

St. Catherine of Siena Parish Council Meeting April 15, 2021

Opening prayer and attendance: The meeting, held via Zoom due to Covid virus protocols, opened with a prayer by Fr. Mark Vyverman. Also present were Scott Betzler, Gracie Kayany, Fr. Jeff Hanley, Nancy Dudasko, Barb Walters, Colleen Semler and the council's new member, Josh Fisher.

The minutes of January 12, 2021 were approved.

Fr. Mark and council members welcomed Josh.

Old business: Fr. Mark reported that the council still needs a couple of additional members, but that recruitment is limited by the current surge in Covid virus cases. The council role of president is also now vacant as is a representative to the finance council.

Finances/ Bishop's Annual Appeal: Fr. Mark said the parish is still about \$100,000 off last year at this time, although that number is holding stable. The cause is significantly lower church attendance. The diocese has given the parish a pause on its loans but the obligation will resume in July. The cost of the roof repair had to be put on to the loan from the diocese. Because of this and pending expenses such as air conditioning and parking lot maintenance, a capital campaign will probably be needed. Meanwhile, the Bishop's Annual Appeal, which last year was delayed because of Covid, has begun again. Fr. Mark

expects an appeal will be a “tough sell” this year, resulting in a deficit. That means in order to meet its obligation the parish will likely have to give back the extra it raised last year. Josh suggested that to save money on repairs, maintenance and other property expenses, volunteers be recruited from the parish.

Bringing people back to church: Josh posed the question of how the parish can draw people back to church. Fr. Mark agreed the need was great to bring people back. Although Easter mass attendance was one of the best since Covid restrictions began, he predicts the parish will lose 25 percent of its members. Compounding the problem is the lack of large enough rooms where people can meet in small groups. Most of the rooms in Marian Hall are too small for meeting under Covid safety considerations. The staff is planning to look at rooms in the Stanley Center to repurpose, but the recent surge in virus cases has delayed those plans. The resumption of gatherings will have to be done slowly, with health-related limitations such as no food, Fr. Mark said. However, planning and discussion for that time is well underway.

Nancy suggested that families and individuals could be encouraged to participate in church by offering more ministries outside regular working hours. Josh agreed that opportunities need to be open to families to have a presence in church in part

by offering that presence in the hours after school and work. Fr. Mark suggested council members begin asking our family and friends to recommend steps the parish can take to include more chances for families to be at church. Nancy suggested a survey could be used to that end.

The next council meeting date was set for June 15 at the Walters home in Lawton.

The meeting closed with a prayer by Fr. Jeff drawing on the writings of St. Catherine.

Submitted by Barb Walters, secretary