

Saint John the Baptist

Discipleship and Mission Commission

Minutes

Date:	March 21, 2023	Chair	Emily Carlberg	Staff Liaison	Jessica Balzarini
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Next Meeting: **May 16, 2023, at 5:30 p.m.**

Member/Attendee	Present	Member/Attendee	Present
Melanie Dowell (PLC REP)		Deb Marsh	X
Jessica Balzarini	X	Neil Steffl	X
Steven Broszko	X	Mike Uzelac	X
Emily Carlberg (Chair)	X	Jodie Wolla (recorder)	X
Erin Hardy	X	Karl Zabinski	X
Jackie King	X	Guest: Jen Livermont Andrea Bongaard	X X

- I. Opening Prayer – Steven B.

- II. Mission Statements -Recited Aloud
 - A. Parish Mission Statement: Bearing witness to Jesus Christ who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life: GO. MAKE. TEACH.
 - B. DMC Mission Statement – *“Inspiring and Leading all at St. John’s to become intentional disciples of Jesus Christ through evangelization and faith formation within the heart of the Catholic Church.”*

- II. Opening Comments
 - A. Welcome and Introduce visitors. Welcome new member- Deb Marsh.
 - B. Time to discuss Father’s question “How is Lent Going?”.
 1. Discussion included:
 1. It’s getting more difficult, I wanted to give up food however, the Lord wanted me to go deeper and Focus on greater love in areas I am lacking so it has been very difficult. I lead a program for Middle Schoolers at St. Agnes which many kids have joined and it’s been very inspiring, I also lead a Rosary Challenge club and I have 40 kids participating.

- I. Ongoing Monthly Agenda Items
 - A. Update from previous month’s PLC – See Written Report, no questions.
 - B. Goal 1a: Review of Written Reports – No questions.
 - C. Live Report – Jen Livermont, Coordinator for Families, see written report section for notes.

- II. Business
 - A. Fits in Goal 1: Review of area churches program fee structure and scholarship policy. Information submitted by Commission members is currently being reviewed by Jessica Balzarini, Director of Parish Life.
 1. We have implemented a three-tiered registration process, giving an early bird registration from April 1-July 31, 2023 prices are the same as last year’s price, a regular registration time from August 1-September 24th which the fees increased by fifteen dollars and the same late fee period which starts September 25th and the fees increase by another fifteen dollars.
 2. Discussion on the three registration times and the fees. Consensus was in favor and the fees seemed reasonable being our programs were significantly cheaper than most all the parishes we surveyed this year. The new fee structure was well received and supported.

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B. Goal 1b: Cana Marriage Ministry

1. Review Cana Dinner

- Karl reviewed the Cana Dinner event.
 - a. Bill Wacker was the speaker this year. The talk was a lecture style, numbers were down a bit from other years (by ~ five couples or so)
 - b. Kudos to Jessica Balzarini for empowering and growing this ministry, we appreciate all her work.
 - c. Cana dinner has been happening for 1-15 years and maybe it is aging out, we need to pinpoint what direction to go in.
 - d. The highest attendance year was during Covid.
 - e. A big issue is lack of volunteers. A huge thank you to a few members of The Knights of Columbus for stepping in on short notice and helping out, this was very effective.
 - f. Confirmation students have been used as volunteers which counted for their hours needed in the Confirmation Program, however we will not use them due to the amount of micromanaging needed to work with this group.
 - g. Additionally in the past, the young adult group volunteered however this group aged out. We have talked with Sarah Wilder about the new youth adult group she is trying to build. Maybe this will be a viable option in the future?
 - h. Discussion around moving the Cana Dinner to January to be more liturgical in the year.
 - i. More suggestions included: a brunch, coffee bar etc. The core group imagined a more formal event but maybe people are looking for social events?
 - j. Question was posed to commission members “If You Missed, Why Did You Miss?”
 - i. Answers included: President’s weekend, we were out of town from several people, overcommitment for activities happening several weekends in a row, for example Wines to Wishes etc. the cost of events for several weekends in a row for SJB activities means we have to choose which events to attend.

2. Update on Ministry Expansion –

- Marriage Minute Overview
 - a. We are offering bite sized pieces to enhance and provide ongoing support and encouragement to our married couples.
 - b. This has been going very well and has been well received. We will look for more ways to grow the Marriage Ministry.

C. Goal 2C: Begin looking at the details for the Night of Gratitude

1. Review Event Information

D. Goal 3a: – Discuss Synod Document Section 1 and 2

1. Read Section III The Upper Room A. The Mystery of the Washing of the Feet #’s 18-27

2. Questions:

- In the Incarnation, Jesus descended to serve us – he “humbled himself.” What does Jesus’s humility teach us about the value he sees in each of us? How can we recognize that value in others? (18)
- What “garment” might you need to shed to humbly serve others? (21)
- Archbishop offers examples of “foot-washing” he sees in our Archdiocese. What would you add to that list – or which example of those listed has impacted you most? (24)

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- What does St. Teresa of Calcutta say is the greatest hunger of the human person? How might parish life help those who are experiencing this hunger? How might you help those experiencing this hunger? (25)
 - What is one way you may participate in the service of “foot-washing” in your household or in your parish? (26)
3. Read Letter here
https://archspmmainite.s3.amazonaws.com/Synod/Synod_pastoral+letter_112222.pdf
 4. Or listen to it here <https://www.archspm.org/pastoral-letter-podcast/>
- III. Long Term Planning
- A. **Night of Gratitude – April 28**
 - B. VBS June 20-22
 - C. St. John’s Feast Day Celebration ~~June 24~~ Thursday June 22nd, 2023
 - D. Catholic Youth Summer Camp – June 25-June 30
 - E. Totus Tuus date - July 22-29
- IV. Review of Events
- A. Past Events for Review and Feedback
 1. Last Month’s Events and Ongoing Ministry:
 - Ongoing Ministries
 - Cana Dinner recap - Karl
 - Marriage Minute #1 recap - Karl
 - Men’s Retreat
 - B. Upcoming Calendar of Events and Volunteers Needs:
 1. Egg Hunt – April 8th at 10 am – volunteers needed.
 2. Devoted – March 22 and Watchmen March
 3. Alive in the Word – Easter starting on April 11th for 4 weeks.
 4. VBS and TT registration open
 5. Still need childcare help – brainstorm ideas
- V. Ending Prayer: Neil S.
- VI. Adjourn 8:05 PM

** Treats in May Emily & Steven

Written Report – Jen Livermont, Coordinator for Discipleship for Families

*Live report tonight

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Childcare – In addition to our regular programs that we provide childcare for, we added childcare for RCIA couples who are meeting with the priests before convalidation of their marriages. We also provided childcare between the Masses for couples to attend the Marriage Minute on two Sundays. We are also providing childcare for the March Frost and Flannel. Coming up in April we will provide childcare for the First Communion Retreat and the Reach More Small Group Celebration.

Sunday School – During Lent, we break down the Gospel readings of the Passion and Death of Jesus beginning with the story of Palm Sunday. These Holy Week readings contain a lot of content, so this helps it to be more manageable for the students. This would be too much content to cover on Palm Sunday. We read a new book called Louie's Lent from Ascension Press that the kids really liked. We will continue to have a picture book that reinforces the theme each week in addition to the Bible stories we are reading. Last week we learned about St. Patrick and how he used the shamrock to teach about the Holy Trinity. Next Sunday we will be washing feet and acting out the Last Supper.

Catholic Kids Bulletins – We have been printing 100 Catholic Kids Bulletins every weekend. We increased to 120 on the weekend when we didn't have Sunday School and that seemed to be about the right number. We will have a Catholic Kids Bulletin for Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday.

Family Formation – The March Family Formation had a great turnout for Fr. Paul speaking on the Church and Our Journey to Heaven. We had 7 priests hearing confession. Middle school went first and then the rest of the grades went in descending order. We did that because the younger children typically want Fr. Paul to hear their confessions and he was giving the talk. The older kids often like to go to outside priests so that worked well. I did talk to Fr. Paul afterwards and we decided that in years to come, he shouldn't give the talk in the month that we offer confession because the line for him was the only backup for the night. There was a fair number of parents that utilized this opportunity to go to confession as well. I would like to continue to see that be the culture of Family Formation on this night that the parents attend confession.

Egg Hunt – The Egg Hunt will be Holy Saturday, April 8th at 10:00am. We will begin in the West parking lot with a welcome, blessing from Fr. Paul and directions. We will have two hunts with younger kids at the school playground and older kids at Vet's Park. We are planning for 350 kids. I don't anticipate that many, but I want to be prepared since our numbers continue to increase. We will be able to use St. Joseph's Hall this year for crafts and refreshments. The refreshments will be provided by the youth and will be sold as a fundraiser. The games will be in the Plaza. This will help the event to feel much better than last year when we had to have the entire indoor portion of the event in the Plaza.

Vacation Bible School – VBS is June 20-22 from 9-noon. Registration took filled in less than five days! We are anticipating having the 40 students who registered along with two preschool Care Crew classrooms of students who will attend as part of their class day. This will bring our total between 70-80 students, depending on the Care Crew numbers. We have a waiting list available for VBS in case plans change and a family drops out unexpectedly.

Totus Tuus - Totus Tuus is July 24-28 for the grade school program. We are at 76% full right now and we anticipate being full by the end of April. We lost a little momentum with spring break so we hope that once everyone is back in school, we will fill up.

First Communion Retreat – I plan to assist Jill with the student portion of the First Communion retreat if I have enough childcare coverage.

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Night of Gratitude – We sent information on our volunteers from the past year for the Night of Gratitude. This will be on April 28th.

Feast of St. John the Baptist Celebration – We may be moving the Feast of St. John the Baptist celebration to Thursday, June 22nd. This will be a great event to invite all the VBS participants to since we will have our last day and water event that afternoon. We will have Mass at 5:30pm, dinner, ice cream treats and a DJ out in the parking lot. (Fr. Paul is still deciding on final plans.)

Written Report – Sarah Wilder, Coordinator for Discipleship for Middle School Youth and Young Adults

- Report submitted 3/20/23.

Focus Area 1: Middle School Faith Formation

- Continuing our journey through the Old Testament.
- Seeing lots of growth and engagement from students.

Focus Area 2: SJB School Ministry

- Sarah has been visiting SJB school regularly (before and after school, during advisory, lunch)
- ...is working with staff to lead meditations for the monthly adoration.
- Open Youth Room has 15-20 kids attending weekly.
 - Adults present weekly: 2-3
 - Students have expressed that they are growing in prayer.
- D-Groups
 - 1 girls d-group is currently forming for 6th graders.
- Grade Level Retreats
 - I am collaborating with the religion teachers to plan a retreat for each grade (6-8th)
 - The 6th grade went well! It was a big hit with the 6th graders and many parents were able to help!
 - The 7th grade retreat will be on March 27th. Sarah is training the parent volunteers.

Focus Area 3: Middle School Youth Group

- MSYG will include games, themed message, prayer, snacks etc.
- February youth group was Gaga Ball and a Rosary
 - Each member of the core team gave a little reflection on one of the mysteries.
- Presidents' Day was a blast. The kids had so much fun!
- March youth group will be Stations of the Cross, Adoration and Games – 5th graders are invited to check it out for next year.

Focus Area 4: Young Adult Ministry

- Take And Eat – A Young Adult Gathering
 - It is a “three course meal” in which we
 - 4:00 chew on the word

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- 5:30 receive we Eucharist at mass.
- 6:30 go out for dinner.
- Attendance is usually 5-7 young adults- they are really feeling “fed.”
- We are talking about doing other “outings” and members of the group are expressing an interest in taking responsibility for these.

Written Report – Mikayla Anderson, Coordinator for Discipleship for High School Youth and Confirmation

- Report submitted 3/20/23.
- **Confirmation** – I really loved confirmation. Some of our groups are tough, but our leaders have been great! We had a great vocations night with the Handmaids of the Heart of Jesus and our priests. We also had men’s and women’s night with Steve Broszko and Addy Diaz. Next week, we will have our final parent and sponsor topic night about Theology of the Body on March 26, 2023.
- **High School Youth Group** - We have made some changes for high school youth group this semester. We do topic night, prayer night, then fun night as a rotation. It has been going well and our kids are really experiencing a form of community. They invite their friends for fun nights too, which is great to get others into the Church. We are also starting another discipleship group of high school girls.
- **Summer Things** – Registration is out for all summer programming is open and right now I am on full ministry mode of encouraging student to register – especially for the mission trip and Steubenville conference. Please pray that we fill all spots for both trips! We are going to Huntingburg, IN July 8-15, 2023, and we are traveling by bus. We have 30 spots for the mission trip, 25 students and 5 adults. The Steubenville Conference is here in St. Paul, MN at the University of St. Thomas July 28-30, 2023. We have 15 spots for this trip now, and we could get more based on registration. CYSC registration is good – we still have spots for 9th grade students but filled our spots for Discipleship team. We were only given 12 spots total for that.
- **PROM!** We are having our second annual YOUTH GROUP PROM on April 14, 2023. Our theme this year is NEON, and our youth are taking a lot of initiative on it. I think it should be a super fun night.
- **PRAYER REQUEST** – We need some men volunteers for youth group. Our women are awesome, and we have a couple men and are good, but not as committed to the ministry as our women.

Written Report – Michael Lane, Sacramental Records Coordinator

Baptisms in March:

5 on March 19, 2023

Weddings in March:

For Convalidation on March 26, 2023

Saira and Zachary Voller

Liz and Mat Grosjean

Ricky and Stephanie Longnecker

Emily and Daniel Blageo

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Written Report – Claire Brostrom, Reach More Coordinator

We continue to have 3 Reach More training groups meeting, led by Claire, Neil Steffl, and Michelle Stori (with the latter 2 taking a pause for Lenten material). Saturday, March 11th was a mid-season check in with leaders that included brainstorming how to keep new members connected after Lent. There are currently over 250 participants in Lenten small groups! Upcoming goals include creating a database of study materials that leaders have used in the past with information such as length, depth, amount of reading, popularity, etc. This should aid leaders in moving forward as they select new material for their groups. We will also have an end of Lent survey for small group participants.

Written Report – Jessica Balzarini, Director of Parish Life

Men's Retreat *Awaken*: The Men's Retreat was a huge success. 40 men of the parish attended and another 10 helped Fr. Paul lead the retreat. Men of the parish gave personal testimonies of how their lives have been personally transformed by an encounter with the Lord. 2 men taught and modeled the P.R.A.Y. method of daily prayer, using scripture to reflect on. A strong brotherhood was formed through small groups and many men experienced healing and strengthening in their relationship with Christ.

Cana Marriage Minute *Take Time for your Marriage*: Cana Core Team is offering the Cana Marriage Minute for couples within and outside the parish. The sessions offered in March offered couples tools and education on how to handle conflict within the marriage. We had 6 couples attend the first session. The small number was great for dynamic and engaging small group discussions. Everyone encouraged each other as they learned.

Flannel and Frost: Our New Member Gathering will be held on March 25. This gives new parishioners an opportunity to connect with other parishioners, both new and veteran. It also gives the priests and staff an opportunity to help connect new people into parish life. The gatherings are limited in number during the winter as we meet in Pier 153 to begin.

Written Report – Jill Fink, Director of Catechesis

Baptism: Class on March 6. Celebrations on March 19.

First Sacraments: Parents are working through the First Communion Home Lessons at a pace of 1 lesson per week. A Home Lesson Check Point was added for Sunday, March 19 between the AM mass times. Students in Family Formation and St. John's school received a lesson on The Mass. The next classes will be in the second week of April. The First Eucharist Retreat is Sunday, April 23 from 2:00- 5:00pm.

RCIC: Families will meet on Sunday, March 26 and Sunday, April 2 for final lesson preparation and practice with their families. Celebration is Sunday, April 16 at the 10:30am Mass followed by a reception in St. Joseph Hall. We are working with 10 families toward the celebration of sacraments.

Becoming Catholic RCIA: Our Elect are undergoing the Scrutinies at Mass for March 12, 19 and 26. We have 2 adult Elect who will be baptized at the Vigil as well as 2 teens. 8 candidates will make a profession of faith. We will have 14 being confirmed and 15 will make their first communion at the Vigil on Saturday, April 8 at 8pm followed by a reception. RCIA class continues to meet on Thursday night in preparation.

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Formation Parent Program: March Family Formation Night was March 1 on the topic of The Church and Our Journey to Heaven with Fr. Paul presenting. Students and parents and the opportunity to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation and parents worked on our annual evaluation feedback. Next month parents will gather on Wed., April 12 on the topic: Mary and the Saints: Extended Family for the Journey with Deacon Gary Schneider presenting for the Parent Night.

Marriage Ministry: Our four couples in RCIA piloting the Witness to Love Convalidation curriculum will have a joint Marriage Blessing on Sunday, March 26 after the 10:30am Mass. All our mentor couples are currently engaged couples.

Adult Ministry: Jill will be serving on the Synod Evangelization Team with the School of Discipleship.