



Saint Gabriel

CATHOLIC PARISH

Meeting of Human Concerns Commission September 2, 2025

Present at meeting: Donna Rider (chair), Gerry Wolf, Connie Helm, Linda Helvick, Ron Weis, Jim Robertson, Sarah Walters

The meeting commenced at 7:00 pm with prayer.

The minutes of the May 6, 2025 meeting were read and approved.

Parish Council Report - Jim Robertson shared that the August Parish Council meeting was not held.

Old business:

a) Gerry Wolf reported on the Rice Bowl Collection:

\$3,928.16 was the total from the Rice Bowl Collection. The donations were distributed as follows:

- Karl's place received \$982.04 (25%)
- Catholic relief services received \$2,346.10 from St. Gabriel and \$600.02 from checks made directly from parishioners to Catholic Relief Services (75%)

b) Donna Rider led the discussion on the COGS Winter Clothing Drive and Giving Tree:

- It has been proposed to have the clothing drive October 2025 through March 2026.
- Many of the giving tree tags last year were clothing items and Congregation of the Great Spirit (COGS) asked for additional Mens clothing last year after the giving tree donations were complete.



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- Donna asked the group if this is too much overlap and do we continue with both the giving tree and the clothing drive at the same time?
 - Connie clarified that the winter clothing drive was intended to focus on coats and snow pants and the giving tree tags will be based on what Congregation of the Great Spirit needs for clothing at the time.
- Donna asked about thoughts on a food drive for Congregation of the Great Spirit. Gerry stated that there was a food drive coordinated with the school at the same time as the giving tree last year.
- Connie added that last year there were a lot of requests for the parishioners last year in November and early December. Connie requests that we should look at the timing of events to avoid overlapping requests to make sure each collection will be successful. The teachers are back to school and currently working on their plans for the year. Connie will be working with the teachers on proposed timing for charity drives by the October 7, 2025 meeting.
- Gerry stated we should keep in mind we want to do another reverse food collection for the local food pantry and the timing should not conflict with this collection.
- Donna added that the Congregation of the Great Spirit does get food from Feeding America, but they don't know what they will get month to month. They have been running low lately on shelf stable milk (does not need refrigeration). Donna will contact the Congregation of the Great Spirit to see what they might be running short on.

Respect Life: Donna Rider reported on the following items:

- a) Christmas in July was very successful. In the past, Congregation of the Great Spirit had to limit the # of backpacks provided per family. With this drive, everyone was able to get a backpack.



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- b) October Respect Life Month: Donna is planning weekly bulletin entries that she will send to Nikki and announcements for Father Tim that she will send to Jill. Last year an insert for the bulletin was purchased, Donna may still purchase this if it is not too late.
- c) Diaper drive will be part of respect life. Donna will be contacting Seed of Hope to find out what diaper sizes are needed. Donna to coordinate the timing of the announcement and the collection dates with Connie.

Sarah Walters reported on the Health Ministry/Blood Drive:

- There was a blood drive in June, the goal of 25 was not quite met, however, we were not far from the goal with 21 donations.
- The blood drive was able to obtain 10 double red cell donations.
 - Double red cell donation is a blood donation process that allows donors to give two units of red blood cells in one session. This method is efficient and beneficial for patients needing red blood cells, such as those undergoing surgery or treatment for certain medical conditions.
- Next blood drive: Friday, October 3, 2025.
- Sarah is working on blood drive dates for 2026.

Connie Helm provided an update on Elizabeth Ministry.

- New rosebuds have been ordered. The vase of rosebuds shows different color rosebuds:
 - Pink Rosebud** ~ honors pregnancy and unborn babies
 - Red Rosebud** ~ celebrates births and adoptions
 - White Rosebud** ~ grieves with families suffering a miscarriage, abortion, stillbirth, infant or child death
 - Yellow Rosebud** ~ remembers those waiting to conceive or adopt
- Our parish was never officially signed on as part of the Elizabeth Ministry, Sarah Kohls and Kathy Mans are working on getting the parish officially signed up. Current focus is on the prayer and intention part of the ministry at this time. The frame for the photos of



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the babies that have been recently baptized has been hung up again, this will be continuously updated.

- Learn more about this ministry here:

<https://www.stgabrielhubertus.org/elizabethministry>

Ron Weis reported on the St. Gabriel & St. Boniface Food pantry

- The shelves are more empty and the donations have been less over the summer months. Nikki put an article in the bulletin with food pantry requests, the donations increased the last couple weeks.
- With school starting, it is anticipated there will be several food drives through schools and organizations filling the shelves again.
- The mail carriers used to do a food drive and deliver to the St. Gabriel & St. Boniface food pantry, however, that collection no longer occurs.
- Ron proposes the Thanksgiving drive should span multiple weekends to include those that are not at mass on Thanksgiving. The group discussed possibly either the weekend before or the weekend after Thanksgiving.
- Connie commented that at previous schools her family has attended there was a Thanksgiving meal collection where each class does a different item such as gravy, mashed potatoes, stuffing, etc.
 - Linda commented that this was done several years ago through religious education where the classes brought in the items and the high school students put baskets together. This was around 10-15 years ago.
- If we would want to assemble this type of basket for the St. Gabriel & St. Boniface food pantry, Pizza with a Purpose could possibly help with assembly of the baskets. Another idea would be a special Easter meal basket. Connie will discuss this idea further with the leadership team. Ron stated based on the recent number of St. Gabriel & St. Boniface food pantry visitors, the number of baskets the food pantry could distribute would be approximately 40-60 baskets.



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St. Ben's - Mike Mesenbourg was at St Ben's and unable to attend the meeting. Donna reported that Mike has expressed that sign ups for St. Ben's are going well.

Linda Helvick reported on the Yarn Ministry. The group will meet in the evening on September 9, 2025. This is the first meeting since May 13, 2025. Linda expects to collect several items the yarn ministry members have been working on throughout the summer. Linda will coordinate with Gerry for delivery of items to the Congregation of the Great Spirit.

New business:

- Donna announced she is stepping down as the Human Concerns Chairperson and would like to continue on the committee to help with events.
 - Connie expressed a heartfelt thank-you to Donna for the energy and passion she has brought to Human Concerns.
 - Gerry has stepped forward to take on the Chairperson role for the next year.

Connie Helm reported on the St. Gabriel Disaster Relief Fund: there has been information in the bulletin the past couple weeks. More information coming on this initiative.

- Donna asked if this intended to be an ongoing fund or if it is specifically to address the recent flooding? St. Gabriel Disaster Relief Fund as proposed is to address the August 2025 flooding only.
- This initiative is looking for participation in the following ways: donation of funds, donation of skills including helping others with care and requests for those in need of assistance to call the parish office.



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Gerry asked if there are funds in the church budget for the Human Concerns Committee. Connie reported there is a small stipend. She requested if there are items the committee needs to carry out the mission, please bring these items forward for consideration.

The meeting concluded at 8:10 pm with prayer.

The next meeting will be via zoom on October 7, 2025 at 7:00pm.
Respectfully submitted by Linda Helvick.