

**St. John Fisher Pastoral Council Meeting  
February 3, 2021 – Zoom Meeting**

**Present:** Msgr. David A. Sork, Chris Ratliff (chair), Joe Arroyo (vice chair), Cathy Alessandra, Janos Bakos, Sheila Bloodgood, Dana Hargrave, Antonia Lavender, Joe McGuinness, Dave Williams, Chiby Onyeador (youth rep), Maddy Magaña (youth alt.), Gayle Plecha, and Margaret Johnson (staff representative).

**Absent:** Steve Izuno

**Guest(s):** Bev Fink

Msgr. Sork opened the meeting at 7:01 pm and welcomed the guest.

The Council prayed the First 15 led by Sheila Bloodgood.

**Pastor-Parish Life (Msgr. Sork)**

**Feedback**

- **COVID-19 restrictions and open church**

Msgr. Sork thanked Pastoral Council for the discussion at the last meeting to help guide him in making the decision he did. It wasn't an easy one. Initially he had decided to keep the church closed on the weekends due to a shortage of maintenance personnel but open it for weekday Masses. However, further developments took place which led to the reopening of the church for all Masses. Based on his experiences during daily Mass and the inclement weather affecting social distancing under the tent and the sound system, he felt it was safest to reopen the church to include weekend Masses. He was mindful of what Dana Hargrave had said about how social distancing could be better controlled inside the church. Having Mass outside created more work for the maintenance crew due to sanitizing and resetting up the chairs. Msgr. Sork wrote an article for the bulletin explaining his decision and shared it with Pastoral Council. He thanked those members of Pastoral Council who have helped with the sanitizing and making sure people wear face coverings. He hopes they will continue to help. He asked for feedback from those who attended Mass inside the church. Chris Ratliff was at the Sunday 5:00 PM Mass outside a week and a half ago. The wind and rain caused everyone to huddle close together and it was miserable. The spacing would have been better inside. He was a lector at the 5:00 PM Mass on Sunday, January 31<sup>st</sup>. There were about 75 people inside the church, which is less than usually attended outside. He feels this may be due to people not feeling comfortable returning to church. Dana Hargrave was an usher last Sunday and felt better being inside the church, however it was more crowded than she prefers. Having so many people walk by the pews makes it a little awkward. She thinks there should be a limit of 150 people with the overflow in the PAC-Gym. But she feels Msgr. Sork made the right choice reopening the church. Msgr. Sork doesn't think as many people will attend at the 11:00 am Mass this weekend, but time will tell. People may not have been aware the church had reopened for all Masses inside again. He thinks there will be more at the 9:00 am Mass now that they know. Chris Ratliff said having livestream Mass and communion for those who don't attend is a huge factor minimizing the crowd. No one objected to wearing face coverings inside the church.

Agenda addition: Tree Damage

Gayle Plecha shared that last Monday during the windstorm a huge section of one of the largest trees along Crest Road fell onto the 4<sup>th</sup> grade classroom and broke through the roof of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms. It ruptured the gas line on the roof and gas could be smelled. Fortunately, maintenance staff was still onsite and could turn off the gas, and no children were present as they are still distance learning. SJF is self-insured through the Archdiocese for property and general liability insurance, and within an hour they were out to assess the damage. It took two days to remove the branch and put a tarp on the roof. We are waiting for a structural engineer to determine how to repair the damage. It may be an opportunity to put a new roof on the school. As part of the insurance claim the rest of the tree will be removed by the end of the month.

Agenda addition: Capital Campaign Update

Msgr. Sork said we had begun the Capital Campaign last year with a goal of \$8 million. At the time we were ready to go public, we had received over \$5 million in pledges. But when COVID-19 hit, we decided to suspend the Campaign. Those who had already pledged have been very good about fulfilling those pledges. As of January 31<sup>st</sup>, \$2.73 million has been received, which is almost 50 percent of the amount pledged and shows people really believe in the campaign. Msgr. Sork plans to meet with the Campaign Executive Committee and see when they might be able to start fundraising again.

### **Looking Ahead**

- **Ash Wednesday – February 17**

Pastoral Council was sent a copy of a memorandum regarding Ash Wednesday from the Archdiocese. Pastoral Staff discussed the implementation of it. Margaret Johnson said it would be too messy to sprinkle the ashes on people's heads or put them in their hands. The ashes are so lightweight it would make a mess of the church, clothes, and cars, so she advised putting them in little bags. At the end of each Mass and Liturgy of the Word the bags of ashes will be blessed. People can take the ashes home with them to self-administer. They may be available to school and RE families ahead of time so they can watch Livestream. Once the ashes arrive staff will begin filling the bags.

- **SJF Lenten Retreat – March 14-16**

Margaret Johnson shared the Lenten Retreat postcard. Msgr. Sork asked members to read it. Fr. Dooling will speak at all the Masses and then his retreat will be held on three nights in the church. It will also be livestreamed. The theme is "Surrender." Msgr. Sork asked Pastoral Council to talk up the event with parishioners.

### **Chair/Vice-Chair**

#### **Approval of January Minutes**

The chair asked for corrections to the January minutes. Hearing none, Dana Hargrave moved to approve the January minutes as presented. Antonia Lavender seconded. The minutes were approved.

#### **Staff rep brief: Margaret Johnson**

- Religious Education programs update. Margaret Johnson decided to implement a home-taught system due to the children having enough Zoom with regular school. The parents

are the first Catechists for their children so they can step up to teach. She provides the tools and a video to help them. So far, the responses have been positive. It's been a good system, so she expects to continue that way the rest of the year. They are taking it one step at a time and are trying to plan as best they can. First Reconciliation will occur in March and First Communion will occur in May.

- Margaret Johnson announced that after 21 years she is retiring at the end of June. It has been a great joy for her to work at SJF, and she will leave her programs in as good a shape as she can. Pastoral Council members thanked Margaret Johnson for all her work and congratulated her on her retirement. Msgr. Sork said that Margaret got her master's degree while working in the office and he will miss her. He has set up a search committee, and Gayle Plecha will be chairing that committee to find her replacement. He is fortunate that so many staff people have stayed a long time.
- Virtual RE Congress – February 18 – 21. Margaret Johnson shared that this is an amazing event and usually about 40,000 people gather in Anaheim. This year it will be virtual. She shared her screen with the Council to see the RE Congress website [www.RECongress.org](http://www.RECongress.org) and encouraged all to register. It begins Thursday night with a welcome service and a welcome talk from Pope Francis. The speakers will give a live 35-minute presentation, but you can go back and watch any of the “on-demand” activities at your convenience until March 21<sup>st</sup>. She doesn't know how they will handle the Exhibit Hall on demand. The Liturgies, keynote addresses and youth track will be live. Registration is \$35 for the entire weekend and includes 40 speakers. Msgr. Sork said this will be his 51<sup>st</sup> congress and he found the online registration process very easy. Gayle Plecha shared that a portion of the liturgical dance was filmed inside our church. She doesn't know which Mass it will be incorporated into.

### **2020 – 2021 Pastoral Plan Objectives Review**

The chair asked one member from each team to give an update on their objective. Everyone has a copy of where they stand with their progress.

*Objective #1 – We will develop live and virtual opportunities to interact, worship and retreat with emphasis on the vulnerable and disenfranchised of our community.* Cathy Alessandra attended the Communications Advisory Committee meeting and reported back to her committee. There's another Communications Advisory Committee meeting, tomorrow and she will be present for that and give more feedback afterwards. They haven't talked about the retreats.

*Objective #2 – We will use what we have learned from the COVID-19 pandemic to further our community bond.* Dave Williams has no update at this time, but he feels his group needs to schedule a meeting.

*Objective #3 – We will enhance youth and young adult engagement by contributing to and supporting the creation of online resources.* Maddy Magaña said they haven't done a lot since the last meeting because she's been trying to schedule a meeting with Zack Zuvich. They hope to meet with him next week. Antonia Lavender reported that Zack Zuvich said the kids are overwhelmed with Zoom. Chiby Onyeador didn't get a chance to get feedback from his sister who is in the confirmation program.

*Objective #4 – We will assess the health of SJF ministries and lend assistance where needed, emphasizing impact of COVID-19 and current social issues.* Sheila Bloodgood thanked Dana Hargrave for reporting last month. They finished their survey of parishioner-led ministries. Things are in pretty good shape. A lot of ministries found good ways to stay active. Some have challenges by the nature of their ministry. The group assembled the information into a database, and it is available for perusal. The group came up with three ideas based on the need for advertising and recruiting. These are things that could be pursued if there's an interest. 1) Make sure all ministries are aware of the publicity process at [sjf.org/news-media/publicity-protocol/](http://sjf.org/news-media/publicity-protocol/). They would draft an email for ministry leaders. 2) Think about having a quarterly ministry activity focus article in the bulletin. This could include information about what the ministry does and any help they may need. 3) Ministry talks are very successful. Sheila Bloodgood previewed ideas with Misty Jesse. Misty Jesse said those things have been tried before with different levels of success, but the talks during Mass have been the most successful. At this point the team is looking for feedback from the Pastoral Staff on whether they are interested in any of the ideas and how they can assist with making it happen. Sheila Bloodgood said she would be happy to draft an email for someone on Pastoral Staff to send to the ministries. Msgr. Sork said most of the ministry staff contact information is in the ministry directory that is published each year. Many of the ministries fall under Misty Jesse, but religious education is Margaret Johnson, and the teens are Katie Dante. Chris Ratliff said to make it known to the ministries about the publicity protocols. He feels that the ministries are aware of who their staff rep is, but Sheila Bloodgood thinks that may not be true. Antonia Lavender said AirTable.com has an easy-to-use software program that allows anyone to log in to makes changes and updates to files and share rosters with others. There is one central location for all the information. Per Chris Ratliff's request Antonia Lavender sent the following link to Chris Acherman: <https://support.airtable.com/hc/en-us/articles/360045694613-Join-us-for-a-free-live-Airtable-training-> Sheila Bloodgood concluded that they found the ministries to be strong, and her group is here to help with anything they might need. The chair encouraged everyone to think about the end game for their objectives. What else needs to be done in order to complete their goals. He's happy to help with this task. Both he and Sheila Bloodgood agree that objective #4 is just about complete.

### **PC Nominating Committee**

Dana Hargrave reported that the committee has communicated but not met yet. They moved the due date for applications to April 30<sup>th</sup> (from last year's May 15 due date). The bulletin announcement will begin this weekend. Because of the COVID-19 situation, they've struggled with how to do a pulpit announcement. Now that Mass is inside the church, she feels it will go better and they just need to pick a time. She created an online shared folder for entering potential nominees including Bev Fink. She asked everyone on Pastoral Council to think about who they might know that would be a great addition. She would like to get an information packet together and distribute it to those who show interest. She thinks they are on track. Gayle Plecha added that the updated application is on the SJF website. Click the "About" tab and then "Pastoral Council". There are also hard copies in the parish office. The April meeting has been moved to April 14<sup>th</sup>, which is the second Wednesday, as Msgr. Sork will be out of town. The meeting will begin at 6:00 pm with the information session either on Zoom or maybe in person. The chair said anyone can read the pulpit announcements, but he's happy to do it. They were able to successfully recruit during the lockdown last year so he feels that it will go well this year too.

### **Next Meeting: March 3 at 7:00 PM**

The March 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting will take place at 7:00 pm via Zoom unless the situation improves.

## **Other**

Joe Arroyo read the guidelines for Pastoral Council members to bring concerns and affirmations to the attention of the pastor.

- Dana Hargrave recommended scheduling at least one Pastoral Council member to attend each of the events listed in the “Looking Ahead” section of the agenda so that there will be feedback at the next meeting.
- Antonia Lavender would like to see pictures and an obituary listed on the SJF website of the people who have recently passed away.

The meeting was concluded at 8:18 pm with the prayer of St. John Fisher.