

St. Michael's Parish Council Meeting

September 15, 2020

I. Call to Order and Opening Prayer

Vice-President Jennifer Modeen called the Zoom meeting to order in President Sheila Schreiner's absence. Fr. Braun led the opening prayer.

II. Organizational & Routine Matters

- **Welcome:** St. Michael's business manager Tom Helbling was welcomed to the meeting and everyone introduced themselves.
- **Roll Call: Present:** Fr. Braun, Jennifer Modeen, Kevin Fruhwirth, Jeri Anderson, Judy Jahnke, Kevin Boehm, Craig Pfau, Jennifer Loraas, Tom Helbling, Mary Ann Whalen
Absent: Sheila Schreiner, Holly Brown-Borg, Dennis Feist
- **Approval of Minutes:** The August meeting's minutes had been sent out to members earlier. Jennifer Loraas made the correction that the school has five new teachers this year, not three: Alexa Moriearty—kindergarten, Emily Ost and Alli Babler—first grade, Taliah Arends—second grade, & Ashley Hettwer—third grade. Kevin Fruhwirth motioned that the August minutes be approved. Seconded by Judy Jahnke. Motion carried.

III. Reports of Representing Organizations

- **Altar Society:** Judy Jahnke reported the Altar Society had not met. Raffle tickets are still being sold but they need to be turned in by Oct. 2.
- **Men's Club:** Kevin Boehm reported the Men's Club has not met yet. The "Month of Money" tickets are still being sold until the end of Nov.
- **Knights of Columbus:** Craig Pfau reported the KC's will meet on Sept. 17.
- **Bridge Builders:** Fr. Braun reported that the Bridge Builders did not meet on Sept. 3. Instead, they will meet on Sept. 17. They will then appoint a new representative to serve on the Parish Council.

IV. Reports from Parish Boards and Councils

- **Education Board:** Jennifer Loraas reported the school has 172 students. Enrollment is a little less than last year. Some families are home-schooling and some have moved away. Enrollment in pre-kindergarten is down because of the limited numbers allowed now in the classrooms. The school has received a grant of \$39,617.20 for Covid-19 support. The school is buying items such as air purifiers and thermometers. Classrooms are sanitized after the RE classes. The school is doing a good job communicating with parents about Covid-19 issues. Right now the risk color is "orange" for the area.
- **Finance Council:** Business manager Tom Helbling had sent out to council members the August financial statement. He said Aug. envelopes were up about \$8000 from last Aug., but the plate collection was only half of last Aug. Two large estate gifts received recently were put in our Sanctuary Renovation Fund. This money is deposited in the CDF (Catholic Development Fund) down in Fargo. Tuition money from Religious Education is down. The Bridge Builders reimbursed the school \$10,000 for purchases of new furniture to replace old items. Expenses in the parish are normal compared to last year. We're trying to keep expenses down throughout the coming months. Instead of Depreciation in one lump sum, we're now spreading it throughout the year.

- **Pastor's Report:**

1. **Attendance at Daily and Sunday Liturgies:**

It seems to be picking up—50% or higher. We'll have a better idea after the annual parish attendance census is taken in Oct.

2. **Parish Newsletter** will be sent out the week of Sept. 21-26. The main message is encouragement to return to Mass along with a push for updating our parish census.

3. **Parish Sunday Support Campaign**—will start with talks on Oct. 11 by the pastor and with lay speakers on Oct. 18. A letter inviting parishioners to offer a pledge will be sent out the week of Oct. 12-16 with a follow-up letter in late Oct.

4. **Religious Education Program:**

- Opening Mass was held on Sept. 9 with roughly 60% attendance with 70% signed up.
- Online instruction will be made available—instruction for parents will be Sept. 16.
- Blessing of the Catechists is scheduled for the coming weekend—Sept. 19-20.
- Acquiring Catechists continues to be a challenge each year. Roughly 60% from last year stepped down from teaching RE. However, all of the Catechist positions have now been filled, but we are still in need of classroom assistants.
- Confirmation will be early this year—Friday evening, March 5.
- Fr. Grossman is serving as Catechist for high school and Tim Brook will be offering a few community-building sessions through the year.

5. **Liturgical Coordination:** Jeff McGee has been hired for the position. He & his family are moving back to Grand Forks and he will begin his ministry the last week of September.

6. **Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Daily Rosary**

- Adoration has been well received—but constant encouragement is needed to maintain a full slate.
- Rosary is live-streamed at 6:40 am—and can be viewed throughout the day.

7. **Buildings and Grounds:**

- A volunteer, Kevin Fruhwirth, removed an 18-inch ground skirting of damaged sheet rock in the rectory basement which contained black mold. New siding will be installed. At the Parish Council meeting, Tom Helbling was asked if insurance would cover this. He will check on it.
- The school has been retrofitted for CDC safety protocols.
- The Elevator in the church is awaiting parts. The order is being tracked.
- There have been issues with the Geothermal heating/air conditioning units. Summer condensation gels have been plugging lines & burning out pumps. We are looking into a better cleaning solution and other options.
- The school boiler chimney will need tuckpointing at some point.

V. **Old & Current Business:**

- **Parish Long-Range Planning:** A lot has been put on hold financially right now due to the coronavirus. For example, we're holding off on the sanctuary renovation since it involves so much more than just putting down new carpet. We've received a \$100,000 grant for school window replacement. Next spring we will look at a roof replacement (\$11,000) over the elevator in the church—there's a bad leak. A Parish Council member mentioned that the long-range planning is also about goals that are not necessarily financial. We should keep that in mind.

- **Coronavirus:**

- Fr. Braun said the the latest guidance from the Bishop is that church choirs can offer a limited selection of non-congregational music.
- We will be putting our missalettes back in the pews for Scripture readings and prayers—but not for singing. A council member asked if they would be wiped down each time or maybe they could be left at the back of the church. Fr. Braun said it would be easier to just put them in the pews. People would decide for themselves to use them at their own risk.
- Receiving Communion on the tongue: Not many people take Communion this way, but the procedures continue with using the kneeler and the distributors sanitizing their hands each time.
- The Pastoral Center is open to parishioners for meetings and events using safety protocols.
- Coffee & Doughnuts after the 9 am Sunday Mass will be resumed in early Oct. using social distancing and masks. Some Parish Council members were concerned that it might not be sending the right message since our area is not at a “green” stage. Fr. Braun said it’s important for “fellowship” & “community-building.” However, we will still respect those who do not feel safe in attending such events at this time. This led to another discussion among Parish Council members about the coronavirus. Fr. Braun said “*fear*” was taking over at levels we’ve never seen before. Others said not all scientists are saying the same things and there is different information out there. A member said she could send articles to Fr. Braun and he could forward them to council members. Another member said we still needed to be very careful.

VI. New Business:

- **Christmas Eve Dinner:** A Council member asked that we again put this on our agenda. A decision really needs to be made about this. Maybe things could be done differently this year. Some said it was very important to continue this because it was something St. Michael’s did for *other* people and not just for its own parishioners. Otherwise, the community needs to be notified that it’s cancelled. Jennifer Modeen said she would try to set up a special meeting (perhaps Oct. 6) before the regularly-scheduled Oct. Parish Council meeting. She would invite the former chairpersons Sue Shirek & Joyce Belbas and others as well as the council members. This way there could be a special session to dialogue about it and make an educated decision.

VII. Adjournment and Closing Prayer

- There being no further business, Jennifer Modeen asked for a motion of adjournment. Judy Jahnke motioned to close the meeting. Seconded by Jeri Anderson. Motion carried and meeting adjourned.
- Fr. Braun led everyone in praying the Glory Be.
- Next meeting: October 20

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Ann Whalen