

## **Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, April 15, 2021**

**6:00 pm**

**VIRTUAL MEETING via Zoom**

**1. Prayer: Sue Heard**

**2. Formation: Sean Moynihan**

**3. Review of Minutes**

- No corrections to be made. Motion to accept minutes, seconded and approved.

**4. Old Business – Part 1**

- Recommendations based on Parish Survey Feedback
  - o Resume outdoor Communion Service
  - o Resume monthly Youth Mass on Sunday evenings
  - o Have a one time parishioner mailing to acknowledge survey feedback, provide communication and listing of upcoming events. This, however, comes with additional expenses, so a bulletin announcement is both more immediate and will not incur the cost. It is also a patch pending a decision on the mailing.
- The Worship Commission has not met since the recommendations so there has not been a chance to discuss obstacles to the first two recommendations (scheduling volunteers, availability, etc).

**5. Worship Discussion: Laura Cooman**

- Laura Cooman (Director of Music and Worship) outlined the two pronged approach in response to the Covid situation: following both the Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidance and those of the Bishop's office. The next Worship Commission meeting is scheduled for Monday night, where they will discuss the recommendations for the Communion Service and the Youth Mass. Pam will also be at that meeting.
- While the use of the hymnals is under consideration in some circumstances, the thinking is not to bring them back yet as the books are not cleaned and require contact touching. The use of the leaflets with the hymns will be continued at present. The choirs will also remain small, due to placement concerns for social distancing. They will also be masked. In addition to the number of singers in the choir area, there is the question of the comfort for those who are sitting adjacent to the zone. Could the choir expand to take over the first pews

St. Mark Pastoral Council providing Father Pat with knowledgeable and prudent consultation by investigating thoroughly, reflecting deeply, and formulating practical conclusions to pastoral matters.

by the choir area and therefore be enlarged? There will be a potential conflict with attendance, as they might interfere with arrivals and the capacity limitations. At the 11:00 am Mass, the numbers are close to the 200 capacity (about 185) and distribution within the church is uniform. At the 5:30 pm vigil, the attendance is slightly smaller (about 135).

- Discussion occurred on Mass times, with the possibility of opening another Mass time. This is possible due to the lessening of the CDC cleaning requirements and will aid in getting Masses back on schedule. Could we offer an Easter-like service with Communion distribution for those who do not want to enter the church so they live stream the Mass and still receive Communion? This will be discussed as an option instead of a separate Communion Service as held last fall. The separate service had problems with timing and with volunteers. Lay ministers are still on pause (local decision) to limit contact. The ministry groups need to be canvassed to see who is willing to come back and when. The ushers are back, the lectors are back on a limited schedule, the altar services and liturgy coordinators are still on hold and awaiting comments.
- Is it possible to have the May crowning outside? This is to be discussed.
- There was some feedback that other parishes in the area are moving faster and bringing services back faster than St. Mark. The key is that everyone is working at their own comfort level, so we could start things, move forward, and let folks join when they are ready.
- First Communion - how do we make people feel safe and welcome in church? Can the second graders get to Mass before their First Communion? Some of the parents are not taking students to church, but this has been a trend even before the pandemic.
- Thanks for the effort to type up sermons and intercessions for deaf parishioners.
- How to lessen people's fear may be addressed by the communications in the third recommendation. A funding source has volunteered to help cover the cost. It is possible that no changes in liturgy schedule might be made until the first weekend in June as the First Communion Masses are already scheduled. Note that the Youth Mass is not a weekly Mass commitment and is not a schedule change. The June Youth Mass is often used for the recognition of parishioner graduates.

## **6. School Update:        Kimberly Parker**

- Endeavored to get all students back in the building. They will be back in full over the next few weeks. It allows some students on a blue/gold alternate hybrid schedule, as some parents are still not comfortable with all students returning.
- A creative system for lunch involves measuring marks in the hallway. When inclement weather conditions require students to eat inside, they eat at the marks. The students seem to be enjoying the uniqueness of the situation.
- For next year, the plan is for two rooms per grade, with the gym being used as the lunch room, with new tables or new methods of separating students to the six foot safety standard.

St. Mark Pastoral Council providing Father Pat with knowledgeable and prudent consultation by investigating thoroughly, reflecting deeply, and formulating practical conclusions to pastoral matters.

- Enrollment for next year has waiting pools for all grades except 2nd. If you have any interested second graders, send them in the school's direction.
- The planning for the end of this year and for the next academic year is being made to cover the variable possibilities.
- If Covid-19 vaccine for under-18s becomes available, will it be tacked onto the list of required vaccines? While the school does have a vaccine policy, it does not and cannot require it for employees, let alone students. Will require legislative action at levels far above the school level.

**7. PTPO Update: Jennie Hooker**

- Lion Laps happened virtually on Monday (except for Preschool, which was done outdoors at St. Mark). While it was done at home, there was much enthusiasm, support, and sponsorship. The overall goal was to raise \$42K, it received \$50K! The donation website is open until Monday.
- The next Dining for Dollars event is Tuesday the 20th at Viva Sol Juice company. It is near Panera.

**8. Finance: Tom Brownell**

- Finances are in good shape, with collections holding their own. Expenses are down, with net income on the rise. Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) funds are undergoing forgiveness paperwork, but are still counted as a loan at this point of time.
- School finances are good. Tuition is on budget and expenses are down. Next year, things are looking good with full classrooms.
- Two of the long-term capital projects (AC chillers and columbarium expansion) are underway.
- Planning for next year's budget is also underway. At our June 17 Pastoral Council meeting, the Finance Council chair will attend to update us on the new budget.

**9. Commission Reports (Questions or Discussion):** Written reports received Tuesday of week of meeting

- a. Community Service: Sarah Kirk
  1. No additional information
- b. Religious Education: Andrea Kramer
  1. Discussions underway for the return of Religious Education classes in the fall
  2. There will be no Vacation Bible School over this summer
- c. Community Growth: Betsy Zolper

St. Mark Pastoral Council providing Father Pat with knowledgeable and prudent consultation by investigating thoroughly, reflecting deeply, and formulating practical conclusions to pastoral matters.

1. No additional information
- d. Worship: Pam Burke
  1. More information after the next Worship Committee meeting
- e. Youth: Tom Pell
  1. Tom will be departing from his Council role due to a variety of circumstances. He will try to stay on until Kevin Flores finds a new head for the commission.

#### **10. Old Business – Part 2**

- After previous examples where parish communications, especially in the bulletin, are unclear or may misrepresent points, the council decided to draft a Parish Communications Guide for potential adoption by Fr. Pat. The draft guide presented to the council for review is designed to assist ministry leaders in the various communications options and where to share their news, along with standard style practices. For example, “***ST MARK***” should always be in all caps, bolded, and italicized. Is there a period? The style guide in the *Maneline* will provide confirmation. It is also pointed out that clickable links for websites do not work on hardcopy or pdfs, so complete web addresses should be listed. The guide can also assist with timing and deadlines.
- Please encourage people to submit articles and information to the bulletin or to the Facebook page. Other suggestions include calling items in the guide by their name, such as Lion News and not the School Newsletter. There is a request to leave the prototype open for additional comments and discussions prior to approval.

#### **11. New Business:**

- None

#### **12. Eyes and Ears:**

- Remember that the parish runs the entire spectrum from those who want to return immediately with no restrictions to those who are not willing to return due to health concerns.
- Is there a possibility of having events in the open during the summer? An outdoor movie at the school? Or coffee and donuts outside after Mass? Schedule a picnic with time slots for people to sign up? Some churches in the area are having numerous events but do nothing using indoor facilities.

#### **13. Closing Prayer: Father Pat**

**Meeting concludes at 7:37 pm**

**Next Meeting: May 13, 2021**

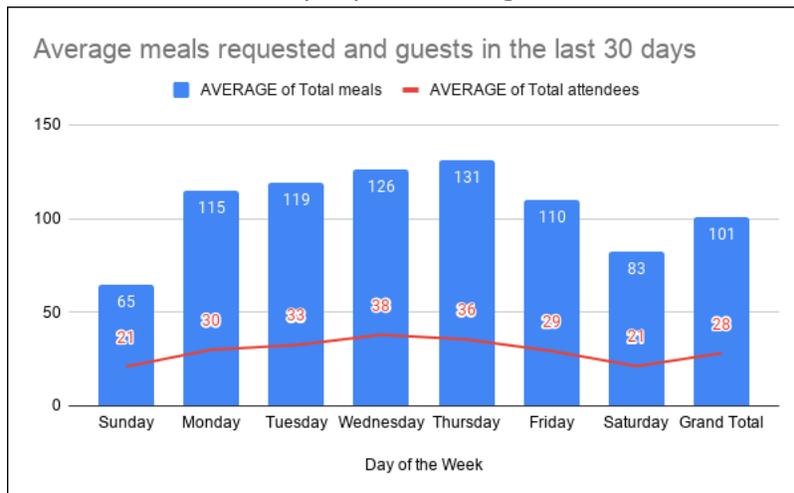
St. Mark Pastoral Council providing Father Pat with knowledgeable and prudent consultation by investigating thoroughly, reflecting deeply, and formulating practical conclusions to pastoral matters.

# Service Commission Report for March 2021

Gift of Peace: Every first Thursday, we provide one meal/month to the Reston Shelter. Food is prepared in volunteer's homes, delivered to St. Mark kitchen, then re-delivered to the Shelter. St. Mark has such generous volunteers!

ESL: We are still conducting ESL and Citizenship classes via Zoom for about 80 students. Our Winter/Spring term is coming to a close on May 6. We may start a Zoom Summer Conversation class if there is interest. Right now we are making our tentative plans for Fall classes, hoping to return to full in-person classes if circumstances permit.

Hot Meals Team (FACETS): The FACETS Hot Meals team was excited to reconvene on March 22 to prepare and deliver over 125 meals to the homeless. The FACETS Hypothermia Prevention Program (where homeless receive meals as well as shelter) ended on March 31, so we expect to see an increase of people needing food in the coming weeks. We will be preparing meals again until May 24, but thought you'd be interested in seeing increases in numbers of people receiving meals over the month of March.



Matthew 25: We continue to collect an abundance of food from our generous Parishioners. Food has been collected all year and re-distributed to several area food banks...most notably FamilyPASS, St. Lucy Warehouse and the Lamb Center. Additional items were collected in March from the families in the St. Mark school, as the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classes headed a drive for the Lamb Center.

PACT: We are starting to visit some of our homebound Parishioners with Fr. Pat's approval. As long as the PACT minister is the same for the homebound person each time (versus rotating help) AND both parties are vaccinated and ok with the arrangement. We are still waiting to restart our weekly visits to Sunrise retirement home, as we need approval from Fairfax County, and our Bishop.

Social Action Linking Together (SALT): In short, SALT arranged:

1. a SALT Richmond Wrap-Up Senate Panel TV show with four Senators on TV Channel 10;
2. a SALT Richmond Wrap-Up House Panel TV show with two Delegates on TV Channel 10;

St. Mark Pastoral Council providing Father Pat with knowledgeable and prudent consultation by investigating thoroughly, reflecting deeply, and formulating practical conclusions to pastoral matters.

3. I spoke on the Ken McMillan hosted Inside Scoop TV Channel 10 show featuring Criminal Justice --SALT Advocacy; and
4. I Spoke at the St John Neumann Lenten Stations on "I was in Prison and you visited me."

SALT Family Services (TANF) Priorities: **PASSED! Our Budget Amendment Item 350 #1s increased TANF benefits & the Standards of Assistance by 10% effective July1, 2021. This Budget amendment also increases TANF Benefits by 10% each year—addressing our continuing "goal to close the gap!!" --by bringing TANF benefits up to 50% of the poverty level! It also provides for INDEXING TANF for Cost of Living adjustment Increases annually!**

SALT Criminal Justice Priorities: **PASSED! Prison Family Video Visitation Program Budget Amendments at \$250,000 by Delegate Kaye Kory Item 400 #1h & Item 400 #1s by Senator Adam Ebbin THAT WILL DRASTICALLY EXPAND Prison Family Video Conference opportunities and develop a model center at one prison to be replicated at the other prisons.**

*See message.....Folks...This....'Positive' Result'....for..."SALT"....providing 'assistance' - to 'less fortunate' people....came about...when JOHN HOREJSI, their 'Founder....appeared as a Guest on our"COMMUNICATING TODAY" T.V. Show, last year....!!*

*...We're proud...that we could be of some assistance - for this 'Worthy Cause'.....John M....Deedee....Irina...  
[www.communicatingtoday.com](http://www.communicatingtoday.com)*

#### **Other Random Service Projects:**

Direct Assistance: There have not been a lot of requests for rent/utilities help. Most likely as a result of the Government stimulus checks and the postponement of foreclosures and rent collections. We continue to build up our Poor Box account in anticipation for when that all ends.

Tithing Allocation Committee: We met in March, 2021 and reviewed one application from Just Neighbors for \$9,000. The full amount of the grant was approved and distributed. Just Neighbors helps migrant families work through the legal system in the many areas of help that is needed.

Rice Bowls: We continue to receive Rice Bowls back from our Parishioners following the Lenten season. Not as many have been collected as in years past. But, this is expected with the lower turnout at our Masses because of Covid.

Lenten Cross Food Collection: Again, St. Mark parishioners were extremely generous in answering the call for help with our Lenten Cross project. Many, many needed items and funds were donated throughout Lent. All items were delivered to the House of Mercy Project in Manassas.

St. Mark Pastoral Council providing Father Pat with knowledgeable and prudent consultation by investigating thoroughly, reflecting deeply, and formulating practical conclusions to pastoral matters.

# Religious Education Report for April 2021

## SACRAMENTS

1. Baptisms: Five Baptisms are scheduled in April.
2. First Eucharist
  - a. Postponed First Eucharist for nine now-3<sup>rd</sup> graders will be at the April 24 and 25 Masses.
  - b. First Eucharist for 2<sup>nd</sup> graders are scheduled for all weekend Masses in May.
3. Confirmation: To accommodate physical distancing, there will be three Confirmation Masses (May 21, June 8, and June 9 at 7 pm); Fr. Pat will confer by delegation of Bishop Burbidge.
4. RCIA: Twin SMCS 4<sup>th</sup> graders and two teens are preparing for the Sacraments of Initiation in 2022.
5. Full Communion with Catholic Church: There are now 3 Baptized women preparing for Full Communion.

## ADULT FAITH FORMATION

1. Bible Studies: A study of *Jesus: The Way, The Truth and the Life* is starting on April 15 and continuing successive Thursday mornings. Two additional groups may be starting the following week on Mondays and Tuesdays.

## CHILDREN'S FAITH FORMATION

1. Children's RE for the current school year ends with classes on April 25 and 26.
2. RE staff have sent a survey to catechists and RE families to determine interest for in-person RE classes next school year, starting either September 2021 or January 2022. Online and homeschool RE options would continue to be offered. Jean Lupinacci anticipates in-person RE classes will be on Sunday mornings, to be planned around the worship schedule at that time. An online RE class option with a catechist would be on Monday, pending survey results.

## April 2021 Community Growth Activities Report

**Always Our Children (AOC):** St. Mark ministry for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender parishioners, their families and friends. Our mission is to be a presence within our St. Mark Community - a place of support and welcome. The next AOC meeting is a Zoom gathering on Monday, May 3rd at 7:00 PM. All are warmly welcome, and all conversation and comments are respectfully received. For the Zoom ID information, please contact Mary Purdy at 703-385-9572.

**Bakers for Funerals:** Cannot have receptions. Will likely recruit when receptions resume.

**Bereavement:** The Bereavement Program is wrapping up the winter session on April 11. We are looking forward to a spring session, once we get requests and referrals. We partner with OLG, and are pleased to suggest their online event to all who have suffered loss.

**Loss and Grieving During the Pandemic - Zoom Presentation:** April 22nd, 7 - 8 pm.

Part of OLG's monthly pandemic fatigue series. Dr. Kristin Bianchi will identify self-care strategies to manage grief in constructive ways. Please sign up to attend - <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E044EA8A72EA7FC1-loss>

**Care for Our Common Home Ministry (CCH)** – Discussed acceptable site criteria for Mary Garden with Eric Peterson. Possible sites will be identified later this month. Adopt a Highway clean-up April 24<sup>th</sup> (new date) in celebration of Earth Day – April 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**Christians in Commerce (CIC)** – Meeting weekly through Zoom.

**Ecumenical Bereavement Ministry through the Becky Love Foundation (BLF):** The Grief Group remains on hold, with hope to coordinate with a new counselor in the next few months.

**Evangelist Ministry –**

**Alpha:** Contact John at [jhwmitchell@yahoo.com](mailto:jhwmitchell@yahoo.com), or Fr. Tuck at [grinnellhorace@gmail.com](mailto:grinnellhorace@gmail.com) for times and days for spring Alpha sessions

**Following Christ - Easter Series - Wednesdays, 7:45-9:15 pm,** starting the week after Easter, April 7, seven weeks long, ending May 19. Please contact Sarah at [skirkbtr@gmail.com](mailto:skirkbtr@gmail.com)

**Funeral Receptions:** Paused.

**Knights of Columbus (Santa Maria Council):** No April update.

**Le Cercle Francais:** Continues to meet via Zoom every Tuesday from 10 to 12 and converse en Francais.

St. Mark Pastoral Council providing Father Pat with knowledgeable and prudent consultation by investigating thoroughly, reflecting deeply, and formulating practical conclusions to pastoral matters.

**MOMs Ministry:** Creator of the group has been transferred. New administrator monitors Facebook page and gmail account. Not having in-person gatherings due to Covid.

**Movie Night:** Cancelled.

**Newcomer's Committee:** Looking forward to welcoming Newcomers when possible.

**Pastoral Care Team (PACT):** Transferred to Service Commission per Bill Grossman.

**Prayer Requests:** Prayer Requests – We continue to receive many prayer requests that are sent out to our 150+ prayer volunteers. Bill welcomes new members to this group!

**Peace and Justice Committee (PJC):** Not meeting.

**Prayer Shawl Ministry:** The shawl ministry is not meeting but we are producing shawls.

Barbara Johnson is presently recuperating from a broken hip after a fall. Maria just lost her husband, so Leadership is sparse. In May we will have baby blankets and shawls.

**Praying College Moms (PCM):** monthly PCM meetings will continue through May/June, 2021.

**PRAYING COLLEGE MOMS SPRING ROSARY!** THURSDAY, APRIL 29; 7-8:30. Please take part in our Zoom rosary and pray for holy support of our young adults ages 17-27, as they finish their school, college, training work for the year...and for success in their career development. **Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89278297831> Meeting ID: 892 7829 7831

**One tap mobile +13017158592,,89278297831# US (Washington DC)**

**Pro-Life Committee (PLC):** Maureen Barrett, Pro-life Committee chair, has changed parishes and is stepping down from the leadership role. Currently, no one from that group has volunteered to chair this committee.

**Remembrance Ministry:** We continue to send out cards and notes to the bereaved of our parish. We usually do not hear back from the people we contact but this past month two in our group received lovely thank you notes. Warms our hearts that our comfort during a family's difficult time is appreciated.

**Senior Ministry (M&M's):** Many M&M's are participating in Zoom bible study classes.

**Small Communities of Faith:** All of our Small Communities of Faith are meeting virtually. One group is meeting by Conference call weekly and the others have all adopted Zoom as their meeting venue!

**Soup and Stations:** Paused

**Welcome and Information Desk:** No April update.

St. Mark Pastoral Council providing Father Pat with knowledgeable and prudent consultation by investigating thoroughly, reflecting deeply, and formulating practical conclusions to pastoral matters.

## **Worship Commission**

The Worship Commission has not met since the previous Pastoral Council meeting. We are meeting Monday, April 19, 2021. I will submit my full report next week.

There were 360 in attendance for Easter Sunday 11 AM (spread out among the church, activity center, and parking lot).

We are working on the 2021 Liturgy Day of Reflection which will be held May 22. More details to come!

### **April Youth Ministry Pastoral Council Committee Report**

Father Pat gave Kevin permission to hold outdoor events and meetings on the property beginning now.

Jr. High Night is Friday, April 16th from 6:30 – 7:30 pm in the front parking lot.

High School Night is Sunday, April 25 from 6:30 – 7:30 pm in the front parking lot.

We have a NET Confirmation Retreat on the 24th in the back parking lot.

We sold 1160 bags of mulch this year! Not bad for a covid year...the scouts really helped us out with spreading.

We have 15 WorkCampers so far...and 4 Adult Leaders and 2 Contractors.

Sarah and Kevin are asking all WorkCampers to pay \$200 total this year (\$100 deposit paid at registration). This is for the tent rental and other expenses. St. Mark raised nearly \$6000 this year to help with building materials for Sarah's farm renovation.

Young Adult Ministry is continuing to have First Friday events.

I have decided that it is time for me to step down from Council. I have let Kevin know and he is looking for a new volunteer to fulfill the role.

St. Mark Pastoral Council providing Father Pat with knowledgeable and prudent consultation by investigating thoroughly, reflecting deeply, and formulating practical conclusions to pastoral matters.