

St. John the Evangelist Parish

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PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL - Minutes

Fr. Michael Williams – Pastor – ex officio	Marie Bardswich – St. John’s
Myron McCormick – Finance – ex officio	Sue Quackenbush – St. John’s
Rachel Charette – St. John’s	Trudy Hinds – St. Bernardine’s
Diane Myre – St. John’s	

MEETING DATE: Thursday, May 26, 2022 @6pm in the Parish Hall

PRAYER: We prayed the Synodal prayer together, and then offered a special prayer for the parishioners of St. Bernardine’s, as they celebrate their 75th anniversary this year.

Following this, the PPC met to discuss the following pastoral issues:

OLD BUSINESS:

(1) A review of items discussed virtually over the last 2 years

ONGOING BUSINESS:

(2) Social Concerns, Faith Formation & Spirituality, Pastoral Care, Worship, Youth, Future Planning

(3) Parish Financial Update

NEW BUSINESS:

(4) Covid impact on the Parish

(5) New Members

Re: (1) Fr. Michael summarized the dates and decisions made virtually (through email) since May of 2020, when in person meetings were not permitted:

May 9, 2020: Old Business report that Sonya Arcand has been chosen as parish custodian; Update on our financial position; Proposal to donate the \$1,000 gift from Loughheed’s to the Infant Food Bank (agreed to by consensus).

September 26, 2020: Agreement to meet going forward via email, rather than Zoom.

October 3, 2020: Old Business update that Alpha is complete, Sonya has signed an employment contract, and the sale of surplus property will not proceed until our new Bishop is appointed. Subsequently, our new Bishop visited to view the surplus property and decided to review the sale in terms of a larger project to review all Diocesan property. In the meantime, given that the file is on his desk, we will remove it as an agenda item.

October 9, 2020 A review of the first three quarters of our finances, as impacted by the pandemic; a proposal to sponsor a second child through Chalice (agreed to by consensus).

October 17, 2020 A decision to be made regarding Christmas Masses, for which our numbers are limited by Provincial law. Either **first come – first entry**, or **pre-registration**. The decision was made by consensus to go with “first come – first entry”.

December 22, 2020 A report that Fr. Michael cancelled Masses from December 26 – January 8th, rather than limit attendance to just 9 people, as per the restrictions in place in Ontario at that time.

February 5, 2021 A report that nobody had to be turned away at the Christmas Masses; A consultation on the best way to distribute the ashes on Ash Wednesday (agreed by consensus to leave the containers just inside the side entrance for parishioners to pick up during the day).

May 10, 2021 A request made by a non-parishioner for an exemption to our Hall Policy, in order for them to use the kitchen for a business. By consensus, the answer was ‘no’.

December 23, 2021 A report that, to date, the candle money donated has been distributed as follows: \$1,344 to Chalice to support our two kids, and \$1,000 to the Elgin St. Mission, in lieu of participating in their ‘bread fundraiser’. With just under \$1,700 remaining to distribute, Fr. Michael proposed giving \$1,000 to the Garson Food Bank (our regular recipient), with the balance going to L’Arche Sudbury. (Agreed to by consensus).

Re: (2) This area was discussed following the report (4) below (Covid impact on the Parish).

Under social concerns, a question of whether we are able to have parish socials again. We can. The issue will be attendance numbers, and whether they would be enough to sustain an event. This was discussed at some length. Pot Luck dinner? June BBQ? A Fall event of some sort? No decisions were made, except that Rachel will see over the summer if there is some interest with volunteers in organizing an event for the Fall.

Under Faith Formation & Spirituality, a discussion around Baptism, and the difficulty parents seem to have to take the initiative to pick up a registration form at Church. A number will email a request for Baptism, but balk at physically coming to pick up a form. Although some members suggested we adopt online registration forms, Fr. Michael is strongly opposed to this. His feeling is that if attending a Sunday Mass one time is a bar too high for some to navigate, then perhaps their faith is not yet strong enough to ask Baptism for their child. Other members of PPC echoed this view.

Under Worship, a discussion around musicians and choir members. One of our main musicians moved out of town, and our only choir director retired. If a musician is found, Fr. Michael indicated he is more than happy to welcome him/her into this ministry. The choir will follow, as long as there is a director willing to step forward. Also under this heading, Fr. Michael gauged the interest in moving weekday Masses back to 9:30am (moved to 10:30am during the

pandemic). The earlier Mass seems to be preferred, and Fr. Michael will make the shift either at the start of summer, or at the end.

Under Future Planning, a discussion on options for welcoming back to Sunday worship those who stopped attending at the beginning of the pandemic and have not yet returned (numbers are about half at this time). A welcome back letter was discussed at some length, as well as the possibility of sending a general letter out to everyone in Garson/Falconbridge/Skead as a means for evangelization. There was no consensus achieved at this time, and so we will let the various ideas simmer over the summer and revisit this at our next meeting.

Under Youth, we reviewed various attempts to reach out to this group, including the failed initiative in hiring a part time youth coordinator. Various ideas that focussed on the need to pray were discussed, including a weekly prayer for youth at the Sunday Mass, a weekly prayer intention during the Universal Prayer, and a bulletin section devoted to this. No consensus was achieved at this time, although Trudy and Rachel agreed to write various bulletin inserts over the summer that can be used beginning in the Fall.

One member asked for clarity re: the new “Donations Secretary” heading in the bulletin. Fr. Michael clarified that the position is not new, but has been held by Barb Beaulieu for many years, and he just wanted to ensure that parishioners knew who held the various paid positions in the parish, and so recently started showing her position in the bulletin. Barb enters the donations of parishioners into the Parish Friendly program, which is needed in order to issue receipts each year. She also prepares those receipts, as well as the donations envelopes each year, and she takes care of the PAD program as well. In most other parishes, the Parish Secretary looks after all that, but in this parish, this role has historically been separated.

Re: (3) Myron presented the financial report, reflecting the first third of the year. There are no concerns at this time in our finances. On the revenue side, we are tracking close to our budget. On the expenditure side, our maintenance costs will likely track higher than we budgeted, due to the decision to replace the old aluminum windows (1 in the Sacristy and 8 in the Rectory) that have not yet been replaced. We will also reseal the parking lot, since that job had been suspended at the start of the pandemic, and is now overdue. We will easily be able to absorb these costs, however; we will not need to draw down our deposit with the Diocese, which currently amounts to \$262,712.

Re: (4) Fr. Michael distributed a spreadsheet showing our Mass attendance going back to September, 2011. Fr. Jim began tracking attendance then. Fr. Michael has organized it on an excel spreadsheet, showing the average Sunday attendance on a yearly basis. Attendance averaged 178 people per weekend in 2012, and has dropped consistently since then to 140 in 2019, for an average decrease of 4-5 people each year. In 2020, with the pandemic, we averaged 64 people per weekend. In 2021, it was 59. So far in 2022, we are averaging 65-66 people per weekend. So, our average attendance is now slightly less than half of what it was before the pandemic. On the positive side, our financial situation has remained stable. Many of those unable or unwilling to risk attending are still supporting the Parish. That coupled with the various cutbacks made on the

expenditure side have allowed us to remain financially healthy. The discussion that followed this report came under section (2), as recorded above.

Re: (5) Some members of the PPC are at the end of their mandate, but Fr. Michael invited them to remain on the PPC, since we were basically suspended for 2 years, and we are already short of our desired number of members. On that note, there is room for one more member to represent the Parish of St. Bernardine, and for two more to represent the Parish of St. John the Evangelist. Fr. Michael asked the members to prayerfully consider over the summer months the possibility of continuing their service. In the meantime, the bulletin will make known the openings available, with a view to inviting new members to the PPC this Fall.

The meeting ended at 7:55pm

NEXT MEETING DATE: Wednesday, October 19 at 6pm in the Parish Hall