

ST. JEROME PASTORAL COUNCIL AUGUST 6, 2026, MEETING MINUTES

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

Members present: Chairman Dan Jackson, Vice Chairman John Hopkins, Lucy Ehrhardt, Jan Gremaud, Tom Mines, Joel Petry, Gail Wolff, Paul Baumgartner, Fr. Kevin Laughery

Members absent: Angee Clark-Hellon, Kelly Houston, Brenda Neumann, Betsy Weinell

Opening Prayer was offered by Fr. Kevin.

A motion was made by John Hopkins and seconded by Jan Gremaud to accept the Minutes as presented; motion carried. Minutes approved.

Monthly Reports

Pastor: Fr. Kevin reported that OCIA continues to grow. He and Brenda are interviewing people to match up OCIA individuals with people who would be fitting catechists. As Fr. Kevin had mentioned last month, St. John Neumann was in need of three additional School Board members to represent the parish. Russ Hart, Kelly Houston and Erin Stark were very helpful in recommending likely people. All three candidates quickly accepted to serve for three years of service on the School Board—Ann Cripe, Gabrielle Alyatim and Mark Schuette. At a recent Deanery meeting, a main topic of discussion was the St. Vincent de Paul Society. An attendee works in their national office in Missouri. Fr. Kevin asked if the work of the St. Vincent de Paul Society can be done on an ecumenical basis, as here in Troy we have Ministries Unlimited. The answer was no, mainly because SVDP Society has a specific spirituality which may or may not transfer. Fr. Kevin is in hope that it would and he plans to have further communication with the attendee from SVDP. There was further discussion about St. Jerome's past involvement with the St. Vincent de Paul Society in the Belleville Diocese involving a food bus delivering once or twice a month food prepared at St. Jerome for the people in East St. Louis. Fr. Kevin is interested in seeing us develop something with SVDP once again. Tom added that his wife Cheryl has a lot of experience with SVDP. Jan asked if food is their only ministry, and Fr. Kevin replied that clothing and furniture were also collected. Tom mentioned that SVDP also helps out with bills, rent, etc. Fr. Kevin stressed that their mission is not just sending things but developing personal relationships. Fr. Kevin mentioned the Pastoral Plan that can be obtained on the Diocesan website. He will send an electronic copy to the Council. The Olive Wood sales event at St. Jerome may need to be scheduled every two years. Advent or Lent may be the best times. The weekend before Thanksgiving 2027 will be the next Olive Wood sale. Fr. Kevin just received a call from Phil Ochoa asking to thank everyone at the Masses for their prayers for his granddaughter Mason, who is now cancer-free. Fr. Kevin agreed that Phil could do that from the ambo before the Masses.

Written Monthly Reports: No questions on monthly reports submitted.

Old Business

Stewardship Weekend: Dan sent out a final draft of the stewardship ministries inventory and to Fr. Kevin for editing. Upon approval, this request will be sent out to the parish at the end of the month asking them to bring back their responses by September 19-20 to be compiled by the Pastoral Council. Some of the ministries listed are not fully formed, but are ministries we would like to start and need volunteers. A retiring parishioner asked Jan where she could go to volunteer her time for the church.

Monthly Fellowship Calendar: Gail distributed another draft copy and asked for input on items and dates. Dan mentioned holding a rededication event for the completion of St. Joseph's Hall, perhaps during the Potluck and Bingo event slotted in for November. Fr. Kevin added that he will be away November 8.

Old Business (Continued)

Centennial Campaign – Capital Projects: Paul reported that the replacement of the church air conditioning will begin after August 17. Replacing the skylights will be in September. There are no firm dates on either of these projects. Paul is pleased with the work done so far in St. Joseph's Hall---floor, vents, and ceiling. Regarding the Evangelical Catholic update, Fr. Kevin reported that we have a team; and we have a schedule for this 12-week spirituality program for the team. It is arranged by weeks, but Brenda said she recognizes the difficulty in pulling the team members together at one time, starting the week of August 30. It will run until just before Thanksgiving. Josh Dart, the Evangelical Catholic representative, will be visiting here Tuesday. October 20.

Campus Security: John will be forwarding his draft of campus security policies and procedures for Pastoral Council input. Dan was asked about the plan to lock church during Mass and there was concern about the ability to exit in case of emergency. Changing out the door locking mechanisms is part of the plan. The gate at the top of the stairs outside the kitchen is unlocked as this is an exit.

Pastoral Council Goals: Grow the membership at St. Jerome. Increase attendance at the weekend Masses. Increase the number of members who participate in parish ministries. Dan asked for changes/additions to the Pastoral Goals and Specific Actions to Achieve Goals that he had distributed I July. Some of the specific actions are already in place. There needs to be a plan. Joel asked if the S.M.A.R.T. approach will be used in accomplishing the goals. (Goals need to be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound.) He referred to the action of recognizing volunteers. Dan led a discussion on what he had done in the past to thank those who volunteered for projects at St. Jerome and what other parishes have been doing. Paul appreciated all the help Jim Sagovac had given him in the hall with the walls and chairs, working long hours to get the job done. Dan appreciated the work on the pews that Allen Schmelzer and his son had done on Wednesdays over a number of months. Joel reminded the group of the importance of building spiritual friendship through community events. Dan suggested an all-parish recognition dinner. Paul agreed to make it all inclusive. Jan added that perhaps 'gratitude' might be a better word as some individuals do not like to be singled out, and we try to be humble in our service. What about adding more specific spiritual goals, for self-awareness to enhance our relationship with the Lord. Fr. Kevin said that there is a way to measure spiritual conversion to determine if goals are being met. Evangelical Catholic may possibly help us do that. We need to give people opportunities to grow in faith. Joel mentioned Adoration, additional rosaries, the speaker series, etc., are all powerful things. Jan asked if we could offer to St. Jerome parishioners Edwardsville's Contemplative Outreach chapter of St. Louis's Fr. Thomas Keating's meditative Centering Prayer sessions. Giving people opportunities such as this would help us achieve our goals at St. Jerome. Our previous Advent Challenge was discussed---sit somewhere else in church; introduce yourself to someone you don't know. It got people out of their comfort zone. A number of options are being considered.

New Business

Pulse of the Parish: Jan asked who is doing the Prayer Chain as Jody had sent out a recent request for Fr. Jorge at our sister parish in Guatemala. He is bedridden and needs our prayers. There being no further business, Fr. Kevin offered the closing Prayer. The meeting adjourned at 7:55pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 3, 2026, at 7:00pm, St. Joseph's Hall.

Respectfully Submitted,
Gail Wolff, Recorder