

Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes

Date: May 20, 2009

Time: 5:00 p.m.

Place: Room 204

Minutes By: Fran Kilts

- Agenda:**
- **Opening Prayer/ Question of the Week**
 - **Approval of the minutes**
 - **Welcome any guests**
 - **Father Greg**
 - **Hispanic Commission Report**
 - **Gospel Justice Commission Report**
 - **Education Commission Report**
 - **Other**
 - 1) **Parish Assembly May 15th discussion**
 - 2) **Election discussion and Call of the Council**
 - **Closing Prayer**
 - **Next Meeting: June 17, 2009 at 5:00 PM in Room 204**

Participants

X	Ron Bocinsky Chairperson	X	Deacon Bill Keeling Staff Representative
X	Ursula Boehme Representative-at-Large	X	Fran Kilts Secretary, Representative-at-Large
X	Rick Braschel Vice-Chair, Social Fellowship Commission		Mario Lizaso Finance Council
	Kathy Cicio Staff Representative		Alex Mieniel Hispanic Commission
X	Fr. Greg Goolsby Pastor	X	Bob Volz (sub Anita Neidert) Pastoral Care Commission
	Tom Gump Gospel Justice Commission	X	Stan Kalisch (sub for Tom Pacer) Liturgy Commission
X	Jo Huddleston Education Commission	X	Jerry Ritthaler Representative-at-Large
X	Bryan Blackmon (sub for Lee Karp) Small Faith Communities Commission		Chuck Thom Building & Grounds Commission
X	Fr. Chito Palang	X	Deacon Kevin Tracy Stewardship Commission
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Action Items

Task	Who	When

Handouts

1. Parish Education Commission Update

Meeting

- **Opening Prayer/Scripture Reading – Fran Kilts**
- **Small group discussion**
- **Approval of minutes – Rick moved to approve; Jo seconded.**

Ron introduced our guests. Bryan Blackman was substituting for Lee Karp, and Bob Volz was substituting for Anita Neidert.

Father Greg –

- a) Deacon Alberto is leaving our parish, due to immigration issues. A reception for him will be held this Sunday, following the 2:30 mass.
 - b) St. Thomas will have a seminarian in residence this summer, from July 1st through the end of August. He is Michael Silloway, a student at the North American College in Rome.
 - c) A retreat for middle school, high school, and college students of our parish will be held the weekend of August 8th. Sixteen young men have signed up so far. It will provide them with an opportunity to talk to others about what it means to be a young Catholic man in a post-Christian environment. Rick will donate some tents for this event. Jo suggested publicizing the retreat in the bulletin, etc. She also expressed concern that the cost might prevent some from attending; Father said that should not keep anyone from participating.
 - d) Father Greg asked Deacon Kevin to inform the Council about the quest for alternatives to the envelope system for contributing to the parish. Options being considered are electronic bill paying, credit card transactions, or automatic withdrawals. It could be handled by our current envelope company, which is just starting this service or through the archdiocesan program.
 - e) Father has given the go-ahead to proceed with e-blast.
 - f) The new statue of Jesus was donated by the St. Thomas seniors. The statue of the Holy Family was given by Father Greg in thanksgiving for recent blessings. A crucifix has been placed in the Parish Hall. Margaret Hess has donated financing for a carved crucifix for the church. Artist George Pasada has been contracted for this project.
- **Education Commission Update - Jo Huddleston**

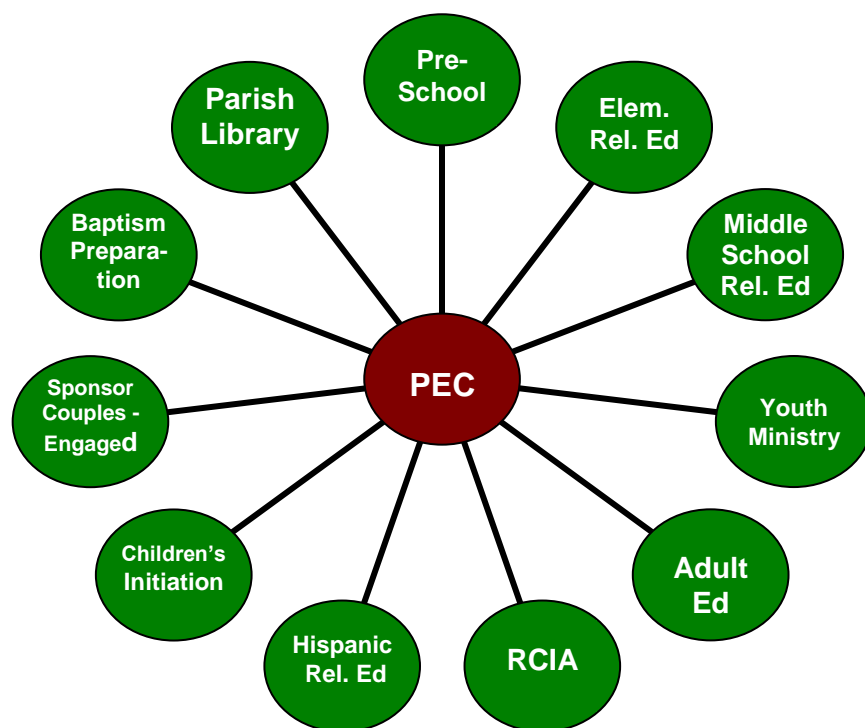


Parish Education Commission **Update – 5.20.09**

Background

- **Mission Statement:** The PEC serves the parish by fostering and facilitating the life-giving knowledge of Jesus Christ and the Catholic faith in adults and children. Through consultation with the Pastor, the religious education coordinators, and the pre-school director, and in concert with the Parish Mission Statement, the Commission offers counsel in the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of the parish education/formation programs.

- The PEC follows its by-laws. These by-laws outline the Commission’s responsibilities and duties, membership and length of term, and guidelines relative to a quorum, consensus and voting.
- Meetings are held every other month on Wednesdays from 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
- The PEC continues in its faith formation by reflecting on the Gospel readings at each meeting and by discussing various Catholic publications. For 2009-2010, the PEC is reading and discussing On Evangelization in the Modern World – Pope Paul VI.
- Parish Education Commission structure:



Life Teen

- Life Teen nights – average 110 thru the year (140 in early Fall to 80 in late Spring)
- Retreats – usually 45-75 participants (Fall & Spring retreats, Core & Teen Apostles)
- Mission Trips – usually 20-45 participants (Chattanooga & Nicaragua)
- Confirmation:
 - 5 Sunday sessions
 - Confirmation Retreat (September) – 120
 - Confirmation (November) – 150
- Breakfast & the Word – 6:45 a.m. on Wednesdays @ Dockery’s – 12-15 participants
- Teen Apostles – 26
- 2 Service projects each school semester
- Various fundraisers for trips, i.e. Poker Tournament

Volunteers

- 13 Core members
- 40 parents on kitchen crew for dinners
- 18 Mentors for Confirmation

- Losing 3 Core members this summer (job transfer, baby, grad school). Adding 1, for sure, and possibly two others

Pre-School Program

- Still collecting tuition payments to reserve place in the program; therefore, don't have final numbers yet for 2009-2010 school year.
- Number of children opting for the Georgia Pre-K program. As of now, enrollment is down. This seems to be common throughout the Archdiocese, with the exception of St. Peter Chanel (full with 125 children).
- Currently, there are 130 children signed up – STA's capacity is 170.
- Actively advertising STA's pre-school program.

Elementary Religious Education

- Pre-school thru Grade 5: 760 participants
- Upcoming programs – Vacation Bible School: 231 participants, 51 adult volunteers, 52 high school volunteers and 51 middle school volunteers.
- Service projects during Lent:
 - **Catechesis of the Good Shepherd** students collected and donated sun protection items and hand sanitizers for soldiers sponsored by the St. Thomas Aquinas Blue Star Support Group.
 - **Preschool** students collected and donated over 25 Beanie Babies.
 - **Kindergarten** children donated over 40 coloring books and 30 boxes of crayons.
 - **Grade 1** donated dog toys, Squeeze Cheese in a can, handi-wipes, bandanas, paper towels and other items essential for training the dogs and human volunteers of Canine Assistants.
 - **Grade 2** baked and donated over 100 loaves of Eucharistic bread that were given to families supported by North Fulton Community Charities.
 - **Grade 3** assembled and wrapped 117 filled Easter Baskets that were given out by North Fulton Community Charities the week before Easter.
 - **Grade 4** created over 150 Inspirational Bookmarks to be given to prisoners by members of the St. Thomas Aquinas Prison Ministry.
 - **Grade 5** donated new dish towels and fastening clips and helped wrap the bread loaves baked by the grade 2 students. Grade 5 students also mentored the Grade 2 students as they prepared for First Holy Communion.

Elementary Religious Education (continued)

- Still need co-teachers for the following grades and times for 2009-2010:

Sunday	9:00 am	Preschool, Grades 1, 2, 3
	10:30 am	Grades 1, 4
	7:00 pm	Grades 2, 4, 5
Wednesday	6:30 pm	Preschool, Kindergarten, Grades 1, 2, 3

Middle School Religious Education

- PSR – 350 students and 37 catechist volunteers (12 of those are co-teachers)
- Grade level retreats – 30 to 90 participants; 10 to 25 volunteers per retreat
- Programs/Activities:
 - **Youth Ministry/Social activities** – 3 to 4 events per year with 15 to 100 youth participating, depending on the event; 3 to 20 volunteers per event.
 - **Middle School Lectors** – 6 to 12 participants who read at the Youth Led Liturgies (8 masses per year).
 - **Parent/Youth Programs** – Prison Ministry – Sunday morning, March 8 – Paroled resident of Hays State Prison spoke about the Agape letters students write each year and their impact on his conversion and continuing journey in Christ.

CyberSMART – Wednesday evening, May 13 – an internet safety workshop with a representative from Prevent Child Abuse Georgia speaking to parents (40 to 50 in attendance) and a licensed counselor and a GBI Special Agent speaking to the youth (25 attended).

Whole Community Catechesis – usually 2 events planned per year – 100-200 participants; 10-25 volunteers (both events cancelled).

Catechist Certification – monthly classes for catechists led by Master Catechists. Next year, we will publicize the availability of these classes throughout the Archdiocese.

▪ Service projects:

Class Lenten Service projects – Fish Fry's; First Communion Family Meals; Blue Star Support Group; Newborns in Need

Youth Ministry – 3 to 4 events per year with 15 to 25 youths participating per event; 2 to 6 volunteers per event.

Areas of Concern/Comments

- Plenty of parent volunteers for events, both social and service.
- Volunteer catechists are needed to provide 2 teachers in each class.
- Attendance in PSR decreases after Christmas.
- Middle School lectors need more opportunities to read. With only 8 youth led liturgies, some youths only get to proclaim the Word once during the year.
- Whole Community Catechesis – This program was widely received the first 3 years, but has struggled with attendance since we had to begin scheduling events on Friday nights or Saturdays as the hall is no longer available on Sunday's.

Adult Education

- Classes are over except 10:30 "God for Grown-ups", which will meet for a couple more weeks. They will conclude the year with a "dinner and a movie" night as has been their custom for several years.
- Fall classes will be planned during the summer months.

Adult Initiation (RCIA)

- Adults who were initiated at the Easter Vigil continue to meet until Pentecost.
- There are 6 adults in the ongoing dismissal and several adults who have already expressed interest in beginning Inquiry in the fall.
- Terry Zobel has annual retreats for the Team.

Children's Initiation

- 3 Catechumens (Baptism, Confirmation, First Eucharist) and 7 Candidates (Confirmation, First Eucharist) - Easter 2009.
- 10 students in First Year Catechumenate – Sacraments at Easter 2010.
- 171 Children celebrated First Communion and First Reconciliation. There were 29 Catechists and 25 additional volunteers for retreats and receptions.

Hispanic Ministry

- There are 453 children participating in Hispanic Religious Ed.

- 125 children made their First Communion on May 9th.
- On-going programs include: SFC Why Catholic (7 groups-73 adults); School "U" for Parents (238 couples-89 adults); Quinceañeras Workshop from July 2008 to June 2009 – 6 workshops w/ 75 girls and their parents attending; and Baptism classes – 11 sessions for 880 parents and Godparents.
- Service projects include: ESL – 3 groups with 45 students (beginners on Sunday, intermediates on Mondays and Fridays).
- Area of concern: Luis Guzman believes we may need to open Children's religious education classes on Saturdays beginning in September, preferably from 6:00 p.m. to 7:15 p.m.

Sponsor Couples for the Engaged

- Couples going thru program have significantly decreased. In 2008, we had 11 couples (approx. 15 in 2007) and so far in 2009, we have had only 2 and no additional couples scheduled in the near term.
- Not recruiting sponsor couples as STA has 10 trained sponsor couples at this time.

Baptism Preparation

- Classes held once a month on the 2nd Sunday of the month.
- There is an average of 80-100 sets of parents that go through the program. Some parents will baptize their children at churches other than STA.
- STA has two instructors; ideally, we need 5 or 6. This would allow us to teach in teams or a person would only have to volunteer twice per year. We are advertising for help in upcoming bulletins.

We are also in need of volunteers for the baptismal hospitality program where volunteers work the actual ceremonies. These volunteers would attend every 6 to 8 weeks. This request will also be placed in the bulletin.

Ron thanked Ursula, Jerry, Rick, and Fran for their work on the Parish Assembly. Father announced that 8 Strategic Planning committees have been established; each has one or two leaders. There will be a brainstorming meeting on June 6th at 10:00 a.m.

Jo, Tom Pacer, and Fran will be leaving the Council, as their terms will be ending. Applications for the at-large position is available online at <http://sta.org/apply.pdf> and at the Parish Office.

The meeting closed with a prayer.

The next meeting will be June 17, 2009.

