

St. Thomas Aquinas, Indianapolis
Parish Council Meeting Minutes
Approved at June 4, 2024 Parish Council Meeting

- Opening Prayer led by Fr. Verghese.
- Roll Call: John Sobotowski was welcomed as the new STA Finance Committee Chair. Others present: Chandler, Grau, Hayes, Hudecek, Marsh, Price, Williams.
- Minutes from February 2024 meeting were approved (as corrected with minor edits)
- Comments from pastor and/or pastoral associate
 1. Fr. Varghese
 - a. Attendance is moving upward since COVID; but Fr. encouraged all parish council members to work on getting increase the attendance at all masses.
 - b. Father struggles with space issues, especially with early morning mass and the preschool.
 - c. The two new staff members (Music Director and Administrative Assistant) have moved well into their roles.
- Buildings and Grounds
 1. Updates from Chris Durnil
 - a. The remodeling of the bathrooms will begin in early June - with August 1st as a completion target date. In addition, the two security doors project will also be completed before school begins.
 - b. The New Foundations Project has received approval to enter into an engagement with a firm for feasibility study. The council unanimously recommended that Fr. Varghese accept the new foundation committees' recommendation to engage Cape Fletcher and Associates. The scope of work and tentative agreement with CF and A can be reviewed by contacting Chris Durnil through the STA parish office.
- Proposed Change in Parish Constitution language from Pillar to Ministry Leader
 - Changes in the Parish Council Constitution were reviewed and accepted for presentation to the parish for feedback. Hopefully, these changes will be formally approved at the June 2024 meeting.
- STA Strategic Plan Goals
 1. Reports of 2024-25 objectives and actions
 - A. Spiritual Growth: Patrick Price (No report)
 - B. Stewardship: Geoff Ziegler (See Page 3)
 - C. Community Engagement: Charles Williams

- Neighborhood social service community fair is under consideration. A date will be identified.

D. STA School: Mary Catharine Grau

- The State Accreditation visit (based upon 13 benchmarks with a self-study) took place on March 14th. The self-study and the feedback from the report will be helpful to the school as it develops future goals. The accredited will be for 5 years with the report expected by June.

E. Dialogue, Truth, Faith: Tim Nation (No report)

☐ Finance Committee: John Sobotowski

- A report from the Finance Committee was reviewed. (See Page 4-5)

☐ Other Pillar Reports and Additional Items of Interest

Fred Chandler submitted a Spiritual Life Pillar report (See Page 6-7)

☐ Upcoming Council Vacancies

- There will be one open elected position starting January 1. The timeline for solicitation of nominations and election was reviewed. There will also be some appointed positions which Father will present to the council in June.

☐ Dates for July 23 to -June 23 will be typically on the **first Tuesday** of the month, every other month. The Dates are August 6, October 1, December 3, February 4, April 1, June 3

☐ Ending Prayer: Matt Hayes

Stewardship Notes – STA PC – April 9, 2024

Gala

- November 9, 2024 – Indianapolis Artsgarden (downtown)
- Steering Committee has formally met twice thus far (currently 11 members w/ Kate Erdel as chair)
- Save the Date communications starting in the coming days (I just added a slide to the Narthex monitor)

SausageFest

- August 16/17, 2024
- Inaugural 5K Walk/Race/Fun Run to occur on Thursday, August 15. More details to come.

Annual Stewardship Pledge

- Still aligned for this communication to occur in the next 6-8 weeks, as we get closer to fiscal year-end (June 30).
- Reminder this is a change from our previous end-of-calendar year communications.

Fundraisers

- Met with Liz Suscha (FC member). Topic was on how Stewardship could assist with establishing a framework around STA fundraisers. This topic is being driven/discussed by FC, but multiple different individuals/groups are impacted. More to come..

Parish Council Report: March 31, 2024

- Fiscal year 2023-24 giving was 1.8% higher than prior fiscal year-to-date – this covers July-February 2023.

STA Finance Committee Meeting – March 12, 2024

Financial Statements Update

- Collections were 10% below budget for fiscal year (at this time last year we were 11.5% below budget). Budget corresponds to target of \$25/week per registered household.
- United Catholic Appeal: as of 3/25/2024 parish has reached 39% of assigned \$64,000 goal, with 59 donors participating.

New Business

- Father appointed John Sobotowski as chair of committee, and he will be representing this committee to parish council.
- School proposed budget for the coming school year. School council asked for \$207,000 below archdiocese guidance (9.89%) of annual school budget. Budgeted Revenue of \$1,881,683.70 and \$2,065,493.29 of Expenses. Teacher benefits came in \$2,000 higher than last year's budget which comes from the archdiocese and was unexpectedly higher. Last year's budget is close to identical to this year. Grants benefited the school last year; this trend is expected to continue with new grants being written. Budget includes 5% raise for teachers, textbook expenses increased by 25% due to new required religion textbooks.
- The committee approved a class of 2025 5k fundraiser on Thursday before SaugageFest. Budgeted for 200 participants, breakeven at 40-50.
- The FC discussed the need for stronger planning and communication with ministries, governance, and plans to make it easier for parishioners to give to the parish via electronic means. These are topics we will tackle in the next few meetings.

Next Finance Committee meeting: April 16, 2024.

St. Thomas Aquinas Parish and School, Indianapolis

Summary of Financial Activity for Fiscal Year-to-date: July 1, 2023, to February 29, 2024

| Revenues – to nearest thousand | Period | Over/(Under) Budget |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| Sunday Collections | 468,000 | (52,000) |
| Tuition & Fees | 1,162,000 | 64,000 |
| Other Revenue | 134,000 | 46,000 |
| Total Revenue | \$1,764,000 | \$58,000 |

| Expenses – to nearest thousand | YTD | (Over)/Under Budget |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Salaries and Benefits | (1,026,000) | 180,000 |
| Archdiocese Assessments | (126,000) | (1,000) |
| Spiritual Life & Programming | (73,000) | 5,000 |
| Property, Facility, Utilities | (252,000) | (27,000) |
| Other Expenses | (50,000) | 22,000 |
| Total Expenses | \$(1,527,000) | 179,000 |

| | | |
|--------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Net Income: | \$237,000 | \$237,000 |
|--------------------|------------------|------------------|

Bank Balance (to nearest thousand):

| | |
|------------------|-----------|
| Fifth Third Bank | \$749,000 |
|------------------|-----------|

Restricted Funds Balances:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| Haiti | \$27,000 |
| Auction/Gala | \$42,000 |
| Energy Improvements | \$35,000 |
| Capital Campaign | \$110,000 |
| STA Home & School | \$84,000 |
| Various Auxiliaries (reporting to FC) | \$277,000 |
| Other Restricted Funds | \$34,000 |

Available Operating Cash **\$140,000**

April 2024 Report from Spiritual Life Pillar, Fred Chandler

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

LENT/EASTER 2024

Our Lenten Evening of Stillness and Silence prayer service was nicely attended. As in Advent, Eucharistic Adoration was added which included a benediction at the end of the service. 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.

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 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: This continues to be a positive and popular Sunday morning activity for the children.

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: Blessing of other liturgical ministers besides EMs is pending.

Ministry to the Homebound: This ministry is slowly reactivating. If you know of homebound parishioners who would be interested in receiving Communion, contact Matt Lorch in the Parish Office.

Centering Prayer: The group continues to meet at 6:00 p.m. on Thursdays. This month we bid "au revoir" to Karen Spears as she takes off for an adventure in France for several weeks before moving to the Chicago area later this summer. Karen has led this program since its inception. The new leader is Ed Spahr from Immaculate Heart. The ministry has received a lot of interest lately. There are three new members who join on a regular basis. An individual from North United Methodist has joined the group.

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 has 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 received the sacraments of initiation on Holy Saturday.

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: Judy Cebula and Susan Burris developed a series of Eucharistic reflections which were presented before each weekend Mass in Lent. Katie Schafer has joined the STA staff as the Director of Music. Katie comes to STA from Hopkins, MN. She looks forward to involving many parishioners in children and adult choirs.

Lenten Suppers: Sue Kobets coordinated the Lenten suppers that began on Feb. 16 and continued through the six Fridays in Lent. There were seventeen hosts. Numbers much greater than ever before. That includes the three sharing groups that followed the Lenten program. 221 people signed up. Some attended more than one Friday night. There were approximately fifteen children who went along for the evenings. Thanks to Sharon Mason for planning the liturgical part of the evening. The best news is that Sonja Chevigny has agreed to be involved in this ministry next year!!!!!!!

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 the official 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.

