

ST. JOSEPH'S PARISH, OTTAWA

2022 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

June 15, 2022 – 7:00 p.m.

1. Land Acknowledgement

Donna Rietschlin, Pastoral Council Chair and moderator for this AGM, welcomed all, and called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. with an acknowledgement of our presence on the traditional territories of the indigenous communities that preceded the founding of our Parish and who have cared for the land, water, plants and creatures of this area for generations. We are thankful to them and honour and learn from the example they set.

2. Opening Prayer – Offered by Pastor, Fr. Jim Bleakley.

3. Welcome

Donna extended a special thanks to the dedicated women in the Parish, the active members in the various Ministries, the members of the Parish Finance Council, the members of the Parish Pastoral Council and the newest Parish staff member, Paul Dansereau, Faith Formation and Young Adult Ministry Coordinator.

4. Adoption of the Agenda

Donna presented the AGM meeting agenda. On a **MOTION** made by John Weir, seconded by Joy Heft, that the Agenda be accepted as presented. The Motion was passed unanimously.

5. Approval of the 2021 AGM Minutes

Donna presented the 2021 AGM Minutes. On a **MOTION** made by Kathleen Strader, seconded by Kathleen Allan, that the 2021 AGM Minutes be accepted. The Motion was passed unanimously.

6. Treasurer's Report

John Mark Keyes, Chair of the Parish Finance Council (PFC), presented highlights of the Report which included the capital budget, ethical aspects of investing and fundraising issues. He reported that revenues and incomes came in at approximately \$1.5 million for the past year, and, owing to government Covid grants, the audited statements showed a surplus: the General Fund over \$400,000 and the Women's Centre over \$500,000. Covid grants are expected to end by the end of 2022 and no future surpluses can be expected. John Mark also advised that parking revenues are not back yet. John Mark reported that substantial capital will be needed for projects such as the Church's front steps with ramp and stonework, roof repairs, parking lot repairs, and the heating system that needs to be replaced within the next three to five years. Sunday collections have dropped; dozens of families have not returned. A suggestion was made that the collection totals be reported regularly in the Parish Bulletin, and that advertising St. Joe's presence in a few community papers would not hurt.

John Mark also reported that the PFC has two new members: Joe Gunn and Kathleen Keenan.

A **MOTION** made by John Mark Keyes and seconded by Joan O'Connell, that the Parish agree to the recommendation to the Finance Council and approve the re- appointment of the auditor for St. Joseph's Parish for another two years: Marcil Lavallée Chartered Professional Accountants, Licensed Public Accountants. The Motion was accepted as read and was passed as read.

The appointment would be reviewed every five to ten years.

7. Parish Pastoral Council Report – Invitation of nominees for PPC among those Present and naming of PPC members for 2022-2023

The Parish Mission Statement provided the base of Donna's recognition of our welcoming and proclaiming community via the time and talents offered by the following persons: Jamie Loback (Music, Liturgy, Welcoming), Eleanor Rabnett (Synodality), John Weir (Refugee Committee), Sue-Anne Hess (Reconciliation course, Blanket Exercise), and all involved in the Women's Centre, the Christmas card mail-out and the Advent series. Donna also recognized the web of support we received from other parishes and groups: St. Basil's, Sacré Coeur, OMI-St. Peter's Province, Anglican Church of the Messiah, Ottawa Food Bank.

Together with the Parish Finance Council Chair, the adjusted PFC Terms of Reference were reviewed, as well as those of the Parish Pastoral Council. An updating of the PPC document is planned for the Fall - in consultation with Fr. John Renken, Professor of Canon Law, St. Paul University.

PPC Membership: In response to Donna's invitation, two nominees put their names forward: Kathleen Strader, parishioner and St. Joe's staff member and Claire Cheesman, parishioner and Synodality group member.

A **MOTION** was made by Joan O'Connell and seconded by Marion Kizas, that the two nominees, Kathleen Strader and Claire Cheesman be accepted as members of Parish Pastoral Council for 2022-2023 - with the proviso that Kathleen's status as a member of Parish staff is found not to conflict with membership on PPC. The Motion was approved.

8. Report from St. Joe's Women's Centre

Highlights of Marsha Wilson's report follows:

- \$5,000 raised from the Women Moving Forward event will go to the Indigenous programme at St. Margaret's Church.
- \$15,000 received from the City of Ottawa for food, cleaning supplies and grocery vouchers; also, food containers for take-out meals.
- Fifteen women at a time are allowed into the Women's Centre, with Wednesdays and Thursdays the busiest.
- Bingo games and outings to Waupoose Farm are planned as more children are coming as summer approaches.
- The Women's Centre has received many donations of toiletries.

9. Report from St. Joe's Supper Table

Kathleen Strader and Sue-Anne Hess reported highlights of their experience:

- While Kathleen manages operations, Sue-Anne and Madison work as Interim Coordinators.
- Sue-Anne also heads the Volunteer Committee actively seeking volunteers.

- Patsy assisted twice a week when breakfast, lunch and dinner were served for a while. Only dinner is offered at present.
- Some churches (St. Elias, Parkdale United) are providing us with dinners Tuesday through Friday.
- More families are coming to the food bank on Wiggins Pvt.
- Owing to the transient nature of its clientele, the Supper Table does not take donations of clothing or of used containers.

#### 10. Significant Parish Events

On our Parish synodal journey, Claire Cheesman reported that Eleanor Rabnett spearheaded the synodal process with great diligence, beginning with an announcement in January 2022 in the Parish Bulletin. By March, 20 volunteers attended two sessions. Each session had one person working as a facilitator and another working as the scribe. By April, twelve groups had been formed. After each group had captured the essence of the exercise: “a pilgrimage of the heart, a conversion journey that all of us are being asked to take together”, an examination of where the Parish needs healing, a journey with the Holy Spirit’s guidance toward synodality. The summaries of “synodal” sharing that took place between group members were subsequently compiled into the Parish report to the Archdiocese. A full report will be shared with the parish in the Fall 2022.

In the aftermath of the Indian Residential School system and its legacy, a humbled population across the country, including churches, have sought ways to initiate respectful and productive conversations concerning colonialism and other forms of injustices against traditionally marginalized communities, while also recognizing the agency and dignity of all individuals involved. To this end, our Parish initiated a number of financial and educational opportunities for parishioners to learn about and “walk with” our Indigenous brothers and sisters. (See No. 11 below.)

#### 11. Parish response to reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples

- Our Parish has presented to parishioners a video featuring Fr. Gary Laboucaine, OMI, an Indigenous priest who introduced us to Indigenous people’s spirituality and way of life, their experiences of grave injustices, tremendous suffering and ongoing trauma – a dark legacy of which we were mostly or perhaps completely unaware.
- On a learning curve, our Parish members were offered participation in a Listening to Indigenous Voices Study group for 11 Zoom sessions over a 4-month period. Host: another Oblate parish: Canadian Martyrs’.
- As a guide for recognition and inclusion of Indigenous spirituality in our own worship practices, St. Joe’s invited the Kateri Native Ministry’s Executive Director Donna Naughton to arrange to have a Kateri Mass in our Parish. The collection was subsequently donated to the Kateri Native Ministry.
- The Women’s Centre applied a \$150,000 grant to Indigenous women.
- At the request of the Archdiocese, our Parish held a special collection for the Indigenous Reconciliation Fund and collected a significant amount over the target of \$5,000 set for St. Joe’s. The campaign goal for the Indigenous Reconciliation Fund from all Canadian dioceses is \$30 Million.

#### 12. Pastor’s Comments

Fr. Jim stated that trauma marked last year. The pandemic made it difficult to do pastoral work. We've turned the corner and are beginning to come back. What are the tools we need? We can begin by giving a mandate to the new PPC in September and re-establish our bond with parishioners and work to determine whether we are meeting the needs of the Parish. We must become creative. Inviting the Kateri Native Ministry to worship with us was a good beginning. There is, however, a long journey ahead of us. There have been calls to action on behalf of the Indigenous community. How do we respond?

Staff turnover and replacement have also become an issue, particularly for the RCIA, Faith Formation and Young Adult Ministries inasmuch as the First Communion and Confirmations, and Marriage Prep are already on the calendar. Paul Dansereau has been hired to reengage programs that have been dormant for a few years and has already made great strides to address the backlog in Faith Formation.

Fr. Jim confirmed his move to Vancouver this summer and, effective August 1, 2023. Our new Pastor, Fr. Robert Laroche, is looking forward to continuing to develop the Oblate charism in our parish.

### 13. Executive Director's Comments

Chris reported the following:

- We are in a period of juggling staff – Paul Dansereau, Sue-Anne Hess and Kathleen Strader.
- The grants we've received were very temporary and not sustainable. This is a huge issue for the Supper Table and the Women's Centre. Our traditional sources of income, the parking lot and the hall rentals have dwindled considerably.
- The church stairs reconstruction will begin on July 28<sup>th</sup>.
- A fundraising campaign will ensure a sustainable future for our church building, our Ministries and the Supper Table.

Chris also proffered his thanks to members of both the Parish Finance Council and the Parish Pastoral Council for working together in a collaborative environment.

### 14. Closing Prayer

Fr. Jim ended the meeting with a blessing and Prayer of Reconciliation.

### 15. Motion to Adjourn

On a **MOTION** by Sue-Anne, the meeting was adjourned.

### Signatures:

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Chair: Donna Rietschlin

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Pastor: Jim Bleackley, O.M.I.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

