Parish Council, Ss. Columba-Brigid Parish

Group D - Tuesday, December 15, 2020. 7 p.m.

Minutes

In attendance: Tom Talty (President); Marta Perez (Vice-President); Fr. Jud (Pastor); Stefanie Gladden: Mariah Gladden; Dick Baldwin; Tedros Teklzghi; Paula Hunt; Carlos Perales; Sheila Perales; Jim Christie; Dawn Ingram; Ana Martinez-Morales

1. Our President Tom Talty led us in an opening prayer.

1. We all introduced ourselves.

1. We read the Parish Mission Statement together.

1. State of the Parish:

- *How has Mass been for you lately? What do you think of our response to Covid-19, including the capacity limits we implemented for Code Orange?* We’re doing an incredible job keeping people safe, and it’s sad that there are people who can’t come to church. But hopefully our phone calls are keeping people connected. So many other churches are not open. It also helps to have people attending via the internet. Everyone who’s been keeping it going should be congratulated, and we should carry on. We’re glad Fr. Jud is being strict with the Covid rules, not lenient. The people taking our temperatures are doing great. Someone mentioned that his co-worker from East Aurora started doing what we’re doing, taking names and temperatures. At the 9:00 Mass we feel safe, even considering our medical concerns. We like that the 9:00 Mass is early in the day, too.

- *What is your impression of the role of our parish youth currently?* At Holy Angels they had a Youth Mass once a month, and we will start doing that here. They’ve already started making plans for it. It’s good getting the youth more involved. They are never too young. If youth feel they don’t have a voice, they don’t feel welcome. One of our 4th graders even wants to help as an usher. One of the youth helps with the computer at the 9:00 Mass. It’s also awesome that our youth are visiting shut-ins and collecting toilet paper.

- *Are we doing enough to help those who are poor and others in need?* We’re doing a lot right now, and we’re housing the homeless right here at Family Promise. But could we also do outreach? It’s a little more difficult now because of Covid, and because of state regulations we can’t have volunteers come in now. Their biggest need is gift cards from Tops and Wegmans, especially in $20 amounts. Family Promise also helps their families for their first year in their new home.

*- How are we doing in our care for creation?* We are learning more about recycling! It helps to hear about *Laudato Si’* in our homilies. Also, it was great that our garden was named a St. Kateri Habitat. The Gardenin’ Angels are a great group, and being in it gives you a great feeling. We also used compost from our bin for the garden, which was educational.

- *Overall, are we living up to our parish mission statement?* What’s cool about our mission statement is that every time we read it, it sinks in even more about who we are and what we do. All the comments above are part of our mission statement.

1. *President’s, Vice President’s and Pastor’s comments.* Tom misses the experience of all being together, and the Sign of Peace taking 20 minutes. It’s just not the same with Covid, but we thank God we have what we do have. Marta added that at first it was hard to be at church under Covid, and be six feet away from people. Marta also wishes everyone a Merry Christmas with a virtual hug, in the midst of all the chaos.

It’s hard not being able to hang around and have a cup of coffee after Mass, and we miss Joe Ohl. It’s been a difficult year.

Even with the old church, after it was locked up people would still congregate outside.

1. Discussion Items
2. *Parish Finances: Our parish budget indicates a yearly deficit of over $110,000. Our biggest expense is for buildings and maintenance. Because of all the extra stress from the pandemic, the Finance Council has decided to take an approach for this year concentrating on the positive things we are doing as a parish, rather than worst-case scenarios. If things do not improve considerably by a year from now, how do you envision the parish moving forward?* Some people worry. We don’t want to lose what we have, but if we don’t step up, we could lose it. It would be a shame if Family Promise couldn’t continue here. Maybe we could get creative renting some of our other space to bring in more cash flow. We need to let people know more strongly that we’re in tough shape. There are some inner city churches in our group that are in tougher shape, and it’s hard to imagine how they will survive. There’s concern that people staying away from church could have a long-term effect. If we opened up 100% tomorrow, would everyone come back? Electronic giving is helping. We might also need to push tithing, which has never been done here. At Finance Council we agreed it would be good to present tithing, but after Covid. We are still working on getting a big thermometer to use as a visual. We talked again about whether we should say at Offertory time that we understand if you can’t give at this time, and if you think we can assist you to contact the parish office. The feeling was that we should continue to say that. Still, we do not want our church to close. We love it here, and we worked hard to get this church. We often say the church is not the building, but could our current atmosphere exist without what we have now? We should ask at Finance Council if we could start a Go Fund Me page, and get the word out more about what we’re doing.
3. *Did you participate in the Road to Renewal process, including the Zoom calls? Are you hopeful about the future of the diocese with Bishop Mike arriving soon?* Some of our council didn’t even know what the Road to Renewal is. Those who participated gave it mixed reviews. When word came that we’re getting a new bishop, the Road to Renewal seemed to come to a standstill. Fr. Jud mentioned his conversation with Bishop Mike that took place during a diocesan Zoom call. The Road to Renewal might be a way for parishes to help each other.

7. Updates

A. *Fundraisers (chicken dinner, basket raffle). Need for more members on Fundraising Committee.* Several people commented that the quality of the chicken dinner was not good for the price. The Fundraising Committee is looking for another vendor for a chicken and ribs dinner. There will be people testing it beforehand.

B. *Buildings and grounds.* There was not a lot to update, but Pedro has put downspouts on the Parish Center.

C. *Family Promise.* They are now hosting six families, up from three. There are more bathrooms, showers, etc. A lot of work had to be done on pipes, sprinklers, etc. Family Promise has paid for all of that. They’re also looking into a generator system.

D. *Family Faith Formation* is on hold until after Christmas.

E. *Men’s Group* (which was being held simultaneously) has been going well, meeting once a month.

8. Open Forum

The question of communication came up. How do we get to people that we don’t see because of Covid? Kids don’t use e-mail any more. Some people don’t have computers at home. This is an ongoing challenge. It comes down to how do you touch people’s hearts?

Marta and Dick had the idea of a 15th Anniversary Commemorative Booklet of the dedication of the church. It would be a sequel to the previous booklet of the history of the church, and would include updated pictures and cover all the people from other churches who have joined us. It would not cost the church anything, and could be a little bit of a fundraiser if we ask for a donation. Hopefully it would come out around September. There were no objections to Marta and Dick working on that. Maybe it could be distributed at a DiTondo’s-type dinner. Maybe we could even have the bishop come and have a rededication.

9. Next Meeting for Group D: April 27, 2021 at 7 p.m.

10. Jim Christie led us in a closing prayer.

Minutes taken by Fr. Jud