

Our Lady and St. Patrick's Parish General Meetings

Thursday 7th April 2022 at 11am and 7pm

Present:

11am: Derek and Denis Horton, Maria Browne, Tess White, Tony Whitty, Lynn Roche, Sheila Samuel, Mary Dwyer, Eirlys Furlong. Notes taken by Collette Matchett

7pm: Keith Lewis, Sue Walsh, Margaret Morris, Cath Devonshire, Jacqui Summers, Gemma Pullen, Maria Cahalane. Notes taken by Collette Matchett

Apologies: Paul Donoghue. Nicola Kelly-Fisher.

Opening Prayers

Opening prayer for the parish and for a fruitful meeting was offered by Fr Edmund.

Together the assembly prayed the Synodal Prayer.

1. Welcome

A welcome address was given by Father Edmund who explained the Synodal Process would continue and as we welcome Easter in our lives so too there will be a ***New Life*** in our Parish. To this end we will be renewing our Parish Council, to which all parishioners are welcome.

2. Thanksgiving

Father Edmund thanked all parishioners for their steadfastness during the difficult times all have experienced over the past two years. Father thanked those who provided him with food and fresh vegetables and to those who checked in with him to make sure he was ok.

He offered appreciation for:

- Stewards – Derek, Denis, Alina, Jennifer, Collette and Michelle
- Cleaners – Alina, Rosemary, Fi and others
- Sacristans – Mary and Sheila
- Catechist – Maria Browne, Collette and Maria Cahalane
- Social and Fundraising – Michael Banks, Maria Davies, Lynda Morgan and Angela Brennan
- Synodal Team- Keith, Paul, Maria and Collette who have listened to parishioners and put together the Synodal Report for our parish
- SVPs who have kept in touch with families
- Gardening – Tony Whitty, Alina and Noel.

“God richly bless us, make our mission clear and strengthen our passion to be His Church in this parish.”

3. Evaluation of the past two years.

Included in this evaluation are 4.the future plans discussed at both meetings.

Maintenance

This is an ongoing situation: 5 years ago the **Presbytery** was in a significant state of disrepair with dampness in the loft and the balcony above the office leaking. There were also financial challenges with the **water and sewage** costs. These have since been reduced significantly from £700+ to around £200 with the introduction of a meter. The **telephone and internet** cost have been unified into one charge. The **Meeting and Function Room** is complete and available for use although there are still some issues with damp that need to be addressed. The **outside toilets** are completed.

In the **Church** both the **lighting in the church and the PA system** have been improved. The introduction of a water meter for the single tap has reduced the cost from £200+ There have also been repairs to the **roof and the basement** fire prevention standard has been upgraded to protect our church. The repointing of the **external Walls Sanctuary** is completed.

Work on the **steps from Commercial Street** has been completed with improved lighting. Grounds maintenance is an ongoing, which recently included a cost to rebuild the collapsed boundary wall.

Future Plans – the renovation of the Sanctuary, improvements to both the fire alarms and the intruder alarm, refurbishment of the outside kitchen for functions and making safe the balcony on the presbytery.

Unfortunately, the previous “Buildings Team” was dissolved.

Thanks to Denis and Derek who continue to service certain health and safety issues, such as certificates being brought up to date, that will be addressed with Father Edmund on his return from Rome.

The **Grounds and Maintenance ministry** – led by Derek and Denis Horton

Liturgy

Following the difficulties presented by COVID **Mass** attendance is good along with attendance at **Adoration** and the **Sacrament of Reconciliation**. Father Edmund continues to regularly **visit the sick**.

There was some discussion regarding whether the timings for Adoration should be limited but it was agreed that Exposition of the Holy Eucharist should continue from 11am to 6pm on Fridays to allow people who work to attend later in the day. Father Edmund gave assurance that he is present for most of the time and when he is in the house he monitors the church and if there is no one at Adoration he goes back into the church. However, there are parishioners who regularly attend at different times throughout the day.

Maria Browne, Maria Cahalane and Collette Matchett attended online the “**Growing a Missionary Parish**” evangelisation programme which has led to the establishment of a parish prayer group, catholic mothers’ group and renewed wedding preparation and formation experiences. It is important that all of our community are offered opportunities for a “**Divine Encounter**” and therefore we need to encourage retreats, bible study and formation, a choir and Eucharistic ministries.

Prayer Group – Maria Browne has organised a prayer group that meets fortnightly on Wednesday afternoons. Prayers include praying for our parish.

The Liturgical Ministry will plan for **retreats** throughout the year.
Rosary –On Wednesday evening the Rosary is prayed at the Cenotaph in Maesteg at 6pm. (Pray UK)This is our public witness in Maesteg and is led by Alina. The Rosary is also prayed in the church each Monday at 6pm.
Liturgy of the Word and Bidding Prayers – Denis and Maria will put together a rota for readers.
The**Liturgical Ministry**– led by Maria Browne

Catechesis, Formation and Education

Sacramental preparation.
Baptism – parents meet with Father Edmund and are currently directed to Collette for accompaniment.
Preparation for the **Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist** – parents should contact Father Edmund and will be prepared by either Maria Browne or Collette.
RCIA – there are currently no candidates for RCIA; this should be encouraged through bible sharing and formation activities and marriage preparation.
Marriage Preparation – Maria Cahalane supports Father Edmund with a series of meetings prior to marriage and it is hoped that newly married couples will continue to meet with other couples on their marriage vocation journeys.
Mothers' Group –formal meetings are planned for the last Thursday evening of each month at 7pm with informal coffee morning offered at 8:45am during school term times.
The Catechetical, formation and education team– led by Collette Matchett

Community, Social and Fundraising

The social and fundraising team have successfully hosted activities in these difficult times –Christmas Tree Blessing, St. David's Day, St. Patrick's Day and Garden Party for older parishioners. It is important that we provide opportunities to come together socially for companionship as God's family.
The 300 club and raffles are useful funding sources and Derek and Denis will look into setting up a weekly lottery bonus ball draw.
The **SVP**continues to support families in the parish both spiritually and temporally.
Collections for **Foodbank** will continue, and all donations are currently delivered to Caerau Foodbank.
The Community and Social Ministry – led by Michael Banks
Consideration should be made regarding continuation of Churches Together etc.

Finances

Father Edmund assured all that we must trust in the Lord and although we must continue to manage our parish finances prudently, we must not be overly anxious. We need to resolve our financial difficulties one by one. The situation is not as bad as we think but we are in big debt that is making us feel worse than it is.
We must believe in what we can do to move forward.
Gemma Pullen is an accountant and has volunteered to join the Finance Ministry. A day will be needed for financial considerations and we can consider our position more effectively when we receive our end of year financial report.
We should plan what we want to do and then God will provide for us when He is ready to bless us.

Father Edmund expressed his gratitude to Derek and Denis for their counting of weekly offerings and prompt banking of monies. They will continue to serve the parish in this way. We are encouraged to continue with the planned giving envelopes and the online banking service. A retiring collection for the restoration fund will also continue.

A small charge is made for funeral and therefore consideration should be made to charging for weddings which can be quite considerable at secular venues.

A Bonus Ball lottery of 59 members is proposed and Derek and Denis will look into setting this up.

Our Finance Ministry – led by Gemma Pullen and Keith Lewis.

The Financial Council will operate independently of the Parish Pastoral Council. The Pastoral Council will provide the framework for the pastoral needs of the entire parish, the Finance Council will consider how to manage our financial resource effectively for the Pastoral needs of the Parish, and provide regular reports to the Parish and Archdiocese.

The Parish Ministries Council

The four members of the Synodal Team, Maria Browne, Paul Donoghue, Keith Lewis and Collette Matchett, will be ex-officio members of the council having met with and listened to the people of the parish.

Each of the four ministries should send two representatives. There will be **12** members of the council in total and there shall be **4** meetings each year.

