

Church of Saint Thomas the Apostle – Parish Council Meeting Minutes
January 10, 2011

Parish Council Attendees

Name	Role	Present	Absent
Fr. Ed Moran	Priest	x	
Fr. Sam Seyd	Priest		x
Fr. Arthur Murphy	Pastor	x	
Deacon Dennis Ferguson	Deacon	x	
Deacon Kevin Monahan	Deacon	x	
George Coppolo	Parish Council President	x	
Will Huber	Parish Council Vice President	x	
Patty Sisti	Parish Council Secretary		x
Rosaire Brodeur	Council Member	x	
Kathy Brown	Council Member	x	
Eileen Cullen	Council Member	x	
John Daly	Council Member	x	
Michael DeConti	Council Member	x	
Teresa Duprey	Council Member	x	
Angelo Faenza	Council Member	x	
Chris Haddad	Council Member	x	
Sally Hanrahan	Council Member	x	
Karl Kuhn	Council Member		x
Rob Kulak	Council Member	x	
Bob Kuszpa	Council Member		
Rachel Lobo-Lowry	Council Member	x	
Mary Ann Lopez	Council Member	x	
Joe McCabe	Council Member	x	
Ernesto Pitruzzella	Council Member		x
Donna Radigan	Council Member		x
Corey Rekow	Council Member	x	
Jamie Sullivan	Council Member		x
Colleen DiSanto	Ex-Officio Member – STA School Principal	x	
Elizabeth Kiselica	Ex-Officio Member – Religious Education Director	x	
Martin Smith	Ex-Officio Member – Choir Director	x	
Ellen O'Connor	Parish Secretary	x	
Janet Quinn	Parish Center Coordinator	x	

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Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Parish Center

Opening Prayer—Bob Kuszpa

Discussion with Cross Fire

Fr. Moran introduced a member of Cross Fire, Allison Champagne. Allison and Joanna Champagne helped to form Cross Fire in 2007 with Fr. Moran. Cross Fire was formed for 20 to 30-year-olds to come together to discuss faith and form fellowship. The membership of Cross Fire is currently 45 people. Members are representative of STA and Manchester. Approximately eight members of Cross Fire came to the Parish Council Meeting.

Cross Fire was invited to attend a Parish Council meeting to share their ideas for increasing membership, spirituality, involvement and contributions at Saint Thomas.

Community

- Parishioners want a community feel without feeling obligated to participate.
- The community needs to be more interactive during Mass
- Use Greeters at the doors of the church and encourage them to be more welcoming. Perhaps have Greeters hand out membership cards.
- Have programs/speakers geared toward families, singles, divorcees, and new comers club.
- Bring Church to the people – have Mass at a park in the summer with a picnic to follow.
- Advertise the church.

- Ongoing outreach into the community perhaps through sports; hold pick-up games in the gym or at local parks, sponsor a youth program
- Community based fundraisers throughout the year that more people can get involved with but not feel unable to do so due to time constraints or major obligations.

Mass

- Modernize the Mass while keeping Catholic traditions
- Have one Mass (Sunday 5PM) with more of an experimental format (modern music, more interaction, Praise and Worship, family oriented)
- More education/history of the Church and how it relates to today in the homily
- Explanations of Bible readings before Mass or before the reading; put it in context, as many do not understand.
- Run Mass more as a Children's Mass is run – more interactive

Teresa Duprey noted that she has read Growing an Engaged Church by Albert L. Winseman. Teresa felt that this would be a beneficial read for the Parish Council as the book illustrates how other Catholic Churches have been successful in energizing their congregations.

Pastor's Report – Fr. Murphy

Nothing to report

Items for Discussion (time permitting)

1. Minutes from Last Meeting – December 13, 2010 meeting minutes were accepted without amendment.
2. Census Report (George Coppolo and Ellen O'Connor gave update) – All 300 forms that have been returned have been data entered. There was not a great return of forms after sending the Census home through the CCD and Confirmation Class programs. Cross-referencing of returned

- forms against the current envelope users has begun. Ellen will try to get a ballpark figure on the cost of sending out a mass mailing to the envelope users.
3. Web site report (George Coppolo gave an update) – Contract with our web master, Susan Talarski has been extended for three months. Michael DeConti will train Ellen O’Connor and Suzanne DeLutrie on how to post things to our web page. Michael DeConti and Kevin Duprey have both volunteered to help with keeping the web site updated.
 4. Social Action (George Coppolo reported) – There has been no leadership for the past 1 ½ years. George asked for suggestions on how to bring Social Action out of dormancy.
 - i. Deacon Ferguson suggested doing one drive a month without forming a committee. George pointed out someone would need to take responsibility for any drive and be the point person.
 - ii. Fr. Moran suggested speaking about it from the pulpit.
 - iii. Liz Kiselica pointed out that there is always ongoing outreach and perhaps providing our parishioners with this information will allow them to get involved. (ie. CCD program collected toiletries at Christmas time for those in nursing homes; Youth Group does Coat Drives; Women’s Club and school both support Saint Agnes Home; etc.)
 - iv. Ray Smith reported that the JustFaith group sponsored a family in crisis at Christmas time. JustFaith is learning about what Jesus wants us to do. Ray is hoping that JustFaith will increase their Social Action involvement next year. The membership of JustFaith is down to seven from the original nine.
 5. Parish Council Meeting for February – George Coppolo proposed that the meeting date be changed as it is currently scheduled for February 14, Valentine’s Day. The Council agreed to change the meeting to Monday, February 7 at 7:00 p.m. in the Parish Center.

6. New Business

- a. George Coppolo thanked Rosarie Brodeur for all the work that he did to remove a tree that had fallen in the parking lot. George noted that Rosaire has saved the parish thousands of dollars by taking on this project himself.

- b. Mike DeConti passed out a list of all that the Knights of Columbus have accomplished over the past year. Mike reported that the Keep Christ in Christmas tree lighting and carol sing was a success. Mike also reported that 41 people attended the New Year's Eve dinner dance and that this was a fundraiser for Saint Thomas the Apostle Elementary School. Mike spoke about two upcoming Knights of Columbus events:
 - On January 25, 2011 the Knights will be sponsoring a Blood Drive in honor of our veterans.
 - On January 29, 2011 the Knights will host a Pasta Supper after the 5:00 p.m. Mass. Funds will be donated to Saint Thomas the Apostle Seminary in Pakistan.
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- c. Kathy Brown asked that two items be added to the February agenda: 1) Greeters, and 2) Targeted giving for repairs to the church.

- d. Education/Enrichment Group of West Hartford
Ray Smith reported that the Group will be sponsoring a retreat during Lent/April. Louglin Sofield will lead the retreat, which will be held at Saint Mark the Evangelist. . The retreat is to be sponsored by all the churches in West Hartford. Each church will be responsible for some part of the retreat. Ray believes that the retreat dates are April 3-6.

e. Deacon Ferguson encouraged parishioners to attend the Men's Retreat, which will be held at Holy Family Monastery on the weekend of February 2-6.

7. Special Intentions were shared

8. Closing Prayer – Sally Hanrahan

Meeting adjourned: 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ellen O'Connor

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Parish Secretary