



ST. PAUL'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting – December 14, 2020

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

Elected Members Absent: None

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

Recording Secretary: Deborah Botti

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

Others Present: Liz Locatelli; Maxine Martin

The meeting began with prayer at 6:49 p.m.

Minutes of the meeting of November 9 were accepted.

Reopening Committee Updates

- The equipment and volunteers are in place to live-stream all three Christmas Masses. Expensive equipment is not required. The quality of the live-stream to the hall has been good, and the test stream reveals it's even better when viewed at home. The live-stream will be deleted after each Mass so parishioners have the sense of participating in Mass, not watching a movie at will. Also, the number of viewers can be determined.
- Discussion ensued regarding singing at the Christmas Masses – with masks on. Reference was made to studies that indicate the propagation of droplets – even with masks – was far worse with singing than speaking. So while there was a lot of negative reaction to not singing in the recent survey, it is for medical reasons, and this explanation has to be conveyed to parishioners.
- “Arbitrary” seating in church was also mentioned in the survey. Should a diagram of the seating and explanation be posted? Additionally, the crime-scene-like tape is off-putting to some. Given the fact that people are more familiar with the procedures – and are still ushered to their seats – the tape probably can be removed.
- It's difficult to predict the numbers at the Christmas Masses because live-streaming at home could prompt a decrease in attendance. However, the volunteers probably

should be prepared to arrive a little earlier.

- Insofar as responding to the survey results:
 - The key points to address will be determined via email among Parish Council members.
 - The response will ghost-written and sent to Fr. Sean for final editing, approval and distribution by him.
 - Because there are some who believe our adherence to protocol is extreme, there needs to be transparency and a clear explanation of our rationale while stepping back and looking at it through their lens. That rationale can ultimately be accepted or rejected, but at least there will be an understanding that decisions weren't arbitrary. Due diligence was done, and it's safety first. Ours was a loving response to our neighbor in light of the potential devastation of COVID-19.
 - Parishioners need to be reminded that there is an ongoing review of procedures, and changes, such as live-streaming, continue to be made.
 - It is also important to balance the letter with all the positive responses that the survey prompted.
 - The Reopening Committee was dismissed.

Administration & Stewardship

Nothing to report.

Education & Faith Formation

Rebecca Suchy and Jessica Carpinio were able to plan a COVID-friendly Christmas pageant on a Saturday afternoon just for the Religious Education families whose children were participating. There were costumes, and the children did readings during this intimate event. In hindsight, it would have been nice to live-stream

Christian Services

In excess of 80 Christmas baskets were distributed earlier today, which followed 80 that were distributed for Thanksgiving. This was a little higher than last year.

Worship & Spiritual Life

There was no Youth Ministry meeting Thanksgiving, and plans are being made in advance for continuity during Christmas because Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve also fall on Thursdays.

Arts & Entertainment

The church will be decorated, primarily by John Botti. Jessica Carpino, with Deb Hilgenfeldt's help, will take care of the wreaths. Julio will be responsible for the outdoor Nativity and banners in the East Wing. COVID-19 dictates decorating groups of two or less.

Other Business

A brief discussion ensued regarding the special generosity of this parish, which doesn't stop even during challenging times. The number of Angel gifts that went to St. Simon Stock was heartwarming – and there wasn't even an actual Giving Tree. Donations to the holiday baskets were bountiful, and Montgomery Nursing Home was grateful once again for the many stockings for seniors provided by our Religious Education children. Many positive events punctuated this challenging year.

The meeting closed at 7:52 p.m. with prayer.

Next Parish Council meeting will be Monday, January 12, at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Deborah Botti