

Saint Raphael Parish
Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes
February 24, 2025 7:00PM

Opening Prayer- Elaine B.

Rose Marie M. facilitated the meeting

Attendance: Absent - Deacon George S., Manfred M., Maria T., Terri D.

Acceptance of January 2025 meeting notes

Father John's Comments:

- Father asked the Council to decide in which church to hold the Lenten services of Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday and the decision was made to celebrate the Triduum at St. Gabriel Church. Cathy C. will call the Tyde (next door) asking to use their parking lot during the holy week.
- Peter O'Neil will replace Manfred for his responsibilities at St. Gabriel Church.

Standing Committee Reports

Prayer and Worship Committee Report from Ann Eden

- Prayer service on March 10 with the theme of Hope.
- There will be Lector Training with Fr. Michael Ruminski 10 AM March 22.

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

- **Kindness Project:**
 - Committee will investigate collaborating with other churches to provide personal care items to Niantic Woman's prison. We await Tiheba Bain's communication.
 - To continue the Kindness Cards project cards, we can plan for Easter April 20, Mother's Day May 11 and Father's Day June 15. We also need to ensure that the personal care items are distributed to the inmates for free and not put in the commissary where they must purchase them.
 - We have identified a secondary partner and will evaluate them at our next meeting.
- **Pro-life Ministry:**
 - **Short-Term Strategy:** Create awareness and spread the word to attract more volunteers to form a Pro-life Committee and we plan to do that by doing a diaper drive as a small first step.
 - New pro-life prayers for the faithful are being evaluated by Deacon George
 - Next meeting is March 10th 7 PM (virtual)
- **Domestic Violence initiative**
 - An article to create awareness was published in February Parish newsletter
- **Safe-Haven Baby Box project**

- Attracting supporters of the legislation is the next steps: writing letter of support and/or volunteers to make in-person testimonials when it comes to a public forum. Parishioners will be asked to generate support for the bill by sending documents of support or in-person testimony of support. Announcements in the bulletin week ending 2/8 and 9 asking for written support for bill will help.
- A public hearing agenda has been posted for Thursday, 2/20/25 at 2pm.
- **Human Trafficking**
 - Elizabeth Simonetti has been selected to join Archdiocesan Human Trafficking Task Force.
- **Homefront:** A date is identified for a new project - May 17, 2025.
- **Next meeting** is scheduled for March 10, 2025 at 7 PM. Meeting will be virtual.

Parish Life – Cathy Coda and Rose Marie Marmolejo

- Lenten Supper will be on March 28th at 6PM at St. Ann Parish Center.
 - The Committee members are Kathleen Buchanan, Cathy Coda, Rose Marie Marmolejo, Kerry Sciuto.
 - The Dinner will be catered by Lasse's for \$15/adult \$5/child 12 and under (Baked Cod, Mac & Cheese, roasted vegetables, dinner rolls, condiments. Parish bakers will be asked to supply dessert.
 - Reservations will be taken and paid for after masses March 15/16 and March 22/23. No Walk-ins please
 - Deacon George will be our speaker
- The May Coffee And date has been moved from the weekend of May 17/18 to weekend of May 3/4. This Coffee And will benefit Boys and Girls Village.
- Parish Picnic is scheduled for September 7th catered by Lasse's
- Homefront dinner will be May 17 at 6 PM. Subway will be supplying the lunches for the workers.

Faith Formation: Maria Tomasetti

- First Communion classes, Confirmation classes, and First Reconciliation make-up classes are ongoing.
- The dates for our monthly GIFT program in March are reversed--Tuesday, March 25 (evening) and Sunday, March 30 (afternoon). Topic: Nicene Creed, The Church.
- OCIA/RCIA. One candidate, a baptized Catholic, is preparing to receive the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil.
- Adult Confirmation. One candidate is preparing to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation at the Cathedral of St. Joseph on Thursday, May 15.
- Nurturing Seedlings: Community for Young Parents of children from birth to age 5. We attended the February 8 training in Bristol and are now building our Nurturing Seedlings Facilitator Team. We will begin inviting young parents of children from birth to age 5 to participate in the five sessions, which we hope to launch in June. More to come!

- Christian/Lifelong Faith Formation Committee. The committee met on Monday, February 10 to review current and planned programs and to begin discussion of possible gaps and new ideas. Terri Deveny facilitated the meeting, and Frank Lacerenza attended. Joyce Marlow will also be participating in future meetings. Our next meeting will be scheduled for May. (Frank has copies of a spreadsheet of current and planned programs for anyone on the Council who would like to learn more.)
- "True North" Summer VBS Camp. Scheduled for the week of July 21 thru July 25. Registration for campers (ages 4 thru 10/11) officially begins on March 1 although we have received some registration emails. Recruitment of teen volunteers (ages 12 and older) and adult volunteers is in progress.

Goals

- Flowers will be distributed at each of the masses to all the mothers on Mother's Day
- Francis will check on the status of the welcome packet to offer a wider distribution especially to new church members.

Constitution By-Laws Committee Report:

- The Art. XV change was approved moving up the selection process for the purpose of improving the orientation of new council members.
 - As was recommended by the Constitution & Bylaws Committee at its last meeting, the Council officially approved, and Father ratified, changing Article XV 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.***
- Committee recommends the following change to Article IX (to be acted upon at the Council's next meeting):
 - Last sentence of **The Agenda** section to read: ***A quorum is defined as 2/3 of the selected members.*** NOTE: This only removes the words "*As decided at the 23 October 2014 meeting*"
- Committee recommended changes to Art IX to improve the quality of communication and relationship with parishioners. The council decided to ask the Secretary will publish the date, time, and location of the next council meeting in the bulletin 2 weeks prior to the that meeting.
 - Although two separate paragraphs are referenced, the single purpose is to inform parishioners of upcoming Council meeting details. Two weeks prior to each meeting, notice should be sent to the Parish Office advising date, time and location.
 - Additionally, there was a discussion on how to best honor the intent of this article (IX). Several such ideas were discussed. This was tabled for further discussion at the council's next meeting: that parishioners should be advised of their right to submit to the Council items for consideration for the agenda at least one week in advance of the meeting; that members of the parish should be entitled and welcome to attend as observers; that the Pastoral Council email (pcsaintraphael@gmail.com) should be utilized and included with any such communication to the parish.
 - A sub-committee to improve communication/public relations was formed. Frances and Joyce will brainstorm methods to identify and acknowledge concerns of parishioners and report at the March 31, 2025 meeting.

Selection Committee

- The selection committee members are Cathy C., Joyce m. and Frank L. They will follow the current selection process. Final selections will be made in April so new members can be introduced at the May Council meeting (June 2).

Open Forum

- No report

NEXT Parish Council Meeting: March 31, 2025 St. Saint Ann Office 7 PM