

Pastoral Planning Committee

Meeting Minutes

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart – West Brookfield,
Saint Joseph – North Brookfield,
Saint John the Baptist– East Brookfield.

Meeting Date: November 25, 2024

Location: Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Parish Center

Present: Eileen Bene, Roger Dame, Tina Fitzgerald, Ed O'Malley, Brian O'Malley, Cathy Larocca, Mike Larocca, Richard Caron, Christie Driscoll, Joan Reidy, The Diocesan representatives Elizabeth Marcil (Diocese), Stephen Sycks (Diocese), Edgar Luna (Diocesan Pastoral Planning Committee), Rebecca Gordon, Ron Ryel, Fr. Miguel Pagan, Fr. Don Ouellette, Fr. Joe Rice (Parish Administrator of all three parishes).

The meeting started promptly at 6:30 PM with a welcome and opening prayer from Fr Rice.

Group Prayer:

The group, led by Fr Rice, participated in a prayer exercise that involved reading the scriptures and the Adsumus Sancte Spritus. The Diocesan representatives gave an overview of the prayers.

Update on question from last meeting:

The Diocesan representatives noted the following updates:

- Bishop McManus has met with Fr. Bill Shipper from Mary, Queen of the Rosary in Spencer. Bishop shared that Father Shipper will attend the next Diocesan Pastoral Planning meeting.
- The Bishop plans on meeting with Fr. Richard Lembo from St. Aloysius in Gilbertville. Fr. Lembo has mentioned publicly that given he is well past the retirement age, and that he is considering what his next phase of priesthood looks like.
- St. Stanislaus in West Warren is currently staffed by a Deacon as an Administrator of Finance and has a part-time retired priest, Father Ed Ryan, fulfilling sacramental ministries. This is a small parish with a small congregation.
- St. Paul's in Warren is currently an Oratory run by a religious order, The Institute of Christ the King. This Oratory focuses on Latin Mass and will not be part of any Pastoral Planning meetings.

General Feedback Discussion

A couple of members of the committee voiced concern about the pace of the meetings. There was frustration over a perceived lack of a definitive plan and the introduction of potentially other parishes joining the meetings.

The Diocesan representatives, Elizabeth Marcil, Stephen Sycks, and Edgar Luna shared that we are still early in the pastoral planning process. Successful pastoral planning happens when people in a geographical area come together towards a common mission and common strengths. There is no definitive plan as of yet. We had talked in September about prayer, analysis, discernment, and then proposals. We are currently in the prayer and analysis portion of the process.

The Diocesan representatives, Stephen, Edgar, and Liz will take their concerns to the next Diocesan Pastoral Planning meeting in early December for further discussion.

Parish Profile Discussions

The committee broke into parish groups to start discussion in order to complete the parish profile forms. Completed parish profiles should be forwarded to Elizabeth Marcil by January 15th to be collated prior to the next meeting on January 27th.

Fr. Rice closed the meeting at 8:00 pm with prayer.