

Saint Raphael Parish
Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes
December 2, 2024 7:00PM
St. Ann Church Conference Room

Rose Marie M. called the meeting to order and requested an opening prayer (Terri D.).

Attendance: Absent – John A., Manfred M., Francis O.

Opening Prayer- Terri D.

Rose Marie M. facilitated the meeting

Acceptance of September 2024 meeting notes

Father John's Comments:

- Roof repairs are progressing, and the St. Ann Church roof is finished.
- Pleasantly surprised and grateful our Masses are well attended and there are more children and young people attending.

Standing Committee Reports

Prayer and Worship Committee Report from Ann Eden

- ***Celebrate Saint Raphael!*** (September 27-September 29): Triduum in honor of our patron saint went very well. The Friday evening Prayer Service included Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, Adoration and Benediction. During Adoration there were periods of silence, recitation of the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary (led by Cindy Sissick, Pat Pavlucik, Tom Jagodzinski, Maria Tomasetti, and Rose Cox and an abridged version of the Litany of Saint Raphael (led by Frank Lacerenza). Mary Lee Frisbie served as cantor.
- During the weekend Masses the Prayer of the Faithful petitions were prayed “through the intercession of Saint Raphael.” As a tribute to Saint Raphael, “health of the sick” and because “an apple a day keeps the doctor away,” GIFT families and other parish volunteers handed out apples after all the Masses.
- Special thanks to our local BigY World Class Market at 150 Boston Post Road, which supplied the apples. The managers and staff could not have been more helpful or cooperative. BigY give us a very reasonable price and happily loaded the boxes of apples into our vehicles for delivery. Thanks also to the Knights of Columbus Tinto Council #47 for their kindness in supporting the celebration and covering the cost of the apples.
- The Prayer and Worship committee was especially pleased and grateful for the parish-wide involvement: GIFT, Knights, lectors, parish volunteers, etc.
- ***International Rosary*** (Tuesday, October 8 at Saint Gabriel Church): Diana D'Avignon (French), Emma Scialis (Italian), Antonia Gomes (Portuguese), Katarina Weirether (German), Anna Nguyen (Vietnamese), John Marmolejo (Spanish) led the congregation in praying the Luminous Mysteries. Particular focus on 'praying for priests' and 'priestly vocations' was reflected in the meditation prayers. The program concluded with a special prayer for Fr. John, our pastor. Many thanks to Cathy Coda who chaired the reception that followed and to all who participated, baked, or helped in any way.
- ***Mass of Remembrance:*** Sunday, November 17, 2:00 p.m., Saint Ann Church ; live-streamed: At this annual Mass we will remember and celebrate all the members of our parish family who have died during the past year (October 2023 through mid-October 2024). Parishioners, families and friends are invited to attend. Personal invitations went to the families of those for whom we had celebrated funeral

Masses and funeral home and graveside services. The Mass was livestreamed; Matt Downs reported 57 views of the Mass from 8 different states.

- **Advent** begins on Sunday, December 1: This season’s booklet *Waiting in Joyful Hope* from Liturgical Press will be available at all the church doors the weekend before Thanksgiving.
 - Advent wreaths will be in both churches prior to the first Sunday of the season.

Social Justice/Human Concerns Committee – Meeting held on September 30, October 17 and November 18

- We met with Debbie Hudobenko from Hope Pregnancy Center for the purpose of planning to form the new Pro-Life Ministry.
- Used the information collected with Debbie and the committee to create a draft information meeting process and opt-in cards to attract new volunteers who will lead this new ministry. The committee members approved the draft process.
- Volunteers will promote Pro-life ministry (handouts and opt-in cards) after each Mass November 9 and 10. More volunteers needed.
- The committee agreed to the following strategic priorities for the 2024-2025 year:
 - Pro-life Ministry formation
 - Human Trafficking - in cooperation with Louise Simonetti and the Global Strategic Operatives organization – see How to Help handout
 - The Kindness project (supporting female prisoners)
 - Wally will follow up with Tiheba Bain who worked with us for the Mother's Day cards. DONE – No Response
 - Elizabeth will post a notice in the bulletin asking for volunteers to visit Niantic prison monthly to read and discuss the gospel – May be better strategy or contact person with Gina Raymond @ Order of Malta (Catholic Bible Study)
 - Attract and orient new member(s) for the committee
 - Re-assess the results of the relationship with Domestic Violence
 - Wally will request an update from Rachael Schippani at BHCare – DONE
 - Here is the Umbrella Center for DV Services data comparing last fiscal year to the current one, specifically for the town of Milford.

	City	# of Clients Served	Total Hours	Services Count	LAPs	Lethality	Shelter Participants
2023	Milford	252	4049.0	1509	99	79	5
2024	Milford	264	347.2	1086	161	124	1

- Support the Safe Haven Newborn Device project which requires new legislation. The Human Concerns Committee will not play an active role as this project has a separate committee including legislators and professionals.
- The Garden Project. The committee will continue to support Elizabeth in her efforts to grow food for the Food Bank and to promote her process to the Archdiocese.
- The projects supported by Rose Marie and Maria are: Christmas Giving, Teens for Service, Beth-El dinner teams, Trick of Trott, Social Visits to local health care facilities., and CRS Rice Bowl. Updates will be provided on each of these each month as needed. The committee will provide support to these initiatives as needed and requested.
- The committee will **not** play an active role in Protect Connecticut's Children initiative.
- The next meeting of the committee will be virtual on November 18 at 7 PM via MSTeams.

November 18 Meeting Notes:

The Pro-Life Ministry Formation:

- Wally will update the committee and the council on the status of the pro-life ministry formation:
 - Wally will call Maria in the Church office and see how many have responded to the pro-life opt-in requests.
 - Wally will speak to Kerry Sciuto who is interested in being on the committee.
 - In January the committee will begin texting parishioners, if necessary, to garner additional interest in the new committee.

The Safe-Haven Baby Box:

- Elizabeth has garnered help from Save-Baby Box to create a draft of the legislation.
- Elizabeth is working with volunteers to create a FAQ for the project.
- On December 6th the draft legislation and the FAQ's will be available for review.

Domestic Violence initiative.

- Wally will call Rachael and ask for a clear explanation of the data interpretations.
- Wally will ask for next step recommendations.

Miscellaneous

- Wally will email Peter Wolfgang of Family Institute of CT and ask for the link to the presentation that was made at the annual dinner which included all the successful FIC initiatives.
 - Our parish Christmas Giving Program is in progress.
 - Social visits to local health care facilities are being scheduled for December and early January.
 - There will be a SERRV fair trade table at the Dec 7 Christmas fair. SERRV, a nonprofit fair-trade retailer since 1949, has a mission to support artisans and farmers as they earn income through fair trade handcrafts and foods.
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Parish Life – Cathy Coda

Social Gathering

- Our Christmas Fair will be held on December 7th
- New Year's Eve event will be in St. Ann's Hall on December 31. Tickets are being sold after each mass.
- Coffee And schedule for 2025 is weekends of: Jan 18, Feb 15, Mar 8, Apr 12, May 18, Jun 21, Jul 12, Aug 9, Sept 6, Oct 11, Nov 8, Dec 13.

Parish Life Rose Marie Marmolejo

- Successful Advent Luncheon was held on November 24th. Donations of warm winter clothes and food were made to Beth El and Amistad Catholic Worker House.

Faith Formation-Maria Tomasetti

- 74 families have signed up for our faith formation program for 2024/2025--our monthly GIFT program, a Sacramental program, or both.
- First Reconciliation is scheduled for Saturday, December 14 at St. Ann Church. We have several practice opportunities scheduled. We have 23 children who will receive First Reconciliation on 12/14 or on a December make-up date.
- Our GIFT Advent/Christmas Open House is scheduled for Sunday, December 15 from 12 noon to 2:00 pm and Tuesday, December 17 from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm.

- Teen Confirmation. 21 teens received the Sacrament of Confirmation at the Cathedral of Saint Joseph on Sunday, November 3.
- Adult Confirmation. Two adults received the Sacrament of Confirmation at the Cathedral of Saint Joseph on Wednesday, November 6. One adult received the Sacrament of Confirmation at our 4:00 pm Mass on Saturday, November 9. Fr. John received permission from Archbishop Coyne for this Confirmation at our parish.
- OCIA/RCIA. We've started working with one candidate who is a baptized Catholic, preparing to receive the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist. We may also have a second candidate.

Goals

Suggested goals of the Council:

- Frank L. will contact each committee chair, clarify the mission using the By Laws and Constitution, and ask the chairs to share the missions with the committee members. The chairs will ask each committee to identify goals based on the mission. Ideally the outcome of this effort will be each subcommittee presents their goals to the council to avoid overlapping efforts.
- Some of the committees will adopt one or more of the following goals:
 - Distribute a gift of a flower on Mother's Day to all parishioner women who attend masses that day.
- Organize streaming for St. Gabriel's Church as we have it in St. Ann's. Father will work on this goal.
- The council creates a welcome packet for new parishioners. This goal may be completed. Father will check his archives.

A discussion of the By Laws and Constitution occurred especially about how to reach consensus. A committee will be formed, Frank L. will chair this committee, to review the By Laws and Constitution to make recommendations to the council for edits. All council members will read Article II, "Purpose," Appendix 1, "Characteristics of a Parish Pastoral Council," and Appendix 4, a description of the "Building Consensus."

Church Signage

John K. presented a well-received design for the St. Gabriel Parish to replace the free standing one.

Open Forum

- ***"Peace On Earth" Advent Afternoon of Reflection & Music*** - Sunday, December 8, 3:00 pm, St. Ann Church: With special guest speaker, Msgr. Robert Weiss Retired pastor of St. Rose of Lima Parish, Newtown and the St. Ann Choir
- Suggestions were made to identify someone (perhaps a young person) who can boost our social media promotion.
- John K. will work to remove the tree at St. Gabriel Church.

NEXT Parish Council Meeting: January 27, 2025 St. Ann Church Office 7PM