

Minutes of the November 5, 2009 Stewardship Commission Meeting

Attendees: Deacon John Nicholson, Fr. Michael Bova Conti, Donna Biggins, Jenn Sneath, Jim McCarthy

Review of October Meeting Minutes:

Stewardship Calendar:

Hospitality Weekends. We plan to continue the practice of giving individual parish ministries the opportunity to be featured at the monthly hospitality weekends, starting in December. Tentative schedule looks as follows (needs to be confirmed):

- Dec 5 & 6: St. Vincent de Paul, Breaking Bread
 - Jan 6: Lectors? Eucharistic Ministers?
 - Feb 7:
 - Mar 6 & 7: Stewardship Commission
 - May 1 & 2: Parish Pastoral Council, Finance Council
- ❖ Jim McCarthy to contact Paul & Joan Coughlin to confirm when they would prefer to have Lector and Eucharistic Minister ministries featured.

Library Idea: Donna Biggins wonders whether the religious education/parish library could be enhanced and more widely utilized by parishioners. Donna talked to Claire Korzeniowski who knows someone who set up a church library. The Archdiocesan librarian cautions that a parish library is very difficult to maintain.

RCIA Update:

We should continue to promote RCIA themes and encourage individuals to come forward, especially those who may have been baptized but not confirmed.

St. Vincent de Paul Ministry Update: This new ministry was formally announced in September. Now we need donations and clients. Meetings will generally be scheduled for the third Thursday of the month. One “poor box” for donations has been installed; two more will be installed. There will be some Thanksgiving turkey baskets assembled and distributed.

Breaking Bread Update: The fifth round of meals is happening on the Nov 14/15 weekend, with ~50 attendees at seven host sites. We continue to seek new members. Cindy LaRow has graciously offered to help Donna Biggins with this new ministry.

Collaborative Update: Work continues within the Wayland/Weston/Sudbury parishes. October meeting was held at St. Anselm. Participants broke down into smaller groups to share experiences with major changes, e.g. combining Lincoln with Weston, reducing the total number of Masses offered by St. Zepherin and St. Ann. Our Lady of Fatima has not been impacted as much as some of the other parishes in the collaborative. It was acknowledged that the methods of communicating with parishioners have changed over the past five years. Next Collaborative meeting is Jan 11, 2010.

Mass Attendance: Our annual October headcount of weekend Mass attendance showed ~13% drop in attendance from October 2008. This is obviously a concern. The Commission

brainstormed possible explanations for the drop and will continue to try to identify and resolve possible issues.

Stewardship Commission Objectives/Priorities:

Consensus was Charles Zech book, *Best Practices in Catholic Stewardship*, is a good base document to assess where our parish currently stands in terms of stewardship implementation, and where our focus and efforts may be best applied. At the October meeting we reviewed our summary observations of the eight best practices, and immediate action we could take:

1) Be a Welcoming Parish:

Deacon John has emailed Lectors and Eucharistic Ministers reminding them that they should arrive early and lend greater support as people arrive for, and leave, Mass.

- ❖ Donna Biggins to consider contacting newly-registered parishioners to invite them to join Breaking Bread.
- ❖ Reinforce the importance of the Welcoming Committee as a vital OLF ministry. We should consider a whole new ministry, building upon the Welcoming Committee efforts Ursula Lyons has made over the years.

On behalf of the Parish, the Stewardship Commission thanks Ursula for her dedication and efforts with the Welcoming Committee over the past years.

- ❖ The Archdiocese is offering a workshop on Welcoming Committee best practices on Wed, Nov 18, at the center in Braintree. Stewardship Commission members are encouraged to attend, if possible.
- ❖ Identify ways of distributing newly-registered parishioner information, without violating privacy protocols. Most of the new registrations come from Baptisms.
- ❖ Identify and promote ministry opportunities which support social justice issues. Many of our newer parishioners come forward to help with outreach ministries where they see a need and a plan to address those needs, e.g. Holy Family summer camp, St. Vincent de Paul.

5) Provide the Opportunity for Lay Witness Presentations:

Consensus is we are weak in this area. More attention needed.

- ❖ Commission members are asked to continue to review our summary observations list and look for additional opportunities to take immediate actions to implement Zech's best practices. Forward any recommendations you may have.

Next Monthly Stewardship Commission Meeting: Thursday, Dec 3, 2009 at 7:30pm.

- ❖ December agenda to include discussion of Charism workshop in Westford.