

St. Albert Parish Pastoral Council

2009 Reports

for the

St. Albert Parish Annual Meeting

February 28, 2010

Dear Members of St Albert Parish Community,

Attached is a summary of the 2009 activities from the various number of committees, groups, and parish office personnel that contribute to our parish life.

Our parish team and support ministry are serving one of the Diocese's largest parishes; we thank them for sharing their gifts with our community. Your 2009-10 Parish Council worked with the Parish Pastoral Council in the following capacities:

Secretary – Janet Bailey
Chair – Bernie McCracken
Community Life – Rita McGregor
Finance – Debra McLennan
150th Celebration - Ron van Halst
Pastor – Fr. Andrzej Stendzina, omi

Social Justice – Max Vandersteen
Liturgy – Dan Friedt
Youth – Colleen Mahon
Buildings & Grounds – Ron Bokenfohr
Pastoral Associate – Brittney White
Library – Geneva Landry
Oblate/Guatemala – Brittney White

We thank each Parish Council member for sharing their respective gifts with St Albert Catholic Parish. We welcome this year's new members to the Parish Advisory Governance Team .

Following up on the discussions at our parish council retreat, council decided to continue with the following as our main goal for the coming year:

● **Working toward becoming a more inclusive parish community through the various means available to us, e.g. educational, social, liturgical, spiritual.**

Working towards this goal Council achieved several objectives:

1/An AD Hoc Council group of Debra McLennan, Rita McGregor and Dan Friedt successfully organized a workshop on Parish life and dynamics led by Father Andrzej and Father Mike Dechant, omi. The integration of suggestions and ideas gathered at the workshop remain an ongoing task for various council committee groups.

2/ Under the leadership of Rita McGregor the Community Life Committee new directions were established for this group bringing together the work of the previous Community Life Group and the Charity Action Team.

3/Liturgy is at the heart of our parish. Thank you to all who contribute to making Eucharist a truly life giving experience in all aspects of the term.

4/ The Social Justice Group continues to remind us of the link between a dynamic church community and social justice. Max Vandersteen and his team have worked hard to keep these challenging perspectives on our radar.

5/ This year we have built a more sustainable link with Guatemala with the establishment of the Oblate Guatemala Sponsorship Program. 71 parishioners and their families have sponsored 54 children with HIV or life threatening illnesses. Our goal of twinning communities continues to be enhanced with both Youth and Adult involvement: through the exchange program, sponsorships and ongoing community potluck building gatherings.

6/The 150 Anniversary Committee continues to develop detailed plans for our 2011 celebrations. As we get closer to the event we hope to mobilize a large number of parishioners to make this historic celebration a faith building event.

7/ Our Finance group although separate and independent of parish council (Frank Polanski, Rob Lutes and Ken Bokenfohr and Debra McLennan continue to ensure that our parish is in a sound financial position.

Thank you for the opportunity to learn about and serve the parish community over the past 3 years. We are part of an historic, holy community that is challenging us to find new and traditional means to reach out to people seeking faith. My hope for all of us is that we continue to have the courage to discern and seek “His Way” as it applies to “**Becoming an inclusive parish community**”

Blessings,
Bernie McCracken Chairperson 09-10

Liturgy Committee Annual Report

With the goal of 'Working Towards Becoming a More Inclusive Parish' the Liturgy Committee has been meeting faithfully every month this past year, focusing on this goal and addressing concerns, issues and suggestions. The liturgy committee has always been considered a 'common denominator' for our parish since most of our parish gatherings are centered on liturgy. A constant goal at each of the meetings is to ensure that our strategies, suggestions, reflections and 'heart stuff' will support the goal of Parish Council to make our parish more inclusive.

Since this report is a simple overview of the past year, I have listed only some of the many suggestions and ideas that have come forth to support our goal. Some of these include:

- General groups such as outreach, youth, the poor, the elderly, the handicapped and the sick; visitors and strangers were mentioned as areas in which inclusiveness could be better fostered. It was felt that young families were under-represented.
- Establish a greater sense of welcoming as a whole by encouraging an atmosphere of ownership, responsibility and accountability within the liturgical ministries.
- Before Mass there would be an announced welcome to new members and visitors followed by general announcements.
- Provide a Guest Book for new parishioners.
- The desired Mass experience was defined as being welcomed by greeters upon arrival, enjoying appropriately prepared music and articulate readers, and having generally an uplifting experience.
- It is a combination of a strong presider, a good homily and good music that will tie together all our liturgies.

From music ministry, art and environment, children's liturgy, ushers and greeters, lectors, Eucharistic ministers, altar servers and many others, there has been a concerted effort to address the needs of all parishioners and visitors alike. The power of liturgy can never be underestimated in our parish. Good liturgy requires hard work and preparation. The fruit of good liturgy is a communal sense of belonging, support for people and the strengthening of relationships within our faith community. It leads us to a deeper relationship with each other and with our God. We continue to journey in our request for a more inclusive faith community, knowing that a strong healthy liturgy will be one of the pillars that support this goal. We look forward to continued growth, learning and excitement in this ministry.

Respectfully submitted by Dan Friedt
February 2010

YOUTH MINISTRY 2009 REPORT

I am not sure what to write for this report

other than activities going on...

September Canmore retreat well attended... 16 youth and 2 parishioner chaperones

WYD Madrid Group with 12 Young Adult Members

THINKFAST for Development and Peace Jr/Sr High students April 17, 2010

Pierre teaching religion classes 10-12 at SACHS

Ongoing help with celebrations and school masses (Development and Participation)

Give A Damn Social Justice Club at SACHS attended/facilitated by Pierre

Upcoming Ski Trip March 11 Students registered so far

Area of weakness: Involvement with VJM/Junior High students- hopefully the leadership program post Confirmation will help restore this void.

Blessings,
Brittney

St Albert Parish Social Justice Committee 2009/2010 Annual Report

During the past year, members of the committee have attempted to support the Parish Council vision of Inclusivity in our community by attempting to work congruously with council and other parish committees to promote awareness and activity in social justice and environmental concerns. As the relationships improved so too did the outcomes of various projects and joint endeavors. This year's ministry sign up, workshop and ensuing follow up by committed council and committee members will continue to strengthen and focus these relationships within our community. At various times through the year the Social Justice Committee has represented Development and Peace in campaigns, such as Fall Action and Share Lent, to foster spiritual reflection and a community connection to the concerns of the less fortunate members of our global community.

Often working together with Brittney White and the parish youth, the committee has raised awareness as well as support for the people of Haiti, Guatemala and Ecuador and other countries. During the D & P Share Lent campaign last year, the Stations of the Cross were jointly conducted with a theme representing the Development and Peace symbols of Solidarity. Representatives of these groups also presented these symbols at the services on Solidarity Sunday. During the campaign, a guest speaker was brought to the parish to share his experiences while visiting and learning about D & P partners in Zambia. The committee was active during the Fall Action Campaign supporting food sovereignty. A series of educational materials were inserted in the weekly bulletins highlighting the conditions and struggles of indigenous communities in the Global South. These families struggle to put food on their tables while large tracts of land are used to grow crops for agrofuels. Cards petitioning our Members of Parliament to support food sovereignty were signed, collected and forwarded to our government officials. This year the Children's Liturgy program will also be included in learning about the significance of the symbols and participate in following the D & P Lifestyle Awareness Calendar during the Share Lent Campaign.

We again combined efforts with the parish youth during the annual Roy Financial St Albert Mayor's Walk for Charity. Together we successfully solicited enough volunteer walkers and sponsors to raise funds for the Parish Guatemala Mission's desire to build classrooms for the children in the Guatemalan orphanage. The leadership of Father Andrzej and several families in the parish were much appreciated and significant in helping this effort as well.

Through cooperation with the Knights of Columbus the committee has brought attention to the medical and dental mission to Ecuador in which three members of our parish take part. By providing a donation and promoting a raffle, which the committee organized, and a CD sale, jointly organized by the committee along with parishioner David Fraser, they also helped to raise money for the mission. Emir and Lindsay Poelzer along with Rebecca Krauskopf, on behalf of all St Albert parishioners, presented these funds to Dr Avilla for distribution to families requiring assistance while receiving treatment from the mission facility in Cuenca. David also generously donated another portion of his earnings to Development and Peace.

Thanks also to the generous spirit of the Knights of Columbus the committee was further able to heighten community awareness through the promotion of Fair Trade Products at Pancake Breakfasts. These products support the cooperative farmers of the global south and help them to achieve a fair wage and health and educational benefits for their families. Fair Trade products and education were also promoted at The Star of the North Just Christmas Sale, the St Albert High School Fair Trade Week and at Development and Peace events. Some of the money raised through these sales was directed to D & P and some to the Ecuador mission as well.

Also during the last year the St Albert Parish Social Justice Committee has had representatives attend several St Albert Christians for Social Justice meetings and the parish has hosted some of these functions. Originated by representatives of several faith communities in St Albert the group has been attempting to determine and work together on common needs of community members. Focusing primarily on affordable housing at this time, great strides have been accomplished over this time period. Some projects have progressed from this time last year such as the building of two Habitat for Humanity duplexes in St Albert. Some St Albert parishioners were involved with organizing these events while many others volunteered to assist with various stages of the builds. Other projects are in various stages of funding approval or civil proceedings and the committee remains involved with the St Albert Affordable Housing Society in these endeavors. St Albert Parish Council has supported the parish representatives and several of the committee initiatives in raising awareness of the need for affordable housing in the St Albert community. This committee has also been instrumental with the relocation and improvements to the St Albert Food Bank. The new facility is larger and also incorporates other social and charitable agencies in a centrally located intake program.

The Social Justice Committee would like to thank Deb Zeckel for organizing the Easter dinner at the Bissell Center on our behalf. Committee members assisted her by providing, making and distributing sandwiches, etc. for the affair.

A sincere thank you must go out to all committee members for their ongoing efforts and hard work. The Social Justice committee would also like to thank the St Albert Parish Council and the community members for their assistance and continued support

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Community Life Action Committee AGM Report

The Community Life Action Committee and the former Charity Action Committee have merged to become the St Albert Parish Community Life Action Committee. The purpose of this committee is to have available teams of volunteers to assist the parish in carrying out its goals throughout the year.

Members of the parish supported the following activities:

- Parish Picnic
- Annual Pilgrimage
- Provided rides to church
- Lent/Advent Penitential Reception
- Harvest Supper
- Kinnette Christmas Hampers
- Set up and support of various parish functions
- Assisting parishioners with small job/repairs
- Support of inner city lunch

A focus for this coming year will be welcoming new parishioners as well as a “new parishioner information package”.

Submitted by
Rita McGregor
Acting Committee Chair
February 17, 2010

Guatemala 2009 Report

In September 2008 7 young adults began formation and inner city service in preparation for a mission trip to Hogar Madre Anna Vitiello in Sumpango, Guatemala. Twice a month the group met for one formation meeting and one inner city service night. The group was exposed to a wide range of opportunities to help in our own community. As well we had info sessions with guest speakers on such topics as credit unions, fair trade, HIV and other justice issues. In May the group organized a silent auction which brought in \$8000.00 for the orphanage and mission, the group was able to send an excess \$15,000.00 to provide aid to the orphanage after paying for individual trips.

A result of the mission was the Sponsor Program and community potluck initiative. As of now 71 parishioners and partners are sponsoring the 54 children and many are requesting more information of how to be involved. We have gathered for 2 potlucks and will be doing a third in March. The goal for this project is community building within the Parish and a deeper understanding of the Oblates Charism for prayer and mission.

In November in addition to the sponsor program, a Guatemala committee was formed. There are currently 10 members with an elected chair and secretary. Deanne Riopel has taken on the position of chair for this year. The committee organizes the potlucks and takes a deeper look at the finances and projects in which we are undertaking. They as well, study deeper the aspects of the Oblate Charism and look for practical ways to present and implement this into our Parish community.

The current projects we are fundraising for and supporting are:

1. The exchange program (Mission to Guatemala and visitors from Guatemala here)
2. Scholarship Program at St. Cecilia's Parish in Mixco where we are funding the education of 36 students
3. Sponsor Program at Hogar Madre Anna Vitiello in Sumpango, Guatemala
4. A Fill A Backpack program for children in the rural Chicamon area with no access to school supplies (School board initiative)

In June we will be hosting 10 visitors from Guatemala, and constant communication and visits to the Oblates and Sisters is ongoing.

In May we will be hosting the annual silent auction

Thank you all for your support

Library Update 2010

The St. Albert Parish Library was created in 1978 by parishioners and, with the continued and generous support of our Pastors and successive Parish Councils, has served our parish family well. However, for quite some time now, use has been declining year after year. A number of programs and ideas were implemented to encourage people to be aware of and use the Library but none enjoyed sustained success. We came to realize that the reading habits and needs of our parishioners had changed. Thus, in the summer of 2009, after much consideration, the Library was closed.

However, this is not the end of the story.

A few years ago the Parish undertook major renovations in the Library to make it a more functional and welcoming space. These changes were successful inasmuch as use of it for meetings by various groups markedly increased. This part of the Library will remain unchanged.

The best of our books, DVDs and videos for adults have been moved to the recently renovated board room in the parish office. Here they will continue to be available for parishioners. The material for children will remain in the Library, to be used for youth ministry. Many of our older children's books and videos have found a new home at Enoch. Other older books for adults were sold and the profits used for our Guatemala mission.

In the spring a celebration will be held for all past and current library workers to acknowledge the work and efforts of these dedicated and caring individuals. At that time all the materials remaining will be offered to parishioners. We do want these books and CDs to find homes.

Once all the books and the shelving holding them are removed, the resulting space will be refurbished with the intent of providing more hospitable space for parish gatherings, for youth and adults.

Changes like these can be difficult, especially for the workers and those who made use of the Library over the years. However, we believe that having provided over 30 years of service to our community is a success in itself.

How this space evolves over the next 30 years will depend on the needs of our parishioners.

Pastoral Associate 2009 Report

The transition to pastoral associate in the last year post Bernice's retirement has been a natural transition for me. In the area of Sacraments, we are lower in numbers from previous years (Communion and Reconciliation) but higher for Confirmation candidates.

A change in the method of preparation has taken place in which there are more meetings for each Sacrament and parental involvement in the sessions is a requirement. Preparation outlines and material has been prepared for parents and is issued throughout the process. Parents as well have preparation assignments and family assignments alongside their children. All material provided is to ensure the proper preparation is happening at home and refreshed for those who have been away from the material for some time.

Post Confirmation a Leadership Development Program will be offered for any candidates interested in further pursuing catechesis and development.

Upcoming: I am developing a discover spirituality retreat for any parishioner wanting an away weekend sometime in the early Fall.

Blessings,
Brittney

Pastor's Annual Report – 2009

Our Parish Council plays a very important role in our parish because the decisions we make are made through the Council with an input from the committees and individual parishioners. There are three new members on the parish council: Janet Bailey, Dan Friedt and Ron Van Halst.

There were some changes in staff. Our Pastoral Associate Bernice Mahoney retired in August. Brittney White took the sacramental preparations. I was doing the RCIA, Baptisms (interviews) and Adult Education. Br. Pierre Ducharme, OFM was hired to help Brittney with the Youth Ministry.

In 2009 we also started our preparation for our Jubilee Year in 2011. We have a special core group committee that overlooks the preparations.

Details of the programs and activities offered in our Parish are included in the individual reports of the committees that are active in our Parish.

Pastoral statistics for 2009:

Baptisms – 98
Confirmation – 79
Marriages – 38
First Communion – 68
Deaths – 88

Some highlights of 2009:

- Hosting WYD at home with Archbishop Richard Smith.
- Hosting the 150th Anniversary of the arrival of the Grey Nuns
- Knights of Columbus 50th anniversary
- Social Justice activities
- Starting the preparations for our Jubilee Year
- Vocation Sunday and Confirmation with Bp Denis Croteau, o.m.i.
- Annual Pilgrimage
- Social Events (picnic, Fall Supper)

We hope we will continue developing our existing programs and ministries as well as exploring new ways of serving our parish.

I would like to thank all the parishioners for their support and involvement in our parish's life.

Fr. Andrzej Stendzina, o.m.i.
Pastor, St. Albert Parish.