



CHURCH OF THE ANNUNCIATION

1760 NORTON ST.



OUR LADY OF THE AMERICAS

864 E. MAIN ST.



ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH

859 N. CLINTON AVE

SFXC PARISH

We are the hands of Christ in the heart of the city.



All parishioners should be very proud of how hard the committee worked and how dedicated they have been.

Regarding the Strategic Planning Process

In the previous bulletins a great deal of effort was made to write in the form of a narrative because there were several “dramatic” moments in the process and in order for it to be intelligible people needed to follow it as a story. In this version the reader will see the text is composed more directly of the minutes themselves. It can be seen in these months how many times the committee met and deliberated. What is not seen here are the many other meetings that were also held between the leadership and diocesan officials. On two occasions, Bishop Matano joined those meetings. The process has been most challenging and taxing. All parishioners should be very proud of how hard the committee worked and how dedicated they have been. All should show their appreciation to the committee for accepting this challenging responsibility and carrying it out.

It should be noted that in this series of minutes there are a number of references made about St. Michael's. It had been suggested earlier by diocesan officials that we do some work "in parallel" (that is, not waiting until the end) that would look to find out if there were parties already interested in the campus. Because St. Michael's Church is the most aesthetically appealing as well as being the most historically significant, these "side avenues" began to be pursued in order to see if there were other potential uses for the church and buildings. The idea being, that if we were to discover something—in particular, if it were possible to maintain some type of ministry presence—perhaps it would make for a smoother transition and easier decision-making. This factor is especially due to the urgency of our financial situation.

Please note that the sentences or paragraphs in italics are those which clarify the minutes.

2020, Fourth Quarter

September 16 meeting

Fr. Mickey informed committee members of the progress on the new website. Access has been provided to both Elvy and Sr. Theresa so that they can assist with communication updates to the website.

Fr. Bob reported on Dream Team activity. Changes were made to the fundraising proposal designed by the Dream Team. Also, the Diocese suggested that Jack Kearns from Buffalo be hired as the fundraiser. Fr. Bob specified that the goal of the fundraising proposal is to secure contributions from outside of the parish, since we have already tapped our parishioners for increased giving.

Carol raised safety concerns related to the St. Michael's site. Specifically, she spoke about the number of criminal incidents that occur in the vicinity of the church, referencing a Rochester Police Department report. Also, there have been numerous instances of homeless people camping out in entryways of the church. Staff members have expressed concerns about needing to step over sleeping people in order to get into work. Carol stated that she has recently completed paperwork requesting regular police patrols through the church property. Committee members discussed the degree to which such safety concerns should impact our recommendation about site closure. There was not agreement on all sides.

The Mission Must Continue



All should show their appreciation to the committee for accepting this challenging responsibility and carrying it out.

The parish will need to develop a plan to provide faith formation utilizing a team of volunteers.

Carol indicated that she is planning to create an analysis to look at the financial viability of the overall parish with each site closed – first with leaving only ANN & OLA open, then with ANN & STM only, and finally with STM & OLA only. Karen volunteered to work with Carol on this.

Karen reported that Lisa Yockel from the Finance Committee has experience with a particular decision matrix that she would like to recommend. Karen will meet with Lisa to review and report back to this committee.

Fr. Mickey informed the committee that in view of our financial situation, he has decided not to replace the Faith Formation Director position. The parish will need to develop a plan to provide faith formation utilizing a team of volunteers.

October 1 meeting

Committee members reviewed a document provided by the Diocese, which includes several forms that are intended to help us collect data to inform our recommendation. We agreed to use two of the forms: Carol will provide data regarding parish statistics, and Karen & Millie will collate information regarding building usage. In addition to this document, we agreed to use a decision matrix in which various categories will be placed side by side for comparison. The categories can be rated and then a master ranking can be established. This will provide a somewhat scientific basis to arrive at a recommendation. We will determine which matrix to use at an upcoming meeting.

Jordan sought out advice from the Diocese regarding the St. Michael's campus and received an email that delineated several ideas with the understanding that, if in fact St. Michael's is recommended to close, there might be a way of finding a new owner who would offer services that could serve the inner city. Committee members will generate a list of property developers who may be interested in the St. Michael's site, for example, to create an urban outreach and ministry center.

Fr. Bob reported that Jack Kearns (fundraiser) met with the Dream Team at their latest meeting. Mr. Kearns cited parishes with which he has worked in the past, and indicated that he thought we could have a good campaign. Given the great societal and economic uncertainties we are all facing and given that we are facing a closure, Fr. Bob indicated that the fundraising project is on hold for now, until a recommendation is made.

Karen stated that she met with Lisa Yockel from the Finance Committee. Lisa offered a proposed decision matrix, which she has used in the past. We will invite Lisa to a future SPC meeting to present this matrix for consideration.

October 14 meeting

Jordan indicated that he has set up a shared folder for committee members to store all documents, including agendas and minutes.

Karen and Millie have been working on compiling usage information for the three sites, e.g., Mass times, confession schedule, committee meetings, community gatherings, etc. This should be completed by the next meeting. Also, Carol is completing the documentation concerning parish

statistics, e.g., attendance, baptisms, confirmations, first communions, marriages. This information will reflect stats for several recent years.

Carol presented a site closure analysis. Our current 2020-2021 projected loss is **\$113,738**. If we look at just ANN & OLA, the projected loss is **\$35,889**; ANN & STM only is **\$124,944**, and STM & OLA only is **\$164,628**. This is only if we are able to be rid of all expenses respective to the site that is closed. Neither does it take into account the capital repairs which are needed over the next 5 years, which amount to \$1.35 million across the three worship sites; nor does it account for ongoing costs of maintaining the property should it not be sold in a timely manner. Committee members discussed anecdotal comments that have been heard regarding the likely migration of parishioners given different site closure options. It was suggested that a survey of current parishioners could be useful to determine what people might do if one site is closed vs. another.

Committee members discussed several individuals and nonprofit organizations who we should contact to see if they have any interest in purchasing and developing the St. Michael's site. Fr. Mickey will draft a letter to send to these various parties so that the message is the same to all.

Fr. Mickey provided an update on the idea of inviting a religious order in to minister at St. Michael's. The mindset of the committee was that perhaps, if there were to be found interest by an outside group, they could take over St. Michael's as an independent parish. All parishes belong to the diocese; therefore, any such arrangement would need the approval of the bishop.

October 29 meeting

Lisa Yockel from the Finance Committee was invited as a guest to this meeting. She presented a "Cause and Effect" decision matrix. This format starts with the objectives that we wish to achieve as a parish and then each potential site closure would be ranked relative to how well each of the three possible decisions would help us to achieve each outcome. Committee members thanked Lisa for her input, and we agreed to utilize this tool.

Updates were provided regarding contacts that have been made so far with various potential developers for the St. Michael's property. Carol indicated that she has been in contact with Rick Altier from Caliber Brokerage Firm. She believes that he would be a good broker for us. She has provided him with the list of developers and entities we have identified that could possibly have interest. Karen suggested that part of Rick's role could be to inform us of the relative marketability of our three worship sites.

It was reported that at a recent Dream Team meeting, the suggestion was made to invite priests from the Diocese of San Juan, Puerto Rico, to assist with Hispanic ministry. There are 7,000 people who have arrived in Rochester from Puerto Rico because of natural disasters in their homeland. Fr. Mickey indicated he recently spoke to the bishop about this, but the bishop will not invite anyone until we have a specific plan in place.

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November 4 meeting

At the October 29 meeting, we agreed to utilize the “Cause and Effect” decision matrix that was proposed by Lisa Yockel from the Finance Committee. Jordan, Karen, Diamond, and Ann Marie agreed to develop a draft of the matrix and then share it with the entire SPC. The “Matrix Subgroup” established a meeting on November 6 to begin their work.

There will be a preliminary meeting on November 5 with Rick Altier from Caliber Brokerage Firm. We cannot sign a contract with him until we make a recommendation to the bishop and, upon the advice of the Priests Council, the bishop signs off on it. Fr. Bob indicated that we can certainly share our ideas with Rick, but we don’t want to tie his hands, because he may propose some other options.

Reports were provided about some contacts that have been made with potential developers. *Understanding that St. Michael’s is clearly the most costly and difficult to maintain, if it cannot be maintained, the hope is to find some individual or nonprofit organization that will purchase St. Michael’s and preserve a ministry presence in the area.*

November 11 meeting

Fr. Mickey has been working on a letter of interest to send to potential developers for the St. Michael’s site. This letter will also be sent to Rick Altier, as we are hoping for him to be our broker. *(The letter was finalized and sent out later this same week.)*

Bishop Matano has appointed Carol Wynne and Deb Housel to be co-delegates to the Strategic Planning Committee. The role of the co-delegates is to ensure that we are doing everything that needs to be done and to help the SPC reach a recommendation that Fr. Mickey can then propose to the bishop.

The meeting was adjourned early to allow time for the Matrix Subgroup to continue their work.

November 19 meeting

Deb Housel was introduced as one of the co-delegates appointed by Bishop Matano. Deb worked in the parish 10 years ago in the merger that resulted in the current parish. She continues service to the diocese by working with victims of clergy sex abuse. As stated in the last meeting, the bishop has asked Carol & Deb to assist the SPC with the decision-making process.

Jordan presented the Cause and Effect decision matrix drafted by the Matrix Subgroup. The matrix was designed with several goals (or outcomes) in mind. The goals fall into two categories: Maintain Financial Stability (four goals) and Maintain a Presence in NE Rochester (seven goals). The goals were developed keeping in mind the Four Pillars of the decision-making process that were shared at the Town Hall meeting: Vision/Mission, People, Financial, and Buildings/Grounds. The goals were weighted to indicate the relative importance of each. Then there were three decision points: Close St. Michael’s, close Our Lady of the Americas, or Close Annunciation. Each decision point was ranked to reflect how well the choice helps SFXC meet each goal. The weight of the goal was then multiplied by the rank for each decision point to achieve a score. The site with the highest overall score should be the object of our recommendation to the Bishop of Rochester. The matrix was designed to provide as objective a result as possible.

The matrix is available for anybody who wishes to review, along with a document that explains the scoring process for each goal. See the Strategic Planning page on the parish website under the News menu (<http://www.sfxcrochester.org/news/strategic-planning/>).

The end result of the matrix reveals that St. Michael's received the highest score, implying that this should be the site to close. After this was disclosed, a great deal of discussion ensued, both challenging and supporting the result. It was agreed that committee members needed some time to reflect on and absorb the matrix information. A follow-up meeting was scheduled for November 23. In the meantime, Jordan requested that every committee member submit a document describing their recommendation and supporting justification.

November 23 meeting

In advance of the meeting, the members were informed by Fr. Mickey the goal we are hoping for is to arrive at a consensus. That is, we hope that after all discussion is concluded, we can all be agreed. This is not an easy goal to achieve.

Jordan reviewed the results of the committee members input related to the decision matrix. A great deal of discussion ensued. While consensus was not reached, there was a slight majority in favor of Fr. Mickey making a recommendation to the bishop to close St. Michael's. Fr. Mickey will take the SPC recommendation into consideration when he completes his report to the bishop. A follow-up meeting was established for December 9, at which time Fr. Mickey will apprise the SPC of his communication to the bishop.

The differing points of view were articulated as follows.

Jordan – Close OLA & ANN. Consolidate operations at SM, which is the site that best allows us to meet our parish vision statement: “We are the hands of Christ in the heart of the city.” Three others were agreed.

During the meeting, six members were agreed to close St. Michael's. One person had a change of heart over night and agreed with them on this recommendation.

Karen thought that we should put both SM & OLA on the market and see which one sells. Both of these sites are in the 14605 zip code. Both of these sites are in “the heart of the city,” so ongoing ministry at either of these sites would meet our mission statement. We can move the proceeds of whichever site sells back into the remaining site. However, if the majority of the Strategic Planning Committee recommends closure of St. Michael's, she will support that in the interest of moving the process along. We need to refocus the efforts of strategic planning from site closure to parish vitality and survival. However, she is very concerned about the ability to actually sell St. Michael's. She does not think that this site has the most potential for sale. Failure to sell St. Michael's in a timely manner means that SFXC will be saddled with ongoing building expenses for a closed site for an indeterminate period of time. We are in dire need of a cash infusion to address our financial crisis, or we will be facing another gut-wrenching process in just a couple of years.

Fr. Mickey informed them that he would let them know of his decision the following week, December 9, after that he will have to send a report to Bishop Matano.

Respectfully submitted,

Fr. Mickey McGrath