

Minutes for the Parish Pastoral Council Meeting

June 14, 2025

Zoom

Members in attendance: Fr. John Dillon, Marianne Deausen, Guy Federico, Christine King, and Jose Silva.

Others in attendance: Deacon Jim Datovech and Melissa Egan

- The meeting was called to order 7:34 pm.

At its last meeting before the summer break, the Parish Pastoral Council learned that the parish has received bids for the first two projects it plans to tackle with money raised by the Upgrading Our Parish Home for Our Children's Children campaign.

After St. Francis parishioners pledged \$1.3 million during the recent capital campaign, Fr. John reported that Terry Farrell, the chancellor and executive secretary of the Curia, had approved the parish's application to replace its heating and air conditioning system. In the meantime, the parish had received four bids for the replacement of the heating and cooling system. With bids ranging from \$280,000-\$285,000, the parish decided to go with Carrier, said Deacon Jim Datovech. The work will start in October.

Under related business, Deacon Jim also reported that the parish had received two bids to replace the lighting system and controls in the church. The total cost to replace the lighting infrastructure would be \$59,000. The next priority will likely be the purchase of a new organ.

Under other business, Parish Pastoral Council members Christine King and Guy Federico reported on the meeting they recently had with Cardinal Robert McElroy and 12 representatives of other parishes; Council member Todd Grams also represented our parish at the meeting. Chris said attendees brought forward some of the following topics to Cardinal McElroy:

- * The cost of Catholic education in the archdiocese.
- * The need to engage youth and young adults.
- * Developing an approach to manage vocations in the archdiocese.
- * Managing needs regarding the diversity of different groups in the parish.
- * A concern that we're not meeting the needs of the poor and vulnerable.
- * Current political climate is dividing Catholics into two groups: pro-life Catholics and social justice Catholics.
- * Loss of Catholics.
- * Small percentage of parishioners at parishes doing most of the work.
- * The epidemic of loneliness and the impact of social media.

Chris and Guy also reported that Cardinal McElroy spoke of the Papal Conclave in May 2025, which he attended as a member of the College of Cardinals, describing it as “an amazing and spiritual session.” He also noted that he had to lay off one-quarter of the staff at the Pastoral Center to help address the structural deficit faced by the archdiocese.

Other issues brought up included Chris saying that immigrants in Montgomery County fear going about the community, even to church. Guy also discussed his observation of an uptick in people experiencing loneliness. He also expressed his personal concerns about the infiltration of artificial intelligence into people’s lives, saying it’s difficult to distinguish between what’s real and what’s not.

In a separate discussion, the council members also addressed the need for a parish Ministry Fair to be organized, possibly this fall. The council suggested that the parish survey parishioners about possible ministries they believe the parish needs, the impediments to participating in ministry, and what we can do to make ministry accessible, on which Communications Coordinator Melissa Egan said she would follow up. Chris King mentioned the need to establish a nursery again. Deacon Jim Datovech also commented that the parish should consider upgrading all its meeting rooms to be Internet friendly, possibly installing screens similar to the one in the Kuehner Room.

Deacon Jim also commented that a lot of ministries start “because one person has a passion.” But, at the same time, “there’s nothing that says that a ministry has to survive,” he said.

In other business, Melissa reported on the work of the Communications Ministry over the past month. The ministry’s work included:

- Launching a monthly e-newsletter updating parishioners on monies raised thus far for the capital campaign; the status of projects; and a feature on a specific expense to be funded or a witness from a campaign donor on why he or she gave.
- Promoting the Corpus Christi Procession that took place on June 22 in the church parking lot.
- Helping facilitate the re-establishment of data analytics for our parish web site so we can capture user data for our parish web site again.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 pm.