



Minutes for the Holy Savior Pastoral Council meeting

June 26, 2025

Rectory

Pastoral Council Attendees:

Shannon Glover, chair
Sharon Gates, secretary
Margaret Donahue

Sr. Bernadette Gautreau
Laura Koch (online)
Catherine Napolitano-Ross

Other Attendees:

Michelle Varuolo Cole
Richie Philbrick
Nick Puiia
Jim Rinaldo
Sara Ross

Fr. Aaron Damboise, Pastor
Deacon Rod Kuhl
Seminarian Nicholas Hershbine
Jennifer LeDuc, Business Coordinator
Linda Pepin, Office Assistant

Fr. Aaron opened the meeting with prayer at 4:48 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Sharon Gates moved to accept the minutes from the March 20 meeting.
Catherine Napolitano-Ross seconded.

VOTE: Motion carried (unanimous). Minutes approved.

Fr. Aaron introduced seminarian Nick Hershbine who is here for the summer to intern and experience parish life as priest.

OLD BUSINESS

Children's Talent Show

Shannon reported this initiative has been on hold, and she is looking at organizing this for the fall or winter, probably between Thanksgiving and Christmas. Catherine, Jim, and Sharon volunteered to help, and it was suggested the Knights and Daughters may have interest in supporting. Fr. Aaron noted the parish used to do a talent show for St. Patrick's Day. The initiative was applauded as a chance for the children to see support of the community.

Little League sponsorship

Patrick Mooney was unable to attend the meeting but sent his report: It appears that all youth baseball/softball are Rec sponsored programs now. At one time they were funded through

different organizations (Elks, Eagles, Sons of Italy, Credit Union, etc.) but that is no longer the case. In fact, there are sadly so few organized teams in Rumford/Mexico now that many players are outsourcing to Canton Rec. So, at this time, it does not look like Holy Savior would be able to sponsor a team, or at least until Little League participation vastly improves. However, having 2 young kids that will be coming up through youth sports, this is something I will continue to monitor closely each spring.

Trunk or Treat

The group discussed hosting a “Trunk or Treat” in the St. A & J parking lot on Oct. 31. Sara Ross noted there is a Trunk or Treat in Bethel that is very successful, and she would be willing to do this at OLS. Richie said the Knights can discuss it at their 13 July Knights meeting if they will assist. Parishioners will be asked to bring candy. This initiative does not yet have anyone willing to lead it at St. A & J.

Update by Jim Rinaldo

At the January meeting, Jim had been given the go-ahead to pursue an initiative to hear from parishioners on their ideas for increasing attendance. He would like to invite people—everyone registered as a parishioner or who attends--to come give their thoughts at a “Coffee & Conversation” session.

Sara noted that in social groups in which she’s involved in Bethel, she gets asked about a Sunday morning Mass in Bethel. There was discussion about times convenient to the significant ski crowd in the winter.

The group discussed the best day for the session, and concluded Thursday, Sept 11 at 5:30 p.m. was best.

MOTION: Sharon Gates moved to set a “Coffee and Conversation” opportunity for Thursday, Sept. 11. Margaret Donahue seconded.

VOTE: Motion carried (unanimous).

NEW BUSINESS

Worship & Spirituality update

Nick Puiia reported that the committee has four members who will meet quarterly to discuss initiatives in upcoming months, with the next meeting in October. The committee will meet in July to discuss changes for EM distribution of communion to the homebound according to guidance from the bishop’s office. They also have altar server training on their agenda.

Catherine asked if there is a way to decrease the volume of the organ; Nick said the volume controls are ‘fried’ so there is currently no way to decrease volume. There was also discussion about changing the post communion music to instrumental only to facilitate people’s prayers (without the distraction of sung words). Fr. Aaron said he will take that up with the Worship & Spirituality Committee.

Knights of Columbus update

Deacon Rod noted there is no parish breakfast until September.

The Knights are raffling a Naples Packing gift card as a fundraiser, with tickets available after Mass and at the parish office. Drawing is at the Parish Picnic on July 27. Margaret asked about

sending a Knight to Mass in Bethel to sell tickets. Deacon Rod will be there after Mass, and that can be in the announcements.

The Knights are ordering kiosks that have pamphlets. Fr. Aaron elaborated that the Catholic information center cardboard kiosks hold 16-20 booklets on Mass, sacraments, rosary, etc., to help people learn about the Catholic faith. Richie noted the kiosks are \$150 each; this is what the gift card fundraiser will support.

Richie is also working on a free throw contest in Mexico Rec Center in January, to get church presence out in the community, perhaps in coordination with the Daughters of Isabella. It's a way to get kids involved and parents interested and potentially back at church.

Jim Rinaldo asked about having prayer candles back in church, and Fr. Aaron said it is on the list of wishes.

Sara Ross asked about putting a QR code on the pew for WeShare to facilitate contributions from visitors; Michele suggested the alternative of a QR code on a card—possibly on a Missal bookmark.

Updates from Fr. Aaron

Fr. Aaron reported there are new documents from the bishop's office regarding distribution of communion at the Mass and for the homebound. It came about because the bishop had people with pix in the communion line and didn't know why the people were. The new guidance streamlines and standardizes procedures throughout the diocese. EMs and the parish will get more information. These are not extreme changes but will be helpful to the parish at large. Sr. Bernadette noted this has been an issue for years, and Sharon said in other states she's seen Ems called to the altar to get host following communion.

St. Dom's

Fr. Aaron is on the school board for St. Dom's, though the parish doesn't have any students there now. K-8 will remain open, with 208 registered. There is potential for a shuttle to Cheverus for high schoolers. Bishop Ruggieeri made the decision to close the high school portion, but issues had been going on for more than 10 years, and the pot of money that had supported the school is gone. It took \$3 million to run the school, and the board of directors couldn't fund that. The diocese will work on Chesterton Academies in smaller facilities. The bishop is concerned with Christian education, but the realities had to be dealt with.

Social Justice

Jennifer noted there are lots of people reaching out to the parish for assistance with their CMP bills. The parish uses Help Your Neighbor funds for immediate needs of groceries/gas (\$25 gift cards). She also noted Shannon is a great resource, and no one in the community should be without food or clothing.

Council changes

Sister Bernadette noted this is her last meeting as she has 'termed out' after six years on the council. She thanked Fr. Aaron and Fr. Nathan before him for the opportunity to fill a role she sees as representing parishioners who may not feel they have a voice in the parish. She made a point of listening but was limited in her voice. She will pray for all the council members.

Margaret Donahue announced this will be her last meeting, and expressed her opinion that it is all about St. A & J.

Linda passed along a farewell from John Bernard who is also 'terming out' after six years on the council. He expressed thanks for the opportunity to serve and said it has been an honor.

Council Terms

Fr. Aaron stated he has some people in mind to ask to fill council vacancies. The group discussed assigning people to the remainder of terms not served out, to avoid having a majority change in membership when the group that recently came onto the council terms out. The group agreed to assign members according to the staggered schedule submitted. [See atch.]

2025/2026 Meeting schedule

The group looked at the proposed upcoming meeting schedule, which changes the meetings back to Monday evenings at 6 p.m. (they had been moved from Monday to Thursday to accommodate Alpha, and from 6 p.m. to 5 p.m. to avoid time conflict with Thursday Bible Class).

15 September 2025

Cemetery Committee update

Buildings & Grounds update

26 January 2026

Knights of Columbus & Daughters of Isabella update

16 March 2026

Faith Formation update

15 June 2026 (w/ Finance Committee – Budget approval)

Worship & Spirituality Committee update

MOTION: Sharon Gates made a motion to accept the 2025/2026 meeting schedule as presented. Catherine Napolitano-Ross seconded.

DISCUSSION: Catherine noted she has another commitment every other Monday which may interfere with her ability to attend.

VOTE: Motion carried (unanimous).

Adjournment

MOTION: Catherine Napolitano-Ross made a motion to adjourn. Sharon Gates seconded.

VOTE: Motion carried (unanimous). *Adjourned at 6:19 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Gates
Secretary

