

St. Thomas Aquinas, Indianapolis
Parish Council Meeting Minutes
Approved April 9, 2024

Agenda

- **Opening Prayer**
- **Roll Call**
 - *Those Present:* Geoff Ziegler, Matt Hayes, Fred Chandler, Charles Williams, Karla Hudecek, Mary Catherine Grau, Rachel Hudson, Noah DeMoss, Grace DeMoss, Tim Nation, Rocky Marsh, Patrick Price
 - *Those Absent:* Fr. Varghese, Jose Samperio
 - *Guests:* Fred Glass, Jenny Forsee
 - *Online:* Janine Berkovitz
- **Agenda Check**
- **Approval of minutes from December 2023 meeting**
 - Tim Nation moves to approve, seconded by Charles Williams, unanimously approved.
- **Comments from pastor and/or pastoral associate**
 - Fr. Varghese
 - Karla Hudecek
 - TOSTA went well (at least 130 people in attendance)
 - Matt Lorch started as new pastoral associate
 - New music director, Katie Schaefer, starts February 7.
 - Fr. Varghese Sabbatical
 - October 17 2025 - Feb of 2026: the proposed dates for Fr. Varghese's sabbatical
 - Italy and India
 - School can get involved
 - Tracking his progress
 - He'll send videos back for the kids
 - Charles Williams makes a motion for applying for, receiving, and taking the Lilly Clergy Renewal Program sabbatical. Geoff Ziegler seconds, and unanimously approved/supported by the Parish Council.
 - Other items
- **Annual report from Bishop Chatard HS Board of Regents: Jenny Forsee**
 - BCHS appreciates all of the support from STA
 - STA students do extremely well at Chatard
 - Parents and students immediately get involved when coming from STA, which is great to see.
 - This is the first year Chatard has ever had a wait list
- **Buildings and Grounds**
 - Update on New Foundations Project: Fred Glass (Guest)
 - Chris Durnil, Sheila Brown, Jessica Reckamp, and Fred Glass are in the working group overseeing this project
 - On Jan 10, Fred Glass, Noah DeMoss, Chris Durnil, and Fr. Varghese met with the group from the Archdiocese
 - The meeting went well, overall.
 - The committee seemed very supportive of the proposal
 - Now working to get the correct feasibility consultant
 - Conversation regarding the budget changes (contingencies, inflation, etc.)
 - This New Foundations Project allows for a distinct separation between the school building and Church, which is a blessing for both the school and the Church (frees up the Bethany room, allows for a bit more openness to the Church, etc.)
 - Update on repairs/improvements needed (Noah and Beth Boland)
 - Buildings and Grounds chair is not a member of Parish Council, and that causes some muddled communication.

- Charles Williams makes a motion to have Parish Council support the Finance Committee chair to present the plan for the preschool improvements to meet Archdiocesan mandates for state licensure for approval by the Finance Committee.
 - Rocky seconds it.
 - Unanimously approved
- **STA Strategic Plan Goals**
 - **2024-25** objectives and actions
 - Spiritual Growth: Patrick Price
 - Goal 1: take out “staffing” in 1.3
 - Stewardship: Geoff Ziegler
 - Community Engagement: Charles Williams
 - Goal 3: 3.1 should say parish-wide instead of paris-wide
 - 3.5: change “raise up” to “Better promote” and also say “the STA/St. Vincent de Paul Conference” instead of “Boulevard Food Pantry.”
 - Remove 3.6 from the plan
 - STA School: Mary Catharine Grau
 - Dialogue, Truth, Faith: Tim Nation
 - Motion is made to approve the new objectives by Patrick Price. Charles Williams seconds. Unanimously approved.
- **Finance Committee: Noah DeMoss**
 - Financial Review (one document)
 - Other Items
 - Daily Mass except Monday
 - Renewal terms are ending in June
 - Jose Samperio is ending 1 term (elected)
 - Charles is ending first term (appointed)
 - Council will need to elect new officers (President, Vice President, and Secretary)
- **Other Pillar Reports and Additional Items of Interest**
 - Race and Committee: Tim Nation (One document was sent out with the Agenda.)
- **Planning Ahead for Parish Council Leaders and Members**
- **Ending Prayer**

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

- April 2, June 4

Parish Council Report: December 31, 2023

- Fiscal year 2023-24 giving was 2.7% lower than prior fiscal year-to-date – this covers July-December 2023.

STA Finance Committee Meeting – January 9, 2024

Financial Statements Update

- Collections were 7% below budget for fiscal year (at this time last year we were also 7% below budget). Budget corresponds to target of \$25/week per registered household.
- United Catholic Appeal: parish has reached 42% of assigned \$64,000 goal, with 54 donors participating.

New Business

- Discussed pros and cons of adding Venmo as a payment option for fundraisers. - School Commission provided update on budget:
 - o Focus on increasing revenue from outside sources to maximize hiring and teacher retention (e.g. \$25,000 grant for teacher certified in special education).
 - o Proposed 5% teacher pay raise and 2% tuition increase.
 - o Target is finalizing tuition amounts by next finance committee meeting.
- Committee approved \$19,000 of funds to be used in repairs for hot water heater in church basement and leaking pipe in school basement.

Next Finance Committee meeting: February 20, 2024.
St. Thomas Aquinas Parish and School, Indianapolis

Summary of Financial Activity for Fiscal Year-to-date: July 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023

Revenues – to nearest thousand Period Over/(Under) Budget Sunday Collections 361,000
(28,000) Tuition & Fees 973,000 149,000 Other Revenue 114,000 47,000 Total Revenue \$1,448,000
\$168,000

Expenses – to nearest thousand YTD (Over)/Under Budget Salaries and Benefits (760,000)
145,000 Archdiocese Assessments (94,000) (1,000) Spiritual Life & Programming (61,000) o
Property, Facility, Utilities (174,000) (16,000) Other Expenses (56,000) 10,000 Total
Expenses \$(1,145,000) 138,000 Net Income: \$303,000 \$306,000

Bank Balance (to nearest thousand):

Fifth Third Bank \$993,000

Restricted Funds Balances:

Haiti \$21,000

Auction/Gala \$49,000

Energy Improvements \$35,000

Capital Campaign \$107,000

STA Home & School \$81,000

Various Auxiliaries (reporting to FC) \$252,000

Other Restricted Funds \$448,000

February 2024 Report from Spiritual Life Pillar, Fred Chandler, Pillar Head

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

ADVENT/CHRISTMAS 2023

Our Advent Evening of Stillness and Silence prayer service was nicely attended. Father Varghese suggested Eucharistic Adoration be added to the service which included a benediction at the end of the service. I believe this will become a permanent part of the service going forward. We will continue to work hard to promote this special event with the goal to increase attendance. Currently it is a part of our Advent and Lenten season. We may explore holding a service during non-holiday times with the hope this will foster more attendance and an appreciation for just how special and personal this simple event can be for parishioners. In the year of the National Eucharistic Congress Revival Father Varghese wants a special emphasis on the service and the focus on Eucharistic Adoration. We will do all we can to create a display to achieve this.

A special thank you insert was added to a recent bulletin and newsletter highlighting appreciation to all committee members and other special parishioners who helped with the 2023 Christmas set up. This was a huge effort to make it all happen in such a short window of time based upon how the Advent Season fell in conjunction with Christmas. We are also extremely thankful and grateful to the stellar 8th graders who helped transport all of our materials and supplies from storage, both for set up and tear down and a huge thank you to Karla Hudecek for helping coordinate and oversee their help. A year or so ago we began to engage the help of the students with the hope this will instill a better understanding and appreciation for what all is involved in what we do so and thereby further their appreciation of our liturgy and their personal faith.

OTHER FOCUSES AND ENDEAVORS

The Ministry Fair was a huge success overall and we are thrilled to have so many new members on our Arts and Environment Committee. It's exciting to have so much new energy, ideas and support. We are planning a follow up meeting with all new members to tour our planning and supply room in the lower level. The goal is to further educate and inform all committee members about our supplies and inventory for them to utilize both in practice as well as to help further nurture additional creativity and ideas for new and different displays and/or events. Now that we have additional support, we can hopefully inspire and enrich liturgy for all parishioners through an even wider variety of displays, namely during our larger celebrations. We are very excited to have all this new support as we continue to plan for Lent, Holy Week, and Easter.

We will be completing a spring cleaning of the hallway to the basement. We will also be applying a new coat of counter quality paint to the cabinets underneath the informational display monitor. We continue to work hard to work with these existing pieces of furniture rather than expend budget dollars on new furniture. Sheila Brown and Michael are working together to enhance the sitting area in the Narthex by looking for newer cost-effective chairs that are more comfortable as well as a refurbished coffee table to complete this space.

As always, we are open to additional ideas, new activities or events that anyone may want to share to be explored. Again, our goal is to continue to enhance our focus of keeping everything with Arts and Environment fresh, ever changing and always engaging. In doing so it continually brings our mission to life:

Arts and Environment

Intentionally simplistic. Liturgically focused.

Allowing each of us to design our own amazing connection with God.

Bible Study: Jay Kiesler. The Spring 2024 Bible Study of Isaiah part 1 (Chapters 1-39) started on January 25 and will end on April 24, 2024. There are 23 participants (6 new) in this Bible Study: 19 attending the 1:00 PM session and 5 (6 counting me in both sessions) attending the 7:00 PM session. Isaiah part 2 (Chapters 40-66) will be studied in the Fall of 2024. Sessions have tentatively been scheduled for September 12 and 26, October 10 and 14, and November 14 and 21, 2024. Signups for the fall sessions will likely be August 24 and 25 with bulletin and newsletter announcements starting two weeks before the signup weekend.

Children's Liturgy of the Word: Children's Liturgy of the Word: We had **88 children** participate on Sunday, Dec. 3. Thankfully, the catechists had decided in advance to split the group into two age groups to better accommodate their needs. This worked out wonderfully and will continue moving forward. Several parents have stepped in to help.

Religious Ed: We are back to pre-pandemic numbers with 40 kiddos enrolled in our Sunday morning religious education program.

Eucharistic Ministers/Greeters/Lectors/Musicians: Commissioning of EMs occurred on December 9-10. Blessing of other liturgical ministers is pending.

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

Centering Prayer: 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. Six adults are preparing to receive the sacraments of initiation on Holy Saturday. That number is at least double what we have had in each of the past 4 years.

Retreats for men and women:

Sacramental Prep: Confirmation - Thirteen teens are preparing for Confirmation on May 1. First Communion will be May 5. Baptism - 23 infants and children were baptized 2023, with 7 pending. That's four more than in 2019.

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

Vacation Bible School: SCUBA VBS – Diving into Friendship with God – will be **June 17-21, 2024**. Registration has begun.

Liturgy Committee: Mary Rice and Julie Niec have taken over as co-chairs of the group. Preparations have begun for Lent which begins on Ash Wednesday, February 14, 2024. The North Deanery Lenten Penance Service will be ??? Cup stations have returned during Communion with one cup at each of the 5:30 and 8:00 Masses and two stations at the 10:30 Mass.

Lenten Suppers: Sue Kobets. STA's longstanding tradition of Lenten suppers will kick off Feb. 16 and continue through the six Fridays in Lent. You can sign up to host or be a guest. Everyone pitches in to bring soup, salad or bread for a simple meal, and a Lenten discussion is led by the host.

It's a great way to meet other people in the parish and build community. The more people you meet the more you'll feel at home at St. Thomas Aquinas. Soup suppers will be offered in parishioners' homes every Friday during Lent, and at least two will be hosted in the Bethany Room after Stations of the Cross.

Check your calendars and sign up after Masses which began on Feb. 3-4. If you would like to host, help coordinate or staff sign-ups, please contact Sue Kobets at 317-445-3223 or famkobets1@aol.com.

Eucharistic Revival: The **10th National Eucharistic Congress** (NEC) will be held on **July 17-21, 2024**, in Indianapolis, primarily at Lucas Oil Stadium and in surrounding venues. As the defining event of a five-year National Eucharistic Revival, the NEC is an opportunity for Catholics across the United States to be "healed, converted, formed, and unified by an encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist"—and then to be sent out on mission, newly inspired and "on fire" with the love of Christ and His Holy Spirit.

The Week at a Glance

Each day of the National Eucharistic Congress is guided by a theme drawn from Scripture:

- From the Four Corners (Wednesday)
- The Greatest Love Story (Thursday)
- Into Gethsemane (Friday)
- This is My Body (Saturday)
- To the Ends of the Earth (Sunday)

A discounted registration fee of \$274 has been offered for those of us in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

In addition, day passes will be available for purchase in January:

Wednesday, July 17, Adults - \$49, Teens - \$20, and Children (12 & under) – Free

Thursday, July 18, Adults - \$95, Teens - \$75, and Children (12 & under) – Free

Friday, July 19, Adults - \$95, Teens - \$75, and Children (12 & under) – Free

Saturday, July 20, and Sunday, July 21, Adults - \$125, Teens - \$80, and Children (12 & under) - Free

A Daily Schedule for the National Eucharistic Congress is live on our website, <https://www.eucharisticcongress.org/>. You can now explore what this incredible experience will look like day by day.

Preview the options for Impact Sessions in the morning that speak to your particular vocation and mission. Then, get excited for the dynamic **revival sessions**, when the whole assembly will gather in Lucas Oil Stadium to experience the power and love of Jesus. These sessions—and the soon-to-be-announced afternoon breakout sessions—will be led by the expansive list of Faithful Speakers who will join us in Indianapolis this summer.

