



Holy Spirit Catholic Church

A Parish of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Harrisburg

Parish Council Meeting Minutes

9/5/2024

Attendance:

In attendance: Mark, Alison, Maria, Kristen, Brian, Alberta, Jamie, Deacon Jorge, Mark, Judy (via zoom), Becky, Pat, Barb and Fr. Dijo

Absent: Michelle, Ken and Janet

6:45 - 7:00 p.m. Private prayer / reflection

- ✓ Reflection and Prayer led by Mark Totaro

7:00 p.m. Meeting in Social Hall – Call to Order by Mark Totaro

1. Finance Report – not provided

2. Review/edit/approve April minutes

- ✓ Motion to approve by Pat and seconded by Maria

- ✓ In Michelle's absence Mark asked Barb to take the minutes

3. Old Business

- a. Book "Holy Moments" – Maria Condon had requested that Council consider providing this book as a gift to all parishioners. Council had been tasked with reading the book so as to vote on that proposal at the September meeting. The discussion yielded the majority feeling from Council that the book was not objectionable but was also not impactful either. Council also felt there is already a book club in place as a ministry. Furthermore, Council felt that establishing a yearly gift of a book set a precedent that we may find hard to keep up. Becky mentioned that she already has a box of copies of this book which she received for the 7th & 8th grade students. Council decided that this box should be placed in the Narthex and made available for those parishioners who would like to take a copy. Pat said that he would let Maria know that we have decided to distribute the book in this manner.

4. New Business

- a. New Fund-Raising suggestion - Michelle Emerick had asked Mark to be placed on the agenda as she had a fundraising idea to propose however Michelle was not present at the meeting so the agenda item was skipped.
- b. Kneelers for Communion Distribution - Judy Dezogattis had asked to be on the agenda regarding her suggestion to make kneelers available to those who would like to use them at all masses during communion. Council thoroughly discussed the pros and cons of this suggestion. The pros included the feeling that kneelers provided for some parishioners an opportunity for additional acts of piety and reverence during reception of communion. Some also felt that providing this opportunity was in keeping with the Eucharistic Revival. The cons included questions of where the kneelers would be placed, who would place them and remove them, would they be in the way for those who weren't using them, would announcements have to be made at each mass regarding their availability and which line to get in if you want to use them, and would their presence guilt people into feeling like they had to use them to be appropriately respectful. At the end of the discussion Fr. Dijo stated that they had made the kneelers available at his previous parish but ultimately removed them as the above-mentioned cons outweighed the pros particularly the existence of the tripping hazard for those who did not use the kneelers. He further went on to suggest that those who want to kneel for reception may sit in the front pew and he and the ministers of communion would accommodate them from that area. It was determined that Fr. Dijo's suggestions would be the adopted plan, and kneelers would not be made available.
- c. Outside mass – Deacon Jorge asked that we address the dates for when outside masses would be held for the coming year as Easter is later in 2025 than it was in 2024. Council discussed several points including the fact that the “outside people” enjoy the outside mass and that some enjoyed when it was outside year-round. We referred back to the survey results that lead to last year's council decision to have mass outside from 4/1/24 through 10/31/24 and it was decided for the 2024-2025 liturgical year that mass would be offered inside from 11/1/24 through 4/30/24 making the last outside 8:30 Sunday mass for 2024 on 10/27/24 and the first outside 8:30 Sunday mass for 2025 on 5/4/25.
- d. Mailing of envelopes – Mark raised the concern that the sending of envelopes to all parishioners is costing the parish roughly \$5,000. A discussion was held regarding the pros/cons of continuing this send. Points raised included a suggestion to cull the list by removing those people who hadn't given in the last 5 years or 3 years. It was also felt

though that maybe these envelopes were the only connection some felt to the parish because they are out of the area and still consider Holy Spirit “home” or because they are shut ins. It was then suggested that maybe the envelopes be made available for pick up and that only those remaining would be sent but again the concern over those who don’t/can’t physically come to mass would feel left out. Deacon Jorge then suggested that having a discussion about an expense that was in reality less than 1% of the overall income that the envelopes produce was not a useful spend of the Council members’ time. The discussion ended on that point and it was decided that when Janet does her quarterly financial update at mass and in her insert in the bulletin that it should be mentioned “if you no longer want to receive envelopes please notify the office”.

- e. Festival Raffle Tickets – Mark raised the concern that it cost the Parish \$1,700 to send raffle tickets for the festival this year and that the work of stuffing those tickets for sending fell to the office staff due to a lack of festival volunteers. There was some brief discussion about this and it was decided that Council would make the recommendation to the Festival Committee to make the raffle tickets available in the Narthex during festival season for parishioners to take as many as they’d like but that the tickets should not be mailed. Pat said that he would tell Jeff Sommer, Festival chair, that this was Council’s suggestion but Council really felt this was a Festival Committee issue and therefore we shouldn’t dictate how it was handled. We should simply make the suggestion.
- f. Social Justice Ministry – Mark stated that the Social Justice Ministry has been without a lead for over 6 months. He asked the Council to consider whether or not we needed to fill the opening. Council determined that the needs addressed previously by the Social Justice Ministry were now being served by other ministries in the parish including Migrant Justice and Prison so the Council recommended that the Social Justice Ministry lead position be left vacant and the Ministry be disbanded.
- g. Ministry Liasons from Council – Mark opened a discussion about whether or not it was fruitful to have a Parish Council contact for each Ministry and also is it useful for the Council to receive Ministry updates efrom every Ministry for every Council meeting. Council discussed several points including one from Barb where she stated that over the past year, even though Council contacts were assigned, the same ministries responded with the same updates time and again. She suggested, as did Mark, and Council agreed, that the Ministries are coordinated by Holly and that the only time Council should get involved is when there is something the Ministry is wanting to do that affects the parish as a whole like fundraising or collections of materials or something physically being done to the building or grounds. As a result

of the discussion, Ministry contacts will not be assigned for the 2024-2025 Council year and monthly updates will not be solicited.

- h. Ringing of bells at masses – Pat asked Fr. Dijo if he would be open to having the bells rung at the consecration at masses. - Chairman Mark said “Ringing of bells at Mass” is not a Parish Council issue and should be discussed outside of Parish Council, with Fr. Dijo.

Fr. Dijo said he is still learning the various traditions and ways of our Parish so he is not ready to make a decision on this at this time. Fr. Dijo went on to say that in the coming months he will address the entire liturgy including not only the ringing of bells, but also the procedures that the various lay ministers follow including the lectors, altar servers and eucharistic ministers.

5. Closing Prayer – Fr. Dijo

Next Council Meeting: Thursday, 11/7/24