

ST. GERARD MAJELLA
PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Date of Meeting: November 21, 2023

Time of Meeting: 7:10 P.M.

Location of Meeting: St. Gerard Majella Garden Room

Present at Meeting:

Rev. Charles Lachowitz, *Pastor*

Meredith Toweh, *Parish Administration, Director of Faith Formation*

Mark Scherschligt, *Finance*

Dave Brom, *Parish Life*

Karen Brenteson, *Social Justice/Outreach*

Jean Schultz, *Faith Formation*

Zachary Ochsenbauer, *Faith Formation*

Sue Dupay, *Pastoral Care*

Celeste Erickson, *Liturgy*

Absent from Meeting: Steve Robinson, *Trustee*, Craig Erickson, *Finance Council*, An Trinh, *Representative at large for Vietnamese Community*

The regular meeting of the Pastoral Council of St. Gerard Majella was called to order at 7:10 p.m. on November 21, 2023 by Rev. Charles Lachowitz.

- I. The agenda for the meeting was:
 - Stated at general meeting as:
 - ◆ What is it at the parish of St. Gerard's that you give God thanks for.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Sue Dupay, Pastoral Care: There is a suggestion for a Spirituality Week. In the past typically held after Christmas and before Lent (in February). More details as to the structure and presentation are available. Also a suggestion for a Death and Dying Seminar.

Dave Brom, Parish Life: Parish Life draft of a survey was presented to the Parish Life commission that could possibly be used to gather input from parishioners regarding what events/activities they might like to see and/or volunteer for that would further the mission of the Parish Life Commission. Recommendations for revision were made and it was decided to gather input by sending out the survey electronically, having surveys at the tables during hospitality the first weekend of December, and by having a Commission member present to answer questions during the hospitality times. Dave will collate the responses and present them at our next meeting and he will send out a request for volunteers to cover the various Masses on the first weekend of December.

Karen Brenteson, *Social Justice/Outreach* Proposal of a parish Family Day to clean the parish campus. Proposed dates of April 14 – 17.

Zachary Ochsenbauer, *Faith Formation*: Zac plans to start a youth group on Sunday's after the 11:00 a.m. Mass. Lunch provided, pray and talk. He would like to know of parents who would help continue the conversation on that day. Please let him know of any who would be interested.

AGENDA TOPIC: What is it at the parish of St. Gerard's that you give God thanks for?

Dave Brom, *Parish Life*: The topic for discussion at the table present by Fr. Charlie was: When we consider the parish of St. Gerard's, for what are we grateful. Following are the responses of Commission members.

- The culture of the parish, i.e., the way we do things here.
- The Funeral Ministry
- The sense of Community
- The feeling of it being a second home (and a first home spiritually)
- The friendliness and openness of parishioners in general
- The "special" Masses like All Souls' Day and Holy Thursday
- The sense of welcoming and acceptance
- Hospitality times (donuts!)
- Corn Fest, the joyfulness of the event, and representing who we are to the community at large
- Inclusiveness not exclusiveness
- Diversity
- Pastoral care team
- Trunk or Treat
- Flexibility of various groups which allows for occasional absences from participation

Karen Brenteson—*Social Justice/Outreach*

- 1) Fr. Charlie – his homilies are awesome and inspiring
- 2) Karen Blomberg and the music ministry – the music is awe inspiring
- 3) The friendliness of the parishioners
- 4) The office staff and their responsiveness
- 5) The ever increasing diversity of the parishioners
- 6) The people who are willing to share their time and talent volunteering
- 7) The Knights of Columbus and how hard they work for the parish and the community
- 8) The community garden
- 9) Grateful for those on all of the commissions who work to make the St. Gerard community and example of Gods' love for his people
- 10) The community spirit of St. Gerard parishioners

Sue Dupay, *Pastoral Care*:

1. Daily Mass
2. Friendliness of people
3. The devotion of our substitute priests—Fr. Al and Fr. Tom
4. Special opportunities we were given by the staff outside of the regular personalized retreats
5. Wonderful staff and their willingness to be there for the volunteers and community

6. Donation given to pay for the new stove and oven in the parish kitchen
7. This is “home”
8. Our beautiful All Souls Day Mass
9. We find sustenance here in friend, food and soul
10. Those who share professional talents

Celeste Erickson, *Liturgy*

1. The people—welcoming feeling, support from the parish, the morning Mass group, sense of community
2. Comments that St. Gerard’s is “fun again”
3. People who stayed through all the changes we’ve been through
4. People here are caring—not too many people at St. Gerard’s that would turn you away if someone needs help
5. Our Pastor and all his stand-ins
6. History of how this church grew into community

Mark Scherschligt, *Finance*:

1. Inspirational Music
2. Fr. Charlie and priests who serve our parish
3. Welcoming parish
4. Core people who stayed through all the tough times
5. People who are coming back
6. Diversity of parish cultures
7. Café Majella
8. Grief Share ministry
9. Bob Imholte, Facilities Care Coordinator
10. Knights of Columbus
11. Parish Mission after Christmas—before Lent

Jean Schultz, *Faith Formation*

1. Parishioners—people who come to our church
2. Volunteers—funeral, office, outreach
3. The way we do liturgy
4. Music ministry—Karen Blomgren
5. Fr. Charlie and clergy help
6. Open door to the office
7. People united in common goal
8. Think of St. Gerard’s as home
9. Feeling loved and accepted
10. Welcoming and hospitality
11. Welcoming to children
12. Bob Imholte in doing all the work in the church
13. Collaboration of gifts
14. Relationship building beyond our church—outreach
15. Spacious church facility
16. Committed/dedicated staff
17. We are smaller community and we recognize people—build relationships
18. Knights of Columbus

FR. CHARLIE COMMENTARY:

The character of the parish shines through the resilience of those who toughed it out during the transition of pastors—people who hung in there. Visiting priests enjoy the spirit of the people.

In gratitude for:

1. Catechists—their commitment of time and the team who rebuilt Faith Formation
2. Youth—weekend retreat was successful in prayer and devotion and the generation of today choosing the Catholic Faith
3. Sundays—do services well with liturgy and music

TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held at St. Gerard Majella on December 19, 2023, at 7:00 p.m.

Closing blessing by Rev. Charles Lachowitzer

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m. by Rev. Charles Lachowitzer

Minutes submitted by: Margaret Pavlik

Minutes reviewed by: Meredith Toweh