



## **ST. PAUL'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**

### *Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting – January 14, 2025*

**Elected Members Present:** Gale Britto, Julie Laurenzi, Joan Miller, Beth Schick, Chris Murphy, Marisa Block, Anne Savastano and Kate Galleher-Carson

**Elected Members Absent:** Jim Lancellotti,

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

**Ex-Officio Members Absent:** Deacon Michael McCabe

**Recording Secretary:** Deborah Botti

**Others Present:** Pat Davies and Tony Mazzeo

**The meeting began with prayer at 7:02 p.m.**

#### **Pat Davies brought a proposal to the Parish Council**

About a month ago, as I was at Mass watching Fr. Sean and Deacon Carl, but no altar servers. It prompted a memory of adult altar servers that I have seen at several other churches. I wondered if that could be an option here when our young altar servers were not available? It fits in with Pope Francis' call for greater participation in the church by the laity. Afterward, I reached out to some contacts in New Paltz, who would be glad to help us.

I had heard that there might be some questions among Council members, so I am here to answer them.

A discussion ensued regarding scheduling, training and vestments. It was agreed that a blurb would be put in the bulletin, and Pat would handle it from there. Fr. Sean had no objection and indicated it would be interesting to see what happens.

Pat left the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

**The Minutes of the meeting of December 10, 2024, were approved and seconded.**

## **Ministry Reports were given:**

### **Administration and Stewardship**

- Mike from Rotolo Electric was here to determine how to restore power to the shed. He found that the shed and light that illuminates the “St. Paul’s” sign at the entrance are on the same circuit. The entrance light’s wiring is underground, and a problem there tripped the circuit breaker. With the flip of a switch, power to the shed was fully restored; however, there is still a problem with the entrance light that needs to be addressed.

Ever mindful of trying to save the church money, and recognizing Julio’s skill set, Mike spent some time with Julio by the sign. It is believed that once the ground thaws, Julio will be able to make the repair. If it is a bigger problem than anticipated, Mike will return.

- The People’s Financial Report is ready. A date has to be selected for a printout of it to be included as a bulletin insert. The weekend when parishioners receive the report, it will be announced that the Finance Council will be available after Mass the following Sunday to address their questions.

### **Education and Faith Formation**

- First Reconciliation for our 13 third-graders took place on December 11 and went smoothly. The parents were very happy.
- In 1999, St. Paul’s earned the Mustard Seed award for getting parents involved in the faith life of their children. Because of that, St. Paul’s is one of 200 parishes nationwide (four from each state) invited to participate in a national council this year that will focus on how to get parents involved in their children’s religious education.
- The Adult Faith Formation Committee held a brainstorming session on December 29, to discuss Lent and beyond. A follow-up session has been set for January 19. Also:
  - Pat Davies’ “Surrender” book discussion continues on Saturday mornings.
  - Gail Van Tassel’s scripture discussion continues on Monday mornings on Zoom.
  - The Sunday Scripture Study meets Wednesdays on Zoom.
  - Carl’s Book Club continues to meet via Zoom on Thursday mornings.

- There are other things in the works to be talked about next month.
- The Youth Ministry will be assembling bags for the homeless on January 24, which will be delivered to the Middletown Warming Station at a later date. Anyone who can get a ride will be welcome to go with Chris and Deb to the Warming Station to drop off the bags. They will receive a tour to get a sense of what goes on there. SPYM is also:
  - Looking to begin a monthly Sunday meeting after Mass in February. This will be a time to discuss scripture, answer questions and help build faith and fellowship.
  - Working with Rebecca Suchy on the Passion Play.
  - Planning a parking lot decorating party – using chalk and scripture passages.

### **Art and Environment**

Decorating and undecorating went well. Tony Mazzeo will reorganize the shed and label the bins. A committee will be formed before Easter to facilitate all that needs to be done during Holy Week – and then again next Christmas. Tony and Rose Albert have volunteered.

It was pointed out that the poinsettias blocked the view of the creche in the East Wing, and Anne said both sides will be accommodated next year.

New winter shelf pieces were purchased from Hobby Lobby.

### **Worship and Spiritual Life**

Nothing to report – other than there are now only two Sunday streamers.

### **Social Activities**

The Pancake Breakfast has been scheduled for February 9 and will be announced in the bulletin this week. Tickets are \$10 or \$20 for an immediate family. The St. Patrick's Day Dinner will take place on March 8. It was mentioned that a reminder should be given to ensure that there is someone available after both Masses to sell tickets and collect money when the time comes.

### **Christian Services**

- There were 75 baskets distributed for each holiday. Donations specifically earmarked for the baskets were more than \$3,200, reducing the overall cost to \$5,200. That balance was covered by general Food Pantry donations.

It was also noted that a number of volunteers were Confirmation candidates.

- There was a repast for Deacon John after his Funeral Mass for about 70 family members and friends.
- The Consolation Ministry reported that there were many comments about how lovely it was to have Deacon John waked at church. The wake was well-attended.
- There were five new participants in the fall Bereavement Group, and there is interest in the group continuing to meet with a trained leader. It is still under discussion. A new six-week Bereavement Group will probably be scheduled in the fall if there is interest.

Discussion returned to whether the group should continue after the six-week period, which provides structure to help those grieving to start to move forward. There is no guidance from the Archdiocese. Some parishes have annual groups; others are ongoing. There are three Archdiocese-trained bereavement leaders and it might come down to their availability. Or will this group be different?

### **Chairperson's Report – Gale Britto**

- The Listening Session Subcommittee, which has a good analysis of the second session, will meet again to talk about what has been heard and to determine the next step .
- There were no proposed amendments to the Constitution.
- Chris Murphy will assume the segment of Christian Services for which Hector was the liaison. All other liaisons will remain the same.

### **Vicar's Report – Fr. Sean**

Nothing additional to report.

### **Old Business**

It was brought up whether meeting in person after Mass on Sunday is still up for discussion. There is division about this topic; some prefer the meeting as it is. Fr. Sean said that at some point a meeting on a Sunday with the whole parish should take place. "But not now. At some point."

The meeting closed at 7:38 p.m. with a prayer.

Next Parish Council meeting will be Tuesday, February 11, 2025, at 7 p.m. via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted, Deborah Botti