

St. John Vianney Parish Council Minutes
January 12, 2021
6:30 PM Zoom Meeting

Present: Orin Cook, Sheila Liotta, Kim McCarthy, Fr. Joe Pescatello, Veronica Plante (Youth Ministry), Michael Woody, Regina Bamford (Religious Education Director)

- **Call to order**

Kim McCarthy called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM. The meeting opened with a prayer from Fr. Joe.

- **Response to Fr. Joe's Christmas Letter**

Fr. Joe reported that the response to his Christmas message has been overwhelmingly positive. Regina noted that, because of Flock Note, we are able to track engagement and that "The Little Drummer Boy" video was particularly well-received. Fr. Joe went on to read several of the positive notes he received as a result of the Christmas outreach, most of which stated that our efforts have made parishioners feel more connected than they otherwise might feel.

The lowest "open" rate for our e-blasts was 33% and the highest has been 44%. Denis Robichaud, whose expertise includes social media, mentioned to Fr. Joe that anything over 25% is a phenomenal "open" rate.

Regina said that Dynamic Parish is very complimentary about our livestreams and our website.

- **Faith Formation**

Regina reported that the roll-out of instruction was slightly delayed due to social distancing guidelines. In an effort to track overall progress, Regina made phone calls to 12 teachers spanning grades 2 through 5. Although there was some initial concern about the efficacy of Zoom instruction, the teacher reaction is now very positive, with teachers reporting attendance of 100% for most sessions, and the students are very much engaged in class. The "Blessed" program from Dynamic Catholic continues to be very well received by students and teachers. Positive feedback was also received for the new "Christ In Us" digital platform. Regina will be contacting all remaining teachers this week.

Kim asked if live streaming of education will continue after the pandemic ends. Regina said that she is not certain at this point, but that online resources – which have been very popular – will remain available post-pandemic.

Regina also noted that the pandemic forced the parish to consider implementing online programs earlier than they might have been considered, which allowed us to make adjustments more quickly.

- **Youth Ministry**

Veronica reported that the Leadership Zoom meetings for youth leaders continue to be both popular and effective, as the concept allows for continuing engagement with post-Confirmation young people. She noted that guest speakers have been very well-received.

Also, because these meetings are posted on the website, the meetings can be viewed by current Confirmation candidates, giving them encouragement as to how they might stay involved post-Confirmation.

Last night's meeting was focused on prayer.

Last year's Youth Ministry food drive for the Northern Rhode Island Food Pantry collected 900 cans. Social distancing guidelines will make this year's effort far more challenging, but throughout the Sunday morning masses on Sunday, February 7th youth from grades 6-12 will be sponsoring a "Hope Revival." They will be waving signs encouraging parishioners to drop off canned goods in the church parking lot. Cans can be dropped off or volunteers will take them directly for the donor's vehicle. Additional details are in the attached flyer.

- **Roof Repairs**

Roof repairs have been completed as of today. There were no leaks during the heavy storms of the past few weeks.

- **Mass Attendance**

Even without music, the attendance at the Saturday 5:00 PM and Sunday 8:30 AM Masses remains strong.

All attendees for the Christmas Masses were accommodated. It was not necessary to move anyone downstairs to view the service.

Daily Mass will tentatively begin on Ash Wednesday, depending on the Covid 19 situation. Fr. Joe reported that many parishes across the diocese have not yet restarted daily Mass.

- **Finances**

Collections are still down by about \$2,000 per week. Several large donations were received at year end due to tax planning. Those donations are sustaining the parish, which remains in a solid financial position. Online donations have increased slightly during the pandemic.

- **Dynamic Parish**

Regina reported that almost all of the "I Heard God Laugh" books have been distributed.

Dynamic Parish has also released a listing of what are considered to be Matthew Kelly's 11 best prayer videos. Regina will be sharing the links via subsequent e-blasts and on the parish Facebook page.

The emphasis for this year's "Best Lent Ever" program will be prayer. Best Lent Ever Journals will accompany the video series and will be made available.

The Easter book will be "Do Something Beautiful for God" by Mother Teresa.

- **Holiday Gift Drive**

Kim does not yet have exact numbers, but the holiday gift drive suffered to a certain degree due to the pandemic. However, as she noted, this year's efforts will keep the momentum going for next year, and the feedback was very positive. It is likely that we collected more than reported because some parishioners may have failed to type in St. John Vianney in the appropriate field on the web page.

- **St. John Vianney Help for the Needy**

Orin reported that the parish was able to send out a total of \$10,000 to seven or eight organizations. All were very thankful for the help. The account is now low and needs to be replenished.

- **Elections**

Tess Mota is cycling off the council. Kim expressed gratitude for her work as one of the original council members, and noted that our parish owes her debt of gratitude for her efforts.

Kim and Fr. Joe will look at our charter and report on the next steps for board transition at our next meeting.

- **Next Meeting**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:17 PM. Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 2nd at 6:30 PM.