

Pastoral Council Minutes

Wednesday, May 13, 2026, 7 pm

Monsignor Schnacky Community Center – St. Catherine's

Pastoral Council (PC) Members in Attendance:

Bob Ciccone, Tom Cincebox, Kristen Graham, Erica Jones, Skip Lehman Rebecca Hartman, John Hurley, Lindsay Ricci, Marissa Phelps, Michael Schell, Tracy Volkmann, Kasey Wise

PC Members Excused: Dave Pritchard, Charlene Weeks, Diane Yacoby

PC Members Absent: Michael Musa, student rep

Staff: Margie Benza, Jeff Beckett, Fr. Rob Bourcy, Anne Gallagher, Dan Hofford, Meg Kastner, Karen Luke, Karen Reinfiend, Nancy Wahl

Ministry Representative/s: Bob Goldbach

Guests: none

Recording Secretary: Donna Mihalik

Opening Prayer

Kristen offered the following prayer:

Bless us as we gather tonight for this meeting.

Guide our minds and hearts so that we will work together for the good of our faith community.

Teach us to be generous in our outlook, courageous in the face of difficulty, and wise in our decisions.

Father, we praise You, forever and ever. Amen.

Welcome

Rebecca pointed out that tonight's agenda was jam-packed with important items for discussion. Fr. Rob mentioned that Diane was not attending this evening due to urgent medical issues.

Old Business

Mission & Vision Update -- Kristen reported that an expanded team will get together June 1 to continue their work. This will be the first session of the larger committee. Discussion followed about how to reserve a room for committee or ministry meetings. It is important to check with each parish office about booking a time and location. To date there are about 12-14 members representing both parishes.

- **Kristen anticipates adding a few more members and will ensure PC receives full committee list.**

Nomination Process Update

Rebecca thanked PC members and others who reached out to obtain nominations and contacted parishioners, with special thanks to Karen R, Marissa and Tom. Karen R reported that 22 people were nominated, up significantly from last year: 14 from St. Catherine's, 8 from Transfiguration. After speaking with the nominees, nine so far have confirmed that they would like to be considered (5 from St. Catherine's, 4 from Transfiguration). Discussion followed about specific responses -- those agreeing to go forward with the process, those who did not, and those still considering it. Reactions from nominees included: wanting to participate as a way of giving back to the parish, leery of participating due to poor experience with clustering at another parish, and not wanting to be considered due to lack of knowledge about PC.

- **Fr. Rob is compiling the complete list of nominees and responses**
- Cut-off for accepting the nomination will probably be the Sunday before Pentecost
- The meeting schedule for the 2026-2027 year will continue to be the second Wednesday of the month, from September through June
- Suggestion for next year – **add a "nominated by..." field to the nomination form** to help with follow-up conversations
- Additional suggestions – **keep a list of names and responses from year to year, as some nominees have expressed an interest for the future, and specifically invite other nominees to attend a PC meeting** to help spread information about the work of PC
- **Marissa will update the PC Google Doc** and send a list around

New Business

Communications & QR Codes

Nancy and Jeff provided a comprehensive overview of their work on researching options for using a combined QR code at our parishes. They shared their rationales, statistics, analysis, and visuals. Nancy explained that the main reasons for developing a QR code program are to become better connected, to be welcoming, and to make it easier for financial giving. Much discussion followed regarding how the QR codes would actually be presented (where the codes would be posted, size of code, and other design/logistical issues) and the pros and cons of QR codes for us. The QR code design itself would feature a picture of both churches and would not indicate anything about money. A sample of what the user would see when clicking on the QR code was shown; it included a top "Welcome" button that would be directed to a specific info page on our website, plus separate donate buttons for both parishes that would take the user to the donate section of our website. Advantages and disadvantages of various sizes (from small decals to large banners) and locations (email, bulletins, church pews, collection baskets, gathering spaces, hymnals, removable stickers vs. regular printed codes, etc.) were vigorously explored.

Design of the QR code Nancy and Jeff pointed out that it is especially important to identify where it will be best to see the code in order for people to "get connected." Locations will then lead to size decisions. The design location and size should not be visible from the center aisle as we want to be respectful. Creating the QR code must include tamper-resistant considerations.

Some pros of a joint parish QR Code:

- 1) It is another opportunity to welcome visitors and new parishioners, helping them quickly learn more about our church communities
- 2) It reaches out to people who are already using such technology in other parts of their lives
- 3) In addition to providing another convenient (and possibly easier) way to donate, the QR codes can assist us in following diocesan giving guidelines of being "UNOBTRUSIVE, SECURE, WELCOMING, and COMPLIANT w/diocesan donation methods"
- 4) Based on current statistics, electronic giving seems to help people increase their giving more often
- 5) The QR code landing page can be modified throughout the year for buying tickets to a particular event, for a different kind of collection, for CMA contributions, and so on
- 6) We will be able to track the monies coming in via QR code and analyze giving patterns

Some cons:

- 1) Possibility of fraudulent QR codes being substituted on top of our legitimate one, sending the user to a fake donation page, especially when the codes are in a small size or as handouts; it gets harder and harder to detect/prevent/troubleshoot when the QR code is small and ubiquitous as there are just physically too many places to have to check manually for fraud
 - 2) Possibility of people being offended by QR codes that may be perceived as distracting from Mass or other services
 - 3) Possibility of appearing contradictory to have them in pews when we announce to put cell phones away at beginning of Mass
 - 4) Will people understand that the "treasure" aspect of stewardship has always been a part of the Mass, as we always take our offerings to the altar
 - 5) Will people understand that the QR code program is really for the "front end" of finding out more about us, and not just for giving money
- Keep in mind that with QR codes we are primarily looking to reach out to the people who are visitors or not registered, as we assume our parishioners already know how/where to donate
 - There was consensus that we **need to experiment to see what might or might not work, and a start should be to see some removable QR codes in the pews**
 - Recommendations: Let the staff sort out the details, **try locations/sizes for limited periods**

Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve March 2026 PC minutes by Tom, seconded by Skip, and approved with no comments.

Goals for Coming Year

Rebecca solicited recommendations on objectives for PC to adopt for the coming year:

1. Be forward-looking as a council so PC members can develop goals for the incoming leaders – a suggestion that was made via our PC Google Doc
2. Have PC members work on ways to increase attendance
3. Have PC members create ways to bring both parishes together – especially through enjoyable social activities
4. Have PC members outline a detailed roadmap for the parish clustering
5. Have PC members review/study our facility usage at both parishes and how what one group does impacts everyone else's activities – location, timing of programs, activities, services – and how to make more efficient use of both facilities
6. Have PC members plan a tour of each parish

Welcome Committee Update

Skip recommended having an October **welcoming party for new parishioners** in the Monsignor Schnacky Community Center at St. Catherine's, which led to the suggestion that such an event be **held at both parishes and coordinate it with the ministries weekend, Sept. 26-27.**

- **PC members should plan and staff** the welcoming event
- PC should **coordinate with other ministries** for assistance/advice (e.g., Faith Formation, Lemonade on the Porch, baking committees, etc.)
- **Make it a social yet responsible activity** (e.g., mocktails instead of alcoholic beverages)
- Per a request from Skip, **Donna will email Skip a list of the volunteers and their emails**

Pastoral Council Potluck Dinner

Fr. Rob passed around a Potluck Dinner sign-up sheet for the combined annual social event that will be held at 6 pm, just prior to the June 14 PC meeting, in the Community Center at St. Catherine's. The dinner and meeting will focus on:

- welcoming new PC members and thanking retiring members
- selecting a new chair and vice chair for 2026-2027
- Combined Social Event

A question was asked if spouses of PC members were also invited. It was clarified that, while the event was heavily social, it was specifically designed for PC members and attendees only.

Open Forum

Additional Open Forum discussion items included:

- **Request parishioners submit questions** prior to PC meeting so members can address them
- Tracy reported that Char Merrill, who organizes Lemonade on the Porch at St. Catherine's, asked **PC members to consider hosting one of the Sunday events this summer; Tracy has asked for a decision on this and she will follow-up with Char**
- Discussion was held about our parishes' livestreams:
 - Clarify that each parish streams every Sunday mass
 - Reasons for not streaming Saturday services include:
 - music copyright permission considerations
 - staff/volunteer limitations
 - each stream costs money
 - choice has been made to stream Masses where Fr. Rob is presiding
 - Sunday is the Lord's Day
 - However, streaming special events on Saturday nights have been considered when there are reasons to do so (e.g., First Communion),
 - Parishes should **be more transparent about the rationale for this and consider how to better communicate our reasons for doing things**

Closing Remarks by Fr. Rob

- He asked everyone to keep Diane in their prayers.
- Deacon Eric has announced his retirement, though he still plans to remain involved.
- There continue to be many issues with scamming going on around the diocese; Fr. Rob cautioned that we need to be vigilant about what is printed in the bulletin and we will need to **address** the issue of **how we can contact people** (e.g., ministry leaders) because emails cannot be published in the bulletin.
- Fr. Rob and Dan received the **CMA** info and **details will be forthcoming**:
 - SC – goal was increased, due to the increase in attendance; it was \$113,000 this past year and has gone up to about \$130,000
 - T - goal stayed the same, due to decrease in attendance
- He remarked how good it was to hear everyone's visions and experience everyone listening to one another, making decisions for both of our parishes; his goal is for both parishes to come together, especially with some fun socializing. He noted that the point of our efforts is to have both of our parishes thrive so it is very important for PC to show leadership for this goal and actively support it, looking towards the future. *"We're called to be ONE... HOLY... CATHOLIC... and APOSTOLIC community,"* he said and reflected on whether we are really understanding what this means for our parishes.
- Fr. Rob continues to be impressed with our new bishop, the Most Reverend John S. Bonnici, and shared a delightful story as an example of what a really nice person he is:

Anne, Karen L, Margie, and Rob were at a conference recently where the bishop came to speak. When his flight back to Rochester was delayed for de-icing, he tried to find a quiet corner to be alone. However, a woman asked him if he was a Roman Catholic priest and wanted to go to confession, right there in Reagan International Airport. She was followed by a second person and soon there was a confessional "line as long as at Chik-fil-A!"
- He congratulated Kasey on her recent confirmation (applauded by all) and looked forward to her being an altar server for him at Mercy High School.
- The staff had recently attended a meeting on ministries and their visions, which seemed timely for PC based on recent discussions

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Erica, seconded by Tom, and the meeting adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

Action Items are highlighted in bold

Addendum – Transfiguration Pastoral Report (see next page)

Parish Council Meeting Minutes - Addendum

5/13/26

Transfiguration Pastoral Report

LITURGY

- May is the Month in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
 - Ascension Thursday 5/14/26
 - St. Catherine of Siena – 9AM and Transfiguration – 5:30PM
 - Return to “Ordinary Time” on the weekend of 5/16-17.
 - Acolytes
- Two new interested acolytes from the First Communion class.

Additional Notes:

- Upcoming pulpit presentation recruiting liturgical minsters with a special focus on the Usher ministry on the weekend of 5/16-17.
- Our first Social Events Committee planning meeting has been moved to Sunday, 5/31/26. Any interested parishioners from both parishes are welcome to join the committee. Contact Margie Benza.

PASTORAL MINISTRIES:

- Ongoing ministries include and not limited to Cloverwood, Highlands, Rittenhouse (Brookdale), Funeral Ministry, Good Samaritan, Make-A-Meal, Reception Ministry Respite, Visitation and Spiritual Direction.

PEACE & JUSTICE

- Our next Peace & Justice Coordinating Committee is next week
- Our Social Ministry will hold a bake sale on the weekend of June 6-7th in the Gathering Area following Masses. Bakers are welcomed with sign-up in the Gathering Area.
- Ongoing active ministries include our Peace & Justice Education Committee, Open-Door Mission Collaborative, PBJ Ministry, St. Andrew’s Food Cupboard, Sr. Regis Food Cupboard, LaMadonna Homeless Shelter, Rochester Hope, Homeless Outreach Team, Care of God’s Creation and the Monthly Food Drive.

Respectfully submitted,
Margie Benza
Pastoral Associate