

**Mary, Mother of Mercy**  
**Parish Council Meeting of 3/10/2022 ~ Minutes**

**Present:** Mark Albanese, Tim Davis, Tom Duff, Gerry Frank, Susan Guydosh, Scott Hamula, Eileen Heptig, Leo Kawczynski, Jacqueline Leidenfrost, Fr. Bernard Maloney, Andrew Morpurgo, Richard Pell, Kathleen Rourke, Br. Francisco Serrano, Barbara Willers, and Marty Woledge

**Not Present:** Donna Ryan (excused), Bill Masterson, Charles Mullins (excused), Laurenda Denmark, and Lynne Stager (excused)

Tim began the meeting at 7:02 p.m. as the sign in sheet was being passed around.

**Opening Prayer:**

Fr. Bernard led us in an opening prayer.

**Minutes:**

The minutes for the Council's meeting on November 11, 2021, were approved as written.

**Finance Council:** *(see also written report)*

- The financial statement, prepared in part by Rebecca Pizzirusso, the diocesan regional finance director, shows the parish finances as of January.
  - The parish has collected \$36k online over 6 months. The numbers are increasing plus it saves on labor costs. 1/3 of the parish income is now done electronically.
  - We cannot do Venmo as it is not a secure means of financial transactions.
- The parish passed its CMA goal this year. The goal was about \$2k lower than last's year, plus we had about 19 fewer donors contributing.
- Should we spend some of this money on ways to get people back to church? For example, on music ministry or social events like coffee hour or a summer picnic?
  - This suggestion should be sent to committee – most likely the Fellowship committee, for their consideration. Is this the right time to do something like this?
  - We need committee input and discussion.
- Father's letter last year encouraging people to return to church had poor timing due to outbreak of Omicron variant of COVID, but still a good idea. Consider doing it again, possibly for Easter?
- Ordinary expenses were \$5k less than last year and the savings account is at about \$100K.
  - This is "quite an accomplishment" especially in the midst of a pandemic.
  - We are blessed by the financial contributions of our parishioners, even as there are less people in church due to COVID concerns.
- See the finance council report for building and grounds projects.

**Worship (liturgy) Committee report:** *(see also written report)*

- Discussion of the Easter and Lent schedules.
  - Should Good Friday be at 3 or 7 p.m.?
  - Last year we had the passion at 3 p.m. at HC and stations at St. J. at 7:00 p.m.
  - In the afternoon get more of an older crowd, good # of people attending.
  - Discussion of working people vs. school schedules.
  - Recommendation to change to 3:00, traditional time for passion, at HC with Stations at St. J. at 7:00 p.m.

**Word (evangelization and education) Committee report** *(see also written report)*

- Recommendation was made to bring back the Easter egg hunt at St. J. (there are over 200 eggs at St. J)
- Andy will coordinate
- Notice will be placed in bulletin and posted on parish's social media
- Father has encouraged 4 confirmation students on their continued studies and received a positive response.
- The ceremony will be April 5 at Immaculate Conception church in Ithaca. Not yet sure if it will be a ticketed event or limited attendance.

**Witness (outreach) Committee report:** *(see also written report)*

- The parish (particularly from St. James) was asked to provide extra volunteers for the T'burg Food pantry in January. There were few who participated.
  - Suggestion was made to get college kids to help out at pantry on parish's month (next will be Dec.)
  - We are restarting our table for collection of food items/money at St. J. for the food pantry
- Good response to various charity requests in October through December.
- Expecting to get requests for Ukrainian refugee donations. Comment was made money is better, can go further to help than donations of clothing or other items.

**Fellowship (social) Committee report:**

- The fellowship committee had not met recently.
- They will work on suggestions to restart coffee hours and other activities
  - Including possibly a picnic or other event outdoors in the summer
- There has been \$1k donation to create a "faith and fun" account to cover activities for young (20-30s) adults, that will include some sort of faith input as well as social component.
  - Needs to be spent as intended
  - Committee will consult with people in that age group to see what they suggest

**Executive Committee report:** *(see also written report)*

- The committee had a discussion about music at each church as music is crucial to have a more vibrant Mass
  - St. James has an organist 2x a month and they are trying to arrange for a schedule of cantors.
  - St. Francis has an organ player, Joe Pepper, but no song leader
  - The song leader is more important than the musicians and needed at St. J. & St. F.
  - Helps to select hymns we all know, and it was acknowledged that both Leo and Fr. have been trying to pick from familiar songs that go along with readings. Each church seems to go its own path in choosing hymns.
- Suggestions that we try to get music students from IC with a stipend.
  - Even IC and CU have a hard time getting musicians.
- Father's role is to be priest, not song leader, even though he does a good job at that.

**Other Business:**

**Synod:**

- All agree that the question were not really user friendly, but it is important to take this opportunity to submit opinions to higher ups.

Other comments:

- How is this journeying together happening in our church and larger church?
  - Father suggested that the Synod is looking at how church is relating to people and evangelization, the spreading of Jesus Christ's Good News.
  - How can we evangelize when we can't get people into our own churches?
- How is Church relating to people and evangelization and spreading Good News of JC?
  - How do societal groups of the world relate to our church?
  - For example, marriage and divorce. How does church law affect people and does the church's position on this have an effect on church attendance?
  - Another examples include gays and lesbians and their relationship with the church.
  - What about women who feel called to be a priest but are denied and so leave the church for another faith community that is more welcoming?
  - Difference of opinion on communion and mission adds to confusion. Need clarity on message and openness to others.
  - If we listen we will see/hear concerns about how our church does/doesn't relate to people.
  - The church has grown across the world (mainly in Africa and S.America) even if not here.
  - Church has to relate to different societies, and yet realize we are all children of God.
- "We need to be concerned about our relationship with God," more than just sitting in pew.
- "We are too secular, too trivial, too materialistic"
- There is a lack of faith in our country, a problem shared with Protestants and other religions.
- What are we doing wrong?
- Is this process backwards?
- There is a hope that this process is legitimate. Will we be heard?

**PC Membership:**

- Who will continue for another term?
- Is Kathleen the only one required to take a gap year at the end of this term?

**Next Meetings:**

- Our next meeting is scheduled for May 12 to discuss new member recommendations and term updates.
- A suggestion was made that our meeting on June 9 be at the Friary boathouse. That meeting will include our new members and committee assignments.

**Closing prayer:**

"Our Father"

Meeting concluded at 8:12 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted by Kathleen E. Rourke, includes changes from May 12, 2022 PC meeting.*