**Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday November 6, 2019

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

**Absent**:

**Guest:**

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

**Opening Prayer**: Fr. Tim offered a prayer asking God to help the Council carry out its mission.

**Introduction**: Those in attendance introduced themselves to the members.

**Faith Sharing**: Bill Rapp handed out a picture of a waterfall with the Bible verse from Isaiah (40:29): “He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless.” Bill told the members that he was a little confused by the choice of the words, so he did some research. Bill mentioned the words were written during the Babylonian captivity. A reading of the adjacent verses (27-28) and (30-31) removed some of the ambiguity and when another translation is examined, the intent of verse becomes clearer. Power is given to the faint and abundant strength is given to the weak. The word “faint” can have several meanings and the verse can apply to all of them. This verse also applies to us since when we are down, we look to God for strength. The power of God can show itself in our weakness.

Marilyn Bridges commented that as we go through life, we have lots of things to test us, but God’s divine presence brings us to Him. John Kelly added that a crisis in one’s life forces us to look for another way to live.

**Minutes**: The minutes from the September 4, 2019 Pastoral Council meeting were approved with a revision.

**New Member Orientation**: Chairperson Stephens reviewed the *Pastoral Council Membership-St. Bernadette Parish*” document. She explained that a parish is where people experience Christ. Pastoral Council provides a consulting role to the pastor. Chairperson Stephens emphasized that the mission of the Church is to make disciples of people. Council members need to be involved in pastoral planning; working with groups in the spirit of cooperation; serving as an official listening post; and becoming a vehicle to test ideas for the parish. Participation and sometimes prayer are also responsibilities of a Council member.

Father Tim then distributed copies of the current *Pastoral Council Constitution* to all members for their review.

**Old Business:** Chairperson Stephens informed the members that Sarah Holland has continued to work on a design for a 75th Anniversary ornament. The members discussed its distribution and decided to make them available on the first Sunday of Advent.

For the 10th anniversary of new Church (officially November 22), the members recommended a special blessing to be performed as part of the 11:00 a.m. mass on Sunday November24th.

**Parish Faith Formation:** Chairperson Stephensmentioned that copies of *Letter to a Suffering Church* were dispersed to parishioners. Four follow-up meetings were then conducted to allow discussion on the subject and book. Most feedback was positive, particularly the last chapter of the book which provided ways for people to make a difference.

She then announced that the formation series: “The Mass – An Introduction” began on the previous night with 33 in attendance. The four-part series will continue through the month on Tuesdays. A follow-up session called: “A Devotional Journey Through the Mass” will begin in January.

During Advent, the “Rejoice” booklet will be available. There will be a one-night session in conjunction with the booklet.

Chairperson Stephens reported that 24 children are preparing for the sacraments of Reconciliation and First Communion. In addition, 62 are studying for Confirmation.

Finally, Fr. Tim reported that the “Together in Christ” program scheduled for November 9th has been cancelled. He also noted that 40 to 45 people attended the recent presentation by Meg Hunter-Kilmer about the saints.

**Pastor’s Corner:** Fr. Tim informed the members that:

* The annual mass attendance count conducted during October indicated little change from the past year. Just over 500 attended mass each weekend. While the Archdiocese has requested monthly counts in the future, Father Tim intends to collect data weekly to better track trends.
* Mark Armstrong, Business Manager, will make a budget presentation at the next meeting.

The Council members then began a discussion about mass attendance and parish finance. There were suggestions of providing more information (weekly budget, weekly income, attendance, etc.) in the bulletin. Christina Boss mentioned that with the sunset of the One Faith, One Hope, One Love Campaign, it may be good time to take steps to re-direct some of those donations. Marilyn Bridges added that it may be useful to educate parishioners about time, talent, and treasure. John Kelly mentioned that transparency is a good thing.

**New Business**:

* Father Tim provided an overview of the “Amazing Parish Conference” that was recently held in Cincinnati. While its work is still in a planning stage, he indicated that it will shortly be extended out to the parish.
* The members agreed to conduct meeting monthly until further notice.

**Adjournment**: The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

**Next Meeting - Wednesday December 4, 2019**

Approved: December 4, 2019