

St. Christopher Parish Pastoral Council Minutes

October 27, 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.

Opening Prayer

Father John opened the meeting with prayer, calling to mind the presence of God in the swirl of earthly issues and concerns.

Approval of Minutes and Review of the Council Member Roster

The minutes for September 22, 2020 were approved for posting to the St. Christopher website by Dawn Bloom. A correction was made to one Council member's email address.

Religious Education Office Updates

- PSR – This ministry is doing the best they can with remote learning. Participant numbers have declined.
- First Communion and Confirmation – These Sacraments for Parish young people are for the most part completed for 2020.
- St. Christopher School – To date a single COVID incident affected 2 teachers and 3 students, with none seriously ill. 6 or 7 days of remote classes impacted the junior high students. The experience was well handled by the School Principal. Excellent communications were reportedly established with all who were in any way affected. As Cuyahoga County faces the prospect of being rated purple for COVID spread, the School is assessing how this might alter operations.

Mass Updates

- Outdoor Mass – The 11:30 Mass on October 11th drew an estimated 185 parishioners to St. Christopher Centennial Park Pavilion for worship on a beautiful Fall day.
- Overall, current Mass attendance totals about 300 parishioners for the four weekend liturgies.
- Christmas Schedule – The expectation is that the Holy Day liturgies will be celebrated in the Church with livestreaming and Communion in the Parish Center to accommodate those who cannot safely be seated in the Church
 - Christmas Eve – 4:00 PM, 6:00 PM and 10 PM
 - Christmas morning – 8:30 AM, 10:00 AM and 11:30 AM

Mass will be celebrated also on Saturday, December 26th at 5:00 PM and Sunday morning, December 27th at 8:30, 10:00 and 11:30 AM. Livestreaming to the Parish Center will be offered as needed.

- The prospect of altering in-Church seating to every other pew versus the current every 3rd pew is under consideration. This would facilitate seating separation of about 5½ feet and conform with what many other parishes are now doing. This suggestion evoked a lively discussion and resounding resistance from several vocal Parish Council members. With Council consensus, it was concluded that the current seating arrangement will remain in place.
- January/February Weekend Liturgy Times – Given reduced attendance during COVID and typically reduced mid-winter Mass attendance, the prospect of offering 2 Sunday morning Masses rather than 3 is being weighed. 5 PM Saturday liturgy would be unchanged. Two Sunday morning Masses will be the standard from the beginning of the year till the beginning of Lent. The consensus among Council members was favorable to either of the proposed options: 8:30 and 10:30 AM or 9 and 11 AM. Father John suggested that SurveyMonkey may be deployed to solicit Parish-wide preference for one option versus the other.
- Livestreaming – The equipment required to livestream services at St. Christopher has been purchased for some \$20,000. Livestreaming will enable weekend liturgies to be made more accessible. The plan is to begin livestreaming weekend Masses after Thanksgiving, in time for Advent. 5 o'clock Saturday Mass will continue to be recorded for on-line viewing at www.stchrisparish.com and on YouTube.

Weddings and funerals also will be able to be livestreamed. Funerals have presented challenges in adherence to COVID rules. Consequently, Church wakes have been discontinued, and obituaries must instruct attendees to wear masks and maintain social distance requirements. Moreover, the Church is closed when the capacity limit is achieved. Livestreaming should help reduce the concerns of COVID compliance currently associated with weddings and funerals.

Ministries and Events Updates

- *Belltower Beacon* – The December issue currently is being prepared to include articles and accompanying photos.
- Hospitality Ministry – This ministry is pausing for now, with no November or December meetings scheduled. The intent is to resume activity, recognizing the importance of hospitality even during a global pandemic. Ideas continue to be welcome, and activity is expected to resume in March – after Chair Laura Hunter has delivered her baby and hopefully when a COVID “routine” can be achieved.

- Ladies Guild – The executive committee of the Ladies Guild met last week. Activities are on hold for now. The Guild is enthusiastically supporting and contributing to the upcoming virtual Ladies Night Out – with an eye to assessing the success of a virtual social experience. Since the Ladies Guild focuses on community, the Guild is optimistic that during the COVID shutdown women will have the opportunity to reassess their priorities, and organizations like the Ladies Guild will benefit when community activities can resume.
- Ladies Night Out – This annual event – virtual in 2020 – is set for Thursday, December 10th. CLE Urban Winery and proprietor Destiny Burns will be partnering with St. Christopher to offer an on-line wine tasting for the women of the Parish. Five sample wines boxed with individual pairings will be made available for \$25 a box, and a St. Christopher souvenir wine glass will be included. This year’s event will focus on socializing and sustaining the St. Christopher Parish community. On-line registration will be available through the Parish website. The Ladies Guild will encourage LNO attendance with invites to their membership. Moreover, the Ladies Guild will donate door prizes for the event and make a financial contribution to Moriah House Family Shelter, a West Side Catholic Center ministry. Moriah House in the past benefited from the proceeds of the St. Christopher Ladies Night Out silent auction.
- Terra Nova, Young Adult Ministry – Logan Feldkamp, Pastoral Minister, developed and sent a survey and newsletter to 541 parishioners in the 20 – 35-year-old age cohort. Of the 541, 147 were opened and 388 were not. The survey sought to determine what type of event might be of interest to young adults in the Parish during the ongoing pandemic. Only 11 responded; 4 of the 11 indicated “not now”. Given the lackluster response, Terra Nova is in a pause mode now. Council members noted that based on their own experiences, an open rate that exceeded 20% is “good”.
- Youth Ministry – Currently, Youth Minister Eric Perusek is scheduling two monthly gatherings for Parish youth: one virtual and one in-person. A recent bonfire event drew some 20 young people. Suggestions were made regarding effective communications channels to Parish youth, including Twitter and Instagram. Father John said he will pass these suggestions along to Eric Perusek. Council members also applauded the video addressing racism which Eric created with his counterpart from Rocky River United Methodist Church, Steven Young – a dialogue between the two young men of different races. The video is now posted at www.stchrisparish.com
- Evening of Remembrance, November 2nd – Gayle Cilimburg reminded Council that this annual prayer service remembering and honoring the deceased will be next Monday evening, November 2nd. Due to the pandemic, there will be no social gathering afterwards and no community singing. Bob McMurray and Michelle Romary will provide musical accompaniment. Although photos cannot be displayed in the Parish Center in the traditional way, those who attend are invited to bring a photo of their deceased loved one to the prayer service. Announcement of the Evening of Remembrance will be made at all Masses this

weekend. Personal letters of invitation have been sent to all parishioners whose loved ones had funerals at St. Christopher or elsewhere this past year. Currently, there is no ongoing grief support group at St. Christopher due to lack of interest during the pandemic.

Father John Updates

- Father John has recently been designated by the Diocesan Bishop as Administrator of Our Lady of Angels Parish. He is serving in this role because of the illness of the Pastor at Our Lady of Angels. Father John explained that he has found the OLA Parish staff to be very able and organized. Accordingly, his time commitment has been limited to about an hour a week. While this assignment is “temporary” Father John has no idea how long he might be required to fill this role.

Overview of the Parish Pastoral Plan

- Due to the absence of four Council members, this element of the agenda was deferred to the November meeting. Cheryl Selak will follow up with the absent members to encourage their November attendance.

Closing Prayer

The meeting closed with a reading of the St. Christopher Parish Mission Statement and the collective reflection of all present.

Next Meeting

Tuesday, November 17th – the 3rd Tuesday in November

7 – 8:30 PM

Via Zoom – with access details to be provided in advance