

Mt. Irenaeus  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
February 8, 2025  
Minutes

|          |  |          |                                |
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| Present: | Kathy Colucci<br>Tom Conway, ofm<br>Matt Delforte (part time on Zoom)<br>Kathy Dougherty, OSF<br>Jeff Gingerich<br>Matrecia James<br>Jimmy Kernan, ofm<br>Jackie Lanzillo<br>Richard Rothermel<br>Mike Sullivan<br>Sarino Tropeano<br>Kate Trosch<br><br>Rob Buckla<br>Matt Cressler<br>Mike Fenn<br>Mary Freeman<br>Mary Giardini<br>Joe Kotula, ofm<br>Dianne Kuzia Hills<br>Greg Licamele<br>Michelle Marcellin<br>Bill McIntyre, ofm<br>Lou McCormick, ofm<br>Natalie Pronio<br>Karen Pulaski<br>Mari Snyder | Excused: | Mike Kasperski<br>Evan McElroy |
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Meeting began with welcome and introductions.

Mountain Life Updates:

Council for Spirit and Life (Karen) –

- Initiation Branch just finished a 14-month Build with Living Stones formation experience.
  - All pod participants want to continue in some way.
  - Will offer another experience with new participants end of April.
- Offering two summer retreat weekends; June 13-15 and July 11-13.
  - People have already signing up and space is already being filled.
- Mountain on the Road/Mountain in Your Home events.
  - Had one in Rochester in the fall.
  - Had three MIH experiences in Washington, DC, Albany and Chicago.
  - Going to Philly, Silver Spring, Arlington and New Jersey Feb 27-Mar 2.
- Weekends and More Branch.

- Planning 4<sup>th</sup> day of diversity, March 22.
  - Four students working with us.
  - Mike Kelley is Chair.
  - Reggie Harris will be coming and performing.
  - Students doing art expressions.
- “Get to know your Saint” day at St. Bonaventure. Tyler Grudi, ofm will be joining us for the event as well as Jean-Francois Godet.
- Outdoor Stations of the Cross on Good Friday with the theme of “healing.”

#### Ministry with students (Natalie) –

- With Kevin gone, Mari and Bill have stepped up to help with student ministry, communications and planning.
- Shared this semester’s schedule – many activities have occurred and are planned.
- Having more events on campus and getting a good response.
  - Mountain trivia night.
  - Mountain Mindfulness evening – partnering with Power Yoga group and will try to partner with mental health.
  - Mountain Community Leaders, have 6 core leaders.
  - Have two communications interns.
- We have four people interested in the Summer Companion internship.
- Continuing to be involved with all events ran by University Ministries.

#### Provincial SYNOD in Kansas City (Karen) -

- Made good connections with the Province.
- The lay people attending contributed as much as the friars and they were allowed to vote on items discussed. Felt very welcomed.
- The Mountain group was asked to bring two additional lay persons, Allie Leis and Stephen Copeland attended with the Mountain.
- Came up with 8 priorities with 18 actions that support those priorities. Asked to meet with their local communities next. Now the document is off to Rome to be approved.
- One challenge the Mountain is looking at is direct work with the poor. How do we do it now and how do we expand it?
- Jimmy Kernan was also at the Synod and gave summary of his experience. It was a wonderful experience.

#### Update on SBU community (Jeff) -

- New work with Seneca Nation.
- Engaged group of students this year. More students at Mass and interested in service trips.
- Jeff went to DC for meetings with the Franciscan Colleges and Universities group.
- “Four Branches” on campus continue to meet. This group started with the campus friars, Mountain personnel and the University. Since then have added the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany. Meetings continue to go well.
  - At the meeting this week talked about the outcomes of Synod. Need to articulate more about the work we do with the marginalized – key piece for the Mountain and University to work together.
- Matrecia and Jeff are Diversity Equity and Inclusion Chairs – how do we continue the work and know when to push and when to let it go. We think regionally, but not internationally. Jeff is concerned about the loss of Federal aid.

Advancement Report (Mary G. and Jackie) –

- Overnight donations are on track.
- We are at 85% of our Mt. Fund goal for 2024-25 fiscal year.
- A couple more solicitations will be coming up this spring.
- Auction – scaled back to about 100 items. Everything made by the Mountain community brings in extra money. The 2025 Auction will be November 7-16.
- The FDR Endowment Campaign will close when all the pledges are in. There are 3 not completed yet.
- SBU Community Endowment for Mt. Irenaeus is still open, there are infrequent donations made to it.
- Currently applying for a Lilly grant. Matt Cressler and Christine Cusick are writing this grant.
- Planned giving – no new gifts, but Kate Manion O'Reilly wants help us develop it and she is a planned giving expert.
- Mari is leading the planning for our third Living Stones event. Some of those who will be honored are: Dianne Kuzia Hills, Katie Trosch, Sarino Tropeano, Mike Sullivan, Paul Aroune, and Mike New. We will also induct Dan Riley and his sister Patty Lush plans on being at the event. It is being held Memorial Day weekend – May 24. There are a total of 56 people being inducted.

2025 Endowment Campaign (Kathy Colucci) -

- Hired Rob Buckla as Campaign Director.
- The endowment centric campaign is focused on 3 areas:
  - Case for support and materials.
  - Infrastructure for success.
  - Develop the people who are going to help.
- 13 page source document has been reviewed.
- Creating personal profiles on the Mountain ministers; 4 friars, Natalie, Mari, Karen, Mike. These are mostly written by Mary Freeman and Evan McElroy.
- Building infrastructure for the cash or complicated contributions.
- It has been approved to name certain funds in the endowment for people who donate.
- Have had visits with donors and more are planned.
- Campaign cabinet has been working and meeting on a regular basis. (Kathy Colucci, Les Quick, Bob Daugherty, Dick Tantillo, Jim Gould, Evan McElroy)
- Working goal of between \$7-12 million.
- We have verbal and/or written confirmation of \$2.675 million from 5 donors.
- Hoping for 100% commitment from the Board.
- 5-year campaign, payments up to 5 years.
- 7-10 million goes into endowment and the earnings go to operations.
- Looking at estate gifts also.
- Being transparent on our connection with SBU and trying to deal with donor confusion.

**Motion by Sarino Tropeano:** The Board approves the campaign counting guidelines that have been established for the current Mt. Irenaeus Endowment that started in the Fall of 2024. These guidelines will only apply to this Endowment. Matt Delforte seconded the motion. Approved unanimously.

### Three Peaks of the Mountain (Mike) –

- 1) Service to SBU Students – core ministry
  - a. Dan inspired us and never let go of us after we graduated.
  - b. In the 90's he formalized going on the road which led to #2
- 2) Service to Adults/Faith Formation
  - a. Over time he gave the at the university to others and focused on the OTRs and the podcasts and social media
  - b. Ministry with strong growth
- 3) Service to the Province
  - a. Unique ministry within the Province for friars to experience and be formed in a contemplative way of life and ministry.
  - b. Area of strategic focus.

Discussion on these points and what might be missing. There was discussion around how other important elements fit, such as care of creation; Franciscan charism; sustainability. More discussion on this point, what we have done already and how to accomplish what more is ours to do in this endeavor.

### Updates pertaining to the three peaks:

#### Service to SBU students (Natalie) –

- Keeping spread sheet of students visiting the Mountain.
- The Mountain has an Instagram account (has had for several years) and students are supervising the site.
- Working to reinvigorate the Mountain Community Leaders group of faith based leaders.
  - Will again help lead retreats.
- Schedule is very active for the spring. Discussing aspects of a busy schedule and how it affects the contemplative life of the core community.

#### Service to adults (Karen) –

- Adult events:
  - Two women's overnights a year.
  - 80's weekend support.
- Developing manuals and orientation materials for summer students.
- Karen and Natalie meet with students at the Mountain that they are mentoring to be future leaders.
- How do we reach out to people who are spiritually searching?
  - Build with Living Stones pods.
  - Looking at virtual communities for women's spiritual needs?
  - Continuing with adult and student formation.
  - Looking for intergenerational experiences. Before Dan died they talked about creating regional teams for MIH and connecting regional teams across the country.
  - How can we partner more with SBU? Perhaps a pod type experience.
  - Patty Finnerty has volunteered to develop an electronic library.
  - Developing a Branch for civil discourse discussions.
  - Working with the SBU Justice Circle. SBU working on forming a commission for sustainability.
  - Looking at forming a student run thrift store on campus. Matrecia informed us that the School of Business wants to start a professional clothes closet.

#### Service to the Province (Mike) –

- Have been asked to do retreats at other friaries/communities.
- Discussing more hermitages at the Mountain for friars to stay and enter more fully into a contemplative life.
- Have had many novitiates taking retreats at the Mountain. When they become involved in other communities in the Province, they tell about the Mountain.
- Fr. Roger \_\_\_\_\_ our rep?? from the Province is coming for a stay at the end of March. Karen spoke with him at Synod. He asked Allie Leis to work with him on a young adult experience. Kathy Colucci has asked Fr. Roger to one of our Board meetings. She will try to get him to come for one of the fall meetings.

Discussion on when to refresh our strategic plan. The current plan will be on our portal for review.

#### Committee reports:

##### Legal Advisory Committee (Otto) –

- Time to update bylaws. Will prepare recommendations for revisions in advance of next meeting.
- Intellectual property – Province owns intellectual property. Believe we have no problem using what Fr. Dan created. Should trademark our Mountain logo. We have a volunteer that has offered to put all of Dan's art in an archival box so they do not degrade.
- Discussion about making our property part of a land conservancy. If we are interested, we can find someone who knows about this kind of law. Anthony Tirone has some knowledge.

##### Land Committee (Mike) –

- Continuing conversations with Chris Premielewski about land across the road. Putting an offer in front of the family soon, after the Committee and Legal approve the offer.

##### Communications Committee (Greg and Mary Freeman) –

- Talking about "information overload" in general and how we are received. How can our messages be more impactful?
- Working with Michelle on the print newsletter.
- Working on endowment profiles.
- Discussions on the creation gap without Dan. He was our frequent outreach on Instagram and other social media. How/who do we keep that going?
  - Types of content:
    - Ministry
    - News
    - Storytelling
    - Events
  - Who will be the content producers:
    - Resident community
    - Who else?
  - Channels:
    - Website
    - Facebook

- Instagram (main and student site)
- Email
- Print newsletter
- Other
- Editorial process considerations:
  - Central planning location
  - Allow for spontaneity
  - How share content
  - Staffing of content process

#### Nominations Committee (Karen) –

- Due to roll off Board: Otto, Jackie and Katie.
- Have four people who want to join: Matt Cressler, Mary Freeman, Christine Cusick, and Mary Domes. They will be voted on at the April meeting.
- Going over other names of people interested. Some will go onto committees first to get a feel for the Mountain.

#### Finance Committee (Katie Trosch) –

- Katie and Martha Kopcienski are working on wrapping up the 2024 fiscal year reporting. They are working with our outside accountant to finalize.
- Looking for a new CPA firm to review our financials and do our tax return. We hope to move toward having an audit done in the future. We will do an RFP to get three quotes for this work.
- Looking for an accountant or CPA firm to guide us on the accounting and reporting for the new endowment. We want to be sure to set up the tracking of the endowments correctly. We also need someone to help with internal accounting work with Martha switching to a volunteer role.
- Our investments with the Nolan Group (Merrill Lynch) are going well. We review this on a quarterly basis. Marty Shields (a member of the committee) reviewed our portfolio to see how it performs vs. others. We are looking to establish a separate Investments committee which will review the portfolio more closely and more frequently with the endowment money coming in.

#### Buildings and Grounds (Sarino) –

- Have contract for solar batteries at the House of Peace.
- NYS, is giving rebates for solar batteries April 1 and beyond. Federal 30% credit and NYS has a rebate and then the batteries will be between \$12K and \$24K depending on Federal Budget.
- Have completed major renovations on Juniper.
- Working with a new architect, Tammy Hilmey, on the entrance of the Chapel. Putting on a full size room on the deck. Besides helping with the weather aspect it will be a place for other activities and not just a vestibule. This will be a long term project. It will not start until 2026.
- Dealing with a pest problem in the Chapel basement. Had to take down the ceiling and will keep it exposed.
- House of Peace:

- Have pest problem in the house also. The project is underway to take care of the problem.
- In the kitchen, the butcher block has been changed out.
- All countertops will be changed out to quartz. Once countertop is done, backsplash will be put in. Dishwasher area will be tiled. All drawers and hardware will be new, all door fronts will be taken to Jim's workshop and will be refinished.
- Hot water tank need to be changed out – 30 years old. Will replace instead of repair.
- Discussing moving everything to electricity. What is costly is that our buildings are undersized, we only have 100 amps but need 150 amps so we need to rewire things. Will be costly. If we are going electric, we need to upgrade. More to come on this discussion.
- FR. Bill has stepped into the role of project coordinator.

Personnel Committee (Dianne) –

- In the process of finding an assistant for Br. Joe.

Ended meeting with prayer.

Next meeting:

April 25-26, 2025