

A Catholic Community...Our Lady Queen of Peace/St. Thomas More  
Pastoral Council – Unapproved Minutes  
December 6, 2021

Members of Council Present: Christine Bochen, Peggy Clark, David Dean, Lisa Peartree, Margot Lutz

Members of Council Absent: Tim Fitzgerald, Lesly Jean-Louis, Isaiah Tolbert, Jack McIntyre

Ex Officio Present: Father Hart, Margaret Ostromecki, Dick DellaPorta

Ex Officio Absent: Jerry Strauss, Gerald Shanahan

1. Father Hart welcomed the council and David Dean said the opening prayer
2. Comments on and changes to the October 25, 2021 Meeting Minutes were proposed and moved to be accepted by Dick DellaPorta and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Lisa Peartree.
3. The Meeting Agenda was moved to be accepted by Lisa Peartree and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Dick DellaPorta.
4. Topics for Discussion:

● Synod on Synodality

- Discussion on the importance and background for the Synod – this is meant as a way for the Church to listen to the Church at all levels. In having discussions, we want to hear from everyone – especially the lay people who are active in the church and equally important, those who are not and who have left the church. We need to do our best to engage and find ways to talk with those who have felt marginalized and do not come to mass and who have “left the church”.
- How do we get in touch with the marginalized and get their input? Suggestions included reaching out to people that each of us know who have left the church and either inviting them to a listening session or talking with the one on one for their input; looking at our past roles of members and reaching out to those we have not seen in years (not just due to Covid issues);
- Reach out to the LGBTQ community, again through personal contacts
- We need to include everyone’s voices – men and women, young and old (as well as the middle)...
- Include the questions and themes as an insert in the bulletin
- Announce at Mass that we will be having listening sessions. It may be a good idea to announce this at the Christmas Masses, since this could reach a number of people who do not come to Mass routinely.
- Our next Pastoral Council meeting will be a listening session for the Synod.

● Return to in person mass

- Attendance is still increasing at both churches; we are at about 225 for weekend masses at each church.
- Live streaming is working well and we continue to hear from people around the country thanking us for this service.

● Maintenance

- Maintenance projects at both parishes are continuing in various stages. One newer ongoing project is to enclose the audio-visual equipment for live streaming in the sacristy at STM.

● Parish Finances

- Collections remain down, but expenses are also down, so we are still in good financial shape (more revenue than expenses). Importantly, even people not attending mass in person are continuing to donate.

● Catholic Ministries Appeal

- STM is currently at 56% of its goal and OLQP at 51%. We hope that we can make the goals by Christmas (which has been done in the past).

● Faith Formation Program

- Jennifer Abdalla is doing a great job and continues to make our program a success.
- We have hired Luke Nolan as administrative help for the Faith Formation program. He comes with a BA in Divinity from St. Bonaventure and is doing a great job. Jen could not be happier!
- A Trunk of Treat was held at the end of October and it was a great success – we had about 8 families present decorated thematic trunks and handed out treats to about 60 kids.

● Sacramental Prep

- We just celebrated first Reconciliation for our parish and did a good job of bringing together the 4 churches. However, unlike normal, we had very few parents participate for confession at the end of the service. We should remind parents that their participation sends a very strong positive message to the kids about the importance and value of this sacrament.
- We will split the First Eucharist program into two groups of kids for this one meeting at OLQP and one at STM and are hoping for more parental input and involvement.

● Advent and Christmas Programs

- There is an upcoming Penance Service planned that we hope will be well attended.
- Jen Abdalla says we have enough children for a pageant at each church, so we will see how this proceeds this year.

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- Pastoral Planning
  - The Diocese is very happy with our progress on this front, despite no formal planning in place.
- Assistance needed for masses
  - We continue to need ushers, counters, and lay ministers for all our masses.
  - The best way to get more will be to make announcements at masses asking for help.
- CASE Training
  - It looks like CASE training will be required for ushers and maybe other volunteers. Father Hart will keep us apprised of who needs to complete training and when, as soon as this is all worked out at the Diocesan level.

5. Closing Prayer – David Dean

The next meeting is planned for February, 2022

Respectfully submitted – David Dean