

Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes
05-14-26

St. Mary Catholic Faith Community
Hales Corners, WI

Present: Fr. Aaron Laskiewicz, Gilbert Frenn, Mary Beth Katorski, David Mikolainis, Joe Plassmeyer, Jim Podewils, Brenda White

Excused: Clem Budny, Elisabel Chojnacki, Tammy DuBois, Mel Hendrickson, Pilar Klemmer, Frank LaSusa, Caroline Schachtlie

Absent: Tom Gaglione

Opening Prayer: Mary Beth Katorski led the group in praying the Holy Spirit Chaplet by St. Elena Guerra in anticipation of Pentecost.

Approval of Minutes: [Pastoral Council 02-12-26 Final.pdf](#), [Common Leadership Night 03-12-26 Final.pdf](#)

- Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes from 02-12-26 were approved.
- Common Leadership Night Meeting Minutes from 03-12-26 were approved.

Liaison Reports:

Finance:

- The Enhanced Offertory program is doing well. Offertory giving is up over last year.
- A provisional budget for 2026-2027 with \$2M in Offertory and a tuition increase of 5% was approved.
- Teacher contracts were sent out with a percentage increase in salary for non-contract employees equal to the percentage increase for priests, and an increase in step levels for contract employees.
- An increase in participation and related revenue from Special Needs Scholarship Program is anticipated for the upcoming school year.
- The budget for 2026-2027 includes a projected enrollment of 380 students.
- A break-even or slight budget surplus for FYE 2026 is anticipated, due in large part to the success of the Enhanced Offertory program and expenses in line with budget

Deanery:

- No report

Pastoral Care: [Pastoral Care 03-12-26 Final.pdf](#)

- Things are positive.
- There is a need of yarn for the Prayer Shawl ministry.
- Members would like to increase communication around the various ministries overseen by this Commission and will contact Jessica Schilling to arrange a time to discuss.

Human Concerns: [Human Concerns 03-12-26 Final.pdf](#)

- The Commission is hosting a Hospitality Weekend on May 17-18. Representatives from the various ministries along with information tables will be present in the Gathering Space
- A Tootsie Roll Drive will also take place the weekend of May 17-18. There was discussion about preferred locations for representatives to stand.

Discipleship: [Discipleship-Common Leadership Night 03-12-26 Final.pdf](#), [Discipleship 04-16-26 Final.pdf](#)

- The Commission welcomed Mike Stoffers as a new member. Mike is a newer member of the Church as well as the parish.
- Discussion of the book *Forming Intentional Disciples* by Sherry Weddell continues.
- Vacation Bible School will be held August 3-7; small group leaders are still needed. PC members were encouraged to contact Jess Panlener if they or someone they know is interested or would like information.
- Attention was called to the "Called by Name" booklet highlighting individuals in various stages of the parish Adult Initiation Ministry. The booklet, produced by Bev Jurkowski and Jessica Schilling, includes the faith story of each of the highlighted individuals. Copies are located on the Discipleship table in the Gathering Space.
- The Commission is seeking additional members. Encourage people who may be interested to contact Jeff Kacala.
- *Going Deeper with Jesus* will be held on Friday, May 22, from 6:30pm-8:00pm in the Gathering Space. Nick Scanlan will lead worship and Jeff Kacala will share a teaching on "Praying for the Gifts of the Holy Spirit".
- *Magnify* will take place on Wednesday, May 27. Parish member Amy Devaney will share her faith journey.

School Advisory (update provided by Fr. Aaron in Liaison absence):

- The Strategic Planning process and Accreditation process is largely completed. Joint communication of School plan and Parish plan to take place in the future, date TBD.
- There are four teacher openings: two due to retirement, one due to relocating up north, and one leaving for a position in a public school; a replacement for one of these openings has already been hired.
- Linda Joyner has recently seen an uptick in the number of school tours.

SLAW (update provided by Fr. Aaron in Liaison absence): [SLAW Common Leadership Night 03-12-26 Final.pdf](#)

- Met during Common Leadership Night, with discussion focused on items related to Holy Week: ministers needed, rehearsal dates, etc. Fr. Aaron noted that planning for Holy Week gets easier each year due to the fact that both he and Jim Clauer have now been here for a few years and the flow of the week is in place.
- A Morning of Reflection for Liturgical Ministers, led by Steve Janco, was held on Saturday, April 25. ~80 people attended. The morning was very good and well received; people were energized by it.

Pastor's Report:

- The Ordination Mass for six new priests for the Archdiocese will take place Saturday, May 16.
- Memorial Day is May 25; Mass will take place at 9:00am.
- 8th Grade Graduation is Friday, May 29.
- Last day of school is Friday, June 5. There will be an all-school Mass and early dismissal for students. Parish and school staff will celebrate with a combined cookout lunch.
- The Feast of Corpus Christi will be celebrated Sunday, June 7. A Eucharistic Procession in the neighborhood surrounding the parish will take place after 11:00am Mass. Contingency plans for unfavorable weather are in place.
- On Sunday, June 14, Fr. Aaron will be away from the parish to emcee the Polish Fest Mass, with Archbishop Grob presiding.
- The sound system in church will be upgraded in late June. Over the course of roughly six months, Jim Clauer led the process to solicit bids and evaluate vendors. Five different bids were received, including a bid from our current vendor, Metro Sound. All of the bids were close in price, ~\$150K. After evaluation of the bids, including site visits to three different churches, Lewis Sound was selected as the vendor to install our new sound system. Their bid provided the greatest value for the cost of the project, and will include an upgrade to the equipment used to record Mass videos. The tripod camera will be replaced by two mounted cameras, providing greater flexibility in recording. Daily Mass will be moved into the Gathering Space for the duration of the sound system work, with a temporary system put in place for the weekend Masses. The replacement of the sound system was one of the projects identified for completion as part of the "Love One Another" capital campaign.
- 45 new families, representing a total of 99 individuals, joined the parish from January – April of this year.
- In light of Jeff Kacala's upcoming retirement, a Search Committee has been formed to find a new Director of Discipleship. This Committee includes Fr. Aaron, Jim Clauer, and the Personnel Committee which is a sub-committee of the Finance Council. Fr. Aaron shared information about some of the qualities he is looking for in a candidate, as well as the general interview process. The team is encouraged to be very intentional throughout the process in seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit in prayer

Other Business:

Discernment of new Pastoral Council members – Fr. Aaron:

- There will be five open spots to be filled during this year's Discernment process.
- The terms for Jim, Elisabel, Joe, and Mel end in June. Pilar has recently resigned from PC prior to the end of her 3-year term due to increased family priorities. Jim has completed two consecutive terms and therefore is not eligible to discern again. Mel will not discern for a second 3-year term due to family priorities, and has been excused from the remaining meetings for this Council year. Joe and Elisabel are still discerning whether or not they will go through the Discernment process for an additional term.
- Fr. Aaron shared the timeline for this year's Nomination and Discernment process, with nominations opening the weekend of July 4-5, and the final Discernment taking place on Thursday, August 13.

- Fr. Aaron offered his thanks to those who have served on Pastoral Council, with special thanks to Jim for his help as Chairperson as Fr. Aaron became familiar with the parish and the workings of the Council.
- Fr. Aaron invited all PC members to begin thinking and praying about parishioners who may be a good fit for Pastoral Council, in anticipation of the opening of nominations.

Parish Festival - Jim:

- The Parish Festival is July 10-12. Pastoral Council had previously agreed to provide volunteers for the dinner that takes place on Saturday during the festival. Please consider volunteering for the dinner, or for another time slot.

Strategic Planning update – Fr. Aaron:

- 420 people took the Discipleship Maker Index (DMI) survey either online or by submitting a paper copy. This represents ~33% of our weekend Mass attendance, and exceeds the usual 15% - 20% response rate usually seen by the Catholic Leadership Institute when surveys are offered. This completion percentage also exceeded the ~20% participation rate when the DMI was offered in 2020.
- 15 people took part in the Focus Groups facilitated by Tom Fredrickson, our consultant from the Archdiocese.
- The next step is for Fr. Aaron to put together an Envisioning Team. This team will work closely with the Steering Committee to understand and process the survey data, as well as start to write objectives and goals. The goal is for this team is to be comprised of parish members across all age groups, parish involvement, etc. This team will also be involved in drafting new parish and school mission statements, defining parish values, etc.
- Fr. Aaron shared that he feels a freshness and excitement to this process as we look to both build on existing foundations and discern where the Holy Spirit is leading the parish in the future.

Ministry Partner Evaluation - Jim:

- Jim and Brenda met with Pam Lownik and Chris Warner from the Human Concerns Commission. Materials for review have been circulating among this group. They will meet again in the near future to create a draft for further review by Fr. Aaron and others in parish leadership.

Share Your Joy:

- Several members shared how they have recently experienced joy from the Lord in their lives.

The meeting adjourned with a Blessing from Fr. Aaron.

Minutes prepared by Mary Beth Katorski in the absence of Caroline Schachtlie, Secretary.