

Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes

Sunday, September 26, 2021

6:30 pm

Attendees: Clergy: Father Dillon. Trustees: Bill White. Members: Yolande Eldridge, Valerie LeShane, Sue Croce, Greer Koerner, Jill Kennelly, Maureen Fuest, Harold Hutchinson, Elaine Carter, Beth Kozarec, Debra Falvey, Carol McCormick. Youth representatives: Matt Celotto, Gabriel Mongelli

Absent: Trustee: Margot Burkle Members: Stephanie Deixler Youth Rep: Connor DeBoda

Opening Prayer: Father Dillon opened the meeting with a prayer at 6:34 pm.

Reminder: There was a reminder to submit a headshot and brief bio to Fran Wainer for our Parish Council website tab. Anyone who has not yet completed Virtus Training was encouraged to complete it as soon as possible online. The training can be accessed through the Archdiocese website. Information will be forthcoming to members who need a background check done.

Approval of the minutes: The minutes of the July, 25, 2021 Council Meeting were approved.

Pastor Update: Father Dillon reported the start of CCD classes. He attended an Annual Appeal Reception at which many parishes were represented. He also attended and enjoyed the St George Family Picnic this afternoon. He is looking forward to the blessing of the animals which will take place this week on the Guilford Green.

Father stated he is offering Baptism at the 11:30 Mass, on the first Sunday of every month. The service would be available to no more than two families at any Mass. There would continue to be the option for Baptism after Mass on the third Sunday of every month.

The names of those baptised, as well as Banns of Marriage for any couples intending to be married at St George will be published in the bulletin.

Father Dillon advised he is still working on a plan for the Forward with Faith Campaign and will discuss it at the next meeting.

Youth Ministers Report: The peer ministers reported that they spent this weekend at Trinita, attending a weekend long training session. They especially enjoyed their experience because they had not been able to attend their own Confirmation retreat last year due to the pandemic. They are excited to work with the Parish Council this year.

Parish Staff Liaison: The question of a staff liaison was raised. There was no information that anyone was currently assigned to this role.

New business: The Council reviewed a proposed announcement for the St George Bulletin. The announcement would inform members of the parish of Parish Council meetings. It also detailed how members of the parish could request permission to speak to the Council on a topic and have it added to the agenda two weeks prior to the monthly meeting. There were some edits suggested and it was agreed the article would be submitted for publication in the bulletin.

A suggestion was made, in an effort to streamline future meetings, that reports be submitted in advance of the meeting for review by the Council. Members agreed this was a good idea.

The meeting continued with a discussion of future projects for the upcoming year:

1. Increase the visibility of the Parish Council In an effort to let members of the St George community know that the Parish Council is able to connect them to a ministry offering them assistance in many areas.
2. Backpack Ministry - There is a program known as the Prison and Re-entry Ministry at the First Congregational Church. The program provides backpacks and duffels with basic supplies to those newly released from prison. The First Congregational Church is requesting that one month a year, each congregation fill 5-10 backpacks or duffel bags. It was suggested that the parish would donate items and the peer ministry might assemble the backpacks as a service project. The Youth Ministers agreed to take on this project and discuss it with the peer ministry.
3. It was suggested that we reinstate the Welcoming Committee with special consideration for newcomers to St George. It was further suggested that Eucharistic Ministers and Ushers be included in welcoming everyone to Mass.
4. Father Dillon suggested a new ministry - The Lazarus Project. He experienced this ministry at a previous parish and was impressed by it. Members of the church community would volunteer to work with grieving families when planning their funeral services. They would help them navigate the many decisions required at a time when they are feeling very overwhelmed. This ministry would build on the good work already being done by the Bereavement Committee and Martha's Partners who offer incredible support for grieving families.
5. It was suggested that we organize an email program allowing for announcements in emergency situations as well as inspirational readings to be shared with members of the parish. We were advised that an organization providing this service already exists, the Flocknote Project. We did not have a volunteer to continue the work of the Flocknote registry of parishioners.
6. It was suggested we consider sponsoring a Parent's Night Out. We might work with local restaurants to provide dinner coupons or offer babysitting services to allow parents a break. This idea will be explored further, although restrictions (at this time) of mixed groups is still in place due to the pandemic
7. The Forward with Faith Project will remain the main focus of the year. Father Dillon will report on this at our next meeting.

It was agreed that we would move forward with discussion of these new projects at our next meeting as well as a review of all of the current ministries at St George.

Other Items: A member asked why masks are required in some churches in the Archdiocese and not other churches. Father Dillon advised that all New Haven churches required masks because it is a city mandate. It is up to the local authorities to issue a city-wide mandate in public places. Another member asked why we no longer recite the Michael the Archangel prayer at the end of Mass. We were advised it was decided the prayer was not appropriate at this time.

Closing Prayer: Father Dillon led the group in the Lord's Prayer.
The meeting was adjourned at 7:51 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol McCormick, Secretary