

**Catholic Area Faith Community of Jesus Our Living Water
Church of St. Clara
Administrative Council Meeting
May 24, 2021**

Minutes

Present: Father Steve, Brian Harguth, Cynthia Giese, Nate Kimpling, and Mary Nordstrom.

Absent: Chad Gunter, Jim Speiser, and John Donner

Father Steve led us in opening prayer, and we approved tonight's agenda.

Pastor's Report

- The parishioners of all three of our parishes have been very generous to keep our parishes in excellent financial shape. Their support is greatly appreciated. We have seen huge increases in mailed-in donations, drop-offs at the parish offices, IRA disbursements, and Donor Advised Funds. All three parishes are in the black.
- The AFC applied for a Payroll Protection Plan loan in April, 2020 in the amount of \$128,600. That loan was used for payroll so that no employees had a forced reduction in hours while our churches were closed or at reduced capacity due to COVID-19.

Discussion / Action Items

- COVID-19 Status / Protocols
 - Our area faith community is following the protocols given by the bishops in the state.
 - People who want to wear masks are free to continue wearing them, however, the mandate from the Governor is no longer in place.
 - The ropes in the church have been removed.
 - We are slowly incorporating congregational singing beginning next weekend. During the summer months, we will recite the Mass parts, and hope to return to full singing after Labor Day.
 - Deb Grussing is under the impression that more missalettes are being ordered. Mary will check with Tim Cayler regarding this.
 - At this time, no decisions have been made from the bishops of the region regarding Holy water, Sign of Peace, and Communion in both forms.
 - Mary will contact Peg Speiser to ask her to inform Eucharistic ministers that when they are done distributing up front, and Father begins to purify vessels,

the lay minister should head to the back and distribute to the people unable to come forward, as well as Margie and camera operators.

- Parish Festivals
 - We will not do a festival, but will send out the letter asking parishioners for donations like we did last year. A welcome breakfast for Fr. Christian will be held on Sunday, September 12. This information will be included in the letter.
 - Cynthia will send last year's letter to Father Steve or Mary.
 - In today's environment, it is felt that people would prefer food that is catered or all prepared at the church. Cynthia will contact Trish about catering a breakfast for 100 people.

- AFC Pastoral Plan
 - A Pastoral Plan was developed by a task force based on the results of the survey that parishioners in Willmar and Spicer took in early 2020.
 - People were very satisfied with the celebration of our Sunday Masses, preaching, and hospitality
 - We did not score as high on the three items that have been included in the pastoral plan that Father Steve shared.
 1. Spiritual growth - how an individual can grow spiritually
 2. Adult Faith Formation
 3. Discipleship - being able to share personal experiences on how God is present in our lives
 - Council members were told that if they had feedback on the plan, they should send it to Father Steve.

- Area Pastoral Council (APC)
 - The APC has been dormant for a couple years. The previous members of the council accomplished their goal of our parishes working together as an AFC.
 - Father Steve will have a new council in place to start meeting this fall. He is hoping for three people from St. Mary, three from OLOL, and two from St. Clara.
 - Father is open to names of people who are visionary, and concerned about the big picture of the whole AFC and not just their parish.
 - Doug Homan was on the old APC for Monte, Granite and Clara City. He would be a good choice.

Finance

- Tithing
 - Father Steve explained the history of tithing in our AFC which began at the Church of St. Mary in 1976.

- Father Steve shared the tithing allocations for the second half of the fiscal year. A significant portion of our tithing funds is spent on monthly grants. When we discontinued in-person door ministry, we started sending funds to United Community Action Partnership each month. The money we send covers the cost of two motel rooms in the local area, as well as other direct funds. Monthly funds are also sent to the Link, Willmar Area Food Shelf and the San Lucas Tolimán mission in Guatemala.
- Employee Retention Tax Credit
 - In April, the diocese informed parishes that we should all apply for the Employee Retention Tax Credit since we were closed or operating with limited capacity. We utilized an accountant from CDS (who processes all of our payroll) to calculate these credits. We will receive \$77,000 as a credit for payroll taxes paid in 2020. We also qualify for a credit for at least part of 2021.
- Technology Expenditures
 - Due to the pandemic, we had significant unbudgeted expenses to support livestreaming and internet upgrades.
- Proposed 2021-2022 Budgets
 - Father Steve gave a refresher on how our AFC budget works: all “regular” bills are paid by the AFC. The parish basically writes two checks each month, one to the AFC, and to the Diocese for special collections. An example of a “non-regular” bill would be capital expenses.
 - Jesus Our Living Water – overall, the budget is dropping \$35,925. Key items:
 - Father Jerry moved from full-time to half-time; there is one fewer Faith Formation Director, and one fewer administrative assistant.
 - Projected reduction in expenses due to new HVAC system at St. Mary’s.
 - Large reduction in number of missalettes being ordered.
 - Church of St. Clara – overall, the budget is dropping \$2,879.
 - The weekly amount needed is going from \$2,329 to \$1,839.
 - Motion by Brian, seconded by Nate to accept the St. Mary budget. Passed.

Other

- Faith Formation Fees
 - We will charge \$35/student with a family max of \$100. Tuition for catechists’ children are free. This will be included in the email to families to hopefully generate more catechists.
- Windows
 - Brian is working on estimates for the basement windows. The estimate we have is from March, which is outdated.

