

Holy Trinity Parish Pastoral Council

PPC Meeting Minutes

February 21, 2018

Present: Reverend C. Kevin Gillespie, S.J. (Pastor), Reverend William Kelley, S.J. (Associate Pastor), Cecilia Boudreau (President PPC), Ellen Touns (VP PPC), Christopher Hale (PPC), Kevin and Kathleen Coogan (PPC), James Thessin (PPC), Kenny Kraft (PPC), Chris Hannigan (PPC), Carlos Salinas (PPC), Martina O'Shea (Pastoral Associate for Ignatian Spirituality), Bob Ewald (Vice Chair of HTS Advisory Board), Charlie Hennessey (Principal of HTS), Kevin McShane (Assistant Principal of Upper School), Kerri Edwards (Assistant Principal of Lower School)

Next meeting: March 21, 2018

I. Opening Prayer (~7:10)

Cecilia Boudreau offered the opening prayer.

II. Guest Speakers – Holy Trinity School Leadership (~7:15)

Charlie Hennessey (Principal of HTS), Kevin McShane (Assistant Principal of Upper School), Kerri Edwards (Assistant Principal of Lower School), Bob Ewald (Vice Chair of HTS Advisory Board)

Enrollment & Retention

- The Enrollment Forecaster Packet was distributed which had considerable information on Holy Trinity School's (HTS) enrollment trends,
 - HTS enrollment is very strong, approaching the zoning cap of 345 students,
 - Enrollment has been trending higher since 2013, likely due to capital campaign which produced general improvements at the school,
 - Number of students from the local zip code has increased recently due to renovations at Hyde-Addison school which has essentially closed the local elementary school,
 - About 9 years ago HTS opened a second 5th grade which helped to make a second entry point for new students to enter HTS,
 - HTS was a national Blue Ribbon school last year, but can only apply once every five years
 - HTS student retention rate is extremely high, approximately 95%, and those leaving are mostly moving,
 - Demand for entrance is high with 1 seat for 10 applicants,

Question: Item 3.1.5 in the Enrollment Forecaster Packet which highlights a goal to increase the percent of students who are parishioners, is this the correct goal to have or if it is better to focus on allowing HTS to be great educators in the Catholic / Jesuit Tradition, Charlie Hennessey mentions that there needs to be a balance as some parishioners cannot get in as the school is already very full.

HTS is attempting to diversify its student body:

- For Catholic Schools week, the focus was Identity Day which supports diversity
- Approximately 80% of students are parishioners,
- Other local Catholic schools have approximately the same ethnic breakdown including OLV and Blessed Sacrament,

Finances:

- Kevin McShane discussed HTS finances, which are very strong due to strong enrollment,
- There are 342 students which is slightly more than expected,
- In terms of budgeting, HTS actually returned US\$25,000 to the Social Justice Committee,
- For the last 3 years, HTS has met all financial aid needs,
- A short term goal is to increase teacher salaries, which have not kept up with the cost of living during the last 5 years, the current goal is for teachers to hit 80% of Montgomery County salaries,
- The teacher retention rate is very strong, out of approximately 60 teachers, about 5 teachers and 3 teacher assistants leave each year, meaning HTS retains a high percentage of its teachers,

HTS preparing students for future:

- HTS does well in terms of high school placement which is one of the main reasons parents and students want to attend HTS, many students go to Georgetown Prep, Gonzaga, Visitation, and Stone Ridge (all good schools),
- HTS students are doing very well in academics, including on Scantron test and on competitions like the DC spelling bee and math competitions,
- HTS has 6 instructional staff for extra help, and 2 after school tutors, these instructors are very highly trained,
- Jim Thessin asked about volunteers to help instruct struggling students, but Kevin McShane and Charlie Hennessey mentioned that the current instructors are highly trained and that there is currently a lack of available space at HTS, so there are other constraints other than getting people to help,

Ignatian Spirituality:

- Kerry Edwards reported that the students learn both the Examen and the Presupposition at HTS, and tells stories of middle school students discussing what they have learned and how they apply it in their lives,

Special Events and Comments:

- Kerri, Charlie and Father Kevin will attend the 3rd annual Jesuit Elementary School meeting which will be held in Arizona and which focuses on best practices,
- HTS 7th and 8th graders walked out of HTS and experienced 17 minutes of silence in remembrance of the 17 students who died this past week in the shooting at a Florida school,
- HTS 200th Bicentennial is in 2018, many events will take place in October including street fairs, alumni events, etc.
- Child protection is taken seriously at HTS, all parents and teachers need to take Virtus Training before having access to children, other protections are included as well,

III. Approval of Previous Minutes (~7:52)

- Various corrections of previous minutes (January 31 meeting) proposed by Cecilia and other PPC members. Minutes were accepted and approved with noted edits by PPC.
- Jim Thessin brings up idea of putting draft minutes in a public forum (like Google docs) so that parishioners can look if interested, however, until minutes are approved it would be no value to put them in public view. As soon as approved, the minutes are added to the Parish Council page of the website.
- Discussion on standardizing the format of the minutes and creating a template so that future minutes are easier to read, generally accepted.
- Comments on including time markers in the minutes, generally accepted.
- Cecilia proposed shortening process to get meeting minutes done more quickly.

IV. Father Gillespie's Report (~8:15)

- Father Gillespie mentioned that he would keep it brief as wanted to provide time for discussion on Discernment to be given by Father Kelly and Martina O'Shea,
- He mentioned wanting to get the quotes back up in McKenna Hall which had been taken down due to painting and updating, also getting the Parish Mission Statement in each meeting room so that it is easily available for all, with turnover in the position of Director of Facilities, those two items have been a bit delayed. He is hopeful they will be accomplished by Passion Sunday.
- PPC could do the Pastor's column in the bulletin for March 4th, Ellen and Carlos volunteer.

V. Parish Council Election (~8:25)

- Parish Council Elections coming up in the Spring, and the PPC needs volunteers to help organize the process,
- Kevin Coogan and Chris Hannigan volunteer,
- Goal is to have 6 to 12 candidates,
- Discussion on when to bring forward candidates, March meeting seems too soon, April meeting likely will not work as focus of that meeting will be on Leadership, and May might be cutting it close, further discussions on timing to take place after the meeting,
- Standardized process for elections will be passed to Kevin and Chris so that previous work can be recycled,
- Discussion of how to increase interactions with parishioners, example given that during the 1990s twenty to thirty parishioners would at times come to PPC meetings and currently that figure is very low, it was highlighted that the parish is very stable at present and people tend to show up more frequently during periods of disquiet,

VI. Discernment (~8:35)

- Father Kelly and Martina O'Shea lead the PCC in a discussion on Ignatian Spirituality and Discernment,

- Each PCC member stated progress on praying the Examen, their preferred time of day to pray the Examen, and what they have learned from praying the Examen,
- Generalizing, PPC members have had a variety of successes,
- There does not appear to be a consensus on time of day, some prefer very early upon waking, other prefer lunch, and others prefer night,
- Some mentioned integrating the Examen into a daily ritual like commuting or even daily exercise like walking,
- Various individuals mention apps that focus on the Examen which help to keep you focused, Jim Martin was mentioned a number of times as having created some useful apps,
- Father Kelly mentioned that creating the habit of praying the Examen is the most important point when starting, and that people take different paths to do this and not necessarily have all other prayers attached to that same time.
- Martina and Father Kelly review Spiritual Consolation and Desolation and the PPC goes over examples of each,

VII. Closing Prayer (~9:10)

Kirk Willison offered the closing prayer.