

St. Mark Catholic Church

Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes

Date: Monday, August 24, 2026

Location: St. Mark Catholic Church

Meeting Called to Order: 7:01 PM

Meeting Adjourned: 8:06 PM

Next Meeting: Monday, September 28, 2026

SECTION 1 — OPENING PRAYER

The meeting was opened with prayer. Prayer intentions were offered for a parishioner recently diagnosed with a serious illness who is currently undergoing chemotherapy, and for another parishioner who was visiting family out of town and was diagnosed with breast cancer, undergoing a double mastectomy. Additional intentions were offered for all those held in our hearts and by name.

Opening Prayer (led by Father John Putnam):

"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Thank you for the opportunity we have to come together. For the intentions spoken and all those we hold in our hearts — those named here and those in particular need — we ask that you guide this council and our deliberations, that all may be for your greater glory, honor, and the building up of your Kingdom, through Christ our Lord. Amen."

SECTION 2 — ROLL CALL

Members

#	Name	Role / Status
1	John Ferrannini	Chairman — Present
2	Tricia Sisson	Vice Chair — Present
3	Jairo Cadena, Jr.	Secretary — Present
4	Devon Atkins	Present
5	Chad Wilson	Absent – Excused
6	Kelly Fernandez	Present
7	Mike Garcia	Present
8	Chris Bixler	Present
9	Rob Cannon	Absent
10	Nadia Rahaim	Present
11	Mary Jane Zimmerman	New Member — Present
12	Angelo Sedacca	New Member — Present
13	David Thomson	New Member — Present
14	Tiffany Duda	New Member — Present
15	Andrew Jackson	New Member — Present
16	Scott Bruno	Present
17	Father John Putnam	Pastor — Present

Members Resigned (Noted for the Record)

Name	Status / Notes
Bill Mooney	Resigned — Accepted over the summer due to health. His service and contributions to the council are gratefully acknowledged.
Chris Fernandez	Resigned — High travel demands of his professional obligations made consistent attendance unfeasible.

A quorum was confirmed.

SECTION 3 — APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: To accept the meeting minutes from the previous meeting.

SECOND: Voice received second.

VOTE: All in favor. Motion carried.

SECTION 4 — BUSINESS ITEMS (PRE-REPORTS)

4A. Temporary Expansion of Council Membership

Chairman Ferrannini reported that, following a discussion with Father Putnam, a proposal was made to temporarily expand the Pastoral Council membership from 13 to 15-16 members for one term year. The rationale for this expansion is as follows: two members — Chairman Ferrannini and Chad — are automatically terming out at the end of the current year upon completion of their six-year terms, and several other members' first terms also expire this year. The temporary expansion will allow for smoother succession and backfilling of vacant seats.

MOTION: To temporarily expand the Pastoral Council membership for one year.

SECOND: Voice received second.

VOTE: All in favor. Motion carried.

4B. Father's Report — Moved to End of Agenda

It was proposed that Father's Report be moved to the end of the agenda for the remainder of the term year.

MOTION: To move Father's Report to the end of the agenda for the remainder of the term year.

SECOND: Voice received second.

VOTE: All in favor. Motion carried.

SECTION 5 — INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS

The Chair welcomed five new members and invited each to introduce themselves to the council.

Angelo Sedacca

Mr. Sedacca has been a parish member for approximately 14 months, having relocated from New York in July of last year. He is a retired Police Sergeant from the NYPD, currently working in armed security. He is active in the parish as a Lector and Eucharistic Minister, and was recently appointed as an Advocate for the Marriage Tribunal. He is married with four sons.

Mary Jane Zimmerman

Mrs. Zimmerman has been a member of St. Mark Parish for approximately 18 years. She serves as President of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Knights of Columbus, and is a member of the Mary's Women of Joy group. She participates broadly in parish life and expressed her deep love for the parish community. She is married and participates whenever called upon.

Tiffany Duda

Mrs. Duda has been a parish member for nearly four years, having followed her daughter and son-in-law to the area in anticipation of the birth of a grandchild — a third grandchild is expected imminently. She volunteers in many capacities, including the Ladies Auxiliary of the Knights of Columbus, weekly Adoration, the Seven Sisters Apostolate, Homebound Eucharistic Ministry, small group leadership, and kitchen support at parish events.

David Thomson

Mr. Thomson has attended St. Mark for approximately three years and came into full communion with the Catholic Church two years ago, having been a lifelong Presbyterian from Scotland. Since his reception into the Church, his wife, daughter, grandchildren, and son-in-law — currently in OCIA —

have also joined or are joining. He teaches on the OCIA team, participates in men's groups, and is a Benedictine Oblate at Belmont Abbey.

Andrew Jackson

Mr. Jackson has been a parishioner at St. Mark for over 20 years, having come into the Church through RCIA from an Anglican/Episcopal background. He has been involved in marriage ministry and CCD over the years. He is retiring on September 30th and looks forward to increasing his parish involvement. He noted it has been a joy to watch the parish grow and flourish over two decades.

The Chairman thanked all new members for their willingness to serve, noted that the commitment is three years, and reminded them that as council members they will become well-known to the parishioners.

SECTION 6 — REPORTS OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

6A. Chairman's Vision for the Year — John Ferrannini

The Chairman presented his vision for the current council term, noting that some initiatives are long-term in nature and may be realized after his term concludes.

Leadership Succession: Per tradition and discussion with Father Putnam, Tricia will succeed Chairman Ferrannini for the remainder of her term when his term concludes. She will then select her own Vice Chair at that time.

Parish Constitution: A priority goal for this term is to complete, finalize, and officially sign off on the Parish Constitution. The document should be migrated to Microsoft Teams to allow collaborative editing and version control, rather than circulating a Word document among members.

Parishioner Forum / "Meet the Council": A semi-annual forum or meet-and-greet is proposed, wherein parishioners may bring questions and concerns directly to council members. Email correspondence can sometimes feel ignored; a face-to-face format addresses this concern. Father Putnam was consulted and is supportive of the initiative.

Cross on Bell Tower / Church Proper: The Chairman expressed a desire to place a cross atop the bell tower or the church proper. This initiative will be deferred until after the new roof is completed, so as to avoid structural and cost conflicts.

Christmas Tree Lighting / Exterior Decorating: The Chairman has spearheaded the exterior Christmas decorating for many years and is seeking a successor to take over this tradition. The role encompasses coordinating all exterior decorations, including the nativity, lighting around the four-*arborvitae* surrounding the statue of the Blessed Mother, and overall exterior décor. The Knights of Columbus assist with moving and setup; the sisters and seminarians handle the church interior.

Italian American Men's Club / Parish Festival: Father Putnam has agreed to support the formation of an Italian American Men's Club at the parish. Discussion also touched on the possibility of a broader Italian festival or multicultural festival. Timing will need to coordinate with the parish calendar and will be deferred until after planned construction in the rear of the property is complete.

6B. Membership Updates — John Ferrannini

Chris Fernandez Resignation: Mr. Chris Fernandez informed Father Putnam and the Chairman that his professional obligations require extensive travel, resulting in multiple missed meetings. As the parish Constitution contains no provision for proxy membership — and adding such a provision would open the council to potential abuse — it was agreed that Mr. Fernandez would resign from the council. Kelly Fernandez, who had been serving in a proxy capacity, will assume Mr. Fernandez's seat as a full voting council member for the remainder of his term. It is noted for the record that Mr. Chris Fernandez retains a seat on the Finance Council, which, per the Constitution, grants a non-voting council seat. His engagement with the parish continues in that capacity.

Bill Mooney Resignation: The council formally acknowledged Mr. Mooney's resignation, accepted over the summer due to health concerns. Mr. Mooney provided years of dedicated service and valued counsel to the Chairman. He will be missed, and the council extends its gratitude for his contributions.

Committee Assignments: New council members were invited to review available committee assignments and select one. Each council member serves as the council's delegate to one parish committee, attending meetings, relying on the council's concerns, and reporting back to the full council. New members were asked to review the list and return their selection by the next meeting. The Chairman noted that, as outgoing Chairman, he does not take a committee assignment but retains the ability to attend any committee meeting as needed.

6C. Buildings and Grounds — Scott Bruno

East Side Foundation: Investigation into why the east side of the building is sinking is ongoing. Underground drainage lines from the roof to the pond — approximately 200 yards toward the school — were being video-scoped on the day of the meeting. Results were pending at the time of the report.

Roof: Matt Greco from the Diocese inspected the roof approximately two to three weeks prior to the meeting and spent several hours on-site. He indicated he would return within two weeks; Scott Bruno will follow up to confirm status.

Insurance Claim: The insurance claim related to the roof has been denied three times. The Diocese's referral of this insurer to the parish has been noted with concern.

Roof Fundraising: A bulletin announcement was made regarding donations for the roof. Prior to the bulletin notice, an online campaign had been running, which had raised approximately \$8,000–\$9,000. Discussion arose regarding whether a dedicated iGiveCatholic campaign for the roof would be beneficial. It was noted that a Diocesan-wide capital campaign had prompted St. Mark to launch its own campaign first; care should be taken not to create conflicts between campaigns. Designated giving — wherein donors restrict funds to a specific purpose — was confirmed as a mechanism that protects those contributions from being directed elsewhere.

Holy Water Font: The main holy water font near the back entrance is dripping. The spigot gasket may need replacement.

Action: *Scott Bruno to investigate and address the dripping holy water font.*

Front Pew Transom / Hymnal: A member noted that the wood transom above the first pew — where hymnals are kept — is coming loose.

Action: *Scott Bruno to inspect and repair the front pew transom.*

Parking Lot — Preschool Area: A new curb was noted near the preschool parking area. The council briefly discussed whether parking configuration in that area could be improved. It was confirmed this is a known area of concern, particularly during high-traffic times.

6E. School Report

School is in its second full week. New field improvements were completed over the summer; finishing touches are ongoing. Several new teachers joined the faculty this year. Current enrollment is between 700-800 students. The school's technical capacity is approximately 700; siblings of enrolled Catholic

families are accommodated even when individual class sizes are slightly elevated. Space for further physical expansion is limited. The parish subsidy to the school exceeds \$500,000 annually. Catholic school enrollment privilege is tied to the covenant commitment of practicing Catholic family life.

SECTION 7 — OLD BUSINESS

Parish Constitution: This remains the primary outstanding item carried forward from prior terms. The Chairman reiterated the goal of completing and finalizing the Constitution before the end of this term and migrating the document to Microsoft Teams for collaborative editing and version control.

Engraved Bricks / Brick Subscription Program: Brief discussion was held regarding a previously explored brick subscription fundraiser. Consensus was reached that this initiative can be revisited and revived at an appropriate time.

Action: *Brick subscription program to be re-explored by the council.*

SECTION 8 — NEW BUSINESS

8A. SeptemberFest

SeptemberFest is approximately one month away. The Pastoral Council traditionally staffs the ticket booth. Given the larger council size and the anticipation from parish staff of a well-attended event, it was proposed to increase council staffing from two time slots to three. A sign-up sheet will be expanded to include a third slot. The 6:00 PM hour is currently full; the 7:00–8:00 PM hour has one opening. The sign-up will be resent to all members with the expanded options.

It was noted that SeptemberFest is a community-building event, not a fundraiser; revenue from beer and wine sales is intended to cover costs only. The Knights of St. Joseph will assist in escorting ticket money to the safe during the event, as multiple cash drops occur throughout the festival.

8B. Christmas Tree Lighting / Exterior Decorations

Discussion was held regarding upcoming holiday exterior decorating needs. The Chairman is seeking a volunteer to take over leadership of this event going forward. Areas of focus for this year include:

- Nativity lighting

- String lights around the four-arborescences surrounding the statue of the Blessed Mother
- Possible artificial tree (previously discussed; final decision pending follow-up with Bill Mooney's successor)

The Knights of Columbus assist with moving and heavy lifting. The Pastoral Council leads the overall exterior decorating effort. Interested members were encouraged to volunteer for the leadership role.

8C. Council Secretary — Vacancy

Jairo is stepping down from the Secretary role due to other volunteer obligations. A new Secretary is needed by the next meeting on September 28, 2026. The Secretary's responsibilities include:

- Recording the meeting (audio)
- Running the transcript through AI transcription to generate draft minutes
- Formatting and distributing minutes on the established cadence (agenda sent 8 days prior — i.e., the 3rd Sunday of the month — to all members)
- Maintaining the consistency and integrity of the minutes format

Jairo offered to continue in the role until a replacement is identified and will provide full onboarding to the incoming Secretary.

8D. Adoration Hour — Council Assignments

The council holds a standing Saturday Adoration hour from 5:00–6:00 PM. Two council members are assigned to each hour. If one member cannot attend, they are to contact their partner to ensure coverage. The Secretary — current or incoming — will assign all council members, including new members, to specific hours and communicate those assignments accordingly.

SECTION 9 — EYES AND EARS (PARISHIONER FEEDBACK)

Left Transept — Storage Area: A council member noted that the area behind the left transept wall — the alcove near the side entrance — is cluttered and disorganized, and represents a visible concern for parishioners who sit in that section. The bar-style doors draw attention to the area.

Action: *Explore solutions such as a curtain or reorganization of stored items to improve the appearance of the left transept alcove.*

Holy Water Font: The dripping font near the main entrance was reiterated from the Buildings and Grounds report. This item should be addressed promptly.

SECTION 10 — PASTOR'S REPORT — FATHER JOHN PUTNAM

Refocusing the Pastoral Council's Role: Father Putnam offered an important reflection on the purpose and function of the Pastoral Council. Per Diocesan guidelines, the primary role of the council is to advise the pastor on matters affecting the life of the parish — not to function as a board of directors, hear routine reports, or manage operations. Father Putnam expressed his intention to shift the meeting structure going forward so that the council's time is focused on substantive discussion, discernment, and pastoral input.

He referenced a parish survey conducted in partnership with Communio, which identified four priority areas for the parish to evaluate and strengthen:

1. Support for Fathers
2. Support for Young Adults
3. Evangelization
4. Family Ministry and Marriage Ministry

The council is encouraged to reflect on what the parish is doing well in each area, what may be missing, and whether any existing programs or resources should be reallocated. The agenda for future meetings will be shaped around these pastoral priorities. The Chairman and Secretary noted that an advance agenda, distributed eight days before each meeting, will help members arrive prepared to discuss substantive topics.

Ministry Fair: The recent Ministry Fair was very successful, with strong parishioner turnout.

Congress: The Eucharistic Congress is approaching in the coming weeks. Saturday parish activities other than the Congress will be suspended that day. All council members are encouraged to attend.

Finance Council Budget Report: The Finance Council will be presenting the parish budget at the next meeting.

Italian Festival: Father Putnam expressed openness to an Italian festival in lieu of the multicultural dinner, subject to calendar coordination and timing relative to planned construction.

Rectory: Work on the rectory is expected to be completed in November. Once complete, the current rectory will be assessed and improvements planned for a potential sale.

Faith Formation Director: Rebecca Spurgeon has been named the new Director of Faith Formation. She is off to a strong start; staff morale and energy are high. A volunteer training session was underway during tonight's meeting with 57 participants. Additional volunteers are still welcome.

Religious Sisters:

- Sister Mary Agnes is now overseeing the sisters' vocations.
- Sister Mary Philomena is now in charge of the sacristy.
- Sister Mary Jacinta is now full-time in the parish office, assisting with baptism planning and liturgical scheduling, and is spending significant time on the phone helping parishioners.

Parishioners are encouraged to stop by and say hello.

Catholic School Enrollment and Stewardship Covenant: Father Putnam addressed an ongoing challenge: verifying that families receiving the Catholic tuition rate are actively practicing their faith. The current mechanism — the parish envelope system — is imperfect but serves as the only documented record of Mass attendance for those who give online. A number of families have been observed dropping envelopes and leaving before Mass ends, or having a neighbor drop envelope on behalf of multiple households. This constitutes a breach of the covenant agreement. Father Putnam sent an email to all school families today addressing this behavior. Moving forward, ushers will be trained to identify and report this, and families found in violation will lose their Catholic tuition rate. The school's office has been coordinated accordingly. The intent is not punitive but to ensure fairness to the parish and the integrity of the stewardship covenant.

Stewardship Parish Model: Father Putnam recalled that approximately eight to nine years ago, under Father Carter, the parish made a strong effort to operate as a stewardship parish — educating parishioners on tithing and working to eliminate fundraising and second collections outside of Diocesan mandates. This message has not been reinforced in several years and is due to be revisited from the pulpit. The goal is for proper offertory giving to fund all parish needs, thereby eliminating the need for constant fundraising events.

Organ: Work continues toward restoring or replacing the organ. Father Martinez is coordinating with Boudreaux — organ specialists — to assess the instrument, including pressure diagnostics. Separately, the parish was given a Casavant organ from a church that closed in Baltimore; this

instrument was received at no cost, though transport costs were covered. Casavant is noted to be among the premier organ builders in the Western Hemisphere.

New Residents at the Rectory:

- Father Martinez is living at the rectory and is running a new parish running club.
- Seminarian Jeremy Smith is also in residence; he is teaching sophomore religion and photography at Cristo Rey this year.
- Father Huber has recovered from a motorcycle accident and is doing well.

Charitable Giving Committee: Discussion touched on how the parish distributes charitable funds. The committee has a designated budget and evaluates submissions for allocation. Events such as the meal-packing initiative — which cost approximately \$20,000, with half from charitable funds and half raised — can be submitted for committee consideration. The success of the most recent meal-packing event, including the broad family participation it generated, was highlighted.

Finance and Human Resources: A question was raised about whether Finance and Human Resources should be standing agenda items. Father Putnam clarified that Finance Council reports will be included in the standard rotation, and that HR matters affecting the parish will be brought to the pastor directly and to the council if they impact the broader parish community.

Confidentiality: Father Putnam and the Chairman noted that certain discussions are confidential and will be explicitly identified as such during meetings. Items so identified are not included in the minutes. Members are encouraged to ask if they are ever unsure whether a topic is appropriate to share externally.

Fireside Chat: Father Putnam indicated openness to a casual fireside-style gathering for parishioners, noting that the staff has been developing a list of discussion topics that could anchor such an event.

Kneelers: A member inquired about kneeler updates, which had been discussed previously. Father Putnam noted these are still on the list but acknowledged that other pending matters are currently taking priority.

SECTION 11 — ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Next Meeting:** Monday, September 28, 2026 — 4th Monday of the month, per standing schedule.
- All members are reminded to notify the Secretary in advance if they are unable to attend a meeting.
- A card from the council will be sent to Chad on behalf of the full council, to support him and his family during this difficult time. The Secretary will coordinate.
- New members will be assigned their Adoration hour slots by the Secretary and notified accordingly.
- Members interested in serving as the new council Secretary should contact Chairman Ferrannini or Jairo prior to the September meeting.

SECTION 12 — CLOSING PRAYER

"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Lord Jesus, thank you for giving us the opportunity to convene and discuss matters of great importance — of how we can serve you and serve each other better. Please bless our endeavors, have mercy on us for our sins, and guide us toward your Kingdom. Amen."

SECTION 13 — ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jairo Cadena, Jr.

Secretary, St. Mark Catholic Church Pastoral Council

St. Mark Catholic Church | Pastoral Council | August 24, 2026