



St. Mary of Magdala Church

An Ecumenical Catholic Community

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stmaryofmagdalachurch.org

Focus Circle Meeting Notes Tuesday, September 26, 2023

Present at the online meeting: Ed Ruscitti, Kathy Rigordaeva, Barbara Mulligan Rado, and Jim David

1. The meeting was called to order at 4:05pm and the opening prayer was led by Jim
2. The group then reviewed focus circle responsibilities:

The purpose of the focus circle is to ensure that the parish stays focused on living out its mission statement, especially according to the results of the most recent parish discernment meeting. The focus circle is to monitor parish activities and listen to parishioners' hopes or concerns in between meetings.
3. The Focus Circle then reviewed our last discernment statement to consider whether or not the parish was at a point where we needed another parish discernment meeting.

From Parish Discernment Meeting Sep 13, 2022:

We believe that as a parish Jesus is calling us to support ourselves as individuals, community, and leadership as we grow spiritually and physically. He is also calling us to reach out to diverse populations, including those who are hungry and suffering both spiritually and physically, in our current ministries, and in new ways that Jesus brings to our attention.

After some discussion it was concluded that the statement from the last parish discernment was quite comprehensive and was still guiding us. There are still lots of opportunities to minister to each other and through our existing ministries like The Faith Family Kitchen, the baby center, and the recent drive to donate items to the unsheltered and others. The Focus Circle decided that this statement can continue to guide us for another year.

4. The Focus Circle then reviewed the following questions:
 - a. How are things going with our new pastors and the other changes of this past year

In discussion it was noted with delight that there is such obvious enthusiastic support for Kathy and Kathleen as pastors. Kathy pointed

out that the pastoral team meets regularly, and that Jen, in addition to her training, has been working well with the pastoral team. Everyone was excited about Jen's upcoming ordination as a deacon.

- b. Any other insights into our parish life at this time
 - i. There was some discussion about attendance at Mass perhaps being down, but it was pointed out that, when the numbers of those present in person are combined with those attending on Zoom, we are pretty much holding stable to the past two years in attendance. There have been a few new people and one new member has joined us. There are, it seems, fewer summer visitors than there used to be. The Focus Circle encouraged Kathy to make use of some of our past tools, like the introduction cards that people can carry, and the pamphlets that promote our parish.
 - ii. The reality of many churches in the area along with our own is that the congregation is getting older. Pastoral leadership and the Focus Circle is alert to finding ways in which we can keep involved in our ministerial commitments (both outreach and to each other) that work with the reality of our demographics. Barbara pointed out how important the prayer request emails are as an example of this.
5. Other items
- a. Ed brought up the difficulty that he sometimes has in hearing clearly at Mass, and that others have mentioned that to him as well. Kathy will look into the existing equipment that St. Peter's has to help those who are hard of hearing. She will soon be meeting with St. Peter's folks who will be working on a whole new sound system, and she will raise this issue there as well.
6. The meeting adjourned at 5:05pm.