



ST. PAUL'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting – July 10, 2023

Elected Members Present: Julie Laurenzi, Gale Britto, Beth Schick, Kate Gallaher-Carson, Tom Fobert, Michael McGovern and Anne Savastano

Elected Members Absent: Rosa Gonzalez and Hector Hernandez

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

Ex-Officio Members Absent: Deacon Michael McCabe

Recording Secretary: Deborah Botti

Others Present: None

The meeting began with prayer at 6:48 p.m.

The minutes of the meeting of June 12, 2023, were approved and seconded, with the clarification that the Fourth of July Parade was sponsored by the Circleville Volunteer Fire Department.

Ministry Reports were provided:

Administration & Stewardship

A budget has been submitted to the Archdiocese, which was tentatively approved. It's not a deficit budget, but to balance it, the Religious Education coordinator position will be part-time and others have given up health benefits.

Education and Faith Formation

- Nothing to report on Religious Education, which is on summer break.
- Registration is under way for Discovering Christ. Amanda Lopez's talk at Mass was inspiring, and there are now six tables that are filled.
- It was at this point in the meeting that a question was posed: "What is the role of the Parish Council when things happen without it?" Specifically, the ChristLife series was approved and purchased before it came before the Parish Council. What is the protocol?

- Fr. Sean agreed that the Parish Council should have been involved because its role is to act in an advisory capacity about parish matters. However, in this case, the timing was tricky. If ChristLife had been presented to the Parish Council first, then the opportunity for convenient facilitator training at Dunwoody in March would have been lost. The next training wasn't until August and in Maryland. The program cost \$1,100, and St. Paul's owns it, as compared to the three-year Renew program in the '90s, with an upfront cost of \$10,000. With the exception of the food, and it is expected that the freewill offerings will cover most of that cost, the price of the program was the only expense for the series. Given those circumstances, coupled with the need to do something at St. Paul's, Fr. Sean gave the OK after being approached directly by Mark and Kate Carson.
- Kate Carson reiterated that she went to the Adult Faith Formation Committee and discussed the program at great length. "Everyone said, 'You have our complete support,' but they weren't getting too involved." Following that meeting, she and Mark spoke with Fr. Sean.
- Mark Carson expressed disappointment at what he perceives as a lack of Parish Council support. At the April meeting after the training, there were no comments after he presented more detailed information. Deacon Carl offered a quick explanation: "I think the Parish Council was thrown ... It was a done deal."
- There are 42 people signed up for Discovering Christ. The intent is to increase attendance and involvement. After the registration deadline of August 1, parishioners from Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Our Lady of the Assumption could be invited.
 - Additional, and differently-worded, Flocknotes could be sent out.
 - Religious Education uses a "Remind Me" software program, which could also be used to reach parishioners.

Christian Services

Anne Savastano will be Pam Vogt's second with regard to Holiday Baskets this year. Last year, \$2,500 was spent on food, but there is no need to cut back in 2023 because those funds were donated and earmarked for the food pantry/holiday baskets.

Social Activities

A Sunday in September has become the traditional time for the Parish Picnic. This year, that team is preparing dinner for those attending Discovering Christ, and it would be too much to do the picnic beforehand. Is a Saturday possible before Mass, or maybe the end of August? Rick Dzurilla will be contacted for his input.

Worship and Spiritual Life

Fifteen people, including several families, attended the SPYM-sponsored Fishing

Derby with the Southern Catskill Anglers, and everyone had a blast. Each new fisherperson caught - and held! - at least two fish. Then three days later, 11 participated in the Fourth of July Parade. There will be some outdoor meetings in August and then coordination with Religious Education about fall events.

Art and Environment

Nothing to report.

Archangels

Nothing to report.

Chairperson's Report - Julie Laurenzi

- The Pine Bush Community Band loves to perform here and will do so again on July 31. The Youth Ministry will be present to greet and hand out programs. The concert will also be livestreamed, which will be announced in the bulletin. I encourage everyone to come on out!
- Kate, Liz and I have scripted a six-week Bereavement Program, which will be open to anyone who has experienced a loss. There are a number of support options for widows and widowers; not nearly as many for parents or those who have lost a good friend. Beginning on September 23, there will be five consecutive meetings, then the Memorial Mass, and then the final meeting.
- It's time to start thinking about the Ministry Fair, which is held in October. Would someone like to take the lead?
- A year ago, we were hearing about the Synod on Synodality, and meetings to give voice to everyday Catholics were taking place worldwide. As Fr. Sean says, what Pope Francis is trying to teach is that synodality could become the structure of the Church.
 - There is still division in our church today – and the rest of the world – against the backdrop of another presidential election. People might want to get together and talk. We are reflective of society, and it's a beautiful thing when we can come together without judgment, which is already done among small groups. How can we widen the scope of participation and navigate this with respect?
 - Will the ChristLife conversations touch on this? Perhaps if more people saw ChristLife as an opportunity to explore these divisions, it could take off from there.
 - It is good for people to air conflicting opinions in faith; however, there are some things that are essential for Catholics. Our faith is still our faith.

Vicar's Report – Fr. Sean

Nothing further to report.

The meeting closed at 7:40 p.m. with a prayer.

Next Parish Council meeting will be Monday, August 14, 2023, at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Deborah Botti