

St. Christopher Parish Pastoral Council Minutes

July 28, 2020

Meeting – The Parish Pastoral Council meeting was conducted via Zoom in the face of the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic which precludes face-to-face meetings.

The meeting began with an opening prayer. Minutes were approved and it was agreed the minutes will be forwarded to Dawn Bloom, Parish Office Manager, to post to the Parish website www.stchrisparish.com.

Religious Education Office and St. Christopher School updates:

- PSR currently plans to offer in-classroom classes with an on-line learning option.
- St. Christopher School plans to offer in-classroom classes unless a family requests an on-line learning option.
- Religious Education and St. Christopher School leadership are attentive to Rocky River Schools and what they are doing regarding in-classroom and on-line learning. Currently Rocky River Schools plan to offer half-day Monday – Friday in-classroom learning for all students grades K – 12. Rocky River School resource constraints require half-day classes in order for social distancing requirements to be achieved.
- St. Christopher School is able to comply with Ohio standards for social distancing due to the building size and class sizes. Faculty assignments among home room, music and art teachers also facilitates keeping students socially distanced as required.
- St. Christopher School has approximately 250 students in grades K – 8. Full-day classes for all students will be offered. Since the Rocky River Schools do not offer full-day kindergarten, this has prompted inquiries at St. Christopher. St. Christopher's pre-school is full.
- 1st Communions began on Monday, July 27th. Families are afforded three options for 1st Communion reception: (1) any weekday 11 AM daily Mass till School resumes; (2) weekend liturgies in August and September; (3) deferment till 2021. Communion celebrations are limited to four per Mass. A full pew which can accommodate up to 10 people is set aside for each 1st Communicant and the child's family and friends. There are 97 children slated to receive 1st Communion in 2020.
- Confirmation is being addressed for nearly 200 young Parishioners by offering Confirmation six (6) evenings in mid-August for 108 10th graders and five (5) dates in mid-October for 9th graders. Pastors in the Diocese of Cleveland have been granted authority to confer Confirmation in light of the ongoing pandemic. Father John will confirm all St. Christopher youth in 2020.

Mass Updates:

- Attendance achieved more than 50 for each Mass this past weekend (July 25 – 26); 228 Parishioners attended Mass in-person. The highest weekend attendance during the ongoing pandemic was 268. Normal pre-pandemic weekend Mass attendance was typically 1,400.
- It was noted that there are “lots of reasons” Parishioners choose not to attend Mass in-person. Mass will continue to be offered on-line every Sunday.
- Financial support for the Parish has continued, including on-line gifting. Collections are running about \$15,000 - \$17,000 weekly. The Parish raffle response has been gratifying with financial breakeven already achieved. The raffle drawing will be Saturday, August 29th.
- Mass attendees continue to be mask compliant with ongoing reminders of expected protocols to be followed.
- Concern was expressed that ushers at 8:30 Mass are allowing end-of-the-row attendees to let others into the pews – violating social distancing protocols – and they are not enforcing social distancing during Communion reception. The importance of proper protocols being rigorously enforced especially during 1st Communions was reiterated. It was suggested that protocols be presented as “rules” versus “guidelines” in order to eliminate ambiguity and enforce what has been deemed to be the right thing to do.
- The recent practice of the lector welcoming on-line Mass participants was praised as was the inclusion of the on-line constituency in the Prayer of the Faithful petitions.
- It was recommended that the filming of the Mass for on-line participants might include some of the in-person Communion experience for on-line viewing.

Ministries and Events Updates:

- The initial work of the newly formed Hospitality Ministry will resume soon.
- The Ladies Guild leadership offered ideas to its members to test prospective levels of interest. Different ideas drew varying levels of enthusiasm: the notion of a Zoom book club drew a lackluster response (“Are people zoomed out?”) but prayer journaling was well received and the concept of a socially distanced outdoor wine social drew considerable interest. Given more recent COVID19 infection spread and more stringent Ohio requirements to prevent further spread, a virtual wine tasting may be considered.
- The Ladies Night Out event committee is working with the Ladies Guild to determine how they might collectively collaborate to serve the social needs of the Parish women and continue to support the financial needs of the West Side Catholic Center’s Moriah House Family Shelter.
- Youth Minister Eric Perusek at St. Christopher is collaborating with Steve Young, Rocky River United Methodist Church Director of Youth Ministries. A co-sponsored youth group discussion regarding racism is set for Sunday,

- August 16th. Rocky River Presbyterian Church participation may be included through collaboration with Director of Christian Education, Lisa Webb.
- 70 young people participated in an all Virtual Vacation Bible School offered jointly by St. Christopher Church and Rocky River Presbyterian Church. About 50 of the participants were from St. Christopher.
 - Terra Nova, Young Adult Ministry, may be open to “re-imagining” in the pandemic era.

Parish Pastoral Plan:

- Further work and discussion of the Parish Pastoral Plan will be deferred till in-person Parish Pastoral Council meetings can resume.

Father John Updates:

- Father John announced the newly appointed Bishop for the Cleveland Diocese is Edward Malesic who has served most recently as Bishop of Greensburg, Pennsylvania. He succeeds Nelson Perez who returned to Philadelphia in his new role as Archbishop of the Philadelphia Diocese. A Council member who serves in the Diocesan Office shared his insights that the newly appointed Bishop is very likable and easily approachable. Bishop Malesic comes to Cleveland from a largely rural Diocese with the personal experience of having served as a rural Pastor. He reportedly is a graduate of public schools who received his calling to his priestly vocation as a college junior. He comes to his challenging Cleveland assignment having served five years as the Bishop of Greensburg. His Greensburg Diocese responsibility included 12 Catholic schools; the Cleveland Diocese has 112+ Catholic schools.
- The Capital Campaign has received a few new pledges with the unveiling of the new St. Christopher Centennial Park.
- Centennial Park is beautiful, highlighted by the statue of St. Francis. Rocky River’s Recreation Director praised the new Park and suggested signage and sanitizing practices for the playground equipment. More sanitizing equipment will be added. Security equipment is now installed and working.
- A dedication of Centennial Park is still targeted for Saturday, August 29th, the originally scheduled date for the now-cancelled Parish Block Party. Work is afoot to determine if it might be possible to “broadcast” the sound for an outdoor Mass and Park dedication to car radios of socially distanced Parishioners. Planners remain ever mindful of State of Ohio coronavirus rules, changing rules, and the need to stay in compliance.
- The Parish raffle response has been gratifying with financial breakeven already achieved. The raffle drawing will be Saturday, August 29th.
- The Parish Centennial Committee planning for next Spring’s 100th celebration needs more participants. Those interested should email Father John now.

Closing Prayer – The meeting ended with a closing prayer of the Parish Mission Statement by all.

Next Meeting:

Tuesday, August 18, 2020

7 – 8 PM

Via Zoom – with access details to be provided in advance