

Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 9, 2023

CFC Room 103 7:00 pm

1. Prayer: Sandy Gollogly
2. Formation: Sandy Gollogly
3. Welcome Fr. Ignatius. Fr. Ignatius addressed the Council.
4. Review of Minutes
 - Motion to accept, seconded, and passed.
5. School Update: Yolanda Acevedo for Kimberly Parker
 - Update on temporary outage to school heating
 - Update on Catholic Schools Week activities. Review of open house, Masses, celebrations of teachers, vocations, and students.
 - Upcoming events: School visit from WUSA 9 meteorologist week of 21 Mar, International Night 27 Apr, PTPO Gala 29 Apr
6. PTPO Update: No report this month
7. Finance: Sue Heard
 - Review of response to date to the Stewardship Drive (Parish has exceeded the \$300K target, and pledges and donations are still coming in)
 - The new sound system will be installed the week of 13 Feb.
8. Commission Reports (Questions or Discussion): (Written reports received prior to the meeting)
 - Community Service: Theresa Croson
 - No additions
 - Religious Education: Andrea Kramer
 - No additions
 - Community Growth: Betsy Zolper

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- Betsy was not present, but asked Greg Ulises to pass along that she has noted interest in growth in some ministries
- Worship: Pam Burke
 - No additions, but council did discuss the parish Altar Server shortage
- Youth: Sarah Kirk
 - No additions

9. Old Business:

- Discussion of Mass attendance statistics (provided to Council in advance of the meeting and discussed during the meeting)

10. New Business:

- Discussions on additional potential outreach plans to increase Mass attendance
 - Send out mailer (card) to parishioners, using parish census/registry. Card can be used to elicit responses (status active parishioners) and also to update parishioners on upcoming events
 - Sue Heard summarized a plan to conduct a series of School/CCD Masses and social events focused on youth, students, and Sunday RE students, and their families (she will submit this to Fr. Pat for his review and approval – the Council unanimously supported this plan)
 - Targeted outreach to newcomer families of school students
 - Fr. Ignatius described his own efforts in his home parish to re-energize the parish and increase Mass attendance post-COVID. He noted the need for all Parishioners to be “bearers of good news.”
- Discussed stand up of Fri Lenten meals to build community and strengthen outreach
- Discussed efforts to start up the design, construction, and remodeling efforts for new parish bathrooms

11. Eyes and Ears

- No reports this month

12. Closing Prayer: Father Pat

Meeting ends at 8:30

Next Meeting: March 9, 2023 C103 7:00 PM

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To: St. Mark Pastoral Council

From: Theresa Croson
Service Commission Representative

Date: February 6, 2023

Re: Service Ministry Report for February 9, 2023 Meeting

Adoptions for the Giving Tree: Mary Lou McIntire reported that the Special Family Adoptions for the Giving Tree in early December provided Christmas gifts and gift cards for 60 foster children in Fairfax County; and Family Pass donations provided 50 people each with a \$50 gift card.

English as a Second Language (ESL): Monica O'Keefe reported that the St. Mark ESL program started its Winter/Spring term of ESL for adults on Jan. 17 with a total of 70 in-person students and 6 Zoom students on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. This term we have students from 30 countries. The largest contingents are from Guatemala, China, Egypt, Korea and Brazil. St Mark ESL has over 50 volunteers, who, besides teaching and assisting in the classrooms, help with various administrative duties such as outreach and translations.

Matthew 25: Bill Grossman reported that the Narthex will be beaming with opportunities to “give” during Lent through Rice Bowls; the Lenten Cross; and Matthew 25 donated items for the Lamb Center and FamilyPASS.

Social Action Linking Together (SALT): As reported by John Horejsi, there was a recent article in the Washington Post conveying that after many years, Virginia is seriously considering ending solitary confinement for those imprisoned in state facilities.

Thanksgiving Clothes Drive: Paul Renard reported that no updates are expected on the TCD until July.

Hot Meals (FACETS): Dave Kent reported that this past January, we had 20 volunteers that helped with preparing 110 hot chicken pasta meals for the homeless.

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Religious Education Report for February 2023

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION WEEK

The week of February 12-18, *ST. MARK* will celebrate a week dedicated to the students, parents, volunteers, catechists, and staff who are involved in the RE program at the parish. This initiative, proposed by our parish bookkeeper Mary Ann Dmochowski and encouraged by Fr. Pat, takes as its pattern “Catholic Schools Week” and is the first of its kind at this parish and perhaps any parish to highlight the work of Religious Education to RE families and the entire parish community. The RE Commission saw potential benefits of promoting such a week to foster community in the parish and develop awareness of the RE program.

RE families will have a Mardi Gras/Super Bowl-themed potluck brunch on February 12 before Sunday morning classes. There will be a Dining 4 Dollars event on Wednesday, February 15 at Foster’s Grille in Vienna, with proceeds going to High School and Middle School WorkCamp. RE families are also encouraged to come for the annual spaghetti dinner on February 18.

CLASS MASS INITIATIVE

In an effort to develop community in the parish and between SMCS and RE families, Sue Heard has organized sets of two or three grades to attend the same Sunday Mass together and then gather for refreshments afterwards, which will be provided by the families themselves. The first such Class Mass event is anticipated to occur late March.

SACRAMENTS

FIRST PENANCE AND EUCHARIST: Most children preparing for their FIRST EUCHARIST made their FIRST PENANCE as part of a communal service held on December 3. On January 18, Fr. Pat delivered a talk at the FIRST EUCHARIST Parent Evening: “The Eucharist *is* Jesus.” Families will next attend their choice of two identical FIRST EUCHARIST Family Workshops on February 19 and March 12.

RCIA: Three people entered the catechumenate through the Rite of Acceptance held at the 11 am Mass on January 29. Please pray for Jennifer, April and Andrew.

ADULT FAITH FORMATION

The Alpha series, which, since the beginning of the school year, has served as the adult faith formation program on Sunday mornings 9:30-10:45 am (during children’s RE), wrapped up February 5. Members from this Sunday Alpha series are discussing the possibility of forming a small group to continue their work. Beginning in late February, a speaker series will begin for the adult formation program. On February 26, Michelle Haworth from *Commissioned by Christ* will discuss mission trips; on March 5, Deacon John will give a

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talk on Liturgy of The Hours; and on March 12, Bill Dalgetty will present a talk on being Christ in the workplace. CAINA, an organization that provides talks to parishes at no cost, will be presenting talks on Lourdes and its miraculous cures on March 26 and Eucharistic miracles on April 16. The last two RE Sunday programs are in the works and a complete schedule will be published when those talks are confirmed.

A new bible study entitled "Follow Me: Meeting Jesus in the Gospel of John" began January 25 and 26 with both a Wednesday and Thursday session option. The usual Tuesday class was moved to Wednesdays to better suit people's schedules. This is an 8-session study concluding before Holy Week that utilizes 35-minute videos presented by Dr. Edward Sri. These Bible studies continue to meet through Zoom.

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February 2023 Community Growth Report

Always Our Children (AOC): ministry for LGBTQ folks, their families and friends, continues to meet every other month via Zoom. Our mission remains to offer encouragement and support to this community. We strive to stay current with pronouncements, information or commentary, whether pro or con, from Pope Francis and other credible sources, which might have an impact on our LGBTQ community. We are especially interested in the work of the upcoming Synod of Bishops. Our last two meetings this ministry year will be held on March 13th and May 8th. For the Zoom sign-in information, please contact Mary Purdy at 703-385- 9572.

Bakers for Funerals: Bakers for funeral receptions baked for 1 reception in December and 4 in January.

Bereavement Programs: Winter Grief Gathering - The Winter Grief Gathering was held at Turner Farmhouse on December 11, and 18 guests and facilitators came for a holiday potluck afternoon. We sang, prayed and shared stories.

Bereavement Program - The Winter series started up on January 8, with 12 to 15 guests attending. The sessions will run through March 5, with a 1/2 day retreat on March 4, held at Turner Farmhouse. The Spring series will start on April 16 and go through June 11, with a 1/2 day retreat on June 10.

Care for Our Common Home Ministry (CCH) The St. Mark Mary Garden is an approved St. Kateri Habitat. See St. Kateri Habitats around the world [here](#) . Research for replacement plants for Mary Garden has begun. Crystal secured reimbursement for plants that were mistakenly removed. Mrs. Parker is interested in the Clean Air Initiative, formerly "No Idling Campaign". Meeting date of CCH, Mrs. Parker, school representatives and Karen Asta to be determined. Used pill bottle collection planned for Earth Day.

Christians in Commerce (CIC): No February update

Donut Sunday: St Mark School sponsored donut Sunday during Catholic Schools week.

Coffee and Community: Emily Dalgetty, a 36 year old member of St. Mark who happens to have Down syndrome started the Coffee and Community ministry in October on Tuesday and Thursday mornings and it has been very successful. Our hope was that it would give Emily purpose and fill the void of losing her 12-year job at a bakery during Covid. Our other hope was that it would bless the parishioners of St. Mark's to get to know a person with a disability and see her fun and happy personality...and her capabilities! Not only has she made many new friends from the regulars who go to daily mass, but also the parish staff and RE staff who come by too. Emily and I make cookies and brownies to go with the coffee and tea and some of the parishioners are also helping us out with that by contributing their baking skills too. She does all the set up on her own. We hired her former peer mentor from PVI to be her coach, and she (Megan Battle) makes the coffee and pour it into the carafes (total time about 2 hours).

The parishioners who come enjoy visiting over some refreshments, and not only getting to know Emily, but to know themselves better. I substituted one day when Megan couldn't be there and a widow and widower were sharing very personal, tender things about how they met their spouses, their courtships and marriages, and their grief when their spouse died. It truly has become a small community. Emily sat and listened to it all and I thought—she brought these people together! A blessing for her, them, and us, her parents! We so grateful for Fr. Pat's and Bill Grossman's support and wanted the council to know how great it is to help someone, who in turn, blesses others.

Evangelization Ministry ALPHA:

We are putting together the plan for the next series during Lent and when the RE session ends. Ideas include Following Christ, Sharing Christ, or another Lenten program. We always welcome new participant's from within and outside the parish to join Alpha as a participant or as a helper or host for those who have completed Alpha. For more information, contact Karen Asta at 703-489-0826 or karenjasta@gmail.com

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Funeral Receptions: One funeral reception in December, 4 in January.

Knights of Columbus (Santa Maria Council): The Knights have been working hard to serve the community. Here is our activity for the past few months: We enjoyed serving your November doughnut social and meeting the congregation! We provided six boxes of 12 coats for youth as part of your fall clothing drive. This is part of our **Coats for Kids** effort that takes place every fall. We enjoyed providing Christmas Cards in December in our **Keep Christ in Christmas** effort. We also assembled a creche at our hall in Vienna.

Students at St Mark (middle school) are eligible to participate in our citizenship essay contest. Information will be distributed by English class. The winner receives \$250.

We are taking nominations for family of the month, young man/young woman of the year, and Knight of the Year. Information is on our website at Knightsvienna.org. Speaking of families of the month, from St. Mark, our recognized family for December was Rick and Pamela Burkes.

Nestor and Mayumi Folta are joining me at the Polar Plunge on February 18 at Lessylvania State Park. We will go into the freezing Potomac River to raise funds for Special Olympics. If you want to contribute, go here: <https://impact.specialolympicsva.org/team/457254>

Coming up: we will lead a discussion series for Lent, **Into the Breach**, which explores Catholic manhood and how to deal with the challenges of the current day. Sessions start the week of Ash Wednesday. Email Bill Hemmingson at bhemmingson@gmail.com to join or for more information.

Our **Mass for unborn children** is March 25, 7 pm at OLGC. This is the Knights' International Day of the Unborn Child. **KOVAR** is our annual drive to raise funds for the intellectually disabled, providing transportation, group homes, and other assistance. We get our drive going at OLGC at the end of April.

Le Cercle Francais: Continues to meet via Zoom Tuesday from 10 to 12 and converse en Francais.

MOMs Ministry: No February update.

Family Movie Night Ministry: We have been placing a sign-up list as people enter to gather names and email addresses for an email distribution list that gets reminded about the upcoming movie nights, and we're now seeing some "regulars" who attend each month. The December movie, *Arthur Christmas*, although lightly attended was much enjoyed with the addition of special ice cream flavors and door prizes of Nativity-themed books. The January movie, *Sonic the Hedgehog 2*, was our first at which a youth ministry Spirit Team signed up to provide service hours; the teens learned to make coffee, helped scoop and serve ice cream, and chatted with moviegoers. The February movie date fell so close after the January one that we made it one of the periodic adults-only movie nights, showing the 2021 remake of *West Side Story*. The wine and cheese social beforehand was particularly popular, as 20 adults attended the evening's activities and clearly craved the fellowship with other ST. MARK adults. Our next monthly family movie night will be on Friday, March 17 so we're looking at family-friendly movies with an Irish theme or setting. All are welcome to the Activities Center for ice cream at 6:30 pm and movie at 7:00 pm.

Newcomer's Committee: Next date is April 23rd. I would like to include new families attending ST. MARK school.

Prayer Requests: We continue to receive many prayer requests that are sent out to our 150+ prayer volunteers.

Peace and Justice Committee (PJC): Not meeting.

Prayer Shawl Ministry: Our group Prayer Shawl Ministry, was able to donate more in December 2022, thanks for the Sue Heard's kindergarten students, school parents and your help. The Giving Tree (Hope, A Woman's Choice, Second Story, CHO clothes closet, Bethany House, Mother of light center, Shelter house), The Lamb Center and Reston Shelter. Total Donations for 2022- Hats -76, Scarves -58, Hat & scarf set - 44, Shawls -24 (plus more taken

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by Bill Grossman to several organization and shawls in bin by Parish office), Baby blanket -24, Lapghan -17, Gloves -2.

In January, one of our group members showed us a small tote bag to make for the nursing home, she will share the pattern this month. We have 11 in our group now.

Praying College Moms (PCM): group met in the month of January and will meet this week for February. We are reading together, **“What to Say and How to Say It; A Catholic’s guide to answering Faith questions”**. Each meeting involves prayer, and fellowship. We meet once a month for March, April, May, and take a break for the summer months.

The **PCM org** had a board meeting on Jan 23. We are seeking new leadership for the continuance of this non-profit organization. If not met by April 19, the non-profit status will end, and each existing group will just exist as a local ministry within their parishes.

A new initiative has begun at St John Neumann’s. There will be a PCM sponsored Rosary walk, after the 12:00 Mass, each month on the First Friday, followed by lunch and fellowship. The first began last Friday, Feb. 3. Planning has begun for an **Open House Picnic** on May 6, at St. John Neumann. This will be an opportunity for Moms with young adults ages 17- 31, to learn about the Ministry/organization, meet other Moms, and for fellowship. A PCM Parish-based group in Alexandria, continues to meet weekly to say the Rosary, and for fellowship. Respectively Submitted by Frances Chamberlin. Member of the PCM Organization

Pro-Life Committee (PLC): Seeking new chair.

Remembrance Ministry: The Remembrance Mass was held on November 2. Over 100 names were read aloud in remembrance of loved ones who died this year. Since then, the RM continues to send out cards and condolence notes to those who have lost a loved one. We continue our membership at around 8-10 people..

Senior Ministry (M&M’s): M & M Activity as requested for November- January; and Activity plans for February and March.

Nov 16 ~. 22 M & M’s and guest, Fr Ignatius gathered at the Pan Am Family Restaurant on Nutley St in Fairfax for a Thanksgiving Lunch.

Dec 7 - After Mass Coffee; Jan 4 - After Mass Coffee

Jan 25th - 22 M&M’s gathered in the Activity Center for the first Pot Luck Lunch since Jan, 2020.

This was on the occasion of the 13th Anniversary of the M&M Ministry

Feb 1 - 22 M&M’s gathered for After Mass Coffee. Guest Speaker, Deacon John Allen spoke on “The Liturgy of The Hours”.

Future Activity Plans:

Feb 14. - Valentine Lunch at Ristorante Bonaroti in Vienna

Feb 21 - Shrove Tuesday Pancake Breakfast in the Activity after 9:15 Mass

Mar 1 - After Mass Coffee

Mar 12 - Sponsoring Donut Sunday

Mar 15 - St Patrick’s Day Lunch at the Auld Shebeen in Fairfax

Small Communities of Faith now Small Group (SG): Julie Scott, the new Small Groups Coordinator, is working to reinvigorate the small groups at St. Mark. We are making a push to get new groups created for Lent. We made a flyer to distribute after mass on Feb 12, and to put in the bulletin. We hope Fr. Pat will promote the push during his next few homilies as well. I also spoke at the last Alpha session for the RE parents on Feb 5 and encouraged them to continue meeting as part of a small group. We are looking for events where we can have a table and flyers to advertise. If you have ideas, let me know. Juliescott2010@gmail.com.

Welcome and Information Desk: Shall we recruit volunteers?

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Worship/Liturgy Commission

The Children's Liturgy has resumed and is occurring during the 11:00 Sunday Mass. There are about 30 children attending. There are a couple volunteers and are working on a schedule and making sure it gets into Father's notes to be read up at the appropriate time,

Lectors are working well and masses have been having 3 lectors/mass.

Liturgical Arts made it through the Advent/Christmas season. Big thank you to the Ushers who built the creche and setup and took down the star on the Church. We need more help next year. We will work closely with the PTO and see if we can get some dads to help climb ladders to set up the star. Flowers arrangements will be back in church until Lent begins.

Extraordinary Ministers need additional people to help distribute communion. They also need to be sure they are meeting the needs of parishioners who are unable to attend mass.

Altar Servers need help!!!! There is no lead to coordinate this. Laura is filling in until a volunteer is found for this. Perhaps someone from the school since that is where the

The Usher ranks are growing at some masses and are able to allow for 'Even' and 'Odd' month teams. Some masses are short staffed.

There are no wedding scheduled.

Liturgy Coordinators are doing well.

Advent/Christmas Recap

The Lessons and Carols program was excellent. Attendance could have been better. We'd like to hold this again next year and perhaps, invite neighboring churches.

The concert with the cellist was terrific and well attended. There were many school families present.

The Communal Penance service went well. John Kuchenbrod is writing documentation for set-up.

Attendance at our Christmas Eve masses was much better than last year! 800 in the church, 380 in the Gym and 150 in the Activity Center. There were no EM's in the Activity Center. There was discussion about perhaps not having a 5:00 mass in the Activity Center. We'll see how attendance is this year and if the various Worship committees have enough volunteers to adequately staff all our masses. The children singing in the Narthex before mass was appreciated.

There was discussion that the 4th Sunday of Advent this year, is Christmas Eve! Quick turnaround for Liturgical Arts to arrange poinsettias and change the arras in church!

Upcoming:

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Ash Wednesday is 2/22 and masses will be 6:15 and 9:15 am and 5:30 and 7:30 pm The Healing Mass is 2/28 at 7:30 pm

There was discussion as to when we would be able to resume receiving Communion under both species. The consensus was this is still a time of various illnesses and we do not have enough EM's to have the happen. We will revisit this in the spring if Father asks us to. There was discussion about distributing communion by intinction and it was agreed this would not work. We would have to sanitize because communion would need to be distributed by tongue and we do not have enough altar servers to be at each station holding patens.

Baptisms will resume 4/22 at masses.

A parishioner asked if it was possible to alternate between the Nicene and Apostles creed.

It was noticed that some pews are cracking, especially a rear handicap pew.

Liturgy planners will meet 2/13 to discuss Lent and Easter liturgies.

Youth

Middle School (MS):

OLGC vs St Mark in bowling- nearly 60 attended on Feb 3.

Annual Ski Trip is now at Bryce Resort. OLGC and St Mark joining together again
On Feb 20.

MS WorkCamp will be at St Mark this summer July 5-8 with 4 other parishes.

MS BASH is April 22 at Bishop O'Connell HS. Attendance required for candidates going thru confirmation. Current 8th grade are excused since they attended a NET retreat last year. 6th and 7th grade youth and parents have been advised that they can choose to attend this year or wait until next year.

Attending BASH at least once is now a requirement and has been reinstated.

Attendance will be logged on spreadsheet.

High School:

10 WorkCampers are signed up for this summer's Diocesan WC in Winchester.

Bingo Fundraiser is on March 18.

Mulch Fundraiser is on March 25.

Steubenville Conference this year will be July 14-16. 13 other parishes will be joining St Mark. Taking two buses.

CYO:

BB is running fine and Cheer in it's inaugural year, has 13 youth. They cheer at St Mark BB games.

Track and Field plus Volleyball will be starting up soon.

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