

# **St Cecilia Town Hall Meeting**

**Thursday 9/24  
7:00 PM - Parish Center**

## **Agenda & Minutes**

**Master of Ceremonies - Mark O'Laughlin**

- **Welcome & Parish Update** **Fr. Leo Connolly**

It is a great joy to be at St. Cecilia, and I am getting to know a lot of new people. No plans to make any radical changes, but there will be some new things, for instance the blessing of animals on October the 4<sup>th</sup>. There are changes coming in the liturgy – Children’s mass will be 5:00 mass on Christmas Eve. Christmas morning there will be two masses – early and mid morning. We are also going to start to change how the vessels are purified at mass, starting in October in accordance with Diocesan guidelines. We will be recruiting adults as altar servers, including whole families. There are some financial challenges looming as well that will be referenced in the Finance Update. I will be visiting the classrooms in PSR and the Grade school and look forward to those visits.

- **Parish Executive Committee Overview** **Jim Martin**

Reviewed constitution and encouraged feedback and participation.

- **Elementary School Highlights** **Marge Moretti**

Enrollment this year is 193 (195 last year) – including a full all-day Kindergarten. This year we have added distance learning equipment, instead of having to travel back and forth to Bishop Reedy for algebra, etc. Staff members are doing a book study around critical thinking skills – teachers can qualify for CEU’s or credit from ODU for participating. Some students are also participating in a math teaching study. Teachers are going to the OCEA conference in Cincinnati – two days of seminars. Fall Craft show is coming up in October 17<sup>th</sup>. We are working on some partnerships with local restaurants for fund raising events – and first is October 12<sup>th</sup> from 5 PM -9 PM at CiCi’s pizza on Rome Hilliard. If you go in and say you are from St. Cecilia – 10% of profits will come to St. Cecilia. Also looking into Christmas wreath and poinsettia sale this Christmas, and we always could use more Bingo workers.

- **Parish School of Religion Highlights** **Kathy Maggied**

219 students are enrolled in the PSR program this year, serving 143 families. We have switched text book series to Loyola Press, the same program as the school, which is quite an upgrade for us. We have a full staff (teacher & aide in every classroom). The school and the PSR program are looking into a Respect Life program in the month of October. There will be one First Communion Sunday this year, instead of two as in prior years. Confirmation is set for April 26<sup>th</sup>. Completing the sacraments program is starting next month for four children, and there is also an adult confirmation program starting next month. They will be confirmed November 7<sup>th</sup>. Pre-Cana program is continuing, and we have added three new sponsor couples. We will be hosting a marriage and family life say this Saturday for the diocese. Children's liturgy of the word has changed a little bit with the children being dismissed after the Opening prayer. We have added three new volunteer presenters, but could always use more. Our youth ministry program, for High School youth, in accordance with the new High School catechesis framework is also being launched this fall at a bonfire at the end of October, and is still in the developmental stages. We are looking at teaming with St Simon & Jude in this offering. We would appreciate your prayers for this effort.

- Early Childhood Education Highlights

Mary Beth Aeh

We have 99 students this year in the Early Childhood program, that started in 1988, and is licensed through the Ohio Department of Education and our teachers are also licensed. Our curriculum is based on the state of Ohio early learning program, as well as the Diocesan early childhood religion course of study, and also follow the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program. Every fall we have Masters level students who work with us as they pursue their studies. We focus on parent involvement – as this is the number one critical success factor for children in school, and have an active Parent Advisory group. We will be doing the Thanksgiving service project for families in need for St. Mary Magdalene food pantry this year, and will also be having our annual cookie sale during the holidays. There are 40 students enrolled in the pre and after school program with homework time, cooking and art activities, etc. that really enhances their school day. We are always open to suggestions as to how we can improve our program.

- Finance Update

Scott Campbell

This is a difficult financial time for our families, businesses and the parish, and although economically things are looking better, there are still challenges ahead. (See handout) We are in our Fiscal 2010 year, which will end June of 2010. Last fiscal year we had total receipts of \$1,983, 562.01 and total expenditures of \$2,007,136.68. So, we had to dip into our reserve (savings) to cover the loss of \$24,973.67. Our current parish reserve (Diocesan savings) is \$416,811.87 which represents 21% or 2.5 months of this year's budget. Bingo is still one of the largest income producers for the parish, at \$190,612.68 last year. We need the help of the parish to help us plan to overcome this deficit, or we will continue to dip into our parish reserve.

- RCIA Spotlight

Carlene Hamilton

The Right of Christian Initiation of Adults is carried out within the community, as all the followers of Christ have the obligation of spreading the faith and Gospel according to our abilities, as part of our Baptismal call. We all have different gifts, and many serve the RCIA program as catechists, sponsors, refreshment providers and through their prayers. There are four periods in RCIA, and at the end of each the enquirer reviews with their sponsor and priest where they are in their spiritual journey before moving onto the next period. Our actions and abilities, as a Church community, support them not just through this program, but after they are baptized and the other Sacraments of Initiation and enter fully into the church and begin to worship with us fully in the mass. There are 10 people in the current program.

- TRIP program update

Kim Jackson

This is the 11<sup>th</sup> year for the TRIP program and has evolved into a wonderful program, where no one has to spend any extra money than they are already spending at any of our participating retailers – by buying gift cards here before making your purchases. Last year the TRIP program was opened up beyond the school families to our entire parish and we earned over \$36,000 for school tuition (78% of school families have participated) and since November of last year we have earned additional money for the parish general fund and other parish groups. The non school families have not begun to participate to the level we would like, so we need to encourage more people to get on board. We invite your comments and advice on how to improve participation.

- Roundtable Q&A

All Presenters

**Question: For Kim Jackson – could we have gift certificates available in the parish office for those that come by the office during the week? What about sales at Bingo?**

That is a good suggestion, but there are concerns with the logistics of the gift cards (safe and money handling). School and pre-school families can turn an order in on Monday and receive their gift certificates on Friday. We will look into this with the parish office staff. Sales at Bingo are also a good suggestion.

**Question: For Kim Jackson – could we offer an order form for Parish families for them to bring with them to Sunday mass to pick up gift cards, as well as place an order for additional gift cards that are available through the School order program. Maybe add a drop box at mass for non school families that they could then pick up the next Sunday.**

That is a good suggestion, that we will look into, especially for Holiday shopping or vacation planning. We could also provide a way for non-school parishioners to place orders.

**Question: For Scott Campbell & Marge Moretti – How are we addressing the gap between school expenses and school tuition, as the cost of education is larger than tuition?**

We do not control some of these expenses, such as negotiated school teacher salaries, retirement and benefits. At St. Cecilia we have some seasoned teachers that are at the top of

their salary range. Our teachers really do earn every penny and more providing a quality education for our children. We do try to keep tuition at a competitive level, and in doing so cannot charge the actual rate. Due to the reduction in State reimbursement and other challenges, we have more than doubled the dependency on the parish to make up this difference over the last year, and if we raised tuition to where it needs to be to cover the expenses we would lose families. Some of our teachers have donated their pay raise back to help with this situation. We are also starting to look into more fund raisers, as we discussed earlier. There is not one golden solution to this problem, but a lot of plans to address. We are trying to encourage additional enrollment, and are open to more ideas. **Fr. Connolly** – we also continue to work on the idea that there is a parish and school partnership and we are in one community. Any funds raised by the parish, puts the parish in a better position to subsidize the expenses of the school to keep tuition low. We need Bingo workers, as we do not have enough Parishioners to service the clientele that we have. The parish also offers tuition assistance for the school and PSR for families in need in addition to the above.

**Question: For Fr. Connolly – Do we have a concern that the potential of adding Casino gambling in Ohio and what that will do to our Bingo receipts?**

Father will contact the Catholic Conference of Ohio to ascertain their advice on this issue. We have not yet received any position on this from the Ohio Bishops.

**Question: For Fr. Connolly – Why do we not make it mandatory to work Bingo for school parents?**

We cannot make it mandatory or charge a different tuition for Bingo workers than others as the state sees that as individual compensation for Bingo which would cause us to lose our Bingo license.

**Question: For Fr. Connolly & Scott Campbell – What is the value of the land we own across the street? Why do we need it and why are we paying on it?**

We don't have an exact figure, but the land is an asset worth more than what we owe on it (\$47,000), and there are discussions ongoing in the Finance committee as to what to do with this land in the future. Commercial real estate is down right now, so selling it today would not maximize our opportunity. If, in the future, we could convert that land into a revenue generating concern, such as leasing, we could lower our reliance in Bingo for receipts, which is always volatile.

**Question: For Scott Campbell – Do we know what percentage of families use church envelopes?**

About 33%.

**Question: For Scott Campbell – Where is Festival income in the Income statement?**

This under Other Income. This year we made about \$30,000, as opposed to our normal income of about \$60,000. The weather on Friday really hurt us this year.

**Question: For Kim Jackson - What impact has the change in the Kroger program made and can we publish more information as to which portions of the program are most profitable?**

It is hard to get a true picture of this, but in the past we normally would bring in \$2500 to \$3000 a month from Kroger's, and last quarter it was down to \$6500. We will be publishing more information in the future.

**Question: For Marge Moretti – Can we start calling school families who are not participating at Bingo to invite them?**

School board has discussed doing this to increase volunteers. There is also a volunteer website where folks can sign up for opportunities. We can add a link to this on the Parish website.

**Question: For Fr. Connolly - Can we hold additional Monte Carlo nights to help with tuition?**

With our Bingo license, we are only allowed to have two Monte Carlo events a year, and the Festival holds one event.

**Question: For Marybeth Aeh – why do we run the AC in the summer time when we are not using the Parish Center?**

We run Air Conditioning in the summer for the Parish office and meeting and pre-school rooms, as little as possible, in addition to dehumidifiers, to keep mold and mildew down.

Approximate number of attendees: 43

*Submitted by: Jim Martin 9/24/2009*