

Pastoral Council Minutes—March 10, 2016

Attendees: Fr. Tom, Fr. Bill, Fr. Al, Deacon Jay, Susan Frazier, Chris Raymond, Joe Balzano, Therese Vallario, Amy Healey, Judi Ryan, Kyle Erickson, Christi Dignam, Steve Barretto, Tina Doherty

Pastor's Report: There are various building repairs needed at both campuses. Fr. Tom will be consulting with the diocese for advice.

Homily themes. Fr. Tom is asking for feedback. The overall consensus is that the themes are positive, and move us forward as a Parish. Themes, however, ought to harmonize with the readings for mass. At the Church of the Nativity in Timonium, MD, they align themes with the readings for the upcoming year. Father Al, noting that themes are good, emphasized praying over the Scripture readings and allowing for the spontaneous inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He suggested that we might foster awareness this year of 2 to 3 parish concerns, and that we align those concerns with the Year of Mercy. Fr. Tom encouraged to garner feedback from parishioners. Responding to Pope Francis' request that every parish make evangelization a priority, Chris recommended making our pie chart 'Growing as Disciples of Jesus' foundational.

Parish Council Elections: May 5th is discernment; May 12th is the 2nd discernment session, followed by the elections. Three positions are available for 3-year terms.

Stand Up Salem – A committee addressing the Drug epidemic in our community. Judi and Amy are members, though not formally representing the parish. Judy represents healthcare and Amy the parent community. Pastor Tom Gerds represents the Christian faith community. Stand Up Salem held its 3rd community meeting on March 10th with 50 people attending, including many from the high school. A root cause analysis focused on the three substances previously identified as misused in Salem – alcohol, marijuana, and prescription drugs. A common factor in the lives of teens who experiment with the above substances was identified: **boredom**. Although teens engage in many activities, they are still “bored”. Furthermore, outside of athletics or the arts (mainly music), a teen has few opportunities for involvement that includes adult support (mechanics, fixing cars). Another factor is lack of public transportation.

Young adult group: Our group, facilitated by Justine and Fr. Tom, is growing—up from 2 members to 11—and very engaged. Each week, members pick a topic for their open and insightful discussions. Also, we are beginning to interact with some Portsmouth groups. Steve asked if we are reaching the 18 to 35 demographic with our music and homilies. We agreed: music, yes; homilies, not sure. We do not have a Mass dedicated to that demographic. The 5:00 Mass was intended as such, but is now of mixed ages (not a bad thing).

Topic for Next Month: What's working in our parish and what's not working? Also, discussion of “Proposed Way of Proceeding” from the Jesuit director of parish ministries.

Action Item: Consider concerns of Parish and Salem community that could serve as the basis for homily themes. Email suggestions to Fr. Tom.