Saint Jude Pastoral Council Meeting

Wednesday, September 23, 2026

Minutes

Attendees: Fr. Weber, Julie Barber, Greg Branson, Alvaro Garcia-Velez, Steve Gorzek, Liesl Larson, Susan Ray, Andy Schmitt, Annie Tower, Jacob Voss

Absent: Peter Benz, Susie Cabrera, Mickie Steldt, Andrew Meindl, Tom Mullooly

Approval of August 26, 2026, minutes.

- A motion to approve minutes was made by Julie B. and seconded by Annie T.
- Finance report figures require recheck; publication is pending a requested response.

**Pastors Remarks**

- Recent archdiocesan meeting covered Catholic education and demographics; current configuration: 175 parishes (22 with special circumstances), 106 pastors (73 diocesan, 28 religious, 5 parish directors).
- Of diocesan pastors, 12 are above retirement age; 61 pastors/administrators are not retirement-eligible and stably bound to the archdiocese.
- Projections to 2031 assume ~3 ordinations/year, reducing archdiocesan pastors from ~75 to ~61, increasing associate pastors from ~35 to ~53, and adjusting special assignments and loans.
- Strategic options: coordinated restructuring or incremental changes as opportunities arise; no specific parish changes currently planned.
- St. Jude is stable and growing, but within broader constraints of priest availability.
- Religious priests' reassignment patterns introduce uncertainty; aim to keep parish operations within what one priest can manage rather than adding many Masses.
- Seminary formation extended by a year with emphasis on human formation, doctrine, practical work, and social interaction.
- Wauwatosa's strong families, schools, and nearby religious communities are favorable for vocations; ordination rates expected to stabilize.
- Planning assumptions discussed (e.g., adjusting "450" down to "440–435," basis-point impacts) within a manageable five-year horizon to 2031, incorporating seminary pipeline and attrition.
- Canonically ideal model is one pastor per parish; practical near-term approach points to multi-site pastor teams with associates (e.g., Madison's generational model).
- Sunday Mass reporting tracks attendance and percent-of-capacity; differences noted between space-limited communities and those maintaining larger facilities.

- St. Jude seats ~450 comfortably; recent Sunday morning attendance estimates varied; parish count noted as 12 lower with unclear context.
- Historical investments aim to keep St. Jude strong and attractive to families; strong school and finances support vitality.
- St. Jude currently viewed as strong, with successful pastor attraction and solid operations.
- Reference to a 1973 Pfister program signed by Fulton Sheen; Monsignor Holloran listed as club president offering invocation.
- Goal: locate photo/archival proof to support petition for a Fulton Sheen relic placement near the Holy Family statue; outreach planned to archives (e.g., Marian Club).

**Finance Report**

- Early year (August) financials show timing differences; operating performance is stable, no debt.
- School enrollment reported at 415; finances expected to normalize as tuition/fees settle; 20 new families and 52 new students noted, with positive integration in Home & School leadership.

**Centennial Committee**

- Steier Group selected (Aug 31) to lead a capital campaign; K–8 experience aligns with parish needs.
- Three-pronged concept:
    - Infrastructure upgrades: boiler, controls, windows, and building systems.
    - Classroom modernization: create vibrant learning spaces and address tight room feel.
    - Narthex expansion: open space by relocating stairs; enable single-level gatherings and daytime accessible public area (benefits seniors).
- Steier Phase 1 feasibility study will gauge priorities and shape the final plan; campaign timeline to be established.
- Clarified centennial year runs Fall 2027–Spring 2028; official centennial March 2028.
- Regular gala proceeds as usual; larger centennial event planned for Spring 2028 to avoid event overlap and accommodate weather/snowbirds.
- Special Events Committee seeks clarity on whether events are fundraising, net-neutral, or community-building; plan to map the school-year calendar and add centennial flair to existing events, with budget guidance to follow.
- Momentum is positive; mid-October meeting planned to solidify timelines and reduce planning paralysis.
- Committee meeting set for September 29, 2026, to formulate recommendations for the Centennial Commission.

**Parish and Development Databases**

- Parish database tracks current parishioners, giving history, and addresses; confusion remains about the need for a dedicated development/alumni database for centennial fundraising.
- Steier's scope discussed for wealth screening fields (name, address, giving history); consideration of data-scrubbing services to update deceased/relocated contacts.

**Bereavement Breakfast and Event Logistics (Halloween and All Saints/All Souls)**

- Bereavement Breakfast set for November 1, 2026; setup planned for Saturday, October 31, after the 1:00 PM blood drive, targeting a 3:00–4:30 PM window with Daylight Savings awareness.
- Breakfast service planned after 10:00 AM Mass; serving window considered 9:30 AM–12:00 PM; logistics include heating food early, coordinating tablecloths with Kat, and improving invitations with Katie.
- Volunteers requested for Halloween afternoon setup and middle schoolers for November 1 teardown; last year's setup photos to expedite preparation.

**Faith Formation Enrollment, Fees, and Outreach**

- Concerns that ~$100 per-child religious education fees may be a barrier; enrollment has decreased in some grades (e.g., 12 last year vs. 3–5 in some classes this year).
- Potential causes: staff transitions, demographics, and moves to Catholic schools; scholarships/catechist waivers exist.
- Consensus to maintain fees but add explicit financial assistance messaging and broaden outreach to local families (within allowable channels); high school/middle school programs growing, with food used to boost engagement.

**Liaison Reports and Committee Updates**

- Stewardship Committee: no update; request for Google Docs support for Women/Men of St. Jude.
- Literature Commission: first meeting set for Thursday, October 22.
- Human Concerns: Life Chain scheduled Oct 4, 2:00–3:30 PM on Blue Mound (St. Jude location); archdiocesan pro-life programming in October focuses on euthanasia (inadmissible per Catechism).
- Athletics: volleyball underway with new uniforms; tournaments in October; 4th grade practicing only due to numbers; volunteer gaps in concessions and gym supervision via SignUpGenius; late volunteer removals noted; explore locking options or alternatives.
- Seminary dinner on Oct 9: parish table filled (10 attendees); thanks to Joshua and Charles for youth ministry support.

**Mass Attendance and Music Ministry**

- Summer Mass attendance was strong; after Labor Day patterns resumed; recent Sunday morning attendance estimates varied.
- Moving the piano improved choir coordination and sound; commendations for young musicians (e.g., Camille and Matthew Schonwald).

**Gala Donation and Fundraising**

- Gala scheduled for November 7, 2026; council to donate an item but Amazon wish list not yet available; collection to be via Venmo QR or cash.
- Andy will email Venmo details to collect optional contributions.

**Baptismal Font Project**

- Design finalized; metal fabrication underway with progress photos requested.
- Updates to be shared first in the bulletin, then Flocknote and the website.

**Feast Day and Next Council Meeting**

- Next Pastoral Council meeting on October 28, 2026, coincides with the Feast of Saint Jude.