

St. Thomas Aquinas Parish Pastoral Council Meeting Agenda

7:00pm, Tuesday, February 2, 2021

- Guests:/NA
- Opening Prayer: Sharon Mason
- Roll Call and Minutes: Grace DeMoss, Cathy Bickel, Sharon Mason, Rocky Marsh, Tim Nation, Noah DeMoss, Megan Bloede, Sharon Sperry, Karen Momper, Matt Hayes, Karla Hudacek, Fr. Varghese, Jackson Herrera, Chris Collins
 - Grace to send out minutes from last meeting (December) ASAP
- Interim President's Remarks: Cathy Bickel
 - Parish Council meeting schedule for Spring 2021
 - At this point, we will be meeting every other month as a parish council
 - Future meeting date is Tuesday, April 6
 - If we have a particular need, we can come together as a council to discuss that need
 - Election in May will need to happen, and looking at our schedule will be important for that
 - We could nominate people and have an election committee
 - The committee would look at the nominations, call the nominated, and then get bios for the candidates
 - Cons of this is that it could get to be too "ingrown" as a parish council
 - Minutes and group reports need to get published more consistently
 - More representation from the different Masses
 - Executive meeting could happen between now and the next parish council meeting
 - A committee of 3 or so could be helpful in constructing the concept of the election
 - Karen Momper, Sharon Sperry, and Cathy Bickel
- Update Parish Council Roster
 - Google Document will be shared by Grace
 - If you see any mistakes, please let me know!
- Pastor's Remarks: Fr. Varghese
 - Ash Wednesday is coming up on the 17th
 - Children will celebrate at 8:15.
 - Safety will be taken into consideration and teachers will distribute ashes to students
 - Kids are in classrooms and streaming school Masses
 - People welcome to come to Ash Wednesday Mass at 8:15
 - Ashes will be made available in the front office throughout the day, as well
 - Stations of the Cross will happen on Fridays at 5:30 PM
 - In Praise award went to Brandon and Elise Thomas
 - Particular highlight
 - Butler Mass was started last Sunday at 4:00, and they will also be able to receive ashes
- Pastoral Associate – Karla Hudacek
 - 5 candidates; Rite of Welcoming happened this past Sunday
 - More people are coming back to Mass after vaccination
 - Still need greeters for the 10:30 Mass, as well as a lead greeter
 - Confirmation kids will email a group of parishioners to check in and see how they are doing and pray for them
 - Could we also look into folks who do not live with someone?
 - This happens via word of mouth, mostly.
 - Confirmation will happen on Easter at the Cathedral

- Pillar Reports
 - Community Engagement – Rocky Marsh
 - Things are a bit frustrating because there's such a difficulty in checking in on people to see how things are going in the committees
 - Is this an effective position to have, especially during Covid?
 - Not a ton of feedback, especially via email, to bring back to the council about the community
 - There is a sense of being invasive when asking what people are up to
 - Dialogue, Truth and Faith – Tim Nation
 - Pillar head jobs are new, which is hard to figure out
 - Race and Culture committee had a retreat recently
 - Racial equity discussion group starts Feb 8
 - Survey went out in the newsletter that people signed up for
 - STA Talks, etc. is still on hold
 - Finance- Noah DeMoss
 - It's been a learning process to learn about the smaller commissions that feed into the finance committee
 - Still working on hiring a replacement for Brooke
 - Have had someone decline "at the last minute"
 - Had to relaunch the search
 - Call-out for any/all accountants looking for part-time work with a nonprofit.
 - Collections are in good shape, which is a good sign
 - Brooke had planned on fewer collections, but we've mostly stayed even
 - Many online giving donations
 - PPP= part of immediate stimulus package from last March
 - STA has a "forgivable" loan through the Archdiocese
 - Because the Archdiocese handled filing the loan, they will also handle the forgiveness application part of it
 - We are hopeful the loan will be forgiven
 - It's on the smaller end of the loans given out, and we didn't have to dip too far into the loans we received.
 - We don't see any reason it wouldn't be forgiven
 - School Commission – Megan Bloede
 - Staffing has had some changes
 - Middle school ELA gave a 2 weeks notice
 - Nancy has taken over for the ELA teacher
 - Teachers are working together, but they are tiring
 - Still feeling a sense of hope
 - Pre-school-5th is full-time; 6th is there 4 times a week; 7-8th is hybrid
 - Pre-school and kindergarten stayed in school during the close-down in November
 - MANY tours today and all week, and many of them seem very promising
 - 24 Kindergarten spots are being screened
 - We will need an ELA middle-school and math teacher
 - Mrs. Hoy is retiring, and the math teacher is taking over for science
 - Some cancellations (talent show, 8th grade vs. staff volleyball game)
 - Hoping to bring faith partners back

- Rocky is an all-star in trying to answer parent questions without adding more to the teachers' plates
- Mrs. V has really stepped up to lead in unimaginable ways
- Are scholarships available to students, based on racial diversity?
- Hopeful about enrollment for next year
- Stewardship: Chris Collins
 - Really good response from the pledge cards
 - Last year, there was a 5 Weeks of Giving, and we could try doing something like that again
 - Different ways to give/contribute to the church
 - Trying to think about a better way to streamline the envelope packets
 - How do we let people give to where/what they want to give in an easy way?
 - Numbers on the United Catholic Appeal
 - Early talks about perhaps having a Gala, but nothing substantial to report on that front

At-Large Members: Sharon, Karen, Matt: N/A

Youth Outreach :Jackson: N/A

New Business:

- Narthex project is getting closer to being done
- Tomorrow (Feb. 3) is supposed to be finishing up Bethany room floor
 - Just need to fix drywall and get new cabinets, chairs, and tables

Closing Prayer: Karen Momper

Future Meetings: Tuesday, April 6

STA Finance Committee Minutes, December 15th, 2020

Committee Members Present: Jenny Lurkins, Noah DeMoss, Matt White, Mary Rice, Ernie Kobets, Evelyn Ridley-Turner

Commission Representatives present:

Chris Collins, Stewardship
Mo Buell, School Commission

Parish, Church and School Staff present:

Father Varghese Maliakkal
Brooke Smith, Accountant
Karla Hudecek, Pastoral Associate
Cathy Bickel, Interim Parish Council President
Nancy Valdiserri, Principle
Fred Chandler, Haiti Committee

Father Varghese opened the meeting with prayer.

Father gave an update on the Christmas masses.

Review Minutes - November 17th, 2020

- Jenny made a motion to approve the minutes. Mary seconded. All approved.

Parish Accountant Update

- Noah mentioned that we have 3 applicants that we are reviewing. We have posted the opening on several different sites.
- Brooke is helping with the hiring process and is committed to staying on until a good replacement is found.

Financial Report to Parish

- We normally give an update with Sunday collection summaries and overview of STA financial standing. We traditionally do this in October but did not this year.
- Chris mentioned 68 of 600 families in the parish have submitted their pledges for almost \$200,000.
- Noah will give the announcement when we are ready within the next month or two.

Haiti Update

- All 24 grade 13 students who took the national exams of Haiti passed.
- The appeal letter was submitted for January.
- The Haiti committee is working with the school to keep student involvement.
- Singing Rooster who helps grow chocolate and coffee in Haiti asked to have their link put on the STA website and possibly in newsletters. Jenny made a motion to approve the new fundraiser. Mary seconded. All approved.
- The January appeal last year only raised \$3,700 while a couple of years earlier it was around \$16,000. There was discussion around why that may be with no clear consensus.

Financial Review

- Through November we are still ahead of budget.
- Brooke mentioned that we are towards the top of the deanery and archdiocese in terms of people giving online.
- Archdiocese is doing a review of the PPP forgiveness process.
- Mocas and SHORS are doing well.
- We are looking into a new VOIP phone and speaker system for the school.
- Gala is still on hold.
- Lighting project has started and should be paid out in December or January. Final project for capital campaign is the windows.

Final Comments

- Next meeting is scheduled for January 19th.

Father closed with a prayer. Meeting adjourned.

Youth Ministry update:

Alyse Thomas <alysethomas@ymail.com>

Sent: Monday, January 11, 2021 11:21 AM

Subject: Re: St. Thomas Aquinas - Youth Ministry finances

Noah,

As volunteer youth coordinators Maggie Sears and I coordinate events that promote social awareness and social engagement for our middle and high school parishioners and school students. In the past these have included such things as service projects for the parish, food pantry, and soup kitchen; as well as recreational activities such as Top Golf, Hayrides, Pacers games, etc. We have also hosted an STA Trivia Night for adults and Trunk or Treat for parish and school families. All of these events have obviously been put on hold and our thoughts for a few redesigns of our format were put on the back burner as well. As parishioners we do not want to request funds for the coming fiscal year that could be allotted to more pressing needs that would fill a gap that has likely happened for tithing over the past 10 months and as school parents we also recognize that returning to normal school and social calendars will be overwhelming in the foreseeable future too.

With that being said, our plans for youth group will be adaptable to the budget we are given and our pace for returning to a functioning youth group will be guided by where we are as a community. Our goal at this point would be to have Trunk or Treat on the parish calendar for either October 16th or 23rd and Trivia Night sometime in February or March. Trunk or Treat is a free event for those attending and we'd like to have the same budget that we used in 2019. I don't have a record of that amount but my recall is that it was about \$400 and it was used for game supplies/prizes and an inflatable bounce house. We also asked for donations from the parish for the candy that was given out. As far as the Trivia Night goes, we had intended it to be a "friend-raser" rather than a fundraiser but the response was so great that we came away with about \$900 over cost. Of course there is no way of knowing if we could repeat that but we can tailor the night to break close to even but we'd need an upfront budget to cover the cost until attendees pay for their tickets.

Outside of those two calendar events we will reintroduce our ministry to the youth community with pitch in cookouts, greeter volunteering for 10:30 mass, movie nights on the little playground, etc. In 2019 we talked with Jim L. about collaborating with the Catholic Business Association to create a youth ministry t-shirt that could be paid for by businesses paying for advertising on the back of the shirts. We may consider reaching back out to him in the coming months but also feel that many businesses may need some time to recover before they are asked for donations.

Athletic Commission update:

Peter Forsee

1. Flag Football canceled in 2020 due to pandemic.
2. Kickball canceled in 2020 due to pandemic.
3. Overall goal: save and maintain for future – no projects in mind.
4. See attached PDF for financial detail.

Social Media Posting Template

St. Thomas Aquinas is seeking a part-time accountant/business manager to handle the accounting for and oversee the financial activities of its parish and school. Applicants requested who have minimum 2 years experience. Membership at STA is not required!

Please contact Noah DeMoss at: (317) 767-4154 if interested – or, if you know of someone who might be interested, please forward this information to them.

Parish Council Report: Spiritual Life Pillar

Sharon Sperry, Pillar Chair

Tuesday, 2 February 2021

Bible Study: Jay Kiesler, leader. Jay directs this group who are meeting virtually every second and fourth Thursday of the month. The group numbers about a dozen people. They are finishing the study of the Gospel of John and will begin Scott Hahn's *The End*, a study of Revelations, in the second meeting of February.

Children's Liturgy of the Word & Religious Ed: Karla Hudecek.

Eucharistic Ministers/Greeters/Lectors: During these unusual times, the assignments have been done by Cheryl Taylor. Several long-standing lectors plan to return to the ambo as soon as they're vaccinated. We are using only one eucharistic minister and one lector for both masses. Volunteer greeters are showing up at both masses, but we need greeters for 10:30 Mass. We need a chair for the greeter ministry.

Faith Formation: Karla Hudecek. For Adult Faith Formation we will offer a virtual study of the new papal encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* during Lent.

Grace Within: Karen Momper, leader. This yoga group which met in the Bethany Room on Monday evenings is suspended until the pandemic is ended.

Ministry to the Homebound: No director is in place, so we need one, but this ministry is also suspended for the time being.

Prayer Ministries: Both morning prayer and centering prayer have been suspended, largely due to health issues and relocation to another city of the former leaders.

Prayer Power: Carole Finnell continues to direct this active ministry. As an entirely email ministry, there has been no interruption during the pandemic. The current membership is forty-seven. During Carole's recent recovery from surgery, Cathy Bickel has acted as substitute director. Emails currently go out two to three times a week calling for prayers requested for specific individuals.

RCIA: Karla Hudecek, leader. The team includes Andy Pike and Sharon Sperry. Meetings are virtual on Wednesday evenings, having begun in October and continuing until Pentecost. The group includes six people, two catechumen (to be baptized, and then confirmed) and four candidates (to be confirmed). The Rite of Welcoming was held on Sunday, January 31st in person at the 10:30 mass.

Religious Ed: Religious Ed returns to in-person sessions this coming weekend, while catechists simultaneously teach virtually.

Retreats for men and women: Both ministries are on hold, awaiting a group in each to step up to plan the next retreat when we can safely meet. Originally modeled on CHRPs retreats, the planners of the last women's retreat went beyond that model because most of the parish have attended a CHRPs retreat in

the past. One issue for the women's retreat is to solve the problem of attracting younger women to sign up since they often have young children at home to care for.

Sacramental Prep: Karla Hudecek. The new confirmation project called "STA Cares & Prayers" kicked off last week and has received positive responses. This helps strengthen candidates prayer lives, line up potential service hours and deepen their connection with the STA community by emailing parishioners with offers of prayer & help with small tasks. We will have a daylong retreat at STA offered by CYO Camp Rancho Framasa on 3/13. First Reconciliation is postponed until further notice (pending Covid Numbers) while the kiddos begin First Eucharist prep.

Youth Ministries: Alyse Thomas. This group is taking a pandemic pause and that will likely be the case for the remainder of the school year. They have chosen to do this out of respect for the hard work the school has put into keeping the kids, and thereby their families, as safe as possible. They will reboot things this summer with some outdoor socials if our community is in a good place to do that.