**St. Thomas More Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes**

February 11, 2021 via zoom.us 7:00 pm – 8:00 pm; General Meeting

Call to Order: 7:02 pm

Members in Attendance: Father Chuck Adam, Sam Aitchinson, Pam Bourjaily, Keith Feldmann, Karen Grajczyk-Haddad, Karen Hanson, Mick Langguth, Barb Lopez, Matt Lopez, Leigha Rios, Shirley Schneider and Norma Ward

Members Excused: Keith Less, Spencer Knight, and Jason Wagner

**Father Chuck: Opening Prayer:** Prayer to Overcome Racism

**Mary, friend and mother to all,**

**through your Son, God has found a way**

**to unite himself to every human being,**

**called to be one people,**

**sisters and brothers to each other.**

**We ask for your help in calling on your Son,**

**seeking forgiveness for the times when**

**we have failed to love and respect one another.**

**We ask for your help in obtaining from your Son**

**the grace we need to overcome the evil of racism**

**and to build a just society.**

**We ask for your help in following your Son,**

**so that prejudice and animosity**

**will no longer infect our minds or hearts**

**but will be replaced with a love that respects**

**the dignity of each person.**

**Mother of the Church,**

**the Spirit of your Son Jesus**

**warms our hearts:**

**pray for us.**

**Items of Business—Pam**

1. Presentation on STM Lenten Racism Initiative upcoming programming: Karen G-H. and Shirley
   * Shirley noted the flyer for the Lenten activities is in the bulletin. It was shared with the Commission Chairs and Shirley had asked them to share with their members. Karen G-H and Terry Connor are leading a 5-week study on Open Wide Your Hearts. PC members can help by encouraging others and are welcome to join themselves. We are trying to market our events through our FB account. Shirley and Luigi are working on a project to re-enact the Stations of the Cross involving the youth and music ministries. They are planning to incorporate some racial equity concepts from Jesus’s experience and provide models for us to use when interacting with others.
   * Karen G-H noted that the Knights of Columbus are distributing the Lenten flyers (with the programs outlined) after Ash Wednesday services. Shirley and Karen G-H also announced renaming the Anti-Racism Subcommittee as the **Racial Equity Initiative.**  <https://www.stmparishfamily.com/st--thomas-more-racial-equity-initiative->
   * Karen G-H also shared information regarding “Black Owned Businesses” in the Iowa City Area to support during Lent and beyond. Use the link below for a comprehensive list in the community. <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/e/2PACX-1vR_jkETc6zEp9rXBN-f185yhfbzdHZaL849wnwm381A_zRS53fB84eur_cirtK33lBHUcsoL-50EGfo/pubhtml>

\*Note: Dunn Brothers Coffee & Sugapeach are two businesses close to St Thomas More! Check out the others!

* + Member feedback and discussion. Group asked if there was a plan to reach out to other parishes. Pam called attention to a column within this week’s Catholic Messenger that should increase our awareness as racism and equality as a “sanctity of life issue”. Dimy also suggested a way to integrate our efforts with Dr. Micah Keil and Dr. Ella Johnson from St. Ambrose University. Father Chuck was going to reach out to the professors.

1. Progress report on Welcome video for parish website
   * Katie is planning to schedule the Welcome video within 2 weeks.
2. Pastoral Council 2021-22 selection process outline: Barb and Pam
   * Shirley and Dimy have agreed to serve a second term leaving 2 open seats to fill.
   * Motion was proposed and accepted to approve the following process for this year instead of an election:
     + Post announcement inviting interested STM parishioners to consider applying to serve on PC by completing PC candidate information form. Announcement in Bulletin four consecutive weekends (Feb 20/21 – Mar 13/14) with Announcement also at Masses 1st and 4th weekends. Candidate forms due Mar. 19.
     + PC subcommittee chaired by Barb (Mick Langguth and Karen Hanson offered to assist) will review candidate forms and discern in consultation with Fr. Chuck to propose two new members after the March 19 submission deadline.
     + Subcommittee submits names to entire PC at April 8 PC meeting for final discussion and vote.
   * Motion was proposed and accepted to approve the PC candidate information form (sent as separate document along with other PC files for this meeting) Motion approved as outlined in the agenda. Please note document with additional recruitment information.
   * Pam and Barb invited current PC members who would be eligible to serve in leadership positions next year to discern if they would be willing to serve as either President-Elect or Secretary. If you want to know more about those roles, Pam and Barb are more than happy to volunteer information.
3. The members reviewed and approved the January 14, 2021 Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes.
4. Discussion led by Pam: Introduce commission reinvigoration as part of a renewed focus on Evangelization and Stewardship as a PC theme for the Easter season (Apr – June). She would like to focus on how people access the church and church information.
   * Reinvigorate the website and FB –do we need dedicated staff to manage/coordinate? How can we bolster our Outreach, recruitment and enhance parishioner engagement? Members agreed that we need to keep it updated. Father will ask Katie and Luigi to estimate the amount of time they devote to these efforts.
   * Father Chuck mentioned that the Diocese is hiring an evangelization director…maybe some more things will open up with this? Father Chuck proposed that Pam bring it up to the Finance Council.

**Report from Father Chuck Adam:**

* 1. Church finances update
     + We’re doing OK, but Father reminded everyone that we budgeted low. We were hoping for more monies after the 2nd half of the year but it is a long way to June, and the offertory collections are really low.
  2. Lenten liturgical plans
     + Bishop has sent out ideas for Ash Wednesday. Father announced that he has added an additional mass to accommodate any potential crowding. We are having 9:00 am, 12:15 pm, and 6:00 pm masses. Ashes will be sprinkled on the top of your head at the end of mass.
     + Father updated the reconciliation schedule since there will not be a communal service. Every Saturday he will have Reconciliation from 4:00-5:00 pm and on Wednesday evening from 5:30 to 6:30 pm. Father is waiting to hear the Bishop’s recommendations regarding Holy Week.
  3. New worship space update
     + Father said the presentations to Diocesan Liturgical and Building Commission were successful. *Novak Design Group PLC*, Cedar Rapids, IA has been hired.

**Commission reports and discussion:**

**Church/Family Life**, Judy Frits, chair

* PC members: Mick, Barb, Leigha, Norma
* January meeting minutes attached. Please see meeting minutes for detailed information.
* Highlights: Notable was the change to Universal Church directory since Lifetouch is no longer in the church directory business. There will not be a meeting in February; May baskets ideas are on hold for now.

**Faith Formation,** Shirley Schneider, chair

* PC members: Matt, Shirley, Karen G-H.
* January meeting minutes attached. See meeting minutes for detailed information.
* Highlights: Father reported that Confirmation is scheduled for March 7, at 3:30 pm and 5:30 pm.

**Social Action/Social Justice,** Dimy Doresca, chair

* PC members: Dimy
* January meeting minutes attached. Please see meeting minutes for detailed information.
* Highlights: Dimy reiterated the need to support the church’s **Discretionary Fund** in multiple ways. The bulletin notes it as a donation in lieu of a donation to the Ash Wednesday Soup Supper. Tithing Grants were discussed—he noted that some of those monies go to the Discretionary Fund as well as the monies from the Fair-Trade Sale. **Item of note:** Fair trade has been low—this last 6-month cycle was $600 and usually it’s about $1200. So please continue to buy Fair Trade—you may purchase in the church—it’s an honor system, but there are also online options—It’s a big help to the community.

**Welcome Commission**, Leigha Rios, chair

* PC members: Pam, Keith F., Leigha, Norma
* Update on Round 3 of Outreach program
  + 29 volunteers contacted 391 families, leaving 408 more families to contact.
  + Norma will reach out to 50+ Fellowship group to request Outreach volunteers.
* January meeting minutes attached. . Please see meeting minutes for detailed information.
* Highlights: Seven new members in January.

**Worship & Spirituality**, Janet Steenlage, chair

* PC members: Pam, Karen H.
* No January meeting; Karen H. reviewed items from their recent February meeting.

**Finance Council,** Mark Thoeny, chair

* PC members: Pam
* No February meeting; (no January minutes submitted yet as of 2/6)
* Highlights: Next meeting is March

**Regina Board of Education,** Jason Wagner, BOE member

* Father Chuck announced that Regina Education Center has hired Joy M. Kelly to fill their Head of School position. He congratulated Sam on qualifying for District Wrestling Tournament on Saturday.
* Pam offered her thanks to Sam for volunteering for another year as a PC youth rep.
* Sam noted that the “in-person mass” at Regina had to be rescheduled because of a snow day. Everything going well at Regina, but virtual mass just isn’t the same--students miss being with each other.

**K of C,** John Kauble, chair

* PC members: Keith L.
* No news to report

**Stephen Ministry,** Meliza Wise and Lee Gullickson, co-chairs

* PC members: Pam, Karen G-H.
* Highlights: Pam informed the members there were three new trainees, one from STM and 2 from other faith communities. Training at Our Redeemer and involves 50 hours of training.
* Members asked if there was an increase in requests for Care Givers during COVIC-19, but Pam reported that it was not to the extent they expected. Care Givers-Receivers still meet in various ways, texting, socially distanced, and other platforms to meet the unique needs.

**Father Chuck: Closing prayer:**

**Almighty and ever living God,   
you invite us deeper into your world, your people, your Lent.  
May this time be one of outward focus;   
seeking you in those we often ignore.  
Help us live a Lent focused on freedom, generosity, and encounter.  
Give us hearts hungry to serve you  
and those who need what we have to give.**

**We ask these blessings through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Meeting adjourned: 8:09 pm.

Next meeting: March 11, 2021 at 7 pm