

Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish Council Notes

Date: Thursday, September 3, 2026 | **Location:** Sacred Heart

Attendance: Erin Fontaine, Betsy Waldeck, Jim Stemann, Tom Mitchell, Arline Argentati, Donna Weber, Joyce Thomas, Tim Vaughn, Dan Schindler

Absent: Karla Garcia

Staff: Bill Dirr, Kathy Middendorf, Fr. Gruss, Heather Wagner, Fr. Dave

Reports

- Sacred Heart School report
 - Staffing & enrollment: We are fully staffed. Currently we have 467 students enrolled; We are at capacity in 1st, 4th, and 7th grade.
 - Student Enrichment
 - In the next few weeks, we have a number of enrichment opportunities for the students:
 - In commemoration of the 25th anniversary of 9/11, this Patriots Day, we will be holding a prayer service in the front lot near the flagpole. Many thanks to Fr. Sunberg for replacing the flag.
 - Field trips:
 - Library (kindergarten)
 - Greenacres (4th grade)
 - Camp Kern (8th grade)
 - Summer Improvements
 - Bill and his team painted the school's hallways and stairwells.
 - Mark worked on the garden outside of church. Brian improved the landscaping near the school.
 - Thanks to a generous donor and the help of the parish, the concrete pad outside the gym was replaced and the area is landscaped.
 - Another donor provided funding for cafeteria doors. This allows the space to be used by more groups without the sound impacting the offices nearby.
 - The parking lot was resealed and lined for improved safety during morning drop-off.
 - The gaga pit was moved and redone by Auggy Newberry as his Eagle Scout project.
 - Time Capsule: We had two alumni help look for the time capsule. It is believed to be near the bushes and corner of the building of the old church. They dug a number of small holes, but we have not found the box yet.
 - The school is considering opening preschool. They have met with the archdiocese once and will keep the group updated as things progress.
- St. Ann School report
 - Enrollment
 - We are excited to welcome thirty-three new students in grades K–8 to St. Ann this school year. We continue to focus on enrollment growth and sharing the many strengths of our school with prospective families. Current enrollment is 201.
 - New Faculty Member
 - We are pleased to welcome Mr. Jake Spoerl, a graduate of St. Ann, to our faculty. Mr. Spoerl has joined us as our Unified Arts teacher, teaching Music and Physical Education. We are excited about the energy, talents, and experience he brings to our students and school community.
 - Academic Updates
 - One academic addition this year is Algebra I for our 8th-grade students. This opportunity allows students to take a high school-level mathematics course while still in junior high and strengthens our academic offerings and preparation for high school. This year, we have redesigned our master schedule to better meet the academic needs of our students and provide developmentally appropriate learning structures at each grade level.

- Primary Grades K–3: Students remain in self-contained classrooms, allowing teachers to provide consistency and a strong foundation across the school day.
 - Intermediate Grades 4–5: Students switch classrooms for Math and Reading, providing greater opportunities for targeted instruction and allowing us to better meet individual academic needs.
 - Middle School Grades 6–8: Students follow a 50-minute bell schedule, giving them a structured middle school experience with dedicated class periods and transitions between subjects.
- Lunch Program
 - We have partnered with Hamilton City Schools Food Service to provide hot lunches each school day. This partnership gives our students access to a consistent meal program without requiring families to pre-order meals, as well as providing free and reduced lunches for families.
- Building and Facility Updates
 - We have continued to make improvements to our school facilities. Summer projects included cleaning out the parking lot pods and stripping and waxing floors throughout the building. We also completed tuckpointing and plaster repairs in a bathroom over the summer.
 - For safety purposes, the building's gas and water lines were moved into the building. We are updating the St. Ann stage, including cleaning and waxing the stage floor and replacing the older curtain. We are especially grateful to the VFW for its generous donation toward replacing our stage curtain. These improvements will help ensure that our school continues to be a welcoming and functional space for students, families, parish events, and school activities.
- Uniform Expectations
 - We have reinforced our St. Ann uniform expectations this year. The uniform is an important part of our school identity and helps create a sense of pride, belonging, and consistency among our students.
 - Boys: Khaki pants or shorts, a green embroidered St. Ann polo shirt, and a belt are required.
 - Girls: The uniform includes a white embroidered St. Ann shirt and an embroidered St. Ann cardigan, along with the appropriate uniform skirt or jumper for their grade level.
- Special Mass
 - On September 11, we will be honoring all those who lost their lives 25 years ago, the men and women who have served and are currently serving in our military, along with all first responders, by having a special Mass and a flag-raising afterward. If you or anyone you know would like to join us for this, all are welcome.
- New Business
 - Proposal of Shred-It event at Sacred Heart – Sponsored by Knights of Columbus; weekend in September (exact date TBD)
 - K of C would like to find a co-sponsoring organization. The Butler County Bar Association may be a co-sponsor, but the event wouldn't be until April/May. This should be tabled until January/February.
 - Liaison roles
 - At the October meeting, the group will select which ministries they would like to be the liaison for the future.
 - Donna has a past list of all ministries that she will send to Joyce.
 - Fire safety
 - A letter was mailed to a Parish Council member regarding the need for a fire safety plan for the churches.
 - H. Wagner will send the Sacred Heart School plan for the Sacred Heart Church to B. Dirr. B. Dirr will look into a plan for St. Ann.

○ Notification of Change of Meeting Venue ▪ For future meetings, it should be announced on the website and social media if the venue changes. ▪ Motion to keep meetings alternating between locations. [REDACTED] made the motion. [REDACTED] seconded. Motion passed.
Director of Administration Update • There was a little bit of a budget deficit with St. Ann for the last year due to low enrollment and excess staff (i.e., aides). There was also maintenance work that needed to be addressed at the school that was unbudgeted. Additionally, the Director positions are being split (not 50/50, but at a percentage) between St. Ann and Sacred Heart. • New Director of Evangelization and Coordinator of Religious Education have both been hired and started. • Pamela Andorn is working on a parish directory. Pictures are being scheduled at both locations. The dates/locations will be posted in the bulletin. • Sacred Heart Festival gross was \$332,896 is the gross. This does not include the early grand prize collection money. That number is only from the weekend. • St. Ann No-festival Festival – \$19,346. There is an anonymous donation that will be coming in for \$20,000 too. • Audit findings: K. Middendorf is continuing work to combine and close several accounts at both places to make for cleaner bookkeeping. • Finance Council meeting is September 24th.
Director of Facilities Update • Project updates ○ Coal bin is now complete. ○ Pods are now gone from St. Ann. ○ St. Ann Rectory: There are still some items that need addressed, but Fr. Gruss is moved in. • Sacred Heart Gym Roofing updates ○ Eckstein Roofing completed the repairs. • Interior Design Committee ○ There was another request to install a rail at Sacred Heart. B. Dirr will work with M. Wallace to investigate potential solutions and bring it to the next Parish Council meeting.
Director of Worship Update • There have been meetings with the new environment and decor committee – Fr Dave and Brett are leading this group. • Worship Commission meets next Tuesday, September 8. • Choir rehearsals start September 4 • There will be day school choirs at both churches this year.
Pastor Updates • There was a lot of good progress on both properties this summer. • Adult Faith Formation work is ongoing with Brett, Fr. Dave, and Fr. Gruss.
Elections • Secretary – Tim Vaughn • Vice President – Jim Stemann • President – Dan Schindler

2026 Meeting Schedule - ALL MEETINGS ARE ON FIRST THURSDAYS AT 7:00PM
Next Meeting: October 1 at Sacred Heart

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>
November 5	St. Ann
December 3	Sacred Heart