

## **Draft Minutes of the General Assembly**

**19<sup>th</sup> June 2019 – Parish House Main Hall**

### **ATTENDANCE**

#### **PAC Members:**

President	Michael Wilson
Treasurer	Augustine Agyeman-Duah
Vicariate Liaison	Craig Titus
Child Protection/Safeguarding	Celeste Sandoval
Property Management	Leonard Greer
Parish Priest	Fr. Paul C. Friel
Fundraising	Jorge Flores
Human Resources	Gerry Lynch

#### **Elected PAC Members:**

President	Oscar Mbeche
Vice President	Joselito Benitez
Property Management	Yvonne Moussy
Vicariate Liaison	Camille Roney

#### **Parishioners: (33)**

Kevin Mckenna	Jessica Aqui
Marianne Wilson	David Roney
Paul Gannon	George Nnaji
Jane Gannon	Leluan Nnaji
Úna Walsh	Luna Kagabo
Dannette Haley	Annie Yuson
Fedora Leon	Romy Scherzmann
Lyn Benitez	Alex Taylor
Larry Grummer-Strawn	Maribel Mapanao
Sara Grummer-Strawn	James Muchira
Cyril Boschert	Ariba Mbeche
Gerald Lee Greer	Beatrice Kalimanshi
Sharon Heduvan	Oktavian Kuc
Mary Evans Bapst	Amaka Anaedu
Elmer Pagdilao	Arthur Sandoval
Margaret Mcshee	Lucy Odhiambo

**Minutes:** Alice Cepeda

## 1. Opening Prayer

The meeting started at 19:15 with an opening prayer from Father Paul.

## 2. Welcome and Approval of the Agenda

Michael Wilson recognized the PAC meeting attendees, Fr Paul Friel , Leonard Greer, Jorge Flores, Craig Titus, Celeste Sandoval and Gerry Lynch. Augustine Agyeman Duah and Sharon Ledermann were not present. Michael reminded the congregation that the Agenda was published in the Parish Bulletin on 2 June 2019. As stipulated under Chapter, subsection 3, the agenda has been provided for consideration. He stated that no written proposal was received for amendments to the agenda as required under Article 9. He proposed an amendment to the Agenda, under item 10 pertaining to the elections. He proposed to add to the agenda the nomination and election of candidates for the positions of President, Vice President and Vicariate Liaison. Having been seconded with no objection, the Agenda was thus amended.

## 3. Approval of 24 June 2018 GA minutes

Michael Wilson announced that the minutes was published one month after the General Assembly in 2018. The Chair invited Celeste to lead the minutes review. Celeste walked through the minutes as presented. No amendments nor objections were received. The minutes were adopted.

## 4. PAC 2018 Report

Michael Wilson expressed his valedictory address on the end of his term and thanked everyone for the time and opportunity to serve.

### a. Vicariate

Craig Titus, expressing the opinion that the report of the Vicariate is one of the simplest and shortest, states that the report's presentation is done in a precise way in accordance with the statutory requirements.

He states that the Parish has conformed to the schedule of Sunday collections as required by the Diocese, with the Parish having contributed to 23 different charitable works of the Catholic Church at the Diocesan, Swiss, International and Pontifical levels.

Secondly, in addition to the scheduled payments to the Vicariate to service the Parish loan used to fund the Parish house, for the most part to the Swiss Bishops Building fund on another scale, the Parish was able to pay the initial amount, with preference for the Vicariate bond because it carries an interest.

Because of the financial implication of the Parish renovation work and the recognition by the Vicariate of its importance, he announces that the Parish' obligation to make further contributions to the Diocese at this time has been lightened.

Lastly, he states that the Parish continues to receive support from the Vicariate, and it has been helpful.

## b. Child Protection and Safeguarding

Celeste Sandoval reports that together with the RE Coordinator and the Youth Minister, they ensured that the disclosure forms of the registered catechists were up-to-date.

They organized Child Protection and Safety workshops for catechists and confirmation class volunteers during the period. Very recently, they assisted Couples for Christ, a lay organization in the Parish, in organizing a special Child Protection and Safety workshop last June 8, in preparation for their hosting of a Youth for Christ European conference to be held in Leysin in August. There were 41 participants.

In relation to communications, the website has been updated to reflect the Diocese's new charter against sexual child abuse that was first promulgated in January. The charter mandates that all adults in the service of children and young people should present an extract of a certificate of criminal record to accompany the declaration form, in addition to attendance to the child protection workshop every three years.

Finally, Celeste reports that the Parish Safeguarding Policy for children and young people, which last underwent revision in 2016, was reviewed and deemed valid. The next review is scheduled for 2020.

## c. Human Resources

Gerry Lynch reports that there have been plenty of changes in human resources, with a number of people resigning and moving on. They continue to look at the composition of the team as the Parish evolves.

He notes that Edith retired as a receptionist after many years of service; Marlene resigned and moved on from her position in publications; and Sarah resigned as assistant to the youth religious education program. Efforts have been made to streamline the maintenance and cleaning contracts to ensure compliance with Swiss law.

He further reports that following Emily's resignation to take up a position in the Vicariate, a decision has been made to optimize and streamline the existing two religious education programs. The position covering both functions was advertised in the beginning of May, and was closed on May 31. A number of applications was received and recruitment is ongoing.

## d. Property Management

Leonard Greer notes the importance of focusing on what can be done due to the limited number of staff.

He reports that there has been a realignment of the janitorial service to conform to Swiss law. As a result, it is now easier for work to be done. Cleaning and maintenance services are performed on a regular schedule and led by a Parishioner Jason Cultivo who is familiar with the Parish house facilities, and who has been assisting in assigning cleaners to different parts of the Parish house. Leonard explains that an analysis he conducted showed that there is a drop by seven percent in the cost of cleaning and maintenance of the building.

He notes that the Parish house is now five years old. He says that he managed to salvage the documentation on fire control system, emphasizing its importance given that the Parish house hosts more than 200 children every weekend for their catechism classes in addition to the number of working staff during weekdays. The documentation has been updated, ensuring that the Parish has the right manuals. Signage was also updated to ensure that they are accurate and useful. He expressed hope that all these will continue to be updated in the future.

Concerning the telecom system, Leonard explains that Swisscom has switched to IP service. Being a small business in the eyes of Swisscom, it is important to study the system before embarking on an upgrade. After receiving several bids for a new set of equipment, the system was upgraded, with the expectation that the Parish monthly bill will be reduced. This upgrade will pay for itself in three to five years time, with the advantage that the new system will be easier and cheaper to operate.

Concerning the roof, Leonard reports that there is a pair of large trees behind the building, probably 50 years old, which were removed by the Swiss authorities. While he expresses sadness for the trees to go, they cause problems because they produce seeds of special size that block the drainage in the roof. Now that the trees are gone, the problem of leakage due to the blockage of the drain pipes is lessened, with the added benefit of slowing down the aging and deterioration of the drainage system.

## e. Fund-raising

Jorge Flores expressed his gratitude for the support in raising funds to service the loans. He said that the loan balance has been reduced to less than a million francs. He is pleased to report that there was an unexpected increase of 9% in weekly collections. Noting the existing loan balance, the importance of keeping expenses down, and the need to have a reserve for unforeseen expenses for repairs, a decision was made to conduct a marathon pledge to pay the loan in the next five years. This means an annual fund-raising effort of 20% of the remaining loan balance. These amounts to 200 thousand Swiss francs.

## f. Questions and Answers on the PAC report

Cyril Boschert asked about the leakage from the floor due to the storm, and how serious it is as a problem. Leonard responds that he has actually video recorded the leak. It is clear that it is due to the storm and that the building took much more water than the drain pipes can handle. He expresses the opinion that this event is rare because storms like this is not experienced every year.

Sara Grummer Strawn asks about the HR streamlining of the Youth Minister and the Religious Education Coordinator. Having come from Catholic schools and worked in Catholic churches for many years, she expresses her understanding that these are two important jobs that take a lot of time. She wonders about the benefits of this decision given that it's a lot of work for just one person when it's already more than a two-person job.

In response, Gerry Lynch says that part of the streamlining of HR over the last years is look at the remuneration, which has not been optimized. There has been numerous attempts to standardize, and he expresses the intention to continue do that. In terms of combining the two jobs, it's a decision that has been endorsed by Fr. Paul. Other parishes have been mainstreaming to get religious education coordinated and ensure that the two programs work closely together. He explains that this is a changing role, and said that the vacancy that was announced covers a wide variety of responsibilities for the role. He said that he is pleased with the applicants who have applied and expresses confidence that a suitable candidate will be found for the position.

Sara expresses concern that this approach has not worked at all in a lot of parishes.

Gerry thanks Sara for her concerns, and states that it can be reviewed in the coming years if it does not work. At this stage, the vacancy announcement clearly described the role and responsibility of the position. Looking at the applicants who have applied, he expresses the the opinion that they are strong candidates, and thinks that the position can be filled.

Fr. Paul recalled his first arrival to the Parish five years ago. He said that he was asked to look at the religious education program, and has been looking for the opportunity to merging the catechism of teenagers with those of the general catechism classes. He expresses the view that it would be better for all those taking catechism classes.

He recognizes that his efforts have caused a lot of upset feelings. He expresses his apology, especially to Jane and her husband. He also apologies to the General Assembly, and to the PAC. He thinks that these efforts of merging the two functions will bring energy to the catechism program of the Parish.

Jane Gannon, reacting to the discussion, expresses her feelings of dismay about the decision. Likewise Jane's husband Paul Gannon also expressed his concern and dissapointed on the issue.

Michael expresses his apologies on behalf of everyone. He emphasized that the discussion on the package is still ongoing and nothing has been concluded yet.

George Nnaji and Amaka Anaedu expressed their concern too on the issue and think that it should be resolved in the spirit of the church community where all parties are happy.

Jorge recalls that when he first arrived to Parish, he liked it very much. He emphasizes the importance of the good functioning of the Parish following Swiss law. He explains that the PAC tries to make decisions for the good of the Parish as a whole.

Craig reiterates the apologies that have been made. He notes that negotiations are still ongoing, and the post is still under recruitment. He praises Jane for her great service to the Parish, and the

continuing work which needs to be done together, only God can bring to completion. He recognizes the great service that Jane has provided, and thanks her for them. Michael also recognizes Jane's good work and the pain that her family has experienced on account of the changes in HR streamlining.

## g. Religious Education Program

Jane refers to the RE report that was distributed as part of the package of documents for this meeting. Addressing the catechists and all volunteers, he conveys his gratitude to them, including members of his family. She made special mention of the core group of people who have been reliably helping in the Parish catechism in spite of sometimes difficult situation. She expresses the feeling that their efforts are often not properly recognized. Nevertheless, from the bottom of her heart, she thanks and expresses her appreciation to all.

## 5. Auditor's Report

Kevin McKenna reminds the meeting participants that he has been elected by the General Assembly and not by the PAC because he needs to be independent, thereby reporting to the General. He said that he has served for 5 years, and this is his last report. It is good to have set of fresh eyes.

He said that he is reporting on the financial statement of the Parish, which consists of the Statement of Financial Position, Statement of Activities and Statement of Cash Flows. These statements are prescribed by the accounting literature for non-profit organizations, similar to the statements prepared by any Catholic Church in the United States. They are generally accepted as good practice for a non-profit organization.

The second paragraph of the report explains the responsibilities of the Parish Administrative Council. They are the executive committee of the Parish, and are responsible for preparing the financial statements. They are also responsible for establishing a system of internal control so that the funds are properly controlled and monitored in a proper way. He declares that the system of financial control in the Parish are adequate. He acknowledges the work and support he received from the Parish accountant Lucy for doing a good job in preparing the financial statements.

In his opinion, the financial statement that has been posted in the website fairly reflect the financial position of the Parish and the changes in net assets and the cash flows for the year ended December 31, 2017 and 2018.

He reported on the Turkana Education Fund, which has been ongoing for many years. For 2019, the fund is being merged into the Parish' Global Outreach activity. In light of that, the financial statements have been amended to reflect the activities of the Fund.

Kevin further reports that there was a change in the estimate of the amortization of the improvements made to the church premises based on a revised estimate of the useful life of the improvements. He recalls that these improvements were at a cost of 4.7 million Swiss francs. The change reflects the agreed period for amortization of 25 years.

Finally, the statement of functional expenses presented are not a required financial statement, but is presented for additional analysis. The General Assembly accepted the Auditor's Report.

Beryl Orario will replace Kevin Mckenna as auditor for next year.

## 6. Financial Statements

Oscar Mbeche presented on behalf of Augustine. The financial statement overall is in a better position in 2018 than 2017 with a surplus of CHF 34,527. Income also increased by 4 % mainly because of offertory contributions, fundraising events like the Kermesse and other collections from ministries. The Parish was on track also with expenditures and is within budget by about CHF42,000 at the end of the year. The repayment of the loans are also on track. One challenge is to be able to collect the pledges regularly and be able to pay what was pledged. Individual circumstances change but it is affecting our budget and income.

For 2018/2019, aims are to continue to repay the loans and remain prudent with our expenditures. We need to clear our debt in the next 5 years so that we can focus on other things in the future.

## 7. Q & A update

Mary Bapst is asking why there is no lottery. Fr Paul responded that there will lottery before the end of the year.

A parishioner asked about some details of the costs of maintenance. Fr Paul reiterated that there is also some maintenance costs that were spent throughout the years like new tables, dishwashers, chairs, microwave. These things need to be replaced and entailed some costs.

A parishioner was concerned about the costs of the roof. Leonard Greer also said that the leak on the roof was repaired and we need some maintenance costs for roof.

Danette Haley asked about the transparency of the allocations made for the budget. Oscar Mbeche said the the breakdown of allocations and expenses are available in the office if needed.

A parishioner also asked what are the qualifications to volunteer for an auditor. Oscar said that you just need to step up and not be shy on volunteering.

## 8. PAC Elections

Craig opened the elections by saying that there are 4 open positions, President, Vice President, property management and Vicariate Liaison with the latter being appointed.

After the presentation of the candidates of their credentials. The following were elected:

- President – Oscar Mbeche
- Vice-President – Lito Benitez
- Property Management – Yvonne Moussy
- Liaison for the Vicariate – Camille Roney

The meeting ended at 21 :30 with a closing prayer from Fr Paul.

APPROVED BY:

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Oscar Mbeche – PAC President

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Alice Cepeda, GA Secretary

**DISCLAIMER:** This draft version of the GA Minutes is subject to amendments prior to the formal approval of the General Assembly in June 2020. The approved version will then be formally signed and dated by the signatories above.