

St. Thomas Aquinas, Indianapolis
Parish Council Meeting Minutes
August 1, 2023

Approved October 3, 2023

- Opening Prayer
- Roll Call
 - Those present: Noah DeMoss, Charles Williams, Fr. Varghese, Rocky Marsh, Grace DeMoss, Fred Chandler, Geoff Ziegler, Patrick Price, Tim Nation, Jose Samperio, Karla Hudecek
 - Guest: Sharon and Andy Horvath
 - Those Absent: Janine Bercovitz, Matt Hayes, Mary Catherine Grau
- Agenda Check
- Approval of minutes from May 2, 2023 meeting
 - Tim Nation moves to approve, Patrick Price seconds the motion. Approved by Council.
- Comments from pastor and/or pastoral associate
 - Preschool
 - Synodality
 - This is the first time lay people are welcome to the Synod
 - The idea is all about walking together.
 - Community, participation, charity
 - This synod is much more inclusive than previous synods (which have been going on in the history of Christianity)
 - National Eucharistic Congress?
 - Report on Lilly Post Covid Study: STA Responses (Karla)
 - Other items
- Laudato Si
 - Next Step: write a reflection, establish where we are as a parish, and develop an action plan.
 - STA parish has been asked to share what STA meant to them
 - It was gathered and then shared with Matt Hayes
 - Watched a video with a group and came up with ideas of what STA could do
 - During Lent, there were themes/goals each week about/inspired by Laudato Si
 - Ministries will be met with and asked these questions hopefully in August/September:
 - As you reflect on the mission and current activities of your ministry, how do you see them relating to the Laudato Si goals?
 - In what ways do you see your ministry contributing to the parish LSAP Action plan?
 - Looking beyond your own ministry, what actions do you think the parish should take that address the Laudato Si goals?
 - September 1-October 4: Season of Creation
 - Reach out to the parish to celebrate what Laudato Si has done/progress we have made
 - Have a vegetarian meal
 - Listening session
 - The Archbishop will be presiding the Season of Creation Mass HERE at STA on at 6:00 on Tuesday, September 26
 - Invite neighboring parishes to the Mass to celebrate with us
 - Have a reception afterwards
 - Progress:
 - Energy use since 2015 has gone down by 21%
 - Greenhouse gas emissions have gone down by 13%
- Update on STA Plan Goals - with reference to Objectives
 - Spiritual Growth: Patrick Price

- Karla and Patrick will be meeting this week to discuss progress and plans
- How can we celebrate the progress we've made?
- Can we bring back the bringing down of the money from the children?
- Stewardship: Geoff Ziegler
 - Ministry fair is a great idea, but we're working on timing
 - Feedback opportunity at the ministry fair to see what we're missing/what talents our parish has and could offer back to the parish
 - Working with Charles and Noah to make sure logistics are in place
- Community Engagement: Charles Williams
 - 44 ministries exist (at least)
 - We need to make sure the available ministries are up-to-date
 - How do we make sure follow-through happens?
 - Set a date and a team to get together the Ministry Fair
 - November 4 and 5 is our possible Ministry Fair date
 - Brochures: Pictures, description, rough time requirement/commitment
 - Hot Topics booth: Why is our Sanctuary this way? (sign up for a walking tour??)

Big Questions for Us to Think About: What makes a ministry a ministry? What is the difference between a group of STA members that share a common goal/talent/skill/hobby and a ministry?

- STA School: Mary Catharine Grau
- Dialogue, Truth, Faith: Grace DeMoss
 - Petitions before Mass
 - Closed for now—it will stay as it is
 - Book of petitions can be highlighted a bit
 - Welcoming guests personally before Mass
 - This can restart **SOON**
 - Offerings can be a family affair
- Buildings and Grounds: Chris Durnil
 - HVAC issues came from a recent storm—working on fixing it ASAP.
 - Preschool cannot be moved to Common Ground because it is not owned by STA/the Archdiocese
 - Chris is going to submit something to the Archdiocese about our ability to fundraise for expansion for the preschool
- Finance Committee: Noah DeMoss
 - Financial Review
 - monetary gift goes to Nancy V. as a token of appreciation
 - We got a grant for the security of the building (mostly regarding doorways)
 - We can submit this grant every year
 - September: Finance/School Commission/Parish Council will get together to talk about school families and the financial expectations re: contributions to the parish.
 - Other Items
 - Considering a second offering for Fr. Varghese's home parish in India.
 - Parish council supports a donation
- For next meeting: Karla's Post-COVID report
- Other Pillar Reports and Additional Items of Interest
- Ending Prayer

Future meetings 7-8:30 pm (unless otherwise noted) typically on the **first Tuesday** of the month, every other month.

October 3; December 5; February 6; April 2; June 4

Finance Committee Report:

Parish Council Report: June 30, 2023

- Fiscal year 2022-23 giving is 3.3% lower than prior fiscal year-to-date – this covers July 2022 through May 2023.
- “Red envelope” collection announced by Father during May closed collections gap below expected by \$20,000.

STA Finance Committee Minutes: June 20, 2023

Financial Statements Update

- Collections were 8.9% below budget through May.
- Summary of financial activity on following page.

New Business

- Committee voted for \$10,000 in school operating surplus to be moved to principal discretionary fund.
- Discussion and approval of subcommittee fundraiser requests. Noted that across parish education is needed regarding where collections go versus specific fundraisers.
- Father (absent) proposed monetary gift for Nancy. Noah got clarification after meeting, and this will be on July finance agenda.
- Father (absent) proposed STA contribute to his home parish, which is attempting to build a new church. Committee voted to follow archdiocese policy on dealing with such requests. Noah spoke to Father and asked that he provide more clarification at July finance meeting, so that Noah can bring this request to parish council at August meeting with necessary context.

August 2023 Report from Spiritual Life Pillar, Fred Chandler, Pillar Head

Arts & Environment: Michael Davis, together with George Screes and Steve Gudorf.

- A. Ordinary Time banners and related items will be displayed in the next few weeks. Plan is to be in place for certain for Sausage Fest.
- B. Sausage Fest - Special floral displays will be in place for the weekend masses for parishioners and visitors to appreciate and enjoy.
- C. Steve Gudorf & George Screes - Steve and George have been in an integral part of A&E for many years. Over the last few years, they have begun to step down on their involvement and are continuing to do so effectively later this year. I am coordinating meetings with them to ensure we have as much detail documented about the regular tasks they complete. They will not completely be leaving but their involvement will lessen even further. I am continuing to network with other parishioners to identify new support resources for our committee. I am meeting with Sheila Brown to discuss further in detail with the hope she can assist in identifying new committee members as well. I am also requesting assistance from the Parish Council in identifying new committee members.
- D. Steve & George recognition - Need to determine an appropriate way to recognize and honor Steve and George's years of service. They are humble and like to work behind the scenes and will not want anything big. I am suggesting a write up that can be included in the bulletin, newsletter and read at each mass as well as some form of gift of thanks to them.

Bible Study: Jay Kiesler. The Bible Study group will begin a five-session biblical study of the Eucharist during September. We will be meeting the second and fourth Thursdays of the month in the Parish Conference Room at 1:00 PM. If there is interest, there also will be a Thursday night session. Signups for this study will begin during August after each Mass. The parish also will offer a different four session presentation on the Eucharist sometime this spring or early summer.

Children's Liturgy of the Word: This ministry is continuing through the summer at most 10:30 Masses. Recruitment of two more catechists is underway.

Religious Ed: Registration is opening this month and sessions begin Sept. 10. Looking and praying for a grade 3-4-5 catechist.

Eucharistic Ministers/Greeters/Lectors/Musicians: There continues to be a need for additional people for each of these ministries. Commissioning of EMs and Lectors will be scheduled following the Ministry Fair. Fred and Doris Chandler have retired as coordinators of Eucharistic Ministers. A subcommittee of the Liturgy Committee has begun working with the music director to review hymns and Mass parts for familiarity, tempo, and selection. The hope is to increase singing at the Masses by offering hymns that are engaging, inspiring and upbeat.

Ministry to the Homebound: This ministry is suspended for the time being.

Centering Prayer: The centering prayer group has two new young men who have recently joined our group. Karen Spear will be stepping down as the coordinator in March or April of next year. Ed Spahr, an Immaculate Heart of Mary parishioner and long-time member of the group, will be taking over as coordinator then. The group continues to meet at 6:00 p.m. on Thursdays.

Morning prayer: Bill Scott. The Morning Prayer group is still going strong. The group continues to meet weekdays at 7:45 in the Bosler Chapel and typically have a group of 4-6 people. The gatherings last 15-20 minutes.

Prayer Power: Sheila Pluckebaum. To request prayers, email Sheila at sheilapluck@sbcglobal.net

RCIA: Karla Hudecek. Looking to start earlier this year – in September – because Easter is so early – 3-31-24. We plan to expand the team.

Retreats for men and women:

Sacramental Prep: Confirmation sessions will begin in September. Signup for First Reconciliation and First Communion will begin later this month. We've had 15 baptisms since the beginning of 2023.

Youth Ministry: Efforts are underway to have more youth Masses.

Vacation Bible School: Vacation Bible School was a great success – with 23 kiddos and nine teen volunteers. SCUBA VBS – Diving into Friendship with God – will be **June 17-21, 2024**.

Faith Inquiry:

Eucharistic Revival: Fr. Varghese would like at least 10 parishioners to attend. A discounted registration fee of \$274 has been offered. Is it possible to include funds in the 2024-25 STA budget to cover the fee? Fr. Varghese noted that other parishes are fundraising to be able to offer scholarships. The Archdiocese also has asked parishes to recruit volunteers to provide housing for attendees.