



## ST. PAUL'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

### *Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting – March 8, 2021*

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

**Elected Members Absent:** Ross Terranova

**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:** Liz Locatelli and Maxine Martin

**The meeting began with prayer at 6:45 p.m.**

**Minutes of the meeting of February 8 were accepted.**

### **Reopening Committee Updates**

- There was a live-streaming glitch requiring an Internet update.
- There are many people now watching Mass online. When the live-stream via Twitch is shut down, the number of devices online pops up. Last week there were 55 viewers and 75 the week prior.
- It's been noted that accompanying vaccination is often a return to Mass. What might that mean in terms of increased volume in the near future? The overflow into the hall has been more consistently about 20 people and is creeping up.
  - A big factor is whether social-distancing protocols change. Regardless of capacity percentages, if there is no change to the six-foot rule, we cannot accommodate any more people. And our maximum number of 66, which we rarely come close to, is contingent upon people filling the pews as allotted; i.e., a family of five, a family of four, etc. More often, it's a couple in a spot designated for four, or a single person in a spot for three.
  - However, 66 in the church does not include the choir, choir loft or volunteer chairs.
  - Will we be able to sit unrelated but vaccinated people wearing masks closer than six feet apart?

- There will be two Masses on Easter Sunday, and if they numbers continue to grow, returning to two Sunday Masses could be considered. More volunteers would be needed.
  - Deacon John Hall can hold at least 30 people.
  - The Reopening Committee will continue to watch the numbers and communicate via email.
- Parishioners who have returned to Mass know the routine, but new returnees don't. There was an occasion recently where a couple sat themselves in the wrong spot. While there has been some feedback that one less volunteer is do-able, now is not the time with attendance increasing.
  - It is a good plan to ready Deacon John Hall for live-streaming/overflow on Saturdays. The volunteer assignments will be revised, formalizing that No. 4 will move to the hall when the church is at capacity.
  - Reopening Committee members were excused at 7:05 p.m.

### **Administration & Stewardship**

Arrangements have been made for landscaping/spring cleaning of the grounds and weekly lawn maintenance. The church should look alive and be welcoming as people return.

### **Education & Faith Formation**

The Thursday Discernment Group has been involved in a variety of ways to increase social justice awareness. Most recently, a few members participated in the Just Faith Ministries' program, which included books, videos and discussion as well as a great deal of prayer and reflection. As part of that experience, they will join St. Charles Borromeo Church in Harlem for (virtual) Mass and follow-up discussion with its Racial Justice Program on March 14.

The Catholic Anti-Racism Project, made possible by a Catholic Charities Grant that allowed several New York City churches to collaborate (including St. Charles Borromeo), traces its roots to the Examen, a prayer based in the spirituality of St. Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuits.

“We might feel like we're closed in, but there's a lot of outreach going on.”

### **Christian Services**

Not much has changed in the last month. The ministry is still limited, but continues to support the Food Pantry,

### **Social Activities**

Nothing to report.

### **Worship & Spiritual Life**

- The Youth Ministry is anticipating the warm weather and what can be done outside – including Scripture Sharing.
- The First Eucharist Retreat went very well. The highlight for the 11 youngsters was punching down their individual loaves of bread - under the direction of Rick Dzurilla.
- Confirmation, which will take place at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, will also be live-streamed because of attendance restrictions.

### **Chairperson's Report**

A topic to consider was raised at a recent Book Club meeting. Should there be a monthly forum at which concerns could be brought to the table? Discussion ensued, which included a recollection that this has been done in the past and was never well-attended. However, there is already a vehicle in place for this:

The Parish Council, which supports Father Sean in the day-to-day operations of the church, is open to parishioners and is the pathway for complaints.

### **Vicar's Report**

Here's what's happening Holy Week:

- Palms will be blessed in advance and placed on tables in the East Wing and Deacon John Hall. The tables will be moved outside after the 10 a.m. Mass on Sunday so people can pick up palms without attending Mass as well.
- Mass Holy Thursday will be at 7 p.m. However, there will be no Washing of the Feet. Socially-distanced Adoration will follow in the hall.
- There will be no Stations of the Cross at 3 p.m. Good Friday. Instead, at that time there will be a Communion Service with a reading of The Passion.
- There will be no Vigil Mass on Holy Saturday. Vigil Masses will be celebrated at 8:30 p.m. at Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Our Lady of the Assumption.
- Masses Easter Sunday will be celebrated at 9 and 11 a.m.

**The meeting closed at 7:47 p.m. with prayer.**

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

**Respectfully submitted, Deborah Botti**