



## ST. PAUL'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

### *Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting – March 14, 2022*

**Elected Members Present:** Julie Laurenzi, Christine Forbes, Beth Schick, Michael McGovern, Rosa Gonzalez, Pam Vogt and Hector Hernandez

**Elected Members Absent:** Peter Adams

**Ex-Officio Members Present:** Deacon Carl Locatelli and Deacon Michael McCabe

**Ex-Officio Members Absent:** Fr. Sean Harlow, O.Carm.

**Recording Secretary:** Deborah Botti

**Others Present:** Dennis Branham

**The meeting began with prayer at 6:44 p.m.**

**The minutes of the meeting of February 14, 2022, were accepted.**

### **Presenting the Need of the Archangels**

Back in 2017, the Archdiocese prescribed that safety teams be formed at each church. Fr. Sean asked Dennis Branham to coordinate St. Paul's Archangels. At that time, there were 42 volunteers. Today, there are eight.

Dennis says the volunteer shortage became particularly problematic when three weekend Masses returned after a two-year hiatus because of COVID-19. The incident coordinator at the 9 o'clock Mass died the year before, and his replacement reached out to dozens of pre-pandemic volunteers to help cover that Mass. No one responded.

"This highlights our dilemma, and we appeal to the Parish Council for your help," Dennis says.

Although most of the Archangels have either a first-responder or medical background – those who are used to running toward trouble and not away – that is not required. What is required is the ability to observe – and communicate concerns with other team members. Training will be provided.

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

Discussion ensued about how to best assist the Archangels. Dennis dealt directly with Fr. Sean, and the Archangels was not regarded as a "formal" ministry within Administration & Stewardship with its own liaison. Does that need to change? Should Archangels make a plea for help at all the Masses? And given the overall post-COVID decline in volunteerism, should a ministry fair be planned for the fall?

A bulletin blurb or insert regarding the Archangels' need will be included next weekend. However, a Parish Council member brought up that social media is where the younger parents can be found, and while Fr. Sean handles Facebook and our Youth Ministry is on Instagram, we don't have a cohesive approach to social media. Perhaps that needs to be

addressed as well.

It was noted that about 100 more parishioners attended Mass the first weekend of Lent, which was the first weekend of the return to three Masses. Because of the time change and snow last weekend, the numbers weren't as high.

### **Administration & Stewardship**

Nothing to report.

### **Education and Faith Formation**

- Religious Education re-registration is scheduled for the end of March.
- On April 5 and 6, students will participate in children's Stations of the Cross.
- The Easter Giving Basket of gifts for Montgomery Nursing Home residents is overflowing.
- The Confirmation candidates made prayer blankets in the beginning of March and will bake cookies for the Bake Sale to benefit the Prayer Blanket Ministry the weekend of March 26-27.

### **Christian Services**

Nothing new to report, other than the Food Pantry continues to be busy.

### **Social Activities**

A summer picnic is in the works.

### **Worship and Spiritual Life**

- The Youth Ministry is planning a Prayer Service for Healing, Hope and Peace. It will be about 45 minutes to an hour long, filled with Scripture and song. The kids generated this idea as a way to do something positive in a world yearning for peace. Initially, they planned for April 1; however, that is the date that the knitting group reconvenes, and some of those participants might want to attend. So the date will be changed to April 8.
- Weekly Youth Ministry Zoom meetings on Thursday evenings continue.

### **Art and Environment**

Nothing new to report.

### **Chairperson's Report - Julie Laurenzi**

- The storm postponed the Synod Listening Session to March 19. This is a unique opportunity for us. Some are even referring to it as "Vatican 3."
- We have been approached by the Pine Bush Community Band to resume concerts beginning with a Monday evening at 7 in August – assuming there are no new

COVID-19 waves. There is a city in China on lockdown with a new strain, so we have to continue to be flexible. The Archdiocese is still not encouraging social gatherings. Would an outdoor concert be possible? Perhaps at the Town Park with the picnic?

**Vicar's Report – Fr. Sean**

There was no vicar's report.

**Other business**

It was noted that there have been no streamers at the 11 o'clock Mass – and that there have been no complaints, Some churches are beginning to limit streaming to one Mass so as to encourage parishioners to return to church.

**The meeting closed at 7:37 p.m. with prayer.**

**Next Parish Council meeting will be Monday, April 11, 2022, at 6:45 p.m.**

**Respectfully submitted, Deborah Botti**