

**Church of Our Lady of the Lakes**  
**Parish Administrative Council**  
**March 25, 2014**  
**MINUTES**

**Present:** Father Steve, Ron Dobbs, LaVon Gustafson, Steve Maher, Luann Sieben and Mary Nordstrom. **Absent:** Berni Schwaegerl

We began with opening prayer and commitment to our AFC vision statement. Our minutes from February and tonight's agenda was approved.

**Pastor's Report:** Father Steve gave an update on the process of moving faith formation from the parish budgets to the area. The current directors have the new job descriptions and are determining which position(s), if any, they wish to be considered for. The directors are also meeting to be able to recommend a comprehensive faith formation curriculum to the Area Word Committee. We also discussed what the budgetary impact will be to Our Lady of the Lakes.

**Area Pastoral Council Report and Area Committee Reports:**

**Finance Reports:** Father just mailed the checks from all four parishes to Heartland for the Ash Wednesday collections. The total amount was \$5,030.30.

We also discussed what to tell people who previously donated to debt reduction. Now that we have no debt, we will want to educate parishioners and communicate to them our new emphasis on tithing, which comes as a portion of the general fund, and also that we have the Vincent de Paul fund if people want to designate a gift.

**Information items:**

**1. Chairs:** We shared the bids on chairs and pews, and discussed the new chairs, and where to store them. Storing them outside the sanctuary is a safety issue.

**Discussion/Action items:**

**a. Maintenance:** Father Steve contacted someone to lead the Maintenance Committee, but that person declined the invitation. That person prefers to be a worker, and not in charge of the committee. Other names were discussed for Fr. Steve to contact. A suggestion was to bring the committee together and ask them for suggestions.

We also discussed that we need to be setting aside money for items such as re-shingling the roof and replacing the carpet.

**b. Tithing:** We discussed how to implement parish tithing. The recommendation was to begin at 5%, and increase by a minimum of 1% each year until we reach 10%. Father also suggested that a member of St. Mary's tithing committee come out here and explain how it has worked in the past. He envisions that there would be one committee with representation from both parishes. We discussed how to communicate it to the parish; Father said that it needs to come from the pulpit, and that the best way to sell it is through testimonials.

We also need to determine how to best let people in both parishes know what agencies have benefitted from tithing and the blessings it has returned.

**c. Bishop LeVoir's articles in the *Prairie Catholic*:** We discussed Bishop LeVoir's articles in the February and March issues of the *Prairie Catholic*. Do most parishioners realize the severity of the priest shortage? If they don't, it is because they choose not to face reality. Father Jim has been very public that he intends to retire on July 1, 2015. Most likely we won't get another priest to replace him. That means that our four parishes will be served by one pastor and one senior associate (who could retire at any time).

The future will need to include merging parishes, fewer Masses, possibly Masses every-other-week. We have 15 months to begin working steadily to build relationships and be welcoming to people from other parishes so that if someone from a smaller parish shows up, they see a friendly face. Our hospitality has to be a top priority.

It won't affect just the smaller parishes. Even the larger parishes will be impacted - both St. Mary's and Our Lady of the Lakes could see reductions in Masses.

This has to be our major focus in the coming year.

Our next meeting is Tuesday, May 27, at 5:15 pm.