

St. George Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes

April 26, 2020

6:30 pm, Zoom meeting

Attendees

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

Opening Prayer/Reflection: Fr. Stephen led our opening prayer and reflection on something that has changed for us during the coronavirus shutdown.

Pastor Report: Fr. Stephen gave an update on what is happening at the church during the shutdown. There are no public masses. A livestream is broadcast on YouTube for all masses that are held (only one mass is held on Sunday, at 10:00). On Palm Sunday a new camera with a zoom feature was used. Palms were handed out efficiently and safely in the parking lot. Monday adoration continues, as does Holy Hour. The following rules are in effect according to guidelines set by the archbishop:

Scheduled confessions—Postponed until further notice. Confessions are still available by appointment in the cry room.

Baptisms—Rescheduled or performed with immediate family and godparents only.

Funerals—Masses are also not allowed; services are at the graveside only, with immediate family.

Confirmation—Postponed indefinitely; pastors may eventually be allowed to perform confirmation since there are so many dates to reschedule in the archdiocese.

First Communion—Postponed. Some of the kids in the First Communion class were able to have their first confessions prior to stay-at-home orders.

RCIA—Initiation postponed. Archdiocese is planning to do initiate all on one day, either May 30 for the Pentecost vigil or June 14.

Social events—Most are canceled. This includes the Craft Expo. Unclear what will happen with the Carnival. Some prayer and Bible study groups are meeting on Zoom.

Young Families Report: Cara Correll gave an update on the Facebook group for young families. She reported that many families are looking for things to keep their children busy during the lockdown and for ways to connect. The school workload seems to be manageable for children in Guilford, but a bit more demanding for children in Madison at the elementary school level. Special needs children are getting good support from paras.

Discussion on Staying Connected as a Church: Fr. Stephen asked how we can stay connected as a church. Sr. Kathleen has started calling everyone registered at the parish (3,600 families), but needs help from the Pastoral Council and Welcome Committee. Several people volunteered to make phone calls. The idea is to find out how parishioners are doing, if there is anything the church can help them with, and if our info on file for them is correct (e.g., get email address if missing). Joe Nelly suggested telling people about the streaming masses and downloading bulletins online.

It was suggested that perhaps we have music performances in the church that could be livestreamed like the masses. The church might make its streaming services available to interested groups. Other suggestions were holding social gatherings on the Zoom platform. Sr. Kathleen has worked to make people feel connected via Facebook, posting birthday and anniversary wishes, and other personal events. Fr. Stephen suggested offering “Chat with the Pastor” on Zoom, and it was agreed that this might be useful.

Peer Ministry Report: Kiana Vallo and Bobby Haig gave the Peer Ministry Report. Things are going well, but of course all retreats have been canceled. Kiana has kept in touch with Claire, reminding peer ministers to stay in touch with their classes to see how they are doing. A Zoom meeting has been scheduled with the retreat group. Bobby mentioned that he is in touch with friends from retreats, but nothing official.

Other Discussion: Laurie LaTerza asked if any of our groups, like Columbus House, had reached out for support. Fr. Stephen said that the state has provided resources for them, and they didn’t need anything specific from us. They are receiving housing and food from the state. The food pantry had a lot of donations last week. Fr. Stephen advised that we got more than needed, so he might look into sharing with the town food bank. Fr. Stephen also said people might want to donate their stimulus checks to something that would help people in need.

Closing: Zoom calls being what they are, we did not have a formal closing prayer, but we all said goodbye and logged off.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be held on May 31 at 6:30 pm.