

St. Rose of Lima – Parish Council

Tuesday, August 26, 2025
6:30pm – Adult Ed Room

Minutes

Members Present: Diane Bennett, Tom Feldpausch, Deacon Phil Green, Deacon Gene Haas, Jennifer Hesselschwardt, Bonnie Huntley, Gail Lancaster, Deacon Jim Mellen, Steve Pachulski, Karen Ruple, Mike Texiera, & Angie Webb

Special Guest: Barb Kincaid, member of St. Joseph in Battle Creek

Evening Prayer from Liturgy of the Hours Father Jeff opened with prayer at 6:33 pm.

Additions to the Agenda? No additions were made to the agenda.

Review & Approval of Previous Minutes (from April 29, 2025)

A movement was made by Bonnie, seconded by Steve, to accept the Minutes of the previous meeting without amendment. The motion was approved unanimously.

Pastor's Statement

Father Jeff explained that by starting with the Liturgy of the Hours prayer, we have transition time to be present at the meeting.

Father Jeff welcomed Barb Kincaid as a special guest in the meeting. Barb is a staff member of St. Joseph's Parish in Battle Creek who was asked by Fr. Chris Ankley, her pastor, to "shadow" a parish pastoral council as they work to getting theirs off the ground again.

On the pastoral side of things, there are many things to be excited about. Our Mass attendance has increased about 30% over the last year, we have seen an increase in requests for sacraments, Confirmation skyrocketed this year and our OCIA class was the largest in our memory. We are happy to see enrollment growth in the school and great support in the Angel Scholarship Fund. We were able to give up \$25,000 in scholarship funds last school year. There is still a search for the 5th/6th grad teaching position. We believe that God will provide the best person for that position, whom Diane and the school are working daily to find. A lot of positive trends in the metric side of things.

There was a pilot program for adults in learning about the Eucharist this summer with up to 60-70 people attending on a given night.

With growth comes growing pains and we continue to tackle them when they come forward.

Based on the growth in parishioners in the past year, the changes in staff in the past year as well as finishing the church restoration, we are going forward with a new parish directory. Though it feels soon, our parish has sustained a lot of changes, and the new parish directory makes sense right now.

Old Business/Updates

- **Parish Center Project Update**

Since our last meeting in April, we solicited feedback from several parish committees and parish forums. We brought that feedback to the Building Committee and our architects made updates to the Building Project that still keeps within the \$2 million price point. The square footage of the building is what makes or breaks that price point. Geo-technical surveys have been done on the site. There will be a meeting with Father Jeff, the Building Committee, and the architectural team to finalize the plan. The bulletin had a call-out to parishioners who might want to submit bids for this project. Deacon Phil shared that the feedback from the parish presentations was very helpful and have been incorporated into the plan as much as they were able to.

Each portion of the building project is going to have sub-committees i.e. interior design, audio-visual equipment, landscaping, etc.

How do we pay for it? We have \$1 million in our building fund and still need to raise an additional \$1 million. The Capital Campaign will be starting very soon. Invitations will be going out to different groups but all parishioners will be invited. The theme of the Capital Campaign is “Growing our Parish Together.” This will require sacrificial giving. We want to finish the campaign by the end of the year and it will be a three-year pledge and we want this completed by December 31. The projected finish date of the Parish Center is before the start of the 2026/27 school year.

There was a conversation about how the new construction was going to impact the “big field” for the school. From a safety standpoint, allowing children to play behind the Parish Center will require additional supervision. Likely, we will just need to wait and see how the space can be used. There was conversation about different ways that the “big field” could be preserved as well as the benefits of a centralized parking lot.

At the very outset of this project there was a meeting with the Finance Council and the Diocese and they have approved the budget at each interval which is required by the Diocese of Kalamazoo Capital Projects Committee.

5-Year Pastoral Plan

- We saw the need for a Pastoral Plan and formed the Pastoral Plan Task Force and this group has met three times since the last Parish Council meeting. The end game is developing a roadmap for our parish’s growth through specific focal areas.

What we want from Parish Council is to give feedback on this work and get your thinking on what our focus areas are going to be so that we can prioritize our strategies for the next five years. This is not a restrictive list, so if there are other areas that people want to bring forward, please do that.

There will be a 15-minute presentation after each Mass (September 13/14) on the Pastoral Plan so that parishioners have an opportunity to review the Pastoral Plan Focus Areas.

There will also be an all-parish email for those who were unable to attend and a bulletin announcement two weeks prior to the meeting.

There was a conversation of how many priorities that the Pastoral Plan will address and that those priorities would be assigned strategies, actions steps and metrics. While we would like to have three Focus Areas to incorporate into the Pastoral Plan, other ongoing initiatives would continue as they have been.

The five Focus Areas that the Task Force came up with include:

- Faith Formation
- Liturgy
- Social (Parish Life)
- Outreach (Evangelize)
- Communication

One of the broadest questions that drives this thinking is “What does it mean to be a parish?” This should determine what the road looks like the next five years. We need a sense of who we are as we develop a plan for where we want to go.

All Parish Council members are asked to attend at least one of the after Mass presentations on the weekend of September 13/14.

There was a motion (by Deacon Jim) to accept the proposal from the Task Force to present the Pastoral Plan to the Parish the weekend of September 13/14 and solicit their feedback. The motion was seconded by Deacon Gene. Motion carried.

Brick House (721 S Michigan Ave)

- The parish was approached by the owners to buy this building in May. At that time, there were several questions we asked and the owners were going to answer them (lead testing, asbestos testing, etc.). Nothing has been answered to date. All of the tenants have renewed their contracts and the house is still not publicly listed. Father Jeff is not inclined to pursue any further.

New Business

- **July/Summer Count**

Father Jeff passed out the “Count” data for October/Fall 2024, February/Winter 2025, July/Summer 2025. This year, the Diocese of Kalamazoo has asked all parishes to count the number of Mass-goers each weekend during these months. It was noted that numbers have increased from Fall 2024 to Summer 2025 by ~30%. There were special events going on most weekends in July that may have inflated the summer count. It will be good to keep that in mind as we move into the Fall/regular October Counts. Barb Kincaid noted that other parishes throughout the Diocese – including St. Joseph’s in Battle Creek – are seeing a similar increase in Mass attendance.

- **Weekend Mass Schedule**

Pursuant on the conversation from the April 29, 2025, Parish Council Meeting, Father Jeff provided the Council with a handout outlining different proposed weekend Mass schedules for St. Rose and St. Cyril.

Before delving into a conversation, Father Jeff reminded the Council of why we are pursuing the question: the weekend Mass schedule, especially on Sunday, is too tight for the demands of the liturgy, priest, and people.

Additionally, Father Jeff qualified that the options proposed in the current handout are merely proposals. No decisions for adjusting the weekend Mass schedule are being made tonight. Rather, our purpose is to discuss the various options with a view towards the needs of our parish collaborative and under the assumption that there will only ever be 1 priest to serve the collaborative of St. Rose/St. Cyril. Because the final decisions – later down the road – may affect St. Cyril’s, Father Jeff will be asking them to consider the same proposed options at their September 3 Parish Council Meeting.

The handout included the following options:

	Saturday	Sunday	# of Votes
Option 1	4:30 pm (St. Rose)	8 am (St. Rose) 10 am (St. Cyril) 12 pm (St. Rose)	Zero
Option 2	4:30 pm (St. Rose) 7:00 pm (St. Cyril)	8 am (St. Rose) 10:30 am (St. Rose)	11
Option 3	4:30 pm (St. Rose)	8 am (St. Rose) 10 am (St. Rose) 12 pm (St. Cyril)	Zero
Option 4	4:30 pm (St. Rose)	7:30 am (St. Cyril) 9:30 am (St. Rose) 11:30 am (St. Rose)	3
Option 5	4:30 pm (St. Rose)	8 am (St. Cyril) 10 am (St. Rose)	7

There was a conversation that covered several ideas:

- It is difficult to think of St. Cyril not having a Sunday Mass
- Having two Masses on Saturday and two Masses on Sunday seems to be more “priest friendly”.

- Not having the pastor to travel between Masses on Sunday seems beneficial.
- An evening Mass at St. Cyril in winter might be good for roads being cleared.
- A noon Mass might be difficult for families due to kids needing food.
- Technically, we could fit all people into two Masses at St. Rose (250 seating capacity & ~380 persons attending Mass at St. Rose on a given weekend). If we reduced the number of Masses, we could still *technically* accommodate everyone.

As the conversation was reaching its end, Father Jeff asked for a vote from Council members as to what they considered were the “best 2 options” from the 5 presented. Each Council member was given up to 2 votes to cast among the 5 options. The results of this vote are tallied in the above table.

The next step in the conversation will be to bring these same options to St. Cyril’s Parish Council on September 3, 2025. The discussion will continue from there at St. Rose’s next Parish Council.

Next Meeting: November 11 at 6:30 pm in the Social Hall

Adjournment & Closing Prayer:

Bonnie moved to adjourn the meeting, Mike seconded. Motion passed at 8:39 pm

Father Jeff closed the meeting in prayer.

Respectfully submitted by:
Mrs. Karen Ruple
Secretary