

Mission Statement and Usage Policy for
ST. MARY PARISH GATHERING SPACE
April 4, 2024

Mission Statement

The Gathering Space is a place for our most formal hospitality and welcoming events due to its location adjacent to the church. Event organizers must be mindful / respectful of the impact of their activities on the church space regardless of whether the doors are open or closed. This resource provides an opportunity for people to experience the best of our community.

Use of the Gathering Space

The Gathering Space will be used for more formal activities. The activities that are offered there must embrace the people who gather there and not overwhelm them nor distract from worship. Groups must be affiliated with the St. Mary Catholic Faith Community.

The uses for the Gathering Space include:

- Funeral Visitations
- Formal Discipleship classes or educational gatherings for smaller groups
- Hospitality following Mass, formal concerts, vespers or certain other formal activities
- Concerts: In the spirit of classical arts, school band concerts, choral singing, piano concerts will find their way to the Gathering Space mostly through our school. These concerts will need to stay within the respectful atmosphere of the Gathering Space. Rock concerts, dances, recreational activities, will be prohibited from this space. If there are questions concerning the appropriateness of a particular concert or art form, please consult with the Director of Administrative Services.
- School-sponsored activities (each activity must be approved by the parish's Director of Administrative Services)
- Sales or displays (see below)

Policy on Sales in the Gathering Space

Since our parish is highly active with many groups who need to sponsor fundraising activities, the Gathering Space can be used for no more than two events each weekend. Those events could include promotional displays or other informational displays. Once two groups have calendared or scheduled the use of the Gathering Space on a given weekend, other groups will need to make different arrangements in other rooms or at different times with the Parish Administrative Assistant. Priority will be given to sales fundraisers and other activities for the direct benefit of the Parish or School.

The area allowed for sales and displays encompasses the rectangular spaces just in front of the wall where the sculptural Resurrected Christ hangs and in front of the windows overlooking the Labyrinth courtyard. Your group will need to explain your intended layout for the space where you propose to display/sell. The Parish Office must approve the proposed set-up. You will also

be given a clean-up checklist, identifying responsibilities for clean-up. Please fold all your tables after the last weekend Mass and put them away.

When selling items in the Gathering Space, your activities are restricted to the designated areas. Be mindful that the primary reason people are here is to attend Mass. Do not appeal to, solicit or interrupt the people walking in the doors and moving toward the church for Mass. Sales and collections are not to take place at the Bell Tower Door or church entrance. A direct approach can be invasive. Let the people come to the sale...not the sale to the people. Signage is limited to your display area (see Posting Signs below).

Policy for Sales and Displays during the Season of Lent

Lent is a very holy season of the year. It is also a season wherein the Church is asked to give alms as part of the Lenten journey. During the six weekends of Lent, St. Mary Parish collects various items to support our ministry partners. Therefore, the Gathering Space will be used for those collections during Lent. There will be a limit of one sale per weekend which includes cookie sales, Kringle sales, basket sales, and any other fundraising sale. This limit guards the integrity of the season.

Calendaring Special Events

The Parish Administrative Assistant will schedule all events for the Gathering Space. Please plan ahead and discuss your event plans with the Parish Administrative Assistant allowing sufficient lead time that we can give your request due consideration. Events are typically booked on a first-come first-serve basis, however Parish Events, Liturgy and Mass, Catholic Formation Classes, or School events may supersede your event.

The Information Center

The Information Center, also located in the Gathering Space, is open only on weekends before and after Masses. Trained volunteers at the center mostly serve to handle and communicate general parish information. Highlighted below are a few specifics that event organizers sharing the Gathering Space ought to know:

1. Trained Information Center volunteers answer questions for Mass attendees.
2. These volunteers sell items such as Scrip, Oplatek, Little Blue Books, Little Black Books and other items which directly benefit the parish. These sales are apart from the two events that may be scheduled each weekend in the Gathering Space.
3. Trained Information Center volunteers will not be displaced by a group that wants to sell items for their committees, fundraisers, etc. Those groups are to make other arrangements with the Parish Administrative Assistant in the Parish Office to hold their sales as described above.
4. Materials placed in the display rack or on the counters of the Information Center must have prior approval of the Parish Office.
5. Any literature or books or flyers placed in the Gathering Space or at the Bell Tower must have prior approval of the Parish Office.

Set-Up

The Maintenance Supervisor is responsible for setting up staff-run events for the Parish and School. Organizers of sales, fundraisers and other programming are responsible for the set-up and clean-up before and after their own event. When possible, Maintenance staff MAY set up for weekend activities on Friday afternoon if time allows. Maintenance staff is not typically scheduled for weekend activities. Event organizers must plan to make adjustments in the set-up when multiple events occur during the weekend. For example: If the Gathering space is set up for staff's Sunday Discipleship programming and your event on Saturday requires a different arrangement, you must restore Discipleship's planned set-up before Sunday morning.

Clean-Up

The Maintenance Supervisor indicates the following for your use of the Gathering Space:

1. For clean-up after a weekend event, a vacuum is located in the Parish Office coat closet.
2. A mop and bucket for a spill in the Marian Room are located in the large choir storage area in the church and also in the custodian closet located between the girls' and boys' restrooms across from Room 209. Also, in the custodian closet are paper towels, toilet paper, soap, and other miscellaneous cleaning items.
3. The key for any of the rooms (Information Center, Hospitality Room, meeting rooms) or the outside church doors, can be obtained from the Parish Administrative Assistant in the Parish Office.
4. There is a refrigerator located in the Information Center.
5. The Maintenance Supervisor will keep the thermostats in the Gathering Space at 72 degrees.
6. If you have special events and need to have tables, chairs, microphones, TV/VCR/DVD player, or moveable racks set up, fill out a Maintenance Request Form in the Parish Office and submit it to the Maintenance Supervisor.
7. Generally, be sure to clean up and be respectful of the Gathering Space.
8. Any group responsible for breaking or damaging an item, should inform the Parish Office.

Just in Case You Wondered

In keeping with the formal use of the Gathering Space, sleepovers, class parties, lock-ins, dances, casino night gambling, playground activities, etc. will be confined to the Cafeteria, Community Centre, or other larger spaces throughout the Parish/School facilities. Only films with faith-based themes and approved by the Pastor are allowed to be shown in the Gathering Space. Flower sales, which result in dropped leaves and spilled soils will take place in the Cafeteria or Marian Room. The Gathering Space is not a mall or a storage space, but is meant to be kept a formal place for people to experience community *relative to the sacred*.

Posting Signs

Signs can be posted on easels in front of your display area and during the scheduled time of your event. The easels are stored in the cloak room next to the Information Center.

Nothing should ever be taped, pinned, stapled, glued or gummed to the walls, windows, floors or doors of the Church or Gathering Space. All yard signs are limited to advertising Catholic events, are only permitted at the four corners of our property, and must have prior approval of the Director of Administrative Services. Yard signs placed in the yard of the church or directly in front of the doors, will be removed and disposed of. The Director of Administrative Services may negotiate reciprocity arrangements with other parishes or Catholic entities to allow yard signs for their festivals or other fundraisers in exchange for promoting ours.

Scheduling Events Not Related to the Parish

There may be times when an event not related to the Parish is scheduled. In these rare cases, the Parish Administrative Assistant will refer the requesting group to the Director of Administrative Services. For liability reasons, these groups may need to sign an “Adult Hold Harmless/Indemnity Agreement” and may be required to provide proof of insurance or an addendum to their insurance policy protecting St. Mary. The event scheduled will need to be discerned by the Director of Administrative Services as complying with the standards set for the use of the Gathering Space. The Director of Administrative Services reserves the right to limit or deny any activity for any reason. St. Mary Parish has many activities of its own and we do not usually open up the Gathering Space to outside events. Under no circumstances will the parish rent the Gathering Space, as generating rental income may compromise our property tax-exempt status.

Cloak Room

The closet off the Marian Room/Gathering Space hallway is a wonderful place to hang coats during the winter months. It is not meant to be a storage space. Items left in this space may be disposed of without notice.

Finally

It is essential that each group respects and cares for the space they use. Clean-up, tidiness, care of windows, furnishings, wall, carpet, etc. is expected and much appreciated.

Thank you for your consideration and understanding of these policies. May what you plan for the Gathering Space bless you and the many you serve.