

**The Church of Saint Mary**  
**Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, February 9, 2021**

Present: Father Steve, Rita Winters, Todd Wentworth, Jerry Kostreba, Randy Kinney, Francie Peterson, Jodi Rehovsky, Mary Gorghuber, and Carol Gaffaney. Absent: Janet Schiltgen.

The meeting began at 6:07 p.m. with prayer.

The agenda for February 9, 2021 and the minutes of the January 13, 2021 meeting were approved by consensus.

**Administrative Report:**

- Todd Wentworth reported the tenant at 408 Jefferson (the property owned by the church) has purchased a house and has moved out. He noted that this house could be used, if needed, as the home for a new pastor. There will be time to clean, paint and do any necessary repairs. This could be a place for confirmation students to get service hours.
- Todd asked for input on the effectiveness of the bulletin, one of the parish's communication tools. He said that 200 bulletins were picked up this past weekend; it has averaged between 200-300. Kathy Ballou had reported there were 1,060 clicks in January of parishioners reading the bulletin online. Todd also noted that with the three-parish Area Catholic Community going into effect, a joint bulletin will be used. He suggested surveying people and forming a focus group to discuss to review this.

**Committee Reports**

- Cemetery – No report.
- Liturgy – Mary reported reservations will be required again for the Ash Wednesday, Holy Week and Easter services. Father Steve explained that Bishop Kettler will be notifying parishes of the method to be used for distributing ashes – most likely a sprinkling of ashes on people's heads. There was discussion on how to hold Holy Week services during the pandemic; for example, washing of feet. It was suggested to limit foot-washing to people from three previously identified households. Stations of the Cross will be offered two ways: On Fridays during Lent from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM the Great Hall will be open to individuals for a self-guided experience. Booklets will be provided. There will also be a communal Stations of the Cross held on Fridays during Lent at 5:15 PM with people being seated instead of processing around. A recorded Penitential Service will be made available. The plan for Palm Sunday is to have parishioners pick up a palm from a basket on their way into church. Father reported that with the church's precautions in place during the pandemic, there has not been a case of Covid-19 traced back to St. Mary's Church, St. Mary's School or the Faith Formation program.
- JPIC – Rita said the JPIC committee is planning a Zoom presentation for the parish on racism, wealth and the income gap, with a limit of 50 registrations. JPIC discussed sending a letter to the editor of the newspaper in regard to the video put out by the Cornerstone Church pastor, but decided that the column Father Steve wrote for the bulletin was a better way to proceed.
- Stewardship – Jerry reported the committee is continuing to review the book *Abundant Living, Abundant Giving*. Cathleen Nordling, the Stewardship Committee chairperson, has reached out to Belle River and Osakis to encourage them to join the monthly Stewardship meetings.
- Board of Education – Jerry said Faith Formation classes started January 10<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> and they are going well. He reported on the number of Covid-19 cases as of today: Of the 222 students at St. Mary's School, there are currently no active cases, no one in quarantine and 5 in contact tracing. Of the 28 staff members, there are no active cases, no one in quarantine and 2 in contact tracing. Jerry said the school fundraiser, *The Gathering*, will be held virtually on April 9<sup>th</sup>.

- Parish Life – No meetings are being held. A new chairperson is needed. Jodi asked about people who have been on the Parish Life Committee in the past, as a possible resource to find a new chairperson. Todd will give Jodi information to review that he has on the history of the committee.
- Finance – Randy and Todd reported that offerings for the fiscal year are down \$38,000 mostly due to the loss of loose or cash offerings. Thirty percent of the offering is being received through the electronic option at this time. Receiving the first PPP loan, which has been forgiven, helped the church's financial condition. The parish has been approved for a second PPP loan.
- Human Resources – Todd reported that health insurance premiums did not increase this year which will save \$600 per month from what was budgeted. Also, the parish has qualified for a Federal program, FFCRA, to offset the cost of sick leave when employees aren't able to work due to Covid.

#### **Old Business**

- Update on Diocese of St. Cloud Chapter 11 Reorganization – The lawsuit is settled.
- Come to the Water Area Catholic Community Update – No meetings are being held at this time. Todd is working on the by-laws.
- Report on Audio-Visual Upgrade Project – Beginning February 22<sup>nd</sup>, the church will be a construction zone for about four weeks while the new sound system, a video capture system and a video projection system is installed. The cost of the project is being paid through Father Al's Benevolent Fund, the St. Mary's of Alexandria Foundation and individual donors. Access to the church and chapel will be closed during the work week. Weekend Masses will continue to be held in the church. Weekday Masses and funerals will be celebrated in the Great Hall. The new upgrades will allow the church to live-stream Mass and other church events as well as record them for later playback. Volunteers will be needed to operate the sound and camera systems. The construction schedule is as follows:
  - Week of February 22 – Sound booth demo and construction, projection screens and projectors. Portable audio in place for school Mass and weekend Mass.
  - Week of March 1 – Sound installation starts, scaffold on the altar platform, booth construction wraps up, power to projectors and video conduit completed.
  - Week of March 8 – Sound installation completed, new audio system in use.
  - Week of March 15 – Video camera, capture and distribution systems, training.

#### **New Business**

- Holy Week Schedule – The schedule for Holy Week services is included in the parish newsletter which was sent to parishioners a few days ago.
- Update from Bishop Kettler – The Bishop announced that parishes can hold in-person gatherings beginning January 31<sup>st</sup> with up to 50% capacity of the facility, continuing with the safety guidelines previously stated (masks, social distancing, sanitizing).
- Father Steve's Retirement – Father Steve is retiring at the end of June. After the Masses on June 27<sup>th</sup>, there will be a retirement celebration for him at the Carlos Creek Winery event center.
- Pastoral Council Elections? – With the change to the Come To The Water Area Catholic Community, it was suggested that the 3 pastoral council members (whose terms were coming to an end) consider staying on the pastoral council an additional year to have some continuity. Jerry Kostreba said he would stay another year. Father Steve will contact Janet Schiltgen and Rita Winters regarding this suggestion. The election cycle will change from electing three members each year to two members. The ACC pastoral council will consist of 6 members from St. Mary's Church, 3 from the Immaculate Conception Church in Osakis, and 3 from the St. Nicholas Church in Belle River.

The meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m. with a closing prayer.

Carol Gaffaney  
Recording Secretary