

St. John Fisher Pastoral Council Meeting February 7, 2024

Present: Msgr. David A. Sork, Joe McGuinness (chair), Stephanie Bezner, Rosemarie Diehl, Antonia Lavender, Steve Ludwick, Tom Magee, Ryan McCormick, Jennifer Ryan, Charlotte Hargrove (youth alt.), Gayle Plecha, Chris Acherman (recording secretary), and Grant Hungerford as the staff representative

Absent: Namele Baker (vice chair), Ron Homer, Mikaela Ventura, and Tim Niemann (youth rep.)

Guests: None

Msgr. Sork opened the meeting at 7:01 PM. The Council prayed the First 15 led by Steve Ludwick, read by Rosemarie Diehl.

Chair/Vice-Chair

2023-2024 Pastoral Plan Objectives Review: team progress

- Obj. (1) Channels to Publicize Parish Life: *The Pastoral Council will assist the parish in adopting engagement channels such as Flocknote to publicize the abundance of our parish life.* Rosemarie Diehl reported that they used Flocknote for a recent survey and have received 152 responses so far. The next step is to coordinate the channels between the newsletter and social media to have people engage with the parish and bring the ministries on board. Ricardo Mata sent his first newsletter to the Confirmation students. Gayle Plecha reported that 2/3 of people opened the newsletter and hardly anyone has unsubscribed. It is emailed once a month to anyone who subscribes to the weekly bulletin. She added that Lydia Hernandez wasn't able to find any photos of last month's events. Please send photos to info@sjf.org. Rosemarie Diehl suggested sending new parishioners a welcome email with information for a successful onboarding and introduction to all the ministries. She also suggested having a Welcome Ministry which could suggest possible ministries for new parishioners to join. Charlotte Hargrove suggested pairing families who have children of similar ages. Rosemarie Diehl recommended an article in the bulletin to recruit families to participate.
- Obj. (2) Eucharistic Revival & Faith Formation: *The Pastoral Council will support inviting the community to the Eucharistic Revival and the deepening of our faith through faith formation.* Stephanie Bezner shared that she is very excited for the strong showing at RE Congress and hopes all PC members will attend the event as well as the reception on Saturday night. She encouraged all members to attend the Eucharistic procession on Holy Thursday. She heard that the Cornerstone Retreat was fantastic and some SJF women attended the one at American Martyrs. She's reached out to Beverly Beatty who has eight people interested in the next EMHC training and suggested that PC members host a table to encourage parishioners to apply for the next training. They decided to participate in the March Ministry Weekend and have it announced from the pulpit that they cannot have both species until they have enough Eucharistic Ministers. She will talk to Beverly Beatty about some possible training dates to offer those who are interested. Msgr. Sork said those who are interested must complete the application and have it approved prior

to attending the training. He suggested to Stephanie Bezner that she compose an article for the bulletin prior to the next Ministry Weekend which would be due February 19th to Lydia Hernandez. Gayle Plecha shared that Justin Fontenot is only aware of three PC members registered for RE Congress. He wants to make sure that those who signed up for the reception are also attending RE Congress.

- Obj. (3) Welcoming Parish Events: *The Pastoral Council will host 4-6 events for the parish over the year to welcome new parishioners and engage the existing community.* Ryan McCormick reported that they are discussing a charitable event for late March/early April. They would like to put together a free library with their sister church or another lower income church. They plan to have a book drive at SJF to collect gently used books for toddlers to teens. They would then have an installation event with SJF parishioners at Sagrado Corazon in Cudahy. Rosemarie Diehl said they have not reached out to this parish yet to determine if there is a need. Gayle Plecha will provide the contact information to her. Grant Hungerford was surprised the Lenten concert isn't listed as a welcoming parish event. Gayle Plecha said the New Parishioners Lunch brunch is also a welcoming event. Ryan McCormick suggested another music concert with a country or 80's theme band. Stephanie Bezner received good feedback regarding last year's band and suggested asking this band to perform again. Rosemarie Diehl said they need to engage the 25-44 age demographic as they've had very little response from them on the surveys. Grant Hungerford shared that they used to have Battle of the Bands in Barrett Hall, but required security for it. SJF used to have more of a presence at the local high schools when Rico Emnace was the Youth Minister. He had connections with youth bands and invited them to participate. It could be done again, but there is a liability with it and things could get out of control. However, it is something to consider as a way to draw that demographic to the church. He suggested checking out "breakthrough country" on Amazon music to identify the music to which kids are listening. Charlotte Hargrove shared that her high school had their club rush earlier this year and there are only two religious groups on campus and nothing specifically Catholic.
- Obj. (4) Catholic Fellowship and Youth Support: *The Pastoral Council will create opportunities for Catholic fellowship and provide support to Edge, LifeTeen, and our maturing young adults, while encouraging parental involvement.* Charlotte Hargrove said they had a group FaceTime call last night with Ricardo Mata to discuss ideas to get people to attend LifeTeen. He hopes to increase attendance by making it mandatory for Confirmation students. She and Tim Niemann plan to attend as their schedules permit. Steve Ludwick reported that the 18 and over volleyball group will continue to play in the PAC at 7:00 PM in February and March. This includes the regulars and newcomers. Drinks and snacks will be provided in the Plaza Room as Gayle Plecha reminded him that, with the exception of water, food and beverages are not permitted in the gym. Steve Ludwick said he would check into reserving the Plaza Room. He attended a softball manager meeting and reported that they've lost one coach. Steve is reaching out to St. Lawrence to recruit more players. The new season starts in early March. He is working on a pickleball presentation for the March meeting. If it meets approval, they'll move forward with obtaining players and equipment as the school doesn't have any. He said this sport would not damage the gym floors. Gayle Plecha reminded him that there needs to be a Virtus trained person in the room. Steve Ludwick will work with Joe McGuinness on waivers/liability forms for participants.

Pastor - Parish Life (Msgr. Sork):

Dawn Unity, January 16, 7:30 PM

No PC members attended.

Estate Planning Seminar, January 21, 12:15 PM

Stephanie Bezner gave her presentation after the 11:00 AM Mass and about 30 people participated and asked good questions. She incorporated some things from the Archdiocese that Gayle Plecha had shared with her. It was a very rainy day which may have impacted attendance. Some people claimed not to know about the presentation despite it being advertised in multiple places. Gayle Plecha thanked her for doing it and asked if she'd be willing to do it again in six months when the weather is better. The church never knows if someone has included SJF in their estate planning until it happens. Stephanie Bezner recommended sending the information to school families too. She said you can go to YouTube and search "Stephanie Bezner" to see her presentations.

Men's Cornerstone Retreat, February 2-3

Tom Magee attended the retreat with about 45 other men. He said they can't discuss outside the group what happened during the retreat, but it was fun. It was great to connect with a good group of guys. It reminded him of Christ Renews His Parish but maybe not as deep, just broader and more open. It's had a lot of success in other parishes. Rosemarie Diehl attended the one for women at American Martyrs on that same weekend. She thought it was a great experience. Four people from SJF were able to participate. They had 100 women and a waitlist. They've been attending it for 15 years. About 20-30 stayed overnight. Tom Magee added that the men didn't have to stay overnight. Msgr. Sork said the organizers spent over a year planning it, but were still a bit disorganized. They met with him on that Friday and that's when he learned there was a Mass planned for Saturday. He gave a talk on Eucharistic Miracles. They asked him to get six priests for confession which was difficult as so many of them were already committed to the women's retreat at American Martyrs. He was happy to see the demographics of the men who participated.

Looking Ahead

- **Ash Wednesday, February 14** – Msgr. Sork said there will be Masses at 6:30 AM, 8:00 AM, 11:00 AM and 5:15 PM and Liturgy of the Word at 4:00 PM and 7:30 PM. There are plenty of opportunities to attend. There are not enough priests to offer 6:30 AM daily Mass during Lent this year.
- **Stations of the Cross: Starting February 23** – Grant Hungerford said the SJF choir will perform the Passion on February 16th, which is the first Friday of Lent. It is a very dramatic 30-minute presentation with his wife as the narrator. It's a great way to begin Lent. It starts after the Lenten Soup Supper at 7:00 PM. He encouraged PC members to attend the soup supper and donate what they would have spent on dinner. This year they are supporting Christian Outreach in Action (COA) Long Beach.
- **RE Congress Adult Days, February 16-18**
Previously discussed.

Msgr. Sork added that the Pastoral State of the Archdiocese Presentation for the San Pedro Region will be Wednesday, February 21st from 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM at the St. Francis Korean Catholic Center, 2040 West Artesia Blvd. in Torrance. Archbishop Gomez and Randy Steiner, CFO of the Archdiocese, will be speaking about the programs that have taken place.

- **Lenten Retreat, March 10-12** – Msgr. Sork shared that this year’s speaker is Julianne Stanz. She is from Green Bay, WI and spoke to the priests of the Archdiocese. She is really great. SJF is lucky to have her as she only travels once or twice a year outside her diocese. She will speak at all the Masses too.
- **Synod Listening Sessions, March 12 and 18** – Msgr. Sork said Archbishop Gomez will have listening sessions via Zoom from 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM on both nights. The login information is in the handout and explains it all. He encourages all PC members to participate. There will also be a session just for the priests around that same time. He also said PC members should plan to attend the February 27th presentation on “*What is Synodality?*” The presenter is from LMU and he heard her speak in San Diego and recommended to Misty Jesse that she speak at SJF.
- **New Parishioner Luncheon, June 2** – Joe McGuinness said Namele Baker will chair this event as he will be out of town. Please give her your support. She will be recruiting members to make phone calls to the new parishioners to invite them to the luncheon. However, right now he is recruiting members to help with the Lenten Soup Supper on March 15th to set up, prepare the soup and grilled cheese sandwiches and clean up. The event is over by 7:30 PM.

Grant Hungerford shared that the Presidents’ Day Organ Festival Los Angeles will be at SJF on Monday, February 19th from 2:00 PM-3:30 PM. Gayle Plecha said he will need to open the church for this event as the parish offices will be closed for the holiday.

Chair/Vice-Chair

Approval of January Minutes

Joe McGuinness asked for corrections to the January minutes. Hearing none, Ryan McCormick moved to approve the January minutes as presented. Antonia Lavender seconded. The minutes were approved.

Staff Representative Briefing: Grant Hungerford

Choir Discussion Nature of Presentation – Grant Hungerford shared that *In Darkness and Light: Music of Ola Gjielo* concert will be held on Sunday, March 10th at 2:30 PM in the church. He has contracted with orchestra members to perform with the choir. He asked PC members to help support the concert. He also shared some of the history of the youth choir, LifeTeen and Confirmation at SJF. Unfortunately kids are “too busy” to participate in choir rehearsals. Everything is ultra-competitive and they are involved in multiple activities. The youth program has not survived, so he has to work with what he has. He attended the January Confirmation retreat and will be going again this weekend so he has contact with the teens and has the potential to recruit them into the choir. He also teaches music to SJF students as another way to recruit choir members. He added that the ministries at SJF

don't have peak numbers either. He asked Pastoral Council members to help support LifeTeen and their events. He said he works well with Justin Fontenot and Ricardo Mata and together they can build a good program. Stephanie Bezner said the SJF 5th grade is excited to participate in Edge next year and it would be great to have a summer activity for them like an "Intro to Edge" night to build on that excitement. She'll share that idea with Justin Fontenot. Grant Hungerford added that he teaches the SJF middle school kids the songs for the 5:00 PM Sunday Mass so they can participate. He also invites them to participate during Catholic Schools Week, but parents just aren't taking their kids to the 5:00 PM Sunday Mass. Even the Confirmation students don't stay for the 5:00 PM Mass because their parents pick them up after class. There used to be a Youth Liturgy Committee that created a homily geared toward the teens. Antonia Lavender commented that people don't seem to participate in singing at Mass anymore and the teens aren't connecting with each other. Rosemarie Diehl suggested encouraging SJF School alumni to participate in the youth choir after graduating. Charlotte Hargrove said most kids go to the 9:00 AM Mass because of the donuts and to see their friends and hang out afterwards. Grant Hungerford said there is a parent component to LifeTeen, but they've never instituted it. Since it's on Friday nights, it doesn't feed into Mass. When kids feel a part of a community, they tend to want to do things together. The demographics of the Sunday 5:00 PM Mass is no longer teens. Msgr. Sork said LifeTeen is designed to be a post-Confirmation program. Grant Hungerford would like to go to Confirmation classes and teach the songs they sing at Mass. He feels the main mission should be to get more people in church. Msgr. Sork said the church has taken a hit since COVID. There is a general problem of the parents not coming to Mass; therefore the kids don't come.

Lenten Soup Supper – PC Hosts on March 15, 2024

Previously discussed.

PC New Member Nominating Committee update

Joe McGuinness announced that Antonia Lavender would chair the nominating committee. She said she doesn't have any updates at this time. Antonia has requested two PC members to join the committee. Everything is all pre-organized from efforts in past years. The committee just needs to set the dates for promoting it in the bulletin. Gayle Plecha said the goal is to get prospective members to attend the April meeting and then submit applications. PC members will discern the applicants during the May meeting. The pulpit announcements happen in February and March. Please send bulletin articles to Lydia Hernandez no later than the Monday before the Sunday bulletin. They will need to coordinate with Msgr. Sork when PC members could speak at all the Masses to promote Pastoral Council. It's usually the weekend before the PC meeting. She said the April meeting will take place the second week in April since the school will be on spring break during the first week. The talks could happen on the weekend of April 6th-7th. **Next**

Meeting:

- March 6, 2024 (to be finalized at Council meeting). Joe McGuinness confirmed the meeting date.

Other

Joe McGuinness read the guidelines for Pastoral Council members to bring concerns and affirmations to the attention of the pastor.

- Rosemarie Diehl shared a post she read on Nextdoor from someone looking to find a church that is modern and relatable for teens. There were responses recommending many churches but not SJF. How can SJF reach out to that critical age group and help them see what is available in the Catholic faith? This is something to discern when creating the 5-year Pastoral Plan. She added that the majority of the responses to the survey came from parishioners 75 years and older. She also suggested revitalizing the ministries and making sure the teens and the Confirmation program are healthy so they can grow the parish.
- Ryan McCormick asked about the term limits for Pastoral Council members.
 - Msgr. Sork said to read the bylaws.
- Ryan McCormick shared that no one hosted the donut hospitality table after the 9:00 AM Mass last Sunday so he and his wife stepped in to help. His wife has reached out to Justin Fontenot to let him know they want to participate but has never received a response.
 - Gayle Plecha said Justin Fontenot staffs the hospitality table after the 9:00 AM Mass and Misty Jesse staffs it after the 7:30 AM and 11:00 AM Masses.

The meeting was concluded at 9:23 PM with the prayer of St. John Fisher Parish.