

Pastoral Council Meeting - August 22 Re-cap

VISIONING FOR THE SAINT ALPHONSUS - SAINT ALEXIS GROUPING

Are You Called to Serve?

How will the combined Parish of Saint Alphonsus and Saint Alexis pursue the attainment of God's vision for the combined parish once they merge on October 15 as part of the *On Mission for the Church Alive!* initiative?

That is a question discussed this summer by the Pastoral Councils of both parishes with Father Zywan, who will be the administrator of the merged parishes. Father Zywan and the councils invited all parishioners to join them at an August 22 gathering at Saint Alexis Church to explain how the pastoral council will be organized as the parishes move forward.

First, a six-member Executive Council composed of members from Saint Alphonsus (Sue Eppley, Dick Heilman and Leslie Mitros) and Saint Alexis (Tim Johnson, Mark Joseph and Len Petracosta) was formed to work closely with Father Zywan on the vision and strategic planning for the merged parishes.

In addition, a 12-member Pastoral Council is being formed to focus on these 12 areas of ministry:

- Outreach - Community support such as mission trips, prison ministry, food banks, nursing homes, etc.
- Special Events - Non-fund-raising events such as Faith on Fire
- Small Groups - six to eight person groups for faith formation and discussion
- Greeters – For weekend Masses and other events
- Stewardship - Time, Talent and Treasure gifts
- Hospitality - Refreshments for after Mass and other events
- On Mission! - Parish integration issues; liaison with Diocese
- Communications - Bulletins, e-Bulletins, web presence, public relations, etc.
- Alpha - Dinner & discussion-based faith formation for adults
- Volunteer Coordination - Continuously seek people to use their gifts for the church and recognize their efforts
- Liturgy - Ensuring lively, engaging Liturgies
- Welcoming Team - Focus on new church members

These are the building blocks to build the best parish we can build, Father Zywan explained, as he talked about filling pews, growing the church, creating a vibrant community and bringing others closer to Christ.

“We need to trust God and let him amaze us,” Father Zywan said. “That’s the church I want to be a part of and have friends come to.”

An inspirational video featuring Georgia pastor Andy Stanley encouraged people to “step out of the boat in faith” as Peter did when he saw Jesus walking on the water. It does not matter if you feel worthy or able, Mr. Stanley said. When you feel God nudging you, he added, you need to step outside your comfort zone -- you just do what you can do and trust God to do what he can do.

Executive Council member Sue Eppley told the 40-plus people at the gathering that the “ask” for the evening was for attendees to reflect on their gifts and talents. She encouraged all to ask themselves: How can I help? How can I make this new combined parish the best that it can be? Are you ready to chair a committee? Or do you want to serve on a committee?

Executive Council member Tim Johnson said he believes that when these two active, successful, engaged parishes combine and collaborate, “We will be so much more than either was alone.”

“God is in charge. It’s His church,” Father Zywan continued as he talked about becoming one community. The goal is not to make Saint Alphonsus in Saint Alexis’ image or to make Saint Alexis in Saint Alphonsus’ image, he said.

“We are called to create something new,” Father Zywan said. “We are one. We are all Catholic. We are all going to be a part of a new parish. We just don’t know exactly what that will look like. We need to trust Jesus.”

If you are interested in serving on the 12-member Pastoral Council as a committee chair or member, please call MaryEllen Pendel at Saint Alexis at 724.935.3434 or Cindy Cusic Micco at Saint Alphonsus at 724.935.1151. A PowerPoint presentation posted on both parishes’ websites gives more details about ministries.