

**ST. PAUL’S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**

***Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting – August 10, 2020***

# Elected Members Present: Christine Forbes, Patricia Davies, Pam Vogt, Deborah Harrison, Kevin Green and Thomas Mulroy

# Elected Members Absent: Ross Terranova, Peter Adams and Rosa Gonzalez

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

**Recording Secretary:** Deborah Botti

# Ex-Officio Members Absent: None

# Others Present: None

**The meeting began with prayer at 6:50 p.m.**

# Minutes of the meeting of July 13 were accepted.

# *The following updates were given:*

# Ministry Reports:

# Administration & Stewardship:

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# Nothing to report.

# Education & Faith Formation:

# Out of more than 100 families, there are only about a half-dozen who have not re-registered their children and will have to be tracked down. That’s an amazing response, especially given the times.

# Sacraments that were canceled in the spring will be received at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in Middletown as follows: First Eucharist at 11 a.m. September 19 and Confirmation at 5:30 p.m. October 2.

Christian Services:

* The possibility of becoming a member of the Food Bank was discussed. There is no cost to join. Some items it distributes are free; others are purchased by the case at .16 cents a pound. This could be very helpful with filling Holiday Baskets as well as supplementing our Food Pantry. Items are ordered online and picked up in either Goshen or Cornwall-on-Hudson monthly. Requirements include application and supporting documents that must be approved, followed by a site inspection. The Food Bank will be investigated in person to get a more tangible feel for how this arrangement might work.
* How will the team safely fill and distribute the Holiday Baskets this year? In the past, the food was picked up Saturday using a truck donated by a parishioner. The baskets were assembled by volunteers on Sunday and then distributed on Monday. The schedule might have to be altered this season to help ensure social distancing for volunteers and the recipients.

# Social Activities:

Nothing to report. This might well be the last ministry to be up and running.

Worship & Spiritual Life:

The Youth Ministry continues to meet via Zoom every Thursday evening. The kids are starting to invite friends, and it’s been noticed that curious siblings are starting to get closer to the computer. It might be the safety of a virtual setting – and a “community” that kids are at ease with because of social media – which is making it more comfortable to get closer to Scripture during the meetings. The Bible verses the kids are sharing are awesome – and they’re even using the dictionary to look up words in the Bible.

Art & Environment:

* What about the giving tree this year? It’s hard to project how many people will be attending Mass in late fall – and, therefore, how many angel tags would actually be taken off the tree. No one wants to disappoint the children. So while we might have a clearer answer in October, Deacon Michael will reach out to Terese Quinn, who coordinates this endeavor, to discuss different possibilities.
* Deacon Michael will also be looking into using MERV (Miminum Efficiency Reporting Valves) filters at St. Paul’s as is done in the building that he manages in New York City. These filters are more efficient at trapping bacteria, but could be cost-prohibitive based on the number of filters our HVAC system uses and the frequency with which they would need to be changed.

Chairperson’s Report - Christine Forbes:

# The Reopening Subcommittee continues to meet weekly. Last week, 23 attended Mass on Saturday and 49 on Sunday – plus the volunteers. However, because of the configuration – a couple sitting in a spot for a family of four, for example – reaching capacity would not have been possible.

# Discussion ensued about whether to continue to offer a Communion Service for any overflow, an option that has never been used and would require additional volunteers. Although there was a negative response or two, no definitive answer was reached.

# Discussion then ensued about whether after Labor Day there should be two Masses again on Sunday to give parishioners a sense of normalcy. The possibility exists that the fear of getting turned away might be keeping people away.

# Music was also brought up. There is still concern about singing, but perhaps the keyboard can return.

# Mass volunteers have noted that there are a few people who do not want to sit in the location designated by the volunteer. Father Sean will address this in a Flocknote.

# Parishioners have been seen in the parking lot not wearing masks or social distancing. It was agreed that volunteers are not responsible for policing people.

# Vicar’s Report – Fr. Sean Harlow:

# Nothing to report.

# Social Justice – Pat Davies:

# An offshoot of Book Club participants reading “The Holy Longing” by Fr. Ron Rolheiser was three participants meeting independently via Zoom to discuss their responses to the pandemic and racism. This “Discernment Group” prays under the guidance of the Spirit insofar as to how to proceed – both individually and as a community. The group has grown to eight. Some have been candid about personal experiences, and participants share articles found to be enlightening.

# The USCCB has issued a mandate to deal with racism. Does St. Paul’s want to take a first step by offering non-confrontational and church-based education to our parishioners?

# It was agreed that the Parish Council will draft a letter letting parishioners know that it will be sharing recommended and faith-based resources with regard to social justice. Acting with justice is, after all, part of St. Paul’s Mission Statement. This letter will be in the bulletin and on our website, and provide different links weekly that hopefully will ultimately serve as a call to action. It was noted that in June there were 200 hits to our website, which is an increase but not a guarantee of how many people the site is reaching.

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

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

# Respectfully submitted, Deborah Botti