Parish Staff Networking Group
Jan. 16, 2020
Our Lady of Peace, Cleveland

1. Terri Preskar updated all of us about her retirement status and affirmed that the diocese and the Catholic Community Foundation will continue to support parishes and this group. The March meeting will take place at the Foundation offices.
   a. February 20 -- 10 a.m. (NOTE NEW START TIME GOING FORWARD), St. Joseph, Avon Lake. Fr. Ron will be making salmon for an early lunch for attendees!
   b. March 19 -- diocese. Patrick Grace will be our host.
   c. April 16 -- St. Francis Xavier, Medina
   d. May -- ?

2. The diocesan Stewardship Director position is still being evaluated. Terri said that she believes the legacy giving and increased offertory portion of her job should remain with the Foundation, but the stewardship duties and supporting parishes may shift to a diocesan position. Much like Terrie Baldwin’s previous job as director of evangelization became a new director of Missionary Discipleship, this job may be crafted differently to reflect a shifting focus.
   a. Miguel Chavez was hired as director of missionary discipleship and started working in January. He came to the diocese from Walsh University; Terri described him as a vibrant and lively person, a great storyteller, someone who can connect faith and life.
   b. Terri Baldwin reports that in the Diocese of Raleigh, where she now works, the book she previously recommended, Ablaze, is serving as the basis for a developing plan for parish renewal.

3. Jennifer Webb (St. Francis Xavier) had asked for recommendations on thank-you gifts and other items given to speakers, ministry leaders, etc.
   a. Maureen Capellas from St. Hilary (Fairlawn) brought examples of a velveteen rosary bag (99 cents on Amazon) to which she applied the parish anniversary logo using the Epilog laser engraver at the Akron-Summit Public Library. (The settings are saved there for this material if anyone wants to try it.) They also have given a potholder with the parish logo (ordered through Minuteman), magnets, lollipops with the parish logo on a sticker, and glasses engraved (also at the library) with the logo and filled with candy.
   b. Aimee Wasinski from Holy Angels (Chagrin Falls) said they’ve given new parishioners reusable grocery sacks with the parish logo. All ministry leaders and key volunteers were given the same gift this year -- fleece scarves embroidered with the church logo. They also give magnet photo frames with the words “As for me and my house, we shall serve the Lord” and the parish logo. They have given a notebook with the logo and pen.
c. Our Lady of Peace had given leaders mugs with a color image of the church interior on one side, and the address/phone/website for the church on the other. Also, this year they gave the homebound small, nice-quality hand towels embroidered with the parish logo.
d. Kayla Goodwin from St. Joseph in Avon Lake and Aimee Wasinski from Holy Angels said they have given out calendars printed (free?) from LPI with custom pictures and blocks. For the St. Joseph anniversary, they used historic pictures each month. While the quality is somewhat less than desired, the cost and ability to customize seemed to make it worthwhile.
e. Bob Hertl from St. Ladislas (Westlake) said they don’t do gifts, but have an annual nice dinner with wine and dancing for volunteers. Also they do a welcoming dinner for new parishioners, but attendance is lower than desired.
f. Mary Kate Farrar from Gesu Parish (University Heights) said the school has a laser engraver, and the students made wooden ornaments with the school logo as thank-you gifts for donors. The kids also put the string in the ornaments.
g. Kayla from St. Joseph also said their parish ordered aprons and hats (as an alternative to hair nets) with the parish logo, due to so many parish events involving food. Some are given as gifts, and some are kept and used at the parish.

4. Nancy McIntosh from Our Lady of Peace reported on a newer initiative to reach out to the community that is gaining some traction. “Breakfast with Neighbors” is an opportunity to invite those who live near the parish, in typically lower-income areas, to come once a month to enjoy a hot meal with real plates and silverware. A real effort is made to treat these neighbors as guests (not with disposable table ware, etc.); later arrivals get hot, fresh food. Servers say a prayer before each event.

5. Kelly Ericsson from St. Paschal Baylon (Highland Heights) asked how other parishes are managing competing diocesan appeals - Heart of the Shepherd and Catholic Charities. It is especially troublesome because their own parish is midway through its own capital campaign, and parishioners are getting upset about being asked repeatedly for money.
   a. Terri said parishes can participate at various levels, including making a contribution from their own budget instead of asking parishioners. She suggested that, when parishioners understand what the money is for, they tend to support it more.
   b. Apparently money raised above the stated goal for the Heart of the Shepherd campaign is being returned to parishes.

6. Mary Kate (Gesu) mentioned another parish she visited was having an Environmental Stewardship weekend. She had to leave but promised to discuss at our next meeting.

7. What’s Gone Well Recently?
   a. Our Lady of Peace - reaching out to nearby entities that serve the poor and looking for ways to partner. Fairhill Partners offers programs, including
“Grandparents Raising Grandchildren.” Members of the parish attended a luncheon with these grandparents and got to know them, and discovered some significant hardships they are facing as they cope with getting older and raising very young children.

b. Bob from St. Ladislas asked if anyone had put on any kind of in-service for parishioners to encourage them to be more welcoming? Someone mentioned a “What if Starbucks welcomed like churches?” video on YouTube. Aimee relayed her experience of going to Disney World and wearing “happy birthday” and “happy anniversary” pins each day, and how the employees had been trained to look for these badges and greet them especially.

c. Bob also was looking for information about Days of Service and any logistical aids, including how participants are helped to process the experience. Aimee said they have questions on table tents to prompt story sharing, what did you learn today - and open mic for participants to share stories with the group.

8. Meeting times are being changed from 9:30 a.m. to 10 a.m. to make it easier for those who travel long distances.