

Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 13, 2021

6:00 pm

VIRTUAL MEETING via Zoom

1. Prayer: Marjorie Brown

2. Formation: Michael Hatheway

3. Review of Minutes

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

4. School Update: Kimberly Parker

- Finished Teacher Appreciation Week. Thanks to PTPO for a wonderful week!
- School Nurse Appreciation Day: Diocesan Catholic Schools staff went to each school to personally thank every nurse.
- General status: Inching back to normal
 - i. All grades in the building are operating at full in place operations.
 - ii. Several families are taking advantage of distance learning and still attending virtually. Some of these are for the foreseeable future, others are taking advantage of the system if a student is not feeling well so they can attend classes while minimizing risk.
 - iii. The school band has resumed lessons, but presently outdoors. An outdoor band concert is scheduled for May 24.
- PTPO Dining for Dollars - SouvlakiBar on May 24.
- Field Day is scheduled for May 28.
- Plans are continuing for upcoming First Communions and Confirmations, including our school children.
- 8th grade Graduation will be in person on June 2.
- Last day of classes for the students is June 11, while the last day for the teachers is June 15.
- Feeling pretty happy about how well the school year has gone this far.
- Several teachers are leaving at the end of the year, including Mr Ruff (Social Studies) who is going to O'Connell High School.

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- Enrollment for 2021-2022 is good, with nearly all grades having a waiting pool (20-21 students per classroom). The only exceptions at present are 2nd and 8th.
- There will be special 7th grade boys and girls retreats held within the school, focusing on respecting differences.

5. PTPO Update: Jennie Hooker (Not present)

- Announcements included in Ms. Parker's school report.

6. Finance: Tom Brownell

- Finance meeting is scheduled for next week.
- Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan application for forgiveness has now been submitted.
- Finance Council chair will give a report about the proposed 2021-22 parish budget at the next Pastoral Council meeting.

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

- Community Service: Sarah Kirk
 - i. No questions or additions
- Religious Education: Andrea Kramer
 - i. No questions or additions
- Community Growth: Betsy Zolper
 - i. Alpha series - six programs successfully completed. Summer meetings will be every other week.
 - ii. Care for Our Common Home: Proposed garden project involves working with the 3rd grade at our parish school.
- Worship: Pam Burke
 - i. Working hard to finish sacraments, from finding items to coordinating the volunteers and personnel.
 - ii. Ushers issue: Is this a recruitment opportunity to connect with new families at both school and parish? Place in the school's Lion News tomorrow.
- Youth: Tom Pell
 - i. Youth Mass (junior high and high school) resuming on June 13, all should be encouraged to go!

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8. Old Business –

- Parish Communications Guide
 - i. The objective is to explain how the various communications work. It will gather the information into one location so new ministry leads will know formatting guidelines, contact information, and deadlines.
 - ii. There is concern about undo restrictions (or censorship) on submitted content. Is a guideline on acceptable sources for citation necessary? The need comes into play when our communications direct parishioners to other available info. The website link on one recent bulletin item went to a fundraiser and linkage to the intended information took some digging.
 - iii. Since we are representing the diocese, we need to follow the policies of the diocese and all submissions must be vetted. It should also be in line with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) guidelines. Will having a listing of “okay” sources to cite makes all others “not okay”? Information needs to be checked with parish staff for editorial discretion.
 - iv. Communication routes are important to keep people in the loop. Information on lead times is important as it takes processing time into account. The communications mediums section has been reorganized (electronics together, for example).
 - v. The style guide section will need input from *Maneline* for consistency. For example, how should scripture citations be listed (full book title vs abbreviation, etc), capitalization of sacraments names, etc.
 - vi. Council approved forwarding the Guide to Father Pat with the recommendation that the parish adopt it.

9. New Business:

- None

10. Eyes and Ears:

- People are asking about the survey results. The letter describing the results has been written and forwarded to Father Pat for approval but no decision made yet.
- Those attending the 11:00 am Mass are expressing happiness as they are seeing people they have not seen in a year.
- Spreading the joy of volunteering in Church.
- The June Pastoral Council meeting is presently scheduled to be virtual on the 3rd Thursday, later than normal. Andrea will reach out to council members to check on comfort with making it an outdoor meeting with maintenance of social distance requirements as it would normally include a post-meeting social.

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11. Closing Prayer: Father Pat

- Remember that the new Mass time (and live streamed) Mass is 9:00 am, not 9:30 am as it has been in the past.

Meeting Ends at 7:26 pm

Next Meeting: June 17, 2021 6:00 pm

Service Commission Report for May 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.

ESL: We ended our Winter/Spring term of adult English classes on May 6. This academic year all classes were online via Zoom, though we were able to supplement with telephone tutors for a handful of students who had no Internet access. We ended the Winter/Spring term by distributing 18 awards for perfect attendance and 11 for very good attendance. We were fortunate to have about 80 students this term, served by over 50 volunteers. We all, volunteers and students, had to learn how to use Zoom but were able to manage and overcome obstacles. We will be conducting a small Zoom summer Conversation class and already have quorum of students and volunteers signed up. We are hoping and planning (and praying) to return to in person classes in September.

Hot Meals Team (FACETS): The FACETS Hot Meals team will be preparing and distributing Hot Meals again on Monday, May 24.

Matthew 25: We continue to collect an abundance of food from our generous Parishioners.

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.

Social Action Linking Together (SALT): SALT is working on a "Heading off hunger before leaving prison" legislative proposal. People leaving prison are exceptionally vulnerable to hunger.

SALT's proposed bill allows eligible individuals in Virginia to pre-enroll in the SNAP program while still incarcerated so they can immediately access food assistance for themselves and their families upon their release. In the past, formerly incarcerated individuals could apply for SNAP benefits only after they left prison. As a consequence, it could be weeks or even months before they received food assistance—leaving them vulnerable to hunger.

The bill has a lot of upsides—and not just for the formerly incarcerated individual who gets immediately access to food assistance. In fact, it could be a model for other states. The bill's cost is minimal because pre-enrolling incarcerated individuals for SNAP benefits is as simple as adding a line to a form that recipients already fill out.

Moreover, the bill allows the state to invest in people when they need the help the most—right before they leave prison. By providing access to food assistance for such a vulnerable population, the bill can reduce recidivism and increase public safety.

Other Random Service Projects:

Tithing Allocation Committee: We are having a Tithing Allocation meeting on May 19 to review requests for funds for 3 great organizations: Haiti College Fund, Associates of St. John Bosco and the Knight of Columbus.

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Religious Education Report for May 2021

SACRAMENTS

1. Baptisms: There are 4 private Baptisms scheduled in May. The parish will return to Sunday afternoon group Baptisms and Baptisms during Mass starting in August.
2. First Eucharist: 2nd graders will receive the Sacrament during all the 5:30 pm and 11 am weekend Masses throughout May.
3. Confirmation: Three Confirmation Masses will be held, on May 21, June 8, and June 9 at 7 pm. Fr. Pat will preside and confer the sacrament.
4. RCIA: Twin SMCS 4th graders and two teens are preparing for the Sacraments of Initiation in 2022.
 - a. Jean Lupinacci would like to hold the Rite of Acceptance on August 21 at the 5:30 pm Mass. One teen has already been through the Rite, so the other three will celebrate it at this time.
 - b. Jean Lupinacci would like to plan Confirmation and Profession of Faith for 3 adult women during the summer. Date TBD.

ADULT FAITH FORMATION

1. Bible Studies: *Jesus: The Way, The Truth and the Life* meets virtually on Monday and Thursday mornings and Tuesday evenings. There are 40 participants, some are parishioners that have moved away and are so happy to be back in community with *ST. MARK*.
2. The plan is to offer adult faith formation again on Sundays this coming school year. Not sure specifically when that will start due to COVID.

CHILDREN'S FAITH FORMATION

1. RE classes have finished, however, students have until the end of the summer to complete any outstanding work.
2. Based on parent and catechist survey results, RE is expected to be in-person again on Sunday mornings from 9:30-10:45 am, given enough registrations to justify a class for each grade. No breakfast would be served. The schedule should allow families to attend the 11 am Mass together. Monday would continue to be an online option with a catechist. *My Catholic Faith Delivered* continues to be the homeschool option.
3. Jean Lupinacci will be leading a retreat on respect and honoring differences for SMCS 7th grade girls on May 27 at the request of Principal Kim Parker. Boys will have their own retreat that day.

May 2021 Community Growth Activities Report

Always Our Children (AOC): Always Our Children will have our final Zoom meeting of this ministry year May 10th. We continue to welcome new members and give thanks for Father Pat's support for our ministry's goal - to be a presence within the St. Mark Catholic community.

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

Bereavement: We finished up our latest Bereavement Program April 11, and are looking forward to starting another 9 week series in June.

Care for Our Common Home Ministry (CCH) – Working to identify site for Mary Garden this week or next. Will collaborate with Sue Heard and third grade team at St Mark School. Developing webinar on Citizen Science for March 2022 as part of diocesan Laudato Si' webinar series and the Laudato Si' 7 year plan to be released soon by the Vatican.

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

Ecumenical Bereavement Ministry through the Becky Love Foundation (BLF): The Grief Group is on hold, waiting to identify a counselor and space to hold the monthly meetings.

Evangelization Ministry: ALPHA started its 6th series on Monday, April 5th. If you are interested in joining Alpha in the fall, please contact John Mitchell at jhwmitchell@yahoo.com or Fr. Tuck at grinnellhorace@gmail.com or Karen Asta at karenjasta@gmail.com.

If you have a group of friends who would like to participate together, we will put you at your own table.

Following Christ is a seven-week journey that inspires growth in your relationship with Jesus Christ by learning and growing in basic disciplines and truths practiced by Christians since the early Church.

Following Christ is in its second series at St. Mark that began on April 7th. The "WE ARE AT WAR RETREAT: THE WORLD, THE FLESH, AND THE DEVIL" was held on Saturday, May 8th. We were joined by parishioners from St. Mark, Our Lady of Good Counsel, and several other parishes in the Arlington Diocese and around the country. **Please email Sarah Kirk at skirkbtr@gmail.com if you have any questions.**

Starting on June 2nd, the Evangelization Team will offer an opportunity for prayer, music, and fellowship on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday evenings of the month with **Life Group**. Life Group is for those who are wondering, "What's Next" after they have been through Alpha or Following Christ and would like to continue the prayer, music, and fellowship. Each session will be for one hour. We welcome ALL who would like to share together during the summer months. Look for more details to come in the bulletin and from the pulpit. **Please contact Sarah Kirk at skirkbtr@gmail.com or Karen Asta at karenjasta@gmail.com.**

Funeral Receptions: Paused.

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

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

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MOMs Ministry: Creator of 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.

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: We have taken a break. I'm still in recovery mode and have not been out. Maria's husband passed away suddenly. She was taking over. Hopefully soon we will be on track.

Praying College Moms (PCM): There is no additional news from our PCM Org. We had a successful "End of Academic Year" Virtual Rosary in late April. The Parish PCM meetings continue to meet monthly and virtually through May, then there will be a recess until September. We continue to draw new attendees to our monthly meetings.

Just to reiterate our stance at this time concerning the return of the use of St Mark for our monthly meetings: At this time, we prefer to continue to meet virtually. We recognize not all are vaccinated, and we are aware of the lack of treatments available and vaccinations not yet created for this new COVID 1.5, and other variantes of COVID 19, now found in every state in the US. We'll let you know when we wish to return to meeting in person again. Thank you for continued care and concern for our safety.

Pro-Life Committee (PLC): Seeking new chair.

Remembrance Ministry: No new news from the Remembrance Ministry. We are losing one member of our already small group and hope to find another one or two. Other than that, we persevere.

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

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Worship Commission

We will begin the new liturgy schedule on May 15-16.

5:30 PM Saturday Vigil Mass in the Church

9:00 and 11:00 AM Sunday Masses in the Church

Capacity limit of 250 per Mass.

We will livestream the 9:00 AM Mass and offer communion in the ELC for those in the back parking lot every weekend.

I realize this change is earlier than we planned it. Originally, we didn't want to make any changes until the First Eucharists were over, but it turns out that we are going to go significantly over the current 200 person limit if we don't open up another public Mass. We have 80-100 extra people signed up to attend every Mass (because of the First Eucharists). By opening another public Mass, the thought is that some of those people who would normally have attended the 11 AM will choose to attend the 9 AM instead, which will help "spread out" the attendance over the 3 Masses and alleviate some of the crowding that we expect at the 11 AM.

We will also make other liturgical changes on the same weekend:

- Cantor will sing the Responsorial Psalm
- Second lector will be added (one can read the 1st reading, one can read the 2nd reading, and Lucy, you can choose if you want the 1st or 2nd lector to read the Intercessions...just make it consistent please)
- Lectors may remove their mask while reading, as long as they put it back on immediately afterwards and before returning to their pew

There will be a Youth Mass at 6:00 pm on Sunday, June 13 in order to wish our graduating students well and then the regularly scheduled Youth Masses on the 2nd Sunday of the month, will resume on September 2021 and continue through June 2022.

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May Youth Ministry Commission Report

Junior High Youth Ministry:

NET Day of Reflection Confirmation Retreat in April went very well...80 candidates did their 2nd half of their Confirmation Retreat here at St. Mark.

Middle School WorkCamp scheduled for June 28-July 1 from 10 am-4 pm at Turner Farm in Great Falls. St. Luke, St. Joseph and CTR parishes will be joining St. Mark.

All three Confirmation Masses have been set; robes are in to be picked up.

High School Youth Ministry

Diocesan WorkCamp set with 14 youth, 4 Adult leaders and 2 Contractors at Turner Farm with St. Luke and St. Leo parishes joining us on June 20- 24.

College Night for HS Seniors (hosted by Associates of St. John Bosco) will be at St. Michael parish this year due to Covid on Wednesday, June 30th from 7-9 pm.

For both Jr. High and High School, events are now outside and not on ZOOM anymore! We had a great Easter egg hunt at the end of April.

Summer Events are really up in the air because of Covid, however I am taking about 12 youth and another adult chaperone to the Steubenville Conference at the end of July. It's at half capacity and safety protocols are in place. We will be driving 2 vans out to Ohio and back.

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