

ST. JOSEPH PARISH RENEWAL 2013

Final Commission Progress Report

June 2015

Commission Name: Community Life Commission

Chairperson: Pat Lupica, 440.343.2986, patricialupica79@gmail.com

1. Given your Commission's mission, do you feel that your Commission has helped to contribute to growth at St. Joseph since June, 2012? What evidence can you provide?

Community Life is somewhat unique, as we not only have ministries under Community Life, but we have events that make up a lot of what we have to offer. Our events bring people in from our own parish and also bring in people from other Catholic and non-Catholic churches and even unchurched people.

Participation at all events has risen; and this is due somewhat to the enthusiasm our volunteers have for St. Joe's. I think exposure at our Ministry Fair helped parishioners learn more about what Community Life has to offer, helped parishioners understand how ministries fit into Community Life. Volunteers did sign up for various ministries/events at the Fair.

In the three years since these goals were put into place, attendance at Mass has increased and attendance has decreased, never by much. People are registering regularly, but between people moving out and people passing on, it does fluctuate. At this time, we are seeing a small increase in our Mass attendance. We believe more growth will come if we continue the course we are on; we just need to have patience and pray that the Holy Spirit continues moving St. Joseph in the right direction.

2. Has CLC worked to address each of our goals? Any goals remaining unaddressed? What are they and how might Commission be planning to address them?

Community Life members have worked hard to address each goal. We believe we have created a warm, hospitable environment. St. Joseph Church has definitely taken a good spot among the Strongsville community. Our parish has become like home to so

many, with all the activity happening here, both spiritual and social. Word has gotten around.

From greeting at Mass, and at all our gatherings, to all the events it has taken on, Community Life has attracted parishioners and non-parishioners alike, thus possibly introducing unchurched people to St. Joe's. We seem to get more volunteers wanting to help each year, so we think this shows that all are taking pride in what we have to offer, and we feel our volunteers are taking this pride in St. Joe's to others outside of our parish.

3. Any recommendations for PPC to consider as Council begins the work of a new term?

Work toward getting young people and our youth more involved, possibly at more CLC events and within all our Commissions.

Get "Greeter" program put together with a set schedule for people to follow; get volunteers in the habit, so it becomes a weekly happening.

GOALS

- 1) To increase attendance at Mass.
- 2) To create a warm, hospitable, accepting environment in every aspect of the parish.
- 3) To inspire parishioners to take pride in what the parish has to offer and reflect that to the Strongsville community.

ST. JOSEPH PARISH RENEWAL 2013

Final Commission Progress Report

June 2015

Commission Name: **Liturgy**

Chairperson: **Carol Wallington, carol99csu@gmail.com**

The following questions should be discussed with the entire Commission. Then, answers compiled so that the chairperson can share the results with the Parish Pastoral Council at their June meeting. The completed forms should be turned into Fr. Joe by June 30.

1. Given your Commission's mission, do you feel that your Commission has helped to contribute to growth at St. Joseph since June 2012? What evidence can you provide?
 - **Our music program has developed a more cohesive and comprehensive style for each of our weekly masses and our own hymnal has been developed.**
 - **We have established a greeter ministry providing a more welcoming atmosphere.**
 - **Mass attendance at special celebrations and on weekends has increased.**
 - **A feeling of welcome and hospitality has been felt by all and improved greatly.**
2. Considering your June 2012 goals, have you worked to address each of those goals? Do you feel that any of the goals have remained unaddressed by your commission over this time? If so, what are they and how might your commission be planning to address them in the future?
 - **Our commission feels that at this time that all the goals we first created have been met. Though we feel we've met all of our goals there is as always still room for improvement and continued growth.**
3. From your commission's perspective, do you have any recommendations for the Parish Pastoral Council to consider as Council begins the work of a new term? **Please provide no more than three; listed in order of importance.**
 - **Our only recommendation is the ability to share our education pieces with the Parish Pastoral Council to help educate our parishioners on the various work we as the Liturgy Commission do and on the Liturgy as well.**

ST. JOSEPH PARISH RENEWAL 2013

*Final Commission Progress Report
June 2015*

Commission Name: **SPIRITUAL LIFE COMMISSION**

Chairperson: **Pat Pell, 440.655.1670**

The following questions should be discussed with the entire Commission. Then, answers compiled so that the chairperson can share the results with the Parish Pastoral Council at their June meeting. The completed forms should be turned into Fr. Joe by June 30.

1. Given your Commission's mission, do you feel that your Commission has helped to contribute to growth at St. Joseph since June 2012? What evidence can you provide?

The SLC agreed that the Commission contributed to the growth at St. Joseph since June 2012 through the following activities:

- ***The SLC participation in the Parish Mission***
- ***40 Hour Adoration during Lent***
- ***Trapper Jack Presentation***
- ***The SLC participation in the May Crowning***
- ***Adult Bible Study has grown***
- ***The creation of the "Guide to Area Churches"***
- ***The 2015 Enthronement of the Two Hearts***
- ***The ongoing support of all the ministries***

2. Considering your June 2012 goals, have you worked to address each of those goals? Do you feel that any of the goals have remained unaddressed by your commission over this time? If so, what are they and how might your commission be planning to address them in the future?

We have successfully addressed two of our three goals, the third goal of "TO PROVIDE OPPORUTNITIES FOR DIALOG ON EDUCAITON ON THE CHURCH'S TEACHING ON SPECIFIC MORAL ISSUE THAT IMPACT THE CULTURE AND DAILY LIFE", we are just now beginning to work on accomplishing this goal. With the assistance and direction of Father Anthony the SLC will address this goal in July. Father will make a presentation, to the Commission, on a program directed to same-sex attraction and the Church today.

3. From your commission's perspective, do you have any recommendations for the Parish Pastoral Council to consider as Council begins the work of a new term? **Please provide no more than three; listed in order of importance.**

- ***The best way to grow our Faith is hearing the testimony of our brothers and sisters. The staff and Parish Counsel can help by providing their input and polling the other commission ministries to compile the names of brothers and sisters who they feel may have a compelling story to tell.***
- ***The attendance of a Pastoral Council member has been beneficial and we welcome a PC representative at our July meeting.***

ST. JOSEPH PARISH RENEWAL 2013

*Final Commission Progress Report
June 2015*

Commission Name: **Social Concerns**

Chairperson: **Kathy McConnaughy
440.238.6390**

1. Given your Commission's mission, do you feel that your Commission has helped to contribute to growth at St. Joseph since June 2012? What evidence can you provide?

Social Concerns Commission Mission Statement

Guided by the Holy Spirit, we act to inspire, educate, encourage, and empower St. Joseph parishioners to live out the call of the Gospel by promoting active responses to the social teachings of the Catholic Church.

As a reminder, the current Social Concerns Commission began in January of 2013. Prior to this we were a bunch of stand-alone ministries who knew very little about one another and rarely interfaced. Our joining increased communication among our ministry leaders that has blossomed into true friendships, helped us to hone our relationship skills, provided a safe environment for creative thinking, and has enabled us to develop the means to support one another. An improved pathway with pastoral staff has also occurred and we hope to see this continue to improve as we move forward in our development.

We were late to arrive on the scene as the June 2012 Parish Goals, which were developed by council and parish staff, didn't even have us listed. We've often wondered if this was because of the lack of a staff person, dedicated to social concerns, who based their thinking on the compassionate ministry of Jesus and the need to promote social action as a deeply rooted expression of our faith. It has been an up-hill battle to impress on parishioners that, as Pope Francis has stated in the Joy of the Gospel: *"None of us can think we are exempt from concern for the poor and for social justice: Spiritual conversion, the intensity of the love of God and neighbor, zeal for justice and peace, the Gospel meaning of the poor and of poverty, are required of everyone. I fear that these words too may give rise to commentary or discussion with no real practical effect. That being said, I trust in the openness and readiness of all Christians, and I ask you to seek, as a community, creative ways of accepting this renewed call."*

"Any Church community, if it thinks it can comfortably go its own way without creative concern and effective cooperation in helping the poor to live with dignity and reaching out to everyone, will also risk breaking down, however much it may talk about social issues or criticize governments. It will easily drift into a spiritual worldliness camouflaged by religious practices, unproductive meetings and empty talk."

Influenced by our Holy Father's words, the SCC has worked to bring awareness to the social teachings of the Catholic Church. Through a partnership with Spiritual Life, Stewardship, and parish staff we pursued bringing a national advocate of social action to our parish, and presented the "Hearts Wide Open" 3-day parish mission in December 2014. Over the course of these three days, 800 some people heard the message of our Holy Father that we must go out. It was based on his words: *"When we live out a*

spirituality of drawing nearer to others and seeking their welfare, our hearts are opened wide to the Lord's greatest and most beautiful gifts. Whenever we encounter another person in love, we learn something new about God. Whenever our eyes are opened to acknowledge the other, we grow in the light of faith and knowledge of God. If we want to advance in the spiritual life, then, we must constantly be missionaries."

In order to help our parishioners better understand this, we recommended that the GoodNews People small-group program to the parish. Forty-some parishioners participated in this 22 week program and have been lit by the fire of the encounters with those in need. Meeting mostly in one another's homes, they developed a level of trust with one another, discussed Scripture, fused the practice of virtue in their daily lives, and learned the importance of our work as ministers to one another and the world around us. We thank Father Joe for allowing and supporting this program, and we hope to offer it again in the fall of 2015 and again in 2016. Just like bible study, we feel it is a faith formation program and we hope that the parish will take over its promotion, with the Commission as a supporting player.

Since the parish mission we have also used the space in the gathering area to present issues of social concern, such as homelessness and hunger. We are somewhat disheartened by the council's decision to remove this opportunity for educational use. With three of the six commissions choosing education as one of their goals, we had hoped to show how valuable this space could be as a teaching tool.

It is our understanding that the area will now display pictures of saints and include one of Mother Theresa. An uncle of mine, a Jesuit missionary priest in India, had a personal relationship with Mother Theresa and would write in his letters home of her work with the poor. My heart tells me that she would much rather we use the space to create concern for the poor than have her picture displayed. We respectfully ask the council to revisit this issue. All of our gathering areas should "speak" to what St. Joseph's Church stands for. They should reach out to our folks and visitors with the message of our commitment to outreach, personal spirituality and stewardship as expressions of our faith in Christ and based on the messages of the gospels. Let's give our parishioners a reason to gather in this area, to study and reflect, to consider involvement, or to just open their hearts and minds to the needs in the hurting world around us.

We know that Jesus was a temple goer, we know He was grounded in Scripture; but the overwhelming stories given to us in the Bible are the stories of His encounters with others, most specifically those on the margins of society – the poor, the lost, the forgotten – widows, the blind, lepers, the dead. To be true followers of Christ, we must live as He did. Creating social awareness is the beginning. Dr. Martin Luther King often spoke about the familiar story of the Good Samaritan, and how wonderful that people have taken to heart its message of compassion - to care for one another. He then reminded us that it is not enough to bind the wounds of those hurt on the Jericho road, but to take measures to make the road safe for everyone who travels there. We have wonderful ministries that serve those in need, but how do we get the next level if we do not to make justice work part of what we do? This requires a new level of thinking, it requires us to learn how. As a society that has developed to require visual stimulation, we feel that we are missing an opportunity of teachable moments as folks pass through our gathering area.

If your decision was based on those that say they never saw what was there, it would seem to us that it was because it was always the same, and that they had become blind to all of it. Here's an opportunity to reach out to the blind – isn't that what would Jesus do?

If your decision was based on anticipated messiness, we only need to look at Jesus again who reached into the mud and touched a man's eyes to remove his blindness. Could not this message reveal that sometimes you have to get dirty to help someone and that sometimes messiness is okay?

If your decision was based on "who will do it", make it a task for Stewardship to find those with the gifts of story-telling, artistry and presentation to create and man this space. Is it not their task to locate and help develop our parishioners to use their time and talent for God's purpose and for the support of our parish values and mission? There are folks in our midst that are just waiting to be asked.

Our Commission is enthused by the direction being provided through the diocese's *Forming Intentional Disciples* initiative and the upcoming *Joyfully Gifted* retreat.

- We have encouraged participation from our ministry members and suggested to those coming out of GoodNews Program to see this as their next step. The GoodNews Program has worked to create an awareness to the needs of our community, formed bonds of friendship within our small groups, and, with the courage found in these connections, there are some who have already taken training through Holy Family Hospice to become Vigil Sitters, and others who are investigating getting involved with jail ministry.
- Our Mission of Hope has chosen "*Answering the Call to Discipleship*" as their worship theme for our July trip. We believe that the Spirit works through us, and it's interesting that the daily readings during our time away, focus on Jesus' ministry of healing and His sending of the disciples. As we minister to our brothers and sisters in Youngstown, He will remind us "*not to worry about what you are to speak or what you are to say. You will be given at the moment what you are to say. For it will not be you speaking but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.*"
- Our El Salvador ministry is preparing for their next visit in February 2016. Begun in 2004, they continue to grow wonderful and thriving partnerships in this area, not only with the San Jose Villaneuva parish, but with Epilogos Charities, who helps them set up and administer the various programs and funds that are spent in this village on our behalf. They have helped to build churches, and homes, and have made contributions in the village for a number of functions. They have raised scholarship funds for many years, sending hundreds of grade-school and high school children to the two Catholic schools there.
- Our Ministry of Assistance walks alongside people in need daily, being the face of Christ to many who have lost hope. Ministry of Assistance members welcomed our GoodNews participants to witness their work at the Ozanam Food Pantry and at their dinners at Holy Name. Many hadn't a clue what the ministry does, so it was a great learning experience for them.
- Our partnership with the Westside Catholic Center continues to draw more folks to it than they can use on Saturdays for breakfasts, but struggles to fill the Sunday dinner slots. They are reviewing the operation of their ministry and are looking for more effective ways to communicate their needs.
- Since December 2014, our new Feed Our Family Ministry has been serving hot, nutritious meals to low-income and homeless men, women and children through the Our Family Center storefront at Euclid and Lee. They have 3 teams of cooks and 3 teams of servers who rotate through on the first, third and fifth Sunday of each month. Their success is built on the team

approach to service which allows them not only to complete the task, but to participate in active fellowship as they work with one another. More importantly, their ministry includes real interaction with the folks they serve by eating with them and getting to know them as real people and not just a service opportunity.

- Our wonderful Bereavement ministry is overwhelmed, as are other ministries of its kind in parishes whose population is aging. They are loving, compassionate people who need help attracting new folks to assist them.
- Our Hands of Hope database has provided a great tool to get information out to folks, but I must admit that the response to the needs presented has been quite limited. We are not sure where to take this, and are still hopeful that a more effective way to get information out to parishioners in a timely manner might come through a communication system that we understand is under investigation through the office staff.
- Our Respect Life is at a crossroads with a leader who wishes to step down but no one has come forward to accept these responsibilities. They have determined a temporary strategy, but unless a permanent solution is found, it may need to dissolve as it is currently operating.

We are hopeful that you, and our parish, will continue to commit to and support these initiatives and help us to accomplish our objectives to inspire, educate, encourage and empower St. Joseph parishioners, especially in terms of developing social advocacy and not just charity work.

Social Concerns, suggested through our council liaisons, that the normal council retreat include others beyond the PPC, Finance Council and staff. It is my understanding that you will welcome commission leaders to participate in the fall retreat. Thank you. Might you also consider ministry leaders and others, who have a passion for learning and growth and a desire to serve our parish? For success, we need to experience the bond of connectedness with all who yearn for St. Joseph's to become a more vibrant entity in our community; where people are valued for whatever gifts they bring, where Christ's love is tangible, and where they can find support as they struggle to meet the call of discipleship. Why should we wait another three years for a parish mission? Might you consider a Discipleship Committee whose first task is the planning, promotion and implementation of an annual retreat for all parishioners? We ask this on behalf of the parish and for those of us who have been involved with ministry leadership for quite some time. We need to be able to find ways to hand off leadership to others more readily, so as to allow us to continue to grow in our personal faith by having the time and energy to explore new ways of service and personal spiritual growth.

I hope that my words today can be accepted as they are lovingly given. If they have disturbed some, may I remind you that is how the Spirit works? Martin Luther King wrote in his famous letter from the Birmingham jail that *"there is a type of constructive, nonviolent tension which is necessary for growth. And its purpose is to open the door to negotiation."*

His words ring true 50 years later, *"...the judgement of God is upon the church as never before. If today's church does not recapture the sacrificial spirit of the early church, it will lose its authenticity, forfeit the loyalty of millions, and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning for the twentieth century. Every day I meet young people whose disappointment with the church has turned into outright disgust."*

My own three children give voice to that same disappointment and I imagine some of yours, as well. When I am ready to quit, I think of them. What can I do to make them look to my Church with new eyes

and open hearts? I implore you to help them and others like them. I ask you to focus on what we can do to bring them back, and find creative ways to reach out to all our youth and our young families who have yet to realize the importance of faith and how to bring it into their daily lives.

Your work as our Parish Pastoral Council is to assist our pastor to lead and help to bring in the strays among us, and to work through the Commissions to reach out to all. This goes beyond the agenda of a bimonthly council meeting. You carry the responsibility to learn and grow, to question, to negotiate, to brainstorm and vision.

You may ask “where do we begin?” You have already begun. Being provided with the Rebuilt and Tools for Rebuilding books, has given you an opportunity to learn from those who have gone before you. They clearly passed on their successes and failures, and shared their continual struggle to get it right. They encourage the development of core values (businesses have done this with great success in turning around their companies). There are members in our own parish who have participated in and/or know how to assist in this process. We need to find them and ask for their help. We need to streamline our parish mission and mission statement, which should act as a funnel through which decisions are made. If we can define this mission well, then when asked about a new thing, whatever it is, we only need to ask “Does it fall through the funnel or not?” If not, we simply don’t do it. The statement needs to be simple, clear, and short so that everyone can remember it and apply it. The next step is to develop strategies to support and promote it. You are the visionaries. There are folks here to help you if you make room at the table. They are waiting to be asked.

2. Considering your June 2012 goals, have you worked to address each of those goals? Do you feel that any of the goals have remained unaddressed by your commission over this time? If so, what are they and how might your commission be planning to address them in the future? *See above.*
3. From your commission’s perspective, do you have any recommendations for the Parish Pastoral Council to consider as Council begins the work of a new term? **Please provide no more than three; listed in order of importance.** *See above.*

Respectfully submitted by the Social Concerns Commission - June 6, 2015

Patsy Brodie, Respect Life
Norbert Hobrath, El Salvador
Kathy McConaughy, Mission of Hope-Hands of Hope
Tom Miller, Westside Catholic Center-Women’s Shelter
Rosanne Radziewicz, Bereavement
Vicki Vorell, Ministry of Assistance
Denise Weaver, Feed Our Family
Michael Schneider and Carol Wallington, Parisioners
Joe Keys and Rebecca Ciccozzi, Parish Council Liaisons
Deacon Pete Moore, Staff Liaison

ST. JOSEPH PARISH RENEWAL 2013

*Final Commission Progress Report
June 2015*

Commission Name: Stewardship Commission

Chairperson: Phyllis Marie Nemetz, 440.582.3225, r.nemetz@sbcglobal.net

The following questions should be discussed with the entire Commission. Then, answers compiled so that the chairperson can share the results with the Parish Pastoral Council at their June meeting. The completed forms should be turned into Fr. Joe by June 30.

1. Given your Commission's mission, do you feel that your Commission has helped to contribute to growth at St. Joseph since June 2012? What evidence can you provide?

Yes, Many Endeavors:

Stewardship members presence, to commission leadership and parishioners, provides an enhancement to spiritual, educational and functional endeavors.

- Quarterly Publication of St. Joseph Parish Newsletter
- Informative Ministries Catalog Publication
- Revision of Ministries Commitment Card
- Restructuring of Commitment Cards Tabulations
- Presentation of a ministry invitational week, "Ministries Week"
- Directing organizational structure and presentation of both Parish Mission and Ministries Fairs
- Stewardship representation to all ministries Commission Meetings
- Established Stewardship's Mission Statement, Guidelines and Ministry's Logo
- Ad Hoc Calendar formulation group, Calendar to list inner Commissions and Ministries activities and events

We are working cooperatively within our membership and within our parish commissions as we contribute to the growth of St. Joseph Parish Community.

2. Considering your June 2012 goals, have you worked to address each of those goals? Do you feel that any of the goals have remained unaddressed by your commission over this time? If so, what are they and how might your commission be planning to address them in the future?

We have actively worked to meet our goals throughout "2012-2014". Stewardship's Membership intends to move forward in implementing the time, talents and the welfare of the commission's membership and the parishioners of St. Joseph Parish.

3. From your commission's perspective, do you have any recommendations for the Parish Pastoral Council to consider as Council begins the work of a new term? **Please provide no more than three; listed in order of importance.**

Stewardship Members are appreciative of the efforts of Parish Council. We stand in support of endeavors made by Parish Council in the growth of St. Joseph Community.

Suggestion Memo:

- Revisit Council's efforts to establish "Greeters Program" at various major functions.
- Review Ushers' Ministry... Publicity to gain membership.

ST. JOSEPH PARISH RENEWAL 2013

*Final Commission Progress Report
June 2015*

Commission Name: Youth-Young Adult Commission
Chairperson: Kathy Wolf, 330.461.0748, ktwolfpac@aol.com

1. Given your Commission's mission, do you feel that your commission has helped to contribute to the growth at St. Joseph since June 2012? What evidence can you provide?

There has been an increase in the visibility of youth becoming actively involved in the Parish since 2012. The members of the youth group have volunteered as Lectors and Servers at Mass as well as helping out with C.L.O.W. The youth of the Parish have become visible at other Commission events acting as servers, greeters, and clean up crew. As a Youth Group the kids do the Christmas Lighting, help with the Fall Clean-Up, and children's games at the Parish picnic. Many of them also help out at VBS. The Youth Commission doesn't stop at 7-12th graders, the choir, Jesus's Birthday Party and an event for the third through sixth graders was also started.

2. Considering your June 2012 goals, have you worked to address each of those goals? Do you feel that any of the goals have remained unaddressed by your commission over this time? If so, what are they and how might your commission be planning to address them in the future?

The goal to get the youth more actively involved has been somewhat successful. The goal to keep youth coming to youth group presents a big problem. One of the main reasons the commission feels this happens is due to the amount of other activities that they are involved in. The group always starts out strong and then dwindles after Christmas. One way the commission is looking at is by Tim McGrath and Linda Zvoncheck coming up with some type of accessible program. The drop-ins have been eliminated and we are working on meeting for a teaching or outside event one Sunday a month. Youth Group meetings will remain on the first and third Sunday of the month.

3. From your commission's perspective, do you have any recommendations for the Parish Pastoral Council to consider as Council begins the work of a new term?

From the perspective of the commission, the only recommendation would be to start something for our College through 27 year olds. The event(s) should be spiritual as well as fun, Mass and a cookout (for example). There needs to be some sort of social event that these young adults would be able to connect with people of their same age group that share in the same faith beliefs. The group could meet a few times a year for some spirituality with the hopes that connections would be made and possible

friendships formed. The young adults in the opinion of the commission get lost and we have to find a way to keep them connected to the Church.