



ST. PAUL'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting – March 11, 2025

Elected Members Present: Gale Britto, Joan Miller, Beth Schick, Chris Murphy, Marisa Block, Jim Lancellotti, Anne Savastano and Kate Gallaher-Carson

Elected Members Absent: Julie Laurenzi

Ex-Officio Members Present: Fr. Sean Harlow, Deacon Carl Locatelli and Mark Carson

Ex-Officio Members Absent: Deacon Michael McCabe and Rosa Gonzalez

Recording Secretary: Deborah Botti

Others Present: Tony Mazzeo

The meeting began with prayer at 7:00 p.m.

The Minutes of the meeting of February 11, 2025, were approved and seconded.

Ministry Reports were given:

Administration and Stewardship

- Jim noted that a hole near the entrance driveway was filled by the state DOT. Upon further inspection, he discovered that the culvert is crushed under the driveway, which explains the icing issue during the winter. The state DOT has been contacted. They are to send a supervisor to inspect the area and determine who is responsible for what.
- There has been a problem with the heat in the church. Val Bruni was called and determined that a leak somewhere in the system caused the boiler to lose pressure. Julio is checking the boiler daily, but Val Bruni will return with cameras to find the source of the leak in the network of old underground piping. Repair might require breaking through the concrete slab upon which the church sits. If required, this work would have to be done before the next heating season.

Education and Faith Formation

- Both sacramental retreats will be held at St. Paul's this year – and on the same date, March 22. The third-graders will bake bread with Rick Dzurilla and hear a presentation by Tony Bellizzi. The Confirmandi will primarily be in the church hearing witness talks. The two groups will come together midday with a joint activity that allows the older kids to assist and get to know the younger ones.
- Confirmation is 11 a.m. on April 26; First Eucharist is 11 a.m. on May 10.
- Because of a snowstorm, the February 16 Adult Faith Formation Committee meeting was held via Zoom. A low-cost or free version of Renew – or one where training is not necessary – will be investigated.
- Pat Davies "Lectio Divina" presentation after the 10 a.m. Mass on February 23 was attended by 20 parishioners.
- Last Sunday was Deacon Carl's first Gospel reflection after Mass. It was well-received with about 20 participants.
- The Book Club's Lenten selection is Fr. James Martin's, "Come Forth: The Promise of Jesus's Greatest Miracle," about the raising of Lazarus from the dead. It is prompting lively discussion.
- The Youth Ministry had nothing to report.

Art and Environment

The Team met to discuss different ideas – including a concept for the altar that would be visible to both sides of the church – so as to be on track with ordering. Palm trees will be purchased from Lowe's; Laurel Grove will deliver its plants on April 15.

Discussion ensued about the shed, which is shared between Art & Environment, Social Activities and Religious Education. In the past, there had been sections designated for each group so storage was organized and items could be easily located, something to strive for again.

Worship and Spiritual Life

Nothing new to report.

Social Activities

- There will be no fish fry this year because it would conflict with Stations of the Cross.
- Either the 14th or 21st of September is being eyed for the Parish Picnic.

Christian Services

- The Prayer Blanket Bake Sale brought in \$1,355 to be used toward supplies. The fleece can cost up to \$20 a yard, but Rebecca is frugal; she watches out for sales and uses coupons. However, the closing of JoAnn Fabric in Middletown is worrisome. She will have to find another source, which might not be as financially advantageous.

The Prayer Blanket Ministry has met twice – once the core group to replenish women's blankets and then again with the Confirmation candidates. Twenty-three blankets were made.

- The Food Bank's new Montgomery distribution center is easier for our volunteers to access. They typically pick up about 800 pounds of food – a healthy portion of which is meat, vegetables and fruit – for about \$200 or less. Grants are given through the Food Bank a couple of times a year to help offset costs. However, there is a concern as to how the USDA – and product availability at the Food Bank – might be impacted by the current administration. Food is distributed by appointment during office hours.

Chairperson's Report – Gale Britto

- The dates for the Pine Bush Community Band's 2025 concerts are July 21 and November 24. These are both Mondays, and the concerts begin at 7 p.m.
 - Discussion ensued about whether the concerts should continue as there doesn't seem to be many parishioners in attendance, mainly family members of the band. On the other hand, it is a nice event that is open to the community. Band members are easy to work with, returning the church to the state in which it was found. Council members in attendance don't have to do more than open the door and give a little direction.
 - Discussion then segued into the difficulty there is in involving younger people, and what that could mean to the future of the church. It is hard to get people involved who are working, especially if they are parents, too. Still, an effort should be made, and personal invitations to a specific event or activity are often the best approach.
- The Third Listening Session is April 27. A Flocknote will be sent out as the date nears.

Vicar's Report – Fr. Sean

Fr. Sean opened the floor to discussion about returning to receiving the Eucharist in two species.

The most significant concern is: Who is going to consume the leftovers? And that begs the question of how much wine to put in the cup? And how many Ministers of the Cup? Without knowing how many people will partake of the cup, it will be a learn-as-you-go process. But it will take time to complete all of the organizational gymnastics – ensuring there are enough Eucharistic Ministers, scheduling, training, etc.

The Parish Council agreed that despite reservations, both species should be available and is in favor of proceeding with caution.

Old Business

How best to proceed with the possibility of changing Parish Council meetings to coordinate with times that parishioners are present? This is for the future, perhaps next year, but it makes sense to address this now and see if there is even any interest.

It doesn't get much easier than clicking on a link on the St. Paul's website and watching a Zoom meeting from the comfort of home. It was agreed to start encouraging and inviting parishioners to attend the meeting online, while underscoring that only items on the agenda are discussed. This will help gauge response and sustained interest. It should begin with the April meeting.

The meeting closed at 7:58 p.m. with a prayer.

Next Parish Council meeting will be Tuesday, April 8, 2025, at 7 p.m. via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted, Deborah Botti