



ST. PAUL'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting – February 10, 2020

Elected Members Present: Christine Forbes, Peter Adams, Rosa Gonzalez, Patricia Davies, Thomas Mulroy, Ross Terranova, Kevin Green and Pam Vogt

Elected Members Absent: Deborah Harrison

Ex-Officio Members Present: Fr. Sean Harlow, O. Carm., Deacon Carl Locatelli,

Recording Secretary: Deborah Botti

Ex-Officio Members Absent: Deacon Michael McCabe

Parish Members Present:

The meeting began with prayer at 6:45 p.m.

Minutes of the Meeting of January 10, 2020, were accepted.

The first order of business was discussion regarding the Constitution, which was updated a few months ago. However, because it is customarily reviewed annually, Parish Council members were asked to email any objections or suggested adjustments to the chairperson before the March meeting.

The following updates were then given:

Ministry Reports:

Administration & Stewardship:

- There are new LED lights in the parking lot that now illuminate the darker areas at the its far end - as well as the outside wall to Deacon John Hall, the bushes and Dumpster. A motion-sensor light has also been installed in that area.
- Seven more security cameras have been added outdoors.
- Follow-up questions were raised: Are we required to post surveillance signs? (Checked with our vendor, Knight-Watch Security, which indicated we are not required by law to do so.) Will these security features translate into a break on our liability insurance? (No. Our insurer, Catholic Mutual, provides coverage to nonprofits at already low rates so no other discounts are available.)
- Additional projects being contemplated: A ramp at the main door to render that entrance handicapped-accessible; stripping and re-polyurethaning the main door, as well as repairing the pitted railings.
- It was noted that the flower pots at the main doors to the church could be blocking

access to the upper railing for some. (They have been moved.)

- This Thursday, Fr. Sean and Maxine Martin, our bookkeeper, are meeting with the Archdiocese's regional director of finances to discuss changes implemented as a result of the audit.
- As a result of the recent Archangel presentations at Mass – and clarification that all members need not be first-responders – 16 new people volunteered to serve.
- The Arimatheans were very busy in January with four funerals. Those serving are stationed throughout the church, including the East Wing, to direct those arriving for Mass, to hand out tissues, to point out restrooms, etc. Additionally, because not all of the families meet with Fr. Sean to plan the Mass, the Arimatheans are available to step in as Eucharistic Ministers or lectors, to bring up the gifts, and to participate in the Mass.

Education & Faith Formation:

- The Confirmation candidates are on track with service hours, although a few have not submitted their Sponsor forms.
- Church History is February 23 - always a positive experience. A Parish Council member even plays the pope.
- The Adult Faith Formation committee met a week ago Sunday, in particular to hone activities for Lent. The First Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians is the topic for this year's Bible Study that begins February 25. Also, Janet Corso will facilitate the Lenten Retreat scheduled from 9 a.m.-noon on March 21. The title is: "Amazing Grace and Our Lenten Journeys."
- The Wednesday Sunday Scripture Study continues to be well-attended and will continue.
- Discussion of "Light of the World," the selection for the Advent Book Club and regarded by some participants as an astonishing work of scholarship, continued into January, facilitated by a very patient Deacon Carl.
- A Spiritual Information Night is planned for 6-9 p.m. April 24 and will be comprised of three segments: Spiritual Direction, Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius and Carmelite Spirituality.
- The film "OVERCOMER" will be shown at 6:30 p.m. February 28. That is the same movie that the Youth Ministry recently screened. Ten kids came to that, and a lot of happy tears were noted.

Christian Services:

- Ninety-five seniors attended the luncheon on February 5, and 95 signed up again for the luncheon in March.
- The Ministry Trifold needs to be redone to reflect that Christian Services is no longer providing meals to parishioners facing serious illness or rides for those in need of transportation to doctors' offices, stores, etc. And now with the deletion of those services, this ministry is not overburdened.

- The Prayer Blanket Ministry's bake sale brought in \$1,350 – the highest amount ever. Blanket-making with the Confirmation class took place last Friday, and the blankets were blessed at the Masses this weekend.

Conversation segued into the decline in participation. We are down to about 500 registered families, of which only about 300 participate. There have been no Seeds (preschoolers) at the 9 o'clock Mass. This year, there are 16 children making their First Holy Communion; next year, it will be only 10. However, the first grade this year is the biggest in years – 18, but it is already known that one will be leaving.

What can we do to increase overall participation? Condense classes? Email former parishioners to learn why they're no longer here?

A member discussed the difference between the Northeast and the South. In North Carolina, for example, it is apparent that church is the center of life for most. In the Northeast, however, church does not seem to be part of the overall culture, or as Fr. Sean sadly noted: "God doesn't play a part in people's lives."

Social Activities:

The annual St. Patrick's Day Dinner is scheduled for Saturday, March 14, after 5 o'clock Mass.

Worship & Spiritual Life:

Tom Mulroy, a regular volunteer whenever Art & Environment has decorated and then undecorated the church at Christmas and Easter, has agreed to take the lead to help ensure this ministry continues.

Vicar's Report:

Fr. Sean's initial report under Administration & Stewardship covered all that was pertinent.

Other Business

The fundraising raffle will continue. It will be announced in this week's bulletin, tickets reflecting the seventh in the series will be printed, and sales will resume the weekend of February 22-23.

The meeting closed at 7:55 p.m. with prayer.

Next meeting will be Monday, March 9, 2020, at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Deborah Botti