



St. Mary's Parish Council Minutes – March 10, 2021

Virtual Meeting Held via Zoom

7:00 pm meeting called to order by Sean Hughes

In Attendance: Father Matera, Sean Hughes, Daria Mauro, David Croke, Lori Ryan, Betty Bible, Mary Keenan, Susan Falkner, Josh Livingston, Larry Christian, Paul Henault, Gavin Hughes, Jim Cramer, Leon Rippel

Absent:

Opening Prayer by Fr. Matera

APPROVAL OF MINUTES- For February 10th meeting. Minutes Approved.

PASTOR'S REPORT

1. A bulletin board has been installed in the Magowan Center in memory of Patricia Estill.
2. The parish is experiencing a slight increase in Sunday Mass attendance. Accordingly, seating for church has been reconfigured slightly to accommodate more parishioners.
3. Parishioners will be asked to sign up for Good Friday and for Easter Masses, but they will not be checked at the door as at Christmas time.
4. Planning for the Parish Retreat is almost finished. Patty and Cynthia have been working on Music, Deacon Art and Father Matera have been working on the program, and the witnesses are now in place. Father Matera hopes the retreat this will be a moment of renewal for the parish as it begins to emerge from the pandemic.
5. Planning for Holy Week has been a challenge this year. Father Matera has been working with Patty and Cynthia and the Liturgy Committee. Guidelines for this Holy Week came out from the Archdiocese March 9th. The Archdiocese as that we avoid processions on Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, and Holy Saturday, and that the ceremony of the washing of feet not be performed this week.
6. Father Matera would like the Parish Council to give a Pastoral report at Mass the weekend of March 20-21, just as the Finance Council gave a report about the finances of the council.
7. Scheduling weddings has been and continues to be a challenge because couples continue to reschedule their wedding date due to COVID-19.

Focused Discussion:

- Discussed positive feedback from the Financial Report presented to the parish-the report was viewed as concise, transparent and presented documents were very thorough and full of details.
- Father asked that a similar report about the Parish Council activities also be presented to the parish the weekend of March 20-21. Different members of the council will present a Pastoral Report during the weekend masses. The focus will be Worship, Education, Social outreach, and Parish Evangelization (see attached outline of the report)

STANDING COMMITTEES- No Reports (except for those noted)

LITURGY—Larry Christian

The Liturgy committee has been working on preparing for Palm Sunday and Holy Week. New guidance was just issued by the Archdiocese. A brief overview of some of the changes are:

Palm Sunday: Palms will be blessed privately before Mass and available in the Magowan Center for people to take as they enter church. There will be no procession. The Passion Narrative will be read by two lectors and the priest.

Holy Thursday: There will be no washing of the feet. After communion we will place the ciboria with the consecrated hosts on the altar and kneel in adoration. There will be no procession or special altar of repose. The sacrament will be incensed and brought to the Tabernacle. The congregation will be encouraged to remain and adore the Sacrament.

Good Friday: Simple entrance into the sanctuary in silence. The passion will be read by one lector, deacon and priest. At the adoration of the cross, people will come forward as at communion and bow or genuflect before the cross.

Holy Saturday: The church will be dimly lit and all lights turned off as the ceremony begins. The Deacon will light the Paschal Candle located near the pulpit. Cantor will sing Exultet, lights turned on dim for readings and then on full for the Gloria. After the homily, the Rite of Baptism, Confirmation, Reception, etc will occur for our RCIA candidates. The congregation will renew baptismal vows and be sprinkled with holy water.

Easter Sunday: In place of the Creed, the congregation will renew baptismal promises and be sprinkled with holy water.

We will use pamphlets for each day of the Sacred Triduum since they are only used once. All services will be live-streamed.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION— Lori Ryan

- K-6: 3 lessons left and will end on Psalm Sunday
- Grades 7-8: 2 classes left on sacraments

SOCIAL ACTION & OUTREACH—Leon Rippel

- Continued support and outreach was provided to these organizations.

House of Bread

Outreach to Nursing homes

Simsbury Food Pantry

Gifts of Love-Confirmation project to collect food and other items

ADULT ENRICHMENT AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT—Betty Bible

- Focus on reaching out to families to come to church for mass in person or watch via live stream as well as promote the upcoming retreat.

OTHER COMMITTEES/REPORT- No Reports (except for those noted)

YOUTH MINISTRY—Gavin Hughes/Mary Keenan

The year is beginning to wrap up:

- Youth Ministry: we have 2 more youth group evenings until we break and begin summer activities. Next YG is Stress Relief through prayer and meditation
- Confirmation: 2 more classes until we break, next month the 2nd year students will be attending their retreat
- Jr. High YG: We have a couple more planned and then those will be finished until next school year. Next YG is ACTion (charades) how teens can take action and be of service

SCHOOL BOARD—Jim Cramer

- School being held in person
- PPE forgiveness
- Enrollment high-slightly ahead of budget
- Pushing for next year's enrollment-budget to be based on enrollment guidelines (not yet defined)

FINANCE COUNCIL—Paul Henault

- February Revenue came in much higher than anticipated, about \$12,000 over budget. This was primarily due to receipt of a larger annual offertory donation.

- Expenses continue to remain low for the month, about \$7,000 below budget. The parish ended the month of February with a positive income.
- These numbers are preliminary and will be reported to the Finance Council on Monday March 15 are finals.

OTHER

NIGHT PRAYER led by Father Matera.

Next meeting April 14, 2021 7pm.

Draft-Pastoral Report

- One year ago, the pandemic brought our parish to a standstill. For nearly three months we could not attend Mass, and our parish life was greatly curtailed. Since then, a great deal has happened, and while we are not back to parish life as usual, we are functioning as a parish once more. We can attend Mass; the sacraments are being administered; and many parish activities have resumed, albeit in different ways. The purpose of this Pastoral Report is let you know what has been happening in the Pastoral life of Saint Mary's Parish.
- **The Worship Life of the Parish**
 - Mass has been celebrated regularly since July with about 250 people attending Mass each weekend. Our normal number would be about 800.
 - In 2020, despite the pandemic, we celebrated 31 baptisms, 38 First Communions, 61 Confirmations, 4 marriages, and 29 funerals. In addition, the Sacrament of Reconciliation continues to be celebrated weekly.
 - All Masses and most funerals and weddings are now live-streamed
- **The Educational Life of the Parish**
 - St. Mary's School has been able to hold classes every day of the week and has experienced an increased enrollment of twenty students this year
 - Our Religious Education and Youth Ministry programs have been held virtually, which has afforded us an opportunity to increase parental involvement.
 - Men's Ministry meets on Zoom every Saturday Morning
 - The Women Guild has held virtual Bible Studies
 - Deacon Art's Bible Study has been held on Zoom and Father Matera's Adult Enrichment Programs have been held in the church from where they are live streamed.
- **The Social Outreach Life of the Parish**
 - Stephen Ministry has been active throughout the year, especially in reaching out to parishioners who are alone. Our 24 Stephen Ministers spent more than 300 hours caring for others.
 - The Social Actions Committee has held food collections for Hartford and Simsbury nearly every week since the summer
 - Prayer Shawl Ministry continues to provide prayer shawls for the sick and elderly
 - The Parish Staff has kept the parish connected through the Face Book, Twitter, weekly emails, as well as the bulletin.
 - This year's Christmas Giving Tree Program was more successful than ever.
- **Parish Evangelization**
 - Despite the pandemic, the RCIA Program has had one of its most successful years with seven candidates who will be baptized, confirmed, or received into the church at the Easter Vigil.
 - Thanks to our ability to Live Stream our worship and educational programs, we have been able to reach out to all the members of our parish and to others as well.

- **The Year Ahead**

- We are entering a new phase in the life of St. Mary's. As people slowly return to worship and parish life, we will need to "reconstitute the parish." This means reengaging people in old and new ministries.
- We invite you to attend our parish retreat, in person or on line, which begins this Monday as a way to prepare for Holy Week and for our full return to parish life.