

Town Hall Meeting Updates for publication in bulletin

Dear Community of St. John Neumann,

Thank you for your participation in our parish needs-assessment survey, and for your candid comments during our three town-hall meetings. Approximately 120 parishioners participated in the meetings and shared feedback with Fr. Noble and staff. For the next four weeks, we will summarize here the main points from each of the meetings. We will be assembling a planning team to assist with the goals that we will establish based upon the outcomes of the survey and the feedback from you. If you are interested in serving on this team, please contact Jackie Sutton, jsutton.saintjohn@gmail.com or 740/965-1358 x123.

Week 1:

Facilities & Building Discussion

- Parishioners suggested that future building plans should include the addition of a social gathering space, with comfortable seating for groups to gather for bible studies, lectures, youth activities, informal meetings, etc.
- Plans are already underway to expand the Pastor's residence to accommodate living space for an associate pastor, so that additional Masses and programming can be offered at St. John Neumann.
- There is a need for additional parish office space. Many parishioners are unaware that staff currently share offices to accommodate for the lack of space.
- There are no plans to add onto the existing church/worship space. As part of future facility upgrades and possible additions, SJN will plan for a covered entrance to our facilities per requests from parishioners. Facility upgrades might include the aforementioned gathering space or versatile "great hall-type" space (pardon the Pastor's reference to Hogwarts.)
- Regarding questions about building an elementary school or high school on our campus, 1.) SJN is currently not large enough to support enrollment for an elementary school; 2.) placing an additional high school within the diocese, and the location of that facility, is at the discretion of the bishop.

Fr. Noble has been with us just over a year, and has:

- Added confession times to Tuesday/Thursday evenings, 5:15-5:45 pm, beginning August 16th;
- Returned the ASK sessions to our Adult Faith Formation programming; the next session is scheduled for September 13th;
- Supported the inclusion of the Omega program for those who have participated in Alpha and are looking to build on what they learned and to deepen their faith.

Please watch this section of the bulletin for the next several weeks for updates on our response to anticipated growth in our surrounding communities, adult faith formation programming concurrent with

youth programs, and feedback regarding opportunities to volunteer and be of service within our community.

Week 2:

Community Growth & Surrounding Development

- Demographic studies suggest that approximately 80,000 new people are expected to move into the Sunbury area within the next decade. Of these, an estimated 13% will be Catholic.
- Increased growth will add to traffic concerns on major roadways near our campus. Fr. Noble and Bob Scott have had discussions with community leadership regarding a potential traffic light at the intersection of Carters Corners and Route 37. Further discussion is needed regarding the light, but if a traffic light is added, there is a high likelihood that SJN will need to contribute the cost. In the meantime, SJN is looking at hiring a recurring police detail to assist with traffic flow after the weekend Masses.
- SJN will continue to monitor the proposed development of the Planet Oasis site and possible impacts of this on church attendance. The outside bid to purchase land on Carters Corner road for a soccer field has been withdrawn by the interested party due to unforeseen costs.

Week 3:

Adult Faith Formation Programs Concurrent with Youth Programming

- Fr. Noble encourages everyone to take an active role in their faith development in their homes and within their communities. To that end, programs such as Connect Groups, group rosaries in homes, and bringing families to Adoration or Adoremus are important parts of our faith formation programs.
- Parents with children or youth in PSR, Mission or Chosen can now take part in concurrent faith formation programs in the evenings when their children are in classes. Facility enhancements, mentioned in our Week 1 summary, will allow for increased opportunities for hosting these types of programs on our campus in the future.
- We remain committed to bringing engaging, faith-based speakers to SJN, but they must relate to our mission and core values, and benefit our faith development. In order to help facilitate increased programming for adults, we will be sharing an Adult Faith Formation survey with parishioners in September. *Please make a commitment to respond to the survey.*
- Parishioners expressed a desire for parish-coordinated field trips to nearby cathedrals, basilicas, shrines, etc. If you are interested in helping to organize these trips, please contact the Parish Office.

Week 4:

Volunteer & Service Opportunities within Our Community

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- As our community grows, so will the need for community outreach. Our Good Samaritan Ministry and St. Vincent de Paul Society currently, through the generosity of our parishioners, provides financial, material, and volunteer support to organizations such as Big Walnut Friends Who Share, Run the Race Club, Family Promise, Prison Ministry, Re-Entry Ministry, and others. There are always opportunities listed on the Volunteer page of our website for those who want to provide service to others. Volunteering is about helping others, but is also an important means of evangelization in our community. Survey results show that 2/3 of respondents are comfortable sharing with others and talking about their faith, so let's keep talking and increase our efforts to help those around us.

We hope these Town Hall Meeting Updates have been insightful and informative. We invite everyone to take part in programs and events at SJN. Our desire is that you will continue to grow in relationship with Jesus and come to recognize SJN as a place of encouragement and support as we all journey together in faith.