

St. Michael's Parish Council Meeting

August 18, 2020

I. Call to Order and Opening Prayer

Sheila Schreiner opened the Zoom meeting and Fr. Braun led everyone in praying the Our Father.

II. Organizational & Routine Matters

- **Appointment to Vacancy on Council:** Holly Brown-Borg has been appointed to fill the vacancy left by Lowell Schweigert.
- **Roll Call: Present:** Fr. Braun, Sheila Schreiner, Kevin Fruhwirth, Jennifer Modeen, Jeri Anderson, Holly Brown-Borg, Judy Jahnke, Kevin Boehm, Craig Pfau, Jennifer Loraas, Mary Ann Whalen
Absent: Dennis Feist
- **Approval of Minutes:** The previous meeting's minutes (from June 2) had been sent out to members earlier. Jennifer Modeen motioned to approve them. Seconded by Jeri Anderson. Motion carried and minutes approved.

III. Reports of Representing Organizations

- **Altar Society:** Judy Jahnke reported the Altar Society had not met. There will be no Fall Dinner this year but the Altar Society is still having their raffle. Hopefully everyone in the parish will sell/buy a book of tickets. Because of the coronavirus, the Altar Society has not been able to serve funeral lunches.
- **Men's Club:** Kevin Boehm reported the Men's Club has not met. They will donate \$1500 to St. Joseph's Food Pantry. Paul Clark is working on starting up the "Month of Money." Perhaps these tickets will be sold on the church steps.
- **Knights of Columbus:** Craig Pfau reported that no official meetings have been held yet. The KC's will give to three seminarians from their next raffle.
- **Bridge Builders:** Fr. Braun reported that Kevin Bosh has stepped down from the Bridge Builders Board and they have not met yet to select a new representative for the Parish Council. They will be meeting on Sept. 3. About ten of the thirteen members of the board are new. Because of the coronavirus, the Bridge Builders did not have their spring banquet nor will they put on a fall breakfast. They have a new brochure and will probably do a newsletter soon.
The Parish Council reiterated that the Bridge Builders need to get a new representative to attend our meetings.

IV. Reports from Parish Boards and Councils

- **Education Board:** Jennifer Loraas reported that the Education Board met last month. The school will have three new teachers: kindergarten, second grade, and an additional third-grade teacher. (Jennifer will double-check on this.) She said the school has done a great job keeping parents informed about things during these times. Principal Sara Dudley along with a team of teachers has done a lot to put together a working plan for the safe reopening of the school this fall. This plan prepares for all contingencies coming out of the Governor's office and the State Board of Education.
Fr. Braun said the calendar for Religious Education is still being worked out. With Jesse Zyskowski's leaving, we have no plans to hire a youth minister at this time. Fr. Grossman might help with catechesis for the Youth Group. RE is still looking for a 6th-grade teacher. Also, assistants are needed

for the RE classrooms. (About 60% of last year's RE teachers have stepped down.)

- **Finance Council:** Fr. Braun reported the Finance Council had just met earlier that day.
 - We will be receiving a \$30,000 estate gift from Jack Miller (he had been a hospitality minister) and \$5000 from the estate of Mrs. Petron. These gifts will be put in the fund for sanctuary renovation.
 - The parish received an SBA loan in May (Paycheck Protection Program) to allow for continued employment of parish staff and school faculty.
 - We surpassed our God's Gift appeal at 134% with 30% participation.
 - Weekly donations for last fiscal year (July 1—June 30):
 - Adult envelopes came in at 99% of budget
 - Plate donations came in at 74.5% of budget
 - Children's envelopes came in at 14% of the \$900 budgeted. Perhaps we need to do a better job of teaching our children the value of giving.
 - The 2020 Budget has been finalized and approved.
 - For July, Sunday donations were at 80% of last July's donations. Plate was at only 18%.
 - We are returning to using the long-handled baskets for Sunday collections.
- **Pastor's Report:**
 1. **Attendance at Daily and Sunday Liturgies:**
 - Full weekend Mass schedule resumed in May.
 - Requirements for social distancing have been met with varying degrees of success.
 - Provision for reception of Holy Communion on the tongue was navigated with a designated station at a kneeler. Everyone else receives by hand.
 - Attendance through the summer continues to be mixed, roughly around 35%.
 2. **Live-Streaming** continues for both daily and weekend liturgies. Parishioners without pre-existing or vulnerable health conditions are encouraged to come back to worshipping in the church. However, Bishop Folda continues to maintain the general dispensation from the Sunday obligation due to the COVID-19 virus. Interestingly, it was noted that in just the past week the Bishop of Sioux Falls, SD, had withdrawn the general dispensation in his diocese.
 3. **Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Daily Rosary:**
 - Adoration has been well received with participation throughout the day on Tuesdays from 8 am to 9 pm. We also continue First Friday Adoration each month.
 - We have begun live-streaming the 6:40 am rosary—which can be viewed throughout the day.
 - A greater devotion to prayer is encouraged during these ambiguous times.
 4. **Flocknote/Facebook/YouTube:**
 - Media numbers logging in to weekend liturgies on Aug. 8/9: Parish Live Stream—303, Facebook—940, YouTube—408. The numbers do not indicate the duration of the login.
 - Fr. Braun continues to make use of video messaging through his Sanctuary Chats on Flocknote/Facebook.
 5. **Weddings, Funerals, & Ministry to the Sick & Elderly:**
 - Weddings and funerals take place regularly with each family observing safety protocols as best they can. We have not yet returned to funeral hospitality and luncheon receptions.
 - Pastoral visits at Altru and Valley Senior Living facilities are allowed following their protocols. We have not resumed offering Mass at Tufte Manor—awaiting their consent.

- Fr. Joseph D'Aco has returned to our diocese and resides at St. Anne's. He has taken on the role of chaplain there & offers daily Mass for the residents.

6. Confirmations:

- June 1—Bishop Folda confirmed 39 third-grade students at St. Michael's.
- June 7—Fr. Braun confirmed 10 students at the 11 am Sunday Mass—older students and those hesitant to participate in a larger group setting.

7. Ordinations: Fr. Jered Grossman was ordained to the Priesthood on August 8. He celebrated his first Mass at his home parish of St. Cecilia's in Harvey, ND, on August 9.

8. Parish Summer & Fall Public Events: Due to the coronavirus, the following events have been cancelled:

- a) Parish Picnic was scheduled but cancelled.
- b) Altar Society Fall Dinner & Bazaar: cancelled but they are still hosting their fall raffle
- c) Men's Club: still hosting their "Month of Money"
- d) Winter Gala: The Gala itself is cancelled and the Alerus Ctr. will allow our deposit to carry over to 2021. Perhaps a major raffle (a car? a motorcycle?) could be held this winter but a committee would have to be put together to do this. We already have a "large raffle" permit.
- e) Sunday Morning Breakfasts: We anticipate that all breakfasts will be postponed.
- f) Christmas Eve Dinner: Discussions have not been held. There is no one to chair it this year. The previous leaders chaired it for five years but no replacements have been found. Maybe it won't be held because of the virus.
- g) Sunday Morning Coffee & Doughnuts?

9 Elections for the Parish Council and the Education Board:

- In light of COVID-19 and the challenge of holding an election, we proposed—and it was accepted—that the current Parish Council members would retain their membership and offices for the next year and then pick up with new elections in the spring of 2021.
- The Education Board has decided to do likewise.

10. Buildings and Grounds:

- There is a concern about "**black mold**" in two rooms of the rectory basement from flooding. The bottom two or three feet of sheetrock need to be replaced. Parish Council members commented that there are some parishioners who would be willing to volunteer their labor to remove the old sheetrock.
- A \$50,000 grant has just been applied for from the State for the purchase of many of the COVID-related improvement and safeguards for the school—for example, to purchase desks because tables can't be used because of the virus.
- The flat roof of the school needs to be repaired.

V. Old & Current Business:

- **Parish Long-Range Planning:** Most projects put on hold right now due to the coronavirus.

VI. New Business:

- **Liturgy/Music Minister:** Fr. Braun announced that the parish is looking at hiring a new Liturgy/Music Coordinator to replace Jesse Zyskowski in these areas. The parish has interviewed a person who is a furloughed Delta pilot living in Minneapolis but he used to be the liturgy coordinator at the Newman Ctr. when he lived in Grand Forks. (He's also an organist.) He & his wife would like to move back to Grand Forks. If things work out, he would start in late Sept. or early Oct.

A public announcement will be made when things are finalized.

A farewell reception for Jesse Zyskowski will be held outside the church steps on Sun., Aug. 23, after the 9 am Mass. Fr. Braun asked Judy Jahnke if the Altar Society was hosting it. Judy said she would check with Honey Youngberg.

- **Kneeler at the Altar for Receiving Holy Communion on the Tongue:** There was a lengthy and spirited discussion about the kneeler set up at the front of the church for those who wish to receive Communion by the tongue. A council member reported she had heard from three parishioners who were worried about this because of COVID-19. Some other council members expressed strong concerns. Fr. Braun said people on both sides of the issue have talked to him. Bishop Folda says reception on the tongue is to be allowed. This is the solution St. Michael's has worked out. Fr. Braun said it was *never* a principle of Vatican II *not* to receive Communion on the tongue. However, some council members said it is dangerous to do this at this time—people might just have to wait, maybe even for a year. They asked if perhaps the kneeler could be set up in the sacristy. Fr. Braun said that would disrupt the *unity* aspect of the Mass. Others said maybe the kneeler could be moved way to the side or these communicants come up last. (They come up last at daily Mass.) Some mentioned it was important that the distributors at this station sanitize their hands each time. Other members said there were a lot of differing opinions from a lot of people out there. There is no single right answer as how to handle things. Fr. Braun said only a small number of our parishioners receive Communion this way but it would cause angst for many of them if procedures were to change. Some council members were still adamant that we need to err on the side of caution. A council member said perhaps the Parish Council should have had an opportunity for input about these things. It was decided to continue this discussion at the next meeting. Council members agreed, however, that Fr. Braun makes the final decisions and the Parish Council will support him.

VII. Adjournment and Closing Prayer

There being no further business, President Sheila Schreiner asked for a motion of adjournment.

Jeri Anderson motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Holly Brown-Borg. Motion carried and meeting closed.

Fr. Braun led everyone in praying the Hail Mary.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Ann Whalen