, i.e. those who are non-Catholic and feel unable to participate in receiving the Eucharist. Becky reminded us that anyone can receive a blessing.

Some members have tried to engage family & friends in conversation about why they have stayed away from church. Do they have accurate information about our beliefs, the Eucharist, the sacraments and confession? The St. Gaspar Family's recent Confirmation Class of 65, 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> graders, was encouraging. Fr. Tony spoke about the fact that the Catholic Church is changing. He feels that he, and all Catholics, need to take ownership of their beliefs. The church is not trying to make things nice & cozy regarding some of the difficult truths. One member mentioned others feel the Catholic church needs to be more welcoming, i.e. the story of the Prodigal Son.

Parish Ministry/Missionary Disciples Training: This is a Diocese-wide program hoping to promote Evangelization. Deacon Brian Seibert was newly asked to lead the St. Gaspar Family Evangelization efforts. Joan Macpherson made us aware that the deadline has been extended from Nov 15<sup>th</sup> to Dec 30<sup>th</sup> for volunteers or appointees. For St. Gaspar Family, we are asked to have 2 to 3 members from each parish who will commit to the training and effort of evangelization. Joan offered that there will soon be more specific guidelines from the Diocese.

Beacons of Light/Catholic Leadership Initiative: St. Gaspar Family has completed the Envision Portion of the process. (See attached Final Report). We are now at the Implementation Phase.

Communications: CLI has emphasized building of a 1:1 relationship with those who are broken-hearted. There are ways to engage people i.e. Stephen Ministry, Ministry Disciples. Joan has developed a communication tool for parishioners to provide comments, feedback and concerns through Flocknote and a shared landing page of: stgasparfamily.org. (Please see attached comment page). Inviting people to parish events can be an effective welcome to the community, too.

Stephen Ministry: although a 50 hour of training requirement, Stephen Ministry can have impact with parishioners and non-parishioners as a one-on-one listening ministry, as well as a chance to welcome others.

## New Business:

Judi Trick recently vacated her position as Business Manager, due to her serious illness and recent entry into Hospice Care. Per Fr. Tony, Judi has worked at Holy Trinity for 37 years, and worked at St. Rita's for 10 years, prior to that. She has given much to the Dayton Catholic community for many years. Now is a time of grieving. How to cover her job will come later. Office helpers found her "To Do List". Fr. Tony wants to give her the time she needs right now, without bothering her about church concerns. Lynda Middleton is accepting cards & notes for Judi to give to her to read. Others are helping Lynda with immediate concerns like heating at Holy Trinity. Chris Lockhart, Business manager for St. Joe's and Emmanuel, will cover Judi's responsibilities during her illness.

Thoughts on forming statutes for the UPC/UFC, including structure and fit: What has been done in the past? How do we put together things from each of the 6 parishes? Sue Seibert made copies for everyone of Constitution/By-laws from St. Joe's, St. Paul's and Emmanuel. Looking at these may help with forming the new bylaws for the St. Gaspar Family. The archdiocese has also, through Beacons of Light, provided "Families of Parishes Unified Pastoral Council, Guidelines for Implementation" as a resource.

Fr. Tony's Role/Leadership Team's Role: Fr. Tony feels that his role has been one of observation for how things currently work. At times, he has been a lightning rod to help spark change and encourage a different way of approaching matters. The St. Gaspar Family is in its' growing stage, so some discussions may be uncomfortable. Fr. Tony feels he needs to share Diocesan matters, when appropriate, with the UPC/UFC.

What can we do to help provide support for Fr. Tony? Are the UPC/UFC advisory only, or will we be a decision-making body? How are we to get involved/engaged to do what is needed? Fr. Tony stated that he will disseminate information, but will not go against Canon Law. UPC is an advisory board. We are asked to critique each other. We are in the beginning stages of formation and will continue to grow and evolve.

UFC/UPC roles: Decision making body or advisory? Will we need to write language in bylaws regarding the need for a quorum to pass resolutions? For example: if the cost of something is <\$5,000, can we decide that? If there are 2 churches that each have a \$30,000 need, but we don't have the money for both, who decides that? Does the Finance Committee deliberate and the UPC approve or deny the proposal? One UFC member expressed that he feels the need for a more definitive "job description". Joe Hurr offered that at some point, in maybe 5 or 6 years, when we become one Canonical Parish, we will share money. We will have to learn each other's business practices well enough to make a standard description of duties. There will still need to be Diocesan approval of any cost over \$25,000. We will have to create a common set of rules, and review them periodically. Per Fr. Tony, there will be a need for honest communication and no hiding of finances. The UFC will have to get to know each other well enough to make fair, adequate and honest decisions in the best interest of all 6 parishes in the family. Having standardized and automated bookkeeping will help in the long-run. Joe Hurr offered to help Emmanuel get started with that, to move away from paper records.

Proposal for how to meet: After discussion among the staff, UPC and UFC members, and Fr. Tony, it was decided that voting could be a show of hands vs. paper ballots. Fr. Tony reminded us that there might be some intense & difficult discussions, but that he thinks it is better to have "the mess out in front of us". When monies are eventually combined, expenses may not equal income in a particular place. We must respect each other's viewpoints and remember that we are here for God.

Setting of the 2025 Calendar: After discussion, the calendar for 2025 meetings was set. We decided to continue to meet together and then have break-out sessions for UPC and UFC. Rather than rotate meeting places, we decided to meet more centrally at St. Joe's Parish Center. We decided to meet 6 times over the year. Fr. Tony said that some more immediate decisions might need to be made by email. The meeting dates for 2025 are all on Wednesdays: 1-15-25, 2-26-25, 5-7-25, 7-9-25, 9-10-25 and 11-5-25 at 6:30 PM.

Closing prayer: Fr. Tony offered a "Hail Mary". The meeting went to break-out sessions at 7:40 PM.

Kathy Wirrig, Secretary ([ckemgd6@aol.com](mailto:ckemgd6@aol.com), 937-681-1178)

12-05-2024

7:45 to 8:00 PM: Unified Parish Council Breakout Session, Mike Stoner, Chairman

- We began with a round of introductions, as we are all still getting to know each other.
- We decided to follow Robert's Rules for combined meeting practices, but can be less formal in the break-out sessions.
- Voting will be Yea or Nea, unless the vote is close and a show of hands is needed.
- Since we are beginning in an advisory role, initially, we don't need to have a quorum at every meeting.
- Any parish family members' concerns will need to be brought to the UPC Chairman, Mike Stoner, or to UPC Secretary, Kathy Wirrig. That way, items can be added to the next meeting agenda.
- Per Fr. Tony, it is OK to meet at one's home church in preparation for the combined meeting of the UPC and UFC.
- We agreed to refresh committee statutes with a periodic review, rather than having a finite term for the statutes/bylaws, where they would have to be re-written yearly.
- Officers will be Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary. For now, during our formation process, the UPC members felt that it would be in our best interest to have the officers maintain their role, rather than cycle out yearly. It was thought that there would be more continuity that way.
- Fr. Tony had asked us to commit to 3-year terms, originally. He is OK with having 12 members, 2 from each parish, to be the Unified Parish Council and the same for Unified Finance Council. At some point, we will have to rotate-out either 4 of 12, or 6 of 12 members, so that the UPC and UFC can continue to function well when accepting new members.

Chairman, Mike Stoner, offered to work on a rough draft proposal for the UPC bylaws during the time he has work vacation during the week of Christmas. Reading, evaluating and offering input from members at our next meeting, will allow us to create "the footer, or foundation" for how the St. Gaspar Family UPC will function.

Our break-out meeting ended at 8:00 PM.

Kathy Wirrig, Secretary