

St. Thomas More Parish Council Meeting Minutes

September 15, 2025

St. Thomas More – Sacred Heart Room

Call to Order – 7:00 PM by Chair Elaine Stevens; Opening Prayer by Fr. Basilio Az Cuc.

Members present: Gustavo Amaya, Jared Anderson, Mary Carrico, John Colgan, Marian Dunkerley, Dennis Quigley, Dennis Sanders, Kevin Kauffeld, Elaine Stevens, Camille Warden, Matt Wurth, Fr. Mike Clark & Fr. Basilio Az Cuc. Unable to Attend: Alma Machaen.

Agenda Items:

1. Finance Committee spoke at each mass this past weekend for FYE 6/30/2025. There were no suggestions to forward to the Finance Committee.
2. Mass Counts continue each weekend for the Month of September. Elaine Stevens advised one usher should handle the count at each Mass.
3. Reports (bulletin possibilities):
 - a. Marian Dunkerley advised she received late reports from Hope Unlimited and would forward those emails to Parish Council members. A discussion was held regarding the Baby Bottle Drive by Hope Unlimited, which had not reported back the impact from STM. Elaine will reach out to Hope Unlimited to follow up on results. Fr. Mike Clark stated that the impact of any assistance provided to community organizations by STM should be reported back to STM.
 - b. The STM office needs a volunteer on Wednesdays to cover lunch breaks.
 - c. Family Service Society opportunities – they have moved and could use volunteer assistance.
 - d. Funeral Meals – two requests were forwarded to Parish Council for consideration: electrical problems due to overload when the convection oven & warmer are used at the same time, and raising the 3-compartment sink. After discussion, the council was in favor of correcting the electrical situation after a review by Maintenance.
4. 2025 Parish Picnic Evaluation
 - a. Attendance was estimated by Elaine at 475+.
 - b. Food – Elaine reported that there was plenty of food and next year strongly recommends using Perfect Potluck (website) for better planning for food. Discussion of what to do with extra food included having charities pick up the excess or volunteers taking food to River City Mission, Lifeline Ministries or other groups.
 - c. Help - Discussion was held regarding the need for a separate Parish Picnic committee and revising and/or adding more elements in order to make the picnic larger and more attractive for adults and the larger community.

5. The 2026 Parish Picnic will be August 30, 2026. The 11 AM and 1 PM Masses will again be combined. The group liked having the bi-lingual Mass and felt it resulted in a larger Hispanic turnout; Elaine estimated well over 50% of attendees were Hispanic. Fr. Basilio requested that plenty of notice be given in advance if there will be a bi-lingual Mass due to the amount of planning & preparation required. This year's Mass was longer than usual also due to including the Rite of Welcome, which was discussed to have at a separate Mass from the day of the Picnic. Marian Dunkerley revisited the idea of a separate Parish Picnic Committee and how that might be communicated to the Parish; it can be added to the 2026 Stewardship booklet.
6. Fr. Mike – Strengthen the connection between the Parish and the school. A lengthy discussion was held regarding the need to improve the connection between the local Parishes and the St. Mary School System. Fr. Mike wants to have the principals of the HS and MS/ES come and speak to each congregation. He stated that pastors meet monthly and he is working to have all parishes, area-wide, collectively support the school system. He advised that the Elementary School is doing well. He stated that some priests are actually in favor of closing the High School, which generated some dismay by Parish Council members. A discussion followed regarding tension between the FF community and the teachers at SMMS/SMES. Some teachers are reluctant to share classroom space. Marian Dunkerley shared that as a past catechist, it was important to teach the students how to respect the space being loaned to us as part of their education; Elaine added that thanking the teachers is important. Kevin Kauffeld shared that it seems the main role of FF should be to evangelize. It is important to balance that with the sharing of the space. Fr. Basilio advised that some teachers are uncomfortable sharing their space. Fr. Mike shared that there had been past conversations regarding a separate building for FF, which doesn't make sense to get used one night a week when the school isn't in use anyway. Matt Wurth suggested to maybe utilize the HS space if it would lessen the tension between teachers and the FF community. Fr. Mike advised that the FF structure is under review. Marian asked about having some sort of requirement for parents of FF students to share in additional formation of their own in order to support their FF students. Elaine stated there used to be a "Update While You Wait" class for parents during classtime. John Colgan asked why the SMSS campus is being used at all for FF; Fr. Basilio replied that the schools used to each have their own program, but requires 3 times the number of volunteers, etc. and this way is more centralized. Dennis Quigley asked Fr. Mike what he needed from the Council at this point, and Fr. Mike said having this discussion was a good start. He stated that some are asking STM to pay rent at SMES. He believes that many parishioners are not aware of the cost involved in providing Catholic education to each student. He added that at Deanery meetings he had shared that a letter was being sent to STM parishioners and invited the other priests to use it, but they had quite different views on how to use the letter and he is hoping to get them closer to being on the same page.
7. Tri-Parish Mission with Luke Spehar will be held October 19-21. STM, SFDS and SJ will each sponsor one night beginning at 6 PM. There was some discussion about teen/youth events, Masses, NCYC, etc. STM will be having Chocolate Wars for middle schoolers.

Next Meeting – October 27th.

Opening Prayer – Kevin Kauffeld

Closing Prayer – Marian Dunkerley

Adjourn: 8:25 PM. Matt Wurth led the closing prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Marian Dunkerley, Secretary