

## 1-27-2026 Mary, Mother of the Church Parish Council Meeting Agenda

“...to be a Christ-centered radiant light and bold witness to those whose lives we touch...”

- **In attendance:** Aimee Barrett, Mark Benmuvhar, Andy Dapron, Deacon Randy Howe, Mark Inman, Kaitlyn Kennedy, Susan Krieger, Ann Madden, Marian McCord, Mary Ann McWilliams, Fr. Steve Robeson, Linda Telthorst, Cindy Yamnitz
- **Absent:** Rich Blackford, Wendy Franklin
  
- **Opening Prayer** –Mark Benmuvhar
  
- **Review & Approve Nov. Meeting Minutes**-Approved
  
- **Follow-Up Discussion:**
  - **Potential addition of a FT or PT Adult Faith Formation Position**
    - Fr Steve presented information of how PT vs FT vs 2 PT positions would affect budget. There was discussion regarding the demand our parish has for wanting faith formation. We need to consider this budget decision as an investment for our future.
    - Andy is trying to adjust to the scope of the PSR position and has not had enough time to draw any conclusions. He is willing to continue to evaluate. The council agrees we need to give Andy more time to evaluate, before we make a definite decision regarding one FT vs 2 PT.
    - It was discussed the importance of the level of excellence that we aspire to for our parish requires more than 15-20 hours/week. Also the issue of availability was brought up and how difficult that is with a PT position. The importance of having a FT DRE is having someone to link it all together.
    - Kaitlyn suggested considering a Director of Evangelization vs. DRE. It is all our responsibility to be “directors of evangelization”, however we are all not comfortable sharing our faith with others. Cindy had spoken to Jen Meehan and got a job description for a Director of Formation, Discipleship and Evangelization. Cindy was to send the sample Director of Evangelization job description to the council members  
There is also the possibility of internships through the Augustine Institute and possibly the Aquinas Institute
    - The important thing to remember is that we need to continue to feed the people that are interested/involved and reach out to those who do not participate.
    - It was decided to have a committee develop a vision for a DRE for MMOC with a draft due for the March meeting. Committee will be Kaitlyn, Cindy, Susan, Ann, Mark B, Andy, & Marian.
    - We agreed to budget for a Full Time position for the 2026-2027 budget

- **PC Nominations and Election Update -Mark** There will be nomination sheets in the pews for the next 2 weeks. Discernment meeting is Feb 19, Elections are 2/28-3/9.
  - **Update on Commission Budgets- Marian** Commission budgets are due March 1st. Ann will send each Commission chair their budgets and has offered to assist anyone who may need help or has questions.
  - **Parish Picture Directory-Marian** It has been 5 years since our last directory, so the consensus is to plan for another directory this year.
- **New Business**
    - **Full Review of Proposed Edits to PC Bylaws-Marian** We were able to review about half of the bylaws and will continue next month. Once this is approved by the council, the bylaws will be made available to the parish.
- **Commission Reports:**
    - New Parishioner Dinner is 1/31 after 4:30mass. MaryAnn would like PC members to participate-Ann, Marian, Aimee, Susan, Kaitlyn, Mark Inman, and Linda will attend
    - We plan to have 2 Fish Frys again this year as they could not get the third one scheduled/coordinated with all the people needed to make it happen. The team will try to coordinate earlier for next year to get a third one scheduled.
    - The Love Thy Neighbor book study was postponed due to unanticipated schedule conflicts
    - Youth group has 5-8 teens participating...Kaitlyn has some new ideas for the coming year.
    - Wendy is adding a book exchange in March to the event calendar
    - Mary Ann mentioned the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary STL Archdiocese Celebration Playbook that highlights all the activities planned for this year. It is available through the archdiocese.
- **Chair Comments** – Marian McCord-no further comments
  - **Vice Chair Comments** – Mark Benmuvhar spoke about the sacramental families continuing to meet after the Alpha program and there are 6-7 more people that have expressed interest.
  - **Pastor Comments** – Fr Steve handed out a Save the Date brochure for the musical “I Will Live Until I Die” based on the life of Servant of God Thea Bowman at COCA 3/5-3/8.
  - **What’s the Buzz in the Neighborhood?** Nothing to report

- **Closing Prayer** – Mark Benmuvhar
- **Next Meeting**
  - Feb 24,2026 – 7pm in Rooms 3 & 4,
  - Opening/Closing Prayer – Fr. Steve

### **Upcoming Events**

Alpha Series continues until March 30<sup>th</sup>.

## **Administration and Finance Commission January Report 01-27-2026**

Present- Mark Inman, Ann Garavaglia, Don Schepers, Claude Leezy, Mike Garavaglia, Rodney Biehl, Dick Roseland, Marian McCord, Wendy Franklin, Mark Inman, Fr. Steve Robeson

- **Major Projects**
  - O'Reilly center Roofing Project- Ann related that the archdiocese, after reviewing all four bids and asking questions of the various bidders, that they recommend going with Kirberg roofing, who happens to be the lowest bidder as well as our long-time roofer of choice. The investment to do the project \$101,295.00
  - Further discussion surrounded the plan for the Solar Array. Ann did a review of 2025 Ameren bills and estimates that we save about \$1200 per year by have solar panels.. Consensus was that given the age (12+years of the array, that the cost to replace them would take too long to recoup in generated kWh, that we plan to remove and recycle, using Straight up Solar as the vendor. (Ann contacted Ameren the day following our meeting and confirm the per kwh rates being charged will not change when we eliminate our array. The investment to remove solar and recycle \$19,852.00
  - Next Step for the roofing project, sending a letter to the Vicar, requesting permission to proceed with the project.
  - Other projects to be budgeted for the coming year are:
    - Replacement of the youth room flooring.
    - Addition of handicap Assist Actuator to the gym entry doors.

- Financials
  - Operating Gain was greatly improved because of strong December income and reduced personnel cost, due to change from Ellie (full time role) to Andy Dapron (part time Role).
  - As the end of September, we have a (\$1,742.50) operating loss. (October end was minus \$40k). Good news on the financials.
  - Cash position is strong \$659,429. in unrestricted funds, and \$417,610.84 in restricted funds.
- Don Schepers
  - A strong Second Quarter! The donation trend in the second quarter appears to have reversed the trend of the first quarter. Donations, particularly those in our major income streams, have held steady and in the case of Stock/RMD, has increased significantly. If you recall that account stood shy of \$36,700 or 16.8% of all donations. We have received \$74,000 in stock/RMD in the second quarter, moving that account to 21.3% of our donation total. If we keep up the pace of donations, we are on track to have a better year than recent past years.
- Claude Leezy
 

Adequate Major Project funds are on deposit, and if we do fall short, we can borrow from Unrestricted and pay that back later. - Agreed.

#### **Open Discussion/Pastor comments**

Father wanted to explore the impact on the budget if we were to return to a full time PSR/Adult formation staff member, instead of a Part Time PSR only staff member. Ann researched the costs using the current budget numbers, and updating all personnel costs, using a 3.5% increase, which was already approved by the archdiocese. She found:

**Reverting to a full time PSR/Adult Formation staff position would result in a \$22K budget shortfall.**

**In order to provide options, she also found:**

- Keeping the part time (15hr/wk) PSR Coordinator and adding another Part Time (12-15 hr/wk) person for adult formation would add cost but would not result in a budget shortfall: would be salary only no benefits.
- If we remain with one part time PSR coordinator (only) – could adult formation be added to that role – to be determined based on hours needed/available – but that would also not result in any budget shortfall.

What's the Buzz? What is the status of new subdivision? No one is certain, other than Councilman Mike Archer says it is still happening. (per Claude)

Submitted by Mark Inman

***Christian Service Commission***  
**Report to Parish Council**  
**for January 27, 2026 PC Meeting**

Notes from our **January 8, 2026** Christian Service Commission meeting

*The Mission of Mary, Mother of the Church, as a Christ-centered community, is to be a **radiant light** in the world and a **bold witness** to those whose lives we touch, inspiring them to love God and to love one another, as God loves us.*

**Present at meeting:** Susan Buerkle, Lori Fick, Mike Jarvis, Susan Krieger,  
Mary Lou Peters, Jeanne Schepers, Sharon Van Ronzelen

**Not Present:** Mary Factor, Nancy Forsythe, Mark Fuller, Becky McDonnell,  
Jeanette Sloan, Pat Tobin

Opening Prayer: Lectio Divina: *The Baptism of the Lord (#21), Cycle A):*  
*The Gospel of Matthew 3:13-17*

**Meeting Discussions:**

- 1) **Discuss results for the 2025 Rock Church Christmas Gift and Food Drive.** *Please see details below in Sub Committee Reports. We had very similar participation/giving as 2024.*
- 2) **Comfort Meals:** *We are moving forward with this; we included requests in the December Weekly Bulletins for Volunteers to provide Meals; we will resume putting the Bulletin requests in February. So far, we have 8 Meal Provider volunteers. I am maintaining the Providers, and Meal Recipients (currently 2) in an Excel spreadsheet for now.*
- 3) **Sandwich Shoppe:** *Sue Fuchs' Team resumed sandwich making after Christmas Break at MMOC—the St. Anthony's Team is providing sliced meat weekly for the MMOC Team (we are not going to purchase a new meat slicer for use at Mary Mother).*
- 4) Request to let C.S. Comm. Members know that ***Volunteers are needed to provide Lunch*** for the new ***Alpha Session*** that began January 19<sup>th</sup> if anyone knows someone who could help.
- 5) It was requested during our C.S. meeting that Parish Staff consider sending out a Flocknote with the Link to *each* Sunday's ***Lectio Divina content*** from the UCCB site (nice to be able to reflect *prior* to the Sunday Liturgy).
- 6) A couple days after our January C.S. meeting, a parishioner called me suggesting that we consider starting a *new service ministry* at Mary Mother: provide new or gently used

***Rolling Suitcases filled with Personal Care items for distribution to the Unhoused.*** I would like to get P.C. input. This will require someone to coordinate/administer; i.e., Bulletin articles with information, **Where** will the collected suitcases be *stored*? **When** and **Who** will be the **Recipients**? **Timing** to avoid conflict with other existing MMOC Service initiatives (Rock Church, SVDP, St. Anthony's, James II).

#### **Other Updates/Sub Committee Reports:**

Susan Buerkle - ***Catholic Relief Services, Legislative Action:***

***Report:***

- *Susan B. will be coordinating with Lenten planning team coordinator (Pat Tobin) to encourage and emphasize greater participation for the **Rice Bowl collection** during Lent due to the large funding cutbacks. (Sue indicated as an fyi that **25% of what is collected for Rice Bowl remains in the St. Louis Archdiocese.**)*

Mary Factor - ***Metropolitan Congregations United (MCU):***

***Report: Ongoing:*** *Mary is still looking for someone to take over for her as she will be stepping down.*

Lori Fick - ***Summer Food Drive, Christmas Food Drive, Comfort Meals:***

***Report:***

*The **Annual Christmas Food Drive for 2025:***

- *Total boxes including Food and Personal Care items - **88** (in 2024 it was also 88)*
- *Bags of paper products -**14** (in 2024 it was also 14)*
- *Huge TP packages - **36** (2024 was 20)*
- *Boxes of detergent - **2** (also 2 in 2024)*

Nancy Forsythe - ***Christmas 2025 Rock Church Gift Drive:***

***Report:***

- *In **2025:** \$2,313.00 in monetary Donations from parishioners. \$915.00 of the donations were for the food drive. Ability of checks for food was added to the announcement this year. Given to Terri 12/8/2025.*
- *227 Gift Cards Donated of various amounts to Target, Walmart, Kohl's, Aldi and Visa totaling \$5950.*  
***Total for 2025 Combined: \$8,263***
- *Gifts – 1 ½ large box of sock donations, 1 large box of hats / gloves. Probably 5 blankets. 2 Boxes of miscellaneous gifts.*
- *In **2024:** \$1,200.00 in monetary Donations from Parishioners. \$100.00 for food drive. Mailed to Terri.*
- *288 Gift Cards donated of various amounts to Target, Walmart, McDonalds, Subway, Foot Locker, Old Navy, Schnucks and Visa totaling \$7540.*  
***Total for 2024 Combined: \$8,640***

- *All in all, we were almost the same total amount. We also need to take in account that we had the Archdiocesan Food Drive which started the same weekend as the announcements were in the bulletin for the food/gift drive and the trees went up. Still continues.*
- *Also, Thanksgiving fell in that period and food donations went to SVDP.*

Mark Fuller - **The James II Project**: Mary Mother volunteers on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month.

**Report:**

- *No report this month.*

Mike Jarvis - **Sandwich Shoppes** / Rob Telthorst - **St. Anthony's Food Pantry**:

*Sandwich Shoppe meets and puts sandwiches together each Friday at St. Anthony of Padua Food Pantry; Sue Fuchs and Team is making sandwiches at Mary Mother: **Report:** See Discussion item 3 above.*

Becky McDonnell - **Kids/Family Books for St. Anthony Food Pantry**:

**Report:** Becky McDonnell reported that *the Books initiative is currently suspended as she has many books at this time.*

Jeanne Schepers - **Peace & Justice**:

**Report:** *Jeannne has created a color-coded P&J Event Calendar. Please see Christian Formation report for additional P&J updates.*

Leicha Schepers - **St. Vincent de Paul Society**:

**SVDP Report:** No report this month.

Jeanette Sloan - **Funeral Luncheons**:

**Report:** *repeated from previous*

- The Funeral Luncheons group has been restructured into **two Teams** of **12 luncheon Servers**.
- *Each Team* has **two Co-Leaders**.
- The new Team Co-Leaders are: Pat Echelmeyer & Lois Scully; and Barb Leveque & Mary Knoke.
- 76 parishioners have volunteered to Donate Food for the Luncheons; Sides, Desserts, etc. (there is some overlap of Servers and those who Donate Food)

Patricia Tobin - **Bridge Bread**:

**Report:**

**2025 Bridge Bread Sales so far:**

Jan. - \$918.00; Feb. - \$1,005; Mar. - \$926; April - \$925; May - \$855; June - \$829;

July - \$912; Aug. - \$908; Sept. - \$932; ; Oct. - \$911; Nov. - \$890; Dec. - \$897

**2025 Year-End Total = \$10,908; Monthly Average = \$909.00.**

Sharon Van Ronzelen - Tithing:

**Report:** The Tithing reports are included in the weekly Bulletins. The Tithing Committee is working on improving / updating the Contacts for the Recipient groups (some did not respond to the invite to the Meet and Greet held in November.)

Reminders:

--Next Christian Service Commission Meeting: (2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday) **February 12, 2026 @ 2:30** (no December meeting)

Submitted by: *Susan Krieger*, Chair

Health Ministry Report to Parish Council  
January 2026

HMC Meeting January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025 – 7:00pm

Attendance: Aimee Barrett, Lisa Roseland, Mary Scalzo, and Michele Venable

Approval of November meeting minutes

- Approved with two date/time corrections

**New Business**

- Line dancing is Friday, February 13<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM in Reilly center. A can will be out for donations to Saint Martha's Drop-in center.
- Upcoming PC nominations. Mark Benmuvhar, Parish Council Vice Chair, spoke at Jan. 17/18<sup>th</sup> Masses. Clarification was provided by Lisa Roseland during meeting that one chair position would be extended. This will be Mary Ann McWilliams' position in Missionary Discipleship.

**Parish Nurse**

- Blood Drive Thursday, Jan. 15<sup>th</sup> results – 11 units collected. The times that ImpactLife has given MMOC are inconsistent. This will be discussed with the coordinators. Further discussion about blood drive results and how parishioners might be encouraged since there are no longer finger sticks to check iron levels. An external device is used.
- Good Samaritan driver report – 3 parishioners, 3 drivers, one time each since Nov. meeting.
- February is Heart Health month. Discussion about possibly including healthy recipes along with information about heart health. Mary Scalzo suggested a rotation of recipes every week. Consideration of Linda Telthorst's contributions from past years. Will encourage recipes that include common ingredients. Lisa Roseland has agreed to help with this.
- GriefShare begins Feb. 2<sup>nd</sup>. So far, 2 outside of parish are registered.

- No response yet from request in bulletin nurse's corner about facilitator search for Divorce ministry.
- January Thyroid Awareness month – Thyroid information hand out has been in vestibule. Three HMC members worked on this.

#### **Other News/Information from Members?**

- Fish Fry signups are online. The dates are 2/27/26 and 3/20/26. Help in all areas is needed.
- Raffle Baskets – Mary Scalzo talked about the donation box in the vestibule for collection of raffle basket items. Parishioner, Linda Arnes, is taking letters to neighboring restaurants for donations of gift cards/certificates. Mary Scalzo stated that gift cards are the most popular raffle items. Scratch off tickets are also popular. Preview for basket raffle will be the weekend of February 21/22 after Masses.

#### **Closing Comments**

- Next Meeting – Tuesday, Feb. 17<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 PM
- Closed with a prayer by Aimee Barrett

*Notes taken by Michele Venable  
Submitted by Aimee Barrett*

Christian Formation Commission  
Parish Council Report  
January 2026 Report  
January 27, 2026

## **Peace and Justice**

Welcome to Suzie Welch, of St. Joseph in Imperial

### **Subcommittee Reports**

#### **Care of Creation** - Lori Fick

- The Care of Creation Subcommittee has invited Maggie McCoy from the Missouri Botanical Gardens to give a presentation at Mary Mother on Thursday, March 26 at 6:30 PM. Her topic will be food waste and commercial and home composting.
- Mary Merzlufft has joined Care of Creation
- Sharon Barron has composed a mission statement for the subcommittee, which will be discussed at the next meeting, January 27, in the classrooms at MMOC.
- The committee is considering doing a book study later in 2026: The Problem with plastics

#### **Culture of Life** - Jeanne Schepers

- **Feb. 21, 10:00-1:00. “Am I My Brother’s Keeper” workshop** at MMOC, featuring Joyce Jones and Jeff Schulenberg. Flyer is complete and will be on sign-up Genius. Email Jeanne if you can bake cookies for the box lunch. We need one Gluten free cookie batch. Fr. Steve suggested the committee submit a specific pulpit announcement for the workshop.
- **Soup & Movie Lenten Series” at MMOC** Feb.17, 6:00PM, March 7, 5:30 PM, Sunday March 22, 12:00 Noon – “Sign up Genius. Need people to sign up to make soups. The first movie has been changed to “A Black History Tour of St. Louis”, featuring Fr. Gerald Kleba.
- Five members from Mary Mother of the Church Peace and Justice Committee have joined St. Catherine Laboure and St. Justin in the **Just Faith Immigration Course** on Tuesdays.
- Sacred Heart Valley Park will have a Lenten Speaker Series on Housing, Hunger, and Health: **“Lord When Did We See You?”** March 5, 12, 19, 7:00 PM. Contact Jeanne or Becky to join a carpool.
- Mary Fox, Archdiocesan Task force coordinator for Abolition of Death Penalty, will be speaking at our April 14 Peace and Justice Meeting.
- Representative from Prison Performing Arts will speak at our May P&J Meeting

**Love Thy Neighbor** - Becky Quick

- *“Building A Bridge”* book study has been postponed, and will be rescheduled at a later date. Prayers of the Faithful and Stations of the Cross are in progress.

**Community Reports** (see attachments for flyers/meeting minutes)

**Archdiocesan Update - Kim Blackford**

- **The Social Action Leaders meeting** was rescheduled to Thursday January 15 at 6:30 at the Rigali Center, combining the themes of Dr. Martin Luther King Day and the Archdiocese’s Bicentennial year: “200 Years of Heritage and History”. Speakers will be Joyce Jones, Office of Racial Harmony, Eric Fair, Archdiocesan historian, and Corliss Cox, St. Charles Lwanga Center. Kim will check to see if the evening can be live streamed.
- **The Guns to Gardens** event had to be postponed due to a funeral, and will be rescheduled.
- **Archdiocesan Mass for the Preservation of Peace and Justice:** January 18, 2026: 2:30 PM at the Cathedral Basilica; Honoring “The Model of Justice Honorees.” Live stream Link: <https://cathedralstl.org/lituroy-sacraments/livestream>
- **Freedom in Christ:** A morning of Reflection on Freedom & Disordered Attachments: Saturday January 31. K of C Hall Hillsboro, MO. rsvp at <https://forms.office.com/r/NSMHD8VqtX>
- Kim will speak with George Herrera, to facilitate communication from South Vicariate to parishioners.

**Social Justice Collaborative** - next meeting 1/15: No Report

## Old Business

- **PSR Family Night** – Rescheduled to February 23, 6:15-7:30. All members welcome to attend. Subcommittee on CST will reconvene to review plans
- **Subcommittee membership:** Email Becky if you are interested in changing subcommittees or assuming a chair position.

## New Business

- Flocknote is presenting “**Catholic Social Teaching In A Year**”, a once weekly article discussing why Rerum Novarum matters (even more) today. Free sign-up <https://flocknote.com/cst>
  - The first article of the series is linked here: <https://projects.flocknote.com/note/34565553>
  - Becky will pursue sending out in Flocknotes to Parish, and as a follow up to PSR Family nights.
- Alpha is looking for people who can help provide a lunches Contact Marian McCord. Currently there are 60 parishioners signed up.

## Happenings outside MMOC

- **Jan. 31: Freedom in Christ** - A Morning of Reflection on freedom & disordered attachments; 8:30am - 12:30pm; Knights of Columbus Hall – Hillsboro, MO; rsvp at <https://forms.office.com/r/NSMHD8VgtX>
- **The film documentary for Fr. Kleba's STL Black History Tour** is now streaming. Please spread the word throughout your networks and forward the link. (Will be at MMOC on 2/17. <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/blackhistorytour>
- “**A Brick and a Bible**” Experience the untold story of the 1933 Funsten Nutpickers Strike in St. Louis. at the Missouri History Museum Feb. 20-22. For more info and additional dates:
- <https://myemail.constantcontact.com/Our-daughter-s-book-is-now-a-play-.html?soid=1134825867635&aid=XyKywcKuRzQ>
- **Jan. 25: Prayer for Christian Unity 2026**, Sunday, 7-8pm, St. Monica. For details and to RSVP: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe3VNouumsx0Z0LEaY06j6vc4M2lqZaJoyWLD02LfXZDWztDg/viewform>
- *Email Becky if you are interested in Carpooling.*
- Christian Unity Lunches - To encourage ecumenical prayer and deeper relational connections throughout our region we are organizing two lunches, Jan. 20 & 22, leading up to the Prayer for Christian Unity. For details, locations, and to RSVP: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScCTKjnjpD-t7kM9TMMyuAaT6nVi91zfKnDi\\_h3lj7-V-LFHQ/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScCTKjnjpD-t7kM9TMMyuAaT6nVi91zfKnDi_h3lj7-V-LFHQ/viewform)

Advocacy Presentation/ Proposal – Kim Thomas, Erlanda Perlado-Mertens, Andrea Veras, and Fr. Steve submitted a proposal for a new Subcommittee:

### **Committee for Faithful Response (CFR)**

- The committee is commended for creating such a thorough and thought-provoking proposal.

- The proposal was discussed, drawing attention to overlaps with the mission and work of the overall P&J committee, and issues and topics which have been addressed in recent years. There was consensus that education and formation should be accompanied by opportunities to advocate for promoting Catholic values of life, dignity, peace, and justice in social policy. Some members of the committee voiced concern that the P&J calendar for this spring is quite full. The suggestion was made to complement the focus of the already scheduled programming by offering advocacy opportunities to respond to the highlighted issues. (eg. Structural Racism, and its effects on affordable housing; Our social policy affecting the unhoused and the social safety net for persons who are experiencing poverty (current need: Coordinator for Bread for the World Offering of letters); prison reform and abolition of the death penalty; climate change....).
- The committee recommended the proposal for a Parish Conference “Charity and Justice from Womb to Tomb” be further discussed at our February Meeting, utilizing the synodal process. Concern was voiced that plans move forward carefully and with balance, and to avoid further division.

Next meeting is **Feb 10, 6:30pm** via Zoom. Agenda items due by Feb.3 to Becky Quick [rampquick@yahoo.com](mailto:rampquick@yahoo.com)

### **Respect Life Committee – Leslie Najjar**

- Amendment 3 Informational Event – Monday, January 19, 7 pm – St. Monica (12136 Olive Blvd, St. Louis, MO 63141) in the Church Hall – contact Diann for more information [dbomkamp@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dbomkamp@sbcglobal.net)
- 2026 Archdiocesan Young Adult (18-39) Pro-Life Holy Hour – Thursday, January 22, 6:30 pm – Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis – Pro-Life Witness Talk by Br. Benedict Johnson, OP – Eucharistic Adoration – Holy Rosary – Confession – Dinner & Dessert Social (Boland Hall) – For more information contact [prolife@archstl.org](mailto:prolife@archstl.org) or 314-792-7555.
- Roe v. Wade Memorial Mass – Saturday, January 24 – 10 am – Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis – Holy Mass – Rosary – Reception in Boland Hall – Contact Leslie at 314-369-5474 to carpool from Mary Mother.
- Rite of Naming & Commendation – Saturday, January 24 at 11 am – St. Margaret Mary Alacoque - All are welcome to attend this prayer service developed by the Archdiocese of St. Louis to meet the needs of families whose child died before birth for any reason (including miscarriage, accident, abortion or stillbirth). The rite will offer parents and families an opportunity to name the child, bring peaceful closure to great loss, and unite with our merciful God. To RSVP or for more information email [eol@smpaparish.org](mailto:eol@smpaparish.org).

### **Christian Formation Core Team Updates – Cindy Yamnitz**

Theme/Strategy/Mission/Focus for Formation:

- Move from maintenance to mission
- Belong, Believe, Behave
- Forming intentional disciples

## ALPHA

- MMOC is partnering with St. Simon to start Alpha in January.
- Alpha will be offered on Mondays during the day at MMOC and Alpha will be offered on Wednesday evenings at St. Simon. Individuals can sign up to attend day or evening based on their availability.
- Kathleen Balassi and Becky McDonnell will be leading the Mary Mother endeavor, and recruit parishioners to be part of the team.
- MMOC:
  - Jan 8- team training 11:30- 1:30
  - Program starts on Monday, January 19 from 11:30 – 1:30
  - Volunteers still need to assist with meal prep/kitchen
- St. Simon:
  - Program starts Wednesday, Jan 21 from 5:30 – 7:30
  - There are at least 8 MMOC parishioners volunteering to assist at St. Simon
- The Alpha Retreat will be set up so individuals can choose which one to attend based on their schedules. The Alpha retreat will be offered at MMOC on Friday March 6 (5-9pm) and Saturday March 7 (8am-3pm) and a Retreat will be offered as an away trip March 13-15.
- Alphas is open to the parish and the outside community.
- Any parents who couldn't do Parental Alpha with us this fall, can be encouraged to attend.
- We will both be watching the same videos at MMOC and St. Simon each week. This way, folks will have a make-up option if they have to miss their regular meeting.
- What comes next?

## Divine Renovation

- Becky McDonnell has asked Fr. Steve to participate in 3 1-hour sessions on The Three Keys to Unlocking Your Parish. Dates are TBD.
- Made for Mission – Divine Renovation Program
  - April 30, 9:00 – 4:00
  - In Kentucky – 3 hour drive
  - Would like to get a group to go
- Discussion was held on the desire to move forward with Divine Renovation as we have been discussing this for a long time.

## Lent 2026

- The Peace and Justice committee is planning to offer 3 movies on social justice issues during Lent.
- Tuesday, 2/17/2026 at 6:00 pm - Entertaining Angels
- Saturday, 3/7/2026 at 5:30 pm – Selma
- Sunday, 3/22/2026 at 12:00 – Just Mercy

## Peace and Justice Presentations:

- Am I My Brother's Keeper – Joyce Jones and Jeff Schulenberg: 2/21/2026, 10:00 AM-1:00 PM, lunch included. Presented by Joyce Jones and Jeff Schulenberg of the Archdiocesan Office of Racial Harmony.
- Building a Bridge book study has been postponed due to scheduling issues.
- Missouri Botanical Garden presentation on food waste and commercial and home composting, Thursday, March 26, 6:30 pm

## OCIA

- Ed Lewandowski has 5 Inquiries for OCIA. Due to numerous individual needs and conflicts, they will not be on the same schedule. It is possible that 3 of the candidates will receive the sacrament of confirmation at the Easter Vigil.

## Father John A. Hardon, S.J. Basic Catholic Catechism Course – Leslie Najjar

- Half way through the program
- 10 individuals continue to meet regularly
- Not sure where others are in the program as it is a self study except one individual who finished in 1 month.

## Contemplative Prayer Group Update – Carolyn Habenstreit

- Looking at dates possibly after Easter but nothing is set yet
- The Tuesday afternoon Zoom group and monthly contemplative group continue to meet.

## Cornerstone

- This year's study is on The Acts of The Apostles
- 71 people are enrolled in Cornerstone

## Faith Formation Newsletter/Flocknote – Living Our Faith – Rose Wiethop

- November was the final newsletter on the liturgical year.
- Beginning in January Rose is planning to create a one page monthly flocknote called "Planting Mustard Seeds". This will be sent out in the middle of each month,

## Library Update – Carolyn Habenstreit

- Individuals are borrowing books!
- Suggestion was made for "little lending library on the church grounds".
  - Cindy will take this suggestion to Marian McCord
  - Aimee Barrett can offer support and information on this.

## Vocations

- Fr Steve is leading this group.
- A special chalice with vocation prayer is being sent home each week to a PSR family.
- A vocation prayer is being said after each mass.

## Other Formation Activities

- PSR Family Night – Peace and Justice will present to PSR Families on February 23. Original night was cancelled due to weather. Format will include CST Videos followed by group discussions, what is justice, followed by a craft, history of CST, History of our group and function in parish. This was an initiative started by Ellie. I am not sure that it will continue.
  - Discussion was held on re-envisioning family night going forward.
- Erlinda Perlado-Mertens and Joan Mertens - Erlinda and Joan are Spiritual Directors. Following discussion with Fr. Steve, they will be offering Spiritual Direction as a service of self-care to Ministers of Mary Mother of the Church, or possible group spiritual direction. I have no update.
- Fr. Steve is requesting on-going formation opportunities for PSR parents, etc.
  - Bible Study, Prayer group, other?
    - Much discussion was held on this and formation strategy and offerings
    - How to reach parents, what would support them, etc
    - Some Options discussed included:
      - Short video on "Why Catholics should use AI"
      - Focus Bible study called Ignite,

- Formed “Unleashing the power of the millennial mom”
- Fire Night – testimonies on Alpha impact
- Ever Wonder videos from Becky
- Alpha prayer course
- Alpha videos that were not covered in the program
- We concluded with offering:
  - Faith Sharing Nights on 1/26, 2/2, 2/9 to gauge interest
  - Mark Benmuhvar and Carolyn Habenstriet will lead
  - This will be first offered to parents who participated in Alpha
  - Mark will contact Randy so this can be announced on the last Alpha on 1/12.
- Possible Mission option: Deacon Art Miller
  - A nationally known preacher of God’s Holy Scripture, he has traveled throughout the country raising the need of conversion to “Radical Love”. The kind of self-denying love that can only be accomplished through the grace and power offered to us through Jesus Christ. Deacon Miller has preached throughout the United States – from New England to the Katrina-ravaged Gulf Coast of Mississippi, from the Rocky Mountains of northern New Mexico, to the south side of Chicago; he teaches and preaches Christ’s call to His life-changing “Radical Love”.
  - Asked everyone to check him out online to see what they think and we can discuss next month.
  - One comment made: He is a soft spoken. He is old. Does that matter in who we are trying to reach?

Submitted by *Cindy Yamnitz*, Christian Formation Commission Chair

### **Parish School of Religion Report**

**Reporting Period:** January 2026

- **Alpha Youth Program:** 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade successfully completed the Alpha Youth Program before Christmas Break. The final video was not used as the catechists and I felt there was some dissonance between the lesson and a visible, sacramental understanding of the church, but key elements of the session were presented. 7<sup>th</sup> grade is now returning to their usual curriculum (St. Mary’s Press). 8<sup>th</sup> grade took a class session to reintroduce the sacraments and are set to begin the Y Disciple program on January 26.
  - **8<sup>th</sup> Grade Bible Mass:** 8<sup>th</sup> grade will be given their own Bibles. Fr. Steve, Deacon Randy, Rich Blackford, and I want the bibles to be given as part of mass, as we have done in the past. We are working to schedule that mass. Bibles will be used more extensively as Y Disciple unfolds.
- **Confirmation Parent Meetings:** Fr. Steve, Deacon Randy, Rich Blackford, and I began individual meetings with parents of Confirmandi on January 14. These meetings are intended to help us understand how the parish can better support the unique Confirmation journey and ongoing faith life of each family and the effectiveness of our current program and initiatives, as well as ensuring that each student is ready to receive the sacrament this year as planned. Meetings will run through at least February 1 or until each family has had the opportunity to meet with us.
- **First Reconciliation:** Our 2<sup>nd</sup> grade class participated in First Reconciliation on January 20. Students were well-prepared, and, along with the expected nerves, demonstrated joy and excitement about their participation, a credit to families and to the foundation laid by **Beth Steverson**. The new PSR Coordinator was excited not to have messed anything up badly. A typical translation of the story of the prodigal son was used for the Gospel reading. This proved lengthy for the audience – if we use this story in the future, we will draw from the children’s lectionary.

## Faith Formation and Family Engagement

- **Family Mass Program:** The January 18 Family mass included a new lector from 5<sup>th</sup> grade. **Lisa Raglin** helped him prepare and he did an exceptional job! We are suspending the practice of assigning a particular grade level to each mass. Expectations for the grade-level assignments had not been well-communicated to the PSR catechists, and Lisa was struggling to fill roles with participants from the assigned grade. The practice of having particular grades supporting each Family Mass will be reevaluated before next school year to determine if it is worth reviving with some adjustments. Until then, we will revert to the prior practice of having roles at Family Mass open to all students. Lisa and I are planning to meet this week to discuss Family Mass and ensure all practices are sound and well-communicated.

## Upcoming Events

- **First Eucharist Parent Workshop: Date: Monday, February 9, 2026**
- **PSR Family Night:**
  - **Date:** Monday, **February 23, 2026** (rescheduled from December 1 due to inclement weather)
  - **Led by:** Social Peace and Justice Committee
  - **Topic:** Introduction to **Catholic Social Teaching** (basic overview and family activity)
  - This will be our only PSR Family Night this year. The practice of having these nights supported by parish commissions and committees will be reevaluated before the next school year to see if this is the best structure for these nights going forward

Submitted by Andy Dapron

## Youth Group Updates January 2026

Written by: Kaitlyn Kennedy

- Multiple events held throughout December and January with typical attendance but good feedback from teens.
  - Open Youth Room for studying for finals
  - Christmas Party
  - Olympic Games
- Steubenville registration is open to all 8th-12th graders through 2/4. Currently have 3 teens registered.
- We have been looking for opportunities to collaborate with other youth groups. Assumption has reached out to see if our teens want to help with their Luke 18 retreat in April. We are waiting to see if our teens are interested. The first planning meeting is 2/1.
- I met with OYM this past week to get more information on Totus Tuus. If this is something Fr. Steve and I feel is a good recommendation for our parish (after we discuss it), we will present it to Parish Council for consideration.
  - **Quick Overview:**
    - It is a 1 week summer program for 1-12th graders dedicated to sharing the Gospel and promoting the Catholic faith. The mission of Totus Tuus is to help the youth served and missionaries develop their relationship with Christ and His Church for lifelong discipleship.
    - Pillars include the Eucharist, Marian devotion, catechesis, vocational discernment, and FUN!
    - Missionaries are local college students/young adults/seminarians and spend a week at our parish hosting the event. While the activities are targeted for youth, there would be many opportunities for the rest of the parish to help and support this ministry.

## MISSIONARY DISCIPLESHIP COMMISSION

January 2026

### STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE –

- Year End 2025 resulted in 49 new parishioners/households. This exceeded 2024 by 15 . We feel very blessed to have added so many people and/or families to our faith community.
- Welcome Pew Cards – These cards continue to bring us new parishioners. Year end totaled 7 new parishioners as a result of the pew cards.
- Welcome Bags continue to be received with positive feedback from both the recipients as well as the ambassadors delivering them.
- Legacy Project – Fr. Steve has asked the Stewardship Committee to take oversight of this endeavor. Tom will continue to give us information and Bruce will create monthly bulletin articles as a follow up to keep this idea in people’s minds.
- New Parishioner Luncheon has been changed to a Dinner and will be held after the 4:30 Mass on Saturday, January 31, 2026 in the Parish Hall. The committee has decided on a menu that is an upgrade to the McAlister’s sandwiches. Invitations have gone out and the committee is working on several ideas to encourage interaction among all the attendees. If budget allows, we are hoping to have live plant centerpieces to be awarded to one lucky person at each table.
- Letters to New Parishioners – Anyone who has delivered a Welcome Bag two months ago are being sent the name and address of that person and asked to send that person a hand-written note asking if they have any questions and inviting them to a parish activity. Just another way to reach out to our new parishioners a couple of months after they have registered and letting them know we are here for them.
- The committee focused much discussion on how to better market our committee. We need to let people know we are not about money, but a committee that cares about growing our parish in Prayer, Participation, and Generosity. This will continue to be the focus of our meetings over the next several months.

### CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER GROUP

- Weekly Lectio Divina continues facilitated by Joe Himmelberg on Tuesday afternoons at 2:45pm via Zoom. Contact Joe at: [joehimmelberg@yahoo.com](mailto:joehimmelberg@yahoo.com).
- Monthly Centering Prayer, facilitated by Margaret Porrier, continues the third Tuesday each month at 10:30 am in the MMOC classrooms. There is some discussion about adding a monthly evening practice in 2026.
- The Group is planning to continue their quarterly events next year.
- Also planning a workshop on Centering Prayer hopefully in early summer.
- The Contemplative library has a growing selection of resource materials in the vestibule available for anyone.

PRAYER GROUPS – Calls to each prayer group have been made to confirm the accuracy of what is shown on our website. A few changes were made accordingly.

JONAH TEAM – Linda Telthorst is still primary contact although she is looking for a successor. She reports the group is somewhat stagnant in their numbers. After the holidays they are hoping to come up with a few ways to market themselves – possibly a pulpit talk.

E-TEAM SQUARED – The group continues to be strong in evangelization and in reaching out to those in need of some spiritual growth. There is much discussion on Alpha and how each parish can benefit from it. Meetings for the first three or four months will focus on ways to bring the message of this being our 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary as an archdiocese to our parishioners. Meetings are on the 4<sup>th</sup> Friday of each month from 10:00 to 11:30 am. Participating parishes take turns hosting these meetings. Anyone from a parish is invited to attend.

Submitted by,

Mary Ann McWilliams  
Chair, Missionary Discipleship Commission

#### Social Commission report January 2026

Our December events went well. Becky reported a great crowd at both the Advent Glow and the Happy Birthday Jesus party. Lots of great feedback on the Advent Glow. The movie afternoon was not as well attended as I had hoped but all had a good time.

Things are getting busy for socially here at Mary Mother. Here is a calendar of what is coming in the next two months

Jan. 30-Card tournament

Feb. 1-Frozen Tundra Golf classic

Feb. 8-Super Bowl party 4-end of game (potluck)

Feb 12 Sensational Seniors

Feb. 15 Donut Sunday

Feb 27-Fish Fry

March 20 Fish Fry

March 29-Lenten movie Godspell 3:00 Parish Hall

Respectfully

Rich Blackford, Social Chair

## Mary Mother of the Church Liturgy Meeting January 7, 2026

The evening began with a potluck dinner at the home of Randy and Mary Anne Howe. Randy led us in prayer to begin the evening. The liturgy meeting opened at 7:25 pm

Attending: Ann Madden, Deacon Randy Howe, Mary Anne Howe, Susan Fuchs, Nancy Muehl, Pat Tobin, Carol Drury, Angela Hapgood.

### OLD BUSINESS

Discussion of mass times for Christmas Eve and Christmas for 2026.

- We propose to have 4:00 and 9:00 pm on Christmas Eve and only one mass on Christmas Day, preferably at 10:00 am. This would follow the same idea as we have for Thanksgiving and New Year's Day – only one mass on the actual day. Since the numbers for Christmas Day masses were low, we believe having one larger mass would serve the people better.
- A question was raised – can the Vigil Mass for New Year's Eve be moved to 4:30? It can be a struggle for those working that day, to get there.
- Request was made to have an Advent Wreath in the chapel next year.

“Gather Book” hymnals

- We all agree it is important to make it easy for people who donated books to retrieve their book. Nate will select a date and recruit volunteers to help sort/organize the books by name. This should help when it comes time to distribute them. He plans to send a flocknote notice.
- Pat Tobin learned the recycling center does not take books.
- Ann Madden will look into the idea of donating the books to a mission group. We cannot afford to ship the books, so they would probably need to be delivered/picked up.

Everyone agreed that both Advent and Christmas liturgies went well. The space was decorated nicely, and the music was wonderful. **Note for 2026** – The trees and other decorations were taken down too early in 2025. We should wait until after the Baptism of the Lord before removing any Christmas decorations.

Review of Liturgical movement at masses

Several comments the liturgy commission received about the latest liturgical dance:

- Dancers were graceful, but several people did not feel it enhanced the liturgy.
- The “Holy Family” was more like a theatrical performance/play – not prayerful movement. It was awkward.
- Another issue was that Anita was one of the dancers and also a reader at mass. People are not supposed to serve in multiple ministries at the same mass *unless absolutely necessary*.

### NEW BUSINESS

- What are plans for Lent? (Ash Wednesday is 2/18/26) Can we resurrect the “mime passion”? Would there be enough interest from the youth? Will probably need to recruit from 6, 7 and 8<sup>th</sup> graders. Need to check with Father Steve before proceeding.
- Randy will ask Father Steve if he will do the blessing of the throats at all masses the weekend of January 31 and February 1.
- Lisa Raglin will be working with the youth on Lector reading.

- Now is the time to be thinking of people to nominate for Parish Council. Elections will be happening very soon.
- Are we still interested in having an outdoor mass? We need to discuss with Father Steve so this is tabled until February meeting.
- Several people will be unable to attend the regularly scheduled February Liturgy meeting, so it will be moved to February 11 – pending approval of Father Steve.

**A BIG THANK YOU** to Randy and Mary Anne for hosting this evening. The dinner was enjoyed by everyone and the fellowship during that time was great fun.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm

Respectfully submitted,  
Angela Hapgood