

Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes

Thursday, October 13, 2022

CFC Room 103 7:00 pm

1. Prayer: Tom Brownell
2. Formation Tom Brownell
3. Finance Greg Ulses/John Zolper
 - The letter containing the parish's financial statement was sent last week
 - Financials summation
 - There is a significant deficit, which started back in 2018
 - The Finance Committee decided to place its efforts in stewardship and focus a parish appeal to target the \$300K deficit.
 - Discussions will take place over the next two weekend service masses, with Father Pat next week and a member of the financial council on the following weekend
 - The best solution would be to bring people back to the parish, not just getting more money from those already attending
 - Establish a better connection between the school and the parish
 - Leverage the partnership
 - Establishment of longer term projects
 - Talk with the 20-25% (estimation) of student families that are not parishioners
 - Healthy school, healthy parish
 - Adam being the contact
 - Call tomorrow
 - How effective is talking about money from the pulpit?

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- While 49% of registered families used to give, it is now down to 40%.
- It can be seen as a turnoff, as it is preaching to the choir
- Is there a way to compare the patterns with other parishes?
- This will be a targeted effort for the two weeks and not a continual effort
- Those in the parish are the only audience to speak
- Revenue is only from donations and gifts/donations
- NPR analogy: the appeal will be to those who listen but do not donate. It may get frustrating to those who listen and give, but there should be an understanding of the necessity.
- Two fold strategy
 - Get those who are coming to give more
 - Get more people to attend
 - Can we find out who is registered but do not come and get them to come?
 - Get people to go out and recruit (a la the formation piece) to stir up the ground
 - Try to get the catechists and families to join the parish
 - Must have incentives to come
 - Chatter in the school
 - RE, School, families to get energized and engaged
- Christmas Push
 - Advertise and use the Choirs
 - Get those who only attend at Christmas to return more often
 - Push the new pews, the new floor, and the new smell

4. Review Minutes

- Motion to approve, seconded, and passed by unanimous vote

5. School Update Kimberly Parker

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- The three school masses went well
 - The noise created when the hymnals are returned has been reduced
- The Living Rosary was celebrated this week for the first time since 2019
- National Safety Week is next week with numerous events
 - An emergency alert to the parents is scheduled to be tested
 - Walkie Talkies are being provided to the parish staff to make sure emergency contacts are maintained
- At the end of October, Jodee Blanco, speaker on Anti-Bullying and Compassionate Discipline
 - Will work with the students
 - Will work with parents during the morning
 - Will work with the teachers. Other school principals and other guests will participate in this session.
- Veterans Day presentation
 - Any veteran who wants to talk about their branch can speak for 5-7 minutes.
 - Coast Guard is already represented
 - The other branches are needed
 - Put in the bulletin? It will be in the Lion News tomorrow
 - Nikki West coordinating
 - The American Legion is providing flags
- The Open house in November is by appointment only
- Christmas Pageant is in the planning stages
- Blast from Past: Historical knowledge of school. Additional information or data will be helpful.

6. PTPO Update Lisa Wise

- Trunk of Treat planning and coordination is underway.

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- Volunteers needed.
- Schedule problems with diocese
- Coordination with Confirmation Mass
- Dining for Dollars \$600 made
 - Next event is at Panera on Tuesday October 18th
- The Enrichment Programs (theater, outdoor sports/recess) are successful. Chess is being added next week
- Judy Blanco - coffee for parents after dropping the students off

7. Commission Reports (Questions or Discussion): Written reports follow the minutes.

- Community Service: Theresa Croson
 - No questions
- Religious Education: Andrea Kramer
 - No questions
- Community Growth: Betsy Zolper
 - No questions
- Worship: Pam Burke
 - Christmas Taize prayer service -
 - Moved to Lent
 - Will have some family caroling
 - Advent and Lessons December 14 at 7pm
 - Some Eucharistic Ministers are not wearing masks. Should there be a uniform policy?
Since masks are optional, it should be optional for the ministers..
 - Ministry Fair after masses?.
- Youth: Sarah Kirk

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- No questions

8. Old Business:

- Council Elections
 - Success on donut Sunday in recruiting
 - Some assistance with ballot collection coming in
 - Sam to chair committee,
 - He needs two assistants (
 - Reminder this is the Monday/Tuesday before Thanksgiving
 - Terms ending this cycle:
 - Elizabeth Peters can't run due to term limitations
 - Tom Brownell is running
 - Sue Heard is running,
 - Michael Hatheway is undecided
 - October 31 is the final date to find new candidates and have their pictures and biographies submitted for inclusion on the election material
 - All on council who are not running should serve at the polling stations or assist in the voting tabulation
 - It is a manual count of the 3400 families in parish plus 300 in the school
- Pilgrimage (Fran Smith)
 - Excited to help in reigniting the parish
 - Three ideas
 - Pilgrimage on the Green
 - All parishes in deanery to celebrate an outside mass with Bishop

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- Our Lady of Good Counsel, St Andrew the Apostle, St Claire of Assisi, St Leo the Great, St Mark, St Mary of Sorrows, St Paul Chung, St Timothy, and St Veronica
 - Have a picnic lunch,
 - Entertainment to include school choirs, kid activities
 - Provide lemonade, baked goods
 - In Fall 2023
 - Dependent on numbers, may be in front of rectory
 - Some costs (chairs for mass?)
- Pilgrimage to St Elizabeth Anne Seton Shrine (Emmitsburg, Maryland)
 - Aimed to students, families
 - Mass on Sundays at 1:30
 - Age appropriate functions
 - Coordinated effort with RE classes, school
 - Have car pools;
 - Coordinate required with the Shrine if enough people are going
- Pilgrimage to Philadelphia
 - St Leos is going in November
 - Will be an all day (6 am to 10 pm) event
 - This will be by bus
 - Similar to the bishop's trip
- Approval to work on events
- Fran Smith to form committee
- Winter Retreat off campus?

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- Would be scheduled for January 27-28
- Is there interest in faculty, staff?
- It is late for reservations at Priestfield
- Are you comfortable in a crowd of 100 people, including sharing rooms with others
- Voice vote to agree in principal to go on retreat, understanding that financial costs will be incurred

9. New Business: None

10. Eyes and Ears

- What we can do to bring people back to the pews.
 - Spaghetti dinner?
 - Increased use of Facebook page
 - Friend the page!
 - Can funeral services be linked to let people know when they are scheduled?
 - Need for written approval from the family
 - Add to the checklist for things to arrange.
 - Other social media?
- Children's Liturgy starting up
 - 11 o'clock mass
 - Necessary volunteers
- Donut Sunday
 - It popped!
 - Very well attended despite Bishop coming later and it was a holiday weekend
 - High energy
 - Discussions included what's coming up in the Capital improvement

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- Newcomers luncheon this Sunday
 - Why are we not including Newcomers to the school family?
 - This should be added to next announcements
 - The spring luncheon can be their first.
- Daily Mass in the chapel moving back to the chapel?
 - Not possible at this time due to distance requirements.
- Tree trimming?
 - The front signs are blocked
 - Will be addressed next Wednesday

11. Closing Prayer: Father Pat

12. Meeting ends at 8:15

Next Meeting: November 10, 2022 C103 7:00 pm

Commission Reports

To: St. Mark Pastoral Council

From: Theresa Croson
 Service Commission Representative

Date: September 20, 2022

Re: Service Ministry Report for September 22, 2022 Meeting

Bakers for Funeral Receptions: Mary Lou McIntire reported that volunteers baked for two (2) funeral receptions this past week and another funeral reception will be held this upcoming Friday.

English as a Second Language (ESL): Monica O'Keefe reported that St. Mark ESL program will have registration for the Fall 2022 term on September 20 and 22.

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In person classes will resume for the first time in two years. During the Covid-19 epidemic all classes were conducted online via Zoom. Classes now are for adult immigrants on Tuesday and Thursday evenings starting September 27. While we have about 50 volunteers signed up, we are still in need of a few more volunteers. We hope to have a full staff by opening day when classes begin on September 27, 2022.

Giving Tree: Carolyn Peterson reported no new information at this time.

Hot Meals (FACETS): Dave Kent reported the next feeding our neighbors in need will take place on Monday, September 26, 2022.

Hypothermia Shelter Program (HSP): Pilar Oishi reported that the first HSP planning meeting with St. John Neumann Catholic Church will be this week. The next couple of months will be mostly pre-planning logistics.

Social Action Linking Together (SALT): As reported by John Horejsi, he was "elated" to announce that after SALT was had to accept some unsavory compromises on the non-refundable Virginia Earned Income Tax (VEITC) legislation and after years of effort to improve on the Non—Refundable VEITC, the State of Virginia is conceded to give the lowest-income workers a major tax break. Now this means that instead of only reducing how much a low-income tax filer owes without giving money back, it can now lead to a bigger refund, or create a refund that otherwise would not have existed.

As a partner with the Coalition to End Solitary Confinement, SALT is committed to the Coalition's "Rapid Response Work Group Study Project" required by our Coalition bill SB108 that was amended in the House to do the study. As summer comes to an end, the SB108 Workgroup is ramping up to interview incarcerated individuals who have suffered through and survived solitary confinement, as well as those responsible for making solitary confinement decisions within the prison system.

SALT has scheduled a meeting to brief Senator Adam Ebbin on the joint report regarding the "Lawrenceville Correctional Center: For-Profit Prison Run Amok" with the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy. Conditions there are considered cruel, inhumane and the worst in Virginia.

Religious Education Report for October 2022

SACRAMENTS

Baptisms: Baptisms continue to be offered in a group, non-Eucharistic service once a month on Saturday afternoons. Beginning January 2023, we will return to alternating this monthly option with children's Baptisms to be celebrated during weekend Masses.

Confirmation: Our spring Confirmation Mass has been scheduled for Thursday, May 18, 2023, with Archbishop Timothy Broglio of the Archdiocese for the Military presiding. We are currently preparing 81 Confirmandi (77 eighth graders, 4 high schoolers). The 8th Grade Confirmation candidates have now met their Spirit Teams, and families have learned about the overnight retreat. The boys retreat is October 21-23; the girls is October 28-30.

ADULT FAITH FORMATION

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Our current Bible Study using materials from Ascension Press is on “Wisdom.” This 8-part study features Jeff Cavins and Thomas Smith examining biblical wisdom as it relates to daily life, drawing on the literature of Proverbs, Wisdom, Sirach, and Ecclesiastes. We have 41 adults signed up (26 for Tuesday; 15 for Thursday). These numbers are about the same as last fall’s course on the Acts of the Apostles (39) and this spring’s on Romans (35).

For adults of any or no religious background who are interested in learning more about the Catholic faith or considering completion of Sacraments beyond their Catholic Baptism, Joe Flaherty will lead a Catholic Inquiry Session on September 28 at 7 pm in the RE Office. For some adults, this type of inquiry session leads them to enter the RCIA process.

CHILDREN’S FAITH FORMATION

We are hoping to reintroduce the Advent potluck brunch for RE families and are currently seeking parents to volunteer to make it happen.

At our catechist in-service, there was a strong desire from some catechists to use the “Circle of Grace” program as the option for providing students with safe environment and Christian chastity education required by the diocese. Teaching this program requires training and, so far, four *ST. MARK* catechists have received the training.

The Diocesan Catechetical Conference will be held November 19. Our catechists are encouraged to attend to further their own formation.

October 2022 Community Growth Activities Report

Always Our Children (AOC): No October update.

Bakers for Funerals: We have had 5 fairly large funerals in less than 2 weeks to bake for. Our wonderful bakers baked close to 40 desserts for the 5 receptions....wonderful ladies always willing to give their time to do this for grieving families.

Bereavement Programs: Fall session 1/2 day retreat led by Deacon John on 10/15 at Turner Farm, last session on 10/16. Winter session will start 1/8, and finish March 5. Winter Grief Gathering - proposed for December 11, potluck social at Turner Farm Contact Sarah Kirk, skirkbtr@gmail.com.

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Bereavement Group - No October update.

Care for Our Common Home Ministry (CCH): Season of Creation concluded October 4th the Feast of St. Francis with a blessing of the animals offered by Fr. Pat. Adopt a Highway Clean-up planned for September 24th was canceled due to lack of volunteers. Empty pill bottle collection the weekend of October 1 and 2 was quite successful. Next meeting at the end of October.

Christians in Commerce (CIC): No October update

Donut Sunday: Pastoral Council sponsored donuts on October 9th. Attendance increased compared to the last donut Sunday. All of the tables were filled. Andrea was the lead and the event ran smoothly.

Evangelization Ministry: Sunday morning Alpha during RE has grown every week, with 26 guests and 7 team/support. Alpha is also managing the coffee and donuts on Sunday mornings for RE parents, students and catechists.

Monday evening Alpha live Alpha is heading into week 5, with a retreat on October 28 and 29. Live Alpha has 22 guests, and 9 team/support.

Monday evening Alpha zoom is also on week 5, with the same retreat schedule online. Held in conjunction with St. Phillips/People of Praise, last count was 20 people.

Youth Alpha on Wednesday nights, 7:30 - 9, 8 to 12 people in St. Mark Youth room.

Planning for winter Alphas to start in January, 2023.

Funeral Receptions: Five large funerals in less than two weeks.

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

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

MOMs Ministry: No October update.

Family Movie Night Ministry: The next monthly family movie night will be on Friday, October 21. With it being close to Halloween, the film will be the classic Monsters, inc.. to provide good natured scaring that isn't over the top for little ones. All are welcome to the Activities Center for ice cream at 6:30 pm and movie at 7:00 pm.

Newcomer's Committee: The Newcomers Committee has our next Newcomers Luncheon on Sunday, October 16th at noon in the Cassidy Activities Center. Please RSVP to Jessica Luka jess0725@verizon.net. A new chair is needed for the Newcomer's Committee.

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Prayer Requests: We continue to receive many prayer requests that are sent out to our 150+ prayer volunteers. Information about this group was in the bulletin this past week.

Peace and Justice Committee (PJC): Not meeting.

Prayer Shawl Ministry: Meeting October 11th at 1 pm. Sue Heard is leading a yarn collection at St. Mark School!

Praying College Moms (PCM): The Praying College Moms met on Oct 4 at St Mark. We are reading and sharing “What to Say, and How to Say It, about the Catholic Faith” by Brandon Vogt. This month we had a lively discussion about The Eucharist; starting with the lack of knowledge about the true substance of the Eucharist: 47% of Catholics believe it’s a symbol! We also shared updates on our young adults, and prayed together. The Holy Spirit was lovely in the room!

On Oct 18, the PCM org. will sponsor, Melissa Overmyer, Evangelist, Catholic author, Inspirational speaker will offer a seminar “A Scriptural Antidote to Worry” an evening of inspiration and prayer concerning the vocation of mothers for their college-aged young adults. Tues, Oct 18, 7-9, The Lyceum Auditorium, Alexandria, Va.

TBD: Upcoming late October, early Nov. PCM social at nearby Bill Run Winery. Dec.6 St Mark will sponsor a PCM Rosary for close to 700 young adults, followed by refreshments and fellowship.

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

Remembrance Ministry: The Remembrance Ministry met recently to plan the annual Mass of Remembrance on November 2. Invitations to the Mass were sent to those who lost someone during the year (and who had contacted the office to report the death of their loved one). We have one new member to our team.

Senior Ministry (M&M’s): No October update.

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

Welcome and Information Desk: No October

Worship Commission

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1. Sunday adoration time will move back to 1 PM and will be located in the church.
2. We will not be installing a railing in the CAC right now, but perhaps at a later time.
3. Fr. Ignatius is a visiting priest from Cameroon. He's just visiting right now, but we are waiting on word from Fr. Scalia on whether or not he will be "in residence" here at St. Mark once Fr. Mbinkar leaves. Not sure...stay tuned! If anyone asks, just please let them know that he's a visitor for now.
4. All the curbs in the parking lot will be repainted on the morning of October 8. Please be aware and cautious if you're in the parking lot that morning.
5. The lector workshop is officially scheduled for Saturday, October 29 @ 9:30 AM in the church. Guest speaker is Fr. Rich Miserendino, associate at St. Bernadette in Springfield. **Lucy**, can you send this info out to all the lectors, inviting them to attend? They will also have time to practice in the church after Fr. Rich's presentation.
6. There have been a lot of rumors swirling around about "Fr. Pat's retirement". Please be aware that nothing has been discussed or announced, and the staff is unaware of anything more on the subject at the moment. I'm not sure where the rumors are coming from, but please if you hear something, just tell folks there is no such plan in place right now. Fr. Pat will be with us for the foreseeable future!

Here are two questions for discussion:

- We've been asked to talk about the possibility of restarting Children's Liturgy of the Word. This would happen at the 11:00 AM Mass only, due to the RE schedule. I think this is possible but we would need a coordinator and volunteers to make it happen. Thoughts on who might be willing to help, etc?
- We had a policy in place politely requiring that all **Eucharistic Ministers** wear a mask for the few minutes they are distributing communion. I know most ministers are still doing that, but some aren't. We need to have a uniform approach and policy with regard to this.

Youth

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HS and MS kickoffs a success! Thanks to all the wonderful volunteers that helped make it a success!

First two Y&F Masses went well. Not a large number, but moderate.

BACK FROM THE DEAD event this Saturday at Seton Shrine in Emmittsburg. Open to 7th-12th grade youth.

CYO Basketball Registration is open through October 25.

Kevin Flores is looking for MALE Retreat Team Leaders for the Boys Retreat!
October 21-23 at Hunting Ridge- spread the word!

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