

HOLY SPIRIT PASTORIAL COUNCIL
Meeting Minutes from October 17, 2021

Attendees: Rev. David Nestler, OFM Cap; Sofia Fasone, Erin Whatley-Baker, Kim Fortson, Sandra Madison, Erin Raines, Peter Jenkins, Jennifer McClellan Johnson, David Tucker, Reginald Jones.

Absent: Brenda Anekwe-Smith, David Williams, Ray Hines.

Non-council members present: Sr. Carol Pelegrin, Belinda Henry-Ruffin

Agenda: Rev. David Nestler, OFM Cap.

Recording secretary: Rosalind Whatley

1) Father David opened the meeting seeking co-chairpersons to lead future meetings. The last two chairs are no longer on pastoral council.

*Erin Raines and David Tucker volunteered to co-chair.

2) Youth ministry – Holy Spiriteens

*Erin Whatley-Baker spoke on some items the youth have been doing. The summer “get re-acquainted” picnic was a success. It was a learning curve, that has given the adults new insight as to how to handle the teens when out in public.

*The naming of the youth group will be placed before the youth to see if they are in accord with the current name of Holy Spiriteens, if not they will have the opportunity to change it.

*Acknowledgements were sent out to Erin Whatley-Baker for her dedication to the youth group.

*Any other items pertaining to the youth group was asked by Father David.

*‘We Give Catholic’ is on November 30th. Please tell your family and friends to donate for the youth group. It’s been mentioned in the bulletin. This event is done once a year. You can text to give or use the link on the website. There is a QR code in the bulletin. Brenda Anekwe-Smith and Cara Johnson have spoken on this item during Mass.

A question was asked – How do we know we are getting the donations? Erin Raines answered that the page can be monitored to see the donations that are given. A donor report can also be uploaded on 12/1/2021 to show who all donated.

A discussion ensued further about this. It was mentioned that this falls under an umbrella of the ‘Giving Tuesday’ theme. A one-time donation on one day from 12:00am on November 30th to 12:59pm.

A question was asked – Is it an outright donation or a percentage of the donation that would come to the parish? It is believed that the parish would receive the outright donation.

Youth ministry has money in their account with the parish. When making the donation on ‘We Give Catholic’ be sure to annotate that it is for the youth group. There are also youth envelopes in the envelopes received for your tithe.

A question was asked – How will they differentiate between Holy Spirit Avon Lake and Holy Spirit Garfield Hts.? If you use the QR code, it will come up under the correct parish, but you can also make sure to put the parish name with Garfield Hts.

3) Saint Henry church property

Holy Spirit Parish Garfield Hts. is no longer associated with this property. The Diocese of Cleveland has bought the property. Father David had been negotiating with two real offers to purchase the rectory but couldn’t get either offer closed. One organization that was interested in it has a program for teenage girls who are pregnant or new mothers, it helps them get proper care and give them life skills. The second organization was similar, it dealt with young teenage girls who age out of foster care, helping them and giving them life skills. Due to unforeseen circumstances neither of these organizations were able to purchase the building.

The diocese purchased the rectory and the front lawn for a price of \$130,000.00. They also purchased the remaining property, everything but the Harvard Community Center and land for an additional \$130,000.00. The purchase of these properties has wiped out our debt to the Diocese (somewhere around ½ million) Debt and unpaid assessments have been wiped clean. It also took care of the debt we incurred with the merger from St Cecilia’s, and a bill Father David was not willing to pay. He negotiated to get all these debts cleared.

The bank account now has a surplus of \$260,000.00 and Father David has asked the council to come up with ideas that would benefit the parish. Where would they like to see the parish ten years from

now? What would be a suitable investment to use the money?

Part of the money will be used to repair the sink hole on the sidewalk, once the city has repaired the underlying cause of the sink hole. The city is responsible for repairing the hole, Holy Spirit is responsible for the sidewalk. Father David would like to have the curb returned, and for it to be high enough where people won't be able to drive over it, and a tree line re-installed. What other items for the parish would be agreeable, air conditioning in the buildings or elevators in the parish center and church?

A suggestion was made to make the room when entering the parish center on the right making it a reception area. Using the door that is there, installing a ramp to the door. Sandra Madison suggested that we have someone come in and give an estimate on what it will cost to modernize the parish center. A suggestion was made to make the front of the church wheelchair accessible.

4) Smart Academy and violations of the lease

Father David has sent to their organization's head a letter informing them they are in violation of the lease agreement. This letter was sent via certified mail and hand delivery. He has had several conversations with Dr. Aitken, who was to get to Father David a "Memorandum of Understanding." This issue has been an ongoing one between the school, Smart Academy, and their sublease of the gymnasium on Sunday morning and other times to New Door Praise and Worship church. Father David is waiting to hear back about the letter sent.

The school's lease is up in June of 2023. Their rent is \$6,800.00 and they pay utilities which can run anywhere between \$1,900.00 to \$3,200.00 monthly. Per the school, Smart Academy, they have not subleased the building. They are not receiving rent from the church. The programs that are happening on Sunday are claimed to be youth enrichment and literacy services. Father found the name of the church from the van they had in the parking lot to bring parishioners in.

5) Communication with Bishop Malesic

Eight members of our parish council attended the meeting recently with the bishop. Due to an unfortunate comment by the bishop, people left the meeting feeling disheartened. Father David wrote a letter to the bishop expressing how people left the meeting feeling disheartened by his talk and the bishop responded. Father David now puts this to pastoral council, should he share the letters with the parish? A discussion ensued about the meeting, and it was put

forth by one member that yes, the letters should be given to the parish.

Father David would like for the bishop to meet with Holy Spirit pastoral council to further talk about how the African American community can be more prominent within the Catholic church. It was suggested that the bishop should attend the National Black Catholic Conference to get a better understanding of the African American community within the church as Sister Carol Pelegrin did when she attended one. It was decided that Father should include the letters in the bulletin and on the website.

6) On helping to resettle an asylum family from Afghanistan – are we interested?

A discussion ensued on this topic. It was mentioned how at St. Henry's we helped with homeless families on weekends, giving them shelter. This was done in conjunction with the Lutheran church that had been near St. Henry's.

Father David mentioned that the third floor of the parish center can hold a family, it has eight bedrooms and a kitchen. The kitchen would need a refrigerator and stove only. Should the parish reach out to Catholic Charities about hosting a family? Is pastoral council willing to use available resources to help a needy family? Is this something the church would like to do?

It was mentioned that we could have zoning issues as the building is no longer zoned for residential use. Father asked should he take the next step and inquire about the parish hosting a family, what is involved in it, etc. The council recommended, 'yes.'

7) Parish photograph directory – any update?

Kim Fortson has been researching companies, one company no longer does parish registries anymore, they will do school photographs but not for a parish. She is still looking into more companies. Some names of photographers (Steve Neal being one) were given to her thinking that a photographer could help guide our research into a good company.

The meeting closed out as it had been 90 minutes. Father made mention of the next meeting dates then closed the meeting with a prayer.

Minutes recorded by Rosalind Whatley