



ST. PAUL'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting – June 2, 2020

Elected Members Present: Deborah Harrison, Peter Adams, Patricia Davies, Thomas Mulroy, Ross Terranova, Kevin Green and Pam Vogt

Elected Members Absent: Christine Forbes 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:

Others Present:

The meeting began with prayer at 6:30 p.m. – along with the request for Parish Council members to keep Christine and Scott Forbes in their prayers upon the death of Michele “Mikie” Forbes, a parishioner and Scott’s mother.

Minutes of the meeting of May 19 were accepted.

In anticipation of reopening:

Conversation ensued regarding the Preparing for Phase 1 reopening letter Father Sean sent to all parishioners just a few days ago. He addressed not only the supplies being gathered to help ensure safety, but how important volunteers will be going forward. The mailing also included Guidelines from the Archdiocese that will be followed, as well as the announcement that St. Paul’s is now opening for private prayer two days a week.

Highlights of points made:

- It seems to some that the Archdiocese is serious about older folks not coming to church. However, demographics indicate that most of our parishioners are older. Father Sean clarified that this isn’t so much about age as it is overall health, and health issues tend to accompany those who are older. Particularly, anyone with cardiovascular disease, respiratory illness and/or cancer – or even those just feeling under the weather before Mass – should seriously consider not attending.
- Numbers were tackled next. Although probably still at least eight weeks away from Phase 5, Sunday Mass – although the possibility exists that the official timeline will be accelerated – what does 25 percent capacity mean for St. Paul’s? Father Sean said a parishioner/architect has prepared a church schematic. Using a percentage is a little tricky because of our configuration. To comply with the six-foot social-distancing mandate, only 24 will be allowed in the Main Church (with a total capacity of 170) and 42 in the East Wing (with a total capacity of 210). In general, families will be seated in the East Wing and singles/couples in the Main Church.
- And just how will these numbers be ensured? Parish Council members shared anecdotes from churches that have opened in other states. Some have requested

online reservations; in Florida, there are churches that link an email and phone number to a specific seat's ticket to enable tracing if there is an outbreak. Deacon Carl checked other states via YouTube and found in Washington, D.C. and Massachusetts, for example, signups didn't work. They've had better success with a first-come, first-served approach. A member with a connection to a church in Massachusetts shared that parishioners attending Mass must sign an agreement promising to wear a mask and use hand sanitizer.

- There is a reopening subcommittee that will examine and make recommendations about the steps we should be taking before each phase unfolds.

Private Prayer:

Deacon Carl and Deacon Michael have taken the reins on opening the church for private prayer, which begins tomorrow (June 3) and will take place on Wednesdays and Thursdays. The pews are taped. Social-distancing circles are on the floor. Sanitizing stations are set up. The Tabernacle is on the altar. There will be no more than three volunteers at each session because the volunteers would go toward the maximum occupancy of 10 that is allowed in Phase 1. Deacon Carl will handle the 10 a.m.-noon shift and Deacon Michael from 3-5 p.m. This is a starting point. The deacons have talked about being flexible if different or later hours are requested.

Plans for June 14:

Ross Terranova presented an extensive proposal for a drive-by procession that will check three boxes: The need to see Father and the Deacons; the need for reflection at church and the need to replenish the food pantry.

- Dennis Branham, the Archangels coordinator, is reaching out to the chiefs of the local fire and police departments to secure their assistance with traffic flow. Because it is a short event, which will begin at 1 p.m., he's reasonably certain they will be able to assist to enhance safety.
- The Youth Ministry is eager to participate. They will prepare signs that express their relationship with our church and God with which to greet – and perhaps send off – the cars as they process.
- Families will be encouraged to have their children create expressive signs to display from within the cars – and to decorate the cars, too.
- Because of her knowledge of COVID-19 precautions and the Food Pantry itself, Pam Vogt will oversee the Food Pantry collections. Parishioners will be asked to bring a non-perishable item or grocery-store gift card. Food pantry donations can also be made through WeShare.
- Parishioners will be alerted to this event through the bulletin, Flocknotes, the website and a Religious Ed email.
- Once advised of how much municipal help to expect, it will be determined if any other volunteers are needed. There will be a dry run beforehand, which begins with a pre-planning meeting complete with doughnuts.
 - Cars will be directed from the entrance to the Food Pantry station.
 - The next stop is parallel to our Shrine of the Blessed Mother for reflection.
 - Last stop, in front of the church to greet Father and the Deacons.

No doubt, everyone will leave knowing something special just happened.

The meeting closed at 7:27 p.m. with prayer.

Next Parish Council meeting to be determined.

Respectfully submitted, Deborah Botti