

**Catholic Area Faith Community of Jesus Our Living Water  
Joint Church of St. Mary / Our Lady of the Lakes  
Administrative Council Meeting  
May 24, 2021**

**Minutes**

**Present:** Father Steve, Ron Dobbs, Dave Henle, Julie Taunton, Rick Conway, Bob Hogan, Penny Johnson, Dave Reed, Kurt Schimek, Bill Schindele, Nathan Streed, and Mary Nordstrom.

**Absent:** Sheri LaPatka, Steve Maher, LuAnn Sieben, and Kal Torkelson.

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

**Pastor's Report**

- Father Steve reported that it has been intentional that we have not met during the pandemic. Our parishes are in good shape financially, and it has been prudent to maintain social distancing.
- 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.
- 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.
- We celebrated the Sacrament Confirmation in February without a bishop. Sacraments such as First Communions took place.
- There was an overpayment of funds to the diocese by the parishes during the bankruptcy. The priests will be meeting tomorrow to discuss whether the funds should be returned to the parish or used to pay down the diocesan pastoral center mortgage.
  - Both parish's councils would like the money returned.
- No idea when we will get a new bishop.

**Discussion / Action Items**

- COVID-19 Status / Protocols
  - 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 our sanctuaries will be removed this week.
  - 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. At that time, we want to start up choirs as well.
  - We intend to have in-person Faith Formation in the fall.

- Vacation Bible School was cancelled since at the time the decision was needed to be made, there were still significant limitations in place.
- Funeral lunches continue to be individual box lunches.
- 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. It is possible that some of these may return and some may not.
- There are “rumblings” (but nothing written in stone) that the bishops will remove the dispensation to attend Sunday Mass on July 1.
- Parish Festivals
  - Our Lady of the Lakes and the Church of St. Mary are intending to move forward with their festivals. Father Steve has asked these festival leaders to rethink having donated food (cakes, cookies, bake-sale items, pies). If they want to continue with Cookie Walk, Bake Sale, Cake Walk, Pie sales then perhaps they could invite parishioners in to bake the items.
- AFC Pastoral Plan
  - A Pastoral Plan was developed by a task force based on the results of the survey that parishioners 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.

## **Finance**

- 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
  - We have spent over \$74,000 in unbudgeted technology expenditures since June, 2020. Many of these funds have been to enable us to live-stream our Masses – new cameras, new projectors, upgraded Internet service, etc... We also are due to replace our outdated computer servers. Many of these expenses were paid by the parish that received the benefit.
- Tithing
  - 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.
- Excess funds in the AFC checking account
  - There is currently a large balance in the AFC checking account. How much do we want to keep? What should we do with the excess?
  - Motion by Nate; seconded by Kurt that we refund excess of two month's budgeted expenses back to the parishes based on the current year's AFC assessment percentages. The Pastor can refund excess funds at any time, but an automatic refund will be triggered when the checking account hits three months of budgeted expenses. Motion passed.
  - A motion was made by Kurt and seconded by Rick that we pay "hazardous duty pay" to our staff members, up to \$1,000 (grossed) up per employee. Motion passed, with Nate abstaining. Father Steve and Mary will determine the amounts.
- Proposed 2021-2022 Budgets
  - 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.
    - Motion by Nate, seconded by Kurt to accept the AFC budget. Passed.
  - Church of St. Mary – overall, the budget is dropping \$34,662.
    - The weekly amount needed is going from \$16,528 to \$15,781.
    - Motion by Nate, seconded by Kurt to accept the St.Mary budget. Passed.
  - Our Lady of the Lakes – overall, the budget is increasing \$3,128.26.
    - The weekly amount needed is going from \$7,748 to \$7,741.
      - The weekly amount is going down because the budget for the DMA refund from the diocese was increased to reflect actuals for previous years.
    - Motion by Dave, seconded by Ron to accept the OLOL budget. Passed.