

**Church of the Incarnation
Pastoral Council Minutes
10/28/2020**

Attendance:

Lesley Aleman ✓	Saray de la Cruz ✓	Marianne Kish ✓
Doug Campbell ✓	Michelle Edwards ✓	Mark Niehaus ✓
Carmen Chandross ✓	Mitchell Hillman ✓	Kelly Robbins
Patti Clifford ✓	Sarah Jones ✓	Monsignor Keeney ✓

Agenda:

- I. Meeting called to order at 7:05 PM.
- II. Opening Prayer led by Sarah Jones.
- III. Approval of Minutes - A motion was made and seconded to approve the September 23rd meeting minutes and the council voted unanimously to accept the minutes.
- IV. Role of Pastoral Council - Doug Campbell briefed the "Role of the Pastoral Council" as highlighted in "The Amazing Parish" and "Called to Serve". That presentation is available to the council members in our online files. Major points emphasized were:
 - A. The Pastoral Council, Finance Council, and staff comprise the leadership team that supports the Pastor. These three entities form a team of teams.
 - B. The Pastoral Council's primary role is to address the long term strategic planning for the parish that is driven by a focus on the mission and vision for the parish.
 - C. Near term objectives supporting that longer term vision are managed by a process of selecting a "Rallying Cry" focused on the next six months.
 - D. That rallying cry then becomes an achievable, measurable milestone for the leadership team's focus.
 - E. That process begins with a common understanding of our parish mission and vision. Best practices for this role involve conducting a mission analysis to declare a mission with great clarity, develop a shared vision for our parish, communicate that vision, assess the current state of our parish, develop a strategic plan to achieve our vision from our current state, and then stay on course with the mission, vision, and plan as a decision litmus.
 - F. The rallying cry is simply an achievable objective that keeps us focused on our path and provides measurable progress in six month increments. It is a collaborative effort which will help us reach the bigger picture.
 - G. Monsignor Keeney added that the amazing parish model was developed by folks at the national leadership roundtable. They specialize in the business and communication side of the church. They focus on the need for unity and cohesion so that all three components of our leadership team will work together toward the same goal.
 - H. Mark Niehaus added the amazing parish focuses on clarity as well, especially over communicating. The emphasis on clarity is going to be very helpful.
 - I. Monsignor Keeney added that one important thing to know is how the rallying cry will affect our meetings. Once it is established, everyone will look at defining objectives to

help reach the rallying cry. These objectives will be set by the staff. They are designed to help keep us on track. We want to focus on what we need to improve. Therefore, we won't be wasting any time.

- J. Carmen Chandross asked, "When it comes to communication, how can we align safety with our Spanish and English communities?"
- K. Monsignor Keeney clarified that having a rallying cry doesn't mean that we won't address other concerns regarding the parish.

V. Expectations

- A. Meeting Objectives: As part of the agenda, clear objectives will be communicated and reviewed.
- B. Meeting Sequence: The agenda has objectives and a clear sequence of events. At each meeting all objectives should be checked off or should be tabled for another meeting.
- C. Committees: Everyone will be joining committees that are focused on issues that they feel are important.
- D. Preparation Between Meetings: The importance of being prepared for each meeting was discussed. An emphasis on being responsive to council communications e.g. emails, surveys, etc. In the future, we will consider what education and formation we need to best serve.
- E. Communication and Collaboration:
 - 1. Marianne Kish reviewed the need for communication among the Leadership Team as very important and staying organized.
 - 2. Pastoral Council Liaison: We need a Finance Council liaison to attend meetings to help with collaboration between these groups. Msgr. commented that the meetings will be recorded so everyone can view them. Mitchell Hillman has volunteered to be the pastoral council liaison to the Finance Council. Msgr. designated either Izzy or Cesar to communicate this information to the Finance Council.
 - 3. Leadership Team Minutes: Everyone should review minutes when they become available from all three components of the leadership team. They will be uploaded to Incarnation's website. Pastoral and Finance councils meet monthly and the staff meets weekly with some exceptions.
 - 4. Approval of Pastoral Council Minutes: Sarah Phillips will post minutes once they are accepted and signed by the pastoral council chair and the pastor.
 - 5. Translation of Minutes: Thank you to Carmen Chandross for providing the spanish translation for our Pastoral Council Meeting agendas and minutes. Lesley Aleman and Saray de la Cruz also offered help if translation is needed.
 - 6. Metrics: There was a short discussion of metrics and state of the parish. Monsignor offered that we have captured some limited data on weekly attendance. Comparing numbers of parishioners who are attending in person, 2/3 Spanish speaking and 1/3 English speaking. We are also tracking the number of views on live streams. Additionally, we would like numbers of children who attend religious ed and the number of children who are eligible to attend.

VI. Rallying Cry - The most important six month objective.

- A. Monsignor offered this opening guidance: From your perspective, what is the most important thing for the parish to accomplish in the next 6 months? It should connect

to the overall mission and vision statement. Last year's council wanted to create a new one, unfortunately they were unable to do so because of covid.

- B. This discussion is something that will be repeated with the Finance Council and staff. The three groups will then be brought together to discuss and determine our Parish Rallying Cry.
- C. Our general goal is that we have something established before Christmas, so we can begin the new year with defining objectives for the next 6 months.
- D. Ideas Shared for Rallying Cry after a five minute personal reflection:
 1. Michelle Edwards - Focus on safety in community, coming to mass, participating online, religious ed., etc. Meeting people where they are. What makes people feel safe? What are we doing to connect? With a vaccine coming, what can we do to reunite or safely come back together?
 2. Patti Clifford - How to provide more support to the community? Is there any way to encourage people to be more active in their faith on a daily basis, especially online? How to get more people involved in ministry?
 3. Mark Niehaus - Echoing Michelle-Return to worship? There are many forms of worship, it doesn't always take place in the Worship Center. Healing. Return to faith/grow our faith.
 4. Lesley Aleman - Return to worship. Fear is stopping people from attending. Doesn't allow people to live their faith like they did before covid. Communicating with the community. Relay information from the Pastoral Council, Finance Council, and staff. Helping the food ministry. This has been crucial during covid. Needs have grown.
 5. Mitchell Hillman - The increase/restoration of mass attendance. More service opportunities, PACEM, food pantry. More adult formation opportunities. Could potentially engage during covid.
 6. Saray de la Cruz - A way to bring the people who have fear back to the church and make it safe for them. Evangelization within the youth in the Latinx community. More training for catechists.
 7. Carmen Chandross - Safety. Ways to keep the community aware of changes. How to encourage and reinforce changes. Increase evangelization. Would like more integration between groups especially at the bilingual mass. Would also like to encourage people to attend a different mass than usual.
 8. Sarah Jones - Anxieties about the future, mourning old life, how can we demonstrate that as a parish that we are here for each other? A place of worship where God reigns, God is sovereign. The idea to meet people where they are, what can we improve or emphasize? Figure out why people aren't attending. How can we reach out and discern each concern? Who are we as a parish?
 9. Doug Campbell - Preparing for the future/launch? Revival. Our parish needs energy and excitement to take us out of the state of covid towards reopening. Mark commented that Incarnation actually hosted a revival years ago - It was incredibly fun. Baptist revival in a Catholic church.
 10. Marianne Kish - Similar thoughts, focus on post-covid reopening. Likes the idea of a multicultural parish and how we can use this to our strengths. Evangelization and

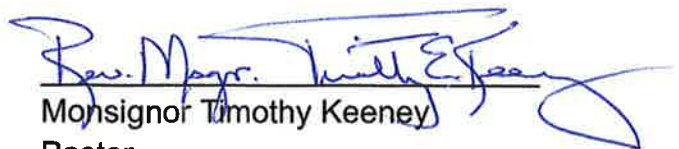
joining the community. Idea of technology- different mediums, how can we use it as a tool? What is the best way to do it? How can we engage the youth?

- E. Next Steps: We will bring these thoughts and ideas to the next meeting and develop our top 3 recommendations for a rallying cry to share with the full leadership team.
- VII. Committees and Subcommittees
 - A. Discussion of Committees and Subcommittees was tabled until the November meeting and council members were asked to take a look at ideas for committees starting with those provided to the council online.
 - B. Monsignor Keeney expressed his desire for a hospitality committee and a committee to address English/Spanish speaking unity.
- VIII. The council was reminded of the diocesan Eucharistic Congress on November 6 and 7.
- IX. Based on survey results, Doug Campbell confirmed the next Pastoral Council meeting dates are November 17 and December 22. Mark Niehaus requested that meetings be sent as calendar items. Doug will be sending these out moving forward.
- X. Christmas and Advent seasons:
 - A. The Advent Penance Service scheduled for November 15, will not be a Penance service. It will be an extended period of time with extra confessors between 6-9PM.
 - B. There will be a drive through nativity outside instead of what we normally do.
 - C. Christmas Eve masses will have two masses celebrated at the same time instead of broadcasting into the parish hall. Christmas Day, we are leaning toward only one mass in English, but might double the Spanish masses. We are also looking at scheduling masses for Our Lady of the Rosary and Our Lady of Peace.
 - D. For the Eucharistic Congress, the Blessed Sacrament will be displayed virtually so everyone can participate in the worship during the Holy Hour.
 - E. We are planning an alternative New Year's celebration with a Holy Hour on the last hour of the 31st of December.
 - F. We had about 25 people for St. Michael's evening prayer for first responders, little more attendance for St. Luke's evening prayer service for healthcare workers. Coming up Nov 2, In addition to our masses for All Souls Day, we will have an evening prayer for those who lost loved ones-evening prayer service at 7pm.
- XI. Pastor's Notes:
 - A. We have a need to update/professionalize the Food Ministry workspace. That will improve operations and help preserve dignity for those receiving assistance.
 - 1. A larger renovation for the space might expand into classroom 10 as well.
 - 2. We received a large 10k donation for the food ministry. We would like to use this donation to install a stainless-steel sink to wash produce, install an adult bathroom, and have commercial freezers & refrigerators.
 - 3. While we might not have the funds for the entire project, we could start renovations.
 - 4. We are also looking at adding an office space in the food ministry so it can be more professional and, as needed, private.
 - B. A second camera was installed for videoing masses. Flawless switching should improve viewing experience. This should help to get better multiple perspective shots for our many recorded services.

- C. Monsignor Keeney asked Fr. Chris to develop a plan to institute a young adult ministry and help that ministry to “take flight.”
 - D. We have a need for help with marriage preparation within the parish.
 - 1. Looking to train married couples to help with the Prepared and Enriched online assessment and walk-through with engaged couples.
 - 2. There is no Spanish language marriage preparation program within the diocese. The Prat family, who has been leading our home grown program, will be stepping back from this ministry and we are looking to train another couple.
 - 3. Looking for couples to work with to set up a Natural family planning program for our English and Spanish couples
 - E. Communications committee is looking at buying (subscribing) Flocknotes to aid with communications via email and text. Our Spanish community uses text more than email. This could be a game changer to help reach parishioners. OLR already uses Flocknote.com as a communications tool.
 - F. As part of the effort to develop/enhance the new website, we are looking at “branding”. Part of that branding is saying *who you are*. One of the challenges we have is the name of our church. Our parish name, Church of the Incarnation, causes confusion to others outside our parish. Many do not know what denomination we are. It doesn’t advertise that we are catholic and does not help focus the search for those seeking a Catholic church.
 - 1. New signage with a shorter name-Incarnation Catholic Church (the original name that we were designated)- would facilitate search and recognition of our parish’s Catholic identity. Growth in Ruckersville creates a need for an easily identifiable Catholic church on the northern 29 corridor.
 - 2. Mitchel Hillman and Mark Niehaus agreed that this is a necessary change.
 - 3. Patti Clifford noted that some older parishioners will be hard to convince.
- XII. Open Forum-
- A. Doug Campbell offered that he would provide assistance as needed with Google documents and files.
 - B. Monsignor clarified the five book titles he recommended for the leadership team. These titles and ordering information are available in council’s online files.
 - C. Mark Niehaus asked for clarity regarding COVID-19 safety requirements for penance service. Monsignor shared that each priest will have his own classroom. Masks are mandatory, and people wait in the hall on designated marked spaces.
- XIII. The meeting closed with prayer at 9:20 PM.



Marianne D. Kish
Pastoral Council Chair



Monsignor Timothy Keeney
Pastor