

Parishioners' Open Meeting
18th January 2022 at 7.30pm

Present: Fr Simon, Deacon Geoff Cook, Stephen Warde (Chair), Sarah Sykes (Minutes)
13 present at start rising to 19

Apologies: Mary-Jane O'Sullivan

1. Matters arising

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted as a true record and the Chair brought forward the following issues:

Windows in the church: have now been adjusted so that it is possible for them to be opened ajar rather than fully. We will aim to have at least 2 windows in the church open during Mass.

Christmas Masses: Thanks were expressed to all those who were involved in preparing and supporting the Masses over the Christmas period. It was felt that the seating, without booking, was adequate without being overcrowded.

Safeguarding: we are working towards organising safeguarders for each Mass as well as specific parish groups such as children's liturgy as well as an overall co-ordinator. Fr Simon has also applied to the Diocese for some training for Reece who will be co-ordinating the paperwork for the Parish with regards to this.

Building up our Parish initiative – training for those who have expressed interest in the ministries of reading and eucharist. Nora Darby has sent out an initial email contacting all and will be shortly sending out a follow-up email with the following training dates:

Eucharist ministers
Saturday 29th January
Saturday 5th February

Sessions to start shortly after the end of 9:30am Mass. Fr Simon would also like people who are currently eucharistic ministers to attend morning Mass on one of these dates in order to be recommissioned, and a minister or two to attend the training to support those joining.

Readers
Saturday 19th and 26th February

All sessions will take place in church and should finish by 11:15am. Volunteers need only attend one session in their chosen ministry.

Current Readers should also attend Mass on one of the two Saturdays for recommissioning.

2. Parish News

As recently announced in the newsletter, Fr Walter has been asked to transfer to Bury St Edmunds by the Bishop. His final weekend with us will be 29/30 January. There was some discussion about how all the Sunday Masses would be covered as canonically a priest should only say 3 Masses.

Fr Simon hopes that Fr Andreas will be able to help out occasionally – particularly for the Ablaze Mass – but we must bear in mind that he may have other commitments with Radio Maria and he is due to return to Austria in June.

Helena mentioned in the 'chat' that Fr Gregory (from Blackfriars), who has celebrated the Ablaze Mass for us, has said that he would be pleased to help again.

Other members of Blackfriars may also enjoy occasional contact with our parish.

Fr Simon said that he is happy to say 4 Masses over the Sunday Mass period.

The possibility of a Eucharist service was mooted for a weekday Mass to give Fr Simon a break.

Fr Simon is considering moving Tuesday morning's Mass to 8am, and for Lent on Friday mornings an early riser Mass at 7am as well as the current 12:30pm Mass

He also expressed that he was not keen to have an additional priest regularly saying two Sunday Masses as he feels that hinders his need to be pastorally in touch with the Parish. It was suggested that a schedule suiting Fr S could be found – for example help once a month or similar. Concern was expressed that Fr Simon did have a break from the work of the Parish and that resources within the city to help with that should be explored.

3. Synodal Process

A small group of volunteers (consisting of Roberta Canning, Helena Judd, Ron Haynes, Jo Wager, Michanne Haynes, Jeannette Milbourn(?) and Edward Acton) have made progress with planning a series of meetings to discuss the questions put forward by Bishop Alan to kick start discussion in the Parish about how well we communicate, listen and support each other as a parish and as a church both locally and in the wider world.

The first of these meetings has already taken place, but there will be a certain amount of recapping. The meetings will be held as a mix of online (Zoom) and in-person discussion groups. Some will take place after weekday Mass and some during the Saturday morning coffee hub. It is planned that the Saturday morning meetings will take place in hybrid format with a mix of people joining online and in person. These meetings will start at around 10:30-45am.

There are 10 questions which will be used as a starting point over 6 discussions. The starting points are not necessarily the sole point of discussion, anything can be raised. Also to be born in mind is how this process could be an opening for the future for us to continue to reflect on, in particular how the listening process can work to build up community on an ongoing basis.

To raise awareness of the process it was felt that it should be spoken about after each Mass and Fr Simon said he is happy to do this. In addition the full list of dates should go in the newsletter and an additional Keep in Touch email with all the dates and details will be sent out.

The Chair expressed thanks to the volunteers for coming forward and getting the ball rolling.

It was also noted that if the hybrid online/in-person meetings are successful, it may be something we will take forward for future Parishioners' Open Meetings.

ACTIONS

- Talk to parishioners after all Masses about the Synodal Way, why it is important to participate – not only for the Synod but for our parish going forward - and how to do so – FR SIMON
- Put full dates and details in the newsletter and a standalone Keep in Touch email – REECE AND FR SIMON

4. Parish Groups

SVP – Catharine Warren thanked the Parish for its generous response to the Giving Tree this Christmas. She reported that 19 hampers were delivered to families, 50 gifts to Meals on Wheels and 12 vouchers to WinterComfort.

She thanked Helena for contacting them about the Synodal Way and confirmed that the group would consider some of the questions in a forthcoming meeting. The group will also be joined by 4 new potential volunteers who have come forward through the Build Back the Parish survey.

Justice & Peace – Ron Haynes thanked the Parish for raising £200 on Peace Sunday for Pax Christi. The Parish will also contribute an additional sum.

Tech Group – Richard Birkett reported that 3 weeks ago the camera which broadcasts the livestream had broken during the 11am Sunday Mass. However a new camera has been purchased and installed so that the livestream was up and running again in time for the following weekend's Vigil Mass. The camera which had broken has been sent away for repair and once repaired will mean we will have a back-up camera to hand in case of future breakdowns and which can be used on other occasions such as running hybrid meetings. It was agreed that the system had worked very robustly continually for just over 3 years and we were very lucky to have a talented team who have been able to keep things running smoothly – particularly through the pandemic - and act quickly to replace the broken camera.

Confirmation – Helena Judd reported that we will have 24 candidates for Confirmation which includes several candidates from St Vincent's Church in Fen Ditton. Meetings will take place once a month after 11am Mass. All candidates will be encouraged to take part in Parish life which will include attending POM meetings. Please welcome the new families attending 11am Mass from St Vincent's and pray for the candidates. Helena will share the meeting dates with Fr Simon and the Parish Office to avoid any clashes with baptisms which often take place after 11am Mass.

Children's Liturgy – Leonie Isaacson reported that following a recent meeting there are now 11 people who will go on a rota to lead children's liturgy sessions. People will work in pairs so this number of volunteers will mean that each pair will be leading every 5-6 weeks. She also said that numbers of children participating were around 18 over the last couple of weeks. The sessions currently take place in the parish room with the doors open for ventilation. If/when 9.30am Mass returns to the school premises then she hopes all will continue but for children's liturgy to continue at church during 11am Mass a further influx of volunteers would be needed.

CAFOD – Serga Collett thanked people for being generous in donations and purchases at the Unwanted Xmas Gifts sale over the last couple of weeks which was run jointly with SVP. She didn't have a final total of money raised to hand but would report it in the newsletter in due course. The Anniversary celebrations due to take place next month have been postponed but there is no definite date yet. There will however be an online celebration to mark the day and all are welcome to join.

Following the success of Walk for Water last year, CAFOD will be running a Walk for Hunger this Lent. The Parish CAFOD group plans to record parishioners' steps on the website again, but will be choosing a new destination to walk to. At the moment a destination in Afghanistan is being considered but the group are open to other suggestions. Money raised will go into general CAFOD funds rather than to a specific project. The route we decide to virtually walk will be to give our efforts a focus and end goal.

5. AOB

- i. Parish events diary – Catharine Warren asked if, as the Parish diary was now held in an online format, it could be published on the website so that people could easily see what was happening on any given day in the parish. This would help confirm that room bookings have been made, avoid clashes, and make planning meeting easier among the various parish groups. Representatives from the Tech Group at the meeting agreed to take this forward.
- ii. Lent – Fr Simon plans to hold Stations of the Cross on Friday evenings, possibly as a hybrid group of people joining in person and online. He also asked if the Parish would be interested in a scripture group of Lenten prayer group or other similar activity. Please be in touch with him if so.
The Justice & Peace group are also happy to run Stations of the Cross on Wednesday evenings as they did last year.
The CAFOD Fast Day will be on 11 March.
It was suggested that there could be a penitential service concluding with 'general absolution' as a way of the parish making a fresh start post-COVID.
- iii. Fr Bob anniversary celebration and thanks – the anniversary is in September and Fr Simon suggested that it could be held at Blackfriars as they have more space to do this than our Parish Room. However, if we schedule it to take place in July before the schools break up, then it could be held at St Laurence's as the weather will hopefully be good enough to use the garden.

- iv. Mass Arrangements – there are no plans to change the current arrangements for Mass despite the general relaxation of measures in the country.
9.30am numbers attending are steady at around 60
11am attendance levels are drifting back up to what they were before Omicron and are at around 150. As numbers increase there will be less opportunity for social distancing but it is hoped that quieter weekday Masses will be used by those who may feel it is not safe to attend busier Masses due to health vulnerabilities.
- v. Church heating – the next finance meeting will be beginning the process of looking into the best way to replace the current gas heaters in the church, including asking Fr Paul Maddison for information about eco-friendly option.
- vi. Parish Room and adjoining rooms roof area – the waterproof membrane is failing and needs replacing. It is likely that the area will need to be re-roofed as the main church was a couple of years ago.

ACTIONS

- Ask Fr Bob whether he would be happy to have a celebration marking his 60th anniversary as a priest and a thanksgiving Mass for his work in the Parish – FR SIMON
- Online Parish Calendar – TECH GROUP

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

17th March at 7:30pm – bring your own Guinness!