CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION

PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

DECEMBER 15, 2021 6:30 PM

AN OPEN ASSEMBLY OF CATHOLIC BELIEVERS OF THE DIOCESE OF RICHMOND.

PROCLAIMING THE WORD OF GOD

CELEBRATING THE EUCHARIST

SERVING THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

AT ATTENDANCE

Present:
Amy Petersen, Joe Burke, Jon Szewczak, Linda Cataldo, Mike Anders, Ken Levins, Bill Rockwell, Valorie Rockwell, Aaron Banyai, Diane Banyai, Deacon Tom McFeely, Deacon Gary Harmeyer, Deacon Jim Ahearn, Janet Jones, Ruth Brogan, Lisa Liedl, John Sokolowski, Bridgett Passauer

Not Present:
Grace Shaw, Mark Shaw, Madlyn Scott, Father Daniel, Tom Steffens, Jim Fowler

MEETING START

The meeting (via Zoom) was called to order by Amy Petersen, Chairperson at 6:30 p.m. EST. The PC session’s opening reflection and prayer was prepared and presented by Mike Anders.

OLD BUSINESS

No old business was presented this meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Update on the Afghan Family Resettlement Project – Ruth Brogan
Ruth Brogan updated the PC on the progress of the Afghan Family Resettlement Project. The first family moved into their apartment on 15 December 2021. The family consisted of a husband, wife, husband’s brother, and a little boy who is almost 4 years old. They brought with them 15-20 duffle bags of belongings. The apartment was furnished, and they were able to move in. They had been staying in an extended stay motel.

The second family is related to the first. They are a mother, father and four sisters. The mother and father are a little reluctant to separate from the sisters, which they would have to do. The leasing agent is being flexible and will allow the sisters to move into the apartment, and then let the mother and father “visit” the sisters over an extended period until a third apartment is setup.

Joe Burke congratulated Ruth on the herculean efforts it took to cut through the bureaucracy in order to get this done. Ruth in turn called out Elizabeth Berry who stepped up and took charge on all the Giving Tree tasks/items which freed Ruth up to focus on the Afghan Project.

2. Synod Briefing – Joe Burke and Bridgett Passauer
Joe Burke introduced the parish process for the Synod and turned it over to Bridgett Passauer. Bridgett used a Power Point presentation to present the PC with the initial brief, action plan, and timeline for the parish’s involvement, the PC roles, and the intent of the Synod.

The Synod is a call from the Pope to solicit an open forum of listening between the people of the church and that leaders of the church. Not only do the people need to listen to the leaders, but more importantly the leaders need to listen to the people.

The Synod began at the Parish / Diocesan levels in October 2021. During January and February of 2022, there will be small group discussions with members of the parish community. The discussions are intended to foster an open communication. Each small group will have a maximum size of eight (8) people. In addition to the eight, there will be a Facilitator and a Notetaker. The goals of the small groups are to “answer” a set of questions provided by the Diocese, that will hopefully spark the conversations with the parish community.

After the small group discussions, the “answers” from each session will be provided to a Writing Team, who will attempt to collect the predominant themes of the answer to each question into a single 500-word maximum extract. These extracts will be submitted to the Diocesan offices by 28 March 2022.

Once the parish extracts are finalized and submitted to the Diocese, the Diocese will collect all the parish submissions take that information to the Conference of Bishops in the Vatican to be submitted to the Pope.

The Synod is a parish-run / Laity-run entity. Without the community, the mission of the Synod cannot be completed. As such, Staff and Clergy are not permitted to be directly involved in running the small groups. Staff can assist in helping to collect the “answer” data and even review the extract data prior to submission. That is why Father Daniel approached Joe to be the lead lay person for the Synod.

The PC roles in the Synod are:
1. To pray for the Synod process here at Church of the Ascension
2. Participate in a two-hour Listening Session
3. Volunteer to be a facilitator or notetaker for other sessions
4. Communicate the purpose/reason for the Synod when asked

Why is Church of the Ascension participating in the Synod (besides being instructed to do so by the Diocese)? The answer is that it can provide much needed data on how we will be “looking forward” to what the future of the parish will be.

One of the goals of the Synod is to reach out to those who have left the Catholic Church (the DONEs) or those who would not consider the Church (the NONEs). The goal is not to pressure these in any way but to gather information regarding why they regard the Church in the way that they do.

There was an extensive Question and Answer session between Joe and Bridgett and the PC members. Joe and Bridgett admitted that they do not have all the answers as they are new to the effort. Deacon Gary suggested talking to those in the Landings group, since they had left the Church and had returned, the members would be a valued resource for understanding the many complicated reasons behind the NONEs and DONEs. Ken Levins brought to the table that the Good News groups that are still meeting would be good candidates for reaching out to the broader community. Linda
Cataldo asked if the parish’s involvement in the Synod could dovetail into the Vision. Joe answered that many on the Vision Writing team were invited to assist with the extract writing.

Joe wrapped up the presentation expressing gratitude to the PC for providing feedback.

The presentation Power Point document is hosted in the PC Drop Box repository for all to refer to.

3. Vision Theme Worksheet – Amy Petersen
Amy Petersen reminded the PC that Kathy Hevey had sent out a worksheet for the PC to complete. The completed worksheet is due 10 January 2022.

MEETING END
The meeting adjourned at 7:21 p.m. EST.

PRAYERFULLY SUBMITTED BY:

JON SZEW CZAK
SECRETARY

NEXT MEETING
The next meeting will be on January 19, 2022. The Reflection will be given by Ken Levins.

FUTURE MEETINGS 2021-2022

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<tr>
<th>Meeting Date</th>
<th>Reflection By</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Ken Levins</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 Feb 2022</td>
<td>Valerie Rockwell</td>
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<td>16 Mar 2022</td>
<td>Bill Rockwell</td>
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<td>20 April 2022</td>
<td>Grace Shaw</td>
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<td>18 May 2022</td>
<td>Mark Shaw</td>
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<td>15 Jun 2022</td>
<td>Tom Steffens</td>
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<td>20 Jul 2022</td>
<td>Jon Szewczak</td>
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