

St. George Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes

January 26, 2020

6:30 pm

Attendees

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

Opening Prayer/Reflection: Fr. Stephen led our opening prayer and reflection, reading from today's Gospel. We reflected on a time when we felt called to something.

Welcome/Acceptance of October 27, 2019, Minutes: Joe Nelly asked for a motion to accept the minutes from the October meeting. Valerie LeShane made a motion to accept the minutes, Criona O'Brien seconded, and everyone accepted unanimously.

Peer Ministry Report: As the Peer Ministers were studying for their midterm exams, Harold Hutchinson gave the Peer Ministry Report for Kiana Vallo. Kiana reported that the Peer Ministers are planning a "Lock-in" meeting tentatively scheduled for January 31 to allow the Peer Ministers a bonding opportunity. The Peer Ministers hosted two successful retreats in the fall, with three more planned for February and March.

Pastor Report:

Fr. Stephen reported that the mass count was completed in October 2019, with an average mass attendance of 1,190 (up from 1,150 in October 2018—not statistically significant).

Fr. Stephen said the parish is finishing up the financial report from this year, and he is disappointed because the figures are down \$40,000 this year due to the move to eliminate the annual collection. People did not increase their giving as requested (that is, spreading out what they would have given in one lump sum at the end of the year across their weekly contributions). It was suggested that we go back to the old method, but Fr. Stephen said he hopes that we can bring parishioners along with the idea rather than giving up entirely. His aim is for parishioners to understand that their offering is tied to real stewardship, not just material needs of the parish; we should give in gratitude to what God has given us. Despite this shortfall, the parish is in good shape financially, as there are other sources of income, including bequests.

Fr. Stephen further advised that there are some staff changes in the office. Eileen O'Brien, the bookkeeper, is stepping down from her job in mid-February. Fr. Stephen said he is working on restructuring the other jobs. Liz O'Connell plans to go to half time.

Parish Evaluation Retreat: Joe Nelly led discussion on the Parish Evaluation Retreat that the Pastoral Council attended on November 23, 2019. Many members felt that the use of prayer partners in the

meeting was very helpful. It helped them get to know each other better, particularly in a one-on-one setting. It was a great form of team building and a method to strengthen our faith. Also mentioned was the fact that coming together in the large circle was also helpful after the partner exercises. Fr. Stephen suggested perhaps our first meeting every year should be like this—a chance for the Council to get to know new members and strengthen the group as a whole.

One goal that came out of the meeting is to strengthen the faith of young adults in the parish. Suggestions included a mass for teens at the 11:30 mass on Sundays. Diana Harris reported that she met with Claire Nichols and Kevin Buno to get their thoughts on this. Kevin is very enthusiastic about the idea and would love to incorporate the teen and children's choirs in the special mass. Claire is more hesitant because she has met with resistance when she tried to do similar things in the past, but she's open to trying again. Another suggestion was perhaps a Sunday evening mass, similar to what Pilgrim Fellowship does, just for teens, where they might feel more comfortable sharing with one another. Fr. Stephen said he was hoping the teen mass would be integrated with the regular mass to bring everyone together. It was decided that a small committee should be formed to discuss the issue and work with Claire, Kevin, peer ministers, etc. to get a sense of what would work best. Sarah Celotto, Diana Harris, and Criona O'Brien volunteered to be on this committee.

Synod: Cara Correll reported that a large mass for Pentecost is planned for May 31 at the Oakdale Theater.

Physical space: Fr. Stephen opened a discussion on expanding the parish building site to create more space that is desperately needed for meetings/classes/etc. As part of the fundraising the parish is required to do for the Archdiocese, we could go above and beyond our goal in order to raise funds for such a project. The Archdiocese sets a dollar amount that we must raise, and we get to keep 50% of these funds. If we raise more than required, we are allowed to keep those funds—basically, we piggyback our extra fundraising campaign with the one for the Archdiocese to take advantage of their fundraising resources, making it easier for us to raise the capital for this project.

Fr. Stephen passed out a sample questionnaire that is being developed to send to leaders of each ministry to get a better sense of the space we need.

Walking with a Purpose: Maureen Fuest reported on the Walking with a Purpose program, which will run as a pilot program for the six weeks of Lent at St. Margaret's. It is intended for women of all ages, to help them strengthen their faith. Twenty-two women came to the organizational meeting. It is being organized by representatives from four different parishes, and although it is based on Catholic teachings, it is open to women of all faiths as part of evangelization efforts.

Other: Margot Burkle passed around an article for members to read by Jack Jezreel.

Closing: Joe Nelly thanked Sarah, Diana, and Criona for volunteering for the new Youth Committee and led the closing prayer.

Next meeting: The next meeting will be held on February 23, 2020, at 6:30 pm.