

January minutes for St. Thomas More pastoral council, Jan. 10, 2022

Present were: Father Brad Whistle, Jeff Case, Richard Vieitez, Tom Clinton, Joe Hobbs, Daniel Miller, Julie Turok, and Lynn Baker.

Absent were: David Leis, David Riley, Jeri Duong, Miguelina Young and Naomi Becker.

Father Brad opened the meeting with prayer.

Council chair Jeff Case acknowledged the day as the anniversary of Father Brad's ordination with prayerful good wishes from the council.

Father Brad announced that Marianna Romero will head up the parish sessions for the Bishops' synod, initiated by Pope Francis. Sessions at STM will be Jan. 25 and Feb. 22 with a third session for the deanery conducted by Bishop Medley in March. Father stressed that it is important for council members to attend these sessions.

Father Brad also shared a letter going out soon to the parish under the theme of "What now?" The letter is a follow-up to a group discussion of primarily younger parish members about how we are to grow as a parish in the future. The parish has engaged Generis, a parish support firm that has guided other parishes in our diocese facing similar opportunities. Generis will interview several households. All others will be invited to complete an online survey with the objective of giving voice to hopes and dreams for STM's ministry going forward.

Ministry reports forwarded via e-mail from absent members were:

From David Leis:

Homebound Ministry continues to run with our volunteers following the procedures given by the <sup>[[1]]</sup><sub>SEP</sub> facilities. There are currently six facilities that our homebound ministry visits with either Holy Communion<sup>[[1]]</sup><sub>SEP</sub> or for prayer. We continue to have new requests for home visits and for residents at the facilities.

Music – Kelly Groves reports the following:

The St. Thomas More Choir sang for the 8 p.m. Mass on Christmas Eve and did an incredible job. They sang a few new difficult pieces and did a superb job. We have also resumed our St. Thomas More Choir to sing for Sunday liturgies. There is no audition or singing experience required to be a part of this important choral ensemble. The St. Thomas More Choir rehearses on Wednesdays at 7 p.m. The expectation of a choir member is to arrive approximately 30 minutes prior to Sunday Mass for vocal warm ups and join in a short rehearsal.

There are currently approximately 28 members in the St. Thomas More Adult Choir.

Choir is coordinated and conducted by Director of Music, Kelly Groves.

We will also resume our Resurrection Choir to sing for funeral liturgies. There is no audition or singing experience required to be a part of this important ensemble. The Resurrection Choir does not have any weekly scheduled rehearsals. The expectation of a member is to arrive 30 minutes prior to a funeral liturgy for vocal warm ups and join in a short rehearsal. The Resurrection choir will be coordinated and conducted by Director of Music, Kelly Groves.

We currently have 12 cantors for the English Masses, three cantors for the Spanish Masses, and four Seasonal Cantors who are in college and sing for Masses during school breaks such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, and summer. We hold cantor workshops quarterly to train and instruct cantors, including liturgy guidelines and vocal technique in a group setting. This is led by Director of Music and professional vocalist/cantor, Kelly Groves.

The bell choir ensemble played for Christmas Eve Mass at 8 p.m. They played familiar carols before and during the liturgy. The bell choir rehearses on Wednesday evenings at 6 p.m. Basic knowledge of music theory and music sight reading skills are essential in order to be a part of this ensemble. We currently have eight members of the Bell Choir who played for the 8 p.m. Christmas Vigil. Bell choir is coordinated by Kelly Groves and conducted by Derrick Anderson.

A professional string ensemble from The Paducah Symphony Orchestra was hired to play for both of the Christmas Eve Masses, including the 4 p.m. Mass and the 8 p.m. Mass. There were two violinists and a violaist.

A professional doctoral student from MSU was hired to play for both of the Christmas Eve Masses, including the 4 p.m. Mass and the 8 p.m. Mass and Christmas Day 9 a.m. Mass.

Daniel Miller reported via e-mail:

Ministry to Homebound Update: Currently visiting six facilities and continuing to follow updated COVID guidance for visits with either Holy Communion or for prayer. New requests continue to be received for visits.

Coffee and Donuts Going Strong: We have 19 families participating and Munals delivering 20-22 dozen per week to the church.

Funeral/Special Meals are going on as planned, however we are now requesting all parishioners to wear masks until they sit down to eat.

Giving Tree Program: Twenty-six families turned in applications for the program this year with a total of 406 tags on the tree. Rough estimate is that parishioners donated \$12,000 to families in need this Christmas. Volunteers spent about four hours sorting gifts and Kurt Averill with Domino's pizza dropped off pizza for volunteers. Toys that did not get distributed in time were donated to McCracken County Extension Office Toy Drive for Tornado victims.

Tornado Relief: In addition to individual donations of gifts to various agencies by parishioners, a collection for victims was taken up the Sunday following and ongoing throughout December for tornado victims. Overall, the church raised \$27,000 for relief.

Jeri Duong also reported via e-mail: Reference to scouting, Steve Shoulta reported We had good attendance at our December Pack meeting. Only one active scout did not attend. I think we had a good time. We are re-chartered for 2022. We will celebrate our 70th anniversary this year. The Scout Sunday mass is set for Sunday 02/06 at the 11 A.M. Mass. This will likely be a low-key event like what we did last year. Our Blue and Gold banquet to celebrate the anniversary of the beginning of Scouting in America is the following Tuesday 02/08 if the covid situation will allow it. I have not set a date for our pinewood derby for the same reason. I am monitoring the COVID status to see when the next wave begins to diminish to a point that we can do that.

The Over 50's met in December.

- Quarterly Ministry Appreciation Breakfasts- We would like to bring back the Ministry Appreciation Breakfasts in 2022- due to increase once more in COVID cases, this might be best to bring back in the spring.

Lynn Baker reported the following from Monica Hayden, director, St. Mary School System: You can share the following information to the council - but please wait until then as it transpired over the break and I want to share it with my families first. I will be sending a letter out in the next few days.

St. Mary ended 2021 with two generous boosts. We were approved for funding from a government program - Emergency Assistance for Non-public Schools Part II, (EANS II) for about \$1.4M. We will be able to use this money over the next few years for school supplies, technology, and programs to help students impacted by Covid.

We have also had a donor step up to commit the funds to build an auxiliary gym adjacent to our middle school/high school building. We are in the process of receiving approval from the diocese and hope to start construction this spring.

We are getting ready for Catholic Schools Week which is the last week of January. During this time, we celebrate all that is good about our schools and use it as a kick-off for our enrollment for next year. Any information that can be shared at the parish level about the benefits of a Catholic education, the excellent opportunities for students at all grade levels at St. Mary, and the availability of tuition assistance for families in need, would be appreciated.

Children's Liturgy of the Word:

Children's Liturgy of the Word continues to meet at the 9:00 AM Mass each week. We've steadily had

20+ children come each week. The week leading up to Sunday, I send a copy of the lesson plan to the

leaders as well as to Father Brad. During Christmas break, Children's Liturgy did not meet, but I printed

out the booklets and had them available for children during Mass. For the Christmas Masses I printed

out 100 booklets. We have 13 volunteers currently on rotation to lead Children's Liturgy.

Adoration:

We are continuing to have adoration Sunday-Friday. We have lost our Day Captain for Thursdays and I'm

trying to fill that position with no luck as of yet, but I'm still trying. Over the last month there have been

more cases of sickness where we've had to repose more during the week. The Eucharist was reposed

during the weekend of Christmas and New Year's.

In Planning:

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Jeff Case reported

The financials for the first six months of the fiscal year are available. Covid has had an effect on giving, but we are still on track for the year. Projects are mostly repairing and replacing older equipment, cleaning and painting.

The meeting was concluded with prayer led by Father Brad.

Next Meeting is Feb 21, 2022