

March 2026 Pastoral Council Summary

Financial Report: Father John said that the Capital Campaign for the K-6 school building has already begun in a quiet way. A contract was signed in December with Petrus Development which helps Catholic churches and organizations accomplish financial visions. It did a feasibility study which concluded St. Joseph has the potential to raise \$15-17 million for the project. The campaign starts silently by approaching the donors expected to commit the largest amounts. That should take a few months. When those donations are solidified, a public campaign would begin with a number of receptions/gatherings where the project would be fully conceptualized in the effort to raise the balance. After that happens, the church would go to the diocese for final approval. Groundbreaking would presumably begin not long afterward. It was later noted that the Stewardship Commission's focus during its annual Stewardship Month in October that the emphasis would be on the Capital Campaign.

Parish Life Commission Meeting: The Lenten dinners were discussed. There were to be three of them; February 25, March 4 and March 18. The first was a gumbo meal for the benefit of the Missions Committee/Bethlehem House. The second was to serve smoked meats with the admissions going to the Conway Ministry Center. The last was to be a Mexican feast prepared by the Hispanic Commission aimed at helping Alzheimer's afflicted people and JoeBear Apparel which serves the same charity. That last dinner was also the setting for a farewell gathering in honor of Associate Pastor, Father Daniel Wendel, who was leaving for a new assignment in Southeast Arkansas. All were expected to be well-received. A reception was set for the Diaconate Ordination of Josh Osborne on May 23 at 10:00 a.m. in Room 116 of the Spiritan Center. Another reception being planned is a welcoming for our new Associate Pastor. That will be held on July 19 which will also be in Room 116 of the Spiritan Center. A discussion followed about a 150th Anniversary Celebration in 2029 recognizing the establishment of our parish. That would be held on February 23, 2029. Talks were to be held with the Knights of Columbus about hosting a fish fry at the Spiritan Center with KC being the benefitting charity. Finally, the Commission was enthused about having another St. Joseph Day an Arkansas Travelers baseball game. Potential games dates were being looked at for June. One hundred tickets would again be purchased on the first base side out of the sun.

Hispanic Commission: There have been ongoing leadership formation classes since the first of the year led by the likes of Mr. Gabe Ferrer and Father Joseph de Orbegozo. Their big event was to be the Lenten Dinner on March 18. There was to be a Family Retreat March 21-22 featuring a guest speaker from Columbia.

Social Justice and Community Outreach Commission: As usual, the work of the Missions Committee comprises most of the efforts being conducted. It was reported the Taylor Grant report and request had been submitted. The request for this year is \$34,470.68 for the ministries of St. Paul Street Evangelization, Project Encounter, the Family Mission Trip along with Regional/International Missions such as Belize, Guatemala, and Delta Disciples. Community Volunteer Day Coordinator Graydon Carter spoke at all Masses on February 14/15 and volunteers were being secured. The goal was for 250 of them for the March 7th event. (*Rain turned out to be a factor in that event as well*). Ron Gatto was back serving as Delta Disciples Administrator. Twenty-three volunteers had signed up for the Southeast Arkansas event March 12-15. There are plans in the works for a Family Mission Weekend, perhaps in October. Efforts are being made to reach out to the Little Rock Food Bank and Compassion Center for opportunities to serve. The next mission trip to Belize is being reserved for January 10-16, 2027. A meeting was held about a Poverty Simulation being held March 16th in the Spiritan Center where St. Joseph High School students in the 10th-12 grades would participate. A couple of dozen volunteers were being sought to man 16 stations. The Divine Mercy Medical Mission planning was underway for the March 14th event. This free medical mission was to take place in the Spiritan Center and was organized by the likes of Angela Greenland, Joan Molder, Marilyn Dail, Theresa Gerard, and Peggy O'Reilly. St. Joseph APRNs Meghan Mallett, Lauren Blansett and TJ Moix were volunteering. Deacon Ramon and Yolanda Berumen also recruited four Hispanic translators. An eye clinic was to be available with an optometrist and a chiropractor present.

Liturgy and Worship Commission: The Commission welcomed its new Music Director, Courtney Burmester. She was working her way into the position and was preparing for Lent and Easter. There were some vacant days for

10:30 Masses as the regular band is having schedule conflicts in coming months. A bilingual choir was gathering for Holy Week. There are two new lectors in training and three others after Easter. Eucharistic Minister training was scheduled for the end of the month. Two new AV operators were being trained. There was only one AV operator for the 4:00 p.m. Mass and there have been some Masses where no AV operators came. Three new Sacristans were to start training, but many Sacristans said to be working every Sunday.

Education and Formation Commission: Stations of the Cross were held for all grades at St. Joseph School during Lent. The elementary had theirs at 8:00 a.m. on Fridays while the middle and high school campuses had theirs at 3:00 p.m. the same day. Next year, Kindergarten-6th grade will be adding a new specialty; STEM/Technology to be headed by teacher Morgan Bacon. Due to high enrollment numbers, a new pre-school and another K-3 classroom is being added. There are no more classroom spaces available at this time. Coach Bruich is being moved to the auxiliary building. NWEA Testing was completed, and amazing growth and achievement scores were revealed. Student enrollment for 2025-26 PK3-12: 579/769 maximum (75% capacity). Student Re-Enrollment for 2026-2027 PK3-12: 591/790 maximum. (75% capacity).

Pastor's Report: At the upcoming May 6 meeting, the council will be providing input for the formation of two committees to which Father will appointing members; the 150th Anniversary of the establishment of St. Joseph Church, which will be observed in 2029, and plans to renovate the church sanctuary. There will also be discussion of the long-term vision plan.