February 11, 2019 **SAINT JAMES PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING** *Minutes*

**ATTENDEES**: *Parish Council Members*: Fr. Martin Linebach, Fr. Casey Sanders, Lou Edmondson, Jeff Lanz, Stacia Reynolds, Coty Oropilla, Greg Schreacke, Sr. Marie Hannah, Cheri Ellis-Reeves, Mimi Pike, Geoff Clark, Jakob Sherrard, Paula Knowles, Jennifer Moran, and Andy Medders.

*St. James Parishioners for a Positive Change Members*: Elaine Alicna, Barbara Boone, Joey Brown, Nicki Clark, Melissa Nepi, Beth Nickell, Sonya Pruitt, Laura Tabb Reed, Susan VanZant-Sherrard, and Liz Tabb. *Additional attendees*: Dean Sears and Dr. Karen Shadle, Archdiocese of Louisville Office of Worship Director.

**AGENDA**: Meeting conducted in Parish Office Basement

This meeting was held to address concerns from the group named *St. James Parishioners for a Positive Change* (SJPPC). Fr. Martin opened the meeting with prayer, after which, the PC chair asked all those in attendance to introduce themselves and to maintain confidentiality of the matters being discussed. It was asked that no audio or video recording occur. The PC agenda was shared as was the agenda from the SJPPC.

Minutes were taken for the PC and for SJPPC. Members of the SJPPC and PC are to meet for review and approval of both sets of minutes. A deadline of Monday, February 18, was set for the submission of the two sets of minutes.

Explanation for the existence of the SJPPC: As stated by a member of the SJPPC, it represents about 150 parishioners, although some members who own businesses or hold community positions such as a doctor or attorney and who are involved in the local community refrained from signing the SJPPC letter of petition; furthermore, some of the signees of the said petition were not in full agreement with all the concerns expressed by the SJPPC. This group has formed to express an indication that something is wrong in the church. The following list of points are the concerns which the SJPPC brought to the PC meeting for discussion.

1. The view that St. James continues to lose parishioners to other area churches.
2. Hymnals have been absent or removed from the back pews and the nursery.
3. Parishioners feel unwelcome and/or have difficulty relating to Fr. Martin’s reserved personality.
4. Surveys or ways to reach out to parishioners for input, opinion and feedback are needed
5. Details regarding Worship:
   1. Music needs to have contemporary options. Input from the parish was not solicited in the selection of Dr. Black’s replacement.
   2. Knights of St. John Vianney are exclusive and become a distraction in large numbers. More needs to be done to encourage girl altar servers.
   3. Mass options without the use of Latin or incense.
   4. Ecumenical worship options to be offered as in the past.
   5. Concerns that the altar linen (antependium) hang to completely touch the floor as opposed to a 1976 paper’s explanation for the church having “clean lines.”
6. Explanations desired for the staffing changes, especially Dr. Black, Andrew Collins, Marquetta Lively, and Jen Tabbert.
7. Why was the Administration Committee dissolved and why PC members are no longer elected as representatives of area neighborhoods?
8. The desire for PC minutes to be consistently posted online as well as included as a bulletin insert.
9. Concerns about financial reports changing without explanation and a need for timeliness and adequate reporting for individual committee accounts (such as the Thanksgiving account)
10. Questions regarding the Parish Pastoral Council term limits and Discernment results. Discussion and answers from the Parish Council to the SJPPC concerns:
11. At one time in its history, St. James had a registry of 1700 households; however, the database had not been updated each year to remove those who had moved away, died, or became inactive. Over a year’s time the entire data base was updated, and registry was completed, giving a total of 1360 registered families as of summer 2017. A PC member remarked on the 107 who had moved away were contacted. She found multiple reasons for their leaving, some of which included attending other churches, military relocation, and children’s graduations from SJS such that now they are no longer dual-registered in their home parish and at St. James. Additionally, 110 new families have registered at St. James and they are comprised of newcomers to the area as well as locals. Conversation with other parishes in Louisville revealed that they update their registry every two years, making summer 2019 the year to review and update the data base again.
12. The issue of not having hymnals in the nursery or with the seating along the back wall was unknown to Fr. Martin and it was not purposeful. Dean Sears will order more hymnals for placement in the nursery and back benches.
13. A priest spoke directly to complaints regarding his personality. He acknowledged that his way of communicating is different from Fr. Chuck and that it was an adjustment for everyone when he came. He said his way of relating could be improved, and he has been trying and will continue to try—his door is always open. His German heritage shows in his reserved manner, but he truly enjoys talking with people and is willing to go out to eat with parishioners or do what he can to dispel the negative atmosphere. The life of the parish changes, just like people change, but his primary concern and role is the care of souls, and he wants what is best for the people of St. James. He reminded the group that we all walk the pilgrimage of faith together, and we should relish every moment spent with our parents. He reminded the group that he is only trying to steer the ship; he has nothing to hide and is trying hard. If he has failed, he apologizes, and he asked for help because he is as human as the rest of us.
14. A PC member addressed the position of Parish Voice, held by Geoff Clark, that was set up specifically to give anyone the opportunity to speak to or contact a council member directly. Furthermore, she suggested that contacting committee chairs in areas of one’s concern, or emailing the Council or committee chair, or to speak or email Fr. Martin or Fr. Casey directly are all opportunities for giving input and expressing one’s opinions and concerns. These options

have been in place for some time as a way to allow two-way communication. Members of the PC asked members of SJPCC if they had participated in the discernment process or took the survey as a way to voice concerns and help bring positive change to the parish. Some did and some did not participate in discernment.

Because the PC has met three times since January after receiving the SJPPC list of concerns, it gives evidence to the PC taking the issues very seriously. Also, the Council has appreciated that the SJPPC has brought their concerns to them for discussion.

1. *a*. As to the music at the Mass, Fr. Martin, Fr. Casey, Jeff Lanz and Dean Sears meet weekly to discuss worship structure. Fr. Martin adheres to a “Best of the Old and Best of the New” philosophy regarding the liturgy and the music. Dean Sears is the newly appointed Director of Liturgical Ministries after Dr. Stephen Black left the position. SJPCC acknowledged that music has gotten better with different hymn choices and upbeat music.

*b.* To address the concerns of Fr. Martin and Fr. Casey because men were not participating enough in the church—they were falling through the cracks-- efforts to involve them more were undertaken. The Men’s Retreats, the Holy League (a men’s group) and the Knights of St. John Vianney, which is geared toward middle school boys and teen-age youth, have all been successful efforts at encouraging men in the church. Fr. Casey mentioned the Pope has said that serving at the Mass is the seedbed of vocations, and the Knights are a way to subtly encourage vocations to the priesthood. The inaugural group of 12 Knights was chosen by Fr. Martin and Fr. Casey on the basis of maturity and leadership. On the first Sunday of the month at the 10 am Mass, known as “the Knights Mass”, the Knights process down the aisle at the beginning of Mass and stand on the side of the altar during the Mass. This is something the boys look forward to and enjoy and has brought greater comradery to the group. As to the colors and choices of the albs, it was Fr. Shayne Duvall who offered the servers the choice of the style of albs to wear for Mass—the long white alb with the colored corded belts or the black cassock with the white surplice. The servers chose the black and white. To distinguish the Knights from other servers, the girls and those new-to-serving at the altar wear red cassocks with white surplices.

*c*. Fr. Martin believes the use of Latin is important in worship. A misunderstanding in the use of Latin at the Mass occurred between him and Dr. Black. Fr. Martin is looking into options. A schedule is in place for incense-free Saturday Masses and Holy Day Mass options without the use of incense.

*d*. No one has volunteered to organize ecumenical services with House of Prayer Lutheran and Christ Episcopal. Fr. Martin asked for interested parties to express a desire and willingness to lead.

*e*. In addressing making changes to the church and to the Masses, Dr. Shadle stated that all the concerns (i.e. Latin, incense, altar server attire, etc.) that were listed were not against diocesan policy or church doctrine. The concerns are subjective, and people are attracted to different things. She agreed that emphasis should be on the liturgy because Mass is the main encounter for most parishioners. When parishioners like the Mass they attended, they return to that church—they come back. She cautioned against a fragmented parish which tries to create selective Masses; i.e., contemporary mass/traditional mass. Instead she mentioned being charitable—realizing that you will have to give up some of the things you prefer in order to get to a place where we can all worship together—finding the best way to serve the parishioners and work for the greater good of the church.

1. The reasons for the staffing changes are as follows: Dr. Black left to care for his ailing mother. Andrew Collins took the position of engineer to support their choice of his wife being able to stay home when they have children. Jen Tabbert left SJS to return to her former career in the banking industry. Marquetta Lively retired and chose to stay home to care for grandchildren.
2. The Administration Committee and Finance Committee were both meeting monthly and discussion revolved around the same topics. The two committees were combined, and Fr. Martin welcomed anyone who was on the Administration committee to be a part of the Finance committee. Most members left because of having served for many years and desiring a break. One member from the Administration Committee stayed to be part of the Finance Committee.
3. Additional discussion led to the decision to put the PC minutes in the bulletin as had been done in the past. Parish Council minutes have been on the St. James website and will continue going forward.
4. In addressing the Summary of Budget Issues and the way the numbers are reported to the parish, concerns about inconsistencies in the methods of reporting has led to a desire for greater transparency in the way the financial numbers are reported. A PC member suggested mailing out the accountability report instead of just putting it in the bulletin and online. A PC/Finance Committee member stated he will explore a better way to communicate the numbers to the parish.
5. Fr. Martin explained that he formed the Pastoral Council from committee chairpersons and by selecting active and involved parishioners who exhibited freshness of ideas as well as a strong commitment to the parish and the work involved in being a member of the Council. Because it is a three-year term, soon discussion will need to begin as to roll members off the Council and selecting new members. It was brought out that participating on committees to share one’s talents and to get more involved is one way to help bring positive change to St. James. The PC will take further steps in implementing the Discernment Process initiatives. The formation of the Parish Picnic committee was mentioned as a recent positive change whereby people are working together to make the church better. And the Picnic also serves as an illustration that new ideas are being considered but change takes dialogue and time.

Next Steps: It was mentioned that possibly PC members could stand in the back of church after Masses so that people could talk to the PC members and express any concerns and receive feedback. Two members of the PC and two members of the SJPPC will meet again. They will discuss the results of their meeting with their respective committees. The PC Chair suggested that the PC and the SJPPC attendees personally consider the gifts of talent God bestowed upon them as they complete their Stewardship form.

Further, the chair noted that a strong way to hear your voice is to become involved in the committees already in existence.

Closing: The meeting closed with a prayer.