

Approved Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, December 6, 2023, at 4 PM. (Egg Harbor Office & Zoom)

Present: Fr. Tom Farrell, Deacon Tony Abts, Deacon Kurt Grube, Jim Schorer, Tom Polacek, Kathy Wolff

Welcome and Check-In: (Tom P)

Tom welcomed us and called the meeting to order at 4:06.

Opening Prayer: (Deacon Tony)

Deacon Tony led us in prayer from the Office of Readings for Wednesday of the 1st week of Advent by St. Bernard the Abbot of France who lived from 1090 to 1153.

“God’s word will come to us. We know there are three comings of the lord; in the first one, we saw Him; the intermediate coming is a hidden one when He will come in spirit. In His third coming He will be walking with us. We will be seen in His glory. In the middle coming He is our rest and consolation.”

Reflection: We need to change what we are doing and adopt a different path. Fr. Tom said we need to come to a place where we really have a relationship with Him. Who are the elect? The degree to which the sacraments come alive in us depends on what we do, the choices we make. We need to accept Him and recognize Him in our lives. Being in relationship with Christ is like a road which we travel; we need to think about how we are driving.

Review and accept minutes of Oct meeting:

Minutes were approved pending two corrections.

Liaison Comments:

Worship Commission:

- At the Liturgy of the Word with Communion following the 1st Sunday of Advent, two persons commented that they wished that members of the congregation had been involved in lighting the candle. Fr. Tom and Deacon Tony will ask a person or family to light the candles going forward.
- The Worship Committee recommends that formation of a committee to investigate the purchase of an organ come through Finance and Pastoral Councils.
- Our Lady of Guadalupe celebration will not occur this year at Stella Maris b/c retreat for Faith Formation students; the community’s celebration will occur this year at SS Peter and Paul. Space is reserved for the 2024 celebration at Sister Bay on the Stella Maris calendar.
- Connie Brandt has volunteered to be the secretary of the Worship Commission.

Living Justice Commission: no report

Faith Formation: Deacon Tony has become aware that Washington Island parishioners had not received all the information pertaining to Advent. Deacon emphasized the need for care in communicating with the Island community because their virtual groups depend on information from the mainland.

Parish Life: There are some groups whose focus seems more site specific than parish wide.

Stewardship: The December meeting is always dedicated to reviewing the progress made in the past year. Tom reviewed the highlights of the year.

- Volunteers:
 - 22 new volunteer members in the parish; at one point SMDC had 484 volunteers.
 - At present we have 377 active volunteers.
 - Jim Stangle and Little Bit LeClaire have joined the Stewardship Committee.
- Plans for 2024 include:
 - June: Service and Sharing drive
 - Sept 18, 2024 is the date of next year's volunteer event and celebration that is hosted by parish leadership. The event is well documented and fairly easy to pull off, but we do need the help of all the parish leadership groups.
- Endowment Committee met in August to discuss our planned activities including:
 - Sending an annual report to the endowment contributors.
 - Contacting individuals, maybe as many as 100, who have not been contacted by the One by One or by the Endowment fundraising campaigns.
 - Sponsoring and estate planning session, conducted by Bob Ross, a new member on the Endowment Committee:

Deacon Tony's Update: Council needs liaisons from Parish Life and Living Justice.

- The role of the Pastoral Council (PC) liaison is to provide a connection between the mission plan and their ministry; the liaison sometimes plays a role locally. Tom said maybe the reason we struggle is that we expect a member of the PC to establish a communication link with all the committees and groups that are organized under each of the parish's four main commissions. We may need to consider another approach such as asking for a volunteer from each of these four main commissions to serve as the liaison to the Pastoral Council. The role of the liaison is crucial because it's how Fr. Tom stays in touch with what's happening in the parish and it's not feasible for him to attend the many meetings or gatherings of these groups throughout the parish.
- Parish mission plan has three priorities: formation of disciples; evangelization; increasing the parish's impact.
- Trustee terms and elections: Deacon Tony reported that an election for trustees will take place in January because it's better to start the new terms with the calendar year rather than the fiscal year. We will put something in the bulletin and get going on the election in January.

- The PC and FC will hold a joint meeting. The date of February 21 at 4:30 at Egg Harbor has been suggested.

Mission Planning Metrix: (Mike T)

Members reviewed the graphs that Mike created. These graphs show the increases in mass attendance and contributions. Contributions are higher to date this year, 2023, since 2019. Attendance figures for 2023 are incomplete.

Pastoral Council Development tasks: (Tom P)

- Update our contact info including term list (also note trustees added). Deacon Tony circulated a list.
- Introduce Pastoral Council members to our parish. PC members are to send a photo to Lori
- Obtain contact list for the Finance Council

Parish Planning: Tom Polacek raised the following points and questions about planning:

- Planning is one of the keys to building a more vibrant growing parish!
- Planning is not a one-time event. It's an ongoing process.
- Planning builds ownership, results in better alignment, improves communication and builds support.
- We need data to measure our progress. What do we need to see to gain more insights into our progress?
- How can we build planning into Stella Maris' culture?

A planning team including Mike, Jim, Kathy, Tom, and Deacon Kurt will develop a preliminary outline for a leadership conference to be held later in the spring of 2024. This group is to report back to the PC at our next meeting (Feb 7). Deacon Tony and our chair need to be updated as progress is made.

Pastor's Update/Comments: Fr. Tom expressed his gratitude for not having challenges that he hears about from other parishes.

Next Meeting Feb 7 at 4 PM (at Egg Harbor and Zoom)

Closing Prayer: The meeting ended with a prayer at 6 pm.