

PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING

February 8, 2026

Present: Father Steve, Bonita Lawhead, Marie Parrish, Trisha Doumit, Judene Mclane, Colleen Boone, Rich Heath, Rob Harris, Linea Johnson, Jessica Ortiz-Eriamiatoe.

I. Revision of Pastoral Council Constitution and Bylaws

Constitution and Organizational Structure Revisions: The council focused extensively on revising the parish constitution to increase operational flexibility. A primary structural change involved reclassifying "commissions" as "committees" to better reflect the way subgroups currently function. The existing hierarchy where commissions held authority over various subgroups was deemed inconsistent with actual practice, leading to a proposal to replace commissions with standing committees and a separate volunteer category. This new model is intended to accommodate individuals who volunteer for specific projects without requiring them to join a formal ministry.

Goals and Performance Reporting: The requirement for a formal "pastoral plan of action" updated every two years has been replaced with a mandate for "short and long-term goals". These goals are to be revised according to changing parish needs and communicated to the parish and the bishop. Reporting requirements for boards and committees were also simplified, allowing for oral, written, or electronic reports to be submitted annually or upon council request, rather than strictly in-person oral presentations.

Membership and Officer Duties: The council adjusted the requirements for youth representatives, shifting the age limit from sixteen to general high school age, provided the representative is confirmed. Officer duties were redefined to better align with practice, such as changing the agenda preparation process to a monthly meeting between officers and the pastor. Additionally, the role of council secretary was clarified, specifying that the parish secretary serves in this capacity, with a council member filling in only during their absence.

Identification of Council Members: The mandatory requirement for council members to wear badges at parish events, including Mass, was removed. In its place, the council proposed more general identification methods, such as a poster with names and photos in the church entryway or social hall. While the council agreed that member names should be listed on the parish website for transparency, they decided against including photos or direct contact information online to prevent data harvesting and protect member privacy.

Ministry and Committee Oversight: The council reviewed the relationship between various parish groups and the central administration. New groups such as PREPARES and the Caritas Committee were added to the official list of recognized ministries. It was clarified that the Knights of Columbus, while committed to assisting the pastor, are a separate organization and will be represented on the organizational chart with a dotted line to the pastor rather than as a reporting committee. To ensure oversight and prevent issues such as ministries veering into partisan politics, the council proposed that the pastor or a designated staff member should be present at all standing committee meetings.

Annual Parish Reporting: The council reinstated the requirement for an annual "state of the parish" report to be given to the community each August. This timing was selected to allow for a complete review of the previous fiscal year, including financial data and sacraments such as confirmations. The report is intended to be accessible to parishioners through the website or bulletin, ensuring accountability without requiring physical attendance at a meeting.

Bylaw Updates and Diocesan Compliance: Proposed updates to the bylaws include a clearer process for filling vacancies, where selections are made from nominees identified by the parish and the council rather than simply based on voting counts. The council also defined the standard meeting frequency as monthly from September through June. Finally, Father Steve emphasized the need to incorporate stricter diocesan procedures regarding instances where a pastor may not choose to follow a council recommendation, noting that such cases require written justifications and notification of the bishop.

II. Staffing and Financial Considerations

There was a discussion about parish staffing, noting the strain on three new employees who are finding it difficult to complete tasks within their allotted hours. It is important to note that all staff are encouraged to record their actual hours worked to ensure they are fairly compensated. The council acknowledged that increasing staff hours may trigger additional benefit requirements, which will necessitate further discussion with the finance council.

III. Pentecost and Feast of the Sacred Heart

The staff and council reviewed the scheduling for the annual parish celebration, which traditionally occurs on Pentecost. Because Pentecost (May 24) falls on Memorial Day weekend this year, there are concerns that travel and holiday plans would lead to low attendance. Consequently, the council reached a consensus to move the parish celebration to the Feast of the Sacred Heart on June 14. Although this date is close to the end of the school year, the council agreed that the likelihood of better weather and higher attendance makes it a superior option to the holiday weekend.

IV. Confirmation Schedule and Logistics

Father informed the council of a necessary adjustment to the Confirmation schedule. The original date of April 18 coincides with a Parent's Weekend at WSU, which created a conflict for approximately half of the thirty-five candidates whose families work in the service and restaurant industry. Additionally, the size of the class is too large to comfortably accommodate all candidates and their extended families in the church at once. The bishop authorized a second Confirmation date for the following weekend to accommodate the large class. Father will officiate a bilingual, second service.