

**St. Thomas Aquinas Church  
Pastoral Council Meeting - Minutes  
Tuesday, September 8, 2020, 7:00 pm  
Zoom Meeting**

**Present:** Emily Beaudry, Dawn Bratsch-Prince (secretary), Fr. Kyle Digmann, Kobe Eischeid, Ann Gansemer-Topf, Scott Law, Ronnie Lindeman (chair), K'Lynn Lynn, John Moss, Lizzie Tecklenburg, Francis Today.

**Guest:** none.

- **Meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM.**
- **Opening prayer** led by Francis Today followed by reflection on the Mission Statement.
- **Volunteers signed up to lead Opening Prayer (see list below).**
- **Business:**
  - **CFAD endowment for window maintenance (John Moss)**

The clerestory window project ended up with \$37K surplus. A major donor asked that additional funds to be used for window cleaning. There is a proposal from Building and Grounds that we establish an endowment which at 4% return provides \$1480/year for maintenance. Finance Council approved this proposal and seeks Pastoral Council approval. After discussion, Pastoral Council is sending this back to Finance Council and asking for clarification: we are asking that the endowment proposal be broadened to include all windows, not just clerestory, and to encompass not just cleaning but also maintenance. **UPDATE:** On September 18 the Pastoral Council approved via email the establishment of the windows endowment, after receiving clarification from Bobby Leblanc that the endowment would in fact include maintenance and cleaning of all windows.
  - **COVID-19 Policy at STA – closing metrics, feedback for Fr Kyle**

As the cases in Story County/Ames have spiked, Fr. Kyle asked for input on three questions: 1) Is STA contributing to the spike in transmission?; 2) are we taking sufficient safety measures?; 3) are there additional measures we can take? The following summarized discussion and suggestions:

    - The most recent adjustments have been no cantor or vocal music, having Father wear a mask throughout Mass. Do we have lectors wear masks when reading too?
    - No indication that STA is a major contributor to COVID spread. Of those attending mass who later tested positive, there was no

discernable spread to anyone else they were around at mass (masks and distance seem to be working).

- For many, STA offers mental and spiritual respite from all-consuming concerns during this difficult time. We need to recognize the value of the STA community as a source of strength and hope, while taking every precaution to minimize spread.
- Concern was expressed about the safety of staff who are physically present in the building. Decreased traffic in church, closed classrooms, online Mass, strict sanitation measures contribute to making the environment as safe as possible.
- Student parishioners are mourning loss of community-gathering opportunities, but understand the need to be cautious about safety. They greatly value the creative opportunities to gather and be transformed (TNL, Come Awake, Adoration, etc.) in a safe environment.
- Other suggestions: have lectors wear masks while reading; encourage parishioners to move outside into the fresh air after mass if they want to visit; look into acquiring a sanitizing machine.

Parish leadership continues to monitor spread in our community and to adjust our operating procedures always taking into consideration Archdiocesan guidelines, CDC guidelines, Ames School District policy, ISU policy, and City and County guidelines.

- **Situation for Musicians/Vocalists at mass during increased Covid-19 concerns.** With the departure of Eric Evans from music ministry, Michael Banwarth is now coordinating this ministry with health from several others. . During the current COVID spike, we will not having singing, just instrumental music.
- **Parish registration update.** Response to electronic registration has been limited. According to Tom Budnik fewer than 500 have registered. All agreed we need to find multiple routes to raise awareness of the need to register.
- **Catholic Worker House – Fr. Kyle.** A group has purchased a house in Ames which is being developed into a Catholic Worker House. Matt Mitchell is leading the effort to create an authentically Catholic community that offers weekly mass, keeps catholic social teaching at its core. Matt is looking for partners among the local Catholic community and reaching out to generate interest.
- **Columbarium Committee** – The committee is re-evaluating the draft proposal they had circulated based on the range of input received. They plan to present a revised proposal to Council next month.

### **Finance Council Report – John Moss**

- In July 2020, we were 26% under budget for income even taking into account a special parent contribution (\$54K). This does not include the CARES funding received. Our expenses were also under budget by 17%. Finance Council is doing some planning around how we reduce our expenses in a time of diminishing income.

**Pastor's Report.** Fr. Kyle presented feedback from the visioning process that has been underway.

- The **Visioning Committee** has identified a gap in how we connect the three parts of our parish mission: gather > transform > send. STA is good at hosting gatherings/events, but we are missing the next steps. There does not appear to be an intentional hand off from one stage to the next. Some examples:
  - when a family baptizes a child at STA, we often miss the opportunity to invite and encourage them back to the parish community – we gather, but don't fully engage in the next step of transformation.
  - we transform people through our small groups, but then don't send them out to evangelize in some fashion.
- Fr. Kyle wants to focus on 3-5 key goals and objectives that the parish can work on in each of the mission stages: gather, transform, send. There was agreement that the ideal approach to this visioning process is an in-person facilitated meeting or retreat, but due to COVID many people are cautious about in-person gatherings. Small group gatherings were suggested. Fr. Kyle will continue to give this some thought.
- **Stewardship:** October is stewardship month and Fr. Kyle wants to begin to identify the wants and needs of our parish family rather than focus primarily on monetary giving. One suggestion is to put out a pamphlet or newsletter to share parish stories about how things are going and then include an ask. More discussion to follow.
- **Meeting adjourned at 20:33PM.**

**Next meetings and prayer leaders:**

Tuesday, October 13, 7:00 PM, Dawn Bratsch-Prince

November 10, Scott Law

December 8, Ann Gansemer-Topf

January 12, John Moss

February 9, Kobe Eishied

March 9, Lizzie Tecklenburg

April 13, Emily Beaudry

May 11, K'Lynn Lynn

June 8