



## **ST. PAUL'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**

### *Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting – November 12, 2024*

Elected Members Present: Gale Britto, Julie Laurenzi, Joan Miller, Beth Schick, Anne Savastano and Hector Hernandez

Elected Members Absent: Jim Lancellotti, Kate Galleher-Carson and Marisa Block

Ex-Officio Members Present: Fr. Sean Harlow, Deacon Carl Locatelli and Rosa Gonzalez

Ex-Officio Members Absent: Deacon Michael McCabe and Mark Carson

Recording Secretary: Deborah Botti

Others Present: Tony Mazzeo

The meeting began with prayer at 7:05 p.m.

The Minutes of the meeting of October 8, 2024, were approved and seconded.

Ministry Reports were given:

### **Administration and Stewardship**

The Finance Counsel will meet this Thursday. The last fiscal year ended with a \$20,000 surplus.

### **Education and Faith Formation**

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- Children's Liturgy of the Word has been focusing on Jesus and the Corporal Works of Mercy. The Confirmation candidates helped make Prayer Blankets and will assist at the Senior Thanksgiving Dinner. And the community continues to grow among the parents.
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- The ChristLife retreat is coming up.
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- The Youth Ministry is planning a Festive Christmas Challenge on December 13, which will feature holiday-inspired games. In January, SPYM will once again assemble bags for the homeless, to be distributed through the Middletown Warming Station. Chris and Deb also report that they are getting good feedback from their devotional series that can be seen on YouTube, Facebook and Instagram.
- Deacon Carl reminded the Council of some of the other aspects of Adult Faith Formation: There is the Monday group that just completed the first three letters of John; there is the Men's Faith Sharing Group on Monday evenings; there is Sunday Scripture Study on Wednesdays and the Book Club. An offshoot of the Book Club was what he described as a "vibrant discussion" after Mass last Sunday among 25 attendees of the movie "Conclave."

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### **Art and Environment**

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The Advent Wreath for the altar will be decorated after Thanksgiving. A bulletin blurb, followed by announcements the two weeks before Christmas, will seek "elves" to assist with decorating the church the Sunday before Christmas, as well as help to water the poinsettias afterward. The color scheme this year will be similar to last year – which is why the ribbons were saved from the wreaths – with a few tweaks.

### **Worship and Spiritual Life**

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Despite being a "Ministry Spotlight," no one stepped up to become an altar server. It's the recurring problem: People clamor for various activities or services, but no one wants to help.

### **Social Activities**

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Signup continues for the Senior Thanksgiving Dinner.

A lengthy discussion ensued regarding a concern noted last weekend: Despite announced signups for the Thanksgiving dinner, Advent Wreath-making and Christmas wreaths through the Heart Association, there were no representatives at the signup table after Mass, and there was even a check for a dinner guest left on the table until Monday.

It was ultimately suggested that the Parish Council liaisons go back to their respective ministries and remind the coordinators that announcements should be requested, and if an event requires that parishioners sign up, they are responsible for ensuring there is someone at the signup table.

## **Christian Services**

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- The first opportunity to select from among the 175 angels on the Giving Tree will be after Mass this Sunday, November 17, and then again on November 23 after the 5 p.m. Mass. Gifts are due back by December 15.
- Blanket making with the Confirmation candidates went well on November 1, with about 20 new blankets being blessed at Mass that weekend.
- The Memorial Mass with a healing service was beautiful, and many were deeply touched by the experience.
- The second structured Bereavement Program has begun and will meet into December, although not on Thanksgiving weekend. This session has a two-pronged approach that takes new members through the program while allowing time for interaction with “veterans” of the group afterward.

## **Chairperson’s Report – Gale Britto**

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- The Pine Bush Community Band will be setting up for its November 26 concert after 11 a.m. that day because Thanksgiving baskets will be distributed earlier. Kate and Mark Carson will help close up after the concert.
- As a result of the October elections, Chris Murphy will come on as a new member in January, and she will join the December meeting. Julie Laurenzi and Beth Schick were re-elected.
- One of the challenges of the Listening Session will be to get more people involved. Who is ready to step up – and not just one person or the same people. And while personal invitations are usually successful, this issue, as well as the most pertinent of the others raised, could be divided into three groups and studied in greater depth. Each group of three main points could be examined by a team of three council members with a goal of devising an action plan.
- Should it be decided at the December meeting who will cover what so the groups can hit the ground running in January? Or is there more for the Listening Session subcommittee to discuss? And should parishioners ultimately be part of the three groups?
  - Welcoming new people to St. Paul’s doesn’t have to wait until Listening Session results. Anne has made “welcome” as part of her introduction to Mass in the past. She can write up something for Fr. Sean’s approval, which Maxine can read on Saturdays.

## **Other Business**

Rosa Gonzalez suggested some fundraising ideas for next year. A holiday gift sale could be successful. Vendors would pay St. Paul's a table charge, say \$30. People prefer shopping church events rather than flea markets. Even a car wash could be good for the coffers. A starting point would be to ascertain how many volunteers there would be for these events, which have to be planned months beforehand.

## **Vicar's Report – Fr. Sean**

This is not for discussion now but to be considered: Should Parish Council meetings be held in the hall after Mass on Sundays?

The meeting closed at 8:06 p.m. with a prayer.

Next Parish Council meeting will be Tuesday, December 10, 2024, at 7 p.m. via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted, Deborah Botti