

Pastorate Pastoral Commission

Meeting Notes

Thursday, October 8, 2026 | Scheduled time 6:00–7:15 PM

Waukon Office

Members present: Teresa Schaefer, Stan Looney, Grayson Rowlet, Vicki Bloxham, Peggy Teff, Ross Kolsrud, Laurie Manning, and Blanca Schroeder. **Absent:** Amy Donlon

Also present: Fr. Joseph, Deacons, and Mike Erickson.

1 Welcome and Opening Prayer

The meeting was grounded in the Road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13–35), reflecting on Christ's hidden presence with the disciples, His illumination of Scripture, and recognition of Him in the Eucharist. Prayers were offered for the intentions of our October Prayer Challenge.

2 Introductions

Members introduced themselves and shared hopes for evangelization, renewed faith among young people, increased Mass attendance, and stronger community throughout the pastorate. Members highlighted the needs of each of our seven parishes, with a particular concern expressed for those without a Weekend Mass.

3 Our Purpose and Role

Fr. Joseph explained that the Commission advises the pastor on spiritual and pastoral matters, including faith formation, evangelization, and parish life. Its work is to listen, discern, envision, and steward, offering long-range pastoral direction rather than managing local events. The Pastorate Finance Commission and parish finance councils address financial and business matters, including buildings and grounds.

The Commission's work is aligned with the Archdiocesan vision and mission, rooted in prayer, the sacraments, Scripture, evangelization, and leadership formation. The central question is how God is calling the whole pastorate to grow together spiritually.

4 Prayerful Listening and Discernment

Gifts and strengths: Members noted increased daily Mass attendance and new faces, well-attended Sunday Masses, a strong Wednesday evening Mass, and a successful First Saturday Mass attracting faithful from across state lines. The priests' energy and communication through the Waukon Area Pastorate Facebook page were identified as assets.

Formation and parish life: Current offerings include six youth Faith Formation sites, Healing the Whole Person, Evangelical Catholic Reach More classes, OCIA, men's Bible studies, and women's groups, among others. Discussion emphasized family-focused formation, adult formation, daily Mass, adoration, and the importance of Eucharistic catechesis.

Community events: Local parish life groups, rosary societies, and guilds are encouraged to continue to plan events to increase community life at each of our church sites.

Survey and parish feedback: The October Touchpoint Survey was distributed through Flocknote, Facebook, and the bulletin in English and Spanish. It asks about weekend Mass experiences, Mass times, hospitality, and communication. We will review all the feedback at our November meeting.

Concerns and opportunities: Members acknowledged grief and communal life concerns where Weekend Mass is no longer offered. Greater compassion and welcome from community members retaining Sunday Mass were encouraged. Sensitivity and patience toward those experiencing grief was encouraged. On the other side, some voices highlighted that they feel very welcome and supported in the new arrangement.

Weekend Mass experience: Some initial comments were read and discussed from the October Touchpoint Survey. This will be reviewed in its entirety at the November meeting. Many positive and negative comments were present. Comments touched on the priests, homilies, sound systems, music, social events, congregation engagement, among other topics.

Mass schedule planning: A discussion on Weekend Mass times was begun. A possible move of Spanish Mass from Saturday night to late Sunday morning was mentioned. Consultation with leaders of the Hispanic community will address what is best for the community and pastorate. Priest rotation, confessions, and Saturday weddings/funerals also need consideration in the Mass times decisions. The desire/need of more staggered Mass times throughout the Pastorate is one piece of initial feedback that has been surfacing. Farming schedules is another significant consideration to weigh. Christmas Mass times from last year were reviewed and discussed. Having Fr. Blake available to assist is a big help. The Christmas Mass schedule remains to be finalized.

Staffing and future planning: The positions of the Director of Evangelization and Director of Operations were very briefly discussed. The Director of Operations position will be posted after further consultation. Discernment of a new pastorate name is planned for the spring.

5 Commission Covenant

The Commission reviewed and affirmed the covenant, including keeping Christ's mission central, praying before planning, listening before speaking, representing the whole pastorate, and remaining unified once decisions are made. Members agreed to share these principles in the bulletin, possibly a few points each week.

6 Commitments and Next Steps

- Fr. Joseph plans to share the full, unedited survey comments with Pastoral Commission members when all data is compiled. The Commission will review and analyze the results at the next meeting. Fr. Joseph will pray for helpful feedback to be received and for the charity of Christ to animate the feedback from our parishioners.
- Fr. Joseph will work to accommodate parish preferences and finalize the Christmas Mass schedule. Feedback on future Mass times will be carefully weighed once all input is collected from the October Touchpoint Survey.
- Bulletin quantities will be adjusted by adding 50 in Waukon and reducing Lansing's supply by 50. Transfer of bulletins to non-Weekend Mass sites is occurring at some locations. Parish leaders at other sites where this is still needed will work to find volunteers to accomplish this.
- The pastorate receives 150 copies of The Word Among Us. In the transition months, not all copies have been received. The subscription issue should now be fixed. 50 copies will be delivered to Lansing, Waukon, and Monona.
- Meeting notes will be posted on parish websites and summarized in the bulletin.

Next meeting: Thursday, November 12, 2026.

7 Gratitude and Closing Prayer

The meeting's prayer intentions included unity, increase in baptisms, confessions, Mass attendance, and the formation of missionary disciples.