



## ST. PAUL'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

### *Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting – December 13, 2021*

**Elected Members Present:** Christine Forbes, Deborah Harrison, Rosa Gonzalez, Pam Vogt, Peter Adams, Kevin Green, Patricia Davies and Ross Terranova

**Elected Members Absent:** None

**Members Whose Terms Begin in January 2022 Present:** Julie Laurenzi, Hector Hernandez and Michael McGovern

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

**Ex-Officio Members Absent:** None

**Recording Secretary:** Deborah Botti

**Others Present:** Liz Locatelli

**The meeting began with prayer at 6:51 p.m.**

**The minutes of the meeting of November 8, 2021, were accepted.**

### **Latest COVID Requirement from the State of New York**

After welcoming the newly-elected, it was explained that members of the Reopening Committee who are not on the Parish Council were invited to the December meeting because of Gov. Kathy Hochul's latest announcement: Masks are mandated again in indoor public spaces until at least January 15. And the Archdiocese of New York has issued a mask mandate as well.

- Orange County now has a 6-7% COVID positivity rate.
- Fr. Sean will send out a Flocknote regarding the mask mandate.
- There will be new signs at the entrances and throughout the church that include information from the state and Archdiocese.
- The greeters will ask if an unmasked person would like a mask, referencing the sign. If the person objects, the greeter is not to push the issue.
- This coming Sunday, the first Sunday since the new mandate, is also the Fourth Sunday of Advent, which comes with the theme of "Love." Wearing a mask can be interpreted as an expression of love for one another, and this coincidence in timing will be noted in the Flocknote.

## **Administration & Stewardship**

Crystal Blue Cleaning, which deep-cleaned the church in July, has been contracted with to clean and sanitize the premises two times a month. A clean church is important at any time, but during this latest virus surge, it also coincides with an Archdiocese recommendation.

## **Education & Faith Formation**

Nothing to report.

## **Christian Services**

- Christmas baskets were distributed today. There are a few people who couldn't make it, but when they do come within the next day or two, upward of 65 will have been distributed.
- Winter can be difficult for many to begin with, especially older parishioners - without this latest COVID surge. What can be done to stay connected?

## **Social Activities**

- Thoughts of gathering for a meal should be tabled for the immediate future.
- However, perhaps a fish fry should be considered. People love a fish fry, and this could be done on a strictly take-out basis. Tastefully British does all the work – and outside. An updated price list will be obtained.

## **Worship & Spiritual Life**

- The Youth Ministry is planning to carol after Mass on Saturday evening. Masks will be worn.
- All things considered, the Advent wreath-making event was successful. Although there were fewer participants than in pre-COVID times, there was a shortage of greens this year so it worked out.
- The Christmas Pageant is back this year, as well as the Children's Choir.
- Attendance is up and down at the Thursday virtual Youth Ministry meetings. Outdoor meetings will be planned for the winter.

## **Art & Environment**

Magan Hart and Shannan Hilario have it all under control. It's full steam ahead decorating for Christmas.

## **Chairperson's Report – Christine Forbes**

- Following up on the outreach discussion from last month, it was agreed an “out-of-the blue we-haven't-seen-you-in-a-while” call could be considered too invasive and potentially offensive. However, it would be fine for someone to reach out to another with whom they've had a pre-COVID connection.
- A letter was written to the Parish Council chair regarding the Flocknote that addressed the should-we-return-to-two-Masses-on Sunday survey. The decision will be more fully explained in a letter responding to that parishioner,
- Although traditionally it is someone who has served on the Parish Council, if anyone, including the new members, is interested in shadowing as a co-chair this year, talk to Christine. If there are multiple people interested, a vote can be taken. A co-chair is the best way to ensure a seamless passing of the baton at the end of the chair's term this year.

## **Vicar's Report – Fr. Sean**

Our income has taken a big hit because of COVID. The first year, there was government assistance in the form of the Paycheck Protection Program. However, we are now dipping into savings to keep up with operating expenses. The Finance Committee is aware and has approved this decision rather than pursuing fund-raising at this time. There's no reason to be overly concerned. St. Paul's savings are significant, and this is what savings are for.

## **Auld Lang Syne**

Ross, Kevin and Deb were thanked for their service, as was Christine for navigating the Parish Council through the pandemic. And Fr. Sean jokingly reminded the exiting members that he still has their numbers!

**The meeting closed at 7:48 p.m. with prayer.**

**Next Parish Council meeting will be Monday, January 10, 2022, at 6:45 p.m.**

**Respectfully submitted, Deborah Botti**