

## St. George Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes

February 28, 2021

6:30 pm, Zoom

### Attendees

- Clergy: Fr. Stephen Sledesky, Fr. Dennis Vincenzo. Trustee: Margot Burkle. Members: Elaine Carter, Yolande Eldridge, Debra Falvey, Maureen Fuest, Harold Hutchinson, Joyce Ippolito, Valerie LeShane, Criona O'Brien. Peer Minister: Bobby Haig. Staff Liaison: Cara Correll.
- Absent: Bill White (Trustee), Andrew Wang (on LOA).
- Visitor: Thom Duffy

**Opening Prayer/Reflection:** Valerie LeShane read today's second reading as our opening reflection.

**Welcome/Acceptance of January 24, 2021, Minutes:** Yolande asked for a vote to accept the minutes. Valerie had one correction, and then the minutes were accepted unanimously.

**Forward With Faith Campaign:** Thom Duffy, from the Finance Council, presented on the Forward With Faith Campaign to give the Council an understanding of how capital campaigns work. By combining two capital campaigns, we can save on costs. For this campaign, our parish goal is \$860k, of which 50% goes to the Foundation, 50% to our parish. After this goal is met, any funds raised would be split 20% for the Foundation, 80% for the parish, although the Foundation may waive their 20%. Thom believes this request would be accommodated.

Thom said it is important that we solicit ideas on what this money should be used for from the parish; if they feel that whatever we are raising funds for is their idea, we will have a more successful campaign. He recommends that we conduct a listening campaign to solicit ideas from parishioners to give us a better understanding of the parish's needs. This would be a three-step process: (1) listen, (2) collate ideas, and (3) report the findings back to the parish. Yolande Eldridge asked if the PC would be able to put forth recommendations, and Thom said that yes, members could give their ideas individually, and we could also make recommendations as a group. Fr. Stephen said that the Council will be responsible for collating the feedback, and that he will make the final decision on what our funds will be used for in consultation with the parish. Margot asked when we would have a decision from the Foundation on whether they would waive their 20% of the funds raised above goal, and Fr. Stephen said he is in the process of asking them now. Debra Falvey asked how much was raised in our last campaign; Fr. Stephen was not sure—possibly \$1.5M. Valerie asked how our goal was set; Fr. Stephen replied that it is based on parish offertory income.

In addition to steps 1–3 above, Thom said there are two more steps to getting this off the ground: step 4 would be coordinating the campaign with the Archdiocese, and step 5 would be presenting our plans to the parish and kicking off the campaign. He said it is essential to give information to parishioners about our goals to set expectations. Yolande asked how long this campaign would be; Fr. Stephen said five years. Valerie and Debra asked about major and corporate donors, respectively; Fr. Stephen said we could begin the campaign by soliciting major donors, but that it is not usual for the parish to have corporate donors.

Fr. Stephen said that right now, he would like to contact the Archdiocese, with the support of the Council, to let them know we want to do the combined campaign. There was some discussion about what the funds might be used for, and Fr. Stephen said that it doesn't necessarily have to be a building campaign. The money might be for a position or ministry, but there had been discussion of moving to Phase 3 of the church renovation that Fr. Shanley had begun. Margot wondered about what our needs are in terms of religious education. Will our model change due to COVID? She also spoke about possibly using the money to purchase a house to be used for temporary housing. She thought perhaps the parish as a whole is not concerned about moving to Phase 3. Valerie asked if Fr. Stephen could find out what other parishes have done. Fr. Stephen said that most funds have been used for brick-and-mortar projects, but some funds have gone toward youth programs and other ministries. Thom said again how important it is to hear directly from parishioners what the money should be used for. There was a little more discussion about the housing subsidies the parish has been paying for, and then Fr. Stephen said he needed to know if he had the Council's support to write to the Archdiocese and tell them we wanted to do the combined capital campaign. The answer was unanimous: yes. Fr. Stephen thanked Thom Duffy for his time, and Thom left the meeting.

**Council Updates/Housekeeping:** Yolande advised the Council that Diana Harris had resigned the Council for personal reasons, effective immediately. She asked any Council members who had not sent her a bio and headshot for the website to be sure to do so.

Yolande next said that we should examine our bylaws for any needed revisions. She noted that the bylaws currently state that the agenda for our meeting needs to be sent one week prior to the meeting, but it usually goes out just a few days before the meeting. Also, the bylaws state that a member who misses three meetings will be removed from the Council. Finally, there is no mention in the bylaws about taking a leave of absence, although the Council recently voted to allow Andrew to take a leave. Valerie also mentioned that we might want to include a requirement for Council members to act as liaisons to the ministries. Fr. Stephen asked if someone could write new wording to be voted upon before the next meeting. Yolande said she would prepare something, and Valerie volunteered to help her.

**Peer Ministry Report:** Bobby Haig gave the Peer Ministry report. He said that confirmation classes are continuing, and the recent presentation on substance abuse was well received. Representative Sean Scanlon and funeral director George Sullivan were two of the featured speakers. Bobby said there was also a PowerPoint presentation on human trafficking. There is one more in-person class and one more Zoom meeting before the end of this year. Margot asked Bobby if he was aware of a movement in the community to support students dealing with mental health issues due to the pandemic. Is this something the peer ministers might have a role in? Bobby said he wasn't aware of such a movement, and that he wasn't sure that the peer ministers should be involved in addressing this issue.

**Staff Update:** Cara Correll next gave the staff update. She described how they were using technology to keep parishioners connected. As an example, Fr. Stephen had prepared a video on preparing your own ashes for Ash Wednesday that was very popular on social media. She said there was also a Stations of the Cross video, and that a live Lenten pretzel baking event was planned for children and families for March 9. Reconciliation is starting, and dates for First Communion have been set. One of these will be outdoors. Last weekend staff attended a virtual conference that involved spiritual videos on religious education and faith.

**Pastor Report:** Fr. Stephen reported on the kickoff of Flocknote, a technology that will help the parish communicate more effectively with parishioners. This platform would allow us to email and text one another more easily. When someone signs up, the system captures their email and phone numbers. This system will allow for quick communication during emergencies, and it will allow ministry leaders to connect with their ministry members. Fr. Stephen asked everyone to sign up right then, during the meeting, which we all did. He also gave credit to Elaine Carter for introducing him to this technology.

Fr. Stephen next spoke about plans for an outdoor Easter mass in the 11:30 time slot. He wasn't sure if it would be a drive-in or if people would sit on chairs in front of a platform. The mass could be broadcast over FM frequency for people to access over a car radio. The 10:00 mass will be livestreamed as usual. The Council was very enthusiastic about the possibility of an outdoor mass.

**Council Roles:** Yolande said that the Council's role is visionary and focused on outreach, and asked for input on this topic for the next meeting. She said that Margot suggested the possibility of a community garden, and Yolande suggested considering drive-in movies.

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

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be held March 21, 2021, at 6:30 pm via Zoom.