

PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING

September 15, 2020

MEETING MINUTES

ATTENDEES:Fr. Jim McNulty, Mark Tuttle, John Brady, Denise Brady, Terri Field, Geoff Turbiak, Deacon Don, Sharon Miller, Deb Beaman, Jane DeRoo, Renee Billotto, Elisabeth Johnston, Megan Szczypka Wolschleger

ABSENTEES:Joe Bertrand, Alex Mager

I. OPENING PRAYER – Mark

II. REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES – Approved

III. CHAIRMAN’S COMMENTS

a. Welcome back

i. Next meeting to be outdoors like September meeting at 6 pm. If weather does *not* permit, meeting will be at 7 pm as usual via Zoom.

ii. Aside from worship, it needs to be 10 or less people in “close quarters”.

b. How do you feel St. Edith is doing regarding COVID-19?

i. We are missing the gatherings at the church, and people are asking when will things get back to normal.

ii. Some parishioners have been attending Masses at other parishes where they feel more welcomed, and where lectors, priests, and ensemble are not wearing masks despite some of these things being done are against AOD guidelines. Other parishes have a lesser sense of “fear” than what’s currently perceived by some at St. Edith Church. The intimacy and personal connections available at Masses at other local parishes are appreciated.

iii. Capacity requirements of weekend Mass does not appear to be an issue at St. Edith Church or at other local parishes. Weekly Mass attendance shows an increase in attendance but does have direct correlation with number of people who have signed up via SignUp Genius. Is SignUp Genius necessary at this point?

iv. How do we find the balance between fear and evangelization? Balance is key.

v. Regarding wedding ceremony details, we urge people to communicate with Fr. Jim particularly during this pandemic.

vi. For those who currently are not attending in-person Mass and instead streaming online, the streaming technology and equipment is deeply appreciated and useful.

vii. There are noticeably lessening amount of young families and children at weekend Mass, which is a concern especially because these are the people who are *not* necessarily considered the “vulnerable” population during the pandemic. Plus, the Parish Council (PC) members have been working hard to engage young families, young adults, and children throughout the past several years.

- viii. Are people complacent sitting at home instead of attending Mass? Dispensation until November surely plays a part in this complacency. Though, we must be mindful of this so that the habit of not attending Mass in-person does not remain long-term.
- ix. The St. Edith School students returning to school for in-person learning is healthy for the children. Majority of parents support that decision and deeply appreciate the efforts and hard work of the school's staff and faculty to make it a possibility this school year. Currently, zero cases have been reported at the school.
- x. Weekday Mass is offered to school students in-person on Wednesday at 9 AM. One grade per week attends in-person, and all other grades attend virtually from their classrooms via live streaming on Facebook. Parishioners can attend virtually as well, which should be shared to all.
- xi. CYO sports family members are big part of our parish community and have been for decades. Our parish provides these families a sense of family & community and not simply a place to participate in sports, which differentiates St. Edith from many other local parishes and athletic teams. CYO sports families are craving that sense of community now more than ever. During this time, they are prioritizing their children's mental health as much as their physical health, and ability to play sports is a big part of that. Obviously, rules and regulations must be followed, but if so, the hope is that children can play CYO sports at St. Edith. The decision was made in August by the CYO Board not to offer fall sports in 2020, particularly because there were not guidelines put in place at that time. Plus, the top priority was to get the children in the classroom safely, then we could focus on CYO and other activities. Considering winter sports (basketball) typically begins first week of November, ideally plans and guidelines are being prepared at this time. St. Edith CYO basketball coordinator is currently making such preparation a priority, which will later be presented to the CYO board and Fr. Jim.
- xii. At the beginning of the pandemic, majority of us experienced fear, frustration, and anxiety. Now that we're six months into this pandemic, some feel that it is time to consider opening the church doors and welcoming others to weekend Masses. Still, we should continue to be mindful of other parishioners. Observations at other local churches includes: increasing attendance at weekend Masses, daily Mass is offered, social distancing is implemented, processions occur at beginning/end of Mass, priests are distributing the Body of Christ, and ensemble members, priests, and lectors do not wear masks while speaking/singing. Again, some of these things being done at other parishes are against AOD guidelines. Other churches have recently added supplemental weekend Masses to their schedules to alleviate issues with social distancing and to accommodate more people who wish to return to Mass.
- xiii. We are grateful for all that St. Edith Church is doing, and we appreciate the church protecting us. Wearing a mask is a sign of love to other parishioners. Despite this pandemic, we have faith that others will have the urge to return to Mass when the time is right. Some people feel that it is difficult to hear the lectors and ensemble due to masks. Others have not reported any issues hearing the lectors and ensemble. This is an item that will be reviewed by Fr. Jim and the staff.

- xiv. Fishers of Men group has resumed and is going very well. Gatherings include approximately 15 people, outdoors, social distancing, no masks required but are not located on St. Edith Church property.
 - xv. The views of the PC members seem to be a fitting representation of the parish community, which is both diverse and unified.
 - xvi. Fr. Jim points out that it is very difficult to see the restraint imposed by the restrictions/rules/guidelines relative to the pandemic go against what we prioritized in the past several years as PC team and church community. All PC members recognize this and agree.
 - xvii. All in all, we agree that faith drives all of us. Faith over fear seems to be a common theme. Trust that God will get us through this pandemic, but we must be open to what God is trying to tell us as PC members.
- c. Where do we go from here to bridge gaps?
- i. We as PC must find ways to “bridge the gap” keeping mind that balance is key.
 - ii. Is online registration for Mass still necessary? We realize that it was necessary to track attendance when in-person Masses resumed in June. However, if the tracking does not accurately represent the actual attendance, it no longer is effective. Requesting that people must sign up to come to Mass potentially sends a message that is unwelcoming, which we agree is something we want to avoid at St. Edith. If Mass attendance steadily grows and nears the allotted capacity, we will discuss reinstating the need sign up for Mass.
 - iii. How can we show a sign of peace during the Mass? Sign of peace is one of the ways people connect during Mass, which is still feasible with social distancing in place. People are craving that connection, but they need to know that it is okay to do so.
 - iv. Should we send out a survey to parishioners or anonymous feedback online to get the feedback from parishioners? We agree that anonymous survey would not be the best approach but rather encourage parishioners to provide feedback to PC members regarding their thoughts on how St. Edith Parish is handling the pandemic.
 - v. Is weekday Mass an option? Some people feel safer attending a relatively smaller Mass size. People working from home these days provides more of an opportunity to attend weekday Mass. At a minimum, we should encourage all to stream the current weekly school Mass on Wednesday at 9 AM.
 - vi. How can we encourage parishioners to provide feedback? Fr. Jim to remind parishioners both at Mass and online that Parish Council members are representatives and open to feedback from parishioners. Contact info is in bulletin and on parish website. Communicate to parishioners that the current focus of PC is to get a pulse on how St. Edith parish is doing during this pandemic.
 - vii. Suggested that Fr. Jim do another video to update the community on the actions our parish is taking to throughout the pandemic to both protect us as well as proceed to some state of normalcy.

IV. FR. JIM’S COMMENTS

- a. What is feedback from other local pastors? Some people are not following guidelines.
- b. How many people view weekend Mass online? Approximately 1,000 people “attend”.

- c. Survey – Topic was not discussed because we ran out of time due to top priority of getting feedback on how our St. Edith parish is doing on pandemic-related topics.

V. OTHER ITEMS

- a. Commissions – Topic was not discussed because we ran out of time due to top priority of getting feedback on how our St. Edith parish is doing on pandemic-related topics.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Streaming services
 - i. Can the 5 pm Mass be streamed live to give people the Saturday option?
 - ii. Can it be recorded and streamed live?
 - iii. Additional training scheduled for September 17, 2020, and these items will be addressed at this training session. Terri will follow up with the vendor to determine whether we can stream and record.
- b. Memorial Mass donations
 - i. As of recently, the form of payment included cash and check only. Online Giving did not have a category for Memorial Mass donations. Suggestion was made to add Memorial Mass category to Online Giving, so people can make donation online for Memorial Mass. Plus, it gets more “traffic” on our Online Giving website that may not have previously existed.
 - ii. Megan worked with Deb Strautz at the parish office to get this set up in Online Giving. Now, there is a category listed as “Mass Intention” and is accepting donations.
- c. Parking lot – On behalf of safety concerns, is there any reason school cannot use the outdoor Mass space in the parking lot for weekday drop off (morning) and pick up (afternoon)? Fr. Jim reported that there are no restrictions and all parking lot space can be used. Megan will work with Georgene Wojciechowski regarding safety concerns.

VII. OCTOBER13, 2020 MEETING

- a. Opening prayer – Megan
- b. Closing prayer – Deb

VIII. CLOSING PRAYER