

## **Pastoral Council Meeting Final Minutes**

**Thursday, October 19, 2023**

**Room C-103 7:00 pm**

1. Prayer: Sarah Kirk
2. Formation Theresa Croson
3. Review Minutes Approved with typographical corrections to be made.
4. School Update Gabriela Parks
  - a. Student representatives at the Thomas Jefferson Intermediate Math Open: 35 schools participated. Teams with St. Mark students finished 1st, 2nd, and 3rd in different categories. The overall winning team had a St. Mark member.
  - b. Girls confirmation retreat: Very positive feedback from students on the speakers being wonderful. Carrying the impact of the retreat back into the school building.
  - c. Class Masses: Outcome is amazing and discussions abound. Next dates are on October 29 (Fourth and Fifth grade) and December 10 (Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth grade; will be the 6 PM Youth and Family Mass with dinner afterward).
  - d. All staff positions have been filled with one exception: the music teacher position is still vacant.
  - e. Kim Parker learned at a principals meeting that all diocesan schools have lower enrollment in preK this year.
  - f. The school is inviting veterans to speak on November 8 at 8:25 am. It starts with an all school

assembly, followed by breakouts into classrooms. Mrs. West is the point of contact.

5. PTPO Update Malia Collins

- a. Rebecca Bordner (President of the PTPO) will be alternating liaison duties to the Pastoral Council with Malia Collins, due to scheduling conflicts,
- b. Class ambassadors for homeroom teachers (1 or 2 parents to help plan and communications)
- c. Stock the Lounge - a gift from the 8th grade
- d. Trunk or Treat: Next Thursday 5:30-7:30 pm. Pre-order pizza if you want some. Decorate your car trunk, bring candy to give away! Trick or treating for the children plus prizes for decorations!
- e. Dining for Dollars: planned for November 14

6. Finance Sue Heard

- a. Everything is going well and the budget is okay.
- b. Restroom construction is moving along with plans for a major renovation of the upstairs ones being done first, starting soon. The downstairs ones will be done after, roughly two weeks later. As a little renovation, the Bride's Bathroom will have a changing table added and made wheelchair accessible.
- c. There are 96 new spaces now available in the Memorial Garden.
- d. Stewardship talks are planned for Mass. The new stewardship brochure has been successfully distributed.

7. Commission Reports (Questions or Discussion): Written reports

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- a. Community Service: Theresa Croson            No additions or questions
- b. Religious Education: Andrea Kramer            No additions or questions
- c. Community Growth: Betsy Zolper
  - i. Knights of Columbus leader (Mark Chumra) is thankful for the donation of \$4,400 from the special needs fund.
  - ii. Added ministries
  - iii. PACT - Sunrise Retirement - is there going to be a connection to the new Vienna facility?
- d. Worship: Pam Burke
  - i. Room for landscaping between blocks? Is this for the Liturgical Arts committee? No, another committee is taking care of it.
  - ii. Booking Space for the planned evergreen workshop. See Crystal.
  - iii. The issue of distributing both species has been tabled until the spring.
- e. Youth: Sarah Kirk                                    No additions or questions

8. Old Business:

- a. Pastoral Council Elections    Greg Ulses
  - i. After-Mass elections to be held the weekends of November 11 and November 18.
  - ii. Greg Ulses will run again, Bill Peerenboom and Sam Scholar are still considering. Adam Murray is not running again due to upcoming work/family relocation plans. Any other potential candidates? All of us need to keep up the recruiting.

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- iii. Operations team required to run elections and collect/count ballots (minimum of three people). Andrea Kramer, Betsy Zolper, and Theresa Croson volunteered.
- b. Fall Festival: Lots of volunteers and the turnout was good! Still gathering receipts, but it might have made money. Next year, planning needs to start in January. It IS a Pastoral Council event! Who will lead or who will be asked to help out. The book of contacts is available for assistance in leading the endeavor. Seen as a good coordination of the school and the parish.
- c. Preschool Low Enrollment: is a table in Narthex available for the open house?

9. New Business:

- a. Newcomers Luncheon      Sue Heard
  - i. Any ideas how to get the newcomers into the building for a free lunch? It is available to all new school families and new parishioners. There are few acceptances at this point. Is Sign-up Genius and/or email working? Problem with low response rates. Advertised in the Bulletin? Yes, it is listed. Maybe send real mail (e.g., postcard)? Try this for the Spring.
- b. Advent Postcard: Should we gear up and do it again? Andrea Kramer has the artwork from last year and can modify it with the new liturgy schedule dates. The parish included it in the budget for mailing to all parish members; other cards could be available to be carried to specific neighborhoods if desired but think there was limited draw from this last year. Will plan to send out by the week of Thanksgiving. Potential additions: Cookies and Cider after Caroling, Blessing

of the Creche.

- c. Get a team of people to work on the campus beautification process (weeding) before Easter. This might be used for service hours or a Boy Scout project.
- d. Parish Council, Parish and School Staff joint retreat usually the third weekend in January. Is it returning? Greg will check with Crystal if anything is on the radar.
- e. New Men's Group: 10 men have expressed interest. Will meet Saturday mornings at 7:00 am.
- f. Coffee and donuts are coming up on November 12. It is in the November 5 bulletin.

#### 10. Eyes and Ears

- a. Retreat - blood of Jesus questions
- b. Requests for a Sunday evening Mass. Would need volunteers for liturgical ministries! The monthly Youth and Family Mass on Sunday evenings is not well attended so how to rationalize going to weekly.

#### 11. Closing Prayer: Father Pat

**Meeting ends at 8:18**

**Next Meeting: November 09, 2023 C-103 7:00 pm**

To: St. Mark Pastoral Council

From: Theresa Croson  
Service Commission Representative

Date: October 15, 2023

Re: Service Ministry Report for October 19, 2023 Meeting

Celebrating the Season of Creation: From September 1 and concluding on October 4, the Christian family celebrated the good gift of creation. This global celebration began in 1989 with the Orthodox Community celebrating a Day of Prayer for Creation which is now embraced by the wide Christian ecumenical community who come together through celebration, conversion and action for our common home. During the Season, we joined with Christians around the world in prayer and action for our common home. The 2023 theme was “Let Justice and Peace Flow” inspired by the words of the prophet Amos: “Let justice flow on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream” (5:24). In his message for the Season of Creation, Pope Francis comments that the image used by Amos speaks to us of what God desires: “God wants justice to reign; it is essential to our life as God’s children as water is essential for our physical survival. When we maintain the right relationship with God, humanity and nature, then justice and peace can flow like a never-failing stream of pure water.

*St Mark’s Participation*: Prayers for Creation were offered through intercessions at Mass. Individuals offered prayers for renewed respect and care for creation. ♦ The Clean Air Campaign raised awareness about the effects of idling on in-car and outside air quality to reduce idling during school drop-offs and pick-ups. ♦ The Fall Festival was more sustainable replacing water bottles with paper cups. Food scraps and biodegradable paper products were collected for composting. ♦ Plastic pill bottles were collected the weekend of September 30 and October 1, to be repurposed for use in medical facilities in poorer nations. ♦ The Blessing of Animals on the Memorial feast day of St. Francis of Assisi was on October 4 as an offering of praise and gratitude to God for all created beings.

English as a Second Language (ESL) – ST. MARK ESL Program began on Sept. 26<sup>th</sup> and runs through Dec. 5. Our goal is to “Welcome the Stranger” and provide a program where adults from all ethnic and religious backgrounds can come and learn English and acclimate better to life in the U.S. All classes take place on Tuesday and Thursday evenings for one and a half hours from Tuesday, September 26, until Tuesday, December 5. In addition to English language classes, St Mark is offering informal English Conversation, Writing, and Citizenship Preparation.

The point of contact for information on Classes and Volunteering is Monica O’Keefe at 703-980-9380, emailstmarksesl@gmail.com, or see the Web site at [www.stmarkesl.org](http://www.stmarkesl.org).

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For more information on registration, call Mary Anne at 703-403-4170. For more information on volunteering, call Mary Jean at 703-517-7051.

Pill Bottle Collection: A collection was made for empty, clean, and dry pill bottles from Saturday, Sept 30 - Sunday, Oct 1. Matthew 25 Ministries send these bottles to developing countries to be used to dispense medicine. Monetary donations were also be accepted to defray the cost of mailing.

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# Religious Education Report for October 2023

## ADULT FAITH FORMATION

Bible Study: As of October 4 and 5, the Bible Study is underway using the program entitled *Fulfilled: Uncovering the Biblical Foundations of Catholicism, Part Two – Drawn into the Divine Mystery*. This 7-session study facilitated by Mark Morneau is held via Zoom on Wednesdays at 7:30 pm and Thursdays at 10 am.

Sunday Adult Formation: Adult formation is being offered in-person on Sunday mornings from 9:30-10:45 am in the CFC gym, during the period of children's RE classes. The Alpha Team is facilitating the Alpha program as one of the formation offerings. DRE Joe Flaherty has organized a rotating speaker series as the second offering.

## CLASS MASSES

This school year's Class Masses began with the pre-K, kindergarten, and first grade classes of RE and SMCS students and their families coming together at the 11:00 am Mass on October 1. They enjoyed the after-Mass social with families contributing refreshments and children playing both in the CFC gym and outside on the playground. The schedule continues:

October 15 – 11am Mass	Second and Third grades
October 29 – 11am Mass	Fourth and Fifth grades
December 10 – 6pm Youth and Family Mass	Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth grades with dinner following in the Cassidy Activities Center

The RE Commission is discussing how to get increased parent leadership of the Class Masses, particularly the social, so less falls to the SMCS teachers or RE staff/catechists.

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## October 2023 Community Growth Report

**Always Our Children (AOC):** The Always Our Children ministry continues Zoom meetings every other month, beginning this past September. Because of the AOC bulletin announcement for that meeting, I received calls from two former St. Mark parishioners, who have moved away but still check out our bulletin. They are both now in new parishes which do not have a support group of this kind. We are glad we were there when we were needed.

**Bakers for Funerals:** Baked for one very large funeral in the last month.

**Bereavement Program:** The fall Bereavement Program is going well with 10-12 attendees. The 1/2 day retreat is coming up on November 4, at Turner Farmhouse. Our Winter Grief Gathering is Sunday, Dec 10, from 3:39- 5 pm at Turner Farmhouse.

**Book Club:** The seven session St. Mark Fall Bible Study of “**Fulfilled: Discovering the Biblical Foundations of Catholicism, Part 2**” began the week of October 8<sup>th</sup>. We have 27 participants across the two sessions.

The St. Mark Book Club is reading “**The Source**” by James Michener (it is an historical novel on the Holy Land). Because it is 1088 pages, we are reading it over September, October and November. We meet one each month to discuss the section we read for that month. We have 11 participants reading this book.

**Care for Our Common Home Ministry (CCH):** Fall Festival made more sustainable by avoiding plastic water bottles and composting paper cups. Our hope is to continue moving towards sustainability for all events at St. Mark like many of our fellow parishes.

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

**Donut Sunday:** No October update.

**Coffee and Community (CAC):** Emily’s Coffee and Community ministry on Tuesday and Thursday mornings is still going strong! She celebrated the one year anniversary in October and continues to enjoy getting to serve and know so many St. Mark’s parishioners. Fr. Pat continues to be a great supporter, announcing it on the days he celebrates daily mass, and Fr. Ignatius often comes in, sits down and visits with everyone on the days he celebrates mass. It has been a wonderful blessing for Emily and also for the many people who have gotten to know her and each other better. She and I continue to enjoy baking cookies on the off days for her to serve with the coffee and tea. Bill and I sort of alternate going, and we have also enjoyed getting to know so many parishioners (and staff) better too—truly a community feeling!

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**Evangelization Ministry ALPHA:** The fall Alpha completed session 5 of the Youth Alpha series this week in the CAC. The participant's are enjoying the Youth Alpha which has similar content but a revised format. The attendees include both new participant's as well as long-time Alpha followers. The day away retreat is scheduled for Saturday, October 21st at Turner Farm. All are welcome for a morning of mass with Fr. Tuck, potluck lunch, wonderful video, and most importantly prayer.

**50th Pilgrimage Group:** led by Fran Smith. First event is a pilgrimage to Emmitsburg, October 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Funeral Receptions:** We have had 3 since late June, 2 of which were very well attended. Huge thanks to the hard work of our crews! We continue to be open to more helpers and are ready for the next time our help is needed. Doing our best to work around all the recent facilities repairs/improvements, which have somewhat limited scheduling of receptions.

**Knights of Columbus (Santa Maria Council):** The Knights of Columbus Santa Maria Council #4654 was involved in two St. Mark activities this past quarter. We manned the beer concession at the Fall Fest and hosted the donut social on October 8th. Mike Churma is the new Grand Knight.

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

**Men's Prayer Group:** New ministry led by Michael Hatheway

**MOMs Ministry:** Inactive.

**Movie Night Ministry:** The monthly family-oriented Movie Night in September was *The Super Mario Bros. Movie*, an animated magical adventure set in the world of the Super Mario video game. There were 50 attendees. The next movie night is coming up October 20 a

**Newcomers' Committee:** The Fall Newcomers lunch is this Sunday the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Many Pastoral Council members will support the event, and Joe Flaherty will attend as well..

**Pastoral and Care Team (PACT):** My report from PACT is that it has been a busy summer/fall, so far, with many new homebound requests. Mostly, it was for folks who only needed temporary help (1 or 2 weekend visits only) as they recovered from a Surgery. We still have many who are regularly visited, and 3 who are visited by several PACT ministers on a rotating basis. Also, we are still visiting our good friends at Sunrise Retirement Home every Sunday, along with a monthly Mass offered by Fr. Pat.

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**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:** In November, our Prayer Shawl group will start getting hats, scarves, shawls, baby blanket, lapghan together to donate to The Giving Tree in December and The Lamb Center (hats & scarves). We are also working on shawls for the senior which are needed now.

**Praying College Moms (PCM)** No October update.

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

**Remembrance Ministry (RM):** The Remembrance Ministry is in the midst of arranging the Mass of Remembrance scheduled for Thursday, November 2 at 7:30 p.m. During this annual event we will remember those loved ones and friends who died during the past year. We will read aloud the names of those put forward by our fellow parishioners. Everyone is invited to attend. Additionally, the ministry is seeking new members. We have lost, for various reasons, three of our members and are working with a smaller than optimal number of people to carry out our work. Anyone who might be interested can contact the church office for information.

**Senior Ministry (M&M's):**

**9/20** - 28 persons attended our very successful 90th Birthday celebration Potluck Luncheon for Joe Kolasch. After a surprise video of a few years ago of Joe demonstrating his tap dance routine, Joe spoke to us at length about his interesting and blessed life. PS - Joe is still tap dancing!

**10/04** - 14 persons attended our After Mass Coffee

**10/25** - A Halloween Themed Potluck Luncheon is planned.

**Small Communities of Faith now Small Group (SG):** We are trying to get another round of small groups started this fall. Also trying to get more volunteers to help with the Children's Liturgies at the 11am mass. I announced both at the mandatory RE parent meeting.

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

## Worship Commission/Liturgy Planning Meeting

October 16, 2023

This month's meeting was Liturgy planning. The discussion was primarily planning the logistics of the special masses and services that will soon occur and bring us through the Christmas Season.

Mass of Remembrance will be held Nov 2.

The first Sunday in Advent is Dec. 3. The blessing of the Advent Wreath will be at every mass.

Our Lady of Guadalupe Mass will be on Tuesday, Dec. 12 with the Fiesta returning after mass in the Activity Center.

Friday, Dec. 15 at 7:00 pm will see the return of the Advent Festival of Lessons & Carols. This was first held last year, and it was a great program but not especially well-attended. This will be advertised and hopefully be placed on the calendar of events with the Herald. Spread the word! After this, the crèche will be blessed.

The Communal Penance service will be Sunday, Dec. 17 at 7:00 pm.

There are many masses Christmas weekend. All ministries are getting prepared. The LAC schedule for decorating was discussed. Numbers of ushers and EM's needed were discussed and sign-ups will be going up to fill these needs.

Greeters have been at all Christmas Eve and Christmas Day masses. School students have been a part of this. Since the Pastoral Council were greeters at Easter, maybe we call also coordinate and be greeters for these masses?

The question was asked if the Pastoral Council was going to prepare a card to be mailed to some and available in the Narthex listing all the special Advent/Christmas services and events.

## **Youth**

### **Middle School -**

• Middle School Kickoff a great success! Over 150 youth enjoyed the night on Sept 29 • Y & F Mass went well in October. Large number of people stayed for dinner and presentation. • Back From the Dead Cemetery Walk on October 27 at Seton Shrine (MS Friday Night) • "The Marvels" Movie Premiere on November 10 at Cinemark Fairfax Corner (MS Friday Night) **High School -**

• CYC nights are going well. Still lightly attended, but hopefully the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Girls and Boys after the retreat will check it out.

- Diocesan WorkCamp meeting next Thursday, October 26
- First WC fundraiser "Pie and WH Ornament" coming up on Nov 18 & 19

### **CYO Sports -**

- Basketball is gearing up for another season with Greg Wach at the helm.
- CC, Tennis and Fall Track are going well.

### **Scouts -**

- No updates or reports