

Holy Innocents Church

Parish Council Minutes- December 14, 2017

Present: Kate Vullo, Bridget Dinardi, Sr. Donna Kelly, Mike Fisher, Wanda DeJesus, Fr. Hugh, O.P., Jackie Kovatch, Alice Wagner, Grace Baer, Mary Law, Maryanne Dowd, Mike Cusack, Fr. Sutman, O.P., Stephen Busby, Kate Howe, Tom Conaty, Olga Carlsen

Absent: Rither Alabre, Beth Curley, Danielle Dispenza, Tim Hickey, Mark Mannix, Mark Moran, George Mulry

Meeting was called to order: 7:40 pm.

Opening Prayer: Mike Fisher

Remembrances of JT McNally: Father Hugh reported that JT passed away since the last parish Council meeting in November. He died on his way home from a Centennial Committee meeting at the church. Father Hugh and the rest of the Parish Council prayed for the repose of JT's soul. Father then announced that a Memorial Mass would be said in honor of JT on Dec. 30, 2017 at 11:00 AM. His family lives at a distance from Pleasantville, in Cooperstown, NY. Father Hugh offered to assist the family with final arrangements, if needed. The family indicated that it would be in touch with the Flooks-Becher Funeral Home regarding arrangements. Father Frank revealed that he felt that we should not interfere with making arrangements for JT. His sister Tara has used the parish website, which JT ran for the Holy Innocents Parish, to announce his passing and possible reception afterwards.

Pastor's Report: Father Hugh Burns, O.P. reported that Former Mayor John Nonna's presentation 'Building the Arc of the Moral Universe Toward Justice: The work of the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights under Law' will be held on Sunday, Jan. 14, 2018.

Father Hugh announced to the Council that he is thinking of changing the time of the 7:30 am. early Saturday morning Mass. Father proposed an 8:30 am Mass to the attendees at church this past Saturday. They were reportedly supportive. Father also discussed time changes for Masses with the pastor from the Holy Name of Jesus Church in Valhalla, and he is thinking of doing something similar. Mike Fisher inquired about the communication side of this changing schedule. Discussion ensued, with a suggestion to announce the mass change at Holy Innocents on Jan. 1, 2018 and allow a month transition period, so that the change would be instituted on Feb. 1, 2018. An alternative suggested by Father Hugh was to institute the change on Jan. 5, 2018, after a 1/1/2018 announcement to the congregation.

Lynn Beck is a highly competent woman, who ran a Separated and Divorced Group on Long Island. She wants to run a similar group here at Holy Innocents Parish. Father Burns remarked that he feels comfortable with her.

Father Hugh stated that Alan Kluepfel will be soliciting ads for the Holy Innocents' bulletin. He has been engaged in this work in the past in Armonk, NY.

Liturgical Decorating: A committee needs to be reconstituted. Wanda feels Carolyn would be a good candidate for this position. The word is out; we are looking for a few creative parishioners.

Blue Mass on Monday, Dec. 24th at 7:00pm: Father Frank will say this Mass for those who have had a recent loss or for those who perhaps feel down, lonely or blue. If you just need a quiet, calm and spiritual place to reflect, come and join us at this Mass.

Sister Donna expressed how impressed she was with Lessons and Carols. This was the first time she was involved in this activity. She considered it an excellent experience.

There will be a Christmas Party on Sunday, Dec. 17th (begins at 4:00 pm) at Kate Howe's house.

Follow Up from Last Meeting:

a. Rebuild and Renew Update: Kate Howe reported that the Campaign Committee was very happy with the R&R pledge results, currently \$850,000. George felt that this was a little short of our goal, but a great effort by the Committee who worked on this campaign for several months. Kate suggested that we may need to give gentle reminders and follow ups to those who have pledged. Mike commented that this is a homerun for the community. He feels the best way to express our thanks is to keep people abreast of the things we have accomplished paying for. Father Hugh also indicated that the Cardinal's Appeal starts in January, 2018. He revealed that the first small loan payment will be made in January 2018 and continue monthly. We will also continue to pay down the mortgage monthly as a priority. The other important item to pay down is the HVAC system.

One reason we were successful is because we had a dedicated, hardworking committee. Mike noted that "The greatest work is the work we do spiritually". Father Frank and Kate suggested that pictorial PR should be evident in the bulletin. It was proposed by Steve that we feature one item each week in the bulletin. Kate indicated that pictorial PR should also be in our email. People need to know what is going on. The pictures in the bulletin remarked Tom Conaty, should demonstrate the activity engaged in during various parish events ie: the youth group activities. Father Frank further believed that perhaps people should be interviewed to go along with the pictures. Alternatively, it was proposed by Father Hugh that a monthly newsletter might be a better way to inform the parishioners about parish events. Mike continued the discussion confirming that there were a lot of good ideas noted here, however he wondered about conducting a best practices survey to see what other parishes were doing to communicate with their parishioners. Subsequent to Father Hugh suggesting that we need someone to pull this PR effort together, Mike requested if anyone would volunteer to spearhead this effort. Maryanne, who was already looking to put pictures on the parish website, volunteered, and Mike offered to work with her on this endeavor.

b. Finance Committee recommendations:

Mike Cusack reported that the Finance Committee noted that there is a \$20,000 hole in the parish budget. This is going forward on this year's budget. The reason for the hole is unknown. Mike Fisher remarked that we may be \$20,000 less than expected, even though we were in good shape financially last year. Kate Howe commented that we just paid off a mortgage, and then added on the HVAC system. We are also still paying off the mortgage for this building.

c. Fundraising 2018 Discussion and Plan:

Kate Howe commented that she didn't know how we could ask for more money from parishioners. Father Hugh stated that the Cardinal's Appeal begins next month, January 2018. Mike offered the idea

of a community flea market and that people can open up their own stands & sell their own goods. Holy Innocents Parish would collect the money that results from the sale, ie: Rummage Sale. It was noted that it would be a significant amount of work. Alternatively, it was recommended to have the sale at individual homes in the community. It was further suggested that our parish sale should be at the same time as the Pleasantville Day event in our community. It was commented that everyone was selling something on Pleasantville Day. Tom felt that too many people collect money on Pleasantville Day. Father Hugh concurred and thought that we shouldn't be asking for money on Pleasantville Day, just possibly giving items out or advertising Holy Innocents Parish & the OLP Centennial. An annual Raffle was also strongly suggested to raise funds for the parish, as it was well received in the past.

Committee Reports/Liaison Updates:

A Home: JT headed up this as a liaison. We are looking for someone to tie in with this group and replace him.

American Heritage Girls: Giving Tree- Steve reported that there were 150 presents collected for High Bridge. There were also 50 extra gift cards for the Houston American Heritage Girls. Kate worked hard on this drive.

Ecumenical Vocation Bible School, Religious Education: Maria Lamorgese reported that the Religious Education Program has truly focused on the REASON FOR THE SEASON. As a Program they collected for St. Vincent's Psychiatric Hospital in Harrison and the Williamsbridge Manor Nursing Home in the Bronx. Grades 1-3 collected board games for each unit. Grades 4-5 collected shampoo, conditioner and body wash. Grades 6-8 collected new sweatshirts to give to every patient at St. Vincent's, as this was the only gift that the patients received on Christmas morning. Individual Classes did additional service projects, such as creating holiday centerpieces for Nursing Homes and Rehabilitation Facilities. A collection of gently used Christmas decorations was brought to those in need. There was also a collection of items for the homeless.

Maria further commented that her goal for the children was for them to be able to differentiate between Advent and Christmas. It was not easy to achieve this because every store, every commercial and every radio station started Christmas the day after Halloween! The Religious Education Program tried to take it slow, as they journeyed through ADVENT and ANTICIPATED the coming of the Lord! Maria expressed her 'Thank you' to all for their support, prayers and encouragement.

FORMED: Olga requested to know how many people are using Formed. Maryanne will try to get the information for her.

Making All Things New: Maryanne reported that the committee cancelled its meeting.

Parish Events: Danielle informed the Parish Council that on Tuesday December 5th, the Advent Tea, Co-Chaired by Deirdre D'Attoma and Daielle Dispenza, was held. All who attended brought gifts for the Bedford Women's Correctional Facility. They also brought gift cards for our own local parishioners in need. Sr. Diane Forrest, our Guest Speaker, read us the most clever "email warning" about receiving the "Advent Virus" (see below).

WARNING!!

You have just received the Advent Virus!

Be on the alert for symptoms of inner **Hope, Peace, Joy and Love**. The hearts of a great many have already been exposed to this virus and it is possible that people everywhere could come down with it in epidemic proportions. This could pose a serious threat to what has, up to now, been a fairly stable condition of conflict in the world.

Some signs and symptoms of

The Advent Virus:

- A tendency to think and act spontaneously rather than on fears based on past experiences.
- An unmistakable ability to enjoy each moment.
- A loss of interest in judging other people.
- A loss of interest in interpreting the actions of others.
- A loss of interest in conflict.
- A loss of the ability to worry. (This is a very serious symptom.)
- Frequent, overwhelming episodes of appreciation.
- Contented feelings of connectedness with others and nature.
- Frequent attacks of smiling.
- An increasing tendency to let things happen rather than make them happen.
- An increased susceptibility to the love extended by others, as well as the uncontrollable urge to extend it.

Danielle further commented that Sr. Donna Kelly played the piano beautifully for their caroling. It was also wonderful to see Sr. Kathy O'Hanlon again. A 'Thank You' was expressed to Fr. Burns for leading the attendees at the event, with a prayer. A 'Thank You' was also extended to Tom Conaty for keeping the parking exclusive to the event, and for providing wonderful Youth Group Server Volunteers.

The 'Happy Birthday Jesus Pageant' and 'Crafts with Saint Nick Activity' was held on Saturday, Dec. 16th at 10 am. There was a collection of unwrapped baby gifts for young mothers in need, who are at The BirthRight Center. Danielle further stated that \$25/family was collected for an 11 am Breakfast with St. Nick.

Re-Creation: On Dec. 5th a Mass and Luncheon was held by the Re-creation Committee and was well attended. Danielle indicated that once again Casa Rina Restaurant was very generous with catering this event. Volunteers also brought all kinds of homemade cookies for dessert. There will now be a break in the schedule for January and February, due to winter weather. They will reconvene in March, 2018.

Refugee Outreach: Mike Fisher reported that Refugee families will get packages for the holidays. The knitting club made knit goods for each member of every refugee family, as part of their holiday gifts.

Social Concerns: Jackie spoke about what happened at the Centennial Committee meeting. It was reported to be a good productive meeting. Jackie is going to talk to the people who signed up to work on the Centennial event.

Alice Wagner commented that on 11/18/2017 the Social Concerns Committee visited the Nuns for Thanksgiving at the Maryknoll Residential Care Facility. They brought apple and blueberry pies, apple cider, ice cream and candy. They sang Happy Birthday to a few Nuns celebrating birthdays in November.

Website: Maryanne Dowd continues to work on the website. Mike Fisher will help her spearhead the Public Relations effort, perhaps using pictures in reference to parish activities.

Youth Group:

Tom Conaty made an announcement of an anonymous donation of \$2,000 that he received to be donated to needy people. He will distribute this money to people in need this holiday season.

Tom commented on the following **Service Projects:**

- Throughout December the 5th grade boys, in partner with Meals on Wheels, assembled Blizzard Boxes for the Meals on Wheels organization. These emergency kits are a critical food source for homebound people when bad weather hits our area.
- On Dec. 17th, the Youth Group visited the Cottage School.
- Early on Dec. 24th, they participated in a Breakfast Run to NYC.
- A Brunch was held on Dec. 28th at the Ronald McDonald House.

Closing Prayer: Mike Fisher

Meeting Adjourned: 9:15 pm.

Next meeting: January 11, 2018

Minutes submitted by: Kate Vullo