

St. Michael's Parish Council Meeting

November 17, 2020

I. Call to Order and Opening Prayer

Vice-President Jennifer Modeen called the Zoom meeting to order.

Fr. Braun led the opening prayer.

II. Organizational & Routine Matters

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

III. Reports of Representing Organizations

- **Altar Society:** Judy Jahnke reported the Altar Society has not met. The raffle in the fall did a little better than last year.
- **Men's Club:** Kevin Boehm reported the Men's Club sold all their Month of Money raffle tickets. After the payouts, there will be a balance of \$4325. \$1500 will be donated to the school and \$2825 to the church. The Men's Club won't meet until spring.
- **Knights of Columbus:** Craig Pfau reported that the KC's recently met. Three new people had called about membership. The Christmas Eve Dinner was discussed and KC members were asked if anyone wanted to volunteer.
- **Bridge Builders:** Fr. Braun reported that Lori Swinney will be the new Bridge Builders representative. The Bridge Builders recently sent out their newsletter.

IV. Reports from Parish Boards and Councils

- **Education Board:** Principal Sara Dudley gave the report. Things at the school are going well. They started planning in June with procedures in dealing with the coronavirus. Some students had to be out for quarantine but they still stayed connected. The school's enrollment has gone down a little—173 compared to 183 last year. Some students moved out of the area and some went to an on-line option. Due to the safety protocols, the preschool cannot be enrolled to full capacity. Unlike the public schools, St. Michael's decided **not** to do the remote option. They are staying face-to-face because they are able to still staff the building. However, the school is in daily contact with the GF Public Health Dept. and will follow what the Health Dept. says they should do. The Bridge Builders gave the school money for such things as tripods and portable microphones. Also, the Men's Club has given the school money. Also, money has been received from outside sources. For example, \$36,000 was received to buy covid-related items. The state also provided money to help pay for substitute teachers.
- **Finance Council:** Business manager Tom Helbling went over some items in the October financial statement. He reported that envelopes in Oct. were up \$16,000 compared to last Oct. but the plate was down \$3000. Reports are received quarterly from the Catholic Development Fund (CDF).

The high school fundraising income received a donation for Steubenville trips, etc.

Tuition is still coming in.

Federal reimbursements for school hot lunches will continue at least through 2020.

The missalettes for the new year have been purchased.

We're still paying for the elevator (chair lift) repairs. It's difficult to get the parts because they come from Canada. We've asked Otis Elevator Co. what they would charge to get new hardware.

Kevin Fruhwirth suggested we might check with another company such as Schindler to service our elevator.

- **Pastor's Report:**

1. **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

2. **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 used in live streaming. He's forming a new environment committee to assist in providing proper church environment for our worship.

3. **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
- 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
- A nine-day Election Novena was offered prior to the elections—praying for a peaceful outcome to the election.

4. **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
- Began to send 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

5. **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? Nothing has been decided at this point.

6. **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

7. **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 week of Oct. 18, 10 teachers were out with contact tracing quarantine, 2 with COVID. Roughly 25% of the students were out.

8. **Buildings & Grounds:**

- Two Rectory basement rooms were refurbished due to water and black mold damage.
- 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:** Fr. Braun had sent out to council members a sheet on “Long-Range Repair & Projects” for the parish and school buildings. It’s a working document drafted by parish staff & the Finance Council. The parish has received a \$150,000 gift from the Harry Bushaw estate. Along with \$40,000 in annuities, we have \$190,000 marked for things like this. The Finance Council had just that day (11/17/20) approved putting \$150,000 towards the church stained-glass window renovation with a matching parish campaign. \$40,000 will go towards the school window replacement along with a \$100,000 grant received from the Engelstad Foundation.

VI. **New Business:**

- **Parish Revitalization:** Following a request by members at the last Council meeting, Fr. Braun had sent out “Time & Talent” forms that had been used previously as well as the results of a survey done by Fr. Haman a few years ago. About 380 people had responded to that survey. 60% were over 55 years old. (The parish has about 1550 registered families.) Council members discussed getting people more engaged in the parish, but decided that now wasn’t a good time to do another “Time & Talent” survey because not that many people are coming to church currently due to the virus.
Fr. Braun mentioned that he had stopped doing his “Sanctuary Chats” last summer. Some Council members said maybe he should start doing them again or do something else to give parishioners encouragement. During these times, it’s very important to encourage people. Fr. Braun said he’d look into doing something once a week.
- **Midnight Mass:** Last year attendance at the Christmas Midnight Mass was two-thirds to three-fourths full. Some individuals have wondered if we might hold it at an earlier time. Therefore, St. Michael’s is thinking of having our Midnight Mass begin at 11 pm. Council members were fine with this. Some remarked that not many parishes have Masses starting at midnight anymore. Our Christmas Masses this year will be: Christmas Eve—4 pm, 7 pm, & 11 pm and Christmas Day—7:30 am, 9 am, & 11 am. Because of the Covid-19 restrictions, we’ll need to count

people at the door to make sure we're not over capacity. Right now we don't want more than three people per pew for individuals and one person (if an individual) in a side pew. Family members, however, can sit together. Perhaps by Christmas (over 5 weeks away), the Covid guidelines might limit capacity even more. Council members felt it was important that people be prepared for limited capacity—but it's important how it's worded—that we're *taking care of each other*. Members were especially concerned about the number of people who normally come to the 4 pm Christmas Eve Mass.

- **Christmas Eve Dinner:** Due to the virus, the annual Christmas Eve Dinner will again be held at St. Michael's *but with only meals for pickup and delivery*. This will be done between 1 & 3:30 p.m. Fr. Braun said the parish office has already been receiving calls about the dinner. Kevin Fruhwirth has put together a list of 62 churches in Grand Forks and the information will be sent out soon. Sue Shirek & Mary Ann Whalen will monitor the calls & emails. Holly Brown-Borg reported that the turkeys have been ordered from Hugo's. The deadline for cancellation of the order has now passed. Sue Shirek & Joyce Belbas will transfer over the binder with the instructions & lists. Barb Brown will set things up on Dec. 23. This is when the turkeys are deboned & carved. A group from Sacred Heart usually makes the stuffing. We are planning on the same number of meals as last year. Any leftovers will go to the Mission so nothing will be wasted. The Christmas Eve Dinner Committee meets next on Nov. 23.
- **Parish Council Vacancy:** Fr. Braun reported that Dennis Feist has resigned his seat on the Parish Council. Council members decided not to fill it at this time. Rather, we'll just wait until the elections in the spring.

VII. Adjournment and Closing Prayer

- There being no further business, Jennifer Modeen asked for a motion of adjournment. Holly Brown-Borg motioned to close the meeting. Seconded by Craig Pfau. Motion carried & meeting adjourned.
- Fr. Braun led the closing prayer.
- Next meeting: January 26

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Ann Whalen