

**Catholic Area Faith Community of Jesus Our Living Water  
Area Pastoral Council**

**MINUTES  
November 19, 2015**

**Present:** Father Steve, Christa Rivers, Michelle Ridl, Tim Macik, Pat Malmgren, Terry Braun, Donna Carver, Joan Conway, and Mary Nordstrom. **Absent:** Father Jerry, Ron Dobbs, and Dave Reed.

We began with our Area Prayer before Meetings and watched Chapter 5 of *The Francis Effect*. We had some discussion regarding the chapter.

Our minutes from October were approved as well as tonight's agenda.

**Pastor's Report:**

- Father Steve spoke about the Year of Mercy, which begins December 8, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. His article in the *Fiat* is an opportunity for us to reflect on Pope Francis call for mercy. At our January meeting, Father wants us to answer the question, "What is one concrete way that our AFC can celebrate the Year of Mercy?" Not necessarily anything new, but perhaps highlighting something we are already doing.
- He also encouraged the council members to be sure to read Bishop LeVoir's column in the November issue of the *Prairie Catholic*. The article addresses the need in the diocese to have discussions regarding merging and closing parishes in light of the severe shortage of priests in the Diocese of New Ulm.
- Today was the AFC's annual Anointing of the Sick Mass followed by a traditional Thanksgiving dinner. It was a beautiful liturgy and the crowd keeps growing. This year there were well over 200 people attending, which included people from all four parishes.
- Father also reported about this past week's financial audit. The auditing firm will be issuing an official report, but they verbally shared with us that we have strong internal controls in place and they didn't see any major issues.

**Area Committee Reports**

- Highlights from the committee reports were briefly discussed.

**Information Items**

- The *Fiat* will be mailed out next week.

## Discussion Items

- 1. Consultation meetings** – Christa, Michelle, Father Steve and Mary had met to come up with a draft agenda for the Willmar and Spicer meetings. We discussed the questions and the plans for these meetings. The goals of these meetings are to keep communication lines open, to have parishioners understand the urgency we are facing, and to know that just because they are the larger parishes, they are not exempt from future changes.

These meetings are listed in the *Fiat*, will be in the bulletin in January, and each registered family will receive a letter, including the parish data. We are not calling each household.

\* Please let Mary know which meeting(s) you will be able to attend.

- 2. Area Committee structure** – Father Steve brought up the possibility of a complete revamping of our area council and committees. His idea is to abolish the area committees and create liaisons for these areas (Word, Worship, Service and Stewardship) onto the APC. What has been observed of the area committees is:

- a. The committees come together each month and meet, but are not necessarily a good use of the members' time.
- b. We are not finding many people of the next generation willing to serve on committees.
- c. People who we call to volunteer want to help, but they would like to know exactly what needs to be done, when does it need to be done, and how long do you need them.

Father's idea is to have the APC and Area Staff as his two main consultative bodies, with working teams to help perform tasks throughout the year.

He is also suggesting that the APC and Staff meet for a day-long retreat/planning session in January/February to plan for the upcoming fiscal year. The APC then would only meet three other times a year – along with the Staff – to report progress on the items.

Father would like this council to reflect on this and be prepared to make a decision on this at our January meeting.

Note that his idea does not impact parish administrative councils, which are required by canon law and are primarily concerned with the finances of their parish and the physical plants.

- 3. Summer Mass Schedule** – The question on the table was whether we want to move the Mass times for the summer back to 8:15 am in Kandiyohi/Lake Lillian and 10:00 in Spicer, or stay with the 8:45 am / 10:30. Father asked the council to please talk to other parishioners so that a decision can be made in January.

- 4. Mass schedule for one priest** – We continued to discuss this schedule. Father Steve and Father Jerry are still working out what they think would be best.
- 5. Area Word proposal** – The Area Word Committee is considering the option of offering chapters of *The Francis Effect* during Lent – either as a day-long retreat or in conjunction with Stations of the Cross. The APC thought that offering it during Stations of the Cross would be an excellent idea.
- 6. Christmas gifts for AFC staff** – The council authorized Christmas gifts for the AFC as has been done in the past.

Our next meeting will follow the January parish consultation meeting on Thursday, January 21.