

**PASTORAL COUNCIL OF NATIVITY – ST. CHARLES
DECEMBER 1, 2005**

Present: Fr. Driscoll, Howard Gotell, Tony Morley, Maria LeBlanc, Terry Laurette, Gerry Cormier, Jim Nelson, Geoff deGannes, Lillian Bray, Edna Walsh, John Kellegrew, Pat Robinson, Frank Allen, Sharon Murphy, Sharon Fairfax, Pauline Pettigrew, Jeanne Bourque, Palm Cormier

Regrets: Jim MacDonald, Darlene White, Sister Teresa Currie

The meeting was held in Nativity Church Hall at 7:00 pm on Thursday, December 1st, 2005.

Opening prayer.

Minutes from meeting October 27th were approved (Geoff, John).

Tony reported on the parish information session held on November 15th. There was some good feedback from the meeting but feels there are still issues to be addressed. He circulated letters that were received by the council from concerned parishioners. Tony has responded to the letters and wrote to the Archbishop requesting information on any guidelines or constitution dealing with the “Forward in Faith” process. Feedback from the diocese on other parishes dealing with the process may be of use to our council.

Gerry Cormier would like to see a formal response from the Archbishop, including specific direction this council is to take with the future of the Amherst parishes. Geoff agreed this information would be useful.

Geoff agreed to draft a letter to the Archbishop seeking clarification and direction in the handling of the amalgamation of the Amherst parishes. The letter will also request any resources that may be available to help in the ongoing process and thank the Archbishop for Bob Britton’s attendance at our parish meeting.

Howard played a short video from CBC News regarding an amalgamation of the parishes in New Waterford, N.S. He is looking for avenues to show the video to more parishioners. Members of council suggested the video be played at future meetings of the Knights of Columbus, CWL’s and other organizations in the parishes. Howard felt it would be useful to show at regular masses to demonstrate we were not alone in the “Forward in Faith” process. Discussion followed, many members felt it would not convey the correct message because it only showed the problem but no solutions.

Jeanne informed the council of various companies and individuals she has been in contact with recently regarding upgrading the heating systems at St. Charles Church. She has gathered extensive material on funding and expertise available to the parish. Enerplan in Moncton, Natural Resources Canada and Kyros in Toronto were some of the groups she has contacted for information. A Natural Resources Canada workshop will be dealt with by the Pastoral Council Executive in January. Tony thanked Jeanne for her work.

Howard reported on the commitment weekend held by the Stewardship Committee in November. Although the attendance was not large the organizers were pleased. There were 180 commitment sheets returned by parishioners that are being correlated by the committee to be distributed to the various organizations. The respondents will be contacted by the organization they expressed an interest in joining.

Howard commented on the great job done on the Stewardship banner, Council to send a thank you card to the designer and seamstress.

PASTOR'S REPORTS

1. A personal recognition to Jeanne Bourque and an agreement that there were circumstances of a mutual nature that inadvertently had her name missed as a new member of Council.
2. Father thanked Tony for chairing the open meeting and reviewing the procedures that the council had followed to date.
3. Father discussed his plan to re-convene the Transition Committee to coordinate funding projects outside of the ordinary Sunday contributions.
4. Father advised that a combined meeting of the Parish Finance Committees will be held on Monday evening. Regular contributions have been done; Nativity Bingo has been suspended until further notice and the Nativity Bazaar proceeds were less than last year.
5. Procedures have been put in place to close and maintain St. Charles church for the winter months. The water has been shut off by the town, the furnace has been adjusted, plastic is being put around some windows and doors and the alarm system is going to be on at all times.
6. Compliments to Deacon Howard and the Stewardship Committee for the first Commitment Sunday and Ministry Fair held in November. Already this has brought new life to the Parish and has us move along the long road to having the "Stewardship Way of Life" integrated into the faith of the parish and the parishioners.
7. The CWL's will be holding a combined Christmas party next Wednesday evening.
8. People have been approached to help us celebrate Christmas Eve Family Mass at Trinity St. Stephen's United Church, as the setting is somewhat different than what we are used to.
9. Five parishioners attended a Diocesan Stewardship Workshop in Lower Sackville.
10. Palm, Geoff, Tony, Father and Frank attended the Northern Region Pastoral Council meeting in Springhill.

11. Blessings were sent to Maria LeBlanc and Bill Kirkpatrick on their wedding to be held on December 10th.
12. In closing Father asked the Council to formally request permission from the Diocese to amalgamate the parishes and take on a new name. This step will help to simplify many procedures and lessen the duplication of office matters.

OTHER REPORTS

Lillian reported that Nativity CWL held a successful pie sale and that the first amalgamation committee meeting had been held.

OTHER BUSINESS

Lillian asked the delegation that was observing the council meeting that any future correspondence from the group not be sent to her home but be directed to council.

CORRESPONDENCE

A letter requesting funds from the Amherst parishes was received from St. George's Parish in Newfoundland. The pastor of that parish described their need to raise funds, a direct result of lawsuits and bankruptcy procedures. Discussion followed. Father will respond that we are not in a position to offer financial aid at present.

A letter that was received from Jeanne Bourque addressing her concerns with the process that we are using to amalgamate the parishes. She is requesting "a professionally run public consultation process" be initiated with the use of "an impartial and unbiased third party" to assist with the review of options. Jeanne advised she would like to see the council conduct an open consultation and consensus building process and has been in contact with a lady in the Halifax area with experience in this area. Following a lengthy discussion by council members it was decided that we would follow the original plan to hold another open meeting for parishioners in January.

NEW BUSINESS

The agenda item to form an Evangelization Committee was tabled until a future meeting.

A motion was passed "to table Father's recommendation to formally request permission of the Diocese to amalgamate the parishes and take on a new name" (Jeanne, Gerry) 8 – 3.

Date for next meeting is January 5th at 7pm at Nativity Church Hall.

Following adjournment of the meeting the council was addressed by a delegation of concerned parishioners from Saint Charles Parish regarding their concerns with the process Council is using to amalgamate the parishes and close Saint Charles for the winter months.

Respectfully submitted:

Pat Robinson