

Holy Family Parish Council Minutes

September 23, 2025

The meeting was called to order by President Tom Gregg. Father Beckman led the opening prayer.

Roll Call:

Present: Fr. Beckman, Amy Merschman, Lorenzo Sanchez, MaryJo Mertens, Thomas Older, Floyd Krogmeier, Diane Powers, Kelly Giess, and Karen Robbins

Excused: Alycia Helling and Megan Rempe

A motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting was made by MaryJo Mertens and seconded by Karen Robbins. Motion carried.

The agenda was approved as written.

Pastoral Comments

Father Beckman invited the parish council to share reflections on Chapter 1 of *Becoming the Good News* by Michael J. Sanem. The diocese provided these books for reading, reflection, and discussion. Council members engaged in a meaningful discussion.

The Key Points made from Chapter 1:

- We are entering “a new moment” in evangelization. Faith practice and attendance are declining in many places.
- Evangelization involves more than shifting programs; it requires transforming parish culture.
- Evangelization should be integrated into all aspects of parish life—every contact is an opportunity to share the Gospel.
- There is a rising disconnect from organized religion, and many are questioning their faith.
- Side note: Father Beckman encouraged council members to “keep the faith” and noted a spiritual awakening among young people.

Father Beckman asked members to continue reading the book and to be prepared to discuss Chapter 2 at the next meeting. He encouraged the council to reflect on ways to foster greater fellowship in the parish.

He also reported that contractors are preparing estimates for remaining projects at Sacred Heart Church.

Father shared that the first draft of the quit claim deed for the convent building has been applied for and received. He informed the council of an informational meeting with the Board of Directors for the new shelter, and the Fort Madison Police Chief. This meeting

will be held on Thursday, October 23, at 6:00 p.m. in McAleer Hall. Father informed the council there will be two forums for citizens to attend. Along with the forum at McAleer Hall, one will also be held at the Fort Madison Public Library. The representatives will provide information and answer neighborhood questions and concerns.

* The city would not allow to split the parcel, therefore the homeless shelter will retain ownership of the garage. However, the parish will retain use of the garage indefinitely. The Fort Madison Shelter will acquire the convent and the west parking lot (the lot between the convent and the white house to the west).

Commission Reports

- Social Action: MaryJo Mertens is eager to begin meeting with parishioners and sharing information about volunteer opportunities. She emphasized improving communication so parishioners are aware of ways to serve, including the End of the Month Meals program.
- Faith Formation: Report submitted.
- Youth Ministry: Report submitted.
- Liturgy: Diane Powers, the new liaison, reported a continued need for Hospitality volunteers. She noted that Carleen Mayer is training a new cantor and planning music for Christmas Masses.
- Building and Grounds: No report.
- Stewardship: No report.
- Finance: Father Beckman shared the finance report and reminded council members that Diocesan Appeal envelopes should have been received by parishioners.

New Business:

Reminder: When a committee is in charge of Donut Sunday, they must call ahead to the Hy-Vee Bakery, as the monthly order is not a standing order. Orders should be placed no later than the Tuesday before Donut Sunday.

The meeting was adjourned with a prayer led by Father Beckman.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, October 28, at 5:00 p.m. in McAleer Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Merschman, Secretary

*Updated clarification on what Father Beckman reported concerning the Ss. Mary and Joseph Convent garage.