**Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday March 16, 2021

**In Attendance**: Christina Boss, Marilyn Bridges, John Kelly, Craig Meisman, Rev. Tim Ralston,
Bill Rapp, Jeanie Stephens (Chairperson), Chuck Cullen (Recording Secretary)

**Absent**: Megan Neuhaus

**Guest:**

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**Note:** Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, this meeting was conducted via video conference.

**Opening:** The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Chairperson Stephens.

**Welcome & Opening Prayer**: Chairperson Stephens welcomed the members to the meeting. She then read a prayer intended for Pastoral Councils. The prayer asked God, the source of all life, to provide guidance and listening hearts so the members could better understand the needs of the people and thus provide love, justice, and peace.

**Minutes:** Chairperson Stephens asked the members for any comments regarding the revised draft minutes from the previous two Pastoral Council meetings. With no edits requested, the members voted to approve the minutes from the February 5, 2020 and November 10, 2020 meetings.

**Update – One Faith, One Hope, One Love Campaign**: Chuck Cullen, Campaign Secretary, provided a one-page summary of the past six years highlighting the donations made by the parishioners of St. Bernadette. He reported that as of 12/31/2020, parishioners had contributed $834,927. That total represents 91% of the pledged amount. Eighty-three percent is considered average, so the parish did better than expected.

**Pastor’s Updates** Fr. Tim updated the members on the:

* Beacons of Light pastoral planning process

At the last meeting, Fr. Tim outlined a very preliminary plan to work with St. Mary’s and St. Peter’s parishes to explore a One-Pastor-One Parish model. Although the plan had approval to proceed, the process was halted as a result the new Beacons of Light planning process. The goal of this process is to create Families of Parishes, not Pastoral Regions. Parishes throughout the Archdiocese have submitted data which is currently under review. While some relationship with St. Mary’s and St. Peter’s is still possible, it is not certain.

Fr. Tim informed the members that there are currently 107 Pastoral Regions but only 65-70 priests who can serve as Pastors, so this new planning process is intended to address that shortage. He then asked the members to inform him of things that members of St. Bernadette would not want to lose. The Church building itself was one item mentioned by Christina Boss. Marilyn Bridges asked what factors were being considered. Fr. Tim replied that number of parishioners, mass attendance, local demographics, financial condition, school, etc. When asked, Fr. Tim said that some churches could close but there are no such plans at this time for any closings. He informed the members that information about Beacons of Light would be in the bulletin. Chairperson Stephens commented that anyone can sign-up for updates from the website ([www.catholicaoc.org/beacons](http://www.catholicaoc.org/beacons)). John Kelly asked if children from the two parishes are attending St. Bernadette. Fr. Tim indicated a few were. Craig Meisman asked about the future use of rectories and the location of the priest in relation to the churches. Fr. Tim suggested that the location of rectories could be another factor. He also indicated that the use of a rectory would likely result in the sale of the condo currently being used by Fr. Tim.

* Covid-19 Guidelines

New guidance from the Archdiocese will now permit the placement of hymnals in the pews. Also, holy water can once again be provided for use. (At. St. Bernadette, holy water will be available as of Easter.). Masses on Sundays will return to its previous pre-Covid schedule of 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. as of Easter. Facial covering and social distancing are still mandatory. The dispensation from Sunday mass continues for now but the Archbishop is encouraging the faithful to return to mass if possible. The dispensation may, however, be eliminated this summer.

Chairperson Stephens suggested a letter or notice be sent to parishioners about these changes. Fr. Tim agreed to look at that suggestion. Marilyn Bridges asked about the choir. Fr. Tim indicated that they could be doing a little more soon but mask wearing and distancing would be required. Christina Boss noted that attendance is increasing at the 11:00 a.m. mass and so finding a seat is now more difficult. If more people attend, shortage of seats could become an issue. Fr. Tim stated that the every-other-pew arrangement will be used for Easter. He also hoped that social distancing would be adjusted to three feet. Bill Rapp expressed his concept of using every other pew and the 12-inch floor tiles to determine social distancing. Chairperson Jeanie suggested using tape on the pews to provide distancing guidance.

* Possible statues and Tabernacle placement

Fr. Tim said that last May, the statue of Mary was moved from the rear of church to the sanctuary. That created an interest in moving both statues from the rear of church of church to the front, perhaps in the windowsills behind the altar. The members were in general agreement to at least try the concept.

Fr. Tim then asked about the placement of the Tabernacle. Should it remain in the chapel or in the sanctuary – or both? The members commented on the advantages of the two locations but thought two would be the best solution for St. Bernadette. Fr. Tim is to request permission and will inform the Council at the next meeting.

**New Business**:

* Chairperson Stephens inquired about returning to procession for communion. Fr. Tim replied that it is possible but would require a single line with social distancing. He was satisfied with the current communion distribution method.
* Christina Boss asked about the of issue of ministry scheduling. Could the sign-up area be blank to allow those available to place their name? Bill Rapp commented that the app is not user-friendly and wondered if other apps are available. Fr. Tim will check with the current scheduler.

**Ending Prayer:**  Fr. Tim asked for God’s blessings so that we may walk in the path of Jesus as we build up His kingdom.

**Adjournment**: The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

**Next Meeting – May 5, 2021**

Approved: May 5, 2021