

Pastoral Council meeting minutes October 15, 2020

In attendance: Mike, Becky, Donna, Deacon Gary, Barb and Laurie

Opened meeting at 6:59 pm with prayer

Reviewed minutes from 9.17.2020. No suggestions for change. Laurie made a motion to approve, seconded by Barb. All in favor of approval.

Donna asked Becky to add the Mass zoom link to the Facebook page. Also, add announcements from the bulletin to the Facebook page.

How are we reaching our Parishioner's?

Evangelization

Facebook: Daily scripture link, bulletin, community events, religious educ. posts, misc.

Printed bulletin: Now available in the Parish lobby for people to take on their way in or out.

Faith formation:

- Confirmation: 12 Candidates. Each candidate will have a sponsor and 3 other guests at the ceremony. It will be live streamed via Facebook through St. Joseph's page and aired on the radio for others to witness. Taking place Tuesday, October 27th at 6:30 in Greenfield.
- Other grade levels: Received only 8 registration forms after mailing to all previous religious education students (32 families, 52 children.) Engaged 3 family's via the "virtual" religious education program, which is a weekly "newsletter" entitled *Faith, Family, Fun*; has a theme, prayer, activity and additional resource links. The "newsletter" is posted on Facebook as an event and is also emailed to every family that enrolled in '19-'20. It suggests that families take photographs of things they do, create, etc. (but not of the children) and email them to be shared on social media.
- Becky will call each family to check in, get any suggestions that would increase interactions. Then, meet with the religious education teachers about the continuation of the plan as is, or brainstorm how to facilitate better engagement. Pastoral Council suggested each teacher call the families they worked with last year.

Barb received a response from Glen Smith. He presents "A Visit with St. Paul." We do not feel we can schedule his presentation at this time due to the gathering limitations of Covid, but we want him to know we would be interested in the future. Possibly, meetings will be able to occur during Lent. We can revisit this.

Donna quoted Tom Cronin stating "Confirmation is not Graduation." There is a program at St. Joseph's in which the youth have a job to keep them coming back after Confirmation. Becky will invite the youth to participate (or sign up) on the cleaning/sanitizing schedule, zoom Mass schedule, whatever else is needed or they show interest in helping with.

Becky shared a conversation that she had with Louise Carney. Louise was interested in a Halloween event; distributing a healthy snack or treat in front of the Parish to the Community. Becky had reached out to Saratoga County Public Health in regards to a Trunk or Treat, but it is not recommended. The concerns are putting volunteers at risk of Covid, as well as, keeping a list of who attends from the community for contact tracing. The alternative suggestion is to host a virtual pumpkin carving contest. Information will be shared as soon as possible for all parishioners to participate via social media!

Deacon Gary repeated the overarching message from Tom Cronin being "keep trying and don't give up." Mike responded along these lines "adapt the old to fit the new."

Continued suggestions for evangelization/Pastoral Council projects:

- Create a phone tree. Provide callers with a “sample script” – a check in, a personal connection
- Send cards, emails, etc. How can we update our contact lists and build on them? Can we use the contact tracing sheets? Suggested that we include a box below the signature line that says “Yes, you can add my name, etc. to a contact list for Parish updates” But, if the sheet is for multiple Mass attendees – whose information has been granted permission?
- Making announcements at Mass
- Add articles from the bulletin to the Facebook feed
- Create events for various “things that are happening”
- Review the Tom Cronin notes. See what we should focus on next. What are the next steps to take? Deacon Gary feels each person could act on what they do best or are comfortable with. Mike feels we should choose an action or 2 and put our resources on those tasks. We can invite Tom Cronin to return early in 2021 to see what we’ve accomplished.
- Top priority is Communication. We need to reach the people. Very small percentage of “active” Parishioners and points of contact are not reaching far enough.

Mike would like to see Mass held in the church again, especially by Advent/Christmas. Sound Solutions has given us an estimate to run cables to a projector from the altar to the Parish Hall in order to increase the capacity at Mass. We then discussed the schedule and logistics of Christmas Mass and it’s limitations due to Covid. St. Peter’s issues tickets and assigned seats for mass. With limited resources, we will have to be cautious about making a plan that is larger than the volunteers we have to facilitate it.

Christmas Masses will tentatively be held on Thursday, 12/24/2020 at 4:00 pm and 7:00 pm, Friday 12/25/2020 at 10:00 am. The Church “pre-covid” held 368, although we’ve removed a few pews for handicapped seating and this number includes the choir loft, and the Parish Hall held 160. With 6 foot distancing in place we are reduced to 30% capacity or less; about 70 in the church and 40 in the hall. The floor plan will have to be mapped, with seated deemed unavailable. Reservations will need to be made in advance through the Parish office. Seating could be assigned by dividing into quadrants A, B, C, D and numbering the pews. This would reduce the number of ushers needed to assist people in finding their assigned seats. Masks would need to be worn at all times and music, but no singing. As the church fills on first come first serve reservations, people will know that they will be seated in overflow in the Parish Hall and decide if they’d rather attend a different Mass.

Next steps:

- The estimate from Sound Solutions for audio/visual hook up from church to hall will be business at the next finance committee. Mike has already sent them the document.
- The bulletin will be updated to begin sharing the Christmas Mass preparations and schedule.
- Donna will let Roseann Carpenter know that the wreath sale can happen. It will be advertised that payment be exact change or check (and that she should increase her price to \$20 to make it easy.)

Mike will be absent for a few weeks as he recovers from surgery. Laurie will chair the next meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, November 12, 2020 at 7:00 pm in the Parish Lobby
It will be available via zoom. [Zoom.us](https://zoom.us) website, Meeting id **834 7319 9975**, Password: **Peace**

Meeting ended with prayer at 8:48 pm

Submitted by Becky