

St. George Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes

May 31, 2020

6:30 pm, Zoom meeting

Attendees

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

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

Welcome/Acceptance of April Minutes: Joe Nelly opened the meeting by thanking those who have been calling parishioners. He asked for a motion to accept the minutes of our April meeting. Valerie LeShane so moved, Harold Hutchinson seconded, and the minutes were accepted unanimously.

Peer Ministry Report: Kiana Vallo gave the Peer Ministry report. She reported that she has kept in constant contact with all peer ministers. The peer ministers made themselves available to help those in need with yardwork during the quarantine, advertised on social media (Facebook and Instagram). Kiana also reported that she has been in touch with Claire Nichols regarding retreats next year. Gathered retreats at Trinita are unlikely. Fr. Stephen suggested that they might consider doing retreats at the church, with the kids staying overnight at home and returning for programming in the morning. Margot Burkle asked about the money Trinita stands to lose if there are no retreats. Zoom meetings were discussed as a possibility. Fr. Stephen said we should share our thoughts with Claire.

Pastor Report: Fr. Stephen gave the Pastor Report. He said that masses continue to be livestreamed daily. He has received positive feedback regarding the calling of parishioners to check in with them, stating that people are very receptive and grateful when they answer the phone. He has been sending thank-you notes to those who have continued to support the parish financially during the shutdown. For the most part, office staff continue to work from home. The office will reopen to the public eventually, in accordance with state guidelines regarding sanitizing and social distancing requirements. Right now, no more than five people at a time are working in the office. There is a log of people going in and out in case contact tracing for coronavirus needs to be done. The Archdiocese is planning for a June 8 reopening for daily masses, but there is no date for a return to Sunday masses yet. Livestreaming will continue for those not comfortable coming to the church. Fr. Stephen reported that a schematic has been drawn up to facilitate social distancing for in-person masses. There will be one pew open and two closed for each section, staggered across the aisle. He plans for a 50-person maximum, though we might use a 100-person maximum if the state allows. There will be taped markings on the floors and signs communicating information to facilitate social distancing. Parishioners wanting to attend mass will need to make a reservation online so that we can ensure that we don't exceed the maximum number of people allowed, and also for contact tracing, should that be necessary. People without internet access can register by calling the office. The church will be thoroughly cleaned after all masses. This information will be communicated to parishioners through the Bulletin, the website, Facebook, and a video from Fr. Stephen. He will encourage people to sign up for only one or two masses a week so that

more people can come. Baptisms, weddings, and funerals will follow the same guidelines. Confessions will take place in the cry room. First Reconciliations will be finished soon, but First Communions and Confirmation are still on hold. RCIA will have a special mass soon. Fr. Stephen said he was considering taking temperatures of those coming to mass. The priests will enter the mass from the sacristy to avoid socializing, and there will be no offertory and no entrance or closing processions. Bobby Haig asked if outdoor masses might be a possibility, and Fr. Stephen said that he is looking into holding something on the Green with the other churches around the Green. Sarah Celotto asked if Sunday masses will have the same restrictions when they return, and Fr. Stephen replied that he does not know yet. She asked if additional masses could be added so that more people could attend; Fr. Stephen said maybe, but it would be challenging. Andrew Wang said that in his work at the hospital they had found that temp checks are not useful. They have a low yield for too much work, and there is no way to enforce rules regarding attendance for those who might be sick or unwilling/unable to wear a mask. He did suggest that perhaps people without masks could be cordoned off somehow. Harold suggested that Fr. Stephen present his plan to the First Selectman, asking for specific guidelines for dealing with people who won't wear masks. Margot asked if there was a way to ask during the signup process if someone would not be wearing a mask. Fr. Stephen said that parishioners might not feel comfortable attending mass if some people aren't wearing masks. We discussed further, with no conclusions but a sense of the difficulty in dealing with this situation.

Fr. Stephen next reported on his plan to pray the Novena for Life, as suggested to him by Joe. He plans to pray it after next Sunday's mass, at the end of the mass, and then will pray it every day for the next seven days, with Fr. Ricardo saying the closing prayer the following Tuesday. He asked for the Council's approval; everyone agreed it was a good idea.

Fr. Stephen also reported that Ellen Clow at Parks & Rec has asked to use the parking lot for outdoor movies, and asked for the Council's approval. Approval was given unanimously. Bill White asked if any assistance from the church was needed, particularly the Men's Group, and Fr. Stephen said no. They could offer advice, but that's it. Parks & Rec will take all responsibility for the event.

President's Report: Joe Nelly proposed extending membership for an additional year due to the missed time during quarantine. There were not enough members present for a quorum, so Joe said he would follow up via email after asking the Council members who are due to end their term this year to see if they wanted to continue. We also discussed putting off elections for new members until the fall since we are behind schedule due to the shutdown. Joe asked members to let Valerie know via email by June 15 if they want to be considered for one of the offices (President, Vice President, and Secretary).

Closing Prayer: Andrew Yang led the closing prayer, and all members said goodbye and logged out of the Zoom meeting.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be held on June 28 at 6:30 pm.