

PILGRIM CATHOLIC COLLABORATIVE

JOINT MEETING FINANCE COUNCIL AND PARISH COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES

January 20, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom

ATTENDANCE

Fr. Joe Raeke, Deacon Jonathon Jones, Deacon Dick Cussen, Deacon Jim Greer; Finance Council members: John Malloy, Pat Gallagher, Janet Romero, Joe Finks, Madeline McLaughlin, John D'Angelo, Ed Santos, Mary Harmon, Janet Ryan, Jack Franey; Parish Council members: Dan Ryan, Gini Maccaferri, Liz Lauzon, Paul Poremski, Dave Noyes, Joan Ashman

Opening Prayer

REVIEW OF ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

Fr. Joe provided a summary; overall, things went well. Hoping for greater turnout, but churches and music were beautiful and everyone was safe. Next year, there will be more advance planning on locating families for Advent Candle lighting. Fr. Joe has found someone who can help with ongoing technology and sound issues in the churches; this is a local man who was very helpful recently at both St. Peter's and St. Kateri.

SYNOD ON SYNODALITY

Pope Francis has interest in gathering people, not exclusively priests and bishops, to learn how we are as a church, i.e., strengths, struggles, etc. Surveys are being distributed and collected by the Archdiocese to begin the process. There's a need for two volunteers from the Collaborative for Synod work; let Fr. Joe know if interested.

ANALYSIS OF FINANCIALS

No questions on the financials. Jack Franey mentioned that he had seen a Town record indicating that at one point a house had been donated to Our Lady of Lourdes. Fr. Joe will look into that.

CONVERSATIONS ON THE MERGER

Fr. Joe has spoken in confidence with the Finance Council, Parish Council, and Our Lady of Lourdes Knights of Columbus and all are supportive of the prospective merger. He is in contact with Sr. Pat Boyle from the Pastoral Center, who works with Fr. Paul Soper in support of churches going through the merger process.

Fr. Joe has submitted letters to Fr. Bob Deehan, Vicar Forane and Fr. Bob Connors, Episcopal Vicar requesting their support of the merger. Once meetings with parishioners have taken place, Fr. Joe will send a letter to Cardinal Seán, requesting that the merger be approved.

The requisite financial information will be gathered and sent to the Archdiocese so that they can determine if the finances are problematic in any way; ours are in good shape so this should not be an issue. Going forward, there will be one budget for the three churches in the parish. In later discussion in

the meeting, it was agreed that this one parish budget will be shared with parishioners, in the interests of transparency and unity.

COMMUNICATION WITH PARISHIONERS

Fr. Joe will put a letter to all parishioners in the January 29/30 bulletin that will describe the merger process, what a merger and becoming one parish entails, and announcing upcoming information meetings.

Prior to the meetings, there will be a box at each of the churches to gather parishioners' questions in advance, so that they can be addressed during the meetings. Also a good idea to gather the questions online, perhaps through website, newsletter, Constant Contact.

MEETINGS WITH PARISHIONERS

There will be **two Zoom meetings: Wednesday, February 9 at 7 p.m.** (Sr. Pat will join Fr. Joe) and **Wednesday, February 16 at 7 p.m.** (Fr. Soper will join Fr. Joe). Will use Fr. Soper's Zoom account which accommodates up to 500 people. The meetings will be approximately 90 minutes in length: 45 minutes for the presentation and 45 minutes for Q. and A. In addition to questions gathered prior to the meeting, the chat function can be used to gather and answer questions that come up during the meeting, and a transcript kept.

It was suggested that a testimonial, perhaps on video, from a parishioner from another parish that has already merged be shown at the meetings, where the person describes initial concerns, what the process was like and the positive outcome. Fr. Joe has been in contact with other pastors who've recently experienced a merger and he'll ask about this – all thought it was a great idea.

Q. and A.'s can be put on the website and also distributed at the in-person meeting with parishioners, which will be held **at St. Kateri on February 20 after the 10:00 a.m. Mass.** Fr. Joe will ask Fr. Bob Connors to attend and Finance and Parish Council members are encouraged to attend also.

NAMES FOR PARISH

The process calls for us to submit three names for the new parish to the Cardinal and he will select one, which is usually the one that is at the top of the list. Restriction is that the name should not be one already in use within the Archdiocese. We generated a list of names to be offered to the parishioners who in turn will vote, and the top three will be submitted to the Cardinal. Suggestions:

- Ascension
- St. Maria Goretti
- Three Saints
- Our Holy Trinity
- Good Shepherd
- St. Teresa of Calcutta
- St. Isaac Jogues

It's suggested that a brief bio be included for the three saints in the event that parishioners are unfamiliar with them.

TIMELINE OF THE PROCESS

As outlined above, communication meetings with parishioners will be held in February, then Fr. Joe will make a presentation of the request for merger to the Presbyteral Council in March, and the approval decision from Cardinal Seán can be expected in late May or June.

In the meantime, internal work can be done in preparation, such as staff changes, report on conditions of buildings, banking arrangements, etc. Re: staff, there may not be a need to keep all three church offices open every day, and the staff may move around. For example, it has been very helpful to have Kathy Benton come to St. Peter's on Thursday.

QUESTIONS THAT MAY BE ASKED IN ZOOM SESSIONS

We generated a list of questions that may be posed by parishioners. Fr. Joe has asked that we volunteer to provide answers to one or more and send them to him. Questions about the timeline and how this has gone for other parishes can be addressed in Fr. Joe's presentation.

How will the merger affect me as a parishioner? (This may include Mass times, other Sacrament times, and the Church experience in general)

Will all church funds be combined into one account and one budget?

Will any of the churches be closed? Is this a first step toward that?

How will the programs in the various churches be affected? For example, Youth Ministry, CCD classes and others?

How will the various ministries be affected, such as the liturgical ministries of Eucharistic Ministers, Lectors, Pastoral Visitors and others? Will they all be coordinated and scheduled by one person, or by each of the three churches as we do now?

How will the staff be affected?

What will access to the church offices be like? Will they all be kept open? Where will my church records (Baptismal, Marriage, etc.) be kept?

Will there be separate phone lines, or one central phone system?

GENERAL DISCUSSION

This is the right time for a merger – buildings and facilities are in good shape and events of the past three years have brought the three churches together, for example the one daily Mass. It's expected that the great majority of people will be cooperative and supportive. It will be important to point out the benefits of the merger – the ability to realize efficiencies, hire a youth minister and facilities manager, and generally better minister to parishioners' needs.

St. Joseph Cemetery is owned by St. Peter's and operates in the red – no revenue comes in from other sources.

On the topic of Mass times – this is an issue separate from the merger and will be addressed as such. Impacts are due to Fr. Jim’s retirement to Regina Cleri, and most recently news that Fr. Gribble will be moving to New York to write a book as part of advancing the cause for sainthood of the founder of the Primitive Observants. A Capuchin priest from Jamaica Plain has offered to help. There could be some rearrangement of Mass times – more to come on this.

Closing Prayer

NEXT MEETING

February 24 at 7 p.m. on Zoom

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Ashman
Parish Council Secretary