

## **Pastoral council meeting September 14, 2025**

**Present:** Bunnie Lawhead (Co-Chair), Marie Wallace Parrish (Co-Chair), Colleen Boone, Zofia Brannon (youth rep), Mayzie Patera (youth rep), Trisha Doumit, Rich Heath, Chidobe Ugwu, Sandra Cook-Gallardo, Gabriela Holzman, Linea Johnson (Office Manager & Youth Coordinator), and Jessica Ortiz-Eriamiatoe (Secretary Assistant).

**Opening prayer:** Our Father and the repose of the soul of Father Thomas Caswell.

### **DISCUSSION TOPICS**

**Spanish Mass:** After consulting with the Spanish-speaking community, the council decided to temporarily suspend the Spanish Mass.

**Starting a support group for parents of teens:** At least one parent has expressed high anxiety about raising kids in the modern world. The council discussed various options for support groups. Having a parent discussion group during youth group meetings is a great idea. Another idea is to set up a teaching/discussion group with experts about strategies for different parenting issues. There could be a survey to evaluate interest. Maybe a parent network that is free for parents of children of all ages (not just teens) who want to interact and discuss would be good. There may be a need for two different classes/groups: one a support group where parents can meet and share issues, and the other teaching skills to parents while providing resources in a training setting.

### **REPORTS**

**Ongoing improvement project for the parish office:** Father reported that the back door of the parish office was replaced. A wider door will accommodate wheelchairs. The entrance steps will be replaced with a ramp and deck to make this entrance safer and more accessible. This has been a big concern for many years, so he decided to go ahead with the improvement project.

**Faith Formation:** Linea reported a significant increase in registration compared to last year. There are 32 children registered for sacrament preparation. The faith formation classes have about 15 children per class with a total of three classes. The youth group has five people registered, but she expects more to come on the first day. Each class has four catechists assigned which helps with the teaching load.

**Financial Report:** Linea presented the statement of activity and statement of financial position for the last fiscal year. The statement of activity report shows a year-end balance of \$21,000. In the statement of financial position, the church has \$1,100,020 in the bank. She clarified that we never spend more money than we have. If the budget looks tight, and we are not making our financial goals, we will cut back on the spending to compensate. There is no current concern about the church not having enough funds to function normally.

**Renovation of handicapped parking spaces:** Father reported updates from the facilities committee. An architect is looking at creating parking on the street side of the church. If these spots are approved by the city, it will create more handicapped parking spaces for the church. Then we can move ahead to build ramps, an accessible entrance, and safe exits from classrooms. The city inspected our current handicapped space and reported that it is not legal.

**Property purchase:** The finance committee was finally able to contact the owners of the property next to the parish house, at 450 NE Ash St. They and the pastoral council have been making unofficial offers through the parish office. The owners know that the property is very valuable to us, so they asked for a premium price, although the house is not habitable and will be torn down. Their asking price was \$545,000 plus closing costs. We counter-offered with \$510,000 on September 10 and they tentatively accepted. The property would be purchased as is, with both parties paying their own closing costs. They want to close in 30-35 days and keep all major appliances. The next steps are to get permission from the bishop, complete the purchase of the property and begin demolition of the house.

### **FEEDBACK:**

**Lentil Festival:** It would be good to have at least one person actively engaging with people as they spin the wheel for candy and other prizes. Passersby may be reluctant to ask a question about God or the church in general, so being inviting is key. There was also a suggestion to display our Mass times more prominently with a big sign with a QR code besides handouts.

**Neighborhood BBQ:** There were not a lot of neighbors there, but the ones that came seemed to enjoy themselves. Our parishioners who attended were great at facilitating conversations with our neighbors. The food was delicious. Getting to know our neighbors has helped initiate mutual respect and courtesy in the community.

**Parish Picnic:** It was great to see the social media posts about the picnic. There were about 40 parishioners but very few families with children. Some parents attended and didn't know that they could bring their children. It was suggested to make sure we advertise this event as family-friendly perhaps by posting pictures of the park views and large playground area. The weather this year was not ideal with very high temperatures and bad air quality. There might have been less participation since it was scheduled on Labor Day weekend.

### **UPCOMING EVENTS:**

**The Pastoral Council Retreat** is Saturday, October 4, from 9-12 pm in the social hall. People are free to bring food to share. We usually have muffins and juice.