

**Holy Spirit Parish Christian Service Commission**

**Notes from Bereavement Ministry Planning Meeting**

Tuesday, February 20, 2018, 6:00 pm at Sts. Peter & Paul

**Present:** Maureen Balyeat, Chris Christiaens, Theresa Hopkins, Rosann Johnson, Kathy Nyman-Wendt, Juanita McGregor, and Pam Seidletz

**Pastoral Council Representatives:** Lori Durocher

**Staff:** Cindy Eultgen

We opened with a poem that Juanita read by Mary Oliver then went around the group giving our name.

**Discussion:**

From the packet of pages from the Grief Workbook from the Archdiocese of Boston\* (later mentioned as the \*workbook). Some questions that we have distinguished:

1. Will this ministry be part of the funeral process?
  - a. Not necessarily unless we are needed. This ministry is covered.
2. How many funerals do we have each year?
  - a. About 52
- 3.

**Continued to review of local resources** - Besides the first three previously discussed (below) we added a few more resources to hospice and might consider some resources to talk with us about getting started and/or training:

- Hospice
  - Has a couple of different 8 week courses
  - Counselors and Nurses
  - Theresa Hopkins was helpful distinguishing the above as she is a retired hospice nurse
  - This Saturday, Feb. 24 from 9:30-3:30 a training to deal with children's grief (Kathy brought in the newspaper with the information), several people were interested.
- Compassionate Friends is active in Fort Benton [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)
- Camp Francis – for children
- Via Schnider & O'Connor Funeral Homes, a volunteer, Geri Gertson serves as a 'listening hostess' for those in need to talk.
- Grief Share, a nation-wide bible based, ministry is held at 1<sup>st</sup> Alliance Church
- The Veteran Center has a grief counselor, Chris will try to connect with him
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We see the potential for a lot of diverse needs (as previously discussed) and hope to try one on one (such as going out for coffee or meeting for church in the parking lot) as it comes forward. We want to be able to serve everyone. The beginning could be overwhelming and a management nightmare for a while. We need more core people in order to feel strong enough to start. We need more visibility in the parish and via the bulletin for core members.

We started to formulate what our first meeting would look like which we would like to have sometime in April. We want to continue through the summer to maintain momentum. We want to have something that is consistent and regularly reliable. As we focus and clarify where we want to go, we brainstormed what our program would look like. Currently, we like the “Compassionate Friends” model, yet we have the privilege of incorporating our faith. It was mentioned that generally “for those in hospice” people of faith were able to ‘let go’ more easily.

- We will start with one meeting a month, to start at 7 pm in the evening in the RCIA room
  - We see the potential that it might expand to a daytime meeting. Other specialized needs are expected to arise, but wait for the Holy Spirit to reveal what this will look like.
- Most likely a Tuesday
  - Either 2<sup>nd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> due to regular scheduled church meetings on 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays
- We will need to make a schedule of who will take on the roles:
  - **Facilitator** for each date of the meeting
    - A format needs to be created and used by all (begun below)
    - Roseann discussed examples of how a facilitator should work the room to keep on track and include everyone. It was also mentioned that training is needed for all of us to distinguish that we as core leaders/facilitators are helping others with their loss and are not to ‘focus on our losses’. To say, “This has worked in my personal experience”, but use personal experience minimally. Perhaps we could develop a packet of notes for the core members and add practical training to help us feel confident managing each meeting. Additionally, debriefing the meeting may be needed for the core team as well.
  - **Building person**, lights, temperature, unlock, lock etc
  - **Coffee / tea person** (at this point we discussed we may not need snacks)
  - **Extra core people** present
  - **Contact** people (see below – getting things ready for the first day)
- Preparation for ourselves (this ministry can be very draining)
  - Some type of public affirmation/presentation/commission from Fr. Doug on the core team and this ministry (discussed earlier and suggested by the \*workbook).
    - It has been affirmed to us as a group, but needs to be highlighted to the parish community in multiple ways
    - Have contact cards (see below) for Fr. Doug to personally hand out
    - Post information in bulletin
  - Can we have a training/practice meeting before April?
  - Plan for continued education/leadership/ support for the caregivers/core team

- Could be a different day than the regular meeting day because usually those attending the meetings would not want to listen to a speaker, they want to talk about their own grief
  - About 3 times a year such as speaker (Fr. Doug, Counselor, etc)
  - Plan for someone ‘like Joyce Rupp’ to come in a year to 18 months
    - We can budget for this
    - We can coordinate with hospice, the hospital, or college as someone “known” comes in from out of town
- We will need a format for the monthly routine (like AA)
  - Start and close with a poem or prayer (like the two read today)
- We will need **some things ready for the first day**
  - Education and promotion in the parish
  - Discuss using some space in the RCIA room (like part of one of the bookshelves)
    - Committing the room to the regular day of the month we choose
  - Tissues in the RCIA room
  - Cards made up to hand out with our names, contact information, and other types of “services”.
  - A library with videos, books, prayer books/cards, etc
  - Have a sign in sheet with the person name and phone number, type of loss, and the deceased birthrate and death date).

Discussed a card person

There were several things that needed to be complete before next meeting as we look for more resources to glean information and education/training opportunities and then call Cindy (we will see who can attend the next meeting, if too many say yes then we will schedule them for another meeting date):

Person Responsible	Action	To be complete by date	Date Complete	Follow up
	<b>....and then call Cindy to add them to the next meeting agenda or another meeting. The goal is training advice and/or planning advice. But we don't want them on the same date.</b>			
Roseann	Contact Compassionate Friends in Fort Benton			
Pam	Contact Owen Robinson – who led the 6-8 weeks via Hospice			
Chris	Contact Veteran Center			

Juanita	Find out the use copyrights of the poem that was read at meeting to use in the future			
Cindy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk with Fr. Doug,</li> <li>• Flier/info in bulletin at some point,</li> <li>• look at parish database for potential core team members,</li> <li>• talk again to Kelly Trunkle,</li> <li>• consider long term training/speaker and 'self-care for ministers'</li> <li>• find copyright for poem read at closing</li> <li>• find out the 'rules' for using the coffee, coffee pots, cups, etc. in the RCIA room</li> </ul>			
Everyone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider inviting others as core team folks</li> <li>• Bring in resources to begin our 'library'</li> <li>• Consider other things needed for our first meeting</li> </ul>			

Our next meeting will be in 2 weeks: Tuesday, March 6 at 6 pm. Even though it is the same day as the Pastoral Council meeting, it is likely that the reps will only attend once a month, whereas we are meeting every 2 weeks to keep the momentum.

We closed with the poem titled *What does it take to Weave Compassion?* written by Sister Marlys Jax on page 2 of the Assisi Heights Spirituality Center January-April 2018 program book from Rochester, MN that Pam brought in to share.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cindy Eultgen  
Coordinator of Christian Service