

Liturgy Committee Meeting
Church of Saint Mary, Alexandria
Thursday, January 12, 2023
6:30 p.m.

Present: Luke VanOverbeke, Father Matthew, Father Rick, Father Fred, Bonnie Broman, Janice Doebber, Kevin Gorghuber, Mary Gorghuber, Char Hanson, Jody Koubsky, Grace Lambert, Sue McCulloch, Michele Neale, Deacon Tony Pasko, and Erin Takle. Guests: Ginger Hetland and Jennifer Kaweesa. Absent: Carol Gaffaney, Dave Reller, and Bill Verschaetse.

1. The committee began with prayer.
2. Minutes of Last Meeting – The minutes of the December 8, 2022 meeting were approved.
3. Liturgist's Update
 - Introduction of Guests - Ginger Hetland, Music Ministry at Immaculate Conception in Osakis; and Jennifer Kaweesa, Parish Secretary for St. Nicholas and Immaculate Conception, and Religious Education at Immaculate Conception introduced themselves.
 - Christmas season was evaluated.
 - Attendance at the 2022 Christmas masses (2021 numbers for comparison) were:
 - 1,245 at the 4:00 pm (1,084)
 - 381 at the 10:00 pm (385 at 7:00)
 - 591 at the 9:00 am. (467)
 - 2,217 total in 2022 (1,936)
 - Improvements could be made with ministry sign up including:
 - announce needs at the end of each Advent mass, being more specific about the needed positions as the season progresses,
 - communicate specific needs to team leaders,
 - use the divider walls for sign up versus the tables because it is more visible as people pass through the gathering space
 - send direct emails to specific ministry lists with needs
 - personally invite families to minister together
 - invite college students that are home for the holidays to minister
 - ensure emails with ministry needs continue to be sent by another staff member whenever the Director of Liturgy is on vacation (i.e. for Mary, Mother of God special sign ups)
 - overall attend to the tasks necessary for liturgical ministers at Christmas and other holiday liturgies sooner
 - A Christmas invitation letter is a great idea for next year but needs to be done at the beginning of Advent
 - Luke shared his 2023 Lent and Holy Week goals and asked for input:
 - Most of Lent and Holy Week logistical planning will be done by Ash Wednesday
 - New volunteers to help lead Stations of the Cross will be sought
 - Advertise as a "one-off" volunteer commitment, with no long term commitment, in order to recruit new volunteers

- Personally invite individuals to volunteer
 - Ask senior high religious education groups for volunteers. Hospitality and Ushers are another great place for senior high students to volunteer.
 - Implement a Lenten invitation and caller initiative
 - A letter inviting those that did not pick up raffle tickets will be sent during Lent to welcome a return to mass.
 - Volunteers are needed to make phone calls to these same people.
 - Bonnie, Mary, Sue, and Char volunteered to help with this project.
 - Host a Holy Week Liturgical Minister run through and social
 - Would it be more effective to just train the heads of each ministry?
 - Church availability in the evenings is always a challenge during Holy Week due to the number of music rehearsals needing to take place that week.
 - This year we have 2 pastors, which will take much more coordination and communication to run liturgies smoothly.
4. Priests' Updates
- Father Rick gave an update on the new cross decorations at Osakis, said Christmas went well at Osakis and Belle River, and that he has seen things trending in a positive direction and has received many positive comments.
 - Father Matt said he was happy with Christmas at St. Mary's. He hopes to introduce English plain chant parts this year during Lent, with possibly Latin next year, followed by more complex chants in the future.
 - Father Matt and Father Rick had a great retreat this week.
 - Father Matt will be starting a St. Joseph's Initiative, which will strive to recognize everyone that cares for St. Mary's, especially those that work behind the scenes (i.e. janitors, maintenance, sewing vestures, etc.).
5. Liturgy Committee Education Session & Discussion
- Paragraphs 1-20 of the Apostolic Letter Desiderio Desideravi of the Holy Father Francis was discussed.
6. Ministry Covenant and Bylaws
- The covenant agreements from last meeting were reviewed.
 - Welcoming is not just hospitality, but all of us and our signs, symbols, actions, etc.
 - Active verb forms were suggested to encourage our active commitment to these items at all times.
 - The importance of being accountable to parishioners and if parishioners know what the Liturgy Committee does or who to contact was discussed. There are many ways we can increase awareness (Ministry Moments, publishing minutes, etc.) but we also need to be careful that we don't become people parishioners just air their grievances to. Paid staff should be the point people in those instances.
 - Overall everyone was in agreement with the content of the covenant agreements that were drafted.
 - Meeting frequency, duration, and content were discussed.

- The consensus was that meeting frequency and duration is adequate and should remain the same.
 - It was suggested that additional action items be shared whenever possible, that the expertise and networks of the individuals on this committee be tapped, so that we continue to move forward in our work.
 - More advanced planning would be appreciated and more fruitful.
 - Sending the minutes out as soon as possible after each meeting is greatly appreciated, especially for those that miss a meeting.
7. Assignment
- Paragraphs 21-40 of Desiderio Desideravi
8. Announcement
- Love, Inc is a local non-profit that mobilizes local churches to transform lives and communities In the Name of Christ. They are currently looking for volunteers to help in a variety of ways, including to serve on the Board of Directors. The Executive Director position is also open for applications. Contact Michelle Neale for additional information.
9. A closing prayer was led by Luke.

The meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by:
Jody Koubsky