



IMMACULATE CONCEPTION PARISH

Leading People to Jesus Through Worship, Community, Service and Devotion to Mary

Immaculate Conception Parish Pastoral Council Meeting September 11, 2024

Rich Viertel called the Parish Council meeting to order at 7:35pm, and led the members in an opening prayer.

Attendees: Rich Viertel, Paula Mong, Kendra Girardot, Janet Wilks, David Lyons, Max Herath, and Julie Clemens. Not present: Fr. Matt Hoover, Deacon Chris Campbell, Principal Colleen Kent, and Patty Conway.

Announcements

- **Opening Prayer:** Rich explained to Council members that each month one person will open the Parish Commissions and Council meetings with a prayer. Paula volunteered to lead the opening prayer in October; Kendra volunteered to lead it in November. Rich will provide a sign-up sheet for council members to select one of the remaining months.
- **August Meet & Greet:** Rich and the council members thanked Janet Wilks for hosting the August Meet & Greet dinner at her home. It was a beautiful evening filled with good food, introductions of members, and lively conversation.
- **2024-2025 Meeting Schedule:** Rich confirmed the meeting schedule for the year and asked council members to add the dates to their calendars and/or accept his calendar invitation.
- **New Youth Faith Formation Staffer:** Rich and council members expressed their excitement to meet Veronica Dannemiller, who recently joined the staff at IC to work with Youth Faith Formation. Veronica introduced herself during the Commissions meeting and participated in the Faith Formation & Spiritual Life Commission Breakout Session.
- **Engage@IC Feedback:** Rich thanked council members for their participation in the Engage@IC event held in August. He asked for feedback on the event and for ideas on how to strengthen future participation in Engage@IC.

Council members discussed at length the topic of increasing interest in IC's Ministries. They agreed that most people want to experience a sense of belonging in their parishes but are often waiting for the "right communication" to move them to participate in events and service ministries. Sometimes, it may be a personal invitation that brings a parishioner to join a ministry. Other times, it may be a talk or homily that provides an inspirational message about service and motivates a person to participate.

Council members agreed that holding Engage@IC at the same time as the School Supply Sale this year did not bring more people to the Engage@IC event. Rather, it seemed that

most parents were focused on picking up supplies for their children and did not have the extra time to learn about IC's Ministries.

Council members discussed their responsibility as leaders in our parish to bring others to service opportunities. One member exclaimed how serving is a part of our identity as Christ-filled people and council members could have an opportunity to become spiritual mothers and fathers, leading others to spiritual service and fulfillment. Another member cautioned in underestimating the importance of personalization when inviting parishioners to serve. Young adults (in their 20s and 30s) who are attending church regularly want to be involved but perhaps the communication has not been personal enough to reach them yet. A couple of members shared how the influence of watching their parents serve in the church motivated their own current participation in events and ministries. Finally, a member mentioned that a study has shown that retention is best in churches that place demands on the members.

During the Council's conversation several specific suggestions were made:

- (1) Regularly advertise about the Engage@IC Ministries in the bulletin. This could be done with a listing of the ministries once per quarter and/or informational articles featuring a couple of the Ministries each month (when applicable, the article/s could be tied to the seasonality of the ministry such as featuring the Garden Ministry and HASA's flower sale in early spring).
- (2) Make videos of the IC Ministries in action and display them on IC's website. The videos could also be shown during parish events.
- (3) Add motivational videos about the Call to Service to IC's Website (e.g., Fr. Mike Schmitz has a powerful video on YouTube about serving in the church).
- (4) Direct a couple of homilies each year to speak about the power of service in spiritual terms (e.g., address how parents can pass the commitment of serving in Parish Ministries on to their children).
- (5) When the weekly liturgy connects specifically to an IC Ministry or Engage@IC in general, connect Engage@IC into the homily for that week.
- (6) Send handwritten invitations and notes to parish members for a personal touch (In particular, council members could send handwritten notes and cards to new parishioners. In addition, it could become a practice that new parishioners receive a visit from Fr. Matt to bless their homes).
- (7) Make regular announcements about Engage@IC ministries at the end of mass.

Paula will check with IC staff about making the Engage@IC brochures available for distribution. Rich will check with IC staff about whether any type of "new parishioner welcome package" is sent to new members. (Approximately, 139 new families have joined IC since September 2022.)

- **Fall 2024 Faith Formation Activities (see IC bulletin):** Rich asked Council members for an update on the planning of the December Triduum. Currently, the dates of the Triduum are scheduled for December 8, 9, & 10. Programming for the first two days has been finalized:
 - (1) Fr. Thomas Blau, O.P. from St. Patrick Parish, will give a presentation on Sunday, 12/8;
 - and (2) The Holy Day of Obligation will be celebrated with masses on Monday, 12/9. The

Faith Formation & Spiritual Life (FF&SL) Commission members are continuing to discuss program ideas for the third day. One suggestion is to host an event on Tuesday morning for children and their Mothers and Grandmothers. Janet offered to speak with Colleen about the feasibility of holding this type of event in conjunction with IC School. Otherwise, the FF&SL members discussed changing the schedule of the Triduum to begin on Saturday, 12/7 (and end on Monday, 12/9). If the dates are switched, then the Triduum Celebration could once again include programming by That Man is You. Janet will contact Rich if a request needs to be made to move the date from Tuesday, 12/10, to Saturday, 12/7.

- **DMI Survey Action Plan:** Rich shared a copy of the DMI survey results that were distributed to IC parishioners during the summer and informed council members that they will discuss the results in greater detail after Fr. Matt returns from his sabbatical.

Next Up: Giving Tuesday

- **Nominations & Recipient Selection Process:** Dan Costello, Former IC Parish Council President, will lead the nomination and selection process for Giving Tuesday recipients. The call for nominations will be sent to Commission and Council members via email on 9/18, and will remain open until 10/2. The voting process is scheduled for 10/9-10/22, with the recipient being announced on 10/23.

Commission Breakout Meeting Reports

- **Faith Formation & Spiritual Life:** David Lyons and Julie Clemens joined this Commission as new Council members. Programming for the December Triduum was the topic of discussion.
- **Social Concerns:** Max Herath joined this Commission as a new Council member. Cheryl Costello spoke about the Open Shelter Ministry and requested that food donations (sloppy joe's, mac & cheese, cookies, lunch size chips, and bottled water) be brought on Monday.
- **Parish & Community Life:** Patty Conway is a new Council member appointed to this Commission. The Garden Ministry has been keeping the flower beds well-watered and looking beautiful. They meet the 2nd Saturday of each month for garden maintenance. The Bowling Ministry met recently and 9 people attended. St. Vincent's and the Knights of Columbus plan to have 2 donation trucks at IC in November. The Women's Club held a successful blood drive and will host the New Parishioner Welcome Breakfast this Sunday; planning has begun for Cookies for the Homebound in December.

Closing and Next Meeting

Rich called the meeting to a close at 8:37pm. The next Council meeting will be held at on October 9, 2024.

Meeting minutes drafted and submitted by Julie Clemens, Parish Council Secretary.