

Parish Council Meeting Minutes

Monday, March 15, 2021

7:00 – 8:30 p.m., Virtual via Zoom

In Attendance: Fr. Mark Smith (Pastor), Robert Bourque (Disabilities Ministry Representative), Cathy Buffington, Jennee Chin, James Hudson, Katherine Hunter (Pro-Life Representative), Loren Lavoy (BSA Representative), Brian McAllister, James Parsons (CYO Representative), Ginger Thompson, Rita Thompson (GSA Representative), Millie Vega, Wayne Williams, Marie Winterson (Parish Secretary)

Not In Attendance: David Cutler, Celia Lewis, Robert Martin (Stewardship Committee Representative), Guillermo Rivero, Joseph Smith (HSA Representative),

Vacant Seat: Knights of Columbus Representative

Fr. Mark: Opening Prayer – Brief prayer & reflection based upon based on John 3:16 *“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life.”*

I. Status reviews:

A. Worship

1. Sunday Masses are back to their regular schedule: 5 p.m., 8 a.m., 10 a.m., 12 noon and have small but comfortably sized crowds. The 10:00 a.m. Mass has the biggest crowds, but we're still well below capacity.
2. A Safety Sensor is now in place to relay head counts to help parishioners determine which Mass they might feel comfortable attending. Capacity was just increased by PG County from 25% to 50%.
3. Morning Masses have consistently substantial crowds including the regulars and a lot of college students.
4. Monday through Saturday Morning Adoration draws a comfortable crowd.
5. All day Wednesday Adoration began last week with just a handful of folks in attendance.

B. Ministries

1. Homebound Ministry - visits to parishioners from Fr. Mark, Fr. Andrew, and parish volunteers
2. Saturday Morning Lectio Divina is in-person and virtual.
3. Bereavement Ministry - Funerals
4. Baptisms
5. Health & Safety Ministry
6. A Teen Bible Study run by an engaged couple from our parish, Thomas Showalter & Lizzie Enzler, is held for a small group of teens every other Sunday. Their parents meet to pray and socialize while the teens are meeting. As restrictions relax, we hope to bring in more teens / parents.

C. Finances

1. A Finance report was published last month showing that we basically covered our expenses.
2. Parishioners generously donated funds of approximately 90% of last year's offertory.
3. Both the parish and the School were able to help families in need from our community through the Parish Emergency Fund and the School Hawks Helping Hawks Fund.

D. School

1. HRS is doing well - children who feel comfortable are back in the building, and the rest are learning virtually. HRS can accommodate whichever way parents want their children to learn.
2. The number of enrolled students remains a concern. Some families left to receive free virtual public-school education during the pandemic.
3. We are exploring working with an affordable marketing company for the school with the goal of bringing back those families who took the gap pandemic year and those families from schools that are closing like Hyattsville Middle School and Robert Goddard School.
4. Hoping to increase our enrollment by 60 students over the next three years.

E. New activities introduced during the pandemic F. Church calendar

II. Church projects and priorities:

A. Prior to pandemic – those completed

1. Refreshing of outer Mezzanine with new carpet, lighting, paint, moldings, signage, and entrance to the church.
2. The Music Room was renovated, and we are in the process of moving back in.

B. Current – underway or newly planned

C. Future – has the pandemic changed any projects or priorities? Are there any new projects?

1. Refreshing the landscaping on the Berwyn Road side of the church is our proposed summer project.
2. Suggestion that we conduct a memorial pavers fundraiser as part of the summer project.

III. Possible end to the pandemic - planning for changes in church activities, works, and Masses:

A. Does the Archdiocese have any schedule? Has the Archdiocese made any plans or suggestions?

1. We are taking our direction from the state of Maryland, PG County, and the Archdiocese of Washington.

B. When we return to a “new normal” what do we expect will be the same as before the pandemic and what might be different?

- C. Masses** – *will Masses offered and the church schedule change. Should any activities be both virtual and in-person, such as Rosary, Lectio Divina, meetings, etc. or should everything return to in-person activities?*
1. We will take those things that we have learned and that work better & more efficiently into the future (the ability to meet on-line for those with small children, on-line platforms for some activities, etc.), but we will all be happy to gather together again when it's safe as well.
 2. Perhaps we should consider sign-ups for Easter Sunday Masses as there is talk that many may be planning on returning to Mass on that day.
 3. Suggestion that we plan an outdoor Mass in the spring.
 4. Cardinal Gregory will celebrate the 10:00 a.m. Mass on Sunday, April 25, 2021 at Holy Redeemer.

- D. Ministries** – *are any future changes expected that will differ from the duties and procedures before the pandemic*
1. We will continue with Health & Safety Ministry for the time being.
 2. We will be reviewing the Harvest Bazaar 2020 for 2021: what worked virtually, what made money, is it worth it to hold Friday afternoon events
 3. Suggestion that we make a concerted effort to announce what various volunteers are doing really well around Holy Redeemer (i.e. Nanette & Mary & the Yard Sale)

IV. Return to church (live), welcoming back parishioners:

- A. People are in various stages of returning to church (and perhaps to school?).** *The continuing return of people may be uneventful, but probably will be very emotional for many. What support or special service could be provided to mark this event, when it is appropriate to do so?*
1. It was noted that the wait for vaccines among those who are eager but not yet eligible to receive them is very upsetting for some people. We need to be careful not to move on without them and leave them behind. We need to be sensitive to their angst.
- B.** Is a “We’re together again” religious service needed? Perhaps even a social one, when safe to do so?
- C.** What could be done to invite people back, should this become realistic and necessary?

V. Other **A. St. Valentine's Day Dance proposal was approved by the Parish Council**

1. Rick & Carol Boettinger will provide a DJ
2. The event will be held in the Four Seasons Room
3. Organizers: Ginger Thompson, Tom & Eileen Kirk, Ed & Noreen Keane, Tom & Geraldine Adams (?), Alex & Ellie Sonski (?)

Minutes recorded by Marie Winterson, 03/15/2021