

Mary, Mother of the Church

Parish Pastoral & Evangelization Council (PPEC)

Meeting Minutes — September 17, 2026

Opening & Purpose

The meeting opened with an acknowledgment that there had been some uncertainty following the previous PPEC gathering. Since that meeting, leadership had spent time in conversation, prayer, and discernment reviewing the work completed by the PPC, SET Team, staff, small-group leaders, and previous PPEC gatherings. Common themes were organized into the four squad areas: Encounter, Belong, Grow, and Go.

It was emphasized that the squads are not separate ministries or silos. Rather, they describe interconnected dimensions of discipleship. A person's movement through Encounter, Belong, Grow, and Go is not necessarily linear; people may move among these areas throughout their lives as they encounter Christ in new ways.

The primary goal for the evening was for each squad to identify one or two areas of focus for approximately the next six months, either addressing an identified gap or building upon an existing parish strength.

***What outcome are we hoping for?
How will this bring people closer to Jesus?***

Spiritual Reflection — Joy

Rebecca led a reflection on Joy, continuing PPEC's year-long reflection on the Fruits of the Holy Spirit. Drawing from Archbishop Hebda's pastoral letter, *Only One Thing Is Necessary*, the reflection considered Christian joy as beginning with recognizing God's presence in ordinary life. The group was encouraged to follow St. John Newman's image of spiritual growth occurring gradually—one step at a time.

A simple practice of the Daily Examen was introduced as a way of learning to notice God's presence: Where did I experience goodness today? What brought me joy? Where might God have been present in that moment? The reflection concluded with prayer asking the Holy Spirit to help the parish notice moments of grace and grow in the fruit of joy.

Squad Discernment & Six-Month Focus

ENCOUNTER

The Encounter Squad discussed strengthening the ways people are initially welcomed and connected to parish life. Areas identified for continued exploration included strengthening the existing welcome process by adding an intentional next step that connects newcomers with an established parishioner or group; developing prayer partnerships connecting parishioners with those preparing for sacraments; a “New to You” effort encouraging parish groups to intentionally meet unfamiliar people at weekend Masses; researching how Alpha might work at Mary, Mother of the Church; and strengthening winter Adoration commitments.

BELONG

The Belong Squad identified connection through existing small groups as its primary six-month focus. The group discussed bringing small groups together across generations and life stages and creating opportunities where parishioners can share their gifts with one another. Ideas included intergenerational technology assistance, career mentoring, practical assistance for older parishioners, gatherings for parents and young married couples, and other opportunities that build relationships through shared interests and service.

The squad will also explore an Advent series, similar to last year's program, as an opportunity to invite people into small-group life.

GROW

The Grow Squad identified several areas requiring further discernment. The group noted the importance of better understanding the parish's demographics before developing major new initiatives. The Cana Dinner remains an important area of focus.

Discussion also centered on adult evangelization and helping adults grow in prayer, including addressing distractions and discomfort with praying aloud. The group identified personal invitation and witness as important ways of reconnecting people with the Church.

One concept generating particular interest was a possible “Been Away from the Church?” gathering—a welcoming opportunity for people who have been away to talk about their experiences and consider reconnecting. A broad community mailing was discussed as one possible way to extend that invitation.

GO

The Go Squad identified one of Mary Mother's greatest strengths as the large number of parishioners already actively involved in ministries, service, and small groups. Its emerging six-month focus is to equip and empower already-connected parishioners to intentionally reach out to people who may be present at Mass but are not yet connected to the parish community.

The squad discussed developing simple training to help parishioners become more comfortable initiating conversations, getting to know others, recognizing when someone may need connection, and inviting others into deeper relationship and community.

One practical opportunity discussed was Name Tag Sunday, potentially held monthly in conjunction with Hospitality/Donut Sunday. Trained parishioners could intentionally introduce themselves to people they do not know and invite them into conversation and fellowship after Mass.

The broader goal is not simply another parish program, but the development of a culture of discipleship and mutual care in which parishioners increasingly notice, know, accompany, and care for one another.

We first learn to notice God in our lives—and then we learn to notice our neighbor.

Common Theme Across the Squads

Although each squad approached the work differently, a common theme emerged across all four discussions: connection. Encounter, Belong, Grow, and Go each considered ways to help people move from anonymity or disconnection toward relationship—with Christ and with one another.

This reinforced the understanding that Encounter → Belong → Grow → Go is not a rigid sequence, but an interconnected continuum of discipleship.

Next Steps

- The October meeting will be a business/leadership meeting for the designated PPEC leadership members, with attention to broader strategy and Archdiocesan requirements.
- The next full PPEC working meeting is November 19, when squads will continue developing and implementing their six-month priorities.
- There is no required work before November, although squads are welcome to begin communicating or developing ideas in the meantime—described at the meeting as “empowered, but not required.”
- The next New Member Welcome Weekend is October 10–11, providing an immediate opportunity for PPEC members to intentionally meet and welcome newcomers.

Parish Prayer Needs

Members were asked to pray for additional catechists and Faith Formation/Atrium helpers, particularly one-on-one assistance for children with special needs and additional help with sixth- and seventh-grade formation.

Closing Prayer

The meeting concluded in prayer, offering the trials of individuals, families, and the parish to Christ and asking that they be transformed into service of Him.