

St. George Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes

October 27, 2019

6:30 pm, Church Hall

Attendees

- Clergy: Fr. Stephen Sledesky, Fr. Ricardo Borja, Deacon Bob Tartaris. Trustee: Margot Burkle. Members: Sarah Celotto, Maureen Fuest, Harold Hutchinson, Joyce Ippolito, Laurie LaTerza, Joe Nelly, Criona O'Brien, Marilyn Rowland, Andrew Wang. Peer Ministers: Bobby Haig, Kiana Vallo, Dominic Riccio. Visitors: Cara Correll, Francine Wainer, Noreen Wolleben.
- Absent: Bill White (Trustee), Diana Harris, Rose Ann Kelley, Valerie LeShane.

Opening Prayer/Reflection: Our opening prayer was the CRS walking reflection.

Welcome/Acceptance of September 22 Minutes: Joe Nelly introduced our two new peer ministers who will be serving on the Council, Kiana Vallo and Bobby Haig. He also introduced the three representatives from our parish who attended the Synod meeting this past weekend, Francine, Noreen, and Cara.

Joe Nelly asked for a motion to accept the minutes from the September 22 meeting. Maureen Fuest made a motion to accept the minutes, Harold Hutchinson seconded, and everyone accepted unanimously.

Peer Ministry Report: Kiana reported on the Peer Ministry events that are planned. There will be five weekend retreats this year, and a possible mission trip in June. There will be no trip to Haiti due to ongoing unrest in the country. Two peer ministers were named ambassadors to the Parish Corps for CRS: Gabriela Garcia Perez and Kiera Stanciewicz. There are several drives planned: pet food drive, toy drive, book drive. There will be Columbus House trips for Thanksgiving and Christmas, but students looking for service hours are no longer invited for the regular trips. The 7th and 8th graders will be making rosaries for Haiti and First Communion.

Pastor Report: Fr. Stephen

Fr. Stephen said that he met with Tom Sweetser to firm up the details for our upcoming council retreat, to be held on Nov. 23 at 9:00. The first part of our day will be dedicated to prayer and reflection, and the second part will focus on our vision for the parish. He then invited the Synod representatives to speak.

Francine gave an overview of the four themes that were discussed at the Synod. Each theme had a series of propositions associated with it, and these were discussed by each deanery (groups of 20–25 people representing a wide variety of races, ministries, ages, etc.; there were 320 people at the Synod). There were 10 deaneries, and the idea is to come up with the final wording for the propositions in time for the closing mass and celebration, schedule for Pentecost next year. Archbishop Blair will send a letter to each parish with an update. The Preparatory Commission is revising the propositions to finalize them based on these meetings. Noreen described an example of a proposition that was discussed.

Evangelization is being promoted—are we bringing people to a personal encounter with Jesus? As Catholics, we should be sharing our faith stories through testimony. We need to connect with other parishes and not focus so much on our own parish.

Fr. Stephen stated that we need to be thinking about whether we have fostered a relationship with the living Lord. This needs to be our responsibility as a church.

Laurie asked if there are videos we might watch to understand what is happening at the Synod. There are videos available at the Synod “Go + Grow” website, as well as on the Archdiocese website and Facebook page. There may be a chance to show the videos for the entire parish at a later date.

There was additional discussion of the importance of testimonials and evangelization, as well as the need to focus on young families and people.

Stewardship Fair Report: Joe said that about 100 people signed up for ministries, but we did not do a good job reaching our target audience: young families. There was significant interest in social service ministries. Fr. Stephen said we need to connect our service to the church. We often do things to serve others “just to be nice,” when we need to think about how to connect our faith with our service. He recommends the book *A New Way to Be Church* by Jack Jezreel.

There was additional discussion on the need to be inclusive to anyone interested in ministries and not make them feel unwelcome, which is a continuing problem.

New Business: No new business at this meeting.

Closing Prayer: Laurie LaTerza.

Next meeting: Our next meeting will be our retreat on November 23 at 9:00 a.m.