

Saint Mary Parish
Franklin, MA
Parish Pastoral Council Meeting
Sacred Heart Hall

Minutes, Monday, March 11, 2024

Present: Father Bob Poitras, Pastor; Father Jack Sullivan, Parochial Vicar; Karen Ackles, Religious Education Director; Terry Kerr, Music Director; Leo Racine, Pastoral Associate

Council Members: Paula Coughlin, Jim Lane, Lisa Oxford, John Ristaino, Mike Swan, Pandora Carlucci

Open Meeting: Pandora Carlucci welcomed all to the first PPC meeting of 2024, as the January meeting was canceled due to challenging weather.

Prayer: Fr. Bob led the Council in reading together the opening prayer from the Book of Blessings.

Review and Approve Minutes of November 2023: There were no questions concerning the minutes. Approval was unanimous.

Welcome and update of the parish: Father Bob welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that *All is well*. Participation is up and collections are doing well.

- **Finances:** Fr. Bob noted that we will be seeing a negative financial standing when we receive the next report from the Finance Committee. There have been a number of unexpected projects.
 - All of the windows in the rectory needed to be replaced. The windows stopped functioning.
 - The floor collapsed in the office of the Finance & Operations Manager. This required immediate attention. The Finance & Operations Manager was displaced from her office. Additionally, her desk was damaged and needed replacement.
- **Liturgical:**
 - Advent and Christmas services were a great experience and well attended. There was a night of reflection, adoration, confessions, evening prayer and adoration.
 - Deacon Guy continues with the Monday Rosary via zoom. Participation grows.
 - We currently have five (5) altar servers. John Ristaino assisted with training.
 - The bells at Mass have returned.
 - Adult Faith Formation is active. Both women's and men's faith formation groups are growing.

- The Catholic Appeal is underway.
- **Parish Community**
 - Fr. Bob attended a boys basketball game at FHS.
 - K of C is holding a Pancake Breakfast on Sunday, March 17.

Confirmation Age Requirement Change: Fr. Bob and Karen Ackles, Religious Education Director, updated the Council on changes to the age at which an individual receives the sacrament of Confirmation. Currently our students receive Confirmation in the fall of their junior year or 11th grade in high school. According to Cardinal Sean's Decree Letter, the Archdiocese of Boston is changing confirmation age from tenth grade to eighth grade.

This change presents challenges and changes for religious education to address. Fr. Bob and Karen mentioned that they currently use Decision Point Confirmation Preparation Program. They are reviewing the program for fit for eighth grade students, rather than 10th/11th grade students. Bishop Barbosa is assisting parishes in this journey.

Fr. Bob stated the need to build a strong youth group to continue the participation of youth in the parish past 8th grade.

Lent and Easter - Father Bob reviewed the preparations and services for Lent, Holy Week and Easter.

- The Stations of the Cross are good. Each week is led by a different ministry.
- Holy Week Services
 - Sunday is Palm Sunday
 - Wednesday – Adoration, Confessions, and prayer in the chapel in the evening
 - Thursday – 7:00pm. Mass of the Last Supper with Washing of the Feet, in the Main Church
 - Friday - 3:00pm Passion of the Lord Service, followed by Stations of the Cross, in the Main church
 - 7:00pm Passion of the Lord Service, in the Main Church
 - Saturday - 7:00am Morning Prayer, Chapel
 - 8:00-9:00am Confession, Chapel
 - 7:00pm Easter Vigil, in the Main church
 - All Triduum Services begin at 7:00pm
- Easter Sunday
 - Masses at 7:00am, 9:00am, 10:30am. There is no 12:00 noon Mass

Sunday Mass Schedule – Fr. Bob told the PPC that he is thinking about the ongoing Sunday/Weekend Mass schedule. Memorial Day weekend ends the 12:00 noon Mass for the summer. It returns at 9:00am. He shared some attendance numbers from the 12:00 noon Mass.

PPC Elections: Discussion. Dolores Brunelli, Lorraine Schratz and Mike Swan are stepping off the Council after seven years of service. They served for seven years due to a delay in election schedules associated with the Pandemic. The fourth member of their group moved away several years ago.

Historically, those stepping off the Council coordinate the election for the incoming group of four PPC members. Because this is a small group, Lisa Oxford, Paula Coughlin and Pandora Carlucci will lend additional assistance. They will meet and plan the election.

Lightning Round: This is an opportunity for members of the PPC to share thoughts.

- Keep altar servers
- Revisit the plans for the Main Street project
- Difficult to hear readers and speakers at funeral services
- Good volunteers
- Attendance is up
- Lots of young families
- Good energy
- Revitalizing ... energy returning
- Fun pajama story time with youth at Christmas
- Confirmation age change ... questions as to how it will work
- Will there be an opportunity for high school youth to volunteer with younger students?
- Tours of the church .. windows, statues, design

Closing thoughts: Father Bob shared a few thoughts as we brought the meeting to an end. The 150th Parish anniversary is three years from now. How do we want to recognize this? Discussion of the Sunday Mass schedule will continue. The May PPC meeting will include a vision discussion.

Closing Prayer: Father Jack led all present in The Glory Be.

May 13, 2024 next Parish Pastoral Council meeting.

Next PPC meeting: May 13, 2024