

Saint Raphael Parish
Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes
January 27, 2025 7:00PM
St. Ann Church Conference Room

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

Attendance: Absent – Francis O., Deacon George S., Manfred M., Terri D.

Opening Prayer- Cathy C.

Rose Marie M. facilitated the meeting

Acceptance of December 2024 meeting notes

Father John's Comments:

- A suggestion was made to Fr. John to add handrails in both churches going up steps to the altar for additional safety of elderly parishioners. The council will discuss this and make decisions at the next meeting.
- Fr. John reviewed the attendance, and the numbers show a significant upturn 2024 to 2025.
- Suggestion was made to move the 11 AM Mass in July and August from St. Gabriel to St. Ann for the air conditioning. The council will discuss this at the next meeting.
- The WiFi in St. Gabriel's is being installed.

Standing Committee Reports

Prayer and Worship Committee Report from Ann Eden

- At our January 18th meeting, per the written request of the Pastoral Council, the committee reviewed, as we have before, the function of our Prayer and Worship Committee according to the Council's Constitution and By-laws. The committee's stated function "to maintain an ongoing program of education and training for liturgical ministers" prompted a brief discussion and a request that we look at options for a program of lector training.
- Goals for the Prayer and Worship Committee: To continue to provide opportunities for parishioners to deepen their faith through a variety of prayer experiences and liturgical celebrations. (Unanimous committee agreement).
- The committee's current focus: the upcoming season of Lent. Ash Wednesday falls on March 5.
- The theme for Lent 2025: "Hope", which dovetails beautifully with the theme of Jubilee 2025.
- The committee was unanimous in our choice of Lenten booklet: *Not By Bread Alone* from Liturgical Press. With Father John's approval we will order 500 booklets for the parish as soon as possible.
- Schedule for Friday stations of the cross, 3:00 p.m. at Saint Ann Church, livestreamed.
(*Bulletin/newsletter notices should include info that stations are recorded – available for viewing after the fact.*)
 - 03/07/25 Stations by Father Michael Clay
 - 03/14/25 Stations for Peace
 - 03/21/25 All of You Drink of This – The Way of the Cross
 - 03/28/25 Stations for Today's Disciples
 - 04/04/25 Come to Me All of You – Stations in the Voice of Christ

- 04/11/25 Mary's Way of the Cross
- Maria Tomasetti is looking into options for Stations of the Cross for teen led stations for people of all ages.
- Lenten events on the parish calendar:
 - Evening of Prayer – Monday, March 10, 7:00 p.m. at Saint Ann Church (Similar to what we had done for *Celebrate Saint Raphael*): Open with exposition of the Blessed Sacrament/Close (Fr. John will be with us.) Litany of Hope: a service of worship Close with Benediction
 - Evening of Music and Reflections – Peter DeMarco coordinating w/Amy Ekeh Monday, March 24 at 7 p.m. at Saint Ann Church (Backup date: Monday, March 31)
- Lenten Supper: Scheduled for Friday, March 28, catered by Lasse's. Committee (Cathy Coda, Rose Marie Marmolejo, Pat Pavlucik, Kerry Sciuto, Kathleen Buchanan) scheduled to meet on Friday, 1/31 at 11:30 AM for future planning. Event to include reflections.
- Easter Triduum, The Great 3 Days:
 - Holy Thursday, April 17; Good Friday, April 18; Holy Saturday, April 19. Where will the Triduum liturgies be celebrated? (Decision rests with Fr. John.)
 - Blessing of Easter Food – Deacon George (**verify**) Holy Saturday, April 19, noon at Saint Gabriel Church
- Next meeting: Online, to be scheduled during the week of February 11.

Social Justice/Human Concerns Committee – Meeting held on January 6, 2025

- The committee agreed that we are following our responsibilities as delineated in the By-Laws and Constitution of the Parish Council. No action is needed.
- **Kindness Project:**
 - Women received 100 cards and envelopes (pre-stamped) at Niantic Prison the week of December 16.
 - Committee is investigating the possibility of providing needed personal care items in the spring to all 800 women in cooperation with 3-4 other churches.
- **Pro-Life Ministry:** Our initial strategy is to form a committee by identifying volunteers to run the committee
 - Introduction online presentation will occur on Wednesday January 8 at 7 PM. The team members are invited. The purpose is to ask volunteers to act.
 - A request will be made to add the prayer of the faithful for the unborn at every Mass (for the purpose of creating a pro-life culture).
- **Domestic Violence initiative**
 - The committee will write an article for the parish newsletter to update the parishioners.
 - Maria will look for an opportunity to have BHCare make a presentation about relationship building for the youth. The purpose will be for education to prevent domestic violence.
- **Safe-Haven Baby Box project**
 - Draft legislation has been written
 - Legislators will be chosen soon who will propose the Bill

- Parishioners will be asked to generate support for the bill by sending documents of support or in-person testimony of support.
- **Human Trafficking**
 - Elizabeth will work with Order of Malta and Louise Simonetti from the Global Strategic Operatives organization to identify opportunities for investment of financial support and real estate investments.
- **Homefront:** A date is identified for a new project - May 17, 2025.
- **Souper Bowl of Caring, Drive-Thru Event, Teens for Service project.** We had 15 teens from Grades 7 thru 12 participate on Saturday and a good number of parishioners drive in with donations for the St. Gabriel Food Pantry and Beth-El Center, especially in the first hour. We've advertised this as a Jan and Feb event so additional donations are coming into both churches and our GIFT sessions.
- **Next Meeting:** February 3rd 2025 at 7 PM (virtual)

Parish Life – Cathy Coda and Social Gathering and Parish Life Rose Marie Marmolejo

- The New Year's Eve Party, it was a big success, many Thanks to Arlene, Kathleen, Melvin and his family, and to all who participated. The food from Lasse's was great, the DJ was fantastic, note for this years New Year's Eve celebration, to make sure there are salad bowls and extra plates. All who went had a great time, there was dancing and singing. There was a \$970 extra after all said and done, money goes to Father John and the Church. Plans are for another one will be forth coming, and the price will go up to \$50 per person.
- Christmas Spectacular 2024 made over \$6000, Thank you to Mary Jo and her entire crew of elves who helped out with setting up, baking, and day of helping out at tables and in the kitchen. Again, a big Thank you to Kathleen, Melvin and Aurora and their sons. Enough is not said for their continued help with church activities and all they do.
- Advent luncheon may not happen for 2025 but want to keep the winter drive going for need of hats, gloves, scarfs. Trish suggested somehow combining with giving tree, but that may not be an option.
- Lenten dinner is planned for Friday, March 28th at 6:00 pm. More info to come.
- Lou gave us Social Gathering Projects for 2025, upcoming Social Gathering Meetings, Coffee And dates, and an email from Frank Lacerenza, with information on Functions of Council Standing Committees
- Leo suggested working with other churches to help one another with all the activities.
- Social Gathering will keep doing the Coffee And, which includes donations to WWP and Boys and Girls Village; Tag Sale, Christmas Spectacular, Lenten dinner, New Year's Eve party/dinner, Annual Picnic, Ministries Pamphlet, Bottle Drive (next one is being planned for early Spring). The committee decided a Mission statement is needed for our group.
- Food drive to support Saint Gabriel's food pantry, and Beth El Center will be held January 25, from 11 – 1PM at Saint Ann's parking lot.
- Next Social Gathering Meeting: February 18, at 6:00 PM NOTE new time, that's 6:00 PM

Faith Formation: Maria Tomasetti

- First Reconciliation and First Communion - 23 children received First Reconciliation in December 2024. Five additional children/teens are preparing to receive First Reconciliation. 28 children are preparing to receive First Communion in May. Our scheduled First Communion weekends are May 3/4 and May 17/18. Children will receive First Communion at our regular weekend Masses.
- For our January GIFT program (Jan 26 and Jan 28), we are offering the VIRTUS Empowering God's Children, Teaching Safety program for children/teens in Grades 1-12 with their parents/guardians. We are required to offer this personal safety program every year to families registered in our faith

formation program. The VIRTUS program replaces the Child Lures and Teen Lures programs used in previous years since this company closed permanently in December 2024. We return to our sessions on the Nicene Creed for February GIFT, focusing on Jesus' Death and Resurrection.

- OCIA/RCIA. We have one candidate who is a baptized Catholic, preparing to receive the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil. A second candidate, baptized in another Christian denomination, will begin preparation in the spring.
- Adult Confirmation. We have one candidate who is preparing to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation at the Cathedral of St. Joseph on Thursday, May 15. A second adult is considering preparation for Confirmation, possibly for our late summer/fall Adult Confirmation program, which we will be advertising.
- Nurturing Seedlings: Community for Young Parents. The Archdiocese piloted the Nurturing Seedlings ministry in 2024. We were not part of the pilot but will be attending a training session to learn more on Saturday, February 8. Nurturing Seedlings is for parents of children from birth to age 5 and is designed to help bridge the gap for young families between Baptism and First Eucharist preparation. More to come!
- Christian/Lifelong Faith Formation Committee. A meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 10 from 7 pm to 8 pm in a Saint Ann Parish Center classroom. Any adult parishioners, ages 18 or older, are welcome to participate. Thank you to Terri Deveny, who will be facilitating this meeting.

Goals

Constitution By-Laws Committee Report:

- The committee consists of Cathy, Francis, Elaine and Frank (chair).
- The Committee proposed the following amendment to our Constitution & Bylaws. NOTE: This has the approval of our pastor. It will be discussed and decided at the Feb. council meeting:
- Change Art. XV (Amendments) to read: ***Any member or committee of the Pastoral Council may recommend an amendment to the Constitution/byLaws at any regular or special meeting. After discussion and approval of the Pastor it will be included in the written minutes and be part of the written agenda for the next meeting. If the consensus of the council is in agreement at the next meeting, the proposed amendment will go into effect, subject to the ratification of the Pastor.***
- The new committee member selection process will start one-month earlier in February (not march) to facilitate the start of the committee. The selection committee will need to be formed in February. In the Feb. agenda we will include the changes. The newly selected committee members will attend the final meeting on June 2nd as part of their orientation.

Open Forum

- Suggestion was made to have an incident process when there is an accident or medical emergency. Fr. John will contact the insurance company to see if they have a recommendation for a procedure.
- John K. will organize flowers for Mother's Day
- Cathy C. will contact Pat about how to get started on a welcome packet.

NEXT Parish Council Meeting: February 24, 2025 St. Gabriel Hall 7PM