

St. George Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes

November 22, 2020

6:30 pm, Zoom

Attendees

- Clergy: Fr. Stephen Sledesky, Fr. Dennis Vincenzo. Trustees: Margot Burkle, Bill White. Members: Elaine Carter, Yolande Eldridge, Debra Falvey, Maureen Fuest, Diana Harris, Harold Hutchinson, Joyce Ippolito, Valerie LeShane, Criona O'Brien. Peer Minister: Bobby Haig.
- Absent: Deacon Bob Tartaris, Laurie LaTerza.
- Visitors: Cara Correll, Jim Kenefick.

Opening Prayer/Reflection: Fr. Stephen led the opening prayer. We reflected on today's gospel from I Corinthians.

Welcome/Acceptance of October 25 Minutes: Valerie LeShane made a motion to accept the minutes, Maureen Fuest seconded, and the minutes were accepted unanimously.

General Announcements: Fr. Stephen informed the Council that two members stepped down from the Council: Sarah Celotto, Johnna Sullivan, and Andrew Yang. Sarah was concerned about the tenseness in our previous meeting and our disagreement on the Just Faith program. Johnna Sullivan also expressed concern about racial issues. In addition, Andrew Yang no longer has time to devote to the Council because he is a physician helping patients during the coronavirus pandemic. He requested a leave of absence, which the Council would have to agree to. Fr. Stephen said he had asked Criona if she would like to step in as president of the Council, to take Sarah's place, but she doesn't have enough time to devote to the position right now. Fr. Stephen asked if anyone else might be interested, and when no one expressed interest, he asked what we should do about all of the vacancies. There are no recent nominees who are available (most are now on the Council). He mentioned we could accept nominations from within the Council or by lottery. Debra suggested leaving things as is for the time being, during the pandemic, and maybe revisit later in the year. Margot said Andrew's leave of absence is probably fine for now; this is a special case, since normally a leave of absence is not desirable. Margot further suggested reaching out to the people who felt they needed to resign, to let them know that we appreciate their service and they will be missed. Yolande echoed what Margot said, saying that we should honor Andrew's request and that she feels bad that Sarah and Johnna were uncomfortable. She volunteered to write notes to them. Joyce suggested reaching out to former members of the Council to see if they'd like to come back. Criona suggested that retired people might be interested and have time to volunteer. Margot suggested perhaps members could take on the president role on a rotating basis. Fr. Stephen said it would be best to table the discussion until January.

Peer Ministry Report: Bobby Haig gave the Peer Ministry report. The Peer Ministers changed the lesson structure for the Confirmation class, moving to two presentations followed by one online class (before it had been one live presentation followed by an online class). Bobby also said that there had been problems with the Black Lives Matter video streaming. Those viewing from home could not see the video because it was labeled "private." Claire sent an email yesterday (11/21) to say that there would

not be an in-person event this week, so a YouTube video from Ascension Press was assigned. Bobby said that it's difficult to get responses from students when he's teaching; no one wants to speak up to answer questions. There are also some students who never signed up for Google Classroom. He's not sure if they are not interested, or if they're having technical problems.

Survey Monkey: Fr. Stephen next moved to a discussion about our survey. Yolande said that we never really determined what the purpose of the survey was, so it was difficult to create the questions. Harold stated that we needed to avoid making the survey too long. We discussed the benefits of yes/no questions vs. questions ranking things on a scale. Fr. Stephen said that the survey should focus on figuring out what people need from the church right now. Is there one thing the church could be doing that would help people spiritually? Debra suggested communicating to parishioners that we care and are here for them. Maureen suggested emailing the survey to those who have email accounts, and we could also put the survey in the bulletin. Fr. Stephen said that the committee writing the survey should prepare the text by the Monday after Thanksgiving.

Pastor Report: Fr. Stephen reported that mass attendance has been in the low 80s for Sunday masses, not hitting the max allowed. For Christmas, the archbishop approved earlier vigil masses (before 4:00) to accommodate more people. A special 1:30 vigil mass will be held for seniors only, to allow them to be in the freshly cleaned church. Other masses will be held at 3:30, 5:30, and 10:00, spaced to give time for cleaning. Two masses will be held on Christmas day at 8:30 and 10:30. The vigil masses at 3:30 and 10:00, as well as the 10:30 mass on Christmas, will be livestreamed.

Fr. Stephen said that we made our goal for turkeys for Thanksgiving sharing. We had enough to freeze 52 turkeys for Christmas sharing. The Food Pantry has new coordinators, now that Vera and Joan have left, and the new team is doing a great job.

Fr. Stephen next discussed our upcoming fundraising campaign, in which every parish is given a goal. From the money raised, 50 percent goes to the Foundation, to be drawn upon by the parish for capital improvement or other initiatives. The parish receives the other 50 percent, and any other money above and beyond the goal. This is a good opportunity for the parish to get money toward expanding the Sullivan Center. This work will probably start in 2021. Fr. Stephen said that we will be discussing this campaign in our January meeting; it would be worthwhile to piggyback our need for the money for the Sullivan Center with the campaign so that we are not asking parishioners for two large gifts too close in time (i.e., parishioners would be giving toward the capital campaign and the Sullivan Center separately; if we combine with the capital campaign, we're only asking them for money once).

Outreach to Ministries: Valerie, Criona, Maureen, and Yolande reported that they have begun calling all ministry leaders to check in to see if they are active during the pandemic. Some ministries are still going; others had to stop temporarily. There are still more calls to make. Debra volunteered to help with phone calls. Yolande commented on how joyful the ministry leaders were despite the pandemic, and that it was very enjoyable to talk with them.

Closing Prayer: Fr. Dennis led the Council in the closing prayer.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be held on January 24 at 6:30 pm via Zoom.