

## General Meeting Notes

At the start of the meeting we had 45 attendees. A list of attendees follows these notes.

Marian Klymkowsky opened our meeting with a prayer.

Frank Distasio outlined three primary topics for our discussion:

- **Update on In-Person and Virtual services**
- **Discussion of terms “Liturgy” and “Paraliturgy”**
- **Discussion of draft funds management paper**

Charlie Hookey summarized what we learned from Lillian Bisson’s October 3, 2021 Memorial Mass which was held at St. Luke’s Orthodox (hereafter “St. Luke’s”) multipurpose hall. There were about 60 people in attendance (including Folk Group and presider Joe Nangle) and some 40 Zoom attendees. Chairs were set up about 3 feet apart. A laptop camera and iPad were positioned next to each other at the back of the hall affording Zoom attendees a wide shot of the hall. Megan Hookey served as tech administrator for the service. While the service was recorded, Charlie doesn’t think it does justice to what actual Zoom attendees may have experienced (the recording was “rather flat.”)

Charlie has been in touch with the technician for the NOVA Community; they have held 3 or 4 hybrid (in-person with Zoom access) liturgies. Their “tech” person advised having:

- a strong WIFI (which St. Luke’s has - they recently upgraded this service);
- good “cable management” since attaching and securing all the cables poses a bit of a challenge; and
- the proper equipment (we expect to purchase an audio mixer for between \$100 - \$200 to get the microphones closer to speakers; we will also need a 42” TV monitor with speakers - which NOVA places by the altar - to allow Zoom attendees to interact and be seen by people attending in person).

It appears we may need two people to administer this system: one to handle the main equipment, another with a portable camera for close ups (e.g., presider, readers, prayers).

NOVA seems to be having a satisfactory experience with their hybrid liturgies and we have every confidence we will as well.

We will not be able to resume in person liturgies at St. Luke’s at our normal 9:00 a.m. time until that community moves back into the chapel. St. Luke’s does not currently have a date for such a move.

We may have another option of meeting in person at St. Luke’s at another day and/or time. This, of course, will also depend on the availability of our presiders.

Member questions:

Can the tech administrator mute Zoom attendees?

Someone on Zoom during Lillian's mass was unmuted and their background conversation distracted other attendees. Charlie said - for some reason - it was not possible to mute all Zoom attendees and will look into this issue. There was also a related comment to have someone to monitor the chat box.

How much technical experience is required of someone to be a technical administrator for in-person liturgies?

Charlie suggested knowing how to generally operate Zoom (muting attendees, using the spotlight feature, etc.) would probably suffice. However, it is not clear whether someone could do this remotely or if there is still a need for two people in the hall.

Frank outlined general CDC (Center for Disease Control) **guidelines for safely gathering in person:**

- Acknowledging the Delta variant of COVID is very contagious;
- Vaccinations and boosters (if/when available) are recommended;
- Masks should be worn;
- Good indoor ventilation is recommended;
- Social distancing is recommended (CDC still suggests 6 feet).

Member feedback:

- Either vaccination or a negative COVID test should be required;
- Our Christmas Eve liturgy usually draws a big crowd (extended family are generally in attendance) - which is a good reason to clarify expectations for anyone attending an in-person gathering for when we can/will have one;
- We need input from our presidors about their safety concerns and what protocols they would be comfortable with or require;
- There seems to be easy access to rapid COVID tests (e.g., Fairfax Libraries are making them available) and we could even procure/purchase some to have on hand as needed for guests. Having masks available was also mentioned.
- Question of how to handle a situation if guests do not comply??

Paula Hillery is currently scheduling our presidors for January - June 2022 and she will confirm with them whether they are willing to preside in-person (should the time come in 2022).

This presented an opportunity to discuss whether we should have both a Christmas Eve liturgy (a PAX tradition) on Friday, December 24, and a mass two days later on Sunday, December 26. Attendees were polled and 23 out of 34 responded they preferred **NO PAX LITURGY ON DECEMBER 26**. Paula will contact Ted Keating who is our scheduled presider for 12/26/21.

There was agreement the Steering Committee should draft a protocol for attending an in-person PAX liturgy (with Zoom access) so members and guests can decide whether to attend liturgies in-person when we resume doing so. Once drafted, the protocol will be shared with the Community and published on the website (as/when appropriate).

Our discussions turned to how members feel about using the word **“liturgy” vs “paraliturgy”** for our Zoom worship services over the last 18 months and going forward.

Member feedback:

- Since we can do the liturgy of the Word via Zoom, it’s still a liturgy;
- A liturgy presumes the liturgy of the Word and the liturgy of the Eucharist, so while we cannot share Eucharist, our Zoom services are paraliturgies;
- The word liturgy in Greek means “performance”;
- While some may use “liturgy” and “mass” interchangeably, they are not the same - a mass consists of both the liturgy of the Word and the liturgy of the Eucharist;
- Even when we do not have the liturgy of the Eucharist, we still have the liturgy of the Word, so we still have liturgy;

There was agreement that going forward, members are comfortable using “liturgy” for our service whether occurring virtually, in-person, or a combination of both.

We next discussed the words “Eucharist” vs “Communion.”

Member feedback:

- Once we resume hybrid services, those participating in-person may have a different experience than those who are attending virtually.
- We were able to join First Baptist Church of Chesterbrook (FBCC) in their virtual Communion Service by each having a piece of bread/cracker and a drink available;
- “Communion” is not the same as “Eucharist” - the difference is consecration and transubstantiation (conversion of the substance of the Eucharistic elements into the body and blood of Christ at consecration, only the appearances of bread and wine still remaining);
- “Communion” is a *ritual to commemorate Jesus' death and resurrection* whereas with “Eucharist,” once consecrated by a priest in the name of Jesus, bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ;
- Even at in-person gatherings with the liturgy of the Eucharist, participants who do not receive Eucharist still experience it;
- No easy answers, but Sister Therese Koernke IHM (who lead a PAX adult education session some time back) believes Eucharist is the entire experience of everything we bring to the altar: ourselves, the bread, the wine; this might pull us all together - whether we are in person or in virtual attendance;

- We should check with our individual celebrants about virtual “Eucharist”;
- The Church has a narrow view of transubstantiation;
- We’ve previously discussed how central Eucharist is to our identity as Catholics (and as members of PAX: an Intentional Eucharistic Community); after a wonderful year and a half of virtual liturgy of the Word, some members might miss Eucharist and some may not;
- We’ve already raised the issue of Eucharist with our presiders at the beginning of our virtual liturgies and have understood our presiders are agreed on “Spiritual Communion”; one presider has given us appropriate text to use (while other presiders prefer a moment of silence or use other text);
- Indeed, there’s an impression that at least one presider is uncomfortable with another community’s decision to administer Bread and Wine virtually (i.e., everyone brings their own);

Our attention next turned to the **draft “PAX Funds Management”** guidelines, a recent initiative of the Steering Committee. Frank drafted the guidelines which were then reviewed and edited by the Steering Committee (including our incoming members Ann Brown and Carl Siebentritt) before being circulated to members for review and feedback. Frank mentioned he’s only been with PAX for 3-4 years and has the perspective (as well as a lot of questions) of a newer member. He would ask obvious questions such as “How does the Community spend its money?”

It’s important to note this initiative is NOT a reflection on anyone’s performance. It reflects the fact that much knowledge about income and expenses, as well as donations to causes, has been passed on by informal verbal tradition and is not readily apparent to new members. One member commented that in 40 years with PAX, they’ve had utmost confidence in the stewardship of the Community’s contributions. The Steering Committee certainly hopes this is the sentiment of most, if not all, members. However recent Steering Committee members felt they did not sufficiently understand the community’s finances while feeling entrusted with some degree of oversight over them. The guidelines are an attempt to commemorate the Community’s priorities.

Frank and Marian have also been working on an annual budget for PAX to determine how much we need in General Funds to operate the community. Surplus funds not needed to ensure the Community’s ongoing financial health, operations, and social justice initiatives are periodically (with the intention of at least annually if not semiannually) awarded to the Social Needs Disbursement Committee (SNDC) to distribute to smaller, local charities as presiders and members refer them to the committee.

We also maintain “Specified Program Donations” for:

- **Benjamin Fund** to subsidize mortgage payments for a South Sudanese refugee family (currently \$275/month);
- **Food for Others from Elizabeth** to replenish groceries or financially assist one or more local food pantries and/or organizations helping people facing food insecurity;
- **PIN (People In Need) Cushion Fund** to provide emergency funds to individuals (generally payable to a third-party, e.g., landlord) as referred by PAX members;
- **Reenie Fund** to provide rental assistance (currently \$500/month) to an individual who was the impetus for establishing PAX’s PIN Cushion Fund;
- **Syrian Families Fund** to subsidize emergency needs for three Syrian refugee families.

Marian will resend the guidelines for member review and comment. We have already received useful feedback and are looking for more if you have it. We will make the necessary changes/additions before adopting the guidelines (which should be viewed as a work in progress to be updated/revised as needed).

Member feedback:

- Appreciation for efforts to formalize the Community’s spending;
- Observation that it makes it easier for sub-groups (mission groups/committees) to have a budget;
- Treasurer reports have been useful showing the monies that come in and how they are spent;
- Appreciation for being able to contribute to PAX knowing monies go directly to the people in need (e.g., Benjamin Fund, Syrian Families Fund) and to front line organizations doing the work;
- Gratitude for the stewardship of contributions to date.

Marian then advised that our **PAX Ministries List** is currently up-to-date with members signing off on the capacities in which they will serve the Community in the upcoming (2021-2022) year.

**Megan Hookey** has graciously agreed to serve as our **Membership Coordinator**.

We still need someone to serve as **Community Retreat Coordinator**. Now that we have access and experience with Zoom, it’s possible to have virtual retreats centered on a specific topic.

We will be looking for volunteers to provide **IT Support** during our in-person liturgies when it is safe to resume them. Please contact **Charlie Hookey** ([cfhookey@hotmail.com](mailto:cfhookey@hotmail.com)) if you have interest in this ministry.

**Marie Dennis** has agreed to coordinate our support for **Martha's Table** this Thanksgiving season. Stay tuned!

We concluded our meeting with Bob Merrill arranging for Pastor Jim Gibson (**First Baptist Church of Chesterbrook, FBCC**) to speak to us via phone about future collaboration between our two communities. There seems to be interest on both sides to continue (e.g., VOICE, the James Lee Community Center, and occasional joint worship). Pastor Gibson told us about the efforts of 27 Northern Virginia Baptist Churches to send donations to Haiti where monies are channeled to organizations with boots on the ground.

Notes written by Marian Klymkowsky

Reviewed, revised, and approved by the Steering Committee on October 15, 2021

### PAX General Meeting Attendees October 10, 2021

Mary Lou Melley	Marita
Maria Teresa Kooij	Judy and Mike Schaeffer
Rosa Scott	Leslie Evers Kaplan
Sylvia Diss	Diana Keenan
Marilu MacCarthy	June Zhu and Tao Shen
Nellie Ohr	Julie Stevens
Rob Abbott	Barbara Spangler
Chris Johnston	Mary Linda Sara
Pat Levins	Rhonda Eldridge
Anne and Rob Kifer	Marian Klymkowsky
Dennis O'Connor	Ann and Steve Brown
Amalia Iglesias	
Patty McGrath	
Patty, Doug and Mike Spaulding	
Abby Mackness	
Frank Distasio	
Charlie and Megan Hookey	
Dick Bowling	
Carl (Tres) Siebentritt	
Barbara Cabrera-Holtz	
Paula Hillery and Ron Novak	
Lois and Bob Merrill	
Rich and Kathy Brentin	
Charles Schehl	