

PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING

January 11, 2026

Present: Father Steve, Bonita Lawhead, Marie Parrish, Trisha Doumit, Judene Mclane, Colleen Boone, Rich Heath, Chidobe Ugwu, Rob Harris, Zofia Brannon (Youth), Mayzie Patera (Youth), Jessica Ortiz-Eriamiatoe.

I. Parish Property Improvements and City Coordination

The council received a positive response from the city regarding the proposed church property changes. A significant update involved the sidewalk design; the city indicated that pushing the sidewalk as close to the building as originally planned by architects would not be necessary, as they were comfortable with parked cars extending to the current curb line. Additionally, the city clarified that it remains responsible for maintaining and plowing the parking area, which relieved the church of potential maintenance costs.

Discussion also touched on the need for improved lighting in the block, as it is currently very dark during winter. The city is open to adding a light pole, and the council considered incorporating motion-sensor lighting into their own designs. Furthermore, a planned handicap-accessible ramp will provide direct access to the church, potentially serving as the preferred exit for funerals to avoid carrying coffins downstairs. To further improve accessibility, the council plans to install electric doors with push-button openers.

II. Maintenance and Governance

The council noted that work on the annex siding and the carport's fascia board has already begun, though it was temporarily paused due to holidays and weather. Regarding governance, members are scheduled to meet in two weeks to review and edit the parish council's constitution and bylaws.

III. Liturgical Services and Community Feedback

The Advent season saw over 30 children participate in their first confession. A new challenge was noted as several children only spoke Spanish, prompting the council to plan for a Spanish-speaking priest at future penance services.

The Festival of Lessons and Carols, a new ecumenical event spurred by the Nigerian community, was highly successful. The service featured community leaders as readers and included songs in multiple languages, including Ukrainian. Feedback for next year includes inviting more diverse community members, potentially including the mayor, and starting rehearsals earlier to accommodate larger choirs and more complex musical arrangements. There was also a suggestion to rename the event to "Readings and Carols" to make the title more intuitive for the local congregation.