

Charlotte/Greece/Hilton Parishes Evangelization Team

November 14, 2024

Notes

Present: **Holy Cross/Our Mother of Sorrows:** John Owens, **St. Charles Borromeo:** Rose Marie Lombard, **St. John the Evangelist:** Marianne Katz, Dominick Zarcone, **St. Lawrence:** Karen Bunker, **St. Leo the Great:** Joan Rohr, **St. Mark:** Carolyn DelVecchio, **Facilitator/link to the Pastoral Planning Task Force:** Karen Rinefield

Excused: **St. Leo the Great:** Cindy Craner (we are hoping she will officially join this committee!)

Purpose of this group: to share parish evangelization best practices, to design and implement shared evangelization projects

Target audiences:

1. Members of our parishes—helping them deepen their relationship with God.
2. Members of our parishes—helping them talk to others about their faith without judging or criticizing.
3. Members of our parishes who pulled back during Covid and those no longer participating.

Opening prayer: Psalm 16; intercessory prayers, the Lord's Prayer

Additions to the agenda

- Karen shared an email from Tod Simone (St. John's). A resident of Elderwood does a presentation on Joan of Arc. Tod wondered if the evangelization team would like to sponsor his presentation.
- Dominick will talk with Tod to learn more.
- Joan said that Dcn. José Rivera has a devotion to St. Joan of Arc—perhaps St. Leo's would offer his presentation if we do not sponsor it.
- [After the meeting Dominick emailed Tod and received a response. We can discuss this more at our next meeting.]
- Joan, Karen B., and Carolyn were facilitators at this fall's sessions of "The 99" at St. Mark's. Dcn. Frank Petrone wanted Carolyn to ask if other parishes would want to proceed with this evangelization effort.
 - The program includes 3 weekly sessions with video followed by discussion. There are different options for the last week, including prayer in the church. Two weeks later there is a follow-up session after people have read the book "The 99 Handbook: A Catholic Guide to a Life of Faith" by Mark Hart with Joel Stepanek.
 - Feedback at St. Mark's was that people liked the small groups and the personal nature of the sessions.
 - Rose Marie said that now would not be a good time to do this at St. Charles since they are celebrating their anniversary with an event every month. Many things are starting up or resuming, including Child Church.
 - Holy Cross recently resumed Children's Liturgy of the Word and coffee hours. Ignite on Friday evenings is popular with young people. In a recent parish survey parishioners said that they wanted to be more involved.
- (As a sidebar, John said that he recently advertised the Roc Catholics Northwest website at tables during a coffee hour. Marianne added that she is also advertising 7-parish events and resources at the coffee hours at St. John's.)

Update on the work of the Pastoral Planning Task Force

- Karen encouraged everyone to attend one of the parishioner meetings on Wednesday, November 20.

Develop and publish a list of retreat opportunities beyond the 7 parishes

- Review of the draft document:
 - Rose Marie brought information for Mt. Savior which will be added to the document.
 - Each entry gives a good idea of what one can expect at each retreat center. We may want to add a glossary of terms, e.g. silent retreat, directed retreat. We can work on this again at our January meeting.
 - There was a question about whether husbands still needed to make a Cursillo retreat before their wives could. [After the meeting Karen B. confirmed that this is no longer the case.]
- We also had previously talked about publishing a list of the parish contacts for men and women retreats at Notre Dame Retreat House.
 - John called Notre Dame to get their list which he shared tonight. He then contacted each person identified, asking for permission to share their contact information.
 - Joan thinks that Neil Combs is the contact for men's retreats for St. Leo's, but we need to check.
 - We need more work to finalize this document.

Answer "where did you find God today" through faith sharing at parish committee meetings

- Joan has shared the initial letter to pastoral leaders with Fr. Joe Catanise, Dcn. José Rivera, and Terri Nicolosi. She learned that staff meetings already begin with sharing a "close moment" (language from Cursillo).
- Holy Cross has started with this question at the last three meetings of the Evangelization/Stewardship Committee, and there has been a good response.
- Fr. Peter Enyan-Boadu passed out the letter from our team at the last liturgy committee meeting. Marianne explained that what we are asking is not as involved as he had thought. This sharing has worked well in two meetings so far.
- We could also have this question on table tents at coffee hours and encourage people to share their responses.

Advent flyer

- Done, and out to parishes for distribution the weekend of 11/23-24.
- Each parish will distribute it in whatever ways work best for them. Dominick will offer to gather a group to stuff bulletins at St. John's.

Other:

- There was a suggestion from one of the pastoral leaders that the seven parishes sponsor a shared penance service for Advent and Lent. The previous E. Greece/Charlotte Planning Group did this, and parishioners appreciated the opportunity. Perhaps the pastoral leaders and/or the task force (renamed the coordinating committee or steering committee?) can take this up once a recommendation goes to the bishop.
- 2025 is a Jubilee Year. Maybe we can work that into our planning.
- Marianne had contacted Carl Coloney at Hope Lutheran to learn how they follow up with newcomers. Here is his response: "If a visitor comes and is not known by the greeter, they are welcomed and encouraged to sign a book at the visitors/info desk. They are given a welcome bag with a water bottle, Hope magnet, and some info brochures about Hope and their ministries. They are called the same day as a welcome call to see if they have any questions or concerns of any type that could be answered. A follow-up letter is sent that week. Also, on the back of our pews there are welcome cards that can be filled out and also a sticker on the pew with a QR code that can be downloaded by a visitor on their phone to register as a visitor or register a prayer request. I think that making a visitor feel welcome is a first step in the evangelizing process. Once a month we have a "Meet the Pastor" time between services where visitors can meet one of our pastors personally and ask any questions on their minds." A second email from Carl: "I found out this morning that the letter that comes out in the next few days is hand written. I'm sure they will encourage the person to check

out our ministries on our website or call the church for any other questions. Another next step and part of the process—there's an invitation to a class run two or three times a year called the 5Gs. The 5Gs stand for Gospel, Grow, Gather, Give, and Go. It covers each area of the Christian walk and can lead to membership if the participants wish to join but it is not required. Each person or couple is assigned a shepherd who meets and follows up over the 5-6 weeks for support and any questions. There is usually a 5 or 6 month time for the folks to explore some of the available opportunities to serve. Small groups are highly encouraged as the more they will get connected there is a greater chance of them becoming part of the Hope community. If they decide to join, then it will happen during a Sunday service. I think there has been a luncheon for the new members. The whole process from front door to connecting to joining has been developed over the past years and seems to have worked to some degree. Coming to and visiting a new church can be overwhelming, so to have some smooth entry points makes it less stressful. Welcoming is the biggest factor to focus on and definitely will convey Christ's love in His people which is a great avenue for evangelism.”

Closing prayer: Hail Mary

Future meetings

- Thursday, January 9 at 6:30 pm, room #3 in Deacon Hall at St. Lawrence
- Thursday, February 20 at 6:30 pm, room #3 in Deacon Hall at St. Lawrence