Parish Council minutes 10/6/21

In attendance: Steve Bentz, Bob Current, Sam Ensley, Liz Furniss, Linda Gutoskey, Susie Hague, Keith Heimann, Stephanie Keefer, Steve Lutz, Dan Schneider, Patty Sosenheimer, Fr. Tom and guests Becky Mushett and Nyein Chan

1. Becky Mushett, our parish liaison to Catholic Charities, introduced Nyein Chan, who directs refugee and immigration services for Catholic Charities. Nyein was a refugee himself from Burma many years ago and now coordinates the efforts to resettle those who arrive in Fort Wayne. There are currently 50-70,000 Afghan refugees in the US awaiting resettlement. Roughly 7000 are now housed at Camp Atterbury in Indianapolis. We expect roughly 75 to be settled in Fort Wayne.

The government gives two days notice when refugees will arrive and provides $1,000 per person, expecting that to cover 90 days. The staff from Catholic Charities meets them at the airport and needs to have housing ready for them along with clothing and food. The housing is the difficult part. All of the refugees they have worked with are very eager to work and Catholic Charities has connections with employers who are eager to hire good workers. However, most landlords require a down payment, a year lease, and proof of employment before someone moves in. There is a challenge also in finding storage space. Donors offer furniture, household goods and clothing, but it must be stored somewhere until the housing is lined up. With the help of Becky and Linda Gutoskey, our parish is looking for ways to help.

[Post-meeting note: Catholic Charities is now using part of our office garage for storage. We are planning to collect gift cards for the refugees on our Advent Giving Tree. We are looking at ways to work through the St. Vincent de Paul Society to help with household goods and transportation. Stay tuned.]

1. We have organized an All Soul’s Day Mass to remember those who have died in the past year. Details were briefly shared.
2. The Bishop is organizing the diocese for listening sessions in preparation for a worldwide Synod. More information to come.
3. The church renovation is moving along behind the scenes, and the capital campaign is going well.
4. Sr. Genevieve will be honored at Coffee and Donuts on Oct. 24.
5. LeeAllen Fortin will be ordained a deacon at 11:00 on Nov. 27.
6. We are trying to organize a Catholic Relief Service chapter in our parish. More information to come in the bulletin.
7. Church landscaping is scheduled for Oct. 15/16. [Post-meeting note: Due to rain, the trees were planted, but the rest of the plan will wait until Oct. 29/30.]

Next meeting: November 3 [Post-meeting note: Fr. Tom has been called to a diocesan meeting that evening. Our next scheduled meeting is not until January. If an additional meeting is needed, we will contact members.]