

ST. JEROME PASTORAL COUNCIL OCTOBER 2, 2025, MEETING MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Dan Jackson at 7:03pm.

Members present: Chairman Dan Jackson, Vice Chairman John Hopkins, Paul Baumgartner, Angee Clark-Hellon, Lucy Ehrhardt, Jan Gremaud, Kelly Houston, Fr. Kevin Laughery, Tom Mines, Brenda Neumann, Joel Petry, Gail Wolff

Members absent: Sr. Linda Mary De Lonais, Betsy Weinell

Opening Prayer was offered by Dan Jackson.

No additions or corrections to the September 4, 2025, Minutes. Motion was made by John Hopkins and seconded by Angee Clark-Hellon to accept the Minutes as presented; motion carried. Minutes approved.

Monthly Reports

Pastor: Fr. Kevin was thankful for a successful Mass in the Grass on Sunday. He then commented on the September 30 Pastoral Training session conducted by Katie Price from the Diocese in Springfield. Katie encouraged Pastoral Council to make personal invitations and introductions to parishioners. In talking about the make-up of the Council, she favored election and rotation on and off, which is different from current practices. When Pastoral Councils were originally mandated thirty-five years ago, Fr. Kevin was informed that Council members should be chosen by selection over election. Fr. Kevin's experience over the years has been that the people who sit at the Pastoral Council table are people who care. Another topic covered by Katie was offertory envelopes, which need to include not only opportunities for financial contribution, but also for offering prayers and other forms of stewardship. Fr. Kevin is willing to discuss these ideas with the staff.

Written Monthly Reports: No questions on the monthly reports submitted for Youth Ministry, Faith Formation and St. John Neumann. Jan had a question on the Administrative Office Report reference to Safe Environment Training and Updates. Dan and John responded that this was Safe Haven. Brenda added that she must verify that all her volunteers are up to date with their Safe Environment training and background checks. Training is only one time. Background checks are initiated by the volunteer and repeated every five years.

Old Business

Pastoral Council Training – Review: John agreed with Katie Price's suggestion to go back and review the 2024 Parish Vitality Study. Jan liked the idea that Pastoral Council members contact five parishioners and ask for their prayer requests to be forwarded to the Prayer Chain. This will provide an opportunity for parishioners to share what's on their mind. Dan will contact Deacon Bob to see if there are people on the Prayer Chain who would like to reach out to parishioners, especially those we have not seen at church in a while. Tom suggested we use a prayer basket at Mass, where people could write and submit their prayer requests. Jan added that this ties into Fr. Kevin's previous comment about the offertory envelopes, which could be used for more than money; and these could be placed in the pews along with pencils in time for the Centennial Campaign weekends. People still need to be asked personally.

Rosary Walk/Mass in the Grass – Review: Angee talked about the Scriptural Rosary Walk in which four people participated. Perhaps an outdoor Rosary at the Grotto would be good for next year but do it later in the day. There were comments that 8:00am was too early. John suggested an outdoor Rosary Walk twice a year between Sunday morning Masses. John received suggestions for an outdoor Stations of the Cross; however, there may be safety issues.

Brenda reported how easy it was to get volunteers for Mass in the Grass. People just need to be asked. We must be the inviters. The lunch had great attendance. Bingo could have had more attendance, but the Council needed to wait until people were finished eating in order to set up. Those who participated had a fun time. Dan deemed it a great success. Brenda will make a photo board of the event and place it in the narthex.

Old Business (continued)

Centennial Campaign: Jan reported that the three receptions presented by Ray Coogan from OSV were completed the previous week. Jim Sagovac and Jan Gremaud provided talks as well. Pulpit talks will be launched over the next three weekends. Currently the Campaign has eleven donors with pledges totaling \$154,000.

Monthly Fellowship Calendar: This is a continuous process and will remain on the agenda. The fellowship activities are ways to get new people involved in their parish. Jan reminded the Council that the spiritual aspect needs to be emphasized more, such as greater attendance at Adoration and at special Masses (i.e. St. Jerome Feast Day). Angee announced a Living Nativity event during Advent at the Blackjack Chapel with a reception in the hall.

Engaging the Community Through Social Media: Joel described a “Why – How – What” concept by Simon Synek of inspiring young people from the inside out through social media. WHY: To grow closer to God and each other through our parish family, connect with other people. HOW: Spiritual friendship, prayer, acts of service. In this Digital Marketing Brainstorming, he added WHAT: We could offer that we have a robust parish community, vibrant celebrations with Masses, various activities and groups, etc. People could shoot their own videos and share, create a post and share or an administrator could post. Examples of spiritual friendship would be activities that are going on, acts of service, Living Nativity, Mass in the Grass, etc. People could digitally share their stories, interviewing people asking people what is their ‘why’...why are you here? Friendship challenges—invite someone to do something during advent, pray for someone, write notes of encouragement, invite someone for coffee, Friendship Sunday, Bingo, small group activities. Dan agreed that if our objective is to be inviters, this is another avenue to “invite.”

Campus Security: Brenda reported that she received a call from Officer Tony Leone who is on the Troy area Alliance with St. Jerome and he tested her after the recent Michigan Mormon Church shooting. He asked about St. Jerome's security. After a long discussion, it was determined that St. Jerome Church must have cameras at every door with someone watching those cameras during Mass. All churches in our area have door cameras with someone in a rear area monitoring them during services. Someone needs to be in our narthex and our doors need to be locked during Mass. This would be part of their service to St. Jerome. Dan added that procedures must be developed and everyone made aware. John and Jan volunteered to work on procedures. There was a lengthy discussion about transients' asking for money, needing utilities paid, people sleeping in the clothing donation box, etc. Brenda is part of the community outreach effort for these situations and needs to be made aware of each request. Paul reminded the group that obtaining cameras had been investigated previously, and we have the wi-fi necessary for them to operate.

New Business

Transition of Sr. Linda Mary's Ministries Post-Retirement: Sr. Linda Mary offered to be absent from the meeting so the Council could discuss how her ministries could be transitioned post-retirement. Dan was concerned that since the meeting was running overtime, this topic could be tabled until the next meeting. Fr. Kevin added that this is something that can develop over time. He and Brenda had started considering things but would need another month.

Pulse of the Parish

A suggestion was made to Dan that the Pastoral Council meet in St. Joseph's Hall rather than at the parish office. The main reasons mentioned being challenging accessibility to the upper office and inadequate parking. Dan will contact Jodi Roedl to make sure St. Joseph's Hall is available.

There being no further business, Dan offered the closing Prayer. The meeting adjourned at 8:21pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 6, 2025, at 7:00pm, Wayland office.

Respectfully Submitted,
Gail Wolff, Recorder