

Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes Final

Thursday, February 11, 2021

6:00 pm

VIRTUAL MEETING via Zoom

Prayer: Sarah Kirk

Formation: Sarah Kirk

Review of Minutes

- **Motion to approve as submitted, seconded, and passed.**

School Update: Kimberly Parker

- Catholic Schools Week
Sunday (1st day of school week) addressed parishioners at Masses; thanks for the support; praying for the parishioners and their intentions
- Teachers
95% have received 1st vaccine, concurrent instruction doing well
- Pandemic plan is going well
- Option to offer more in person instruction to grades 5 to 8
 - Presently 2 1/2 days in person, 2 days online
 - Proposed 4 days in person for active special services
 - Proposed 4 days in person for those whose parents are both active essential works
- Enrollment, at present, is 369 students
- Next Year: Plans based on what is happening now, not just hope; while the release of the vaccine is great, protocols are still existing and need to be followed; the restrictions have not changed yet and will be considered for the next academic years
 - 150 applications for next year, but the school does do not have the spots, creating a plan to determine how many spots will be available.

- Parents will hear of the options during a presentation during the February 18 PTPO meeting: accept new plan, continue with existing plan, making the safest decision

- March 23 - no vocations Mass for 8th grade, there will be an online vocations event. an escape room type with teams to solve problems, and it will involve video messages from the Bishop

PTPO Update: Jennie Hooker

- Connection with parish and parishioners

- General meeting on February 18 (zoom): Health Department speaker. PTPO business, General elections - Board openings

- Dining for Dollars (week long event at Italian Gourmet), family style meal to pick up with options and accouterments, February 22nd to 26th, mention St Mark's when ordering for the donation!

- Lion Laps: school-wide fundraiser (by website, should be set to go by March), scheduled for Monday, April 12, and a parish "class" will be an option for parishioner donations

Finance: Tom Brownell

- Parish finances looking good considering the pandemic limitations. income is at the same level as it was from last year, PPT loan helped, donations still arriving from parishioners

- Stewardship campaign deemed success, 50K in new one time contributions, new contributions from some parishioners

- Request forgiveness of PPT loan, new PPT - parish is not eligible as we are doing too well

- Capital improvement, new chillers are scheduled to be installed in June, required a deposit of \$195,000.; new segment of the Columbarium is being made; new boilers are at the beginning point of acquisition.

- Survey for potential capital projects in parish and CFC is planned.

- School revenue is up due to higher enrollment and some lower expenses.

- There was an inquiry from one parishioner as his thank you letter only mentioned his regular contribution and not that from his 401 IRA. He wants to make sure that the funds were received.

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

- Community Service: Sarah Kirk
 - The hypothermia shelter went well.
- Religious Education: Andrea Kramer
 - Confirmation Mass will not be a single ceremony; bishop is delegating his authority to pastors for this sacrament.
- Community Growth: Betsy Zolper
 - Praying College Moms very active; retreats were successful
- Worship: Pam Burke
 - Lent/Easter schedule: safety is the top priority, with turn around times between masses for cleaning the church being emphasized.
 - Polled all the committees to compile best possible schedule.
 - Discussion on why can't Easter vigil be both livestreamed and open to the public?
 - The Vigil Mass ends late (1030 pm) in the evening therefore requiring the cleaning crew to work even later into the evening or arrive early the next morning to clean up before the church preparation crew for the next (930 am) mass. Is a second team to clean facility? People need to be trained in usage of powerful chemicals. Is there a possibility of having an additional training classes for volunteers? There may be other issues (such as insurance, covid liability) to be considered.
 - Option: have the Vigil Mass (10:30 pm) be open to the public, with maximum limitations, and steam the Easter Mass (9:30 am).
 - Does attendance merit the work level required? Saturday attendance was about 150, Sundays normally about 100.
 - There will not be any Confirmation candidates coming in this year at the Vigil Mass.
 - Cotton balls for Ash Wednesday are for avoidance of skin to skin contact
- Youth: Tom Pell
 - Number down due to pandemic
 - Work camp is still underway

Old Business: None

New Business:

- Engaging Parishioners and Maintaining a Sense of Community during the continued pandemic.
 - Should we do a short church survey?
 - Electronic version possible, as the elections were done with an online component. Do we want to know what people are feeling or what should be done to enhance connection and community?
- Market the church
- Times of the mass is causing people to attend other parishes
 - More proactive approach
 - Create other social events (even virtual) will be nice
 - Facebook - 5 to 10 minute weekly live content that is NOT Sunday morning
 - Tree of names for the sick
 - The Following Christ program is happening during Lent,
 - Alpha is underway with 40 people,
 - Bible study group (on zoom), and
 - M&Ms are very active
 - Engaging the school with student readers / singers. Virtual coffee and donuts. Flock Note being sampled for usage
 - Word on Fire for content. Andrea, Sarah, and Marjorie volunteered to develop survey
 - Bringing people back to church as the pandemic recedes. When returning to regular mass schedule, but still livestream one Mass to meet the need for those who do not want or cannot return
 - People will be crying out for community once things are cleared, for the spaghetti dinners to the pew communities

Eyes and Ears:

- Question about taking off your mask in common spaces like the chapel when you are alone. Just because there is no one else in the area does not mean you can take off your mask. Other people will be entering and the germs do live on the surfaces for a period of time.
- Saint Kateri habitat (pollinator garden with native plants)- how does it work with the proffers for the building of the CFC. Check with Ms Parker, Crystal, or Erik McDade.

Father Pat's Comment

- Thanks and welcome to the newcomers to the Council
- One key is bringing the information to the correct persons
- How much the parish is still committed to charitable contributions is inspiring.

Closing Prayer: Father Pat

Meeting Ends: 7:38

Next Meeting: March 11, 2021

Service Commission Report for February 2021

Blood Drive: December Blood Drive is cancelled and will reschedule for December 2021

CHINS: Received many generous gifts from St. Mark Parishioners through the Amazon Wish list during the Giving Tree time for Children in the Hospital

Christ House: Christ House ministry is on hold during Covid period.

English as a Second Language (ESL): We began this Winter/Spring term on Jan. 19 with 80 adult immigrant students distributed among our 7 levels of English. All classes are via Zoom, but we have learned a lot from our Fall term, the first time we had to use Zoom. Students and teachers are becoming more proficient and we all have figured out how to roll with the glitches that sometime happen. We are grateful for the support of Bill Grossman, Denise Argote and Mary Ann Dmochowski in the church office for helping us with the logistics of online registration, billing and textbook distribution.

We are fortunate to have so many loyal students. In a normal, in-person term we have around 100, so 80 students using Zoom is pretty good. We still have two tutors who teach 2 students via phone, since those students have no Internet access.

Gift of Peace: We continue to provide one meal/month to the Reston Shelter, on the first Thursday of every month. Food is prepared in volunteer's homes, delivered to St. Mark kitchen, then re-delivered to the Shelter.

Giving Tree / Adoption Ministry: The virtual Giving Tree was able to provide Christmas blessings to many this year. We have no concrete numbers of gifts and dollar values to provide, as much of the Giving from our Parishioners happened directly to the Organizations through their websites. We did collect, in house, lots and lots of gifts for 80 Foster Children and 20 families from FamilyPASS organization. All gifts were delivered to the Social Workers scattered throughout our area in Vienna, Reston, Fairfax, Springfield and Annandale. We received a lot of very nice thank you letters from the Children who were able to have a "Christmas morning" because of this amazing program. Many thanks to Nancy Dunaway, Mary Lou McIntire and Carolyn Peterson for their amazing help throughout the weeks leading up to Christmas.

In addition, after its service in the Narthex, the actual tree was taken to the Fairfax homeless shelter to help brighten Christmas for guests there before it was stored away for next year.

Hot Meals Team (FACETS): The Hot Meals Team is still unable to prepare meals for our homeless community. St Mark is providing donations to FACETS to purchase food in place of our usual meal contribution. This process is expected to continue at least until May 2021.

Hypothermia Shelter Program: The Hypothermia shelter team teamed up with a second faith community, Fairfax Presbyterian for the week of December 6, and with St. John Neumann Catholic Church during one week in January. We provided food and clothing to those who came to the Shelter during those weeks. The food and Clothing were donated by many of our Parishioners, and all was organized through the amazing work of Pilar Oishi.

Matthew 25: Amazing supply of food continues to be donated in our M25 area from Parishioners. Food is constantly re-distributed to our area organizations in need.

PACT: Ministry: we are still not able to visit our homebound due to Covid.

Thanksgiving Clothing Drive: We certainly hope to resume this great Service program, this year, 2021!!

Social Action Linking Together (SALT): SALT Bill & Budget Amendment Tracking Form

TANF Increase and Standards of Assistance Budget Amendment Item 350 #1h by Delegate Sam Rasoul.

TANF Income Disregards Fact Sheet 2021 Budget Amendment Item 350 #5s by Chief Patron Senator Ghazala Hashmi.

Prison Family Video Visitation Budget Amendments Item 400 #1h & Item #356 #14h by Delegate Kaye Kory & Budget Amendment Item 400 #1s by Senator Adam Ebbin.

Ending the Management and Operation of Virginia Private Prisons SB-1179 Laid on the Table in R&SS.

SB 1301 The Virginia Coalition on Solitary Confinement --SB 1301 patron Senator Joseph Morrissey; no prisoner can be placed in solitary confinement except for providing medical and mental health treatment. (in Appropriations, passed R&SS and Finance & Appropriations On the Senate Floor)

HB 2325 Corrections Ombudsman, Office of the Department of; created, report by Delegate Hope provides for power to inspect prisons, recommend and monitor improvements to prison conditions and facilities, and help resolve prisoner, staff, and family concerns. *(in Appropriations SubC – Laid on the table)*

HB 2263 Passed Courts of Justice/SB1165 Passed the Full Senate 21-17, legislation to abolish the death penalty in Virginia.

Increasing access to SNAP, HB1820 (Delegate Helmer); 25,000 Virginia families eligible for food assistance federally funded. (on the House floor)

Other criminal justice bills: The House and Senate will also have to work out pretty significant differences in their expungement reform bills ([HB2113](#), Herring-HD46; and [SB1339](#), Surovell-SD46); and their bills to eliminate mandatory minimums ([SB1443](#), Edwards-SD21; and [HB2331](#), Mullin-HD93).

Other Random Service Projects:

Direct Assistance: No surprise here. We are helping a lot of folks in financial need through our collections in the St. Mark Poor Box. Parishioners have been very generous in mailing in money to us specifying the Poor Box.

Tithing Allocation Committee: We met in January and agreed to distribute funds to 3 great local organizations who applied for Grant money: Lamb Center, HOPE of Northern Va and Second Story. We meet, again, in March, 2021 to decide on funding for whatever applications come to us between now and then.

Rice Bowls: We have distributed enough Rice Bowls to all of the students in St. Mark school and the RE program. We will place many more in the Narthex, beginning Ash Wednesday. Folks are to return the Rice Bowls with coin/loose change to the St. Mark Office. In turn, those funds will go to help Catholic Relief Services.

Religious Education Report – February 2021

SACRAMENTS

- Baptisms: There were 3 Baptisms held in January, one in February. No Baptisms are scheduled during Lent. For April, 3 are scheduled.
- First Reconciliation
 - SMCS children are receiving First Reconciliation during the school day on three Fridays: February 12, 19, and 26.
 - RE children are receiving the Sacrament on two Saturdays: February 6 and 20. On February 6, 18 children received Penance.
- First Eucharist
 - Postponed First Eucharist for 3rd graders are scheduled for all Masses on the last weekend of April.
 - First Eucharists for current 2nd graders are scheduled for all weekend Masses in May.
- Confirmation: This past Friday, the Bishop's Office gave delegation to Fr. Pat for Confirmation, due to continued social distancing requirements. We cannot fit all this year's 88 families in the church on May 21 (scheduled date Bishop was coming to Confirm). We will have 3 Confirmation Masses with Fr. Pat instead (dates TBD).
- RCIA: twin SMCS 4th graders and one teen are preparing for the Sacraments of Initiation in 2022.
- There will be no one brought into the church at this year's Easter Vigil.
- Coming into Full Communion with Catholic Church: an adult father and son paused their preparation in possible anticipation of the mother joining them. The son is now moving to CA soon but is still working with Jean Lupinacci on his spiritual formation. There are 2 Baptized women who started their preparation last week.

ADULT FAITH FORMATION

- Bible Studies:
 - 22 people are finishing their study of Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible this week.
 - 18 people started a 10-week Exodus study on January 21.
- Pastoral Council Retreat: Thank you to Andrea Kramer, Sarah Kirk and Karen Asta for leading this retreat.

CHILDREN'S FAITH FORMATION

We are in week 17 for children's faith formation with online RE classes, and all is well. Jean Lupinacci is continuing to dialogue with the Catechists and is currently planning a Catechist formation session for Lent.

February 2021 Community Growth Activities Report

Always Our Children: The St. Mark ministry for the LGBT community, their families and friends, continues meeting, by Zoom. Our mission is to be a presence within our St. Mark community - a place of support and welcome. Our meetings are held every other month on the second Monday. The next meeting will be on March 8 at 7:00.

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

Bereavement: We started a new Bereavement Program, by zoom, Sunday, Feb. 7, 3:30 - 4:30, continuing for 9 sessions. Using **The New Day Journal** by Sr. Mauryeen O'Brien, we have a team of facilitators and 8 guests signed up so far. We will continue to take more participants for a few weeks. Thanks to Kathy Kelmelis for sending us names of recently bereaved ST MARK parishioners, 3 of whom are joining us.

Care for Our Common Home Ministry (CCH) – Will place Lenten actions in the bulletin with weekly suggestions for caring for creation by living simply. CCH has joined a diocesan program to encourage parishes, schools and parishioners to create St. Kateri habitats on their properties.

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

Ecumenical Bereavement Ministry through the Becky Love Foundation (BLF): We have a new volunteer counselor to host the Grief Group, and hope to have the monthly Grief Group up and running in March, meeting the 3rd Tuesday of each month.

Evangelist Ministry - Alpha: Currently holding online sessions about halfway through.

Funeral Receptions: Paused.

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

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

MOMs Ministry: No February update.

Movie Night: Cancelled.

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

Pastoral Care Team (PACT): We cannot allow our Eucharistic Ministers to visit with our elderly homebound parishioners until we are cleared by the State/Bishop. Same thing goes for our weekly service/visit with the many folks at Sunrise Retirement Home in Oakton. St. Mark PACT ministers continue with the next best thing – calling to visit via phone.

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: No February update.

Praying College Moms (PCM): The PCM Parish groups throughout the Diocese, continue to meet monthly virtually. Some groups meet to provide fellowship and emotional support in these trying times, and include group prayer (St. Mark's group). Some groups meet to say the Rosary together, with time for petitions, and some fellowship too. This is providing an opportunity for Mother-to-Mother socialization, with Christ in the picture, and in their hearts ... during these challenging times. The monthly PCM meetings will continue through May/June, 2021. PCM organization was included in a recent **Arlington Archdiocese of Catholic Women**, Newsletter, as a "great pick for spiritual formation".

Yearly Retreat: "Divine Trust; Not Just for Saints" on January 31st: The life and example of St. Monica, as a model for Trust in our lives with young adults. The retreat facilitator was Frances Chamberlin OCDS, an original member of the PCM group, a past St. Mark School educator, and a St. Mark parishioner. This year, the retreat was presented as a Webinar/mini retreat via Zoom. Success was seen in the relaxed faces after instruction and practice in St. Teresa of Avila's contemplative prayer, "Prayer of Recollection". Like Lectio Divina, this prayer type uses as a starting place gospel, and scriptural passages. The break out session allowed for individual expressions of relating to St. Monica's life story.

Sunday, April 18th: PCM Rosary said for over 600 young adults. Via Zoom: 3:00 -4:00: A Rosary said for the success of students for their end of the year exams, career choices, summer job experiences, and good health.

A Catholic women's parish group, "Wings" at St. Charles Borromeo Church, in Livingston, CA. will sponsor Frances, to give the same lecture, with a Lenten theme, in their monthly March meeting. Also, on the table is a request to have a weekly series of this type of Contemplative prayer (Prayer of Recollection) offered; on a Sunday afternoon ... to learn the process more deeply and receive feedback from a teacher.

Pro-Life Committee (PLC):

The March for Life was not held in Washington DC. However, there were other activities that St. Mark parishioners attended. There was a Life Chain in Centerville outside of St. Veronica. Many people went to pray in front of the abortion

center in Falls Church. The speeches were on-line. From 1-3 there was adoration in the church which was well attended. We are now organizing prayer for 40 Days for Life in front of the abortion center in Falls Church.

Remembrance Ministry: The Remembrance Ministry continues as always.

Senior Ministry (M&M's): No February update.

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 February update.

Worship Commission – February 2021

Lent/Easter Schedule below.

This meeting was prior to staff meeting when actual services were discussed and decided. All committees had an opportunity to indicate their preferences for masses and services. Health and safety is always the top priority. Ashes will be distributed via cotton balls with a new one for each parishioner.

There are no RCIA candidates coming into the church so the Easter Vigil won't be as long. Lenten readings are B cycle readings.

Diocese Extraordinary Minister workshops usually planned won't be happening as we are not having any EM's at masses.

Confirmations were discussed and those are further addressed in the Religious Ed report. It was speculation during this meeting.

There will be further discussion about reintroducing the communion service, but that would prove a challenge with the addition of the 11:00 mass Sunday morning.

The new candlestands in the church are completed and beautiful. Thank you to Ron and Judy Wilgenbush.

Eyes and Ears: There was a big discussion about people in church and the chapel not wearing a mask even when they are alone. These are public spaces and aerosols and droplets spread and are left on surfaces when parishioners leave. Masks need to stay on, even if no one else is present.

2021 Lent/Easter Schedule

Ash Wednesday – February 17

9:15 AM public Mass in Church, livestreamed

5:30 PM public Mass in Church, livestreamed, overflow in AC and communion in ELC

*Ashes distributed with cotton balls

*Need ushers to help with ash distribution, as well as communion

Palm Sunday – March 27/28 – Regular weekend schedule

5:30 PM public Mass in Church

9:30 AM livestream Mass in Chapel

11:00 AM public Mass in Church

*Palms in Narthex; no fancy processions

Triduum

Holy Thursday – April 1

7:30 PM public Mass of the Lord's Supper in Church, livestreamed

*ending procession: ministers only

*adoration in the Church until midnight

Good Friday – April 2

3:00 PM public Liturgy of the Lord's Passion in Church, livestreamed

*no stations of the cross

*adoration of the cross in Church until 10 PM

Easter Vigil – April 3

8:30 PM livestream Mass in Chapel

Easter Sunday – April 4 – Regular Sunday schedule

9:30 AM livestream Mass in Chapel

11:00 AM public Mass in Church, livestreamed, overflow in AC and communion in ELC

2:00 PM Mass in Church for Cameroon community

Stations of the Cross – Fridays in Lent

7:30 PM public Stations in Church, beginning February 19

Communal Penance – March 28

No formal service; priests available for individual confession at 7 PM

The Light Is On – Wednesdays in Lent

6:00-7:30 PM reconciliation in the Chapel, beginning February 24

Liturgy of the Hours: Evening Prayer – TBD

Notes on January/February 2021 for Virtual Parish Council Meeting

Jr. High Highlights:

- Our Jr. High Friday ZOOM nights are not well attended due to them being online for school all day.
I did get permission from Fr. Pat to have a private screening at Cinemark Theatres. We were able to get 4 youth at the last minute to enjoy “The Croods”. I’ve advertised the next one in March already with some promise of more attendance.
- I am hoping as the weather cooperates and gets warmer and it stays lighter later, we can have some activities here (outside) in the front parking lot.
- The NET Day of Reflection on April 24th will take place in the back parking lot near the ELC. I have 5 priests coming for part of the day to hear confession. Fr. Pat being one of them. Since that date falls a day before St. Mark’s Anniversary, I plan to have a couple sheet cakes for dessert for the youth. This reflection day is the Confirmation Candidates’ second half of their retreat. The first half was online over ZOOM. Hopefully, having a in person retreat will inspire them.

High School Highlights:

- Our HS ZOOM nights are faring a bit better, but again the youth are so done with online learning.
- Again, as Spring draws nearer, I am planning some outdoor events here at St. Mark for us to meet and participate in.
- Our yearly WorkCamp Mulch Fundraiser has been approved by Fr. Pat, however, we can’t deliver due to Covid. I sent out order forms to previous customers telling them of this situation. Order forms are also available at the Info desk. Final day to order is March 15th.

We are offering pick up in the front parking lot only on **Saturday, March 27th**. Youth will assist with loading bags in customer's cars and spreading mulch on the church grounds that day.

- WorkCamp will most likely not happen again as in years past at a high school. Instead, like last year, we will team up with St. Luke parish and work on projects at Sarah Kirk's "Turner Farm" in Great Falls. There is some Diocesan talk about opening up the 4 Catholic HS for evening dinner and program each day, but stay tune for more details.

WorkCamp is scheduled for Sunday, June 20th thru Friday, June 25th.

College Highlights:

- Nothing new to report, though I am sending out a monthly online newsletter to keep them in the loop.

Young Adult:

- Ben Porter, Tom Pell and Courtney Earll are continuing to use ZOOM to virtually meet with other young adults and advertising these virtual meetings on FB, the bulletin and flyers. The Winter/Spring months are being planned. They are having some in-person activities such as First Friday Adoration / Dinner, all with safety guidelines being adhered to. They are coordinating with Diocesan sponsored events too thru Niru at the Youth Office.