

St Joseph Catholic Church

Minutes of the Pastoral Council Meeting

November 20, 2024

Present were:

Fr. Brian Eilers (Pastor)
Fr. Joy Adimakkeel (Assoc)
Michael Alexander (Pres)
Lis Soto (Secretary)

Marcel LeJeune
Christina Robertson
Anna Damian
Donna Hanus

Lorian Dusek
Matt Rice
Leanne Southerland

Absent:

Samantha Shepard

Taylor Schroll

Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 6:08 pm with a prayer led by Fr. Brian.

PARISH UPDATES

Father Brian reported that renovation projects at the school and the church doors have been completed. New speakers are being installed this week at the main church. Our parish will be designated a pilgrimage site in 2025.

Father Brian reported on the healthy activities of many programs along the Discipleship Pathway.

Teams of our Lady mentors have held two informational meetings here for married couples, and they determined that there is not enough interest in our parish to begin the program at this time.

Early Learning Center enrollment is close to 50. The goal is 75 students.

St. Joseph School has recovered well from some staff turnover. New turf added to the high school courtyard has improved the area's aesthetic and social aspects. Father Brian and Father Joy are hearing weekly confessions at the high school from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. one day per week.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES 2024

Father Brian asked the Pastoral Council for suggestions to make Christmas masses memorable with these goals in mind:

- Each attendant has a good experience
- Everyone feels welcome
- Each person hears an excellent message to continue their faith journey
- Each person gets something valuable (book)

Marcel L. recommended that Fr. Brian prepare the parish ahead of time by asking them to sit in the center of the pews, smile and greet newcomers, and pray for our Christmas guests, even before that day. Marcel also recommended having a welcome table with trained people to answer questions and ask guests to fill out a prayer intention card to capture their names and contact information. Then, follow up with a phone call or email. Also, we offer a QR code to make it easy to register at our parish.

Leanne S. suggested having greeters in the parking lot and outside the church and offering gifts like holy water or snacks. She also recommended having prayer teams available to pray with individuals before and after masses.

This Christmas is the last part of our 5-year Dynamic Catholic designation, which includes free books from Matthew Kelly to give away at Christmas masses. In the future, giveaway books will need to be purchased. The free book this Christmas is "Three Voices of God". Father Brian is already designing a bookmark to go into the book. Discussion about the bookmark included listing ways to get involved at the parish, Alpha, Jubilee year, or a special prayer.

DISCUSSION - PASTORAL LISTENING

Father Brian reported about a survey tool being designed to help parishes measure and track where their parishioners are in their faith journey. It's like a spiritual checkup that measures fruit over time and can offer data at a parish or diocesan level. This tool should be available next fall 2025.

In the meantime, Fr. Brian hoped PC members could extend a listening ear to parishioners to help people feel valued, heard, and loved. By being Jesus to them, we can help them find Jesus and continue their conversion.

We could engage more in conversations after mass, asking things like:

- How long have you been coming to mass here? Are you a parishioner?
- What stands out to you about St. Joseph's?
- What do you think about..... mass? Event?
- What did you like most about.....that event?our parish? Best experience?
- What activities are bearing fruit for you in your spiritual life?
- How is the Lord working in your life? In particular?
- Have you had an encounter with Christ?
- Can you tell me more about that?
- Where are you on the Discipleship Pathway?
- Have you tried..... Alpha? Bible Study?
- What can I pray for you about?

Marcel L will make a list of questions for PC members to use. Fr. Brian asked that PC members actively engage with parishioners this holiday and give feedback at the January PC meeting. Encouraging stories can be shared before then by email.

Leanne S. suggested that PC members have name tags and offer prayer teams at more masses.

The next PC meeting, January, will open with PC members discussing their 'pastoral listening experiences'.

Donna H. mentioned that we should have a suggestion box. Fr. Brian said that one exists, but it is used as the usher's box.

There was also some discussion about the best timing and way to present the Discipleship Pathway to the parish. No decisions were made.

Closing Prayer led by Father Joy

The meeting adjourned at 7:25 pm

The next Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 15, 2025.

Respectfully Submitted by,
Lis Soto