

Saint Jude Pastoral Council Meeting
Wednesday, October 22, 2025
Activity Center - 7:00 PM

Approved Minutes

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

Absent: Andrew Meindl

No Youth Reps were in attendance

Opening Prayer: Julie Barber

Approval of Minutes: It was clarified that the interest stemmed from "witness statements" that were presented at a separate event, not the installation mass. The minutes incorrectly attributed new volunteer interest to Father Weber's mass. It was also noted that minutes referenced Bremen in place of bereavement breakfast, clarifying Bremen as a city in Germany. A change was made in the Bereavement Breakfast committee, Susie C. not Susan R. agreed to serve on the committee.

A motion was made by Greg and seconded by Julie to amend the minutes to reflect this correction. Mickie made a motion to approve the minutes as amended and Susan seconded. Minutes were approved.

Pastor's Report: Fr. Weber updated the council on upcoming parish events.

Jude 20 Talks will take place from 6:30-7:30pm in the parish hall.

- On Sunday, October 26th Ryan Serfas, S.J. will be speaking on hope for migrants
- On Sunday, November 23rd Doug Ulaszek will be speaking on life as a sign of hope.
- St Jude novena will take place every Tuesday through the Feast of St Jude the Apostle, October 28th, 2025. The Novena starts at 5:15pm every Tuesday.
- Anointing of the Sick will also be available Tuesday, October 21st for those in need.

Saint Thérèse Pilgrimage.

- This year marks the 100th anniversary of the canonization of St. Thérèse of Lisieux. In celebration of this anniversary, relics of St Thérèse will be on tour from Rome to 6 locations throughout the United States, including Holy Hill, November 16th. St Jude will be hosting a pilgrimage to venerate the relics. Interested individuals should plan to meet at Holy Hill around 4:15pm for veneration of the relics and to depart after the 6:00pm Evening Prayer. Carpool opportunities will be available.

In preparation for the St Jude pilgrimage to Holy Hill Fr. Weber has created a study group to learn more about Saint Thérèse.

They will be held on Wednesday, November 5th at 7:00pm and Saturday, November 8th at 11:30am in the Activity Center.

A comprehensive list of upcoming retreat opportunities is being compiled for parishioners. Following up on a previous meeting's discussion, an email was sent out requesting information on retreats. The goal is to create a resource of retreat opportunities for the upcoming year that parishioners can attend together.

Current retreats on the list include:

- November 15th: Women of Christ "Anchored in Hope" day of reflection in Brookfield.
- January 23rd-24th: Mother and daughter retreat in Kaukauna for ages 5-8.
- March 6th-7th: Mother and daughter retreat in Kaukauna for ages 9-13.
- March 12th-15th: Women's retreat at the Jesuit Retreat House.
- March 14th: Men of Christ conference at the Miller High Life Theater in Milwaukee.
- April 25th: Day of reflection at the Catholic Ecology Center.
- May 1st-2nd: Boy Scouts' "Walk to Mary Pilgrimage," open to parishioners.

Finance Report: The committee has not had a meeting since the last report. The next meeting is scheduled for the following month, so there are no new updates.

Stewardship Committee: is preparing for a kickoff meeting to restart stewardship efforts and plan for the Centennial. A meeting is scheduled for next Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. with 33-34 invited individuals, including the Finance Committee, school leadership, and other interested parties.

The committee's goals for the meeting are:

- To outline the vision for stewardship and its connection to the upcoming Centennial celebration.
- To identify and recruit individuals for leadership roles within both the Stewardship Commission and the Centennial committee.
- To establish a Centennial executive committee by the end of the year to drive the vision and populate subcommittees.
- To ensure diverse representation from all parish demographics (e.g., school/non-school families, single, older, younger parishioners) in planning efforts.
- Following the kickoff meeting, the committee will send a survey to all participants to gauge their interest in specific areas (e.g., fundraising, event planning, history) and their willingness to take on leadership roles.

Faith Formation: The religious education program has started successfully. A rosary and faith formation session for adults was offered during the religious ed time, which had a good turnout.

The group plans to continue trying different communication methods to encourage parent participation. The semiannual "Rosary and Ice Cream" event was well-attended, with approximately 21-22 kids, primarily from 5th, 6th, and 7th grades. The next one is scheduled for May.

The ministry is actively working on scheduling future events, including:

- A bowling event.
- A snow tubing event, in partnership with St. John Vianney.
- A game night, tentatively planned for January.
- Scheduling open gyms remains difficult, but the idea has not been forgotten.
- A new member, Liesl, will be joining the committee, and she will be notified of the next meeting.

Liturgical Committee: Updates were provided on ushers, the choir, and the church organ.

- A couple of new ushers have recently joined.
- The choir has gained one new member.
- An organ demonstration was recently held for a group of organ builders.
- It was noted that the organ is incomplete, with missing pipes, and has not been 100% finished.
- The estimated cost to complete the organ is approximately \$500,000

A proposed "all at once" plan for sanctuary changes was discussed, with theological justification for flexibility. Mark K. has developed a three-step plan to implement all proposed changes (e.g., moving the baptismal font, piano) at once, tentatively from January to March.

- Month 1: Introduce and educate the parish on the proposed changes and the rationale behind them.
- Month 2: Listen to and gather feedback from parishioners.
- Month 3: Move forward with the changes, assuming no major pushback.

Fr. Weber noted that a review of liturgical instructions (rubrics) from the 1970s through 2012 shows an evolution in language, indicating that multiple sanctuary layouts are justifiable.

- The baldacchino could be placed over either the presider's chair or the tabernacle.
- The latest edition of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) discusses the option of the tabernacle being in the center.

Discussion was had concerning relocating the presider's chair would likely necessitate moving some altar servers to improve access and better distribute personnel within the sanctuary.

- The current plan is to move the presider's chair, while the altar servers and lectors would remain in their current positions.
- However, it was noted that if the presider's chair moves, some altar servers would probably also move to maintain easy access to the presider.
- This change would help to spread people out and more fully occupy the sanctuary space, which is currently concentrated towards the ambo.
- A single, comprehensive change to the sanctuary is preferred over a phased approach to avoid creating a vacant, awkward space. The rationale is that moving an item like the piano and leaving a large vacant spot would appear odd.
- A comprehensive change would make immediate sense to observers, as the new arrangement would visibly fill the newly available space.
- A prolonged, phased change would likely lead to more questions from the congregation about the purpose of the empty space.
- The financial impact of the proposed sanctuary changes is being evaluated, with a focus on the costs associated with the baptismal font and balancing the rear railing.

A question was raised regarding the funding source for these changes.

- The baptismal font was included in the LOA (Letter of Agreement) case statement.
- The cost to move the presider's chair and tabernacle is expected to be minimal, as the pieces can simply be picked up and moved.
- The baptismal font relocation will incur costs for services like panel molding.

A concern was raised about the railing along the back wall, which is currently lower on one side where it was modified to accommodate the tabernacle.

- If the tabernacle is moved to the center, the railing will be uneven.
- The cost to rectify this could be higher than expected, as it may require a mason's assessment.

Human Concerns: detailed upcoming holiday donation drives for various parish-supported organizations. The discussion centered on timing the parish's donation requests for the holiday giving season.

- The Christ Child Society, which the parish is a major contributor to, has requested support for its "Giving Tree" program.
- The Giving Tree will be displayed from November 28th to December 20th.

- Donations support children in six Milwaukee-area shelters and foster homes throughout the entire year, not just as Christmas gifts. This fact will be made more transparent to parishioners.
- A common point of confusion was clarified: gifts should not be wrapped, despite the Christmas theme, which now makes sense given their year-round distribution.

Logistical improvements and expansions for the "Giving Tree" donation program were discussed.

- A new, pre-lit tree has been purchased by Heather to make the display more festive and noticeable, with the hope of increasing donations.
- The Giving Tree will be expanded to include ornaments for underwear donations, supporting both Father Gene's mission and McKenna Brown.
- The parish plans to strategically pace its donation requests.

It was noted that donations of sleeping bags and blankets will be accepted immediately for the MacCanon Brown shelter.

The potential for collaboration with the Girl Scouts for donation drives was proposed. It was clarified that the Halloween drive for Costco is a separate initiative from the holiday Giving Tree.

The November Tosa Food Pantry results were reported as successful, and the food rack installation is imminent.

- The November Tosa Food Pantry raised \$400 and collected 18 bags of food. This result was considered great by the organizers.
- Heather reported that the food rack was scheduled to be installed this week.

Updates were provided on the St. Vincent DePaul mission, MacCanon Brown outreach, and the JOY senior group.

- The St. Vincent DePaul mission is active, having gone on a couple of calls.
- The MacCanon Brown health outreach program is reportedly growing.
- The JOY group for seniors, a collaboration between St. Therese, St. Vincent Pallotti and St. Jude, has been very successful. It attracts 25-30 participants per monthly session. Upcoming sessions will feature a physical therapist discussing balance and a dietician giving a talk over lunch.

Woman of St. Jude: announced its upcoming events and initiatives.

- A book presentation and discussion with Joan Bauer is scheduled for Tuesday, November 11th at 7 p.m.

- The parish gala, with a "supper club" theme, is on Friday, November 14th. There is a strong push for parish-wide attendance, not just school families.
- The candy sale is scheduled to begin by November 16th.
- The Snowball Dance is scheduled for February 7th, which is also National Maquette Day.
- A mother-daughter event is being planned for springtime, but the date and specific activity are not yet determined.
- The group used funds to purchase a gift for the gala auction, which included "Meta Glasses".

The group discussed the logistical challenges of the Funeral Committee.

- The Funeral Committee assists with funeral masses and subsequent luncheons. A primary difficulty is that events are frequently held during the daytime, making it hard to find volunteers who need to have flexible schedules. There was uncertainty about whether funerals are held during the school week. It was concluded that they are not held in the cafeteria when school is in session but may occur during the summer. Saturday funerals are very common

Men of St. Jude: reported a quiet period with few activities.

- They intend to host the casino night again, but no communication have been sent out yet.
- Their most recent activity was sponsoring a Donut Sunday, which was not well-attended but considered important to continue.

School Committee: The committee meetings have not been happening regularly.

The main concern remains parking and student safety. School pickup traffic is a significant safety issue caused by unauthorized parking and early arrivals. The primary problem with designated parking spots is unauthorized use by other people, which forces legitimate users into dangerous situations, such as driving backward through traffic. The presence of walking children exacerbates the danger. Another contributing factor is workers at nearby homes taking up multiple parking spots intended for school pickup. A major cause of congestion is parents arriving for pickup as early as 2:40 PM, well before dismissal, causing traffic to back up and requiring daily intervention for the same group of families.

Donut Sunday: continue to be a success.

The last event was sponsored by Greg and the Boy Scouts. The quantity of donuts ordered was perfect, as they ran out at the very end although it was suggested that the Boy Scouts consumed most of the donuts.

The schedule is as follows:

- November 1: 8th Graders
- December: Human Concerns.
- January 25: Knights of Columbus.
- February 15: [Open]
- March 15: [Open]
- April 19: [Open]

Athletic Association: The new Athletic Association contact is still being finalized. The association has been hosting new half-day volleyball tournaments with six teams, which have been successful and well-received. St. Jude has not hosted volleyball tournaments for many years, so this is a positive new initiative.

Youth liaison committee: plans to meet in November to define its goals and solicit feedback from high schoolers. A primary topic will be to gather ideas from high schoolers on what types of events or engagement they would like to see in youth ministry to prevent the "fall off" after they leave St. Jude. It was also suggested that this youth committee could have a long-standing role in providing consistent feedback for the upcoming Centennial planning.

Discussion: Strategic Planning (Part 2 Parish Space)

The group confirmed alignment on strategic planning priorities for the 100th anniversary, focusing on building needs. There is general agreement on Goal 1: addressing building needs in preparation for a capital campaign.

Key priorities identified include:

- Assessing major systems and identifying urgent needs.
- Refurbishing the church, including the baptismal font.
- The sound system is considered complete.

The group confirmed that a previous goal to upgrade technology for hybrid meetings has been officially abandoned.

The group agreed to postpone further discussion on creating a technology committee until the January meeting.

Decision: Bereavement Breakfast: A subcommittee has been formed to organize the Bereavement Breakfast in November. A new initiative was proposed to send sympathy cards to grieving families three months after a loss. The plan involves sending a sympathy card approximately three months after a person has passed away. The card would include a picture of a lit candle.

Closing Prayer: Julie Barber