

**Our Lady Help of Christians Parish
Parish Pastoral Council
November 8, 2011
7:30-9:00pm**

Present: Ginny Arpino, Anne Banks, Istvan Bonyhay, Tom Coan, Arlene Larsen, Kristina Lukach, Paula Panchuck, Tony Salvucci, Fr. John Sassani, Msgr. Dennis Sheehan, Rosemary Seibold, Jenifer Suehs-Vassel, Jo-Anne Vergilio

Opening Prayer: Fr. John Sassani

Approval of Minutes: Minutes from the September 27th meeting were approved

Agenda items:

1. Update on church finances [Chris Graf, Finance Council]

- a. At the last PPC meeting, feedback from parishioners was brought forward regarding their interest in church finances and their desire for follow-up on financial issues that had been previously discussed with the parish community. In response to this request, Fr. John invited Chris Graf, a member of the Finance Council, to update the PPC to this effect.
- b. Archdiocesan loan
 - i. The parish itself
 1. In 2006, at the time of Fr. John's arrival, OLHC maintained a total debt of over \$1.9M to the Archdiocese (that was carried through multiple different loans)
 2. During the last five years, these loans were re-negotiated, such that over \$900,000 of debt and accrued interest were written off, bringing the total debt to \$1.1M which was then consolidated into a single loan
 - ii. Trinity Catholic High School
 1. Parishes are expected to maintain a financial responsibility towards affiliated parish schools; consequently, OLHC has supported and sustained TCHS over the years, compensating for its budgetary deficits with financial contributions
 2. The above Archdiocesan loan was, therefore, recently re-negotiated in order to account for finances that were currently owed by TCHS and that are anticipated to be incurred during its upcoming closure.
 3. The total debt of OLHC to the Archdiocese, thus, increased to \$1.4M with an additional \$400,000 line of credit available for closing costs for TCHS
 4. OLHC has no fiscal responsibility for St. Joseph's Preparatory High School, which will be a sponsored ministry of the Sisters of Saint Joseph.

- c. Parish finances
 - i. Are maintained in overall positive balance
 - ii. Collections and appeals
 - 1. Offertory collection
 - a. Contributions are stable from September to May
 - b. From June through August, contributions decline by $\geq 20\%$
 - c. Therefore, committed electronic giving is essential in which weekly contributions are consistent and predictable throughout the course of the year
 - 2. Grand Annual collection
 - a. Contributions in 2010-11 were, historically, the most successful ever at OLHC, totaling \$191,228
 - b. Collection for 2011-12 was just initiated with hoped for continued generosity
 - 3. Catholic Appeal
 - a. OLHC is not a primary contributor to this endeavor
 - b. A small group of very committed donors does exist and they have been asked to raise awareness of and interest in this valuable effort
 - iii. Disposition of the TCHS building
 - 1. With the assistance of the Archdiocese, the building is currently being marketed as a rental property
 - 2. The optimal/anticipated outcome is to have the building used/rented by another school for educational purposes
 - iv. Suggestions for the Finance Council
 - 1. Provide a periodic update of parish finances in the bulletin
 - 2. Publish the budget, itself, in the bulletin on a regular basis, such that parishioners can clearly appreciate parish needs

2. Church as community – follow-up [Rosemary Seibold]

- a. A survey was disseminated to solicit ideas for, and level of interest in, different activities that could be sponsored at OLHC in order to engage parishioners and help strengthen the parish community (refer to PPC minutes from 5-19-11 and 9-27-11 for further details)
- b. On 10-12-11, the parish staff and various members of the PPC met with approximately 25 individuals who indicated a willingness to either organize such an event or volunteer their assistance
- c. At this meeting, it was proposed and agreed that a minimum of 3 individuals must demonstrate a committed interest in spear-heading an event in order for it to be pursued
- d. Ideas that engendered such committed interest included the following:
 - i. “Old-timers” luncheon
 - ii. International potluck dinner
 - iii. Theology on tap for those over 50
 - iv. Creation of an OLHC team for a walk-a-thon

- v. Sporting event
- e. Of note, the clothing drive for the St. Vincent de Paul Society held 11-5/6-11 was an example of an OLHC community service effort that integrated all ages of participation, involving the junior high and confirmation classes as well as adults, and could be used as a model for other activities

3. Pastoral planning for the Archdiocese of Boston [Msgr. Dennis Sheehan]

- a. Given the diminishing number of priests, the Archdiocese has been exploring ways to effectively and efficiently serve the Church community of the future (please refer to PPC minutes from 5-19-11 for additional details)
- b. One model is to create units of pastoral service such that multiple parishes will be served by 1 pastor, 2-3 priests, 1 business manager and 2-3 pastoral associates
- c. Various issues present themselves with this approach and include the following:
 - i. As per Canon law, the finances of parishes must remain segregated
 - ii. How to unite other resources to serve a multiplicity of different parishes?
 - iii. Can parish staff be shared by several different communities in a team approach?
 - iv. How to inform the Catholic community so as to prepare them for what is to come and how to facilitate realistic expectations?
 - v. How to engage parishes so as to foster their participation in planning and development?
- d. Of note, similar systems are currently in place in other geographic areas (eg. Maine)
- e. A pastoral plan will be presented to the Convocation of Priests in the Boston Archdiocese on Dec 5th, 2011

4. Updates

- a. A welcome and introduction was extended to Vince Brewer, a seminarian who will be participating in parish life at OLHC while he completes his Theological Studies at St. John's and prepares for ordination in 2012

5. Remaining PPC meeting dates for 2011-2012

January 10th
February 28th
April 10th
May 29th