



ENGLISH SPEAKING ROMAN CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF BERN

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON SUNDAY 28TH JUNE 2020 AT 10.30 A.M.

Call to Order and Opening Prayer :

Karin Stauffer, the President of the Council called the Annual General Meeting (AGM) to order at 10:30 a.m. Father Mark Doherty the coordinating priest began with the opening prayer.

Welcome :

Karin Stauffer welcomed the attendees, Father Mark Doherty our liaison Priest and the special guest from the Kirchgemeinderat (KGR), Mr. Martin Godel who was substituting for Mrs. Xuan Lan Vu, the coordinator between the English Community (EC) and the KGR. She also conveyed Fr. Nicolas Betticher's regrets as he had to celebrate a Mass with a Baptism.

Approval of Electoral Officers :

Peter Awodi was unanimously approved to count the votes.

Approval of the Writer of Minutes :

Nisha Raju was approved unanimously to write the minutes.

Attendance :

The meeting was attended by 17 members, the aforementioned guests and the following Council members:

Karin Stauffer, Nisha Raju, Richard Ajebon, Delfina Dris, Juliana Olatunbosi & Emmanuel Ibeh.

Excused: Council Member Betty Gotschmann who was out of the country and Auditor Annette Weissgerber who expressed her inability to be present at the AGM.

Introductions :

Before introducing the Council Members, Karin Stauffer thanked everyone who attended for coming. She went on to confirm that the Minutes of last year's AGM were made available on the website four weeks in advance and the Auditor's Report for those who wished to see it, thus fulfilling the requirements of the AGM.



ENGLISH SPEAKING ROMAN CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF BERN

After a few words of appreciation for the Council Members for all their sacrifices and efforts, she invited them to speak about the work they did in the past year.

Nisha Raju – she assisted Juliana Olatunbosi with drawing up the Rotas and gave additional training or instructions where required to Servers, Readers and Eucharistic Ministers and also assisted Betty Gotschmann with the clearing up after Mass and the purchase of stocks. Her admin work comprised of making the certificates for First Holy Communion and Confirmation, the Advent, Christmas and Lenten retreat flyers, updating the EC Website, sending emails to members, maintaining the Database of Members and list of Sacraments registered to Members, generating the Statistical Report, compiling the hours spent by volunteers, ushering when needed and assisting Bobby Raju with the PowerPoint presentations that has just been introduced. She then added that her main work continues to be the maintenance of the two accounts both in digital and paper forms, drawing up the year-end Financial Statements for the Auditor and with the help of Karin - the Budget for the Landeskirche.

Juliana Olatunbosi – she compiles the Rotas, trains Readers and when Nisha is not available, helps the parents of the First Communion children.

Emmanuel Ibeh – he assists the Council when possible. He was to help at the Picnic and wherever Richard Ajebon needed help, unfortunately that will have to wait though as the Picnic was going to be cancelled. He added that he hopes he can help in other ways.

Richard Ajebon – he began by saying that the ongoing pandemic makes us appreciate our lives more and so thanks go out to Karin Stauffer, Nisha Raju & Delfina Dris for all the work they have done. He informed the AGM that he was responsible for designing the flyers for the Agenda, the Picnic & the Tombola. He was responsible for contacting the sponsors and donors for the Tombola, organise the pickup of the gifts donated and also send out Thank you letters to all helpers and supporters.

Delfina Dris –she supports and facilitates the Council, she set up the Adult Education classes and was responsible for making all the arrangements for its smooth conduct, including discussions with the Presider, Father Erik and organising the food and nourishment for each class. More details on her future plans would be given later.

Betty Gotschmann – as Betty was not in attendance, Karin Stauffer spoke on her behalf. She said that Betty had taken over the Sacristan duties from Ernest and responded to this calling earnestly. She was always there in time to open up and helped the Council wherever she could. During her absence, Karin has stepped in as the Sacristan and we await her return.

Karin Stauffer – she thanked all the Council Members for their untiring work which they do without any payment and she thanked God for sending them. She thanked Fr. Mark who has been a blessing to the EC in many ways. Not only has he been the liaison Priest, but he has also been the pastoral conscience of the EC whenever Father Betticher could not be consulted. He was responsible for the Rota of the Priests as well as for administering the Sacraments in the EC. Karin then conveyed the sad news that Father Mark would be leaving Switzerland by the end of July to



ENGLISH SPEAKING ROMAN CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF BERN

return to the US. She ended by thanking him for his dedication and all the knowledge he imparted and assured him of an official farewell at a later date.

Father Mark – He began by thanking Karin and everyone for being such an interesting community. He was honoured to have been a part of the prayers and journey of faith with the EC and especially enjoyed his work with the First Holy Communion children. He wished everyone the best and hoped to come back and visit someday.

Approval of the Minutes of the 2019 AGM :

The Minutes of the AGM from the previous year were unanimously approved.

President's Annual Report :

Karin proceeded to list out her responsibilities as President. They included organising Council meetings, setting the agenda, time and venue and making sure all opinions were heard and issues discussed, supporting other Council Members in their work, calling the AGM of the Community, discussing the budget with Nisha and then presenting it to Xuan Lan, the liaison of the BK and liaising for the EC with the Bruder Klaus Parish. Karin informed the Meeting that she was the Vice-President of the Pastoral Council where all language groups are represented and liaises with the Landeskirche, the Deanery, the Diocese and other organizations related to the Catholic Church. She added that most of all, she enjoyed visiting with the members after Mass and thanked everyone for allowing her to be a part of their lives.

With regard to the work done as a Council in the Liturgical area, she explained what was involved - organizing the administration of various sacraments, organizing catechists, preparing and sending out the schedules for Extraordinary Ministers for Holy Communion, Readers and Servers, coordinating with the choir and their practices, upholding Catholic traditions like praying the Stations of the Cross as a Community, the St. Blaise's blessing of the throats and praying the Rosary.

Elaborating on other accomplishments, she informed the members that 6 different priests celebrated Mass in 2019 - two from Australia, one from India, and three from the US, 2 Baptisms were conducted, 6 children were enrolled in the Catechism class for FHC with Fr. Mark who was the catechist, one adult was prepared to receive Confirmation and one adult was prepared to be initiated into the faith of the Catholic Church and these sacraments were administered by His Excellency, Archbishop Gullickson on February 24th. Further, she thanked Cornelia Rebholz and Alice Tsuwi who held the "Kids for Christ" class twice a month and spoke about excellent job done by Fr. Erik Ross who lead the Adult Faith Formation classes through the Great Adventure of the Bible.

The EC participated in 3 Joint-Masses, had a one day retreat with Fr Erik, a pilgrimage to Solothurn with a visit to the Monastery of the Visitation Sisters and Sisters of the Sacred Sciences and then to



ENGLISH SPEAKING ROMAN CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF BERN

the hermitage in the Gorge of St. Verena. The EC had a Charity dessert buffet followed by the Tombola and the proceeds of this event were donated to a children's project in Arusha, Tanzania. The coffee bar was open three times a month and for this a big thank you went to the Coffee Bar Ladies, Jane, Tita, Rose, Luce and Marietta and Baristo Greg for taking care of the setup, the serving and the cleanup. Additionally, the Member Database and the Website was maintained, Rosaries were conducted by the Rosary Group headed by Alma, the German courses continued with a new volunteer, Marc Stalder and pastoral counselling was offered through Fr. Matthew Boland, OP. We were part of the Promotional Video which should have been shown at the Synod in March but the Synod was cancelled due to the Corona lockdown.

Karin informed the Members that CHF 2'240 were donated to the Sisters of the Sacred Sciences in Solothurn, for their project in Arusha, Tanzania. After thanking everyone for their donations, she read out the thank you message from the Sisters.

Next on the topic of what will be done, Karin gave her word to continue to appreciate our relationship with the BK parish and to support Fr. Betticher realize his plans for this parish, to make sure that the sacraments are administered for the EC, to organize one day retreats during Lent, to organize a pilgrimage in September or early October, to keep the Adult Faith Formation classes going and to get the German classes to resume.

With this, the microphone was handed over to Delfina Dris who spoke more about the Adult Faith Formation classes. Delfina said that last year's class which had a Quick Journey through the Bible, was an 8 week course with 22 registrations. Led by Fr. Erik Ross, this course was a good experience with a 100% positive feedback resulting in people wanting more. Therefore, the next class would be a much more intensive 24 week course and ideas and suggestions were invited from the Members. Since Fr. Erik would be leaving, the decision on which Priest is to conduct these classes, remained open.

Karin Stauffer then took over again to offer thanks to the following:

- the Community
- our heavenly Father
- all the Priests : Fr. Mark Doherty, Archbishop Thomas Gullickson, Fr. Anil D'souza, Fr. Augustine Agwunolu, Fr. Erik Ross, Fr. Irenej Siklar, Fr. James Baxter, Fr. Matthew Boland, Fr. Michael Sherwin and Fr. Samuel Peter Lovas
- Advisory members of the Council : Alma Krebs and Brigid Krähenbühl
- Tita and Greg Siguenza who never miss an opportunity to serve the Lord and the EC
- Sacristans : Betty Gotschmann and Nisha Raju
- Ushers Betty Gotschmann, Nisha Raju and Matthew Aaron
- Offertory : Diana Dällenbach and Lolita Quinto
- Collections : Lourdes Bantong and Christine Soh
- Readers : Alice Tsuwi, Alvin George, Andrew Alvin, Alma Krebs, Ann Sanz, Brigid Krähenbühl, Poorna Perera, Carol Matthey-Doret, Charles Labaya, Delfina Dris, Eneji Oko, Juliana Olatunbosi, Karin Stauffer, Mayda Rey, Nelia Suter, Nisha Raju, Sarah Asangbe, Shishira Johny and Usha Alvin
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ENGLISH SPEAKING ROMAN CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF BERN

- Servers : Andrew Alvin, Angel Nnodim , Ashley Alvin, Benedict Olatunbosi, Emeka Nnodim, Franklin Udo, Godwin Omosigho, Harrit Eggenberger, Ijeoma Nnodim, Joseph Tsuwi, Lea Mwalengo, Lucia Olatunbosi, Nathan Mwalengo, Rachel Raju, Robert Raju, Roland Olatunbosi, Samuel Awodi and Sydney Udo
- Extra Ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion : Alma Krebs, Antonieta Locher, Brigid Krähenbühl, Carol Mathey-Doret, Delfina Dris, John Portz, Karin Stauffer, Mayda Rey, Nisha Raju, Sabina Kuenzi, Tita Siguenza and Usha Alvin
- Choir : Alicia Benz, Alma Krebs, Bobby Raju, Carol Matthey-Doret, Edgar Quinto, Estrelia Friedli, Gillian Oko , Josie Hirt, June Lee Park, Karin Stauffer, Marietta Juanitez, Mary Eggenberger, Nelia Suter, Nisha Raju, Nonoy Rey, Sabina Kuenzi and Virginia Rentsch
- Website : Nisha Raju
- Auditor : Annette Weissgerber
- Brunch & Tambola : Aaron Ajebon, Betty Gotschmann, Jason Ajebon, Josie Hirt, Juliana Olatunbosi, Luce Ampoloquio, Marietta Juanitez, Pamela Holzinger, Richard Ajebon, Rose Almen, Stella Fernandes and Tita Siguenza
- Bruder Klaus / KGR Team : Fr. Nicolas Betticher, Gianfranco Biribicchi, Goran Zubak, Ivonne Arndt, Nicolina Tunic, Rita Continelli, Therese Leuenberger and Xuan Lan Vu
- To all who are not included in the slides but who offer their help and services when needed.

Address by Martin Godel, Bruder Klaus Council :

Martin Godel thanked Karin Stauffer and the Council for the opportunity to participate in the AGM and said that it was good to see people after the Corona lockdown. He extended thanks from the Church Council for the EC's collaboration, especially to Karin who attends the meetings with the Church Council once a year. Martin informed the Members that construction was to begin on the Church roof to install solar panels which would reduce the electricity costs. He encouraged the EC to keep up its good work and hoped that the cordial relations would continue to be maintained.

Treasurer's Report :

Nisha Raju presented the Treasurer's Report for 2019. The Community Accounts reported an excess of income over expenditure of CHF 4'635.65 while the Landeskirche Accounts reported a similar excess of CHF 7'848.35. The break up of the Charity Brunch earnings were also displayed as well as the Budget for 2021 that was sent to the Landeskirche.

Auditor's Report :

As Annette Weissgerber the Auditor was not present, Nisha presented the Auditor's Report issued by her which expressed her satisfaction over the maintenance of accounts recommended that the Accounts be approved.



ENGLISH SPEAKING ROMAN CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF BERN

Community Profile :

Nisha presented the current statistics and profile of the Community. As of 15th June 2020, there were 299 registered Members originating from 29 different countries across the globe.

Discharge of Liability :

After thanking Martin Godel for his address and Nisha Raju & Annette Weissgerber for their respective contributions, Karin Stauffer asked the Members to discharge the Council's liability. The work of the Council was unanimously approved.

Address by Father Nicolas Betticher : Since Father Nicolas Betticher was not present, Karin Stauffer read out his message.

“Dear all, First,

I want to thank you. During this pandemic and in the still uncertain times, we all have adapted very well. Yes, everyone has given their best so that the parish of Bruder Klaus can continue to live, differently but just as intensely as before. This is because God remains with us, pandemic or not. Therefore, thank you all for your flexibility and cooperation during this difficult time. We have experienced an invisible Church. A community of believers who supported each other in prayer, even when we could not celebrate the Eucharist. We have also experienced a digital parish that has grown. An interesting experience, but it will never replace the Eucharist and concrete prayers in the community.

We will make up for many things in the future, especially our Synod, which we would have liked to hold on March 7 of this year. We will make up for it in autumn or winter. Meanwhile the core team will work out a new 5-year plan. The Pastoral Council will discuss and approve this plan. In the Synod we will certainly also discuss this plan, but especially the lessons we will learn from the pandemic for our parish, our church and society. I believe that we must now dutifully implement this responsibility together. Thank you for your support. I wish you all the best and a leisurely summer.

Stay or get well!

Fr. Nicolas Betticher”

Other Business and Important Dates : Karin Stauffer informed the Members that no Agenda items were submitted. As a lot of events had to be cancelled, the list of important dates would be published later. A retreat with Fr. James Baxter was planned for September but not confirmed.



ENGLISH SPEAKING ROMAN CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF BERN

Closing Remarks and Closing Prayer : After an invitation to the Members to approach Karin Stauffer if they have any ideas or needs, Karin proceeded to thank everyone for attending the AGM and then requested Fr. Mark Doherty to say a closing prayer.

The Meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Bern, 12th July 2020

For the minutes : Nisha Raju