

March 3, 2010 - Spires of Faith Cluster Meeting

Mark White, president, called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m. at St. Boniface Parish School, New Vienna. Charlie Vaske opened with a prayer. Roll call:

St. Francis Xavier, Dyersville: Mike Helle, Ann Heisler, Fr. Phil Kruse and Fr. Bob Gross (**Donna Meyer absent**)

St. Joseph, Earlville: Sue Salow, Deacon Jim Steger and Fr. Herb Tegeler and Margaret Hogan

St. Boniface, New Vienna: Charlie Vaske, Jerry Schneiter and Fr. John O'Oonnor came following Mass.

Tom Pasker also attended from New Vienna.

SS. Peter & Paul, Petersburg: Terry Deutmeyer, Mark White and Vickie Theisen

St. Paul, Worthington:, Gary Langel Steve Koch, and Deacon Fred Pins

Introductions were given. No changes in membership since the last meeting. There are four representatives terms that will be up for renewal July 1, 2010: Charlie Vaske, New Vienna, Mark White, Petersburg, Sue Salow, Earlville and Donna Meyer, Dyersville.

The last meeting was in November with no minutes taken. The last formal meeting was July 15, 2009. Minutes from that meeting were reviewed. Motion to approve with one correction, the Feb. 3, 2010 meeting date should have been Mar. 3, 2010, was made by Sue Salow and seconded by Vickie Theisen. Approved.

The Agenda was approved as presented. Motioned by Steve Koch and seconded by Gary Langel. Approved.

In Old Business:

Cluster Buletin - Is there still and interest to do this? Explanations were given on how Dyersville and Worthington's bulletin now. Worthington office types their own page and emails to Dyersville office to be downloaded into the full 8 page bulletin. Once completed typed and edited it is transmitted to Lpi for printing. Questions on how to divide the costs and the profits of a Cluster Bulletin. The Cluster would have to pay some of the secretary hours for this. Who would do it? Discussion on pros and cons of having a Cluster Bulletin. Should we move forward on a having a Cluster Bulletin or wait 6 months. Most felt a unified bulletin would be beneficial, help smooth the transition. The more things in place before we are down to two priests the easier on parishioners it would be. A benefit to a Cluster Bulletin would be whatever parish you attend for Mass you could pick up a bulletin and have the same information for the week ahead for each parish. Once the bulletin is transmitted to Lpi the bulletins are printed and shipped to each parish by Friday noon. If a parish has a need for inserts, they would be responsible for those and for inserting in their bulletins. A contact from Lpi will be contacted and asked to attend the next meeting in May, possibly having a rough draft to show. Each parish would be responsible for typing their page. It was agreed to move forward with a Cluster Bulletin with a July 1 implementation date or soon there after. Earlville stated that their secretary works 2 days a week. They would contact her if she would be interested in more hours and willing to learn the Publisher Program.

Cluster Budget - Everyone has paid for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2009. Another billing will be done at the end on June, 2010. Billing is done once a year at this time but may move to twice a year or quarterly as the Cluster grows.

Weekday Masses - All were still in agreement that the priests will decide the weekday Mass schedule when the need arises.

Join Cluster Committees:

- Minutes of the newly formed Cluster Social Concerns / Peace Justice Committee first meeting were reviewed along with the Committee members. A large number of people from each is not needed, just a couple from each parish. This committee will aid the individual parish Social Concerns Committee.
- Confirmation Program - Fr. Gross briefed th Committee on what has been happening. The clergy along with Pat Mead and Jerry McGrane have met. The basic training will still be done in Religious Education Classes and at Beckman covering the Catechical side. The parish will offer the faith Formation side with other sessions and retreats moving among the five parishes. Fr.Kruse stated the 40 Hours held this year in Dyersville with speaker Fr.Haugen from Loras College was an excellent Confirmation retreat and might be better that a one day retreat. Discussion followed if candidates would get more out of a small retreat group verses the larger one. Now the pfour parishes of SS. Peter & Paul, St. Boniface, St. Paul and St. Francis Xavier are working together with Confirmation. Earlville would like to keep their Confirmation Program going due to most of their students are from the MV School District, but are interested in using the same format as the Cluster and also joining in the Cluster Retreats. Formation Classes could be up to in the individual parish. Part of the Archdiocesan Policy for Confirmation that's lacking is the Parish Faith Formation. Candidates need to connect with their parish.
- Pre-baptism Classes - Is this something parishes would like to share? Now at Earlville Fr. Tegeler meets individually with each couple and if the couple is inactive he may meet 2-3 times with them. At SFX there are 5 classes held each year with Deacon Miller. First time parents are required to attend a one night class. Pre-baptism Classes could move from parish to parish with parents from all five parishes attending. Most were in agreement to move forward in

establishing such classes. A real concern is the number of parents coming to Baptism that do not attend church regularly. Each parish could still establish a policy for this.

- Pre-Cana Marriage preparation Classes - one is set for March 5/6 in Dyersville with 20 couples registered. Fr. Gross has been working with Fr. O'Connor to establish a second Pre-Cana in New Vienna for this area. Another team would be needed. Two Pre-Cana's for our Cluster wedding is needed.
- Fr. Kruse suggested planning a Cluster-wide Mission next year. Each pastor would have to promote it. Each parish would have one night. We could fill our churches. Do we want to do this? If so a dates would need to be set and speakers scheduled. Representatives were asked to take this back to their parishes and talk about it. A decision would be need at the next meeting, May . Costs would be divided between the parishes. Concern for sizes of church was discussed but Father still felt the importance of having it one night in each parishes. Our goal is to fill the church. A full church is a good sign to all. Coltsburg just had one and the word coming back was it was very good. More discussion on this in May.
- Other Cluster Committees could be a Stewardship Committee and a Faith Formation Committee. Again a couple of people from each parish could form these committees. Information from the Parish Council Guidelines was reference. Each representative received it in their meeting packet.
- Cluster Memorial Service - One is held each year in Dyersville. Cookie Scherman of SFX parish coordinates each year and already has included the surrounding parishes when possible. Fr. Kruse explained this wonderful Memorial Service that's done on a Sunday in November for parishioner who has lost a loved one during the past year whether that person from the parish or not. Part of it is a candle lighting ceremony. Each family then takes the candle home with them to use. This Service is very well received and greatly appreciated. A copy of the last years Service will be brought to the next meeting.

In working toward our **Cluster goal** of a Deacon presence in each parish, Deacon Jerry Miller is preparing to move to the Petersburg rectory.

Cluster photo - samples were shown. Fr. Kruse proposed to frame and to hang this photo in each of our churches. Copies could also be available for purchase if people wish. Representatives were asked to take the photo back to each Parish Council for approval. A few photos were submitted of our churches from individual parishes but to have the same front on view for each, Phil Schmitz, photographer, agreed to take the 5 photos. Thank you to those who submitted photos. One proof was approved with 2 changes - to flip the top corner churches and to remove the snow on the roof of St. Paul's church. A completed framed photo will be brought to the next meeting along with sizes and prices.

A **Cluster Photo Directory** was discussed. This would be a great way to unite our parishes. A core committee would be needed, one or 2 from each parish. A sample of spiral directory with six parishes was viewed. The book gives the option of each individual parish being first in the book with the others following. Approval is needed before forming a committee. A representative from Olan Mills will be asked to attend the May meeting.

Is this a Parish Life Committee function? This also could be an opportunity to update our parish census.

A motion to move forward with a Cluster Photo Directory was made by Margaret Hogan and seconded by Deacon Jim Steger. Approved.

Cluster calendar - any changes and additions should be emailed to the cluster secretary. A new Calendar will be emailed to everyone for use in their parishes. One change that was agreed upon was to list the towns alphabetical and to always list the same way.

In New Business:

Establish Cluster-wide wedding fees to help eliminate couples shopping around was discussed. SFX fees are \$200/parishioners and \$500 non/parishioner right now but increased are being discussed of \$400 and \$600. It is recommend that the fees be paid when the church is booked or shortly after. Of course there are always exceptions and that is up to the descreaion of the priest. Earlville fees are \$150 for parishioners. A comment was given that a wedding in Ames for a relative was \$1000. Following discussion Charlie Vaske motioned to have an outside the parish universal fee of \$500, (if Dyersville votes to raise their fee to \$600 it would go to \$600), but each parish would still set the church fee for parishioners getting married. Vickie Theisen seconded. All approved.

Also discussed "who's considered parishioner and who's outside the parish?" That would up to the descretion of the priest.

A big concern in parishes is that over half the parents presenting babies for baptism are not attending church regularly.

Each parish now decides on how to handle these baptisms. Is there a need to cater a Baptism Class to meet these needs?

Cluster Social Events - could be a Fund Raiser or just a Fun Raiser! Ideas are needed - ways to bring people together - unite us. Dance, Potluck.... Should it be a neutral site? Possible sites: Beckman, Field of Dreams or maybe rotating a yearly event around to each parish. Each parish hosting an event. This could be part of a Cluster Parish Life Committee. Two from each parish is needed to serve on this CPLC. Representatives were asked to bring 2 names to the May meeting that would be willing to serve on this Committee. A chair is needed from this Cluster Board. For information is in the Parish Council Guidelines on Parish Life Committees. Vickie Theisen, SS Peter & Paul agreed to chair this committee and Mike Helle, SFX alternate agreed to help co-chair. Thank you! Be sure to bring additional names from each parish that will be willing to be part of the PL Committee.

The Committee went to Stewardship and Faith Formation. Fr. O'Connor felt the description of these committees were not so clear on how to implement - parish or Cluster level and how they should all work together. Parish elections could affect the cluster committees. The Guidelines state that these committees need to be in place by July 2011. Ann Heisler clarified the Cluster Social Concerns. Each parish will continue to do things on the parish level. The Cluster Committee is to help and to share ideas. For instance our parishes have joined to support the Haiti Relief through SFX parish Haiti's Sister Parish. Social Concerns is not an elected group. They are volunteers that share a common interest. It is hoped that in time more events, such as Haiti, will be shared on the Cluster level.

Cluster web site is beginning. A Loras college student, with the help of our web site coordinate, Matt Vorwald, is willing to put together a site for us. Hopefully there will be more at the next meeting.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, May 12 at 7:00 p.m. at St. Joseph's, Earlville.

NOTE THE MEETING TIME WILL BE AT 7:00 P.M.

A short discussion on the October count and some of the discrepancies was held.

Ann Heisler motioned to adjourn. Mike Helle seconded. All approved. Meeting adjourned 9:05 pm

Respectfully submitted Sharon Gudenkauf