

## July 15, 2009 - Spires of Faith Cluster Meeting

In Dave Lansing absence Mark White called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. at St. Paul's, Worthington. Fr. Kruse opened with a prayer. Introductions were made and new representatives welcomed.

**Present:** SS. Peter & Paul, Petersburg: Terry Deutmeyer, Mark White and Vickie Theisen  
St. Boniface, New Vienna: Charlie Vaske, Jerry Schneiter and Fr. John O'Connor  
St. Joseph, Earlville: Sue Salow, John Geistkemper, Deacon Jim Steger, Fr. Herb Tegeler (Margaret Hogan absent)  
St. Paul, Worthington: Gary Langel Steve Koch, Deacon Fred Pins (Dave Lansing absent)  
St. Francis Xavier, Dyersville: Donna Meyer, Mike Helle, Fr. Phil Kruse, Fr. Bob Gross and  
Noah Diehm, summer seminarian (Ann Heisler absent)

**Minutes** from the March 11, 2009 meeting were discussed. At the present time Mass times changes between SS. Peter & Paul and St. Boniface on an every other month rotation. Will that be able to continue when down to three priests? The main concern will be to make it clear to all parishioners. If that could be done it could work. Fr. Kruse mentioned a Cluster Bulletin, which will be discussed later, could help in keeping everyone informed of Mass times and places. To further clarify the Mass schedule Leon motioned that "when down to 3 priests" Petersburg and New Vienna could continue to rotate their Mass schedule if clear communication between all five parishes. Charlie seconded. Approved. The minutes were changed to read:

*(When down to three priests it will depend on which priest and which parish. For example if St. Joseph's loses a priest they will be down to 1 Mass and Xavier would probably lose a Sunday Mass. If it's Petersburg/New Vienna their Mass schedule would be one Mass on Saturday night and one on Sunday morning with monthly rotation possible. Depending on the scenario at the time perhaps the third priest would still be able to have a Sunday Mass at Earlville. Good communication will be essential)*

Motion to approved the minutes by Mike, seconded by Gary. Approved.

**Approval of Agenda:** Sue motioned to accept the Agenda; Leon seconded. Approved.

### Old Business:

- A. **Cluster Bulletin** - Dyersville and Worthington bulletin is going well. Is there interest from the other parishes to form a Cluster Bulletin? Petersburg/New Vienna and Earlville had discussed this with their Parish Councils and they were in favor when no resident pastor in their parishes. Further explanation and discussion on how a Cluster Bulletin would work. The Bulletin basically pays for itself. The printing costs is covered by the advertisers fee. Over and above the costs comes back to the parish or Cluster if a Cluster bulletin. It would be good way to keep everyone informed of Mass times, parish events and more. It is a non-threatening way to begin working together as a Cluster. Fr. Gross just moving from the Holy Spirit Cluster in Dubuque stated that it was very effective and it can provide an education purpose. Further discussion and clarification at the Parish Council level was recommended. Mike motioned the Spires of Faith Cluster recommend/encourage Parishes to move toward a Cluster bulletin by May 1, 2010. Mark and Donna seconded it. Approved to make this our second year goal.
- B. **Cluster Budget** - Terry motioned to approve the first year Cluster budget; John seconded. Approved. Each parish was assessed a portion of the Cluster 1<sup>st</sup> year expenses using the formula approved in the by-laws.
- C. **Cluster Calendars** - each member received calendars from now until March 2010. Please complete with your parish events, both church, school and parish fundraisers and return to the Dyersville office by Sept. 1<sup>st</sup>.
- D. **New representatives** for a three year term are Steve Koch, Worthington and Vickie Theisen, Petersburg. Thank you to Dave Lansing and Terry Deutmeyer completing their terms on the Council. In Dave's absence, Fr. Kruse, expressed appreciation to all attending for their dedication to this Council and to their parishes.  
- *Election of officers* was held - President: Steve Koch nominated Mark White; Fr. Tegeler seconded. Approved. Vice-President: Sue Salow nominated Margaret Hogan, seconded by Fr. O'Connor. Approved.  
For 2009-2010 officers will be: President - Mark White; Vice-President - Margaret Hogan
- E. **Cluster Goals** - one year review:

1. *To establish Mass time schedule to accommodate the reality of declining availability of priests for the following scenarios; four priests, three priests, and two priests.*

Have four priests now and the Mass schedule is in place; when three priests there will be one Mass at Petersburg, New Vienna and Earlville and Worthington and four at Dyersville with the possibility of another Mass at Earlville; when two priests there would be one Mass at Petersburg, New Vienna, Earlville, Worthington and three at Dyersville. Mike Helle motioned to approve, seconded by Terry. Approved.

2. *Establish Cluster-wide ministry efforts in areas such as Religious Education, Confirmation, Marriage Prep and Evangelization.*

We now have Religious Education in two areas, Earlville has their own and the other four parishes come together in one program in Dyersville. Father briefed the Council on the new Deacon beginning in Dyersville August 1<sup>st</sup>. He will be in charge of Marriage Prep - is there any interest in a Cluster Marriage Prep Program? The deacon could do the initial meeting then assign back to the priest or deacon. He will be overseeing the Pre-Cana and Sponsor Couple Program for Dyersville and Worthington. Earlville, Petersburg and New Vienna do not have a Sponsor Couple Program at this time. Fr. Tegler and Fr. O'Connor would be interested in that part of the Marriage Prep but they still would like to meet with the couple and complete the necessary paperwork, at least for the next year.

Confirmation Program - The Bishop has asks if less than 25 candidates in a particular parish to join with another parish or every other year. (Earlville and Petersburg/New Vienna do that now.) Skipping a year does present problems

with students. A central Confirmation Program would be beneficial. The Sacrament could still be celebrated in their home parish. Fr. Gross explained how the Dubuque Cluster handled theirs. They held central classes and the Confirmation rotated between parishes. He felt doing this also helped pull students into a youth group. Fr. O'Connor felt that a priest needs to be involved in the Confirmation Classes. With most of the students from Worthington, Dyersville, Petersburg & New Vienna also attending Beckman, much of the training was done there but many felt this is not working as well as it should. Earlville would like to keep their program at this time. Our next year's Cluster Goal could be to work toward a Cluster Confirmation Program, at least with the four parishes of Worthington, Dyersville, Petersburg & New Vienna. The Cluster recommended that pastors meet first and put together recommendations for such a Program, then put out to parishioners. Fr. Gross suggested we think Cluster first then parish for application. It may help in planning. Deacon Pins motioned to make as a 2<sup>nd</sup> year goal to work toward Confirmation Program beginning with the four parishes of Petersburg, New Vienna, Dyerville and Worthington. Vickie seconded/ Approved.

3. *Evaluate progress toward cluster goals in a timely matter and include new goals in the budget process.*

This is being done and should be repeated next year.

4. *Ensure that the Sacrament of the Sick is available to all who have need of it.* All felt this is being done and done very well.

5. *Establish a plan to recruit deacons.* Fr. Kruse briefed the Council that St. Francis Xavier has hired a deacon to begin August 1<sup>st</sup>. He will be involved with marriage enrichment and marriage programs. Do parishes want to be part of these programs?

6. *Continue to coordinate communication with parishes regarding cluster activities.* A Cluster calendar listing as much information and activities at parishes and schools. This would be helpful in planning Parish events so no doubles occur and that parishioners are aware of all parish events. Some of the criteria established for inclusion on the Cluster Calendar would be:

- ▶ Event bigger than parish/open to public. e.g. dinner, school events, etc.
- ▶ Fund raiser / social
- ▶ Church / Sacramental e.g. Mass times, Communal Anointing, Holy Day, Mission, 40 Hours, etc.
- ▶ Beckman and school events e.g. music/band programs, musicals/plays, etc.
- ▶ Community events / fair dates, etc. also would be helpful.

Items at this time need to be submitted to the secretary or SFX parish office. A Cluster web site was discussed and would help all parishioners be better informed - a go to place for information - a link to parishes. This would be a great next year goal. Terry motioned for a 2<sup>nd</sup> year Cluster goal to establish a Cluster Web site. Steve seconded. Approved.

F. ***Weekday Mass times*** - as decided at the May meeting there will be at least one weekday Mass at each parish with the priests deciding on the workable schedule when the need arises. Holy Day Masses will also be addressed at that time.

#### **New Business:**

1. ***Cluster Photo*** of church spires - a picture of each church will be needed, especially the spires as this will be used for a Cluster web site, bulletin, stationary, etc. This request will be taken back to the individual Parish Councils and a digital photo submitted. It was suggested that it be put out to parishioners to take pictures of their church and the best one submitted. Worthington and Dyersville already have a photo that is used on the church bulletin.
2. ***Meeting dates*** - The Cluster meets four times a year, rotating parishes same as the first year on Wednesday nights, at 7:00 p.m. As the Cluster grows it may be necessary to meet more often. The meeting dates are:  

<b>November 11, 2009 - Dyersville</b>	<b>May 12, 2010 - Earlville</b>
<b>February 3, 2010 - New Vienna</b>	<b>August 11, 2010 - Peterburg</b>
3. Fr. Kruse briefed the Council on the ***Mission*** planned for Dyersville, Good News Ministry of Seattle. There will be one speaker and he will have 2 talks each day, both different. It will be held in Dyersville as the speaker requests one place as too difficult to move and reset up each day. A collection will be taken at the end of the mission. He highly recommended that the Cluster promote the mission to all parishes. The dates will be sent to each parish.
4. Fr. O'Connor is looking at ***program for young married couples***. As it develops he will forward the information to parishes.

**In review Year 2 Cluster Goals** that were approved. 1.) Move toward Cluster bulletin by May 2010; 2.) Establish a Confirmation Program for Petersburg, New Vienna, Dyersville & Worthington; 3.) Establish a Cluster web site. In addition a Cluster Calendar is being put together and a possible Cluster Fund raiser/social event is a being sought.

All felt we need to do more to bring people together; speakers, marriage programs, family programs, get more lay people involved. All were asked to think of ideas for the next agenda - meeting Nov. 11<sup>th</sup>. A short discussion on how to support our Catholic schools? Concerns mentioned were lukewarm Catholics - what can we do to be proactive, to emphasize our strengths and the importance of Catholic education.

Marriage Programs were discussed. Deacon Steger commented that he has worked with the Engaged Encounter Weekend and could see some of those ideas working in our Pre-Cana. By running our own program we can put even more into the content.

**Announcements:** Earlville will begin redecorating their church soon.

In closing the growth of our Cluster is important for all of parishes. We need to work together.

Fr. O'Connor motioned to adjourn, seconded by Charlie Approved. The next meeting will be Nov. 11, 2009 at 7 pm at Dyersville.