



Diocese of Cheyenne

Office of the Bishop

DECREE

On the Reduction of Sts. Cyril and Methodius Church, Rock Springs, Wyoming, from Sacred to Profane but Not Sordid Use

A petition was submitted by the Reverend William Hill, Pastor of Holy Spirit Catholic Community, on May 23, 2025, requesting that Sts. Cyril and Methodius Church be relegated from sacred to profane but not sordid use. This petition came after the parish had undertaken a multi-year process of study and consultation. This process included engineering assessments, consultation of parishioners, and input from the Parish Pastoral and Finance Councils. On May 28, 2025, the Presbyteral Council of the Diocese of Cheyenne, considered the matter, and after discussion recommended unanimously to Bishop Steven R. Biegler the reduction of the Church of Sts. Cyril and Methodius from sacred to profane but not sordid use.

Before making a final decision, Bishop Steven R. Biegler held an additional listening session for members of the faithful of Holy Spirit Catholic Community on July 7, 2025. Subsequently, their concerns were brought before the Parish Pastoral Council and Parish Finance Council. The Presbyteral Council had been advised periodically about the process, and on October 7, 2025, again unanimously recommended the reduction of the church to profane but not sordid use. This led to a decree being issued on October 10, 2025, which was published in the parish bulletins of October 18–19, 2025. The decree declared that Sts. Cyril and Methodius Church would be reduced to profane but not sordid use.

On October 23, 2025, Greg and Mary Hamilton filed recourse against the decree dated October 10, 2026. On October 28, 2025, Ms. Hamilton, serving as canonical procurator for herself, her husband, and several parishioners, submitted an additional petition requesting revocation of the decree and identifying concerns related to both its substance and the stated grounds for relegation.

On November 18, 2025, Bishop Steven R. Biegler met with the Parochial Administrator, clergy, and lay leaders in Rock Springs to confer with them about the recourse that had been taken. During the meeting, they reviewed the petitions and objections and considered whether the October decree should be suspended pending a more detailed review with a canon lawyer.

Following this initial examination of the petitions and accompanying correspondence, Bishop Biegler issued a Decree of Suspension on November 19, 2025. This decree, suspending the October decision until February 15, 2026, allowed time for additional consultation with parish leadership and for a meeting with the petitioners.

On December 9, 2025, a meeting was held in Rock Springs with the Parochial Administrator and parish leadership. The Reverend Thomas E. Cronkleton, Jr., JCD reviewed the concerns outlined in Mary Hamilton's petitions, along with the supplemental correspondence received during the suspension period and provided written observations. During the meeting with parish leadership, each substantive and procedural objections were addressed, including issues of prescription, parish status, transparency, pastoral consultation, financial considerations, and the canonical interpretation of grave cause. The petition was evaluated in conjunction with the broader historical record of parish consultation and the canonical norms governing relegation. This review confirmed that the concerns raised had been thoroughly considered during the multiyear process leading to the original decree, and that no new canonical arguments or evidence had been presented that would warrant the reversal of the decision on October 10, 2025, or diminish the Bishop's authority and responsibility to act for the spiritual good of the faithful.

On December 30, 2025, a meeting was held with the Parochial Administrator and the parish leadership team to continue coordinating the procedural, pastoral, financial, and logistical components of the relegation process. The leaders also assessed the condition of the church building itself, the surrounding neighborhood context, and the financial and safety concerns informing the proposed course of action. In addition, they verified the parish's legal name, documented the consultative process that had begun several years earlier, and finalized communication plans for parishioners, including preparing and distributing materials for the meetings scheduled in January.

In continuity with these efforts, on December 31, 2025, Bishop Steven R. Biegler formally invited Mary Hamilton, along with additional aggrieved parishioners whose names she would provide, to an in-person meeting to discuss the matters raised in her petition. This meeting was scheduled for January 15, 2026, to ensure that her concerns could be heard directly and addressed within the broader consultative and canonical review process.

In accordance with this invitation, on January 15, 2026, a meeting was held with fourteen individuals representing parish leadership and the aggrieved parishioners. Concerns presented included alleged deficiencies in the original decree, questions about whether a sufficiently articulated grave cause had been identified, and whether potential alternative uses of the church had been adequately explored. Bishop Biegler received these concerns and forwarded them to the Parochial Administrator and parish leadership for further review and clarification.

Consultation with Parish Leadership

After the Bishop forwarded the concerns expressed by the aggrieved parishioner expressed at the meeting on January 15, 2026, additional consultation with parish leadership was conducted. On January 20, 2026, both the Finance Council and the Pastoral Council met to review the documentation and clarifications.

Finance Council

The Finance Council reviewed all documentation, including the engineering assessments, financial analyses, historical records of parish consultation, and the correspondence associated with the petition. After examining this full body of information, the Council voted unanimously to recommend that the Parochial Administrator reaffirm the request for the reduction of the Sts. Cyril and Methodius Church to profane but not sordid use.

Pastoral Council

The Pastoral Council likewise reviewed the documentation and consultative materials that had informed the multiyear discernment process, together with the concerns raised in the recent petition. Following this thorough evaluation, the Council unanimously reaffirmed its earlier conclusion that Sts. Cyril and Methodius Church should be reduced from sacred to profane but not sordid use and recommended that the Parochial Administrator proceed with the relegation.

Parochial Administrator

On January 25, 2026, the Parochial Administrator, Reverend August Koeune, having reviewed the same documentation and the recommendations of the Councils, reaffirmed the earlier decision of the Pastor to request the reduction of the Sts. Cyril and Methodius Church to profane but not sordid use.

Presbyteral Council

On January 27, 2026, the Bishop requested the Presbyteral Council to review the recourse and subsequent material received, as well as the parish leaders written response to the recourse, and for the Council voted unanimously to reaffirm the recommendation to reduce Sts. Cyril and Methodius Church to profane but not sordid use.

Findings of the Most Reverend Steven R. Biegler

Bishop Biegler reviewed the following items with accompanying documentation:

- The original assessments which led to decree on October 10, 2025;
- Written concerns by aggrieved parishioners and those expressed at meetings on July 7, 2025, and January 15, 2026;
- Documentation compiled by parish leaders in response to the concerns of aggrieved parishioners including the engineering assessments, financial analyses, historical records of parish consultation, and the correspondence associated with the petition;
- The unanimous recommendations of the Parish Finance Council and Parish Pastoral Council;
- The requests of the previous Pastor (Rev. William Hill) and the Parochial Administrator (Rev. August Koeune); and
- The recommendations of the Presbyteral Council from meetings on May 28, 2025, October 7, 2025, and January 27, 2026.

Furthermore, having considered the broader pastoral, financial, structural, and liturgical circumstances of the parish and the Diocese of Cheyenne, Bishop Steven R. Biegler determined that a just and grave cause exists for the relegation of Sts. Cyril and Methodius Church from sacred to profane but not sordid use.

This finding was based on:

- the structural and engineering deficiencies requiring substantial repair,
- the significant and unsustainable financial burden required to restore the building to safe use and to operate the building (insurance, utilities, etc.),
- the absence of viable, mission-consistent alternative uses for the property,
- the parish's inability to maintain more than one worship site, and
- the consistent recommendation of parish leadership, affirmed through multiple consultations, that relegation is the prudent and necessary course.

I, the Most Reverend Steven R. Biegler, Bishop of Cheyenne, reaffirm my earlier decree in which Sts. Cyril and Methodius Church, located at 633 Bridger Avenue in Rock Springs, Wyoming, is to be reduced from sacred to profane but not sordid use.

Notification of this Decree is to be published in parish bulletins on March 21-22, 2026, and the full decree is to be posted on the parish website.

Those who believe themselves aggrieved by this decree can within fifteen (15) useful days make hierarchical recourse to me for the recourse to be transmitted to the Dicastery of the Clergy.

Recourse, however, has already been proposed on January 29, 2026, before I had the opportunity to state my decision. This recourse will be forwarded to the Dicastery of the Clergy.

The reduction of Sts. Cyril and Methodius Church to profane but not sordid use is suspended until the outcome of the hierarchical recourse.

Given at the Chancery of the Diocese of Cheyenne
This 11th day of March, 2026.



Most Reverend Steven R. Biegler, DD, STL
Bishop of Cheyenne



Orlena Trujillo
Chancellor

