

## Pastoral Council Meeting Draft Minutes

Thursday, June 08, 2023

Room C-103 7:00 pm

- 1) Prayer: Greg Ulses
- 2) Formation Greg Ulses
- 3) Review Minutes
  - a) Move to accept made, seconded, and approved.
- 4) School Update Yolanda Acevedo
  - a) Schedule: Graduation went well. Tomorrow is the last day for students, next week is the last day for teachers, and the administration is year round.
  - b) Generally keeping inside due to the poor air quality conditions
  - c) Next academic year
    - i) Faculty: Looking for a 3rd grade and two 5th grade teachers with specialties in music, middle school math, and computers. Interview process continues but the challenge is to find qualified candidates, as there is heavy competition for these teachers from schools in both the private and public sectors. We pay 80% of the county teacher salaries but have smaller classes and fewer behavioral issues.
    - ii) Enrollment: Grades K-8 will have two sections each and is full with 350 students. The preschool will have one section for 3-year olds and one section for 4-year olds, with 25 in total.
    - iii) Dates (approximates): New teachers begin August 14th, all other teachers on August 21st.
- 5) PTPO Update Yolanda Acevedo for Lisa Wise
  - a) PTPO is having 2023-24 officer elections
  - b) Fall festival plans underway
  - c) School proposal under consideration of ending the school day at 1 pm on Mondays: Teacher survey shows favorable response, will survey parents next. The present schedule is 7:55 am to 3:45 pm, thereby making after school hours meetings not a viable option. An early release on Mondays would allow for some doctor/dentist appointments to be scheduled without missing class time, but it may cause problems with after school care arrangements.
- 6) Finance Dave Vickers and Sean Moynihan

- a) Shared preliminary draft of fiscal year 2024 budget with comparison to concluding year's budget. Nothing has been formally recommended to Fr. Pat at this point of time. Projecting a \$300K operational loss in fiscal 2024, similar to what was budgeted last year though through the stewardship program an additional \$40 to 80K was raised plus a one-time benefactor gave \$215K. Fiscal 2024 includes raises for staff, parochial vicar, etc. There is no projected increase in the regular offertory collection. The challenges against the budget: inflation, attendance, and collections.
  - b) Not in the budget is the money earmarked for capital improvements, where there is currently \$600K saved in accounts of which \$450 is specifically for the bathroom renovation project. These funds come from the green envelopes or specific gifts. In the planning stages, but normally \$250K is spent per year on the aging buildings and power plants. The industrial dishwasher in the activities center is no longer functional; options are being considered to replace this machine (it has been with us since 1984!). In terms of the bathroom improvement project, we are considering a loan from the diocese so that the entire capital improvement budget is not exhausted and allows flexibility to make other decisions.
- 7) Commission Reports (Questions or Discussion): Written reports received Tuesday of week of meeting
- a) Community Service: Theresa Croson
    - i) No questions or additions
  - b) Religious Education: Andrea Kramer
    - i) No questions or additions
  - c) Community Growth: Betsy Zolper
    - i) No questions or additions
  - d) Worship: Pam Burke
    - i) Nine new altar servers at first training session; three additional altar servers signed up
    - ii) Some hesitancy in using the Sign-Up online service
    - iii) Diocesan "Battle of the Altar Servers" is upcoming.
  - e) Youth: Sarah Kirk
    - i) Joined the 4th Annual Arlington Camino, a 34.5-mile walk especially for teens to offer prayers for seminarians and vocations.
- 8) Old Business:
- a) Increasing altar server participation (Greg) - covered in Worship

9) New Business:

a) St. Mark Stewardship Brochure (Tom)

Joint Pastoral Council and Financial Council project; Bill and Sandy to coordinate. It will be a four-color brochure telling about who we are, what we do, and how we do it, and will include something on how to donate. Please have a copy ready by the middle of July to enter into the editing and review process. The Commissions and School are asked to help put together the information about what their commission does, success stories, personal testimonials or personal interest, and PICTURES!

10) Eyes and Ears

a) Liver cancer patient in need of a type O healthy donor

b) Viva Vienna was packed with all ages. Only one parish is seen having a vendor booth. Might not be the place to invite someone to the church, considering the hectic pace and everything that is going on; great music but everything is happening quickly and in short bits. The Rotary Club-sponsored competition at Viva Vienna had resulted in St. Mark students winning 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place in the essay contests (7th grade level).

c) On the Catholic high school placement test, three St. Mark school students scored in the 99 percentile.

d) Zoom conversation one night a week for ESL students to practice conversation during the summer. This is voluntary and there is no charge.

e) Arlington Herald Family Fun Night: The first one is at St. John's in Leesburg. Volunteers will take care of younger children. The post-Mass pizza dinner will provide a social and celebratory scenario but may substitute a food truck for pizza. At least five events have plans available.

Great way of engaging young families, so check with Bill Grossman about timing

11) Closing Prayer: Father Pat

**Meeting ends at 8:14**

**Next Meeting: September 21, 2023 C-103 7:00 pm**

St. Mark Pastoral Council providing Father Pat with knowledgeable and prudent consultation by investigating thoroughly, reflecting deeply, and formulating practical conclusions to pastoral matters.

To: St. Mark Pastoral Council

From: Theresa Croson  
Service Commission Representative

Date: June 5, 2023

Re: Service Ministry Report for June 8, 2023 Meeting

Bishop's Lenten Appeal: Throughout this EASTER Season, Bishop Burbidge reminded us that it was never too late to make a donation to the BLA. Wonderful works are being accomplished through the many ministries of our Diocese by uniting our Catholic family through the support of many important and necessary programs, ministries and services that no single individual or parish could possibly offer by itself. In reinforcement of sharing the Good News, parishioners were encouraged to demonstrate through action and deeds of offering pledges to the BLA at: [www.arlingtondiocese.org/bla](http://www.arlingtondiocese.org/bla)

Creation Care Corner – The topic this past week is “Protect Pollinators.” Bees, butterflies, and other key pollinators are necessary for most of our major food crops. Honey bees pollinate 80 percent of all flowering plants alone, including more than 130 types of fruits and vegetables. Unfortunately, bee populations have dropped alarmingly across North America, as have the populations of many other pollinator species. They are in serious decline due to exposure to parasites, pesticides, disease, habitat loss and other environmental contaminants. If we all dedicate just a small area to protecting habitats for pollinators, using native plants and sustainable gardening practices, we can help safeguard our common home. It is suggested to limit pesticide use and consider following these tips to start your own pollinator garden at: [www.fws.gov/story/how-build-pollinator-garden](http://www.fws.gov/story/how-build-pollinator-garden)

Also plant trees! They clean our air, protect our drinking water, provide food and habitat for animals. Studies show they even improve our mental health. Trees also absorb the CO2 that contributes to global warming and release oxygen back into the air. In one year, an acre of mature trees absorbs the amount of CO2 produced by a car driven 26,000 miles. Planting trees also helps prevent soil erosion, increases land fertility and can add value to your property. Trees that provide shade can also significantly reduce your energy bills. When selecting trees, choose native types to support local wildlife. Spring and fall can be good times to plant. For more information: [www.arboday.org/trees](http://www.arboday.org/trees)

Hot Meals (FACETS): Dave Kent reported that on May 22, Facets prepared 130 chicken pasta meals, which also included hard boiled eggs, cookies, oranges, rolls, milk and water. They had about 20 volunteers that shopped, cooked and delivered these meals.

Matthew 25 - ST. MARK partnered with Catholic Charities to collect fruit and vegetables for the St. Lucy Food Warehouse, in Manassas, VA through May 31, 2023. Donated food was taken to where the greatest need throughout our Diocese to help struggling families attain healthy diets.

Every month, ST MARK volunteers prepare a complete chicken dinner for delivery to hungry neighbors at the Embry Rucker Family Shelter. Volunteers are needed to cook food at home from a set menu, then place them in the ST MARK Activities Center kitchen. Most volunteers sign up 3 or 4 times a year. It's easy to sign up online for any job that is needed; just with the volunteer's name and email. If you're not a cook, no problem! A driver is needed each month to deliver all the food to the shelter in Reston on the first Thursday of the month. Volunteers can go to the “Sign Up Genius” located on the Service page of ST MARK's website:

[www.stmark.org](http://www.stmark.org); or call Diane at 703-620-0269; or email [stmarkgiftofpeace@gmail.com](mailto:stmarkgiftofpeace@gmail.com)

English as a Second Language (ESL) – As reported by Monica O’Keefe, the last term of ESL ended on May 4, 2023. The next ESL term will comprise of running a small, free Conversation Program via Zoom on Tuesday evenings from June 27 to July 25. Later in the summer, the ESL staff will begin recruiting additional new volunteers as well as advertising for students who want to attend the ESL program.

Panhandling during weekend Masses at ST. MARK - Panhandling can be found in most areas of our county, even here on our Church Grounds. While we may get a good feeling by providing money to a panhandler, the reality is that panhandlers who are truly in need require more resources than small amounts of money. The good news is that our county has many services and staff dedicated to helping those in need. But we need our parishioner’s help: We encourage everyone to not give money to panhandlers. Why? Because giving money to panhandlers encourages more panhandling. Donations of cash will not help solve the underlying reasons why someone panhandles. Refer panhandlers – or anyone you see who may be in need – to our country's social services programs. We have a wide range of services and housing resources. For more information, please call the human services hotline phone number at 703-222-0880.

Recycle Old Eyeglasses - A box for depositing eyeglasses through the Vienna (Host) Lions Club is located in the lobby of the Cassidy Activities Center. These glasses are thoroughly washed and calibrated by the Lions, then packaged for shipment to countries in need. When health fairs are held in these countries, people are so grateful for the opportunity of having their eyes examined by doctors and then given these glasses. They come on foot from miles around and stand in exhaustingly long lines for hours to receive this great gift provided by each of you who donate your old glasses. (The Lions also collect hearing aids.)

Shepherd’s Center of Oakton-Vienna - The Shepherd Center is looking for volunteers to help our senior adult community. You may know of older adults who can no longer drive and have no one around to help them get from place to place. The Shepherd Center is asking for volunteer drivers to help transport these elderly individuals to necessary and important places, essential to living life in the suburbs of the Vienna/Oakton region of Northern Virginia. Volunteer Drivers pick up riders and take them to medical appointments, the grocery store, the pharmacy, the bank, and other necessary places. Volunteer drivers are scheduled based on their own availability. The SCOV is also in need of Volunteer Office Workers. Share your talents and time, and reap the rewards of service. Anyone wishing to volunteer for this important ministry is asked to contact the Volunteer Coordinator at 703-281-0538 or [volunteer@scov.org](mailto:volunteer@scov.org).

A Woman’s Choice (AWC) - The AWC is a Pro-Life center in Herndon, that is sponsoring a “Baby Bottle Blitz” the weekend of June 3/4. Plastic baby bottles were given out after all Masses for them to be filled with coins, cash, or checks to help defray the cost of childcare necessities that new parents often need, as well as free pregnancy testing and counseling, offering life-giving solutions. The goal is to turn every crisis pregnancy into the joyous event that it should be. AWC provides transportation to and from doctors’ visits and assistance with prenatal care and delivery as needed. They also provide women with maternity clothes, cribs, strollers, clothes for their infants and young children, car seats, diapers, and formula to help relieve the financial pressure pregnancy brings. Please return the baby bottles the following weekend of June 10/11. The AWC can be contacted directly at their website at: [www.AWomansChoiceCenter.com](http://www.AWomansChoiceCenter.com)

# Religious Education Report for June 2023

## **SACRAMENTS**

The Sacrament of CONFIRMATION was celebrated on May 18 by Archbishop Timothy Broglio of the Archdiocese for the Military Services. There were 79 Confirmandi from our parish, most of whom were 8<sup>th</sup> graders but there were a few high schoolers this year. In addition, the archbishop gave a special blessing to some 8<sup>th</sup> graders who had been CONFIRMED as infants.

After completing their preparation through the RCIA process, two adult Catholics celebrated the Sacrament of CONFIRMATION at the 9 am Mass on Pentecost Sunday, May 28. Fr. Pat presided.

## **ADULT FAITH FORMATION**

Mark Morneau is in the midst of leading the current Zoom Bible study with two sessions: Wednesdays at 7:30 pm and Thursdays at 10 am. The study is using the Ascension Press video series called “Uncovering the Biblical Foundations of Catholicism: Part One – Called into His Presence.” This Bible study concludes June 28 and 29.

## **VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL**

This summer’s VBS is “Stellar,” a space-themed faith adventure that we will hold July 17-21. We are still in great need of adult volunteers and are actively recruiting. A registration link for both volunteers and campers/participants has been running in the bulletin.

## **CHILDREN’S RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

The parish is recruiting potential RE Catechists, Assistant Catechists, and High School Assistants for the 2023-24 school year. We are thrilled that some new people have stepped up already!

## June 2023 Community Growth Report

**Always Our Children (AOC):** No June update.

**Bakers for Funerals:** Baked for one funeral in April.

**Bereavement Program** - Bereavement Spring Program is wrapping up, with a 1/2 day retreat on Saturday, June 10, and a final meeting on June 11.

**Summer Grief Gathering** - June 25, 3:30 - 5 at Turner Farmhouse, 10609 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls, Va

**Fall Bereavement Program** starts August 20 and runs through October 15, Sundays 3:30 - 5 at St. Mark, with a 1/2 Day Retreat on October 14 at Turner Farmhouse.

**Winter Grief Gathering** - December 10, 3:30 - 5 at Turner Farmhouse, 10609 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls, Va

**Care for Our Common Home Ministry (CCH)** On May 21<sup>st</sup> Sarah Kurush talked about the wide array of tax credits and rebates available for things like electric vehicles, solar panels, appliances, new doors and windows. Found out that this also works for non-profits. On May 30<sup>th</sup> we had a talk in the Mary Garden about their history, plants symbolically related to Mary and the role of native plants. Will work with Cathy Abi-Khattar on sustainability at the Fall Festival and sponsor an essay contest with selected school students and possibly RE students during the Season of Creation.

**Christians in Commerce (CIC):** No June update

**Donut Sunday:** No June update.

**Coffee and Community (CAC):** Emily will continue Coffee and Community through the summer. Her sisters gave her a new "uniform" to wear.

**Evangelization Ministry ALPHA:** The Alpha team sponsored a new series called "The Search" from Augustine Institute using Formed. The Search is a 7 session program that begins with prayer, dinner, a short video followed by fellowship and sharing in small groups. We are meeting weekly in the Cassidy Activity Center and on Zoom contemplating "What Do You Seek?", Who are You?, Why a God?, Who is Jesus?, Am I Saved, and Why a Church? We will continue with an Alpha sponsored event throughout the summer.

**Funeral Receptions:** One reception in April.

**Knights of Columbus (Santa Maria Council):** No June update

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

Francais. **MOMs Ministry:** Inactive.

**Movie Night Ministry:** The May movie night was the last one before a summer hiatus, as it is too bright in the CAC to view the movie screen with the late sunsets at this time of year. This first year of resuming movies since the start of the pandemic was a good opportunity for fellowship and met a need for community and connection. Attendance was especially strong from our parish school families. Movies will resume in September under the same leadership.

**Newcomers' Committee:** We will gear up in September for the fall Newcomers' Lunch October 22. We do hope to have a poster with the dates at the Fall festival on display.

**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) will continue to make hats, scarves, shawl etc. to donate to the Giving Tree and other organizations. We will discuss what we can knit or crochet to help others. Will the students and parents help us again this year with yarn? It helped our group a lot, we were able to donate more to other organizations and the Giving Tree.

**Praying College Moms (PCM)** The Praying College Moms are not meeting until September. We have secured a new team to continue the PCM organization's non-profit status. The final book cover has been designed for the new book by Mary Beth Harper, for parents of young adults just going off to college, military, training schools..."A Tool book for Parents with Young Adults." It will be offered at College Bookstores, and "other" bookstores, as well as from Amazon. We're hoping to see it out by August! Respectively submitted, by Frances Chamberlin

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

**Remembrance Ministry (RM):** Remembrance Ministry continues to send cards and notes of condolence to those who have lost loved ones. In September, we will start our planning for the annual Mass of Remembrance in November.

**Senior Ministry (M&M's):** No June update.

**Small Communities of Faith now Small Group (SG):** No June update.

**Welcome and Information Desk:** Shall we recruit volunteers?



## **Worship/Liturgy Commission**

No new report this month. If another commission meeting occurs this Summer Pam will provide separate report to the Council.

### **Youth**

Summary of planned Summer activities from Kevin Flores

**Youth & Family Mass for June - HS Class of 2023 dinner and blessing - June 11**

**HS WorkCamp - June 17-23**

**College Night - June 28**

**MS WorkCamp - July 5-8**

**Mass & Breakfast Tuesdays July 11&25**

**Steubenville Conference July 14-16**

**VBS - July 17-21**

**Splashdown - July 21**

**Kings Dominion Day - July 26**

**World Youth Day - July 28 thru August 7**