

# October 2025 Pastoral Council Summary

**Guest Speakers:** Two representatives from the Diocesan Office of Stewardship and Development opened the meeting. Estate Planning was the focus of their presentation along with familiarizing the Pastoral Council with the diocesan-wide Planned Giving Initiative. Estate plans were defined as a form of Christian prudence. The presenters added that they weren't here to extract from our parishioners but to actually help them protect their families and then extend the mission of their parish as well. They said research shows less than 50% of American adults have a will. This diocesan program, which is free and easy to complete, will give those choosing it a legal will. At the same time, if they choose, a bequest to the church can be made.

**Financial Report:** There were no questions about the July-August collections which continued the pattern of being very good. An estate consisting of a home and surrounding property was left to the church which will now enable the purchase of new chairs and tables for the Spiritan Center's dining facility. These are much needed.

**Finance and Administration:** It was noted that one of the applicants for the open Music Director position had become a finalist for the position and would be playing here at Masses on the weekend of December 27-28. It was stated that she appears to be very well-qualified and knowledgeable about Catholic music.

**Liturgy and Worship Commission:** Ms. Denay Minett, the new Head Sacristan, was introduced. Father John also pointed out that Ms. Minett will also be taking over the leadership of this commission since Deacon Calvin Pearcy has stepped aside from that role. The various coordinators of lectors, ushers, EMCs, etc., will remain but she'll be over them to be sure they have what they need. The Lector Ministry was going fine. An usher was lost for the 5:00 p.m. Mass. A replacement was being sought while other ushers and teens will help as needed. Two Eucharistic Ministers had left and two were being trained to replace them. More ministers could be used at 8:00 a.m. EMs were reminded not to touch children when giving them a blessing. There are plenty of Altar Servers for both English and Spanish Masses. There is a need for more Sacristans in multiple Mass times.

**Parish Life Commission:** The October meeting report revolved around the Volunteer Banquet that was to be held November 5<sup>th</sup>. The CCM students would help serve the meal again. High school students would be approached about setting up tables for the event. The Lenten Dinners for 2026 were set. On 2/25, Ron Gatto and the Missions team will prepare gumbo on behalf of Bethlehem House. 3/4 will have Jonathon and Stephen Strack will be serving a pork meal for a yet to be determine charity. The Hispanic Commission will be responsible for the 3/18 dinner on behalf of Alzheimer's Arkansas/JoeBear Apparel. The Commission will host the Diaconate ordination reception for Josh Osborne on May 23, 2026 in Rm 116 of the Spiritan Center. A discussion took place about the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the parish on February 23, 2029. Fr John would form a separate committee for the event sometime in 2026. The Parish Life team would be in charge of the banquet. Further discussions will take place as that anniversary draws closer.

**Hispanic Commission:** A new ministry was established in August called "Curgillistas de Christiandad" which meets on the second and fourth Fridays of each month. The first Leadership Formation/Program class on the History of the Church was held in August which drew 44 participants. This class met in September and October as well, the latter of which was taught by Father Juan Guido. There have been about a dozen participants for the Commission's first OCIA classes along with a class on Wednesdays called Formation for Parents for those who have children in catechesis. The Charismatic Renewal group held a retreat in September called "Life of the Spirit." A workshop for EMCs and Lectors was held in August for current ministers and those wishing to become ones.

**Education and Formation Commission:** Dr. Tucker submitted a SJS school report. This included the following: Activities took place during National Vocations Awareness Week to help students reflect on God's call in their lives. Teachers were participating in Religion Committee Days at the Diocese to help revise and strengthen the "Spirit and Truth" standards. Training sessions were held for Envision Savvas Math programs to help children see how math connects to their world. The training was a success and teachers are applying new strategies and ideas from the session. Student enrollment figures at this time were-PK3-12 586/777 max (75% capacity), K-12 518/708 max. (73% capacity), St.Joseph Preschool 68/69 max.(99% capacity), SJES 186/210 max. (89% capacity), SJMS 186/210 max. (89% capacity), SJHS 207/360 max. (58% capacity)

**Social Justice and Community Outreach Commission:** The Missions Committee has decided to issue its Report to the Parish in January of 2026 to cover the entire calendar year. September 5. 2025 marked the 13<sup>th</sup> birthday of St. Joseph Mission Outreach. A full Planning Meeting and Social was held August 27. The Executive Committee needs to determine how to dig into the suggestions, ideas and feedback from that meeting. It's been suggested a meeting prior to the end of the year should be dedicated to that purpose. The Community Volunteer Day has been confirmed for March 7, 2026. Nineteen men from St. Joseph and eight from Lake Village were registered to take part for the Delta Disciples Mission Weekend in September. Their intention was to complete all the urgent and high priority projects in the area which included Gould, Dumas, McGehee, Dermott and Lake Village. The International Mission Belize is set for February 15-21, 2026. Eight persons were signed up at the time of the October meeting. Contacts at Christ the King in LR were also contacted about possible participation. The International Mission, Guatemala is also on go. It's set for January 17-27, 2026. Tom and Theresa Gerard and Peggy O'Reilly will attend to build stoves in Guatemala for Mayan families. A team of 20 will build 20

stoves. There will be a meeting in early January to finalize plans. The Project Encounter/Blessing Bags project took place the weekend of December 13-14. The church youth groups helped pack the bags December 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Handyman/H.E.L.P group year to date through August included 21 workdays serving 14 HELP clients and three non-profit organizations. This excludes dozens of manhours completing the Refuge Project that is substantially complete. Handyman crews will remodel the laundry room and construct a covered patio for the Refuge this Fall/Winter. Missions for Transition-year to date through August involved 36n workdays serving 96 households and 204 individuals plus 29 donation pick-ups for a total of 824 volunteer hours. This is continuing to be a very busy ministry with more requests all the time as the need is so great in our community.

**Old Business:** Mission Statement was sent out with Stewardship Month information packet in October. The document will not become stale. It will revisit that document every spring. Starting in March or April it will be reexamined and updated and a 2026 version will be sent out next October. The January meeting will be Rita Sanders' last meeting. She will be the only council member who will need to be replaced. Some possible candidates were suggested. They'll be approached and Matt Mallett will be informed if we go forward with one of them or not. Another issue that developed more than a year ago was when a tree fell on the metal canopy in the middle school playground area. The school was trying to see where they'd want the replacement to be and what it would look like. The insurance money will take care of most of this and the new one will be triple the size of the old one. It will go more in the area of the present playground equipment some of which will be moved.

**Pastor's Report:** Father John spoke about preparations for St. Joseph's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on February 23, 2029. A commission would be formed to look at that as well as one to study future renovation of the church.