



Blessed Sacrament News

Vol 2 October 2019

1029 Delaware Avenue | Buffalo, NY | 716.884-0053

Parish Pastoral Council

Officers:

Michael P. Pitek, III
Chairperson

Hadley Horrigan
Co-Chairperson

Catherine Jones
Secretary

Members:

Michael Donlon
Elizabeth Ferguson
Patrick Flaherty
Julio Guerra
Anne Harrington
Kathleen McCarthy
Peter Rizzo
Mary Lee Sulkowski

Ex-Officio:

Rev. Paul R. Bossi
Pastor

Paul Jones
Trustee

Mary McCracken
Trustee

Maureen Myers
Director of
Religious Education



Parish Pastoral Council



At the beginning of September a notice was distributed in the bulletin that the Blessed Sacrament Parish Council was seeking four new At-Large Members. As a result of that notice we are very excited to report that four parishioners stepped forward to fill these vacancies. We are grateful that the Holy Spirit has guided 14 people to positions of leadership on our Council. The Council is now comprised of members who range in age from the 30 year-olds to the 80 year-olds with all six decades represented. This issue of the "Blessed Sacrament News" highlights who these Council Members are for 2019-2020, their connection with the parish, and what hopes they have for the parish's future.

We encourage all parishioners to get to know your Council Members. This is your parish so make sure that your thoughts, ideas, and concerns are shared with the Council Members. Our Church today is "on fire" with all of the global and local scandals that are being revealed. Now is the time for all of us to share and embrace new ideas for how to rebuild the Church and our parish, how to restore trust, and to open our doors to all!

You may or may not be familiar with what a Parish Pastoral Council is and does, so here are some frequently asked questions:

What are the Council's Function and Purpose?

Provides consultation to the pastor by prayerfully discerning parish needs, setting pastoral priorities, and empowering people to participate in the mission of Christ.

What are the Terms of At-Large Membership?

- 2 Members to serve a 1-year term: September 2019 through August 2020
- 2 Members to serve a 2-year term: September 2019 through August 2021

Who are Members of the Council?

- Ex-officio members include the Pastor, Lay Trustees, Pastoral Associate, and Life-Long Faith Formation Director
- Appointed Members who are chairs of standing parish committees
- Appointed At-Large Members

Who is Eligible to Serve on the Council?

- A baptized Catholic who is registered with Blessed Sacrament Parish and who is active in support of the parish, supportive of Church teaching, and open to prayer, study, and dialogue

How can a Parishioner be Considered for Appointment to the Council?

- By self nomination when the Parish Council seeks members
- Send written notice to Council Chairperson, Michael Pitek

For more information contact Michael Pitek:

Email: michael@thepitekgroup.com or Call: 816-0144 (office); 480-8313 (cell)



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Michael Donlon
At-Large Member

1) Why did you want to be on the Parish Council?

First, to provide an example to my children on what it means to provide service to others and second, to help the parish transition to a new pastor and build for the future.

2) What are your hopes for Blessed Sacrament Parish?

To continue to build a robust community of faith and to be recognized as a leader in the Catholic and religious communities in the City of Buffalo and specifically the Elmwood Village.

3) What's the most meaningful church event/service you've attended at Blessed Sacrament?

My children receiving the Sacraments: 3 of 4 Baptized at Blessed Sacrament; 3 of 4 celebrated Reconciliation (so far); and 2 of 4 celebrated First Communion (so far).

4) When did you become a parishioner?

Around 2010.

5) In terms of Parish spiritual and social life, what are you most interested in?

With 4 young children, I am at the point in my life where everything is geared towards them so I am looking for fun, service-based events that encourage learning through participation.



Elizabeth Ferguson
At-Large Member

1) Why did you want to be on the Parish Council?

Joined to help keep the parish viable and open indefinitely.

2) What are your hopes for Blessed Sacrament Parish?

That it remains open indefinitely.

3) What's the most meaningful church event/service you've attended at Blessed Sacrament?

The celebration of the parish's 125th Anniversary.

4) When did you become a parishioner?

September 2, 2002.

5) In terms of Parish spiritual and social life, what are you most interested in?

I would love to see a "High Mass" on Christmas Eve. Also would love to see invitations to non-Catholics to parish social events at local hot spots sponsored by Blessed Sacrament.



Patrick Flaherty
Chairperson
Finance Committee

1) Why did you want to be on the Parish Council?

Asked by Fr. Paul and concluded it was a great way to help with a transition to a new pastor given my long relationship with other members and tenure on the Finance Committee.

2) What are your hopes for Blessed Sacrament Parish?

That it continues to thrive in the city either as an independent or linked parish.

3) What's the most meaningful church event/service you've attended at Blessed Sacrament?

On a personal level, my three kids' Baptism. On a community level, the 125th Gala and the events leading up to it.

4) When did you become a parishioner?

Parish in 1994, Finance Committee in 2005.

5) In terms of Parish spiritual and social life, what are you most interested in?

Having a place to celebrate on Sundays with people that share my faith.



Julio Guerra

At-Large Member

- 1) *Why did you want to be on the Parish Council?*
I want to be on the Parish Council to contribute to the long standing of our parish. I would also like to work on having a more vibrant and friendly parish.
- 2) *What are your hopes for Blessed Sacrament Parish?*
I hope our parish will come through all of the change transitions and difficulties in the best way and be united as possible.
- 3) *What's the most meaningful church event/service you've attended at Blessed Sacrament?*
When Fr. Paul invited Ann Marie Zon to talk about her serving as a missionary in another country. How to help others is one of the most meaningful examples that touches me.
- 4) *When did you become a parishioner?*
Almost 3 years ago.
- 5) *In terms of Parish spiritual and social life, what are you most interested in?*
Spiritually, I would like to pray in a group and learn more about Jesus' life. Socially, I would like more interaction with the parish community through different activities but always have a God-focus in the activities.



Anne Harrington

Chairperson
Outreach Committee

- 1) *Why did you want to be on the Parish Council?*
We had done strategic planning and the energy was strong. I felt we had a good chance to make some positive changes and I wanted to be a part of that.
- 2) *What are your hopes for Blessed Sacrament Parish?*
We have so many wonderful members, all good people, but I want us to be vibrant and joyful, a bit raucous and loud and welcoming to everyone.
- 3) *What's the most meaningful church event/service you've attended at Blessed Sacrament?*
A Christmas Eve children's mass many years ago when the church was packed, old familiar faces, brand new babies, lots of laughter and a great homily.
- 4) *When did you become a parishioner?*
Probably 40 years ago.
- 5) *In terms of Parish spiritual and social life, what are you most interested in?*
I believe, correctly or incorrectly, that social activities, service projects, etc. lead to a shared feeling of community that approaches spirituality and makes people feel at home enough and comfortable enough to be open to deeper experiences.



Hadley Horrigan

Co-Chairperson
Parish Council

Chairperson
The School Committee

- 1) *Why did you want to be on the Parish Council?*
Despite its flaws and egregious failings (recent and historic), the church remains an important part of my family and identity. I feel the laity need to step up and lead, in order to enhance the viability of our faith. I don't want to lose the connection the church provides to the generations that preceded us. I also believe Catholic teachings focused on compassion for the most vulnerable among us need to be spread far and wide.
- 2) *What are your hopes for Blessed Sacrament Parish?*
I'd like it to be a vibrant and welcoming neighborhood hub for socializing, activism, volunteerism, contemplation. A great example of the good the Catholic church does via its people.
- 3) *What's the most meaningful church event/service you've attended at Blessed Sacrament?*
Of course, the Sacraments of my family: especially marrying my husband and the baptisms of our three children. But I also love the children's pageant at Blessed Sacrament; it's my favorite part of the Christmas season. I've always been so moved by the story of Jesus' birth, and having the children imperfectly enact it is incredibly beautiful and sweet.
- 4) *When did you become a parishioner?*
2006.
- 5) *In terms of Parish spiritual and social life, what are you most interested in?*
Faith formation and social justice. I'd also like to see a deepened connection with our neighbor, Catholic Academy of West Buffalo, where my three children attend school.



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Cathy Jones

Secretary, Parish Council

Chairperson
Liturgy Committee

Chairperson
The Parish Experience

1) Why did you want to be on the Parish Council?

I am on the Council by virtue of the fact that I am head of two committees. But, all that aside, I think it is important for parishioners to be involved in as many aspects of parish life as possible according to their interests.

2) What are your hopes for Blessed Sacrament Parish?

I would like to see Blessed Sacrament continue to thrive and grow in numbers. The parish should offer programs and services to enrich the spiritual life of parishioners, e.g. potluck suppers, lectures, prayer services.

3) What's the most meaningful church event/service you've attended at Blessed Sacrament?

The most meaningful services have been during the Holy Week, especially Holy Thursday and Holy Saturday.

4) When did you become a parishioner?

My husband, Paul, and I have been parishioners since 1974.

5) In terms of Parish spiritual and social life, what are you most interested in?

I would like to see more coffee hours, Friday/Saturday movies at church, potluck dinners, perhaps a dinner/dance evening.



Paul Jones

Ex-Officio: Trustee

1) Why did you want to be on the Parish Council?

As a Parish Trustee I am automatically an ex-officio member of the Parish Council.

2) What are your hopes for Blessed Sacrament Parish?

That we are successful in increasing our membership, especially from the Elmwood Village, under our new pastor.

3) What's the most meaningful church event/service you've attended at Blessed Sacrament?

Sacraments (Baptism, First Communions, Confirmations, Wedding) of our children.

4) When did you become a parishioner?

January 1974.

5) In terms of Parish spiritual and social life, what are you most interested in?

A full(er) church.



Kathleen McCarthy

Chairperson
Peace and Justice
Committee

1) Why did you want to be on the Parish Council?

Serving on the Council is my way of paying back what I have received in my spiritual life, and in the community formed by the people of the parish.

2) What are your hopes for Blessed Sacrament Parish?

I hope that we will continue to grow by attracting new parishioners who become aware of all that this parish can offer to them both spiritually and socially.

3) What's the most meaningful church event/service you've attended at Blessed Sacrament?

Probably the first Taizé service conducted in July 2013.

4) When did you become a parishioner?

2004.

5) In terms of Parish spiritual and social life, what are you most interested in?

A well-developed Adult Faith Formation program, with recognized speakers who might attract more people from the parish, and from the outside community - potential parishioners. If we are going to reach out to the wider community, we need to have something good to sell them.



Mary McCracken

Ex-Officio: Trustee

- 1) *Why did you want to be on the Parish Council?*
I am a Trustee of Blessed Sacrament Church. In that role I am an Ex-Officio member of the Council.
- 2) *What are your hopes for Blessed Sacrament Parish?*
Since our population is getting more "senior" with each passing day, that our prayers will be answered through an interest and participation by the wonderful "young" blood moving into the area.
- 3) *What's the most meaningful church event/service you've attended at Blessed Sacrament?*
The privilege of being an Eucharistic Minister, Lector, and at times, an Altar Server.
- 4) *When did you become a parishioner?*
You know that I was born and received all of the Sacraments as a member of the New Cathedral and some even took place in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel as it was known for many years. I was out of the parish for a number years. I did move back into the parish in 1970 and unfortunately, I watched from my bedroom in Delaware Towers, the Cathedral coming down, one piece of marble after another. As soon as this began to happen the Chapel became our main House of Worship.
- 5) *In terms of Parish spiritual and social life, what are you most interested in?*
It has become very refreshing over the last few years to experience the vibrancy of so many beautiful Liturgical and Social Activities that have created a "New Breath of Fresh Air" and interest and ownership by Young and Senior Members, that did not exist before.



Maureen Myers

Ex-Officio:
Director of Religious
Education

- 1) *Why did you want to be on the Parish Council?*
I am an ex-Officio member due to my role as Director of Religious Education. In that role, I feel I am a voice for families, children, and teens. We need to be mindful of the total parish planning process.
- 2) *What are your hopes for Blessed Sacrament Parish?*
The parish develops into a vibrant, viable, urban community rooted in their faith in God. The parish becomes a beacon to all those who live in our Elmwood Village and Delaware District. One day I hope to see the pews filled with intergenerational faces, fully celebrating faith and friendship with their God and each other. I would really like to see our families leading the parish planning process.
- 3) *What's the most meaningful church event/service you've attended at Blessed Sacrament?*
Contemporary portrayal of the Stations of the Cross as presented by our teens. However Taizé and Prayer Song experiences have truly been beautiful, as well as the All Souls Day service.
- 4) *When did you become a parishioner?*
2008.
- 5) *In terms of Parish spiritual and social life, what are you most interested in?*
Spiritually: Re-establish intergenerational prayer experiences: services, retreats, prayer groups, support groups. Design a Parish Mission for all ages. Socially: Continue our successful social events; create an on-line community to serve as a source of prayer, faith, and support; and develop social circles.



Michael Pitek

Chairperson
Parish Council

Chairperson
Marketing, Communications,
& Membership Committee

- 1) *Why did you want to be on the Parish Council?*
After learning that Fr. Bossi was retiring, I wanted to be involved in the Council so that I might support the transition to a new pastor and work on creating our new direction with our new pastor.
- 2) *What are your hopes for Blessed Sacrament Parish?*
I hope we will be able to reinvigorate our parish on several levels: increased membership and contributions; liturgical engagement that uplifts all spiritually; working together to strengthen our sense of community; and showing our "faith in action" throughout the year.
- 3) *What's the most meaningful church event/service you've attended at Blessed Sacrament?*
My five children receiving the Sacraments, from Baptism through Confirmations; the marriage of my daughter, Rachel; Taizé services; 125th Anniversary Opening and Closing Masses; and Fr. Paul's Golden Jubilee Mass (the music was beautiful!).
- 4) *When did you become a parishioner?*
August 1982.
- 5) *In terms of Parish spiritual and social life, what are you most interested in?*
Creating a joyful and uplifting liturgy, opening our doors to the Elmwood Village and Delaware District residents, interacting with the schools in our neighborhood (Catholic Academy of West Buffalo, Nardin Academy, and Canisius High School), and actively doing the Works of Mercy as a community, involving both the "youngsters" and the "oldsters," all working together.



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Peter Rizzo
At-Large Member

1) Why did you want to be on the Parish Council?

Most of us have found it impossible to ignore the truth of the Diocesan-wide abuse crisis and abject malfeasance of our Bishop and Auxiliary Bishop. For abuse victims and our larger faith community, this journey has been painful and heartbreaking. Following the most recent revelations, I could no longer remain a spectator to the perfidious and destructive behavior of Diocesan officials. Inspired by the many volunteers who work hard to enrich the lives of Blessed Sacrament parishioners, I have chosen to channel my anger and frustration in a positive direction as a member of the Parish Council. I believe we, the laity, stand the greatest chance of combating evil and restoring trust in the Church by serving our community as we have been called upon.

2) What are your hopes for Blessed Sacrament Parish?

It is my hope that Blessed Sacrament Church represents a beacon of spiritual hope, truth, love, refuge, and tolerance, and for our parishioners to welcome and invite all peoples through our doors and into our faith community without prejudice.

3) What's the most meaningful church event/service you've attended at Blessed Sacrament?

In the short time that I have been a parishioner at Blessed Sacrament, Fr. Paul's Golden Jubilee Celebration stands out as the most meaningful and moving service I have attended. Our church was filled to capacity with the many people who have benefited from Fr. Paul's lifelong ministry. It was a beautiful and wonderfully organized celebration.

4) When did you become a parishioner?

I joined Blessed Sacrament Parish in May 2019.

5) In terms of Parish spiritual and social life, what are you most interested in?

Liturgical music is a powerful form of prayer that allows us to deeply engage with and internalize scripture, prayer text, and church doctrine. We are fortunate to have a very talented music director and cantor at our Sunday liturgies, and I believe it would be worthwhile to explore opportunities to expand this program with additional vocal and instrumental talent, from within the pews and through local high schools.



Mary Lee Sulkowski
Chairperson
Adult Faith Formation
Committee

1) Why did you want to be on the Parish Council?

I am on the Parish Council by virtue of recently agreeing to serve as chairperson of the Adult Faith Formation Committee. I believe that faith formation is a life long journey and our faith needs can change and evolve as we do in our lives. Adult Faith Formation can nurture that journey. I was happy to see the formation of a Parish Council several years ago. After all we, the people of God, are the Church and we need to accept our responsibilities to our parish community – and beyond into the larger community.

2) What are your hopes for Blessed Sacrament Parish?

It seems to me Blessed Sacrament has been reinvigorated over the past several years and I would hope this holy vigor continues to grow. We are at a very transitional time not only in our parish but also in our diocese. It can be an exciting time as well as a challenging one.

3) What's the most meaningful church event/service you've attended at Blessed Sacrament?

Only one? Our 125th Anniversary year was filled with many memorable events. And I have really appreciated the recent addition of Taizé to our church calendar.

4) When did you become a parishioner?

I've been a parishioner for 15 years.

5) In terms of Parish spiritual and social life, what are you most interested in?

Faith Formation! I have also appreciated the opportunity to be a member of our very active Peace and Justice Committee.

Blessed Sacrament's 7 Strategies



Parish
Viability



The Parish
Experience



Religious &
Faith Formation



Liturgical
Engagement



Outreach



Marketing &
Communications



The School



Parish Stewardship 2019.....COMING SOON

GOD SO LOVED HE GAVE



TIME TALENT TREASURE

What shall I return to the Lord for all His bounty to me?
Psalm 116:12

Blessed Sacrament Church's STEWARDSHIP DRIVE will be held in the next few weeks. Please use this time to think about how you can support your parish through giving of your **TIME**, **TALENT**, and **TREASURE**.

Stewardship – Doing What "We Believe"

At its heart, Stewardship is an expression of what we believe. We believe in "the Lord, the giver of Life" – that our infinite God is the source of infinite abundance. The more that we try to claim what God has given us as our own, the less we receive. It's like trying to clutch water in your fist, the tighter you clench, the less water you can carry. It's only when you relax your grasp and open your palm that you create a cup.

When we hear the word Stewardship, we think it will involve increasing financial contributions, spending more time in service activities, or visiting the sick. It's true that stewardship requires giving. Your giving can be as complex as creating an entire liturgical

engagement program, or as simple as holding open the door for a young mother who's juggling a toddler along with a newborn in a stroller. Stewardship is making a choice, one small step at a time, to acknowledge our dependence on God for all that we have, and all that we are. Stewardship lies at the heart and soul of Christian life.

When we talk about Stewardship we usually talk about the 3 T's: Time, Talent, and Treasure.

TIME

The Gift of Our Action

One of the greatest gifts God gives us is the 24 hours of each day. The gift of TIME is a good place to start your stewardship.

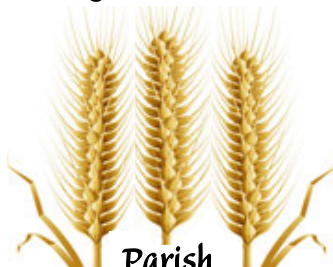
And don't forget the power of prayer. Set aside some time for formal prayer i.e., Mass, Rosary, etc.). Informally, make all of your life a prayer...such as cooking, writing a memo, changing a diaper...all of these offered in the right spirit are gifts of TIME.

Participating in service is yet another way to give of our TIME: visit the sick, lector, volunteer, usher. We live the life of a steward when we hand back a portion of each day to God without thinking of what we get in return.

TALENT

The Gift of Our Ability

It doesn't matter how rich or poor we are, how smart, educated, or famous we might be – each of us has been given at least one gift that we can use on behalf of all the rest of humanity. Our TALENTS should be recognized, cherished, and shared. Identify your TALENT(S) and then give of it/them freely.



Parish
Stewardship
2019

"It's in giving that we receive."

TREASURE

The Gift of Our Abundance

Most of our lives and homes are full of "stuff." The more we have, the more we tend to acquire. Sometimes all of that "stuff" distracts us from what's really important.

Think how you can share your TREASURE with the church.. To adopt a practice of sacrificial giving, reflect over all that God has given you monetarily. Then think about the size of your donation. Consider a "tithe" or 10% of your gross income. If that's too much, then consider 5% or 2%. Re-evaluate after six or twelve months, and consider increasing your gift. At all times, keep a spirit of gratitude at the core of giving of your TREASURE.



Our Church is on Fire..."STAY WITH US!"

Excerpts from ***The parallel between Notre-Dame and the Catholic Church itself***



Our church is saved by those who run into the fire, not by those who pretend it's not burning.

By Annemarie Scobey-Polacheck

"I was standing in my kitchen when I learned Notre-Dame de Paris was on fire. I was filled with a heaviness and a sorrow that was all too familiar. 'The church is on fire,' I texted to my friend. 'And I don't mean Notre-Dame.'

Watching the fire rage, I noted my own shock. It had never occurred to me that the most famous cathedral in the world would catch fire. But watching the fire stirred within me the re-acknowledgment of an even more horrific tragedy.

As shocked as I was by the cathedral fire, I had been even more shocked in 2002 when I learned about the history of so many priests destroying the lives of so many children while bishops looked the other way. The reports continue. I am tired of being surprised by the latest disaster in the Catholic Church.

The parallel between the fire at Notre-Dame and the situation of the Catholic Church itself is the parable for our time. We begin with the deep sorrow of a community that understands that loss affects us all--the loss of the cathedral was a global loss, not a Parisian loss. In the same way, every child's abuse is the exploitation of someone in our own family.

We mourn for that which can never be replaced. There are plans to rebuild. There is hope for a future cathedral. Yet even amid the hope, there is an understanding of the irretrievable loss. And those children who were abused, the trust betrayed, the innocence shattered, the lives lost to suicide - irretrievable. There is no way to build back innocence once it has been charred beyond recognition.

At Notre-Dame, the crown of thorns and Blessed Sacrament survived the fire. They survived because Fr. Jean-Marc Fournier, the Paris Fire Brigade chaplain, ran into the burning cathedral, headed for the relics, and managed to pass the crown of thorns and the Blessed Sacrament to others, forming a chain to safety outside the cathedral.

Our church is being saved by those who run into the fire, not by those who pretend it's not burning. Our church is being saved by those among us who see the tragedy of longtime secrecy and abuse for what it is and yet choose to go in anyway. Our church will be saved not only by the grace present in the Eucharist, but also by the recognition of our responsibility to those who have suffered, those who are fragile and holy - those who wear a crown of thorns.

We are in the infancy in terms of a proper response to the institutional sins of our church. We must admit that there are many members of our community who have fled in fear. Many more stand poised, considering whether to stay or go, not sure if they are welcome. It is now our responsibility to value every community member as a priceless treasure. We need to embrace new ideas for how to rebuild the church. ***We cannot allow the fire to consume us."***

*The full article appeared in the August 2019 (1) issue of U.S. Catholic (Vol. 84, No. 1, pages 43-44).
<https://www.uscatholic.org/articles/201907/parallel-between-notre-dame-and-catholic-church-itself-31779>*

The challenges we face today in the Buffalo Diocese and the Church are great. We don't know how this has effected you and your faith. We urge you, members of Blessed Sacrament Parish, to STAY WITH US!

Run into the fire, embrace new ideas to rebuild our church and parish, restore the trust that was lost, open our doors to all! It is the time for all of us to step up and run into the fire. We are the Body of Christ. We are the Church. Remember what we believe in, dig deep. Rise up from the ashes around us.

STAY WITH US!