

**St. Paul Church Parish Council Meeting Minutes**  
**September 24, 2019 ... 6:30 PM**  
**St. Paul Rectory**

**Present:** John Taglianetti, Peter Crump, Mike Powell, Andrea Kanfer, Joan Dreger, Ethel Reed, Derek Pirruccello, Bob Price, Roseann Ward, JoHanna Polcaro, & Father Mark O'Donnell

**Other Parishioners Present:** None

**Guest:** Juan Carlos Cruz

**Absent:** Kevin McKinzie, Kathy Brunelle

**Attachments:** Meeting Agenda

Fr Mark offered the opening Prayer.

**Opening Comments:** John Taglianetti offered to forgo the opening comments as the agenda would cover all current topics.

**Catechesis for Youths and Adults:** Juan Carlos Cruz presented the program held at St Mary Star of the Sea Church on Sunday and Wednesday Evenings at 7:00PM. This program addresses the decline of the importance and role of Christianity in today's youth.

An article written by Fr. John J. Serio, SDB (Principal, Don Bosco Cristo Rey High School, Takoma Park, Maryland) and published in September 2012 addresses the many issues related to this program and can be found at <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/catechesis/catechetical-sunday/new-evangelization/upload/adolescent-catechesis.pdf>.

**Diocese Audit:** JoHanna Polcaro provided a summary of the recent Audit conducted by the Diocese Auditor. JoHanna explained it is typical for the Diocese to conduct a Parish Audit after a new Pastor has been assigned; however, although an Audit was not performed after Fr Whittle was first assigned to St Paul. Joan Dreger remembers a Diocese Audit conducted after Fr Carey was assigned to St Paul. The audit addressed the financial state of the Parish and focused on financial book keeping and reporting practices as well as administrative procedures and practices. Although the auditor made some specific suggestions and recommendations, there were no significant findings. JoHanna reported that all Audit recommendations are being addressed.

**Finance Council Meeting Report:** John Taglianetti reported that a Finance Council meeting was held on September 16<sup>th</sup>. Members of the Council include Bill Sheehan (Council Chair), Carl Orsini, and John Taglianetti. Derek Pirruccello will participate in these meetings and serve as the liaison between the Finance and Parish Councils. Derek provided the following notes from the Finance Council meeting for discussion:

The Finance Council met on the evening of Monday Sept. 16<sup>th</sup> with Fr. Mark O'Donnell, Johanna Polcaro, John Taglianetti, Bill Sheehan, Carl Orsini, and Derek Pirruccello present. Discussion centered on the task at hand to soon communicate to parishioners the financial

condition of St. Paul Church. The Office of the Bishop sent a letter dated May 29<sup>th</sup>, and which John Taglianetti shared with the Parish Council via email on Sept. 24<sup>th</sup>, urging pastoral leadership to share frankly from the pulpit the challenges faced and the reality that if the parish is unable to pay essential bills, the future viability of the parish is in question. A key factor unique to St. Paul Parish is the parcels of property owned and potentially soon for sale to raise the liquidity position and financial health of the church and as a means of clearing the slate with the diocese. This continues to remain the focus of leadership at St. Paul Church, and discussion was had to make efforts to meet with the Bishop as soon as possible to discuss these plans and receive approval to actively market the property for sale.

Fr. Mark shared the plight of St. Paul is not unique amongst the St. Brendan the Navigator Parish Cluster; St. Mary's is in even worse shape with debt to the diocese a multiple plus over St. Paul's. We reviewed revenues versus expenses for the past two fiscal years ending June 2019 and 2018, with an itemized profit and loss report provided comparing both years and including greater detail than the simplified reports previously reported to the Parish. It was noted revenues from the Fuel Collections covered slightly less than half of what was expensed for heat, and the idea was proposed when the simplified budget is released to call out the Fuel Collection numbers within the "other revenue" line item which can easily be compared with expenses for heat.

St. Paul's has been operating only because we have not been paying our share of the property hazard insurance and worker's compensation insurance to the Diocese, as well as the Cathedraticum, which in the 2018-19 fiscal year combined added up to ~\$47,500. If we were to begin paying these "essential expenses" we'd be looking for \$1,000 in extra offertory income each week, an increase of ~25% from the full amount collected that fiscal year, and that doesn't include payments for accrued debt to date.

A list of capital improvements needed and range of estimates of costs was provided, covering replacing the boiler, installing air conditioning, painting the exterior of the church, sealing the parking lot, updating the flooring, and other smaller items totaling something on the order of \$300,000. This does not include replacing any windows and the amount needed to replace the three-way valves for the heating system.

Given it has been communicated earlier in September the specific need to repair the heating system to restore basic functionality and the upcoming special collection specifically for these building and grounds expenses, Fr. Mark agreed as a next step to open a separate account for monies raised from these special collections to be deposited into. Johanna will work with Fr. Mark to draft an announcement to be read by the lector in the next week's weekend masses coincident with the first special building and grounds collection, with envelopes to be provided in the pews.

*Post Meeting Note: A separate account has been opened to collect and manage the funds donated 'specifically' for Buildings and Grounds repairs and improvements deemed necessary.*

Bill Sheehan will present the FY 2019 Financial Summary Report at the Saturday October 12<sup>th</sup> 4:30PM and Sunday October 13<sup>th</sup> 10:00AM Masses. Fr Mark has rearranged his schedule to

celebrate both of these Masses and provide additional comments as necessary. The next Finance Council meeting is scheduled for January 2020.

**New Pastoral Council Members:** Recommendations for new Parish Council members were discussed briefly. A few new candidates were identified and discussions will follow.

**Faith Formation Classes Startup:** Roseann provided the following notes:

- There are total of 120 students with 56 students on Sunday mornings from 9:00 to 9:50 proceeding the 10:00 mass and 64 students on Wednesday afternoons in the church hall from 4:00 to 5:00.
- There are 8 First Communion students.
- There are 26 Confirmation students.

### **Committee Reports/Assignments:**

**Prayer and Worship** - Kathy Brunelle was not able to attend this evening's meeting but reported prior to the meeting that the new music books would be received shortly. In addition, Kathy has offered to chair the Epiphany Party scheduled for January 5, 2020 to be held in the church hall. Kathy and Joan will co-chair the St Patrick's Dinner in March.

*Post Meeting Note: The new music books have been received. Other upcoming key events and dates include:*

**Advent Program:** November 26th, December 3rd, 10th, 17th. Actual program has yet to be determined, Mike Powell to facilitate.

**Lenten Program:** This program has not yet been determined.

**Holy Thursday Bread Sharing (April 9<sup>th</sup>):** We'll try to hold it in the vestibule without chairs rather than the Hall and see how this works.

**Dinner and a Show (May 23<sup>rd</sup>):** Pasta dinner and a one man show following at 5:30 pm. The profits will go to the Buildings and Grounds Fund. Tickets will be sold to St. Paul parishioners and after two weeks, opened up to the Cluster. The price yet to be determined. We are working with JoHanna to contact Luigi and see if he will cook, or have our volunteers cook. Dave Kane is from Rhode Island and is an actor. This show, about old-schooled, Catholics is a hoot. He engages the audience and is a lot of fun. His character is Father Misgivings and he performs for churches and schools, non-profits. St. Matthias had this show some years ago.

**Christian Formation** - Andrea Kanfer did not have a specific report for this evening's meeting other than to say that the next Christian Formation Committee meeting was scheduled following the Parish Council Meeting. A Pancake Breakfast will be held on October 27<sup>th</sup> after the 10:00 Mass followed by a casual Faith Formation Open House.

**Human Concerns & Social Justice** - Mike Powell offered a number of suggestions for future events to support the Safe Futures, St Vincent de Paul Place and other charity endeavors. A schedule of these future events is being developed with JoHanna. A discussion was also held about holding a winter coat drive similar to that held by St Agnes. Coats collected at St Agnes are donated to Care and Share, an organization in East Lyme, for distribution to needy people. Mike will investigate the possibility of holding a winter coat drive.

**Buildings and Grounds** - John Taglianetti provided the following update:

- On September 4<sup>th</sup> a group of volunteers spent nearly 4 hours assisting Luke in cleaning the Church prior to resuming masses upstairs. The types of cleaning efforts included vacuuming and washing the tile floor area, vacuuming the rug and vestibule area, washing and wiping down the window sills and walls below the windows including the base-ray heating, and wiping down the pews and kneelers. The cleaning effort began at 3:00PM and because of the great turnout of volunteers the work was completed shortly after 6:00PM.
- HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, & Air Conditioning) - There was nothing new to report about the HVAC system other than to report that the first Building and Grounds collection yielded approximately \$5,200.

**Goals or Objectives for the Coming Year** - The purpose of this discussion was to discuss and accept actionable goals or objectives for the coming year.

- Hold monthly Parish Social events similar to the Pancake Breakfast and St Patrick Day dinner. A Pancake Breakfast is scheduled for October 27<sup>th</sup>, a Breakfast with Santa is planned for the final 1000 Club meeting on December 15<sup>th</sup>, an Epiphany Party is scheduled for January 5<sup>th</sup>, and the St Patrick's Day Dinner is planned for March.
- Add two more Certified Food Protection Manager Program certified by Ledge Light Health District located at 216 Broad Street in New London to enable the additional social events. Bob Price has expressed interest in becoming certified.
- Host an open house for parents on the first night of the Faith Formation Classes. This is being planned although no specific date has been chosen.
- Hold Q&A informational exchanges with parishioners to solicit actionable steps to improve the parish. Fr Mark has approved holding these sessions.
- In addition, it was mentioned that a goal should be to increase the number of Parishioners and to increase the weekly offering. However, there were no specific actions that could be identified to accomplish those objectives. They can only be realized by successfully accomplishing the goals and objectives identified above.

John Taglianetti mentioned that additional actionable Goals and Objectives should be added as they are identified throughout the year.

**New Business:**

- The 1000 club will end with the December 15<sup>th</sup> 1000 Club meeting. A 'Breakfast With Santa' will be held at the December 1000 Club meeting.
- The Supporting and Engaging Resources for Action and Change (SERAC) organization has offered to hold information meetings at St Paul Church. SERAC is offering a Congregation Assistance Program (CAP) that trains individuals in faith-based organizations in behavioral and mental health issues and the local community resources available to people seeking help with these concerns. Participants learn the signs, symptoms, and impact of common addictions and explore ways to assist and refer a person in distress. The Council Members agreed that St Paul should pursue this program and consensus was that Saturdays afternoons from 12:00 to 3:00 would be the most appropriate time slot.
- In an effort to address safety concerns 'No Right Turn' and 'Do Not Enter' signs are being installed in an attempt to preclude making right turns in front of the church towards the rectory.
- The next Cluster Pastoral Council Meeting is scheduled for November 20<sup>th</sup> at St Mary Church.

**Action Items:**

- Mike Powell will investigate a program for donating winter coats.

**Next Meeting Schedule & Agenda Items:** It has been agreed to plan for a meeting every 4<sup>th</sup> week of the month going forward. The next Pastoral Council Meeting is scheduled Tuesday, October 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Rectory beginning at 6:30.

Fr Mark led the closing prayer.

These minutes were prepared by John Taglianetti and approved by the Parish Council via email on October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

**St. Paul Church Pastoral Council Meeting Agenda  
September 24, 2019 ... 6:30 PM  
St. Paul Rectory**

**Agenda Topics & Allotted Time\***

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| Opening Prayer ... Fr Mark                             | (2 minutes)  |
| Catechesis for Youth and Adults ... Evelyn Pedraza     | (10 minutes) |
| Opening Comments ... John Taglianetti                  | (5 minutes)  |
| Diocese Audit Summary... JoHanna Polcaro               | (5 minutes)  |
| Finance Council Report ... Derek Pirruccello           | (10 minutes) |
| New Pastoral Council Members ... John Taglianetti      | (5 minutes)  |
| Faith Formation Classes Startup ... Roseann Ward       | (5 minutes)  |
| Subcommittee Reports/Assignments:                      |              |
| • Prayer and Worship ... Kathy Brunelle                | (5 minutes)  |
| • Christian Formation ... Andrea Kanfer                | (5 minutes)  |
| • Human Concerns & Social Justice ... Mike Powell      | (5 minutes)  |
| • Buildings and Grounds ... John Taglianetti           | (10 minutes) |
| Goals or Objectives Review ... Open Discussion         | (10 minutes) |
| New Business ... All                                   | (15 minutes) |
| • Spaghetti Supper & Other Parish Events ... ?         |              |
| • Other Items ... All                                  |              |
| Parishioner Questions, Concerns or Suggestions ... All | (5 minutes)  |
| Action Item Review                                     | (3 Minutes)  |
| Next Meeting Schedule & Agenda Items                   | (3 Minutes)  |
| Closing Prayer ... Fr Mark                             | (2 Minutes)  |

\* The **Allotted Time** is the time targeted for completing **Agenda Topic** discussion. The Pastor, Chairperson, or Vice Chairperson will have the option to allot additional time for discussion or to table further discussion as deemed appropriate.