

ST. GERARD MAJELLA

PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES--DRAFT

Date of Meeting: October 15, 2024

Time of Meeting: 7:19 p.m.

Location of Meeting: St. Gerard Majella Garden Room

Present at Meeting:

Rev. Charles Lachowitzer, *Pastor*

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

Mark Scherschligt, *Finance Council*

Dave Brom, *Community Life*

Jean Schultz, *Faith Formation*

Sue Dupay, *Pastoral Care*

Debby Boyd, *Liturgy*

Peggy Louiselle, *New Trustee and Corporate Board member*

Celeste Erickson, *Liturgy (via phone participation from Arizona location)*

Absent from Meeting: Steve Robinson, *Trustee*; An Trinh, *Representative at large for Vietnamese Community*,

The regular meeting of the Pastoral Council of St. Gerard Majella was called to order at 7:19 p.m. on

October 15, 2024 by Rev. Charles Lachowitzer, *Pastor*

The agenda for the meeting was stated as:

1. Any questions on church finances and efforts for stewardship weekend.
2. Arch Diocese Capital Campaign \$150,000,000 (Every parish is given a goal and will receive a 60%—40% split.)

Additional details:

November 2024 weekends:

2nd and 3rd—Stewardship Weekend: Testimonies from parishioners (also posted on parish Website.)

9th and 10th—Father Charlie speaks: How can we have people be more invested in our parish? Fundraisers are helpful but do not meet the needs of the parish. Each repair at the parish will be in the amount of six figures. To be considered are: Septic tank, insulation, parking lot, heating boilers and cooling tower (energy management system would save greatly over five to seven years), rectory electrical would not pass current codes. Consideration for eliminating church debt at \$1.3 million. Capital Campaigns at St. Gerards only to be considered every 10 years for the multiple building issues here at St. Gerard's.

16th and 17th—Father Charlie speaks: Announcement that pledge cards will be mailed to the parishioners. Letter from Fr. Charlie on Rebuilding With Grace.

AGENDA ITEMS COMMENTARY

Dave Brom, Community Life Question 1: If we're asking for more money, what are we going to do with it? We have a need for adult education and for more volunteers and faith building programs. How do we get beyond \$300,000? Should we focus on incremental giving increase—how much can they give? Need some guide for those already giving. How do we get young people engaged? We're over-built—should we consider renting out. There are non-responders—can we push for a deeper form of commitment? We have a need for programming.

Question 2: Unfortunate timing. We have our needs—the same people are potential givers. Consider the timeline of a three to five year period—merge campaigns—both at the same time could be tricky. Who is manager of the money channeling—Arch Diocese level? Is the amount we are asking for realistic? Older parish members do not have an expanding income. Older adults can remember the parish in their wills.

Sue Dupay, Pastoral Care Question 1: Comparing old to new campaign. Parishioners can consider Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) donations directly to church which are not taxed.

Question 2: How long will the Capital Campaign be? **Fr. Charlie:** For two months every five or six years. Expect 2.5% times paid envelopes. Considering length, the plate goes up weekly during capital campaign.

Debby Boyd, Liturgy Question 1: Electronic giving should be pushed. Considering \$1.3 million is overwhelming and unreasonable. How can we raise that much money? Consider raising stewardship.

Mark Scherschligt, Finance Council Question 1: Electronic giving is better. Timing is important for capital campaign stewardship and how we communicate. Ask parishioners to watch for. Considering \$5 for a cup of coffee—if 200 people do that, it would be a considerable contribution. Meeting discussion shows we are going in the right direction.

Peggy Louiselle, Trustee Question 1: Parishioners to consider online giving from checking rather than credit card as parish must pay fee to credit card company which reduces amount of donation. That choice would affect options for cash back or rewards from credit card company. Regarding suggestion of having a form on the Website for asking questions—consider time spent in answering questions.

Meredith Toweh, Parish Administration, Director of Faith Formation In meeting with Fr. Paul regarding the Vietnamese community, he pledged that their community will do whatever they can to help with the Capital Campaign. There's a sense that St. Gerard's is already their home. Additional comments on credit card giving versus direct withdrawal and fees paid by church. Pledge cards can answer questions about giving.

Jean Schultz, Faith Formation At beginning of campaign there will be in-person testimonials which will be recorded to view on the Website which will be a benefit. On the technical side, the parish database needs to be cleaned up. Some households that are gone are still listed.

Meredith Toweh, Parish Administration, Director of Faith Formation Regarding database, deceased parishioners are getting notices. Regarding children attending Catholic school, the tuition does not make one more dime for the school. They are seeing a six-figure deficit each year and it becomes more and more difficult. Scholarships come from church coffers. They are big on endowment accounts for long-term spending.

Additional comment by Meredith regarding November 8th and 9th dates for Confirmation Retreat. This is the second year merged with St. Stephen's eight, ninth and 10th grade students. Prayers are requested for the team and the kids participating.

FR. CHARLIE COMMENTARY:

- Forms on Website for pre-tax contributions. Add 20% to current giving (proverbial Starbucks coffee—one cup a week is helpful.) We are not desperate to get into the black. We need additional staff for catechesis, faith formation and OCIA.
- Giving comes out of salary—otherwise pull from savings per quarter or annually. Raise one gets is not enough, therefore, must come out of stock or savings contribution. St. Gerard was founded in 1971 and is considered a young parish. No gifts received since the pandemic. As parish ages we could do workshops. At funerals, ask that funeral memorial donations go to St. Gerard parish (\$800 to \$2,000).

Fact—2/3 of those 65 and older have no will, therefore, estate goes into probate—\$1 billion is lost to the government. There is a great benefit for prior planning for assets after funeral.

- The highest amounts at Masses comes from cash contributions from consistent attendees. Also, cash contributions may increase when asked, but will not continue over a period of years.
- From now to 2026 we need to collaborate with our own timeline. Need to communicate regarding RMD's from parishioners. Wills are a good suggestion and using an attorney. This will shore up the validity to family challenges and bickering over funeral costs.
- When the church debt is paid, the bishop does a special consecration of the church with special prayers and holy oils used.
- Fr. is pleased about attendance at all four Masses—not coming late and leaving after Communion. Fewer complaints about heating and cooling temperatures.
- If the Arch Diocese Capital Campaign hits \$1.3 million, the church could get \$800,000. If \$500,000, we could bite the bullet and do the tough stuff up front, remembering most repairs are in the six figures. There was a \$175,000 proposal to update the kitchen. We don't need that as we have a new dishwasher, new stove and can provide state of the art catering. Regarding rebate and other monies, feasibility questions are key.
- The Arch Diocese Capital Campaign must consider 187 parishes in nine counties.
- Feedback from those who have left the Catholic church to attend other denominations when about nine months passes, they return as they miss the Eucharist. Marriages held in barns, no spiritual life. Once person attends, these denominations are aggressive in visits, calls and sending letters. Considering college age kids (as defectors) they do miss St. Gerard's.
- There can be a permanent place on the Website to answer questions regarding bank vs. credit card giving. There can be a form on the Website for changing from credit card giving to bank withdrawal.
- Fr. has noticed that there are new people coming. Additional council members' comments reinforced that there is a larger crowd at the 9:30 a.m. Mass with more children attending for Liturgy of the Word and a parent has said they come to that Mass just for that.
- Success of Corn Fest made a definite improvement on the bottom line. It is helpful to have the same chairs in multiple years in a row and made our first year comeback easier.

TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held at St. Gerard Majella on November 19, 2024, at 7:15 p.m.

Closing blessing by: Rev. Charles Lachowitzer, *Pastor*

Meeting adjourned at: 8:20 p.m. by Rev. Charles Lachowitzer, *Pastor*

Minutes submitted by: Margaret Pavlik

Minutes reviewed by: Meredith Toweh