

Saint Raphael Parish
Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes – St. Gabriel Hall
September 22, 2025 7:00PM

Meeting called to order:

Opening Prayer- Frank L.

Frank facilitated the meeting due to absence of Rose Marie

Attendance: Absent: Rose Marie M.

Acceptance of June 2025 meeting notes

Welcome Back!

- Reminder for those who are not yet on a committee to sign up. Committees can be found in the bylaws.
- Opening prayer; volunteers needed for opening prayer, sheet passed around to select. Schedule will be emailed, or see **Addendum A**.
- Please check the Roster (previously emailed) for accuracy and notify for any corrections.

Father John's Comments:

- Railing in St Gabe/St Ann Church for assistance into Sanctuary. Design-contacted company that put in railings at Resurrection church in Wallingford. Passed around picture for review. St Ann will have 2 installed; 1 by tabernacle and 1 by pulpit. St Gabe will have 1 railing as tabernacle and pulpit are in same area. Railing work is 100% funded, will not cost Parish any expenses. Currently awaiting approval from Archbishop. Looking at potential variations for material; black, brass.
- Livestream at St. Gabriel. Awaiting response from IT person.
- Archbishop Visit. Archbishop Coyne will be visiting Sunday 11/02 at the 9:30 mass. Asking Parish Council for reception following mass. It was recommended that we adjust money counting after the 9:30 mass so that these volunteers can attend the reception.

Standing Committee Reports

Prayer and Worship Committee Report

*See Addendum B

- Feast of St. Raphael. Celebrate the Feast of St. Raphael on 09/29 at 8:00 mass at St Ann. Traditional take home breakfast to go.
- The season of creation will end with the Mass of Creation which Father will celebrate on 10/3."

- International Rosary-Tuesday 10/07 at St Gabriel. Parishioners say each decade in different languages. Refreshments to follow.
- Mass of Remembrance on Sunday 11/02 at 2pm at St Ann.
- Advent-will be receiving books as in previous years.

Social Justice/Human Concerns Committee

*See Addendum C.

- The committee met with Ms. Terry Steele from the Archdiocese regarding how best to incorporate the committee's ideas with the parish at large.
- The Baby Bottle Drive will be in January instead of November.
- Members of the committee will attend an Archdiocesan conference on Human Trafficking in Connecticut
- The Garden Project is thinking about electrifying the fencing to keep out varmints.
- Father is reserving decision regarding committee's request to show the *Turning Point USA* video on abortion due to the politically charged atmosphere around this organization at this time.

Parish Life – Cathy Coda

- 09/07 Parish Picnic. It may have rained on our parade, but it did not dampen spirits! Around 200 from our family of parishioners came out to enjoy the food and festivities. Big thanks to Cathy Coda and all of the volunteers that were involved and for all that participated. Thank you and great to see everyone!!
- Did not have "Coffee And" this month. Will be ongoing for rest of the year.
 - November will be Wounded Warrior Project donations during "Coffee And."
 - Starting in January, it was recommended that we move "Coffee And" to the 3rd Sunday of the month due to conflicts (Father's Day, Mother's Day).
- Bus trip to Goodspeed Theatre in October for Chorus Line. Arlene Lacarena is chairing. 14 people here signed up. During the discussion, we were taken on a trip down memory lane with Fr. John recalling his experience in the Seminary when the play first came out. There were big hopes and long lines, but no favors for the faithful (you can break bread, but you can never cut in line!).
- Planning to do another New Year's Eve Dinner Dance! More details to come.
- Christmas Fair! December 6th. Meeting Thursday night 09/25.
- Message for our Faith, Pope Frances 90 min documentary, "*The Letter*" on 09/28 at 2:30 pm in the Parish Center of St. Ann (next to Library). Refreshments and door prizes to follow!

Faith Formation: Maria Tomasetti.

*Addendum D

Constitution By-Laws Committee Report:

- The Council gave final approval and Father ratified the amendments to the Constitution & Bylaws finalized in 2024-25 (which Council members were sent by email). Printed versions will be provided to Council members at the next meeting.

Old Business:

Deacon George Acknowledgement and Thank You Reception

- Thank you to Cathy Coda (and family!) for the incredible reception. If our gratitude could have been measured by the amount of heat that day, it would have been recorded as “extremely grateful!” It was a sweltering occasion but very heartfelt. Father and Rose Mary thanked Deacon George and Monica for their time with us.

Communication Committee

- Both the July Newsletter and a September bulletin notice thanked the outgoing members who completed their term on the Pastoral Council, introduced new members, and provided a list of current members.
- Pastoral Council Email. Joyce volunteered to check emails and to acknowledge.
- Josh will be putting announcement up in advance of future meetings (still learning!).

New Business:

- The consensus was that the Pastoral Council meetings will continue to be on Monday evenings.
- Pastoral Council meeting calendar will be emailed and is also attached for reference (**please see Addendum E**).

Goals for the year:

Some ideas were discussed, including:

- Parish unity. A reminder that although we have 2 churches, we are 1 bread, 1 cup, and 1 body of Christ united in love. Continue building our way towards 1 heart and encourage the cross pollination between the uniqueness that St. Gabriel and St. Ann offers our parishioners. The Parish Picnic is a great example of building this community.
 - St. Gabriel Church Mass attenders loved having the choir at St. Gabriel a few times this past year.
 - Thoughts about a Children’s choir was discussed -Who could lead it?
 - Youth Participation. Ideas discussed to help encourage our younger parishioners to get more involved- greeters, altar servers, readers, etc.
- Improved communication.

Closing Prayer: Father John!!

Next Pastoral Council Meeting is October 27th at St. Ann

Addendum A: Opening Prayer Schedule.

October:	Rose Marie
November:	Elaine
January:	Joshua
February:	Leo
March:	Susan
April:	Melvin
May:	Joyce

Addendum B: Prayer & Worship Report

Celebrate Saint Raphael!

Continuing a tradition that was established when Saint Ann and Saint Gabriel parishes merged in 2017, we will celebrate Saint Raphael, our patron, on September 29th, the feast day he shares with Michael and Gabriel, the three archangels who are named in Sacred Scripture.

Parishioners, including members of the Pastoral Council, are cordially invited to our *Celebrate Saint Raphael!* festivities, beginning at the 8'o'clock morning Mass at Saint Ann Church on Monday, September 29th. We will ask for Raphael's intercession as we offer special prayers and petitions in his name.

After Mass members of the Prayer and Worship Committee will distribute "breakfast to go" bags, filled with tasty treats for your enjoyment.

Mass for the Care of Creation

The Season of Creation, which began on September 1st, comes to a close on Saturday, October 4th, the Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi. At the 8 o'clock morning Mass on Friday, October 3rd Father John will celebrate the Mass for the Care of Creation, a new formulary or set of prayers and Biblical readings that has been added to the Roman Missal among the "civil needs" section of the "Masses and Prayers for Various Needs and Occasions." Pope Leo XIV celebrated the new Mass on July 9th at the Castel Gandolfo, the papal summer residence.

International Rosary

Please plan to be with us on Tuesday, October 7, at 7:00 p.m. at Saint Gabriel Church for the popular and moving International Rosary, a parish tradition that honors Mary during the month of the Holy Rosary. Multi-lingual parishioners will lead each decade in a different language. During this Jubilee Year of Hope we will focus on the "Hopeful Mysteries of the Rosary," which enrich the other mysteries by inviting reflection on key moments in the history of salvation prior to the Annunciation. Refreshments will follow.

Mass of Remembrance

Sunday, November 2, 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 2024 through mid-October 2025). Parishioners, families and friends are invited to attend.

Advent

The season of Advent begins on Sunday, November 30. The order we will place very soon for seasonal booklets of prayer and reflection will include a number of Spanish-language booklets to accommodate what appears to be a growing number of Spanish-speaking parishioners. The booklets will be available at all the church doors the weekend before Thanksgiving.

Submitted by Ann Eden

Facilitator, Prayer and Worship Committee

Addendum C, Human Concerns and Social Justice:

- Committee was pleased to welcome Ms. Terry Steele from the Archdiocese. Ms. Steele led a discussion on how to incorporate the archdiocese's ideas into the social justice and human concerns committee to all aspects of prayer and workshop.
- Pro-life committee is working with St. Gianna Pregnancy Center in New Haven to run a Baby Bottle fund raiser the weekend of November 1-2, 2025. The funds will primarily be used to support the advisory program and ultrasound program. *We ask Fr. John to give his permission to have Phil Liquori from St. Gianna make a 1-2 minute announcement at the end of each mass ideally on January 3-4, 2026 explaining the Baby Bottle purpose and process.*
- We ask Father John permission to have The Pro-life committee organize and deliver a parish wide in-person video presentation by Turning Point USA Faith on Saturday morning October 25th entitled "Human Life" which is committed to preserving the sanctity of life. The video features Dr. William Lile, a board certified OBGYN. Several Pro-life Committee members have seen the presentation and have enthusiastically recommended it be available to St. Raphael Parish, Precious Blood Parish, and ideally the youth groups in both.
 - Parishioners of the Archdiocese of Hartford (AOH) are invited to learn about the critical role of the Church and community in eradicating human trafficking.
Saturday, September 27, 2025 * 9:15 AM – 12:00 PM [Check-in & breakfast starts at 8:15 AM]. Journey to Freedom: Human Trafficking in Connecticut
A Greater Hartford Regional Conference presented by The Underground New England South Church, 277 Main Street, Hartford, CT

Free registration: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/journey-to-freedom-human-trafficking-in-ct-tickets-1602771746439>

- Garden Project (perhaps electrify fence to repel varmints, winding down 2025 season where we harvested beans, eggplant, peppers and tomatoes) –
- Homefront: (need to be sure that homeowners do not come to the construction site (especially with children) during the workday because all the work stopped to answer their questions and explain things to them; homeowners should not come and go from house during workday;

Committee agreed to continue with the following priorities for 2025-2026 year.

- Priority 1: Pro-Life Ministry
- Priority 2 Human Trafficking – Elizabeth is a member of the archdiocese task force
- Priority 3: Kindness Project - Xmas Giving to Women's Prison
- Priority 4: Homefront
- Priority 5: Garden Project
- Priority 6: Safe-Haven Baby Box project
- Continue to support these ministries– CRS Rice Bowl – Beth-El Center Support – Food Pantry Support – Social Visits to Health Care Facilities – Other?

Our next meeting is scheduled for October 20, 2025 @ 7 PM

Addendum D: Faith Formation

- The theme for our monthly GIFT faith formation program for 2025/2026 is Following Jesus Through the Church year. We started this week: Sunday, September 21/Tuesday, September 23.
- Our scheduled Sacramental overview meetings for parents/guardians of children preparing for First Reconciliation and First Communion and for parents/guardians with teens preparing for Confirmation were held in September.
- Registration is still in progress for our GIFT and GIFT Sacramental programs. So far, 54 families have registered for 2025-2026.
- The Sacrament of Confirmation for our 26 Confirmation candidates is scheduled for Sunday, November 16 at the Cathedral of Saint Joseph in Hartford, beginning at 2:30 pm. (Two candidates may select an alternate date due to conflicts). Six adults are preparing to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation on Tuesday, November 18 at the Cathedral of Saint Joseph.
- Information re: our 2025/2026 RCIA/OCIA program and plans for Nurturing Seedlings: Community for Young Parents will be shared later this year.

Addendum E:

Saint Raphael Pastoral Council

2025 – 2026 Meeting Schedule

All meetings begin at 7:00 PM

September 22 Saint Gabriel

October 27 Saint Ann

November 24 Saint Gabriel

No December meeting as everyone is busy around Christmas.

January 19 * Saint Ann

Earlier as Father will be on vacation the 4th Monday

February 23 Saint Gabriel

March 23 Saint Ann

April 27 Saint Gabriel

May 18 * Saint Ann

Week earlier due to Memorial Day