

Saint Jude Pastoral Council Meeting

Wednesday, February 25, 2025

Approved Minutes

Attendees: Fr. Weber, Julie Barber, Peter Benz, Greg Branson, Susie Cabrera, Alvaro Garcia-Velez, Tom Mullooly, Susan Ray, Andy Schmitt, Mickie, Steldt, Annie Tower, Tim Weiss

Lucas Cabrera (Youth Rep), Julian Van Dulm (Youth Rep), Tiernan Molony (Youth Rep), Sophia Benz (Youth Rep)

Absent: Steven Gorzek, Andrew Meindl,

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

- A motion was made and seconded to approve the amended minutes.

Pastor's Update

- Deacon Frank's Passing:
 - Deacon Frank passed away on February 15th. His funeral mass was described as beautiful.
 - The parish is working with Human Concerns to establish a homebound apostolate to continue visiting parishioners, as Deacon Frank regularly did.
- Lenten Season:
 - Parishioners are encouraged to use the additional opportunities at St. Jude's, including Stations of the Cross, extra confession times, and adoration times.
- Open Positions:
 - **Maintenance Manager:** Two promising applications have been received from candidates within the archdiocese. A second interview is planned for one applicant.
 - **Accounting Assistant:** No applications have been received for this position yet.
- Clergy Updates:
 - Father Mark will be defending his thesis soon and will return home in mid-July.
 - Father Emmanuel is returning on March 26th and will stay through August.
- Fundraising and Projects:
 - Efforts were made after Donut Sunday to generate support for the "purple envelope" push.
 - **Love One Another (LOA):** A quarterly distribution of \$32,000 was received. A thank-you note will be sent to donors. The goal is to reach about \$100,000 in additional funds by 2028.
 - **Sanctuary Project:** Meetings were held with Whitman Studios (design firm) and Inspired Artisans.

- **Tester (Canopy) Repair:** A drone inspection revealed the condition is worse than hoped. The cost estimate is between \$30,000 (best-case) and \$70,000 (worst-case), excluding electrical work. The cost for scaffolding just to get an exact assessment would be \$6,000.
 - **Baptismal Font:** The plan is to move the font under the light in front of St. Joseph's altar. A new, lighter cover with reflective material will be made. The old, heavy cover may be repurposed into an ambry for holy oils.
- **Parish Events & Outreach:**
 - A successful wine and cheese event was held at St. Camillus for twelve parishioners living there.
 - There is no immediate prospect for a new permanent deacon, as the process typically involves a parishioner undergoing a 4-5 year formation.
- **Mass Attendance:**
 - Ash Wednesday masses were very well attended. The later mass times for holy days are proving successful.

Project Leadership and Subcommittee Coordination

- A project is underway to coordinate with the 6 or 7 individuals who volunteered as potential leaders, with Father Weber leading the effort to connect with them individually.
- The next step is a meeting with Tim, Father, and committed leaders to discuss splitting up responsibilities among subcommittees like human concerns, development, and new member welcome.
- Subcommittees will be encouraged to use their personal networks for recruitment and will have flexibility to generate their own ideas for later feasibility review.
- The project is further along than a month ago, with the year 2028 mentioned as a relevant timeframe.

Youth Engagement and Liturgical Involvement

- **Youth Liaison Committee Report:**
 - The committee met to discuss increasing youth engagement, improving the school-parish connection, and raising the standards for the confirmation program.
 - Suggestions included increasing messaging in school and faith formation classes about the importance of weekend mass and the "why" of the liturgy, not just the "what."
 - The committee suggested creating clearer pathways for youth, especially post-confirmation, to participate in roles beyond altar serving, such as Eucharistic minister, lector, greeter, or cantor.

Strategies for Increasing Youth Engagement:

- Ideas include having youth take ownership of causes like a blood drive, adding a new service site connection, and organizing more well-received events like the Holy Hill trip.
- A logistical issue was noted: children are not allowed in the kitchen area at the MacCanon Brown meal service.
- **Connecting the School and the Parish:**
 - The discussion focused on better engaging school families by advertising parish events like speaker series and Donut Sunday in the school bulletin.
- **Mass Sponsorship by School Groups:**
 - A model from Marquette University High School was suggested, where school groups (e.g., sports teams, theater cast) sponsor a Mass by participating in readings and bringing up the gifts.
 - This would require buy-in from the athletic association, and logistical details like frequency need to be determined.
- **Recognizing Youth Contributions:**
 - It was suggested to formally recognize and thank youth participants like the youth choir and servers during Mass to make them and their parents feel valued.
- **Alumni Engagement:**
 - A “3v3 St. Jude alumni basketball tournament” was proposed for high school or college-aged alumni, to be held around Thanksgiving or winter break.
- **Youth Involvement in Liturgy:**
 - It was noted that many youths feel they “age out” of altar serving. Suggestions were made to recruit high schoolers for roles like lector, greeter, or usher. A student was mentioned as an example of someone interested in being a Eucharistic minister.
 - A past youth cantor reportedly stopped due to feeling awkward being much younger than others, highlighting a need to change the culture.
 - Some parents feel their children are not chosen frequently to be altar servers, with some families needing to actively seek substitute opportunities.
 - It was emphasized that the primary reason for Mass attendance is worship, not just fulfilling a role.
 - A suggestion was made to meet with confirmation candidates to encourage continued involvement in ministries, noting that past programs required parish service which led students to other roles.

Finance, School, and Parish Committees

- Finance and School Report:
 - **School Enrollment:** 412 students are enrolled, compared to 423 last year. The 5K class is likely to have a waitlist.
 - **Budget:** The first draft will be reviewed at the next finance meeting.

- **Fundraising & Projects:** The “Tradition of Excellence” fundraiser raised \$35,000. The stage floor refinishing will cost around \$7,000.
- **Finance Council:** Two new members have been appointed and are actively participating.
- **Human Concerns Committee Update:**
 - Craig Steffes and Andrea Treat are now leading the blood drive.
 - The baby shower for the Women’s Care Center was successful.
 - The food pantry collected 20 bags of food and \$380.
 - The MacCanon Brown Homeless Sanctuary held a successful meal service and has an upcoming gala on March 21st.
 - The St. Vincent de Paul society had five visits and received around \$1000 from collections.
 - Expanding the communion call ministry was discussed, noting the “Safeguarding God’s Children” requirement for volunteers.
- **Men of St. Jude Update:**
 - Major fundraisers (Casino Night) are concluded.
 - Members assisted with traffic during a recent funeral.
- **School Committee Report:**
 - The school play is April 24th-25th with a record 49 students. A suggestion was made to hold a Mass for participants and invite seniors to the Saturday matinee, possibly with an Anointing of the Sick.
 - The Scouts and Knights of Columbus are planning a pancake breakfast for April 26th.
- **Mass Attendance and Accountability:**
 - The group discussed the disheartening trend of Catholic families not attending Mass, even though children often want to go.
 - A proposal was made to add a “Sunday Mass” signature line to student assignment notebooks to encourage accountability.
 - It was noted that for pre-confirmation classes, many students attend the required meeting but do not stay for Mass.
- **Liturgical Meeting Updates:**
 - **Cantor Scheduling:** Some cantors feel they are scheduled too frequently. Mark is considering asking school music ministers to cover some masses.
 - **Covering Statues During Lent:** A suggestion was made to cover statues starting from the Fifth Sunday of Lent. There is uncertainty on how to cover the crucifix.
- **Church Lighting:** It was explained that a crawl space provides access to some, but not all, of the lights near the altar.
- **Donut Sunday:**
 - The Girl Scouts will host in March and the adult women’s basketball group in April. May is open, with a suggestion for the stewardship/centennial committee to host on May 17th.

Parish Assets and Strategic Planning

- **Discussion on the Parish Piano:**
 - A discussion was held about the donated baby grand piano, which is used infrequently. The cost of moving it for storage (150 –200 for tuning post-move) and each use was a concern.
 - The parish has multiple pianos. Storing this one could make it available for future revenue-generating arts performances.
 - The value of the instrument and the sentiment of the donation were reasons against disposal.
 - Alternative solutions included removing pews to create a permanent spot for it or renovating the narthex/usher's room to create a new music space.
 - An alternative was to focus more on promoting the parish's organ. The decision remains unresolved.
- **Challenges with School Music and Arts Programs:**
 - Past attempts to start a school band failed due to low interest.
- There is a conflict between academic time and arts activities, and the school lacks a dedicated music room (it's in the library) and leadership for after-school programs.
- **Tabling the Strategic Plan Discussion:**
 - The group agreed to postpone the strategic plan discussion. The plan will be emailed again with specific sections highlighted for review to accelerate the next meeting.

Upcoming Pilgrimage:

The Boy Scouts are sponsoring a 22-mile pilgrimage to Our Lady of Champion on May 2nd, with shorter options available.

Attendance Trends:

- An observed demographic shift shows more younger families becoming involved in parish events and Mass.