**PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

**ST. THERESE CATHOLIC CHURCH**

**May 11, 2021**

**Call to Order**: 7:00 pm by Chriss Lawrence

**Opening Prayer**: Chriss Lawrence

**Attendance**: Fr. Gregory, Chriss Lawrence, Wayne Savage, Tim Brown, Jim Trist, Ron Haggerty (via Zoom), Dan Wenner (via Zoom), Charlie Palutto (nominee), and Walter Priest (nominee).

**Vision Statement**: The Council read the Parish Vision Statement in unison.

**Pastor’s comments and Introduction of Nominees for Pastoral Council**. Fr. Gregory introduced nominees Charlie Palutto and Walter Priest to the Council and asked them to recount their histories, church activities, and reasons for seeking membership on the Council. Then each Council member introduced themselves to the nominees, presenting their backgrounds and current activities in the parish.

**Formation**: The Council read and discussed paragraphs 36 and 37 of Pope Francis’ Encyclical “The Joy of the Gospel.” The ensuing discussion was about hierarchies of truth, moral teachings and their relationships.

**Old business:**

**Approval of minutes:** The April minutes were approved with unanimous consent.

**Council Elections:**  Nominees Charlie Palutto and Walter Priest attended the meeting to observe how the Council conducted meetings and the topics presented for discussion. Jim Trist will continue to contact other nominees to determine if they remain interested in joining the council. He will advise them that the Council needs to know by May 20th if they intend to respond to their nomination.

**Summer Litnic:** A Litnic is a liturgical picnic that combines a Eucharistic Celebration with fellowship and sharing of food. A Litnic is planned for Parish Council members and their families to acknowledge incoming and departing Council members. It is planned for Tuesday July 13, 2021, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. The location will be identified later. Fr. Gregory will send out guidelines about Litnics.

**Parish Picnic:** Planning and organizing activities continue for the picnic by Marianne McCloskey, Ana Barranco, and Kathleen Trist. The Picnic is scheduled for October 3rd.

**Western Night:** Cathy Buquor, LInda Gregory, and Edna Bauer are working on this towards the scheduled date of Saturday, July 24 following the 5 p.m. Mass, ending at 10:00 p.m. This is also the World Day for Grandparents.

**Vaccination Clinic:** Ron Haggerty is keeping the clinic available to anyone that needs a vaccination.

**Brainstorming ideas for getting people back to church:** Fr. Gregory lead a brainstorming exercise to generate discussion on what principles and values should be kept in mind as the parish opens up this autumn. The following were identified as the necessary foundation for planning future activities as Covid-19 restrictions are lifted and people are allowed to reassemble:

* Fellowship is the overarching principle that will act as an umbrella for the others.
* To be open to others, welcoming, and friendly is a core value.
* Broadening our outreach throughout the community and be inviting.
* Effective communications will be a principle element of getting people back to church.
* Education in the faith will be both a principle and a value to sustain interest within the community.

There followed a discussion of what activities have worked in the past or is working now that we can build on. These areas were identified:

* Social gatherings
* MInistries: Social Justice, Formation, Worship/Liturgy, Pastoral Care, Neighborhood Communities, Soup with Love during Lent, RCIA (starting June 1), Ushers/Greeters (getting people inside the door).
* Bible study sessions among home groups
* Theresian bake sales, bazaars, and funeral receptions.

The discussion continued to consider how to put the principles and values identified earlier in the meeting into action. Suggestions included:

* A Welcome Back party - the Parish Picnic October 3, 2021
* Advertising social events on Facebook
* Distribute post cards and letter invitations to the community, with the theme that the safest place to be is in the parish community with its strict adherence to Covid-19 distancing regulations.
* Announcements on Father Gregory’s periodic videos on ParishCast and the church website.

The brainstorming session ended with encouragement to all to consider how to make these things come true, to make them a reality.

**New Business:**

**Council Retreat:** Plans for the Council Retreat will be discussed at the June meeting.

**Questions from Nominees:** The nominees were invited to ask questions of the Council members about how the Council operates. There was discussion on the meeting format, objectives of the Council, and ongoing issues the Council is addressing. It was emphasized that a primary role of the Council was to act as advisors to Fr. Gregory.

**Recognition of Graduates.** Fr. Gregory mentioned that Sean Roberts received his Doctor of Philosphy in Education and was awarded Distinguished Graduate at Regent University.

**Special Recognition:** Many thanks to Ron Haggerty for offering to continue on the vaccination clinic. Thanks to Wayne Savage for establishing the Zoom link so that Ron and Dan could attend virtually.

**Next Meeting**: The next meeting is Tuesday June 8, 2021 at 7:00p.m. in the social hall. JimTrist will offer opening and closing prayers. Chriss Lawrence will bring refreshments.

**Concluding prayer:** Chriss Lawrenceled the council in closing prayer.

**Adjournment**: Chriss Lawrence adjourned the meeting at 9:00 pm.

**Post meeting addendum:** After the close of the meeting, the Executive Committee discussed continuation of the hybrid Zoom/person-to-person format of the Council Meetings. The hybrid format distracted meeting participants, both in-person and virtual, to the extent that focus could not be maintained on the meeting content. Technical difficulties such as video pausing and sound dropping, became too distracting. Therefore, the hybrid meeting format will not be continued.

Parish Vision Statement

The Church of Saint Therese, a Roman Catholic Community in Gloucester, Virginia, will be a place where love, compassion and mutual understanding are present.

The Church of Saint Therese will be a place where families will grow in their faith.

The Church of Saint Therese will be a place which will encourage youthful interaction with the church.

The Church of Saint Therese will be a parish which reaches out to the broader community and brings hope to our neighbors in need.

The Church of Saint Therese will be a safe and inviting community that warmly accepts any who come to it.

The Church of Saint Therese will be a parish that provides an environment that fosters fellowship.

The Church of Saint Therese will be a parish community with a vibrant sacramental life.