St. Bridget Parish Council
Thursday, May 7, 2009

Meeting was called to order by President Andrea McCormick at 7:15 P.M.

Opening Prayer was led by Louise.

Roll Call was taken by President Andrea McCormick.

In Attendance: Fr Fador, Andrea McCormick, Rosemarie Frick, Rose Frith, Audrey Cunningham, Gerry Cunningham, Marnell Stover, Rick Stover, Louise Riley. Parishioner Pat Conroy was also present.
Not Present: Deacon Stephen Beecher, Patricia Beecher, Mel Harmon, Peg Kearns, Walt Kearns, Doug Landy.

Approval of Minutes: Audrey made a motion to accept the April 2nd meeting minutes as written. Rosemarie seconded and they were approved unanimously.

Committee Reports:

a. **Religious Education** – Marnell reported that three girls and one boy received First Communion at the 8:30 Mass last Sunday. She raised the idea of having CCD every week at the church in order to increase Mass attendance, in lieu of the current schedule of 19 classes at St. Bridget and 19 through home study. One of the parents had asked about holding weekly classes at the meeting with Msgr. Schmitz.

   We discussed making Mass compulsory for CCD students and will plan to hold a meeting with parents after a Sunday Mass to discuss setting tighter standards. Father suggested that Marnell solicit parents to participate in the R.E. Committee, to which she agreed.

   Gerry told us of a practice at another church in which children go down to the church hall after the initial greeting and have customized homilies before re-joining the Mass before the Eucharist. We agreed this sounded like a good suggestion to explore further.

b. **Liturgy** – Rosemarie had no news to report other than having done the Easter services. Father suggested we look into having Friday night programs such as Bible Study, and that we explore the many options out there that we may borrow and implement.

c. **Social Action**- Louise circulated a draft of the expanded Social Services and Church Directory that she had e-mailed and agreed to add churches in Lakeville, Salisbury and Canaan. She also brought copies of the suggested Parish Survey and will e-mail it to members for their further review and comments. It was agreed that the survey should be mailed within the next

couple of weeks in order to reach parishioners before the summer vacation season. Father will compose a cover letter to explain its purpose.

d. **Planning & Development** – Rick stated that the clean-up weekend had been a great success with about 40 people volunteering. More remains to be done.

He advised that with the economic outlook substantially better than last fall we are in a position to proceed with work that needs to be done. Exterior painting of the church is a priority and we are getting bids to have it done properly. Second, Rick showed us two alternative drawings done by Greg Rizzotti for rebuilding the church hall entrance and it was agreed that the simpler of the two was appropriate and affordable at $65,000. It would fit in with the simple lines of the church and include two bathrooms.

Rick also brought up the need to close out the grant from the CT Historic Trust by either returning the approximately $900 remaining balance to the Trust or itemizing funds spent on the drawings that may qualify for use of the balance**.** Pat Conroy stated that the historical element must be part of any Trust grants, including any applied for in the future. This will be put before the parishioners to determine their support.

e. **Hospitality-** Audrey reported pictorially as well as in writing and verbally on the success of the clean-up of the grounds and the hot dog and hamburger picnic-style lunch that followed. Her report included the very well-received pancake breakfast following First Communion, which was attended by roughly 50 people. She thanked Marnell and Peg for their help in cleaning and arranging the new kitchen and its contents.

The next event will be lasagna, salad and dessert for the Poirier family, who will be holding an evening of prayers and songs on Monday, May 11th. Parish council members are invited to attend the dinner prior to the event.

Assistant Hospitality Head, Gerry, is still researching wineries to hold a tasting, but has found that Litchfield Hills wines are not obtainable through retailers. In view of the need to get a permit to hold a tasting as well as the other work entailed, it was agreed that it would not be held before next spring.

Council members would still like to hold a wine and cheese evening in the near future that would not necessitate state approval.

f. **Communications-** Andrea spoke for Mel, who had nothing to report.

g. **Special Events-** Rose reported that she had visited several area churches to publicize the Michael Poirier evening and was well-received by all. She reviewed the logistics and sequence of events so that all will be coordinated.

h. **Spiritual Life-** Per Father's request in his e-mail to the council, we discussed how to re-vitalize and nourish the spiritual roots of the parish to ensure its survival and growth. Father informed us that he plans to do a presentation about it at Masses the weekend of the 16th and 17th.

Comments and suggestions of council members were:

- Gerry believes we need to assign someone to publicize events, such as Rose has done for the Poirier evening. He emphasized the importance of maintaining contact, encouraging participation, reinforcing through sending postcards and *ad hoc* communications. He suggested holding church events for specific purposes.
- Audrey suggested we provide transportation to services for those in need and send cards to families on their deceased members' death anniversary or birthday. (Per Andrea we do send cards on the anniversaries.) She brought up the idea of having a different parishioner attend each parish council meeting to give him/her an appreciation of what goes into running the parish. (This was not widely-accepted.)
- Rick stated that we need to find out why the majority of people are not attending Mass by having an "Issues and Answers" forum. This can be started off by the Parish Planning Survey. Gerry suggested identifying <u>one</u> issue to be addressed per meeting and publicizing it well in advance of the date.

Pastor's Report- None. There is no report of the meeting attended by 41 people from St. Bernard's and St. Bridget's with Msgr. Schmitz since Father wasn't there, by design.

Old Business- Agenda items "a" through "f" and items "h" and "i" were addressed in Committee reports. Other Old Business:

g. Andrea will get carnations from the flower shop for Mother's Day

j. Father has not yet gotten the cost for the memorial plaques

k. A motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to permit the Bowens stay at the rectory when here to oversee rebuilding of their home. Father will check with the archdiocese.

Ex-agenda- Pat Conroy stated that her group would like to continue with the oral history project.

New Business - The time is nearing to elect a new Parish Council and current members must decide if they wish to continue. We should consider enlarging the council by extending an open invitation to parishioners. We agreed to continue meeting through the summer months instead of June being the last meeting of this council's year.

Andrea is going to invite Mr. Silvernale (the octogenarian who appeared during the weekend clean-up and whose grandfather helped build the church) back to speak to us and be videotaped to document and preserve that history. It was agreed that this should be done as soon as possible.

Next meeting will be on Thursday, June 4, 2009.

Next meeting the opening prayer will be led by Rose, the closing prayer by Rosemarie.

Audrey led the Closing Prayer.

Andrea made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Rose.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:07 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by
Louise Riley
In the absence of Secretary Mel Harmon