

St. Rose of Lima – Parish Council

Tuesday, November 11, 2025

6:30pm – Adult Ed Room

Minutes

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

Excused Absence: Deacon Gene Haas,

Evening Prayer from Liturgy of the Hours: Father Jeff opened with prayer at 6:31 pm.

Additions to the Agenda? No additions

A motion was made by Bonnie and seconded by Steve to approve the agenda as written. Motion passed unanimously.

Review & Approval of Previous Minutes (from August 26, 2025)

Amendments:

- In **Pastor's Statement** - 5th/6th **grade** teaching position (not grad.)
- In **Pastor's Statement** - **metrics** side of things, (not metric.)

A motion was made by Steve and seconded by Tom to accept the Minutes of the previous meeting as amended. The motion was approved unanimously.

Pastor's Updates

- The combined **Parish Picnic** was on September 7th, the weekend after Labor Day. It was an incredibly fun event for our parish members as well as our community members. Thanks to the Knights for the delicious food and thanks to Diane Bennett for the wonderful kids games. Everyone enjoyed the new music group of our own parishioner talent: Kelly, Tom and Bill. We all walked away having been built up as a community.
- Combined **Parish Directory**. St. Rose had 217 people sign up for photo appointments, but it is hard to say how many family pictures were actually taken. In the prior directory, we had 164 photos taken. It sounds like we should have our directories after the first of the year – possibly not until February.
- **OCIA** (Order of Christian Initiation of Adults) Class of 2026 started out with one person and their sponsor, but has grown since then. There are currently eight (possibly nine) people preparing to enter the Catholic Church this year.
- **Revised Policy for the Protection of Children & Young Adults**. Since the Attorney General's Report on the Diocese of Kalamazoo in April 2024, the Diocese has been working to revise its Save Environment Policies. These revised policies, published September 8, 2025, establishes updated safeguards, standards, and procedures for

protecting children and youth across diocesan parishes, schools, and Catholic ministries. Some of the key updates: enhanced screening processes, updated guidance on activities for minors both on and off campus, mandatory reporting roles. It tightens things up and makes sense. At the end, there is a Code of Conduct form for all priests and deacons to sign as well as any adult who has regular contact with minors or vulnerable adults. Sam is working to put together a training day on November 20th for adults who fall into these categories. The new policy is effective throughout the entire Diocese on January 1, 2026.

- **Parish Safe Environment Coordinator.** Deacon Gene has served our Parish Collaborative for many years as our Safe Environment Coordinator. He has decided to step away from this position and to begin training the next generation. Fr. Jeff has asked Heather McFadden to take on this role, which she has accepted. Deacon Gene will work with Heather over the next several months to transition the role, especially with an eye to the revised Policy.
- **Mt. Calvary Cemetery Lead Coordinator** has transitioned from Carol Kensington to Andrew Green. This Coordinator manages the purchase of graves and spots in the columbarium, oversees the cemetery board and keeps records of gravesites. Andrew Green has taken over the position effective immediately; Carol is helping Andrew get used to the variety of responsibilities.
- **St. Rose School** presented a “**Roadmap to the Future**” PowerPoint to all Parish and School families in October. Several families attended as well as members of the school’s Local Council Advisory Board (LCAB). The presentation, led by our principal, Mrs. Diane Bennett, focused on enrollment, school finances, and student academics over the last five years. Diane also showed the school’s organizational chart, and ways in which the school lives out its Catholic identity. St. Rose School is healthy for its demographic, and is grateful to the parish for its financial and community support.

Old Business/Updates

- **Parish Center Building Project** has begun. Great success in our Capital Campaign which has allowed us to move into the construction phase which saves money as opposed to beginning in the spring. Construction will disrupt our parking area while the excavation/clearing is going on. Ideally, all of the foundation and footings work will be completed by the time “real” winter begins. If all goes as planned, the building should be finished by Summer 2026.
- The **Spaghetti Dinners** are fundraisers for the Capital Campaign. They are more than just a fundraiser, they are a way to bring us together as a parish to build community. It is also a low-cost entry way for folks to contribute to the Campaign. In the spirit of parish collaboration, Mike Teixeira is inviting different parish groups to provide workers for the different Spaghetti Dinner (e.g. Parish Council, Finance Council, Knights of Columbus, “SHOR”, Youth Group, etc.). The Parish Council will work the January 8 Spaghetti Dinner.

- **5-Year Pastoral Plan** is a framework to prioritize time, talents and treasures. A subgroup met six times and got feedback from the parish at large on focus areas. The feedback was solicited the weekend of September 12/13 and via email September 15. We received 40 different forms and the table on the Update represents that feedback. Tom Feldpausch reviewed the data on the table and the conclusions based on the data. Tom asked for feedback from this group which was:
 - Perhaps some of the social events could also be considered evangelization.
 - While 40 responses seem low, these are the 40 who engaged and made themselves heard and we want to be respectful of that.

Next steps: Father will do a bulletin announcement thanking people for their input and draft an initial “vision document.” As Pastor, Father Jeff needs to discern how to interpret something like the low priority given to evangelization and hold pastoral priority as to how our parish might need to be “stretched.” Bishop Lohse is starting to formulate his pastoral plan for the Diocese, and our path forward might be influenced by his plan. His priorities for us as a Diocese are:

- Our parishes should be places of welcome and accompaniment.
- We must preach Jesus Christ boldly, unapologetically, and in the words of 2 Timothy 4:1-2 “whether it is convenient or inconvenient.”
- What does it mean to live as a Eucharistic people?

St. Rose’s Pastoral Plan will be influenced by this so will likely not be developed right away.

New Business

- **October Counts 2025.** Every year, the Diocese of Kalamazoo asks each parish to “count” the number of Mass-goers at each Mass every weekend during the month of October. This helps us and the Diocese account for shifting demographics. In October 2025, St. Rose averaged ~380 people per week across all its weekend Masses. This is an increase from ~350 people in October 2024, and, again, an increase from ~300 people in October 2023. We are currently trending upwards. Moreover, St. Rose has not seen this much attendance at the weekend Mass since 2017. This is healthier than the current average across the Diocese which are just now starting to return to pre-pandemic numbers. Moving forward, the Diocese has asked that parishes take two additional counts each year for the foreseeable future – one in February (Winter), and one in July (Summer) – in order to track shifting seasonal needs in parishes across the Diocese.
- **Weekend Mass Schedule.** At our last meeting (August 26, 2025), Fr. Jeff shared his concern about how the current weekend Mass schedule does not have enough time between Masses built into it. Sunday Masses – other than the first Mass on Sunday – regularly begin late. Most egregiously, the 11am Easter Sunday Mass did not begin until 11:25am, leading folks to get upset and leading Deacon Phil to give an announcement before Mass explaining what was happening. At our last meeting, Fr. Jeff shared 5 possible options with the Council and they were discussed. Fr. Jeff then shared these same options with St. Cyril’s Council (September 3, 2025), and a 6th option developed. Fr. Jeff shared the results from both meetings and the impasse we are facing. Father Jeff shared that he thinks that the next step needs to be a joint conversation with volunteers of both Parish Councils to understand each other’s needs and to work together towards a solution. The volunteers from this

Council for the joint conversation include Deacon Jim Mellen, Mike Teixeira, Jennie Hesselschwardtz, and Karen Ruple. The joint conversation will occur at some point in the New Year.

Other Business None

Future Meetings (2026):

- Tuesday, **February 3** at 6:30pm
- Tuesday, **May 19** at 6:30pm
- Tuesday, **August 4** at 6:30pm
- Tuesday, **November 3** at 6:30pm

Adjournment and Closing Prayer

Karen moved to adjourn the meeting. Deacon Jim seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Father Jeff closed the meeting with prayer at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:
Karen Ruple
Secretary