

St. Michael's Parish Council Meeting

March 17, 2026

I. Call to Order & Opening Prayer

Fr. Courtright led everyone in the opening prayer.

President Laurie Kraemer welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made since the two Parish Lay Officers (Tom Rerick & Destin Coles) and John Shaft (from the Catholic Schools Advisory Council) were in attendance for the first time.

II. Organizational & Routine Matters

- **Roll Call: Present:** Fr. Courtright, Laurie Kraemer, Craig Knutson, Janet Burns, Ken Vasek, Rhonda Varriano, Brent Lahr, Craig Pfau, Lori Swinney, Tom Rerick, Destin Coles, John Shaft, Marie Vetter, Mary Ann Whalen
Absent: Erin Perronteau, Fr. Seth
- **Approval of Minutes:** Rhonda Varriano motioned to approve the February meeting's minutes. Seconded by Janet Burns. Motion passed.

III. Reports of Representing Organizations

- **Altar Society:** Janet Burns reported that the Altar Society's "**Fling into Spring**" Luncheon & Fashion Show is set for Saturday, April 25, from 11:30 am to 1 pm. She has designed the flyers & tickets. The 150 tickets will be presold. They will be available at the weekend Masses and from Altar Society members. There will be a Sign-Up Genius in Flocknote & the bulletin for volunteers. There will be 12 models from the Parish modeling outfits from three local boutiques: Mainstream, Pretty B., & Northern Roots. The menu will be: chicken salad croissant, spinach salad, fresh fruit, and bars.
Msgr. Pilon's 50th Ordination Anniversary is set for Sunday, May 31, and the Altar Society will help with the meal to be served after the 5 pm Mass. The food is being catered by the Broken Drum. Janet also reported that the **freezer** in the church basement no longer works & needs to be fixed or replaced. It would cost \$3000 to repair. A new one might be gifted to us.
- **Knights of Columbus:** Craig Pfau reported the Fish Fry on Feb. 27 was a success. It brought in just under \$4700 gross and netted approximately \$2500. Including takeouts, a total of 324 meals were served.
- **Bridge Builders:** Lori Swinney reported they had not had a meeting recently. Their annual banquet is set for Thursday, April 23. Tickets will be \$15 each. Student will again receive awards.

IV. Reports from Parish Boards and Councils

- **Parish Education:** Marie Vetter, the Director of Religious Ed, reported that there are 103 students in Grades K-8. Mollie Bye is the Youth Director. Fr. Seth & Mary Kaye Schneibel have the 7th & 8th graders. There are two catechists for each of the elementary grades. It has been a challenge to get catechists. Some of them are getting burned out because some of the kids are hard to handle (autism spectrum, etc.). There are 53 children receiving the sacraments of Confirmation & First Communion this year (on Sat., March 21). There will be no Confirmation for children next year. Instead, these three sacraments will be given in separate years: First Reconciliation in the 2nd grade, First Communion in the 3rd grade, and Confirmation in the 4th grade. Bishop Folda made this change for the entire Fargo Diocese. There are about twelve adults in OCIA being confirmed in our parish at the Easter Vigil.

Parish Basement Rules: Marie Vetter reported that she has made posters that have been put up in the church basement reminding people to be respectful of the Parish Space. There have been problems with children running around down there on Sunday mornings. Council members said that we need spread the word that we want the basement to be welcoming and to promote fellowship, but parents need to watch their children. Fr. Courtright said maybe he could talk to the parents.

- **Finance Council:** Tom Rerick reported that our Accounts Payable have been high recently.
- **Pastor's Report:**
 - **St. Carlo Acutis Middle School update:** Fr. Courtright said that seven major gifts are expected to be donated from some parishioners for the new middle school. Four fund-raising receptions are being planned. The feasibility study that was done said \$8.2 million could be raised for this project from the three parishes.
Fr. Courtright showed council members some pictures of the projected building.
Ground-breaking will take place in May.
 - Fr. Courtright also announced that Deacon John Bredemeier will be retiring October 31. Maybe we should have a "going-away" party for him.
 - Fr. Courtright said he thought it was a good idea to separate the Sacraments of First Communion and Confirmation and not have the students receive both at the same time.

V. Old & Current Business

- **Parish Council By-Laws:** Council members continued their discussion on what needs to be updated in the By-Laws. The Bridge Builders will be described as the "Bridge Builders Endowment".
The term "Parochial Vicar" will be changed to "Associate Pastor" in the by-laws. He is a non-voting member. The two Lay Officers are also non-voting members. Fr. Courtright said the parish needs to have two Lay Officers as a legal designation. Our Lay Officers are part of the Finance Council. However, it was said that the Business Mgr (also non-voting) is more knowledgeable than the Finance Council. It was decided that if the Business Mgr cannot attend a Parish Council meeting, one of the Lay Officers will attend. The Parish Council has six elected members as well as representatives from various groups & boards. Should a person from the Catholic Schools Advisory Council be required to come to each meeting? Will that person be a voting member?
We hope to have our final vote on the updated By-Laws at the next Parish Council meeting if two-thirds of the voting members are present.
- **Parish Council Election:** Craig Knutson reported he has been lining up people to run for the two seats opening up on the Parish Council. Council members also gave him some more names.
- **Beautification Committee:** A contract was signed March 16 with Conrad Schmitt Studios (out of Wisc.). We will pay them \$6000 to meet with us and draw up a rendition.
Forks Lath & Plaster has confirmed that the church walls underneath the paint are good & solid. It was suggested that Parish Council members should take a look at what it is like in the church above the ceiling underneath the roof. Maybe we can do this at the next meeting.

VI. New Business: None

VII. Adjournment & Closing Prayer:

Fr. Courtright thanked the Lay Officers for coming. There being no further business, Ken Vasek motioned for adjournment. Seconded by Janet Burns. Laurie Kraemer then closed the meeting.
The next meeting will be April 21. Fr. Courtright led the closing prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Ann Whalen