Saint Bridget Parish Council Minutes  
**Wednesday; January 15, 2025**

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| Father Ken Shuping PRESENT  Rev. Seth Seaman PRESENT  Bruce Slough, Chairperson PRESENT  Allie Strollo, Secretary PRESENT  Pat Accardo PRESENT  Julia Williams ABSENT  Mike Wilder PRESENT | Frank Devenoge PRESENT  Tom Giannasi PRESENT  Kristine Keeney PRESENT  Mack Rich PRESENT  John Rogers PRESENT  Tara Chiudian PRESENT |

# Opening

* 6:01 PM – Meeting was called to order by Bruce Slough
* Opening prayer, Father Ken

# Approval of Minutes

* 6:01 PM Meeting minutes from November 2024 meeting were approved by the council

# Liaison Reports

## Liturgy – Mack Rich

* Christmas Mass
  + Estimate is total of 2,130 people who attended Mass for Christmas.
  + 5 p.m. Mass had over 780 people in the Church and Commons.
  + The distribution of the Eucharist in the Commons went well thanks to the extra EMHCs.
  + The Blessing of the Creche was hard to hear throughout the Church. The priest's mic for it will be tied into the main system next time.
  + 5:15 p.m. Mass had about 400 people.
  + MPH had a projector set up to display a backdrop image from the Church altar and it worked well.
  + 8 p.m. Mass had larger than expected attendance; the Commons was used for seating.
  + Midnight Mass had a little over 100 people--similar to Sunday 7:30 a.m.
  + The candle lighting was nice; more candles in or near the pews could be helpful next time.
  + The Church was very full for 10 a.m. Mass--approximately 250 people.
  + Plan to keep the same general Mass schedule for 2025 Christmas.
  + Will look into modifying the Creche platform to emphasize the Nativity scene more.
  + Perhaps shrink the Creche platform, add lighting, or add stable pieces.
  + May offer a "Blessing of the Jesus Figure" (exact title TBD) for parishioners to bring in their infant Jesus figures from their own Nativity scenes to be blessed; akin to Easter basket blessing. Could be offered after Masses on the 4th Sunday of Advent.
* Liturgical Wine
  + A light, sweet red wine was selected and a case ordered to begin using.
* Incense
  + No incense to be used at 7:30 a.m. Sunday Masses. This will be publicized in parish emails, the bulletin, and church website.
  + When incense is used at other Masses, the windows will be opened, weather permitting.
* 9 a.m. & 11 a.m. Mass Attendance
  + Discussed opening the Commons regularly for the 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Sunday Masses.
  + For now, Ushers will track attendance to measure the need for additional seating.
* Feast of St. Bridget
  + Bishop Knestout will celebrate Mass at 5:30 p.m. on Saturday, 2/1.
  + Alternative Readings will be used, from Hosea, 2 Corinthians, and Matthew.
* Other Masses
  + Feast of the Presentation is on 2/2. It is also the closest Sunday to the Feast of St. Blaise, so Blessing of Throats will be offered after Masses.
  + Ash Wednesday Masses will be at 8 a.m., 9:30 a.m. (school Mass), 5:30 p.m., and 7:30 p.m.
* Lent
  + Fr. Seth is exploring a Stations of the Cross procession through the neighborhood on April 11th. It would involve parishioners who live in the area to host specific Stations.
* Other
  + Ushers will be offered training on defibrillators and other basic first aid.

## Christian Formation-Kristine Keeney

* Schedule of some upcoming events
  + Retreat Day for 1st Reconciliation Class will be Jan 25 (and repeated on Feb 8).
  + 1st Reconciliation services will be held on March 8 & 15.
  + Diocesan Youth Conference will be the weekend of Feb 7-9.
  + 1st Communion Retreats will be held on March 29 and April 5.
  + Students will receive 1st Communion on May 3-4 and May 10-11.
  + Students will receive Confirmation on May 8.
  + We are starting to plan for VBS this summer. It will be held the week of June 16.
  + Work Camp for high school youth will be the week of June 23.
  + Lifeteen Summer Camp will be the week of July 20 (for both middle school and high school this year).
* 55 kids attended Children’s Liturgy two weeks ago. Consistently over 40 kids in attendance.

## Social Ministry- Julia Williams

* Christmas sharing- went better than anticipated. Currently doing follow up thank you messaqess and surveying partners who participated. Communication emails and advertisements in the commons made a positive impact.
* We will be having interest meetings for both the Haiti ministry and Walking with Moms on Jan 19th after the 9 am and 11 am masses.
* DC March for Life- we are coordinating and supporting this event for parishioners to ride to DC on January 24, 2025. Will leave St. Bridget at 8 am and return that afternoon.
* We are conducting a diaper drive all this month with youth programs and the parish to support CCC and our other Respect Life groups.
* We received a lengthy list of parishioners interested in joining a number of our outreach programs over the Christmas holiday and will be getting them involved over the next few weeks with those activities. Will be continuing to encourage participation for the new year among the parish. Very exciting to see.
* SVDP successfully housed its first Hotel to Home family just before Christmas and they are already working with family #2.

## Community Life and Evangelization – John Rogers

* None

# Pastor Report

## Fr Ken

* Diocesan Synod
  + Details to come (Some topics could include Formation, Ethics Ministry, Youth and Campus Ministry, Stewardship, Evangelization). Expecting more information over the summer/fall

# Principal Report

* Catholic Schools Week-Sun., Jan. 26-Fri., 1/31
  + Open House (Kick off) Sunday, Jan 26 10AM-12PM. Families are invited to join us at 9AM mass
* Spelling Bee
  + Classroom bees were held prior to winter break. The winners from classroom bees will participate in the School Spelling Bee this Fri. at 9AM at the MS. the winner will represent Saint Bridget at the Diocesan Bee
* Disciple Spotlight Recognition week of Feb. 3
* Thank you to the Parish Council members who attended the Kindergarten Nativity and school tour prior to Christmas Break

# Old Business

* Nursery Recommendation still pending new hire
* Disciple maker Index survey
  + Fr. Ken shared reports on Strengths and Opportunities, Benchmarks, and Missionary Impulse
  + Representation from school, parish, and staff participating in 7/8 working sessions with a consultant to set priorities and goals
    - Priorities set: Engagement, Formation, Discipleship
    - Next step is to set goals and action items for each priority
    - More details will be shared at the Feb. Parish Council meeting followed by communication plan
* 75th Anniversary Activities
  + Saints and Sinners Jan 23-Photo albums from the past
  + Organ Concert Jan 24
  + Feb 1-Anniversary closes on Feast of Saint Bridget; Evening mass followed by dinner. Bishop Knestout will be in attendance. Dinner tickets are still available for purchase

# New Business

* Parishes will be incorporating separately from the diocese. Possible impacts:
  + Adopt new corporate name, “Saint Bridget-Richmond, Inc.”
  + The school would be wholly owned and operated within our new corporate structure
  + We would have, at minimum, annual Board of Director meetings with the Pastor, Vicar General, Vicar for Clergy, and Chancellor serving as officers of the corporation.
  + We would have vendor service agreements with the Catholic Diocese of Richmond to specify any payments to the diocese and the services expected in return
* “Interment of Angels” provided by Bliley’s. This service happens every six weeks and more information can be found online.

# Parishioner Feedback: Suggestion Box

* Smaller baptism groups-6 at a time is too many and feels less reverent and holy
  + There is a limit of 3 at mass; baptism services there can be up to 8
  + Saint Bridget does over 100 baptisms in a year
* Paint the front alter and ceiling (possibly a gold trim on the arch of the main alter

# Adjournment

* Meeting adjourned 7:09 PM