

St. George Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes

January 24, 2021

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. Staff Liaison: Cara Correll.
- Absent: Andrew Wang (on LOA).

Opening Prayer/Reflection: Fr. Stephen led the opening prayer.

Welcome/Acceptance of November 22, 2020, Minutes: Valerie LeShane made a motion to accept the minutes, Maureen Fuest seconded, and the minutes were accepted unanimously.

Council Vacancies: Fr. Stephen started with where we left off in the previous meeting: vacancies on the Council. Bylaws had been distributed through email for members to review in terms of filling vacancies.

Valerie LeShane nominated Yolande Eldridge for the President position. Yolande accepted, and members voted via Zoom's chat feature. Yolande was elected President unanimously. Yolande then took over the meeting as President.

The Council discussed the term limits for all members. Fr. Stephen requested that an updated list be prepared and distributed to all members. He then asked if current vacant positions should be filled now, or if we should wait until next year. Harold Hutchinson suggested it would be a good idea to wait until June, and everyone agreed.

Council Goals/Expectations of Membership: Fr. Stephen next moved to a discussion of Council goals and expectations of members. Is our time being given in a meaningful way? What are our immediate goals? Margot Burkle stated that in the past, members had expressed that some things didn't seem to move forward, and asked what areas Fr. might need help with. She suggested that it was unreasonable to kick members out for missing more than three meetings in a year, and said that we have gotten away from subcommittees. Valerie said that St. Margaret's requires members to be assigned to a ministry. Maureen Fuest asked if there were any other parish models we could look at.

Fr. Stephen suggested that Council members might connect with a group of ministries. Then, if a ministry has an issue to bring to the Council, a structure would be in place so they could go through their contact. He also said that perhaps there should be a spot on the agenda for the Building/Education/Finance Committees to present occasionally. Committee Reports could be presented in writing prior to meetings.

Maureen suggested preparing a list of bios and pictures of all Council members for distribution to the parish, so that people could contact any member with an issue. Yolande suggested putting contact info on member bios on the website. Elaine Carter asked about communications among Council members,

and how we should communicate among ourselves with important information. Fr. Stephen suggested using the “Reply All” feature to respond to our group emails regarding meetings. There was discussion about informing people about COVID exposure, mass cancellations, etc. Elaine asked for a point person on the Council who could answer communications, and Fr. Stephen said that person is now Yolande.

Peer Ministry Report: Bobby Haig gave the Peer Ministry report. The Peer Ministers had three Zoom classes during the first semester, but it continues to be difficult to get kids to engage with the virtual meetings. He tried to reach out to students who didn’t attend Zoom classes, without much success. The format continues into the spring, with a week of in-person classes followed by a week of Zoom meetings.

Council Project Updates: Valerie LeShane reported on the Christmas card outreach, stating that they had put information on the Christmas card mailed to all parishioners. She was concerned that people did not notice it was there since it was on the back of the card. The Pen-Pal Project was also posted in the bulletin, without much response. Margot said that letters were a nice idea and that some people were doing this on their own. Valerie said that informal phonecalls are also appreciated. Our survey project was tabled in favor of providing the info on the Christmas cards.

Pastor Report: Fr. Stephen reported on the Forward With Faith Campaign that our parish will be involved with this year. The Archdiocese has established a Foundation to assist with this work, and the foundation will provide grants to support parishes. Every parish gets the opportunity to contribute to the foundation and raise funds. 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. Fr. Stephen said we should consider piggybacking on this campaign to raise money for expanding the Sullivan Center, as space is desperately needed for religious education. Maureen said it would be important to communicate to parishioners what the funds will be used for. There was some discussion over details of the project—cost, uses of expanded space, etc. Fr. Stephen said our main task now is to decide if we should do this, and then determine exactly what we need.

Fr. Stephen next reported on our finances for 2020, which were not too far behind our expectations. The church did apply for and receive a PPP loan to keep staff during the pandemic closures. Expenses were reduced due to no in-person religious education programs or retreats, along with other cancelled events. He reported that ECSA is doing very well and has the highest enrollment in many years, partially because the school was open full time, unlike other schools in the area. Costs in the school were increased due to the need to purchase masks and other PPE supplies.

Closing Prayer: Fr. Stephen closed with a prayer for the Year of St. Joseph.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be held February 28, 2021, at 6:30 pm via Zoom.