

## PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, November 18, 2021

6:00 pm

VIRTUAL MEETING via ZOOM

- 1) Prayer: Theresa Croson
- 2) Formation: Theresa Croson
- 3) Review of Minutes
  - a) Motion to approve made, seconded, and approved.
- 4) School Update: Sue Heard for Kimberly Parker
  - a) The Extended Day Care position has been filled, with a St Mark parishioner being selected.
  - b) There remains an opening for an Instructional Assistant for kindergarten (the current holder is leaving; there are three applicants under consideration.)
  - c) Government funding Cares Act paperwork has been submitted
  - d) 100 Desks and 140 chairs arrived early on Tuesday, even though they were due during the summer. The old desks and chairs are being sorted into keep and discard piles. The four new cafeteria tables are still pending delivery.
  - e) The Open House event on Sunday had a large turnout and with good energy. Forty families visited and saw the school along with the parish's liturgical arts, prayer shawl, and alpha ministries. Council member asked is there a possibility of a Ministry Fair? The opportunity to do both exists and it could help all around.
- 5) PTPO Update: Christiane Popperwell
  - a) The book fair was successful, despite missing the bulletin deadline. Word was successfully spread through the various ministries announcements.
  - b) For all those volunteering, it must be remembered that Virtus is required as is a background check. This check has an expiration date and will have to be redone for people wishing to help out if it has elapsed.
  - c) PTPO is in full agreement on the open house.
  - d) The Coat Drive gathered 182 coats Thursday and is accepting more on Friday. They cannot deliver coats tomorrow or Saturday to the Activities Center due to other events already scheduled. Bill Grossman might be able to make room elsewhere until the Activity Center is clear.
  - e) Dining for Dollars planned for next month, so stay tuned for future announcements.
- 6) Finance: Tom Brownell
  - a) School finances are good and stable.
  - b) Church income is up and expenses are flat. The cash situation is good.
  - c) The stewardship campaign was delayed due to problems with mailing and delivery.

- d) The capital improvement plan for pews is still under debate and awaiting additional information from the manufacturers.
  - e) The sound system is under scrutiny.
  - f) The piano and organ are still under consideration for replacements.
  - g) A gift from a parishioner is designated for the proposed bathroom construction, so plans are being dusted off and the project is moving to the forefront of the plans.
- 7) Commission Reports:
- a) Community Service: Theresa Croson
    - i) Hypothermia Shelter: St Mark will provide food and snacks to the hosting venues of St John Neumann on the week of January 16 and the Church of the Holy Comforter (Vienna) on January 30. FACETS will assist by providing staff during the shelter weeks. The shelter will follow distance protocols, but there are no vaccination requirements.
  - b) Religious Education: Andrea Kramer
    - i) No updates
  - c) Community Growth: Betsy Zolper
    - i) No questions to forward
  - d) Worship: Pam Burke
    - i) Christmas is Saturday, so the question of having the weekend vigil Mass at 5:30 is being raised. There is a question on staffing. The council's opinion is that we should not have the Mass. People who show up expecting it will be most vocal though.
    - ii) Christmas Eve Mass in the school gym will require masks. The simultaneous Masses in the main church and the Cassiday Activity Center will be mask optional.
  - e) Youth: Sarah Kirk
    - i) No Questions
- 8) Old Business:
- a) Donut Sunday: Thanks to all who helped staff the function. It was the first use of a provider other than the closed Shoppers Food Warehouse. Giant donuts were readily accepted, with the children loving the sprinkles. The kitchen was left in a spotless condition. Ten dozen donuts fit the bill, which is down from 30 dozen at the peak.
  - b) Parish Elections: Only four nominations for the four positions; no additional persons volunteered to run. Holding out for final decision on additional candidates on Saturday afternoon before calling off the election and appointing these candidates instead. If there is no election, an announcement will be made in the bulletin and on the website. The biographiess will go on the board to let people know about their new council members.
- 9) New Business:
- a) December Pastoral Council Social (Thursday, December 9): Normally in the rectory, but this might not be an option. Activity Center may come into play, if available. If not, we will not substitute in a business meeting. Can do a zoom social if preference. Most people are comfortable with the in-person meeting, but

feeling better if it is held in the Activity Center. Preference is for the new earlier time (6:00) over the previous time (7:30).

- b) January Staff and PC Retreat: The Retreat Center may be opening for us, but this is a rumor at this point of time. Problem with the retreat is the number of participants (100 people) and that roommates are required. Staff is still discussing.
- 10) Eyes and Ears:
- a) Pleased with Donut Sunday and happiness it brought to all attendees
  - b) Alpha planning team: in-person series with food in the Activity Center to start in January. Checking with authorities for limitations. Monday evenings, Dinner 6:30, Program 7-8:30. Sunday morning Alpha is trying to incorporate food, but it is in the gym and no food is allowed during the school year. Potential in-school Alpha, but many two-income families may make this difficult. Possible pop-up style meeting to see if people want to join.
  - c) Votive candles: not allowed due to fire hazard
- 11) Closing Prayer:           Father Pat

Meeting Ends at 7:01

Next Meeting: TBD

## PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, October 21, 2021

6:00 pm

1. Prayer: Marjorie Brown
2. Formation: Elizabeth Peters
3. Review of Minutes: Motion to approve as submitted, seconded, and approved.
4. School Update: Kimberly Parker
  - a. Thanks to Betsy Zolper and Sue Heard and the 3rd graders for their efforts in the blessing of the Mary Garden.
  - b. Still looking for school volunteers for lunch, outside supervision at recess, library assistance, and preparing students for Friday mass readers (Thursdays)
  - c. One Part time assistant position is available; runs from 4-6pm, three days a week
  - d. November 14: 1st open house 12:00 -1:30. Not exclusively for new admissions, so stop by if you would like to see the CFC.
5. PTPO Update: Christiane Popperwell
  - a. Dining for Dollars
    - i. At the Chick-fil a; \$300 earned. Minor problems with the app requirement; this will be addressed in future events.
    - ii. No Dining for Dollars in November, one is in the works for December.
  - b. Trunk or Treat is next week, from 5:15 to 7:30 pm on Thursday. Judges for best Trunk. Come in Costumes!
  - c. November 1st to 5th is the Book Fair, Need more volunteers. Also open after Mass on November 7th.
  - d. November 10th: Used uniform sale 10:00-11:15 in Activities center
  - e. Thanksgiving clothing drive is being planned.
6. Finance: Tom Brownell
  - a. Deciding on the pew replacement versus pew refurbishment plans
    - i. Refurbishment: estimated time: 12 weeks
      1. Extends the use of the high quality ash of existing pews
      2. Cracks will be mended and resurfacing of the pews
      3. Only a one year warranty
      4. Estimated life extension is 30-40 years
      5. Note that phasing the process to keep the church open will add to the time and cost.
    - ii. Replacement: estimated time: 3 to 5 weeks
      1. 15 year warranty
      2. What to do with the old pews?
    - iii. There will be new kneelers no matter which option is chosen.
    - iv. The prices are about the same
    - v. The planned event will be the summer of 2022. Note that the floor is to be replaced at the same time.
7. Commission Reports (Questions or Discussion):

- a. Community Service: Theresa Croson
  - i. No report updates or questions
- b. Religious Education: Andrea Kramer
  - i. No report updates or questions
- c. Community Growth: Betsy Zolper
  - i. Shawl ministry has new leader
  - ii. Will there be a baby shower in fall or baby blankets over Christmas?
    - 1. The shower was Pro-life committee, which is looking for a new leader
    - 2. Blankets are coordinated with Caroline Peterson
- d. Worship: Pam Burke
  - i. Great to have 5 o'clock Mass in the Cassidy Activity Center
  - ii. More crowded, allows for mask option
- e. Youth: Sarah Kirk
  - i. No updates or questions
- 8. Old Business: None
- 9. New Business:
  - a. 2022 Pastoral Council Nominations and Elections
    - i. Four at large members whose two-year terms are ending
      - 1. Monica and Sean are finishing their second term and are not eligible for reelection
      - 2. Marjorie and Rafael are not seeking to run for reelection
    - ii. Need many new candidates
      - 1. Face to face requests, advertising in bulletin, possibly approach past candidates, announcements at the end of Mass.
      - 2. Commission heads have been asked to discuss possible candidates with their groups.
      - 3. New family recruitment? Sue to follow up. Younger families? Andrea will ask Kim Parker to put in Lion News.
      - 4. Submissions of bios/photos to Crystal by October 29
    - iii. Elections Committee
      - 1. Logistics for elections on the weekends of November 13/14 and November 20/21
      - 2. Vote counting
        - a. Last year's electronic ballot was required due to Mass schedule and attendance levels. Low election turnout. Not thinking an electronic ballot is necessary this year.
        - b. Phone voting for those who cannot come. Crystal has a dedicated line that can be used for this purpose.
      - 3. Please let Andrea know you want to be on elections committee
        - a. Sean and Elizabeth
        - b. Betsy (2nd Weekend)
  - b. Donut Sunday hosted by the Council, Sunday, November 14, 9:45 to 11:00 am CAC
    - i. Starts at 8:30 for coffee and set up

- ii. Shoppers has finally closed, so donuts will now be from the Giant Oakton
10. Eyes and Ears:
- a. Alpha for St Mark families. This is a good building zone for both new and old families.
  - b. Complaint about tattered condition of Virginia State flag. The replacement is on Crystal's to-do list.
  - c. Wifi in the building. There is no budget, at present, to address this issue. The Finance Council is being clued into previous reports and it is on their radar. The Activities Center is going active in a couple of weeks. Downstairs is another issue as it requires a separate router. We are calling in Cox for pricing. It will be using a separate network for security reasons.
  - d. Dissemination of Communications Guide: still underway by the staff.
  - e. Organ and the Piano: replacement of the piano has made one parishioner very upset. Can we fix it and not replace the piano? The present piano cannot hold pitch very well, as the building humidity is an issue, along with the size of the piano. It is not in great shape, requiring tuning to be done once a month at \$200 a session. The organ (new in the mid-eighties) has been repaired several times.
11. Closing Prayer: Father Pat

Meeting Ends at 0723

Next Meeting: November 18, 2021 via Zoom

## Service Commission Report

Children in Need of Smiles (CHINS): As reported by Ann Paniszczyn, CHINS is delighted to be a part of St. Mark's Giving Tree again this year. It is hoped that many of St Mark parishioners will support the children at Inova L.J. Murphy Children's Hospital and Inova's Life with Cancer through generous donations. This is CHINS only collection of the year and they wanted to convey their appreciation for all the support from St Mark!

Clothing Drive for Thanksgiving: Paul Renard reported that the Thanksgiving Clothing Drive is right on track. All volunteers, materials, and plans are in place. The clothing drive will start collecting this upcoming Saturday (November 20) and will finish the next day on Sunday at noon (November 21).

English as a Second Language (ESL): Monica O'Keefe reported that the ESL program had one student pass her U.S. Citizenship exam so far this term.

The ESL Fall term ends December 7, 2021. The Winter-Spring term will begin January 18, 2022 ending on May 5, 2022. Classes remain online via Zoom due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

*St. Mark ESL student demographics*: The ESL program currently has a total of 69 students this term. This amount is down a bit from the initial count last month which included some individuals who did not complete registration.

Total countries participating is 26. 42% of St Mark ESL students are from various Latin American countries. This figure includes 3 students from Brazil. For Spanish speakers only, the percentage is 37.6%

The country with the largest number of students is South Korea, with 18 students (26%). ESL also has students from other countries including Syria, Russia, Ukraine, Cameroon, Japan and Viet Nam.

Giving Christmas Tree: Carolyn Peterson reported that the Gift Giving Tree organizers had a table placed in the Narthex last weekend and has recruited volunteers and contributors to Special Adoptions. The Giving Tree tags are currently being assembled this week and the tree will go up on Saturday, November 20. All volunteer slots have been filled and everyone is looking forward to a successful gift collection on the weekend of December 4-5.

Hot Meals (FACETS): Dave Kent reported that FACETS' next get together to feed the homeless is scheduled for Monday, November 22. They will have a thanksgiving meal theme and expect to prepare and serve around 125 meals to homeless folks within the Fairfax area.

Hypothermia Shelter Program: Pilar Oishi reported that there is no new information on the Hypothermia Shelter. With that being said, meetings continue to be held with members from Saint John Neumann to discuss future endeavors of this program. Currently, they have not been

able to secure a second faith community whose location and hosting week would work for everyone to attend.

Social Action Linking Together (SALT): SALT advocacy against the abhorrent use of solitary confinement in the State of Virginia was conveyed to Bishop Burbidge through an email from Fr Tuck Grinnell. Supporting documents attached to this email included a statement from another Bishop presiding within Virginia's legislative jurisdiction and two articles that appeared in the Arlington Herald. Also included were statements from [both] Popes and other authorities that demonstrates the immorality of the extended use of solitary confinement in prisons. Fr Tuck informed Bishop Burbidge that the articles referenced were researched and worked by Bob Stewart and John Horejsi from SALT. Praying that the VA legislature in this next session (starting in January) will address the inappropriate use of solitary confinement in the state prison system and that there is real possibility of positive change. Fr Tuck asked for a call to action in addressing the issue for the purpose of ending barbaric treatment of prisoners. In his response, Bishop Burbidge acknowledged the importance of the matter and forwarded the information to the Executive Director of the Virginia Catholic Conference, Jeff Caruso in support of corrective action.

# Religious Education Report for November 2021

## SACRAMENTS

1. Baptisms: 5 children were Baptized in November, and 4 are scheduled for December. We continue to hold Baptisms at liturgies outside of Mass for now.
2. The second of two Penance Workshops for families was held on November 14.
3. Confirmation is scheduled for Monday, May 23, 2022 with Bishop Burbidge. There are 68 eighth graders preparing for the Sacrament. Daylong retreats for Confirmation candidates were recently held at Hunting Ridge Retreat Center in Winchester, VA where we have typically held overnight/weekend retreats for them in non-pandemic times.
4. RCIA: there are now 13 people in the RCIA process. Rite of Acceptance and Welcome for 4 people will be held on November 28 at the 11:00 am Mass. Three additional people are in Inquiry and not ready for the Rite.

## ADULT FAITH FORMATION

1. The Acts of the Apostles Bible Study (held over Zoom) and in-person Alpha sessions on Sunday mornings during RE are both continuing along well.
2. The parish will be hosting *Forming Disciples in Mission* on March 26. It is an all-day Workshop in Evangelization, sponsored by the Diocese.

## CHILDREN'S FAITH FORMATION

1. Religious Education for children in grades 1-8 continues with in-person classes on Sunday mornings (279 are currently enrolled in RE, with about 25% of these students homeschooling rather than in-person classes).
2. Penance and Eucharist classes for 6 children older than 2<sup>nd</sup> grade are continuing to meet on Tuesday afternoons.
3. The Education Commission is being formally constituted again after several years. There are seven members representing different populations within our faith community.

## November 2021 Community Growth Activities Report

Always Our Children (AOC): Ministry for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender folks and their friends and families. Zoom meeting held on November 8<sup>th</sup>. Contact Mary Purdy – 703-385-9572.

Bakers for Funerals: We have baked for one reception.

Bereavement Program: The fall session ended October 24, with 20 registered, our largest group to date. We are hosting 2 gatherings, one on Sunday 11/14, and a second 1/8/22 for support around the holidays. The next 9-week program will start on January 9 and conclude on March 6, in person at St. Mark, room C102.

Drop-in Bereavement Group - Sacred Spaces, is led by Ellen Murphy and meets on the 2nd Tuesday of the month, in person at St. Mark, C104. We will explore aspects of the grieving process, thru Sacred Scripture, prayer, poetry, quote of creative art.

Care for Our Common Home Ministry (CCH) – Creation Care Mary Garden

Our sacred garden is taking shape. Third grade students and teachers from *ST. MARK* School are working with the Care for Our Common Home Ministry to bring our Mary Garden to life. Thirteen varieties of native plants grace our garden with more to come! You may enjoy looking at the 37 Jacob's Ladder plants added to our garden by *ST. MARK* third graders. The leaves are opposite, mimicking a ladder. See Gen 28:10-17 to refresh your memory on Jacob's dream and John 1:51 where Jesus likened himself to a ladder. Not only is the name of this native plant rich with biblical symbolism but its early blooming blue flowers are a reliable source of nectar for the season's first pollinators. If all goes well, Our Lady of Guadalupe will take her place in the garden by the beginning of December. The Herald highlighted the blessing of our Mary Garden. See the article [here](#). Our garden offers a space for spiritual reflection and for thanksgiving to our creator by offering plants that sustain our bees, butterflies, and birds. The diocese has formed a working group to encourage parishioners, parishes, and schools to plant their own Creation Care Mary Garden. If you would like to learn more about our garden or volunteer on a rotating basis to water and weed, please send an email to [stmark.cch@gmail.com](mailto:stmark.cch@gmail.com).

Christians in Commerce (CIC) – Christians in Commerce d/b/a WorkLight meets in person the first and third Wednesdays in the choir room from 7 to 8:00 AM, and by Zoom on the second, fourth and fifth Wednesdays.

Donut Sunday - No November update.

Ecumenical Bereavement Ministry through the Becky Love Foundation (BLF): Bereavement Program - started in person on August 22 for a 9 week series, with a 1/2 day retreat on Saturday, 9/18.

Evangelization Ministry: No November update.

Funeral Receptions: One reception in the past month.

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

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

MOMs Ministry: No November update.

Newcomer's Committee: No new updates for the Newcomers Committee since last month's update.

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: will donate this month to The Lamb Center the following: 18 Hats, 2 Hat & Scarf sets and 2 Scarves. The group will donate more during the year.

Praying College Moms (PCM): The Praying College Moms Group continues to meet at St, Mark, monthly in Room C102. This involves discussion leading from the Book, "And So We Pray; Guidance for Moms with College Aged Young Adults", prayer, and fellowship. Other parishes have their own unique monthly meetings, and some meet weekly and pray a Rosary together. Next month, we will be holding our meeting as a PCM Rosary, praying for over 600 young adults during the Rosary decades. God bless you all. Pax. Frances Chamberlin

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

Remembrance Ministry: No November update.

Senior Ministry (M&M's): The M&Ms group had their coffee on November 3 and there were 18 attendees. Eva Sneade led a trip to Winchester. We did not have many join - they viewed the leaves on the way, had a nice lunch and walked the outdoor Mall. It is a beginning since the pandemic.

The group had a great Thanksgiving luncheon at the Pan Am Restaurant in Fairfax. Joyce Kerrigan arranged this with the restaurant, Bill McCarthy emailed the group and we had 38 attendees. The food was very good and enjoyed by all. We are planning a Christmas carol sing-along for the December 1 coffee.

Small Communities of Faith (SCOF): No November update.

Welcome and Information Desk: No November update.

# Worship/Liturgy

Details and dates were confirmed for Advent/Christmas Masses and Services.

Liturgical Arts is on track for getting ready for all these seasons and timing to do such things as set up the Advent Wreath Thanksgiving weekend, build the creche, yes, it will be back in the narthex, wreaths in the church, trees in the planters etc.

Usher's report indicated strong concern for adequate numbers of ushers for all the Masses. We are hoping that since the CFC Gym will be a masks-required Mass, ushers who haven't been back because we are no longer requiring masks, will serve at the 5:00 Mass in the gym.

Lectors and Liturgy Coordinators are all lined up and ready to go.

Some additional cloths have been ordered to cover all the Mass locations.

EM's and altar servers also expressed concern with adequate staffing, but we will all do our best.

## *Youth Commission: November 2021*

### Middle School (Jr. High)

- The first MS event after the Kickoff was seeing a movie at Cinemark Theatres in Fairfax “Addams Family 2”. About 20 youth registered and had a good time. I was able to pre purchase tickets at a discount passing it on to the parents. \$8.99 instead of \$14.95. We actually were in the black (budget wise) a \$1.21.
- Both Confirmation Retreats went on as scheduled with little minor hiccups that every retreat will face. Missing forms, people being late etc. Overall, 62 youth had a spiritual and blessed one day retreat at Hunting Ridge.

Mr. Lupinacci was a hit with the boys on his talk about the Eucharist.

Sandy Simoncelli, an adult volunteer, had Meg Hunter Kilmer podcasts on her phone which some listened to while waiting for confession. She has podcasts on various subjects including *obscure saints*.

### High School

- The Diocesan RALLY had over 700 youth attend. Unfortunately, no St. Mark youth were present, though a few were spotted attending with other parishes. I was present helping out the Youth Office. A few other parishes had zero attendees.
- CYC (Catholic Youth Communities) launched last month with Sarah Kirk and Philip Root leading the night. Word of mouth is needed to make this grow! The 8<sup>th</sup> grade Confirmation candidates and their parents are invited to a info meeting on November 10<sup>th</sup>. Praying that people come!

### College / Young Adults

- Tom Pell and Courtney Earl are taking the reigns as volunteer leaders and developing some activities thru the St. Mark FB page.
- Niru at the Diocesan Youth Office relays upcoming events my way on a monthly basis.

### CYO Sports

- CYO Cross Country and Tennis have ended for the season. CYO CC had a few first place winners at the meet held on November 6<sup>th</sup>. CYO Tennis came in first after beating St. Agnes in the championship round.
- CYO Basketball began practices last week with over 130 players. Jimmy Garvert found a replacement, Katie Alyward, for his position next year and is training her to take over. Practices are Monday thru Friday 6:30- 9:30 pm in the CFC Gym and on weekends Saturday 9 – 5 and Sunday 1 – 5 pm
- Still finalizing COVID protocol, so all coaches, parents and players know about procedures in case someone tests positive for Covid. We are all about safety.

### Scouting

- Closely working with Todd Lundquist and Frank Anstett with Scouts and leaders to involve them more in the parish youth activities.