

**St. Leo Church**  
**Pastoral Council Meeting**  
**March 29, 2022**  
**Meeting Minutes:**

**Note:** Due to Covid Restrictions, this meeting was conducted via videoconference.

**Present:** Kathy Vance, Noah Baskett, Mike Maggart, Mary Ann Seiwerath, Sr. Pat Michalek, Jeffrey Grice, Vern Harkins, Marcia Matthaei, Eugena Buena-Douglas, Luis Blanco-Doring and Fr. Elias Puentes SJ, were present. Melissa Monroe was absent.

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:32 PM by Council Chair Kathy Vance. An acknowledgment that St. Leo Parish sits on the sovereign land of Native Americans was recognized.

**Opening Prayer:** Opening prayer was presented by Marcia Matthaei focused on Psalm 46. Reflections followed.

**Commissions Q&A:** *The Council discussed the work of the parish commissions.*

The **Faith Formation Commission** is hosting a book study/book series this May following the book: "Abraham: A Journey to the Heart of Three Faiths". The presentation by Father Greg Boyle at Bellarmine was attended by several of the council members and St. Leo's parishioners who were all impressed with his presentation. The RCIA right of sending ceremony, with explanations provided to parishioners as to what was happening and why, was well received by the parishioners.

The **Food Connection Commission** is very busy with its work. It is working on strategic planning towards a more comprehensively developed plan for the next 3 to 4 years. It is exploring answers for its future about what they do well, what are the signs of the times, what's the Magis as it relates to their work, and what are they being called to do at this time. Kyle Crawford, a former Jesuit Volunteer is a new hire at the Food Connection. He is working on youth programming and has made a positive impact by finding several ways to save on expenses and operate more efficiently in this area.

The **Liturgy Commission** has outlined the dates and times of Easter week services. Sue Hudecek will be giving a reflection at the Good Friday service. At the Easter vigil on Holy Saturday a blessing of the fire and light in poetry plaza will take place where people will be gathered for the blessing of the water, welcoming of candidates into the church and with parishioners bringing bells to ring during the Gloria. Easter Sunday Masses with baptisms will take place at 8:30 AM and 10:30 AM. In recent liturgies young people have been involved in various roles. The Commission continues to focus their work on building community. The commission was recognized for wonderful work done regarding presentations for Black history month.

The **Pastoral Care Commission** was involved with planning for two funerals recently. A parish reconciliation service took place on March 23 with Yvonne Combs as the homilist. She was also introduced and welcomed as a new member of the Commission. A report was provided about the Afghan families assimilation into their new home and community. A May fundraiser event is being planned, likely in late May to support the family and introduce them to the parish community. The family is taking advantage of ESL opportunities, have been established with a primary care doctor and dentist. They have been enjoying outdoor activities involving bike riding and soccer for the children. The father is receiving help in finding employment. The mother has received a sewing machine and assistance in learning shopping. Summer activities for the children are being planned. In summary, many things have been happening at a quick pace for them.

The **Social Justice Commission** is exploring the creation of a legislative event to help parishioners understand the legislative process and to become more engaged as advocates on social justice issues that may come up in the state legislature.

The **Facilities Commission** did not meet recently. A new chair of the commission needs to be found to replace the past chair who resigned.

The Stewardship Commission is exploring establishing periodic small fundraising events to use as a vehicle of building the parish community. This activity would be seen as more about community building than fundraising, although the secondary benefit could be to help address some parish facility's needs, such as replacing light fixtures in the church. The events would likely involve food, wine, and music to help attract people to the event. The commission is currently brainstorming ways to address this.

Eugena reported on recent activities of the **Kateri Circle**. Father Pat has been recovering from a recent surgery but is expected to be back at their liturgy soon. In his absence they have much appreciated Father Xavier and Father Kevin filling in for Father Pat. The Kateri Circle will have a Synod listening session through zoom in April. The Tekewitha Conference will take place this summer; scholarship opportunities are being explored to assist those who would like to attend.

**Pastoral Council Elections:** Luis reported on the process for the upcoming election for Pastoral Council positions. There will be three positions open. Liaisons will be needed for council members to the Faith Formation Commission, the Facilities Commission and the Food Connection Commission. In addition, Jeffrey Grice, the liaison to the Liturgy Commission will run for a full term on the commission, as he was appointed to fill a vacancy in the past year. Marcia, Melissa, Sr. Pat, Vern and Luis will serve on the election committee. The election will take place in June, in advance of the June Pastoral Council meeting.

**Synod Report:** Kathy reported that two listening sessions have taken place so far. 31 people attended the first session and 26 attended the second. Three more are planned. She reported that great conversations are taking place during the sessions with good feedback being provided to the parish. Notes of each session are being typed up. Themes that have emerged are a hunger for reestablishing an in-person

parish community. She also said that many attendees commented on their happiness with the efforts of Father Elias to build the St. Leo's parish community.

**Pastor's Report:** Father Elias reported on several items. The Food Connection is planning an open house, at least a few times a month, following the Sunday Mass, to allow parishioners to meet the staff, see the facility and learn more about their work. He reported that a parish member suggested having an event to recognize and thank the parish staff for all their hard work in keeping the parish going, especially during Covid. Further discussion will take place about this. Father James Allison, a popular priest speaker will be in the Tacoma area in May, and efforts are being made for him either to speak at St. Leo or, if not possible, to assist parish members with being able to hear him speak elsewhere in Tacoma.

On April 30 he and Luis will be meeting with the chairs of the parish commissions. They will review the importance of organizing and encouraging parish volunteers to assist in the work involved with the projects that emerge from commission ideas. The parish staff can become overburdened with organizing and overseeing events that take place in the parish, and volunteer help needs to be encouraged to assist with this work. It's important for photographs and brief descriptions of events and projects be provided through social media or the parish website to show and inform parishioners of all the good work that is taking place. Volunteers involved with each event could help greatly by providing this service.

Father Elias reported on the need to hire a new Youth Formation Coordinator, as Kristin Elligsen has recently given notice of her resignation. Kristin has been instrumental in developing and facilitating this program during Covid but she is pursuing an opportunity to move forward in her career. She will be thanked for her work at the May 10 Mass for First Communion. Heather and Adriana will be spending time with Kristi class to understand the status of the programs that she has put in place and to carry them forward until a new person can be found. Moving forward it's clear that a team of volunteers will be needed to assist with the work in this area and that the paid position will likely be 22 to 27 hours per week, a part-time position. He also reported that advertising for a permanent part-time person to work in music and liturgy will be posted soon. This also will likely involve 22 to 27 hrs. of compensated time. Father Elias also reported that he had met recently with representatives of Guadalupe House to follow up on discussions as to how St. Leo can support Guadalupe House as good neighbors. Finally, he reported that Sacred Heart Parish will be celebrating the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart on June 24 and that a gathering to celebrate this will take place.

The meeting closed with a prayer and was adjourned at 8:25 PM.

Next Meeting: April 26, 2022.

Respectfully Submitted: Vern Harkins Secretary