Christ Our Light Unified Pastoral Minutes

Thursday, November 14, 2024 – 7:00 PM
Holy Redeemer Parish Hall

1. Prayer & Reflection – Fr. Ken opened the meeting with prayer. Nick Wilker read Colossians 1:9-14. Fr. Ken said he chose this reading because it talks about who we are called to be by God. This was followed by reflection in small groups. Afterwards Fr. opened up the floor for intercessions from the group. We ended this portion of the meeting with an “Our Father”.

2. Christ Our Light Staff Transitions
    a. Fr. Vara Kumar Chowpatalli, C.PP.S., Parochial Vicar November 30, 2024
        i. Fr. Ken stated getting Fr. Vara Kumar to the United States has been a long process. It started two years ago. His Visa application was submitted January of 2023 and our family of parishes found out Labor Day weekend 2024 that he would be coming.
        ii. He was the Director of Vicariate in India so he had quite a few loose ends to tie up before he was able to leave India.
        iii. His parents were both Catholic School teachers; it is important to note that only 2% of people in India are Catholic. He was ordained in 2004.
        iv. He arrived in the United States September 17th and has been learning a lot about our culture, how things work in the church over here, filling out lots of paperwork, and connecting with other priests he knows from India. He is excited to be here and out of administration and back behind the altar in a church. He will be shadowing the 4 priests from our parish family starting the last weekend in November.
    b. Fr. Ken Alt, C.PP.S. Semi-Retirement
        i. Fr. Alt is ready for retirement to some extent but is not ready to hang up his hat all together. He will continue to live at the St. Johns rectory with Fr. Matt. It is important to note that this will incur minimal costs to the Christ Our Light community.
        ii. He is willing to help out with 1 week day mass a week, 1 Sunday mass a week, CCD confession times, Shrine requests, etc. He has signed on to help for an additional 2 years before reevaluating.
    c. Sarah Mescher Director of Communications
        i. Sarah Mescher introduced herself. She grew up in Carthagena, graduated from St. Henry High School, received a marketing degree from BGSU. She is married to Kevin Mescher and they have 4 children. SHe is a member of Holy Redeemer parish.
        ii. She started her career at Crown in the marketing department before going into digital marketing with other companies. While doing this she felt the nudge to work with kids; started as a substitute teacher before accepting the Elementary CRE position at Holy Redeemer parish.
        iii. This director of communications position will allow her to continue her CRE position but allow her to use her graphic design and marketing degree as well. She started this past week and is excited to grow in this position.

3. Christ Our Light Mass Schedule
    a. Possible addition of a Sunday Morning Mass
        i. With Father Alt agreeing to take on a Sunday mass, we need to look at the current mass schedule and understand what would have the greatest impact on the Christ Our Light family of parishes and staying within the Beacons of Light parameters?
        ii. After the past two October counts, the 10:00 mass at Holy Redeemer has consistently had a large overflow. If we add an 8:00 mass at Holy Redeemer, it will alleviate the overcrowding at St. Joe’s 8:00 mass and the 9:00 masses at St. Augustine and Precious Blood. This will

hopefully also bring back the parishioners attending mass at other family of parishes due to the overcrowding.

iii. The next issue is how to split the priests? The nice, clean 4 week rotation is out the window, but we need to make sure that Fr. Ken Schnipke is making it to all 8 parishes each month. Saturday masses will all stay the same since Fr. Alt doesn't want to take on a Saturday mass. With the addition of an 8:00 am mass, we would have 8 at Holy Redeemer, 8 at St. Joseph, 8:30 at Nativity, 9 at Precious Blood, 9 at St. Augustine; Fr. Alt would have to take on one of these masses to allow for the other 4 priests to fulfill the remainder of the Sunday masses. Not only do we need to look at the Sunday masses and where the priests would preside, but also the Deacon schedules, the schedule of when the Deacons would preach, nursing home masses, Shrine masses, CCD reconciliations, etc.

iv. Discussion amongst the Unified Council - it has been agreed that an earlier mass is better than a later mass. St. Joe is always crowded. St. Augustine is within capacity at masses, but usually not overcrowded like the 10:00 mass at Holy Redeemer.

v. Where do we go from here? Talk with parishioners to let them know what changes may be coming. This would not happen until the end of January (1/26/2025) weekend. This allows for the schedule to be revamped and so the Holidays don't get in the way, and for some vacations to happen.

4. Beacons of Light Annual Report and Pastoral Plan for Christ Our Light
    a. Recorded Homily from Fr. Ken Schnipke December 7-8, 2024 at COL Weekend Masses
        i. This homily will include the annual report, a draft of a communication plan, and our goals (Knowing God, Loving God, Serving God). It is important to note that while we are not the largest family in the AOC, we have the highest weekend Mass attendance within the AOC. We are averaging 108% utilization of our parishes weekly at weekend masses.

5. Archdiocese of Cincinnati Partnership with Girl Scouts
    a. Background information
        i. The GSUSA and GSWO have been using resources that are not in align with the virtues of the Catholic church (including but not limited to LGBTQ, Transgender, Planned Parenthood, etc)
        ii. Information can be found at https://catholicaoc.org/girl-scouts for any questions that may arise about this decision.
        iii. It is important to note that the AOC and the GSWO spent years trying to come to an agreement, and this decision was made not as a judgment towards certain individuals or troops but out of respect for our Catholic values.
    b. Decision and Directive 2025
        i. American Heritage Girls is an alternative to Girl Scouts with Christian values with Catholic influences.
        ii. There are certain things that have been done within the Christ Our Light family of parishes that we will follow up on with the Archdiocese to see if we can continue to support these troops.
        iii. The AOC will not terminate their relationship within the GSUSA until the end of the 2025 calendar year.

6. Christ Our Light Updates
    a. Parish Council Bylaws discussion among Marion Parishes
        i. St. John and Precious Blood are close to finalizing their bylaws; tabled for the next meeting
        ii. 2 templates are available for St. Sebastian, St. Rose, and Nativity BVM to use as a guideline
    b. Evangelization & Adult Faith Formation offerings

i. Jodie Blindauer has been meeting with individuals from each parishes and have come up with a number of events that can be attended by anyone in the Christ Our Light family.
    a. St. Monica Club - for people praying for family members to come back to the church, currently 15-20 individuals have been attending
    b. 30 day Eucharistic Revival - this will be like a book club where they will meet 3 times during the 30 days
    c. Ask A Priest night at Moeller Brew Barn February 24th
    d. Disciples Radiate Christ will occur this spring
    e. The Minster Ministry of Mothers is bringing in Dr. Mary Ruth Hackett for their Divine Mercy event and we will be turning this into 3 nights with Dr. Mary Ruth targeting different audiences
        i. March 26th - Loneliness Epidemic for 7th-12th graders at NBHS
        ii. March 27th - Sharing Parenting Perspectives and Practices for parents of all ages at MLHS
        iii. March 28th - Daughter of the Beloved at the Divine Mercy event for all women from the Christ Our Light family at Minster K of C

c. Solemnity of Immaculate Conception Holy Day of Obligation (see reverse side)
    i. The Holy Day of Obligation is moved to Monday, December 9th because no solemnity out ranks a Sunday in Advent celebration. There will be 8 masses on the 9th that hopefully allow for every parishioner to attend a mass that day.
d. Christmas & New Year's Mass Schedule (see reverse side)
    i. The only change from last year's schedule to this year's schedule is that St. John's 5:00 mass has been moved to 4:00 mass. This hopefully will help with the overcrowding that occurred at the 3:00 mass at Precious Blood.and Holy Redeemer

7. Christ Our Light Family of Parishes Events & Updates
    a. Holy Redeemer
        i. Confirmation this weekend, November 17th with the St. Mary's Deanery Dean, Fr. Sean Wilson
        ii. Holy Redeemer's Feast Day celebration will take place November 23 and 24 this year. This will include a Sipping with the Saints event and Donut Sunday after masses respectively.
        iii. Holding an evening of discernment to allow for people to get involved with numerous ministries as well as a Ministry Fair in February.
    b. Marion Catholic Community
        i. St. Sebastian
            a. Fish Fry at the Knights Hall during lent
            b. Trying to get the Men's Sodality up and running again
                i. Will do fundraising events
                ii. Chicken Fries
        ii. St. John's
            a. Moved the speakers up in church, moved the tabernacle to behind the altar
            b. New roof this spring - approximately ⅓ of the cost is covered by an insurance claim
    c. St. Augustine/St. Joseph
        i. St. Augustine
            a. A parishioner attended their last council meeting with concerns about the sound system that they had done a major upgrade to 2 years ago. The council is trying to come up with a solution - maybe by contacting an acoustical engineer.
            b. Forming a committee to fundraise and address the issues with their steeples (leaking, etc)
        ii. St. Joseph

a. Dedication of the new altar was a fantastic celebration. The archbishop even commented that it was the most beautiful altar he had ever seen.
b. The old altar was burnt on November 2 after All Souls Day celebration

d. Other concerns/questions

8. Concluding Prayer - Beacons of Light Prayer led by Fr. Ken Schnipke

9. Next Meeting – Thursday, February 13, 2025 at Precious Blood Church Basement

Jenny Albers
Stacie Enneking
Barb Kahlig
Jack Homan
Karen Homan
Mitch Schwieterman
Michelle Ashman
Pam Meyer
Mark Francis
Sue Bruns
Byron Albers
Erin Niekamp
Trevor Wynk
Adam Koesters