

St. Mary Parish Council Meeting Minutes Wednesday, October 20, 2021

Present: Fr. Mike Lightner, Dr. Susan Allen, Mike Anderson, Joe Lukasik, Austin Rose, Joe Fahley, Andrea Spencer, Bill Walsh, Ann Hoernke

Absent: Michael Sajbel, Joel Kuplack

Guest: Steve Siegel

Meeting began at 5 pm

Fr Mike opened with a prayer.

Joe Fahley made a request to approve the agenda. Ann made the motion to approve it, and Mike A seconded it. The agenda was approved.

Joe Fahley then made a request to approve the minutes from the September 16th meeting. Susan made the motion, and Mike A seconded it. The minutes were approved. Discussion then ensued regarding where to post the minutes for parishioners to read. It was decided to post the minutes to the website and also print copies to put in the back of the church and announce before Mass that they are available. Austin suggested we put a QR code on the paper copies to link it to the website copy in case people prefer to use their phones to read the minutes online. The QR code option was postponed for now.

Fr. Mike's Update:

Fr. Mike opened discussion on the noticeable drop in Mass attendance at St. Mary since the change in Mass times. Both Ann and Bill mentioned that they have received several complaints about the changes. Joe Lukasik asked if the overall attendance was dropping or if people were just attending Mass at St. John's. Bill created a chart showing Mass attendance at both parishes for the past 16 weeks, and it indicates that St. Mary parishioners are choosing to attend Mass at St. John's. Further discussion ensued regarding ideal Mass times and the possibility of a 7 am Mass returning and even a potential Hispanic Mass. The return of an ad orientem Mass was brought up too. Mike A suggested we communicate to parishioners well in advance if we bring back ad orientem. Austin suggested an ad orientem Mass for Christmas. Bill suggested getting coverage in *The Compass* if we do that. Father does not want to make any changes for now. He wants to see what the numbers are after 6-8 weeks with the current schedules

before proposing any changes. Mass attendance will be put on the agenda for the November meeting.

Trustee Update:

Ann stated that communication within the parish needs to be improved. Special collections are not published in the bulletin early enough. The Disaster Relief collection was announced before Mass for three weeks, but it wasn't in the bulletin until the weekend of the collection. Also, it was not clear that there was not going to be a second collection but rather parishioners had to use the special envelopes only, so any loose monies in the collection basket went toward parish support rather than the Disaster Relief fund. It would be nice to see a weekly calendar in the bulletin indicating what events were happening on every day of the week.

Committee Updates:

Worship:

Austin held a training session for new and existing altar servers. Only one existing altar server and three new ones attended - one was too young. Austin will try to hold another training session and see if Dcn Don will assist in getting more day school kids involved. Fr Mike suggested quarterly gatherings for altar servers for refreshers and just a fun time. It was also suggested that other Mass ministers meet maybe twice a year for updating and fellowship. Mike A asked if there was any news from the diocese regarding the return of Extraordinary Ministers to help with Communion distribution, and Fr Mike said there has been no mention of it yet.

Austin is still trying to get a decorations committee established. He contacted the people suggested at last month's Parish Council meeting but couldn't get any interest. Andrea knows of someone who may be interested in the committee, and she will follow up on contacting that person. Austin and Fr Mike will look at our current Christmas decorations and determine if we need to shop for replacements. Andrea said teachers will take any old decorations to decorate their rooms.

Living Justice:

Susan updated the council on the Respect Life meeting held together with other parishes. There is a new Pro-Life group at Lawrence University. 40 Days for Life is occurring now. There was also talk at their meeting about getting speakers on Pro-Life issues. Susan suggested that our parish might want to incorporate those speakers as part of our adult education. We would need to coordinate calendars.

Susan mentioned that Russ Brumm is interested in our parish possibly adopting a family from among the Afghan refugees. We have done that in the past with other refugee families. We will see what the diocese has planned.

Lastly, Susan said there was discussion at the Respect Life meeting regarding healthcare and the vaccine mandate. Employers are rejecting religious exemptions and Susan asked for prayers for people whose livelihood is affected by that.

Evangelization: No report.

Education:

Andrea informed the council about the upcoming Book Fair in December. It will be “Blessings, Books, and Bagels” with a Faith Formation night and an opportunity for parishioners to participate.

Fr Mike said the school will celebrate St. Nick’s day on Dec 6. Father and Dcn Don are putting an emphasis on teaching about our saints. Father also said the school established a Remembrance altar for those who died.

Andrea asked Fr Mike about a schedule for visiting the classrooms. He is still working on that. He did get into 4 classrooms so far to meet students and answer questions. He will try to get into classrooms twice a month.

Building and Grounds:

Joe Lukasik informed the council on the success of having SMCHS students here for their Service Day on Friday, September 24. They washed pews and waxed floors in the church and cleaned in the school too. They worked outside on the playground and did yard work also.

Father Mike, Steve, Richard DeKleyn and Joe Lukasik will meet for a walk around our facilities to establish work orders. Steve will coordinate a date.

Safety and Scrip:

Mike A received an Emergency Response Plan draft from the diocese. He will meet with Steve and Joe Lukasik for guidance regarding the physical structure of our church. We need to establish CERT teams for Masses (Community Emergency Response Teams.) Mike A will talk with Fr Mike at another time to clarify our needs. Father said a big need is a medical bag. Lectors, ushers, greeters, Extraordinary ministers could all be trained to be part of CERT.

New Business:

Bill Walsh informed the council that the diocesan One by One program is coming to our parish soon. Bill distributed a summary of our Parish Mission Plan, which was created with St John parish before the pandemic. Bill asked Fr Mike if we are still going to do our mission plan with St John, and if not, we will need to rethink the whole plan. Fr Mike did not think we will be doing a combined plan because of different needs. Fr Mike thinks we should present this to the Finance Council to look at capital assets rather than programs.

Adjournment:

Austin moved to adjourn the meeting. Father seconded it, and the meeting was adjourned at 6:40 pm.

Father led a closing prayer.

Next meeting is at 5 pm on Wednesday, November 17.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Hoernke
Secretary Trustee