

Pastoral Council Meeting

Thursday, October 15, 2020

6:00 pm

VIRTUAL MEETING via Zoom

Opening Prayer: Karen Asta

Old Business

- Nominations and Elections Committee (Karen, Marjorie, Betsy)
 - To meet soon
 - Bulletin announcements
 - For candidate recruitment
 - For voting announcements
 - Use past announcements for guidance.
 - Four positions are open for at large members. Departing members: for Karen Asta (term limit), Amanda Bradley (not running for reelection), and Andrea Kramer (not running for reelection). Elizabeth Peters is running for reelection.
 - Think about people who would be a good fit and reach out to ask. Face to face discussions are the primary method of recruiting candidates. Ask them and then circulate information back to the council.
- Pastoral Council elections are scheduled for the Nov. 14-15 and 21-22 weekends.
- Committee to consider logistics for the election
 - How to recruit candidates
 - In person asking
 - Pulpit announcement
 - Hold voting this Fall.
 - Unsure with paper ballots.
 - Alternatives
 - Email vote?
 - Google form?
 - Facebook?
 - Biographies are to be written by the candidate, submitted to Crystal, and placed on the wall or placed on an electronic media. Please mention in the five things email, the webpage, and on the livestream events.
 - Optional paper vote in addition to electronic, for those who do not use or are adverse to using electronic formats.
 - Test run the google form through council

New Business

- None

Eyes and Ears

- Parishioners are asking what the plans are for Advent/Christmas, as we assume the pandemic conditions will continue.
 - Alternatives are being considered for the season, based in part on the conditions of the pandemic.
 - Online or in person to be determined
 - There WILL BE liturgies

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- Parishioners have commented that recent homilies seem to be quite political, which may turn people off and make it harder for them to hear other messages/teachings of the Church.
 - Universal basic income
 - Amount of charity
- January retreat
 - Should we be planning for one?
 - Should it be cancelled?
 - Note: the location used on past retreats has closed.
 - The school did a snap retreat, taking only a few hours
 - Alpha retreats were in person originally, now virtual (with goodie bags delivered to make a special connecting action)
- Religious Education at home is onerous
 - Zoom (2nd Grade) is now holding classes to a maximum of a half hour
 - Classes now require some parental input; it is no longer a drop off and pick up arrangement.
- Communion service: A parishioner was not aware of the 1100 communion service. Was also not aware of the livestream mass. Finally complained about getting a letter asking for more money without getting thanks for existing contributions.
 - Multiple methods of communication have been tried to reach everyone
 - There were thanks for the contributions that have been made and are being made, but the shortfall is still a shortfall.
- Create a connection method for single people who have no one to talk to, as some only talk to people once a week.
 - Contact Bill Grossman - he has a community outreach program

Pastoral Update: Father Pat

- The Finance Committee stewardship program (see above Eyes and Ears) has started asking for money.
- Plans for the future
 - The outside communion service is fine as long as weather cooperates, but winter is coming.
 - Working with authorities, as right now the area is in Phase III and that entails specific limitations on the numbers assembled
 - Problems are now popping up with small group transmissions
 - Holiday plans being considered
 - Retreat: Please talk with Jean Lupinacci
 - Pray for the recent confirmands and those who will be starting the process to become confirmands

School Update: Kimberly Parker

- Enrollment
 - 369 students enrolled
 - Full at this point
 - A waiting pool exists for any slots that open
 - Planning for next year has begun
- Supporting the Parish
 - Kindergarten:
 - Last year, Veterans Day Assembly.
 - This year: Virtual Assembly,
 - Slide show presentation being recorded
 - Shared with parishioners.
 - 8th Grade: Virtue of Grace.
 - Student service project.
 - Outreach to those who are missing human contact, with classes writing older parishioners.
- Laptops for all teachers will be funded by the PTPO

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- Computers for 5th-8th grades are available due to Cares Act and alternating days of instruction
- Chromebooks available for 3rd-4th grades, in the process for 1st-2nd. Will be one-to-one.
- Staffing:
 - Three people left in October,
 - New staff
 - 1st Grade Teacher,
 - Permanent Tech Specialist,
 - Kindergarten assistant,
 - Music teacher
- Admissions Events going virtual
- Bishop visiting November 10

PTPO Update: Jennie Hooker

- Shoe drive concluded with 10 1/2 bags (260 pairs of shoes) collected for Funds for Org
- Current focus for Lion Laps
 - April 16 is targeted date
 - Sponsors being sought
- Triannual Gala is being delayed because of current pandemic
- Dining for Dollars coming up (October 16)
 - Panera Bread (Vienna Shopping Center)
 - Code for online is PRFUND.
 - In Person: mention for ST. MARK!
- Dining for Dollars future:
 - November 4
 - Chipotle

Finance: Andrea Kramer

- Stewardship season
 - 1st set of letters sent out to share how last fiscal year finances turned out.
 - 2nd set of letters will be sent out (next week) to invite stewardship commitment for the new fiscal year
 - No in person testimonial at mass, but there will be a taped message on the website
 - Online giving and Faith Direct
 - Credit Card - new option to cover the 2.5% processing fee as additional donation
 - Casual contributions down due to coronavirus
 - People still using envelopes,
 - Was \$75K, with \$65K additional Faith Direct
 - Now Faith Direct \$85K, but envelopes contributions down to \$60K
 - Advertising on livestream mass to "if you would like to donate, give link"
 - Present in bulletin so not going to add this as screen image

Commission Reports (Questions or Discussion):

- Community Service: Sarah Kirk
 - ESL Zoom classes have started
 - Giving Tree: gift cards going directly to organizations
 - FACETS: paying instead of giving food due to pandemic
 - Hypothermia: working out details
 - Matthew 25: record amounts of food donated
 - Thanksgiving Clothing: information posted and communications open to give directly to outside organizations
 - SALT: upcoming season plan

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- No blood drives, no funerals
- Religious Education: Andrea Kramer
 - Backlog of those waiting to receive their first eucharist or confirmation will be eliminated by the end of this month
 - Youth/Religious Education:
 - 400 students are in a typical year
 - 100 former students are being contacted as no registration yet
 - 100 have opted for the home school
 - 200 are with the catechists
 - Younger students are facing time limitations on zoom calls because of shorter attention spans
 - They are turning in work through video returns
 - The parental responsibilities for younger students is higher than before.
- Community Growth: Betsy Zolper
 - Two new groups
 - Labre Community:
 - For Adults with mental health difficulties.
 - National organization
 - Support for People who are Caring for those with Memory Loss
 - Existing groups
 - Bereavement group is having a hybrid retreat
 - Care for Our Common Home: Adopt a Highway
 - Praying College Moms - Seminar
 - Remembrance Mass: November 2 @7:30
 - Priest at St John Neumann tested positive for covid, services closed
- Worship: Bob Lemieux
 - Next regular schedule being discussed
 - Streaming mass will continue
 - With regular congregation
 - Trying to work in 2nd mass
 - Maintain communion service as long as possible
 - 200 people going
 - Some are refusing to go inside a building for health concerns
 - Christmas Season
 - Mass of Remembrance
 - Thanksgiving
 - Immaculate Conception
 - Our Lady of Guadalupe
 - Taize Sunday
 - Christmas
 - How to limit people
 - Tickets?
 - Visitors?
 - How to turn people away?
 - Reserve a spot
 - Know exactly who is there
 - Allows contact tracing
 - Covid tracking app
 - New wifi booster outside chapel helps sound quality
- Youth: Tom Pell
 - Junior Youth
 - Postponed kickoff meeting finally held: 65-70 attending

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- Biweekly Junior High meetings through December on Zoom
 - March for Life in January cancelled, but livestream from St Thomas More
- High School
 - Zoom every other Sunday
 - Diocesan Work Camp
 - Meeting October 22
 - White House Ornament Sale
- Young Adult
 - Zoom bible study (Thursdays)
 - Hike planned for Saturday
 - Outdoor meetings
- CLC
 - Starting after confirmation retreats

Formation: Betsy Zolper

Review of Minutes

- Move to accept revised September minutes (Bob Lemieux), seconded (Andrea Kramer), and passed.

Closing Prayer: Sean Moynihan

Meeting ends: 7:34 pm

Next Meeting: November 12, 2020

Service Commission Report for October 2020

Bakers – No funeral receptions, so no baking.

English as a Second Language (ESL): St. Mark ESL began its twice a week evening Zoom classes on September 29. With the generous help of staff in the parish office, we were able to devise online ways to register and pay, set up a system for distributing textbooks and teach students and teachers how to use Zoom. Now we have 70 adult immigrant students. We even found some volunteers to tutor 3 students by phone only, since they had no home access to the Internet.

Giving Tree / Adoption Ministry: Planning is underway on how to handle the big Christmas Giving Tree. Similar to the Clothing Drive, we are going to ask Parishioners to contact our selected Organizations, directly, through their websites to make donations AND/OR send or drop off Gift Cards to the St. Mark office for us to re-distribute. Cash (Check) donations will be encouraged, too.

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 January.

Hypothermia Shelter Program: St. Mark Hypothermia will be supporting SJN again the week of January 17-24, 2021. FACETS will be using one site on a 24-hour schedule for the entire season, starting December 1, 2020. The exact location is yet to be determined. Many of the sites will not have kitchens. FACETS staff will facilitate the program, no

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volunteers are expected and the site will be on a bus line. More information will be available after the October 13th POC FACETS meeting.

The faith communities at this point are expected to provide cold meals for breakfast and lunch and a hot dinner. There may be other supplies needed that we are not aware of yet. SJN's steering committee has decided to provide a hot meal via catered meals from local restaurants. In the same manner that the Shelter Hot Meals program has since March. The donations so far have exceeded expectations. They have used Lucia's, Santini's and Anita's and are open to suggestions of other restaurants.

What does this mean for St. Mark? We will not be requesting any meals or volunteers. How would we handle monetary donations to support hot dinners or other supplies FACETS/SJN may need? Last season we also joined Emmanuel Lutheran and other communities in supporting the final week of Hypothermia. Can we support two? Matthew 25: Food contributions in Matthew 25 continue to be very generous, helping us keep the FamilyPASS pantry and the St. Lucy Warehouse shelves stocked.

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

Thanksgiving Clothing Drive: - Information is now going out in the bulletin, facebook, etc. about our annual Clothes Donation program, as we cannot collect and distribute from the Activities Center, this year. We are asking folks to take their clothing donations directly to any of the 12 organizations that we recommend.

Social Action Linking Together (SALT): SALT- participated in an Ending Solitary Confinement legislative strategy meeting. The main purpose of the meeting:

- to plan legislative strategy for the upcoming 2021 session and discuss how to raise awareness about the movement to end prolonged solitary confinement in Virginia.
- to monitor our partner Stakeholders Work Group--Legislation enacted in the 2020 session that requires the Board of Corrections (BOC) to study the use of solitary confinement in Virginia jails, in consultation with a stakeholders work group, composed of advocates, officials, and other stakeholders.
- a zoom meeting with Delegate Kay Kory and Delegate Hope & Senator Adam Ebbin to explore & develop a legislative package to Ban Private prisons in Virginia. Our Senate bill last year, Laid on the Table, is again viable See SALT Fact Sheet below
- SALT is Hosting the Virginia Virtual Nuns on the Bus—Town Hall on Monday October 12th. Thanks for St. Mark Parish support.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION REPORT FOR OCTOBER

SACRAMENTS

Baptisms: we continue to offer Private Baptism

- September: 1
- October: 3
- November: 2 scheduled

First Eucharist

- 59 Children have received first Eucharist since July
- 8 more total scheduled through October 24. Then we're done.
- About 15 *ST. MARK* School children waiting until Spring 2021

Confirmation

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- We have confirmed 80 Teens since July
- There are 20 Scheduled for 10/15 -last date!
- 4 Confirmation Candidates are postponing until 2021
- Our Confirmation date for this year's 8th graders will be Friday, May 21 at 7pm with Bishop Loverde (NO Mass, Liturgy of the Word and Confirmation Rite).

RCIA

- 2 Baptized adults and 1 unbaptized teen actively in Inquiry
- 2 unbaptized SMCS children starting Inquiry October 20.

ADULT FAITH FORMATION

Bible Study- Mark Morneau is assisting me with setting up bible studies.

- 25 Studying Book of *Revelation*
- 17 studying *Ephesians*
- In December we are offering *Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible* to people who have completed Alpha and anyone else who wants to join.

Other Adult Faith Formation: I am planning on scheduling speakers on Zoom in the fall, starting with speakers that were cancelled in the spring.

CHILDREN'S FAITH FORMATION – began Sept. 20/21

- Parents had the choice of independent study (homeschool) using My Catholic Faith Delivered or Catechist led using Alive in Christ.
 - Currently 94 registered in Homeschool RE
 - Currently 201 registered in Catechist Led RE
 - We are at 75% of last year's enrollment for Grades 1-8. This is typical of the other Arlington Diocese parishes, according to DRE discussions during our weekly meetings.
 - We are keeping RE Registration open through October at least.
- High school Confirmation class with 4 students starting soon.
- Class starting soon for older children preparing for First Eucharist. We have several families with children needing First Eucharist.

October 2020 Community Growth Activities Report

Two new groups are forming the Labre Community for Adults with Mental Illness (see below) and the other to support those caring for loved ones with memory loss.

Always Our Children: No October update.

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

Bereavement: Our current 9 week Bereavement Program is a hybrid model, mostly by zoom, but some in person at Turner Farmhouse. We have 9 guests, and are looking forward to our 1/2 day retreat, coming up on October 24. Dcn John will lead the first session, followed by the second session with Lectio Divina and discussion. The online version is 2 1 hour sessions, 9:30-10:30 and 11 - 12. In person will have coffee/tea at 9:15, and a potluck brunch during the break from 10:30 - 11. All are welcome to join, please email Sarah at sarah.blfound@gmail.com.

Care for Our Common Home Ministry (CCH) – Adopt a Highway clean – up was a success. Next clean up in April to mark Earth Day. God's Gift of Water mini-retreat attracted about 70 people per night. We had speakers from CRS and the St. Kateri Conservation Center. Fr. Tuck led us in conversation and reflection on the importance of water to

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life and how priest friends from around the world have relayed stories to him of dwindling resources. We hoped that people would feel a change of heart that would lead them to examine how they interact with the gift of creation. It felt like a moment of pause during a difficult time.

Christians in Commerce (CIC): No October update. The local men's chapter of Christians in Commerce meets every Wednesday morning from 7 to 8 am in the Choir room, for prayer, teaching and small group discussion about living out our Christian faith in the workplace. All men are welcome. Coffee and donuts. Access is through the rear door.

Ecumenical Bereavement Ministry through the Becky Love Foundation (BLF): The Grief Group remains suspended for COVID, given the demographics of our attendees, and reluctance to spread disease, and difficulty with online meetings in a loosely knit group.

Evangelist Ministry - Alpha: No October update.

Funeral Receptions: Suspended.

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

Labre Community for Adults with Mental Illness – Facilitated by Kristin Obadal our new assistant in the Faith Formation/Youth Ministry Office. This is a twice a month spiritual support group that will operate under the mission statement and articles of the Labre Community for Adults with Mental Illness/Mental health conditions. There is already such a support group that meets under the auspices of the Basilica of Saint Mary in Alexandria, twice monthly in person and twice monthly on zoom.

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

MOMs Ministry: No October update.

Movie Night: Cancelled.

Newcomer's Committee: Fall luncheon cancelled.

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. Folks are extremely appreciative of the availability of this form of prayer!

Peace and Justice Committee (PJC): No October update.

Prayer Shawl Ministry: Beautiful hand-made baby blankets will be given for the October baby shower with some reserved for those who advocate at the abortion centers. We will meet in November to distribute scarves and hats to the homeless. We will meet again in January to again distribute completed hats and scarves to those in need

Praying College Moms (PCM): Seminar – October 22, 7:30 – 8:30 pm **Taming the Fears and Worries of 2020.** RSVP to Liz Hild for Zoom link lizhild2411@gmail.com

Pro-Life Committee (PLC): No October update. Baby shower for October. Wish list is in the narthex.

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Remembrance Ministry: The Remembrance Ministry is working on the annual Mass of Remembrance scheduled this year for Monday, November 2 at 7:30 p.m. Invitations have been sent to those who have lost a loved one during the past year and who reported this to St. Mark. Remembrance Ministry members will be on hand to welcome all who attend. All Covid-19 restrictions will be followed for this Mass.

Senior Ministry (M&M's): No October update. Will provide an update when they start up again.

Small Communities of Faith: No October update.

Soup and Stations: Paused

Welcome and Information Desk: No October update.

Worship Commission Report – October 2020

Liturgy Schedule – The Worship Commission discussed later fall and winter options for an additional Sunday Mass in addition to the live stream and the Communion Service. There are significant challenges with winter weather and many Parishioners not yet comfortable with being inside with large groups. The Saturday Vigil will continue. No decisions have yet been made but the availability of the Blessed Sacrament to the largest number of Parishioners, the ability to obtain volunteers, weather and COVID safety are important considerations. It is important to remind people that Catholics continue to be dispensed.

The Commission also discussed Christmas Season Liturgy planning, starting with the Mass of Remembrance (All Souls) at 7:30 P.M. and 10:00 A.M. Thanksgiving Day Mass (format TBD). We also discussed Immaculate Conception, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Taize Sunday and Blessing of the creche, and Christmas. Myriad logistical issues will be addressed in order to provide Liturgies representative of the Season.

Youth Commission Report – October 2020

Jr. High Highlights:

- Our Jr. High Kickoff went well outside in the back parking lot thanks to Fr. Pat for approving it. We had about 65-70 youth in attendance with about 10 volunteers and Spirit Team parents. The youth enjoyed seeing one another and ate pizza, snacks and loved winning prizes.
- I plan to have bi-weekly Friday Jr. High Nights thru December.
- The LIVG Evening of Prayer and March 4 Life Rally/Mass has been canceled, however, it will be livestreamed from the Cathedral of St. Thomas More.

High School Highlights:

- Our HS Kickoff went well too. Over 25 youth were in attendance.
- I plan to have HS Zoom Sunday nights every other Sunday during the Fall. The youth are on overtime with ZOOM right now.
- I plan to still attend Diocesan WorkCamp next summer. Sarah Kirk has offered to be our stakeholder. Our first ZOOM meeting will be Thursday, October 22nd at 7 pm.
- Fr. Pat has approved our WH Ornament (pre-order) Fundraiser now thru November 22.

Order forms are online, available in the parish office, RE office and school office.

College Highlights:

- Nothing new to report.

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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 Fall 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 through Niru at the Youth Office.

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