

St. Michael's Parish Council Meeting

October 20, 2020

I. Call to Order and Opening Prayer

President Sheila Schreiner called the Zoom meeting to order.

Fr. Braun led the opening prayer.

II. Organizational & Routine Matters

- **Roll Call: Present:** Fr. Braun, Sheila Schreiner, Holly Brown-Borg, Kevin Fruhwirth, Jennifer Modeen, Jeri Anderson, Dennis Feist, Tom Helbling, Mary Ann Whalen
Absent: Judy Jahnke, Kevin Boehm, Craig Pfau, Jennifer Loraas
- **Approval of Minutes:** The September meeting's minutes had been sent out to members earlier. Tom Helbling motioned to approve. Seconded by Jeri Anderson. Motion carried.

III. Reports of Representing Organizations

- **Altar Society:** The Altar Society has not met. The raffle ticket drawing was held Oct. 4.
- **Men's Club:** They are still selling tickets for the "Month of Money." No meeting has been held.
- **Knights of Columbus:** They met last week, but no report.
- **Bridge Builders:** They hope to get a newsletter out.

IV. Reports from Parish Boards and Councils

- **Education Board:** No report
- **Finance Council:** Business manager Tom Helbling had earlier sent out the September financial statement. Income in envelopes is down about \$2600 compared to last Sept., but the plate is down a lot more. Reports are received quarterly from the Catholic Development Fund (CDF). Religious Ed tuition is still coming in. The school received an Economic Resiliency Grant that needs to be spent within a certain time frame. Principal Sara Dudley is doing a good job with that. Preschool tuition income is down because the enrollment is down. The After-School Activities Program income is also down. We've recently had expenses for the elevator repair and from Johnson Controls. The parish is trying to tighten expenses. We recently received reimbursement for payment for a musical group that was going to come to St. Michael's but is now cancelled due to the virus. A Parish Council member asked Tom Helbling how salaries are set for parish employees. He said they are individually set depending on the position, experience, etc. He has also checked with other parishes. (Teachers' salaries are set differently.) A Parish Council member also asked why the income from SCRIP has gone down so dramatically. It's probably because it's not sold after Masses anymore because of the coronavirus. It's only sold through the parish office and not many people do that.

- **Pastor's Report:**

1. **Parish Newsletter** was sent out the week of Sept. 21 with general news to keep parishioners in touch with information on fall programs.

2. **Sunday Attendance:** Attendance was counted the first three weeks of October.

- 2019 average per week = 1405
- 2020 average per week = 572
- Down 833 average from last year—equates to down 60% from last year

3. **Liturgical Coordinator:** Jeff McGee began working in late Sept. He's catching up on duties and responsibilities. He's working out copyright issues for music that came through on our online streaming.

4. **Spiritual Life and Liturgy:**

- RCIA Classes are underway with 25 attending on average
- Monday evening Bible Study has over 20 attending
- Physical Mass attendance is 40% of last year at this time—which is a concern
- Live-streaming of the Mass continues
- Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament all day on Tuesdays.
- Live-stream of the Parish Rosary at 6:40 am—which can be viewed throughout the day
- Bishop has given permission for church choirs to offer limited selection of non-congregational music
- Hymnals back in pews for Scripture reading and prayers
- Preparations for Nov. devotions—All Souls Day & remembering our loved ones throughout the month

5. **Parish Church Support—Sunday Offertory Appeal:**

- Pastor spoke at all Masses Oct. 11, encouraging parishioners to offer a pledge of financial support
- An appeal letter was sent out Oct. 15 with an encouragement to return a pledge
- Oct. 18—Parishioners shared personal witness talks on the value of giving—inviting everyone to return a pledge
- Oct. 25—Follow-up pulpit announcement expressing gratitude for generous response and encouragement for everyone to return their pledge cards
- Sending out thank-you letters to those who responded with a Sunday Offertory pledge.
- Nov. 11—Follow-up pledge request letter sent to all who have not yet responded with a pledge

6. **Parish Finances:**

Brainstorming ideas for creative fundraising in light of not hosting the "Winter Gala" this year

- Possible Meat Raffle—but the KC's already have a meat raffle in Feb./March
- Maybe Lenten Month of Money Raffle for the Easter Season? Coinciding with the KC Meat Raffle?
- Any other ideas?

7. **Parish Life and Outreach:**

- Pastoral Ctr. is open for parishioner meetings and events using safety protocols
- Coffee & doughnuts offered after 9 am Mass starting Oct. 18
- Christmas Gift Baskets and Christmas Giving Tree programs are underway—overseen by Deacon John
- Christmas Eve Dinner will be held providing delivered meals only—No on-site meals

The committee will be meeting again on Oct. 21. Jennifer Modeen, Holly Brown-Borg, & Sheila Schreiner are trying to take leadership.

Follow-up questions for the committee:

- Parish staff needs a contact person with phone number to forward unforeseen questions
- Who is working on a new poster with the new plan?
- Businesses to be aware that material gifts not needed—e.g., trees, garland, gifts, etc.

8. Religious Education and School News:

- RE Classes are underway with attendance at about 60%. About 18 students online.
- Confirmation scheduled for March 5
- The school is facing challenges with COVID. At the start of the current week, 10 teachers were out with contact tracing quarantine, 2 with COVID. Roughly 25% of the students were out.
- Bus fees were refunded for the 10 days while the bus driver was out.

9. Buildings & Grounds:

- In the rectory basement, two rooms had the lower sheetrock removed. Kevin Fruhwirth and Pete Bouley installed the new siding. New flooring for the rooms will be installed this week. We had an adjuster come out, but insurance will not pick up any of the repair costs for the basement. Too much time has passed. Also, the intrusion of water was over several years.
- The elevator parts came in and now the elevator is back in working order.
- Future issues to be dealt with:
 - New roof over the handicapped-access area flat roof--\$11,000—slated for next summer.
 - Issues with the Geothermal heating/air conditioning units. Summer condensation gels up, plugging lines and burning out pumps. We are looking into a better cleaning solution and other options.
 - School boiler chimney will need tuckpointing at some point.

V. Old & Current Business:

- **Parish Long-Range Planning:** We have a \$100,000 grant for school window replacement, but replacing the windows will be complicated and \$100,000 won't be enough. A council member asked if maybe we could partner with someone about the windows. For example, UND partnered with Marvin Windows.
- **Coronavirus:** Things are still challenging due to the coronavirus. Some people are hesitant about attending church as long as the virus is so prevalent. The 9 am Sunday Mass is the fullest with safe-distancing. It was mentioned that Bishop Folda recently tested positive.

VI. New Business:

- **Representatives/Reports at Parish Council Meetings:** The council reiterated that parish organizations such as the Bridge Builders, Education Board, etc., need to have a representative at *each* council meeting. If the representative cannot attend a meeting, the President is to be notified and a written report sent instead. Maybe we should send out a letter about this.
- **Role of the Parish Council:** The question was raised about how the Parish Council could help the parish and pastor better? Is there someone who could help guide the council? Maybe we should check with other parish councils as to how they do things. Sheila Schreiner said she could check with Sacred Heart. Maybe we should educate ourselves about Canon Law and the role of lay people. Perhaps we could look at some other parish council constitutions. The discussion ended with asking members to bring some ideas to the next meeting as to what we need to do to be a more active council.
- **Parish Revitalization:** It's been a challenge to get parishioners to help with the lay ministries. Also, some parish organizations such as the Men's Club are faltering. Council members said we need to pray about what we need to do. One suggestion was to do a survey. Jennifer Modeen volunteered to lead that. Fr. Braun said he would send out some previous Time & Talent Survey forms. This will be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting.

VII. Adjournment and Closing Prayer

- There being no further business, Sheila Schreiner asked for a motion of adjournment. Jennifer Modeen motioned to close the meeting. Seconded by Dennis Feist. Motion carried and meeting adjourned.
- Fr. Braun led everyone in praying the Glory Be.
- Next meeting: November 17

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Ann Whalen