

St. Joseph's Parish

Annual General Meeting

October 4th, 2020

1. Welcome

Brian Ouellette started the meeting at 1:05 p.m. and provided rationale for holding the meeting virtually rather than in person. He thanked parishioners for registering and asked for patience as we become familiar with Zoom platform. The meeting began with 32 connections and ended with 39 connections. It is noted that at least three of these connections included two participants (i.e. spouses joining the call together).

2. Opening prayer

Fr. Jim Bleackley noted that October was the last day of the season of creation and feast of St. Francis of Assisi. On this occasion, the Canticle of Creation was offered as a prayer.

3. Zoom housekeeping

Brian asked that participant add their names to their Zoom account/screen and that they mute their microphones when not speaking or asking questions. Voting procedures and hand raising using Zoom features were explained. Participants were asked to direct any technical issues to Kathleen Strader.

The AGM agenda and draft audited financial statements were shared with all using the chat feature. Those that were not able to download the documents were sent an e-mail.

4. Introductions – adoption of agenda

Brian reviewed the AGM meeting agenda. On motion duly made by Kathleen Strader and seconded by Deborah Dorner, the agenda was approved with 24 participants in favour (0 participants were against the motion – it was noted that some participants were not able to find the voting buttons).

Brian introduced the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC), Finance Committee and parish staff members in attendance.

5. Approval of 2019 AGM minutes

With the correction noted on page 4 regarding the spelling of Paolo Siraco's name, the 2019 AGM minutes were approved on a motion made by Eleanor Rabnett and seconded by John Rietschlin with 21 participants in favour.

6. Treasurer's report

Robert Sykes presented highlights from the Treasurer's report which included a financial overview and upcoming challenges. The 2019 fiscal year finished with a balanced budget, noting that the \$186,000.00

surplus was primarily the result of a one-time gift. The financial audit passed without major concerns. The largest concern is how the COVID restrictions will impact finances in the coming year. As of September, the parish has been able to stay on budget due to wage subsidies provided by the federal government. Once these subsidies end, consideration will need to be given to how parish activities and services will be sustained.

Finance committee members whose terms were to expire this year have agreed to stay on for an additional year to preserve continuity amidst the many changes.

Plans to renovate the front entrance and steps have been maintained. Robert has requested that parishioners who are able to help with the project contact him to discuss options. It is hoped that help from parishioners would potentially offset some of the associated costs.

On a motion made by Patricia Malikail and seconded by Paolo Siraco, the resolution to appoint Marcil Lavallée again for the 2020 audit was approved with 24 participants in favour.

The Treasurer's report developed from the 2019 Audited Financial Report, was approved on motion made by Bob Part and seconded by Liam Kieser with 26 participants in favour.

A question was raised about whether the audited statement itself needed to be approved at the AGM. It was clarified that approval of the Treasurer's report is sufficient since it included statements from the audit. In addition, the audited statements were also shared via chat or email.

7. Featured ministries

a. Supper Table report

Ryan Mitchell presented his report from the newly renovated Supper Table kitchen. With successful fundraising, including the gala, the Supper Table ended the year with a balanced budget for the 1st time in over a decade.

Ryan spoke of creating an outward focus towards the needs of Supper Table guests in order to better understand and help address the issues they are facing. For example, for new Canadian families with lower income, accessing culturally appropriate foods is difficult and the Supper Table was able to respond by establishing purchasing power for ethnic foods. In addition, the Supper Table is hosting movie nights for people to create a home experience, as well as a therapeutic paint night to alleviate anxiety (the art is displayed on the Supper Table Facebook page).

The Supper Table space has increased by 150 square feet with plans to add activities and continue to meet the needs of its guests, which by the numbers includes: 4000 people/month; 150 guests/night; and 20 volunteers/day. The tables are set up in tables of 4 and can be reconfigured to create a movie theatre or other set up.

Questions were raised about anticipated challenges related to current COVID reality. Ryan spoke of creating a consistent group of volunteers that are maintaining smaller bubbles to protect clientele from potential transmission and the ongoing need for financial support that is accessed through grants and private contributions. For example, as the colder weather approaches, they will be seeking donations of cold weather gear. Joanne Lee suggested adding a note about warm clothing donations in the bulletin. Sharon Gravelle suggested posting more information on the website for people that do not access

Facebook. And Patricia Malikail asked about sharing information through IMAGE, a Sandy Hill community newsletter.

b. Women's Centre report

Marsha Wilson presented highlights from the Women's Centre report. The Centre was the recipient of a \$150,000.00 bequest in 2019. The city of Ottawa has confirmed that its funding will be maintained in 2021. Individual donations have decreased in the past three months.

Access to the Centre during the pandemic is limited to six clients for one-hour at a time. Other clients wait outside and come in as people leave. Two homeless women have been allowed to stay throughout the day. Two other women are living in motels with their children: one family is coming to the Centre and food is being delivered to the second. An average of 16.2 women/day were received in the Centre with the busiest day seeing 48 women.

A number of fundraising events will take place this year including A Night at the Drive-in, Quality of Life Virtual Awards and An Evening with Sheila (virtual comedy show).

Martha noted the generosity and engagement from the community who are responding to Facebook posts by sending toiletries, etc. Martha also noted her appreciation of the gardening club maintaining St. Joe's garden, which benefits the Centre and Supper Table.

Questions were raised regarding upcoming challenges due to cold and COVID. Martha confirmed that the needs of the homeless community in particular will increase due to restrictions in terms of number of people. Marsha is considering what else may be offered to respond to needs, for example, women have expressed desire to play bingo and Parish Hall could provide space to host this and other activities (e.g. hair cutting and yoga).

Another question was raised about collecting gifts for women for Christmas. Martha indicates that this activity will happen again this year and will provide information re process in the coming months.

8. Pastor's report

Fr. Jim Bleackley noted that the pandemic has brought about many changes and that the parish staff are doing all they can to continue the mission of St. Joe's. As stated in his report, he notes that the goals and priorities we set for ourselves in the coming year must be based on the invitation to discipleship even in light of the ongoing pandemic.

Patricia Malikail shared that many parishioners are connecting through computers and expressed gratitude to the staff for all that is being done to reach out and provide resources. Thanks for all that is being done. Participants concurred with virtual thumbs up and hand clapping.

9. Executive Director's report

Christopher Adam emphasized the importance of engagement as we continue with less than 30% attendance at weekend masses. He noted how encouraging it was to see so many people on the first virtual AGM and thanked people for joining.

Chris also noted how good it was to work with Fr. Jim through the storm of COVID and how he was appreciative of Fr. Jim's calm demeanour and thoughtfulness.

In his role during the pandemic, Chris also learned to appreciate the value of good on-line communication. For example, sharing liturgical reflections on-line will continue to add value to parish life and outreach beyond the pandemic.

The importance of continued care for the community and property was mentioned. The success of the maintenance and care for the garden in particular has been recognized by others.

The parish also took on the new project of offering maintenance services to Paroisse Sacré Coeur (French oblate parish across the street). Workloads and priorities for maintenance staff have been reviewed so that St. Joe's can benefit from the additional funds that are accessed by offering the service. Robert Sykes, PPC member, has also created report for Sacré Coeur on renovations they may need.

While some staff have not returned, staffing levels are almost back to what it was before the pandemic. Chris emphasized appreciation of support and continued volunteerism from parishioner to ensure that core activities were maintained.

Discussions with elected representatives continue regarding the role play by St. Joe's and the Supper Table in the creation of a community hub. Concern has also been expressed about making large strategic changes during the pandemic.

The history and flexibility exhibited by the parish in the past in terms of rethinking itself in relation to emerging needs in the community was noted (i.e. 2012 changes to governance model and the greater emphasis on roles of laity within the parish). The question of how the community will remain relevant and close to needs of community is important. One shift that may be considered is offering educational services to people who have not been able to access formal continued education opportunities. On this note, Angela and Steve McCanny added in the chat: "There is a high school equivalency program, ACElinks, operating out of the John Howard Society with partnership through Algonquin College. We serve the homeless and low-income population residents of Sandy Hill and Vanier. Opportunities for further partnership always welcome!"

Joanne Lee invited Chris to explore and mine the gifts within the community, which includes many retired people with knowledge and talents to share.

10. Music/Liturgy report

Jamie Loback noted the unprecedented and unexpected ban on singing brought on by the pandemic (singing has been identified as an activity with significant risks of transmitting COVID-19). Different ways of engaging music ministry have therefore been supported, such as the organ preludes and post ludes, having a cantor singing the psalm and communion hymn, and involving instrumental musicians (cello and violin) to bring life to liturgies. Several people were named for their contributions to these efforts.

Liturgies are supposed to be as participatory as possible. Ideas are emerging for this Christmas to give as much of a feeling of Christmas as possible, e.g. the choir singing outside before mass.

All liturgical rules and principles are announced before mass to ensure people are adapting to new protocols.

Rental revenue has disappeared for the most part, though some choirs have resumed with singers keeping 8' distancing and taking breaks to allow the space to be ventilated.

Options are being explored to reengage and reconnect with people in the music ministry (e.g. Taizé), with pre-recorded music for people to use at home on their own schedule.

An Ngo expressed appreciation for the links provided for liturgies on a weekly basis. There was also some discussion about how singing could resume using different means of projecting sound in the church space.

11. Young Adult and Faith Formation Report

Andrew Pump referred people to the report for the nature and number of activities and initiations that have occurred over the past year. Some adjustments have been made to the Young Adult ministry to encourage greater participation in liturgies and activities. The success of the vegetarian cooking lessons (which provided meals to the group and for the Supper Table) was highlighted.

RCIA candidate plans for confirmation were disturbed by COVID and will be confirmed at a later date. Two people wanting to be baptised are meeting with Andrew every week. Baptism for children – programs have been changed for parents and focused on the resource entitled “10 things Pope Francis wants you to know about the family”. First communion happened just before lock down. Confirmation happened in January.

Andrew noted how challenging it is for families right now – facing realities of children being at school, needing to isolate when symptoms appear and juggling work with children at home. There are plans to provide resources for families with children that can be accessed from home.

Appreciation was expressed for the music at university mass brought by Jamie Loback.

12. Parish Pastoral Council Report

Brian highlighted the following items from the PPC report:

- Appreciation to parish staff working tirelessly to ensure activities of parish are maintained and/or extended during the pandemic.
- The “Flourishing Parish” survey conducted in the fall generated responses from 133 participants. Analysis of results to identify ways that PPC can respond to expressed needs and feedback has been put on hold during pandemic.
- A Care for Creation working group was initiated by Joan O’Connell – some recommendations have been shared through the weekly updates to parishioners from Chris.
- Appreciation to the City of Ottawa for their continued support of the Women’s Centre through their annual grant.
- Jenny Lemon is a new PPC member that has joined in September 2020 as the young adult representative.
- Brian reiterated the need to discern and consider how we will need to reengage the parish after the pandemic.
- Thanks were expressed again to all who have contributed in the various ways as evidenced by the reports that were submitted.

13. Questions

Bob Part, as chair of Liturgy Committee, wondered about their mandate to meet quarterly. Given pandemic one meeting has been cancelled. Because the Liturgy Committee is a subcommittee of the Parish Pastoral Council, he wonders if the PPC should take up a motion and vote to approve the suspension of Liturgy Committee meetings until normalcy resumes. Brian noted that the Parish Pastoral Council would take up this motion at the next PPC meeting on October 13, 2020 and he would notify Bob as to the decision of the PPC.

Margaret Cain, on behalf of refugee outreach committee, recognized the work of the parish staff and expressed appreciation to Jamie for what has been done to bring music to liturgies.

Dona Bowers asked about whether there were plans to refresh the website, which can be difficult to navigate and access content. Kathleen Strader is open to looking at any suggestions to improve website usability. Chris noted that WordPress has been used for past 8 years, and recommends keeping this platform while working on making things accessible without losing existing content. In the chat, Kathleen invited suggestions on updating the website by emailing her at frontdesk@stjosephs.ca.

14. Closing prayer

Fr. Jim offered closing prayer.

15. Motion to adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 3:08 p.m. with a motion by An Ngo, seconded by Kathleen Strader.