



Saint Gabriel

CATHOLIC PARISH

Meeting of Human Concerns Commission March 3, 2026

Present at the meeting: Gerry Wolf (Chair), Donna Rider (Vice Chair), Ron Weis, Tom Petrilli, Sarah Kohls, Kathy Mans, Mary Gilmeister, Linda Helvick and Jim Robertson.

The meeting commenced at 7:10 pm with Gerry Wolf leading us in prayer.

The minutes of the February 3, 2026 meeting were approved as sent via email prior to the meeting.

Jim Robertson stated there are no new updates from the Parish Council.

Old business:

Gerry Wolf said he will be attending the Feed My Starving Children food packing event at Brookfield Lutheran Church on April 23 from 6:30-8:30 pm. Barth Wolf will also attend and provide an overview of this ministry that he is very involved with. Other Commission members are encouraged to attend if interested in learning more about this.

The Human Concerns Commission will host Fellowship Sunday on April 19, each ministry should prepare a display.

Gerry Wolf reached out to Terry Balash from Three Holy Women parish (<https://www.threeholyywomenparish.org/>) on the east side of Milwaukee to learn about their homebound ministry. It started by taking communion to the homebound, however, after COVID it evolved to a visitation ministry providing communion if requested. The ministry has 20-25 volunteers that visit the homebound 2 times a month per volunteer. Terry Balash



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coordinates dates and times with the homebound and the volunteers. Once a year she provides an in-service to remind volunteers how to keep safe boundaries, including not participating in health decisions or family disputes.

Next step: Gerry Wolf to talk to Father Tim to see if help from the human concerns ministry in making visits or phone calls would help with the approximately 60 phone calls Father Tim makes a month.

- Mary Gilmeister: Volunteers would have the responsibility to report any abuse or neglect they may see. They would need to be trained and know what to look for. Mary Gilmeister expressed concerns regarding going into parishioners' homes. Tom Petrilli added that visits made through St. Vincent dePaul include 2 people when making home visits.
- Tom Petrilli is interested in whether there is an overlap with the home visits and St. Vincent De Paul ministry at their parish. Either from ministries sharing information or parishioners who participate in both ministries.
- Gerry Wolf will follow up with Terry Balash based on the questions and comments above.

Additional topic: rides to church for homebound parishioners

- Mary Gilmeister shared that her mom lives at the Gables and cannot drive. She has been transporting her mom and others that live at the Gables to church services. Can we offer help to parishioners that would want to attend church, but are not able to drive?
- Gerry Wolf stated we would need to consult the Archdiocese on insurance liabilities if we had volunteers driving on behalf of the parish.
- Tom Petrilli shared that with the work he does with St Vincent De Paul, they are not allowed to provide transportation to clients.



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- Donna Rider suggested possibly there is a way to connect parishioners who live near each other instead of parishioners driving on behalf of the church

Gerry Wolf asked the group if they would like to meet in person for a portion of Human Concerns Meetings throughout the year. We meet 9 times a year, it was proposed to meet 3 times a year in person. The group suggested January and February should remain via zoom. It was proposed to start the meeting at 6 or 6:30 pm.

- For the April meeting we will meet virtually and look ahead to the 2026 fall and 2027 spring calendar and select which months we plan to meet in person and discuss whether to change the meeting start time.

Last month under new business, Gerry Wolf raised the idea of sponsoring speakers. Discussion was opened to hear possible topics from speakers as well as ideas on when/how to host speakers and how to get people to attend.

- Ron Weis heard a recent talk from Milwaukee Guild - Catholic Medical Association. According to their website (<https://mgcma.org/>) recent talks include:
 - "Dying Well: The Catholic Art of Spiritual and Sacramental Care," to deepen your understanding of the Church's timeless teachings on preparing for death.
 - Understanding Physical and Medical Disabilities in Light of a Christian Anthropology...God Doesn't Make Mistakes. Made in the image and likeness of God. A profound phrase which invites us to see the depth and expansiveness of our Loving Creator in the totality of humanity including persons with disabilities and those living on the margins.



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- Mary Gilmeister suggested to partner with the senior group (HAWKS) and include elder related topics such as: dementia, elder exploitation, and romance scams
- Sarah Kohls suggested topics for teens, young adults, and their parents coordinating a speaker to come during a christian formation group meeting. Gerry Wolf suggested a speaker addressing the mental health of young people.
- Donna Rider suggested that attendance may increase if we advertise speakers with other parishes.
- Jim Robertson stated the Archdiocese of Milwaukee may have a list of speakers who are already approved. It was discussed that speakers for parish missions, retreats, and evenings of reflection need to be approved by the Archdiocese.
- Mary Gilmeister suggested we should have goals established before selecting speakers. What type of topics are we advocating and why are the topics important to our parish and do they connect to the mission of the human concerns commission?
- Gerry Wolf summarized the discussion: It sounds like as a commission we are open to bringing in speakers and partnering with staff and other groups. Gerry Wolf will contact staff members and other parish groups for additional discussion.

Donna Rider is continuing to include Respect Life prayers periodically in bulletins. After Easter, there will be information in the bulletin on the Baby Bottle Boomerang collection. It will start three to four weeks before Mother's Day and it will end on Mother's Day.

- In 2023 and 2024 the collection raised approximately \$5,400
- In 2025, there was not as much time to advertise and raised approximately \$2,000
- The money goes to Seed of Hope, pro-life crisis pregnancy center in Washington County.



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- It was requested to ensure the advertising includes the services Seed of Hope offers and how the money donated to Seed of Hope will be used.

Gerry Wolf reminded the group that the next blood drive is March 21, 2026 which is a Saturday and may allow for more people to participate.

Sarah Kohls and Kathy Mans reported on the Elizabeth Ministry. June marks one year since they re-started efforts for the Elizabeth Ministry. In June, cards will be taken off the rosebuds to re-use the roses and the cards will be kept for continued prayers.

- Tom Petrilli shared that he personally added a rosebud and card and appreciates the prayer for his intention. He was wondering if there should be a donation box with the rosebuds.

Pictures are being taken of the Baptismal Families. The families are happy to have the pictures displayed in the gathering space. Families now have the option to sign a media release allowing the pictures to be published in the bulletin.

Sarah Kohls and Kathy Mans have the following ideas for additional actions for the Elizabeth Ministry:

- Add a prayer book to the baptismal bag. Gerry Wolf stated Joan Weis in the parish office is the correct contact for the baptismal bags.
- Ensure parents are aware of additional sacraments and encourage prayer.
- Providing an appropriate rosary based on the age of the child.
- Donna Rider suggested coordinating with christian formation teams to avoid duplicating items that are already part of christian formation classes.



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Tom Petrilli reported that he followed up with Kathy Weis on her interest in St Vincent DePaul. He invited her to an upcoming meeting in March. Tom Petrilli stated that the collection at Holy Thursday mass will go to St Vincent DePaul.

Ron Weis reported on the St. Boniface/St. Gabriel Food Pantry. There is a lenten drive this weekend, he is hoping for a good turnout of food donations. There is a list of 10-12 items the pantry was in most need of in last week's bulletin insert. Ron Weis and Tom Petrilli will be picking up food donations on Tuesdays. Mary Gilmeister has boxes in her office; she offered to move some of the food to her office noting the basket was full again on March 3rd. Mary Gilmeister and Ron Weis to follow up on boxes in the gathering space for the donations.

Gerry Wolf shared that there are no updates from St. Ben's.

Linda Helvick provided an update from the Yarn Ministry; the group continues to meet monthly. Three full bags from the Yarn Ministry were taken to the Congregation of the Great Spirit. Gerry Wolf shared that the parish is very grateful for the donations.

Gerry Wolf to discuss with the Congregation of the Great Spirit staff members if they wish to receive the last yarn ministry donation for this winter in March or April and resume receiving donations in September or October as we have done in years past.

Gerry Wolf shared that he is planning to visit Congregation of the Great Spirit once a month for Sunday mass. The dates he is planning to visit are: March 22, April 26, and May 24. He will be adding these dates to the bulletin and organizing a carpool of those interested in attending.



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Donna Rider shared that the 8th grade class at St Gabriel is doing an all school food drive for Congregation of the Great Spirit during Lent. Any items that are donated that do not meet the Congregation of the Great Spirit criteria will be donated to the St. Boniface/St. Gabriel Food Pantry.

Gerry Wolf will send the Human Concerns Commission contact information with the March meeting minutes.

Gerry Wolf invited Human Concerns members to share prayers to be used for future opening and closing prayers at our meetings. This can be done in advance or at the start of any meeting.

The meeting closed with prayer at 8:10 pm
Next meeting via zoom: April 7, 2026 at 7:00 pm

Respectfully submitted by Linda Helvick