Parish Pastoral Council Special Meeting Minutes
December 29, 2025
Opening Prayer
Silent Roll Call
Parish Council: **Amy Bergman, Stacie Enneking, Steve Gruber, Joel Wuebker, Derek Spieles, Jeff Stammen, John Stechschulte**
Absent: **Beth Mescher, Emilie Winner**
Education Commission: **Jana Ranly, Erica Smith, Cara Meyer, Marshall Brame**
Visitors: **Kim Wiford, Jodie Blindauer, Leslie Tyler**

Reason for Special Meeting
The PPC council was asked to have an urgent special meeting to understand the needs of the Religious Education program and help formulate immediate steps to backfill for a recent resignation.
Religious Education Discussion
1. Challenges faced by the program:

a. Staff feels isolated and on an island
i. Not listed in bulletin
ii. Little interaction from priests and St Augustine staff
b. Huge struggle with volunteer support
i. Few parents of students participating
ii. Volunteer no shows without subs
iii. Continuous struggle for catechists
iv. Lots of good ideas for programs but no one to run them
c. Over whelming day every Wednesday
i. Starting early with Mass
ii. Going late with HS classes
d. Class room space constraints
i. Force larger classes
ii. Much harder for teachers
iii. Leads to discipline issues
iv. Very large first and second grades make for ongoing issues
e. Discipline issues are getting worse and discouraging teachers
i. Need well defined and understood process to remove students from class both short term and long term
ii. There have been cases where parents have failed to respond to phone messages and emails. This will have to be rolled into the discipline process
f. Not enough hours in the day/week to accomplish everything that is desired by the parish
2. Immediate macro steps to start back to a stable program
a. Split the CRE position into two areas
i. Part time CRE Grades K-6
ii. Part time CRE Grades 7-12

iii. This allows more flexibility with hours, support for absences and divides a long Wednesday into two areas

iv. We should advertise for full/part time to target the largest possible pool and have the flexibility to tailor the responsibilities to the talent and availability that responds

b. Hire a part time Youth Minister

i. Helps with facilitating wonderful programs and takes some load from CRE

c. Pursue two solutions to the space issue and pick one

i. Rent space in Halls of Hanover

ii. Work with the school dark hours to allow split sessions on Wednesday night

iii. We also discussed the option of putting a divider in the rectory basement to allow it to function as two classrooms if the above options don't work

d. Sound the urgent alarm that more volunteers are needed for Wednesday Mass, Religion Classes and programs unless we want to cut back on these opportunities for our youth.

e. The Parish Council voted to recommend and proceed with a – d above with a unanimous vote.

i. Jodie B to proceed with a, b, and cii.

ii. Steve Gruber to proceed with ci

iii. Parish Council to draft messages and means to deliver d

1. Needs to come from pulpit/support from priests
2. Bulletin announcements
3. Flocknotes
4. Facebook
5. Etc

3. Additional improvement ideas that need future follow up – Education Committee to consider helping with some of the following

a. Request regular priest support – visits to say hello on Wednesday mornings

b. Finish mass on time to get students to school on time

c. Teacher aides (Dads?) in select classes to help with discipline

d. Update and communicate progressive discipline process for students

e. Cell phones for CREs to aid with communicating and texts

f. Transition contacts for ongoing activities until new CREs are in place

i. Wednesday morning Mass

ii. Wednesday morning classes

iii. Wednesday night classes

iv. Thursday afternoon classes

v. Other programs

g. Expectations for all parents to volunteer in some way (like sports)

h. Lists developed by Jodie and Kim (many, many, things)

4. The financial commitments for all the above were discussed and the consensus was that the impact to the budget would be manageable and that these steps should be a priority.

5. The COL Leadership Team members present supported all of the above and it was understood that Fr Ken would support their recommendations.