

## **Old Saint Joseph's New LGBTQ Prayer Group – Inspired by Catholic Synodality**

Robert Lord-Schell, a new member of our Parish Pastoral Council, says that he was inspired to organize our new LGBTQ prayer group in response to the presentation by a participant to the Vatican Synod discussions on LGBTQ issues. The participant, whom the Archdiocese of Philadelphia appointed to attend the Synod, expressed the opinion that healing needs to occur for both LGBTQ Catholics and the greater Catholic community due to past misunderstandings and miscommunication. This healing will only happen if the dialogue among them proceeds through synodal, prayerful communication, not only on a global level but also between individuals in the church. This message really made sense to Rob. He wanted to take this mission and put it into action by creating an inclusive LGBTQ prayer group here at Old Saint Joseph's.

In starting the prayer group, Rob was determined not only to expand the inclusivity that our Parish values (our motto is "All Are Welcome Here") but also to build on Jesuit principles. He modeled the group on another LGBTQ prayer group at St. John the Evangelist Parish in Philadelphia that meets regularly for prayer, scripture reading, and discussion.

Rob began by bringing the idea to the Pastor and to the Parish Pastoral Council. The Pastor and Parish Council agreed that it was a promising idea. Rob reached out to people who might want to participate, and the group was up and running quickly. The LGBTQ prayer group has met several times at this point.

All are welcome to participate. For details, watch the parish Bulletin for announcements or contact Rob directly at [Robert.lord.schell@icloud.com](mailto:Robert.lord.schell@icloud.com).