CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION

PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

OCTOBER 20, 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

ATTENDANCE

Present:

Not Present:
Aaron Banyai, Mark Shaw, John Maiorana

MEETING START

The meeting was called to order by Amy Petersen, Chairperson at 6:30 p.m. EDT. The PC session’s opening reflection and prayer was prepared and presented by Diana Banyai. Members recited the Parish Mission statement together.

New PC member, Madyln (Maddie) Scott, was introduced by Amy Petersen.

OLD BUSINESS

1. September 2021 minutes were presented to the PC by Amy Petersen. No additions or amendments were submitted by attendees; therefore, a vote was called to accept/approve the minutes. It was passed.

2. Amy Petersen brought up the topic of the PC Job Description. She is not yet ready to present the PC Job Description document. She has not yet received any/enough feedback on the document, or its contents.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Vision Review – Kathy Hevey
Kathy Hevey led the PC members and staff through a review of the Vision from the document that was provided to PC members prior to the meeting. The purpose of the Vision Review was to create a shared understanding of the Vision and what the PC role will be in relation to the Vision, its communication, and its implementation in the immediate and far future. Kathy led attendees in a term-definition exercise that saw attendees breaking down the three main terms (THRIVING, SPIRIT-FILLED FAITH, and TRANSFORMATION) from the Vision statement, to reinforce how the terms set the tone of the entire Vision.
There will need to be further review of the Vision by PC members before a vote for **RECOMMENDATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF THE VISION** can be called and, if passed, sent to Father Daniel for approval. Amy Petersen asked Kathy Hevey if she would like more time at the November PC meeting. Kathy Hevey agreed that it would be beneficial. Kathy Hevey asked attendees to complete a bit of homework prior to the next Vision Review session. She asked that PC members, on their own, review the Vision Themes (title and summary) and capture their thoughts on each one.

The PC role in the Vision was briefly discussed. The PC will own the Vision, even if the PC didn’t write it. The PC will be the primary communicators and champions of the Vision going forward. Implementation will entail viewing every step through the lens of the Vision. It will be the PC members responsibility to carry the message forward into the future. They will have to make it understood to every new PC member, each year.

**NOTE:** The 50th Anniversary Subcommittee has plans to tie their milestone events into the Vision Themes, but how that will be accomplished has yet to be determined.

2. **Update on the Afghan Project – Ruth Brogan (Information Handout was provided)**
Ruth Brogan briefed the PC about a joint effort with the Catholic Charities of the Commonwealth (CCC) that will assist Afghan Refugees in settling into our community (from the temporary holding area at Camp / Fort Pickett). Ruth was not talking about starting up a new ministry – which never ends. Instead, this will be considered a Project that will have a finite amount of involvement. There are several ways to assist the refugees: Financial monthly assistance ($2250); resettlement kits; food from the Pantry and the USDA; and time and skills and community acceptance.

Neither the Social Ministry office, nor the CCC has a firm plan in place, even though Refugees are already being moved from FT Pickett to Virginia Beach as the first step in resettlement. The Social Ministry and Justice and Peace Committee have formed a team around the Project, however, the CCC will not release any details without the team having a formal approval from the Parish (a PC recommendation to Fr. Daniel to proceed).

Joe Burke has already reached out to our local Muslim community to gauge their interest in assisting us. The response was very positive, and they reported that they are standing-by to render whatever aid they can.

A motion was presented by Joe Burke to proceed with recommending to Fr. Daniel that the Social Ministry / Justice and Peace Afghan Refugee Project team be provided formal approval to assist local Refugees through the CCC. The motion was seconded and brought to a vote. It passed.

Because there is not a firm plan in place anywhere, the PC advised due caution in the first steps that the Afghan Refugee Project team takes.

3. **Update on the Representation Subcommittee – Mike Anders**
The Representation Subcommittee met last PC meeting. They discussed how to look at different subgroups within the Parish to garner feedback. There needs to be more discussion with Fr. Daniel. One of the main takeaways was the need for the PC to be more transparent with the members of the Parish. To that end, ideas for posting the PC minutes to the Parish website or
opening the PC meetings to Parishioners were raised. It was decided that it was best to pause and regroup. There is a lot going on in the Parish, the Representation Subcommittee needs to figure out how and where it's target goals fit into all the current events, programs, projects, and ministries of the Parish

4. **Update on Newcomers Subcommittee – Valerie Rockwell**

Valerie presented to the attendees a summary of the topics from the meeting of the subcommittee from the last PC meeting. No one on the subcommittee knew what was in the Newcomer’s package. They were trying to get one for review (Joann Webb puts them together). The Welcome Desk in the Commons is not well labeled, and several people did not know we had a Welcome Desk – it’s not easy to find if you don’t know where to look and what to look for.

5. **50th Anniversary Subcommittee – Tom Steffens**

Tom Steffens briefed the PC on how the 50th Anniversary events were going, and what the upcoming events were going to be. 26 people came out to help dig for the new Mary’s Garden project. 37 people attended the Holy Spirit seminar. The interest in the 50 Years of Sacraments photo board is lacking. Tom has requested that the attendees try to kickstart it with photos of their own.

**Upcoming Events (November to Remember):**

- October 31: 50 children all dressed as Saints. Becky Macchia is the chair of the event that will see them process in at the 10:30 a.m. Mass.
- Nov 2: All Soul’s Day Mass. The names of all those who have passed in the last two (2) years will be read aloud during the Mass.
- Nov 6: Planting in Mary’s Garden
- Nov 6 & 7 (all Masses): new cards in the Pews will be placed asking for feedback on what Parishioners are most thankful for about being a member of the Parish.
- Nov 13 – Veteran’s Salute – Bill Rockwell is the Project Lead. The current plan is to have a Flagpole rededication at 4:30 p.m. EDT followed by 5:30 p.m. EDT Mass. After the Mass, a flag retirement ceremony will be held by the Scouts and the Knights of Columbus. A seabag is already in place by the Welcome Desk where Parishioners can place flags that are ready to be retired with honor. Tom Steffens is looking for photos of the original “signing wall” where Veterans of the Parish and Veteran Families signed a brick wall of the worship space to let everyone know the breadth of the Veteran community in our Parish. He is also looking to provide a new “signing wall” in the commons for a 2021 take on the old Ascension activity.
- Nov 28 – First Sunday of Advent – Advent Candle lighting. Looking to have a Plank Owner Parishioner and one of the newest Parishioners to light the candles at all Masses that weekend.

The 50th Anniversary celebrations will pause during Advent and will resume in January 2022.

6. **Staff Comments:**

- Homeless shelter is on for the week of Thanksgiving. More information to follow.
- Lisa is taking on the role of Communications Director. She asked to be included on all emails to Joann Webb considering all the activities discussed at the meeting.
- Amy Petersen recommended that all attendees read the Staff and Department Head reports located in the Dropbox.
Fr. Daniel thanked the Vision Team/Writing Group for their hard work in preparing the Vision. He commented that we are very busy Parish, and that it was going to get even busier with the Synod. He thanked the Deacons for bringing Pope Francis’ message on the Synod to the Parish. The Synod preparation will take almost two (2) years. The goal of the Synod is to: “Journey together as a family of God. To reflect, to pray, to LISTEN and to discern. To listen to the people that have not come close.”

- Father Daniel

MEETING END

Father Daniel offered the closing prayers. The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:10 p.m. EDT.

PRAYERFULLY SUBMITTED BY:

JON SZEW CZAK
SECRETARY

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on November 17, 2021. The Reflection will be given by John Maiorana.

FUTURE MEETINGS 2021-2022

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<td>John Maiorana</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 Dec 2021</td>
<td>Mike Anders</td>
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<tr>
<td>19 Jan 2022</td>
<td>Ken Levins</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 Feb 2022</td>
<td>Valerie Rockwell</td>
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<td>Tom Steffens</td>
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