

St. Francis of Assisi Parish – Triangle, VA

Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes

January 15, 2022

I. **Call to Order & Attendance** – Virtual meeting - Zoom.

- a. The meeting was called to order at 9:30 AM
- b. Members Present – Fr. John O’Connor (Pastor), Phil Bongiorno, Terry Danner (Chair), Maggie Eves, John Hales, Iván Nazario, Tony Mercogliano, Clarence Neason, Michelle Nicolai, Pequitte Schwerin, Dan Sullivan, Ulli Vaerst, Dr. Tricia Barber (Principal), Marv Floom (Finance committee), Angelica Silva (Francis House).
- c. Members not Present – Jean Allen, Maryanne Hayes (Director of Religious Education)

II. **Opening Prayer** – Fr. John

III. **Introduction** – Introductions were held for Tony Mercogliano, the newest Pastoral Council member.

IV. Minutes for the November 2020 Pastoral Council meeting were approved as amended.

V. **Quantico Safe Haven update** – Fr. John

- a. St. Francis was featured on the front page in the *Arlington Catholic Herald*. The article highlights the efforts and value of the services of St. Francis of Assisi and Francis House's support to the Quantico safe haven program.
- b. The Quantico safe haven was closed by December 22, and the residents moved into the settlement process.
- c. NBC had approached the diocese about doing an article on the relief efforts and outreach. However, a postponement occurred, and while the network was considering a broader approach, the refugees were relocated, and the matter became moot.
- d. CNN may do a news article on this effort.
- e. Lutheran Covenant Church has been active in the resettlement process and settled a few families in Woodbridge.

VI. **Hispanic Ministry Update** – Iván Nazario

- a. The Our Lady of Guadalupe Feast Day was celebrated with a special mass and indoor procession on 12 December at 12:30. The celebration of the Mass had a full house in attendance. The procession was recorded and streamed on the Parish site.

VII. Future Pastoral Council activities – Terry Danner

Work on the parish strategic plan, which had been on hold due to the pandemic will resume. The following volunteered for the work Terry Danner, Phil Bongiorno, Tony Mercogliano, Jean Allen, John Hales, Maggie Eves. Marv Floom has input from the Finance council for the plan.

VIII. Pastor's Remarks – Fr. John

- a. Some Friar assignments will be coming up soon – specific information is not yet available.
- b. The new business manager, Sam Blakeney was selected. He will start on 18 Jan. He has an MBA and works as a consultant. His wife works on the base, and they had children at St. Francis of Assisi Parish School. Fr. John extended thanks to the search committee.
- c. Kudos to Barbara Stouffer for her taking on much extra work during the period when there was no business manager.
- d. Two staff members were out with Covid; both were vaccinated, boosted, and are now doing well.
- e. All staff are asked to always wear masks in parish buildings, unless in an office by themselves.
- f. The Annual Appeal netted \$210,000, exceeding this year's goal – however due to the pandemic it was not conducted last year.
- g. The Christmas collection was down \$16,000 from last year. Weekly collections are also down, due to fewer people attending Mass. Fr. John sent a note to parishioners asking them to remember to donate. Current data indicate about 34% of parishioners contribute most of the donations.
- h. Mass attendance is dropping, probably due to the surging covid infections.
- i. A parish in Reston is interested in how St. Francis of Assisi Parish conducts the annual appeal.
- j. Irregular mail delivery has affected donations also.
- k. Electronic giving has remained stable.

- l. Fr. George is working to include our e-giving process on the website.
- m. Parts of the school need re-roofing with a current bid at \$90K.
- n. The contractor was a no-show for Snow Removal last week – the site facility folks went the extra mile, spending an entire day on snow removal with what equipment the parish has.
- o. The snowstorm decimated many trees along Fuller Heights Road and blocked the sidewalk. Fr. John contacted VDOT about clearing the trees, so people are not walking in the street. VDOT is currently overwhelmed and will respond soon.
- p. The Diocese is celebrating its 50th Anniversary and will likely begin a capital campaign. Goals for completion will be assigned to each parish.
- q. Pope Francis is beginning a synodal process which will involve focus groups and surveys. The Diocese will furnish materials. More details will be available as it progresses.

IX. School Report – Dr. Barber

- a. While there have been a few changes, enrollment for the spring term still stands at 267. Some minor adds and drops may still occur. Maximum capacity if every grade were filled is 280 under the current protocols. She is hosting some school tours after hours.
- b. Last week two days were held as asynchronous virtual since some families were without power and communications. This week students took materials home to support next Tuesday as virtual.
- c. Two classes were quarantined. They are continuing with the existing protocols. There was hope (since dashed) that the new Governor would not cancel mask protocols in schools.
- d. Catholic Schools Week will be January 30th through February 5th.
- e. She applauds the Franciscan spirit of the Parish and staff and offered profound thanks to Fr. John and the Pastoral Council for its support.

X. Francis House – Angelica Silva

- a. Francis House personnel are visiting homes to ascertain the needs of some of the new families and purchase some household goods. Lutheran Covenant Church received a grant which they are using for rental and utility assistance.

XI. Old Business – None.

XII. New Business – The March for Life bus that the KofC had rented was cancelled and the KofC was able to get a refund of the fee.

XII. Next Meeting – The next meeting will be 19 February at 9:30 AM.

XIII. Closing Prayer – Offered by Pequitte Schwerin

XIX. Adjournment –10:15 am.