

St. George Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes

February 23, 2020

6:30 pm, Father Sullivan Center

Attendees

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

Opening Prayer/Reflection: Fr. Stephen led our opening prayer and reflection.

Welcome/Acceptance of January Minutes: Joe Nelly asked for a motion to accept the minutes from the January meeting. Harold Hutchinson made a motion to accept the minutes, Maureen Fuest seconded, and everyone accepted unanimously.

Peer Ministry Report: Kiana Vallo gave the Peer Ministry Report. Kiana reported that the Peer Ministers "Lock-in" meeting on January 31 was not well attended (only 12 people came), probably due to midterm exams that week. There is a problem of enthusiasm among the peer ministers this year. Sixty students signed up as peer ministers, but only about 15 people show up regularly for meetings and teaching. In an attempt to try to connect people back in, perhaps the peer ministry should follow the model used by Pilgrim Fellowship. Various possibilities were discussed, including additional bonding activities (bonfire, escape room) and making meetings mandatory. February retreat went very well. Kiana said leadership was weak in this year's senior class, and she expects things might change when the kids who are juniors this year take over next year. Two more retreats are scheduled for this school year. Diana Harris suggested using a point system, where you need to collect enough points (by attending meetings, teaching classes, etc.) to go on the retreats. We discussed what makes PF successful. In PF, if you miss three meetings, you can't travel. Sarah Celotto reported that PF gets good speakers at their meetings and that you have to *do* stuff to go on trips, community service projects and the like.

Pastor Report: Fr. Stephen gave the Pastor Report. He reported that the Annual Report will be printed this week and mailed the following week. As previously discussed, the parish had a large deficit for 2019. Fr. Stephen also reported that Lenten activities are scheduled as in previous years: Fish Fry Fridays, Stations of the Cross, etc. Sister Kathleen will be doing a Lenten program on prayer to be held on Thursday mornings after mass.

ECSA has an open house scheduled for February 27. New Haven is merging all of its Catholic schools, so Fr. Stephen said that as a result of that reorganization, as many as 85 new prospective students may be considering ESCA for the next school year.

The Archbishop's Annual Appeal campaign will kick off on the weekend of Feb. 29/March 1. The Archbishop has prepared a video homily that will be played at all masses.

Fr. Stephen reported that a L'Arche ministry group is forming. This group plans to create a community alternative to group homes and is faith based, though not specifically Catholic. This group has support from all of the faith communities in Guilford, and several St. George parishioners are involved in this effort.

Teen Mass Committee Report: Diana Harris gave the Teen Mass Committee report. Diana, Criona O'Brien, and Joe Nelly met with Claire Nicholls and Kevin Buno to discuss developing a mass for the teens in our parish. The idea is to create a mass that the kids want to go to, rather than making it mandatory. The mass should engender a feeling of belongingness, and the kids should feel invested in the mass by helping to plan it, do the readings, participate in the music program, etc. A survey will be sent to the youth on March 15 asking about what times and days might work for them. One mass a month will be dedicated for youth (aimed at 7th-12th graders). A subcommittee of teens will organize this mass. A smaller additional mass for teens only is also being considered. Claire said there is a peer ministry mass scheduled for March 15. The teen choir will be involved in the planning as well. Kids will choose the music, and Claire will identify lectors and kids who could lead the prayer of the faithful. The youth mass will be one of the 11:30 masses, for which the second reading is in Spanish. Claire can easily find a kid willing to do the Spanish reading.

Discussion of Goal #1: Joe Nelly led the discussion on progress with respect to getting young adults and families more involved in parish activities. He reported that Cara Correll had said we are moving along well toward this goal. A recent beer-tasting event for young adults was well attended, with a bigger crowd than they had last year.

Justice Advocacy: Fr. Stephen spoke about two upcoming justice advocacy opportunities. On March 10, Jack Jezreel, who developed the Just Faith program, will be speaking in Hartford. On March 14, there will be a summit on Human Trafficking.

Synod: May 31 will be the closing mass for the Synod. It is a ticketed event, and the parish will have 35 tickets to give out to interested parishioners.

Parish Council New Members: Joe reported that he, Valerie, Rose Ann, and Laurie will be ending their terms on the Council this year. A call for new members to be nominated will be placed in the Bulletin. We will stick with the lottery system used in the previous few years.

Welcome Committee: Maureen Fuest reported on the activities of the Welcome Committee. Committee members went to the Knights of Columbus breakfast in February and distributed handouts on upcoming events to attendees. The Committee discussed helping families find places to sit during busy masses. They also discussed ways to be welcoming on Mothers' Day and whether it is necessary to be more welcoming to summer visitors.

Walking With Purpose: Maureen further reported on the Walking With Purpose program. More people than expected signed up for the six-week program, to be held on Thursdays at 1:00 and 7:00. The program is open to people of all faiths along the shoreline.

New Business: There was no new business to discuss.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be held on March 29 at 6:30 pm.

Closing Prayer: Maureen led the closing prayer.