

# ST. GABRIEL PARISH

## POLICY FOR USE OF THE GATHERING AREA, FOYER, MEETING ROOMS, and FELLOWSHIP HALL

### GATHERING AREA:

Our policy for use of the Gathering Area is informed by guidelines published by the US Conference of Catholic Bishops:

#95 “The narthex is a place of welcome—a threshold space between the congregation’s space and the outside environment. It serves as a gathering space and as the entrance and exit to the building. *The gathering space helps believers to make the transition from everyday life to the celebration of liturgy; and after the liturgy, it helps them return to daily life to live out the mystery that has been celebrated.* In the gathering space, people come together to move in procession and to prepare for the celebration of the liturgy. It is in the gathering space that many important liturgical moments occur:

- men and women participate in the Rite of Becoming a Catechumen as they move toward later, full initiation into the Church;
- parents, godparents, and infants are greeted for the celebration of baptism,
- and Christians are greeted for the last time as their mortal remains are received into the church building for the celebration of the funeral rites.

Excerpt from *Built of Living Stone: Art, Architecture and Worship*  
*Guidelines of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops – 2000*

Therefore, the Gathering Area at St. Gabriel Church shall be used primarily as:

1. A place for presiders, liturgical ministers and participants to prepare for sacramental and liturgical celebrations
2. A place for parishioners to experience signs and symbols of different seasons of the church year
3. A place for parishioners to welcome, greet, console and support one another before and after celebrations
4. A place for wakes and vigil services prior to celebrating funeral liturgies
5. A place for prayer and small spiritual gatherings (faith sharing, breaking open the word)
6. A place for welcoming new parishioners to our parish community

The Gathering Area shall not be used for activities such as ticket selling, commercial displays, sign-up for parish-sponsored activities/events, distribution of envelopes which will be mailed to parishioners, or fundraising. These types of activity shall occur in the Fellowship Hall or adjacent meeting rooms.

No food or drinks are permitted in the Gathering Area.

## **GATHERING AREA WALL SPACE:**

Posters in the Gathering Area may only be placed on the bulletin boards:

Enclosed bulletin board (on the coatroom wall): Parish organizations or parishioners wishing to publicize an upcoming event may provide flyers/small posters announcing the date, time and purpose of the event. Postings shall be submitted to the parish secretary and are approved by the parish office. Appropriate items include:

- items from the Archdiocese
- Parish Council minutes and agenda
- Information about a parish or school activity (dated & posted for a 2 wk period)
- Information/flyers concerning other events in the community and/or neighboring parishes that may be of interest to our parishioners -- blood drives, speakers, concerts, craft fairs/festivals, if space permits; parish items take precedence. (also dated & posted for a 2 wk. period).

Poster size of 8 ½ x 11" is preferred; not to exceed 12 x 18" to allow for more items to be displayed.

The open bulletin board (opposite the coatroom): shall be used to celebrate and affirm aspects of parish life and to highlight liturgical and sacramental events. Examples include Lenten and Advent information and displays, introduction of RCIA candidates, Confirmation Candidates, First Communion, new Parish Council members, a display with photos from a work camp trip, etc. It is not used for advertising future events. The person/group making the request is responsible for putting up and removing the display in a timely manner. The contents should be displayed in neat and artistic manner since this bulletin board is in a prominent location and represents our parish to parishioners and guests. The bulletin board should always be complete in time for weekend masses. Due to the seasonal nature of these displays, parishioners shall submit requests for use of this bulletin board to the parish secretary at least two months in advance, if possible.

## **THE FOYER (entranceway):**

Fire codes place restrictions on the use of the foyer. Acceptable usage is limited to the continuous Food Pantry collection and storage of winter salt and shovels. Other collections shall take place in the Fellowship Hall. Parish groups may request to display a sign on the west "ledge" in the foyer for up to two weeks. Posters are limited to a maximum of 12 x 18 in size and may not be hand-written. Parishioners shall submit requests for displaying signs in the foyer to parish secretary at least two weeks in advance

## **MEETING ROOMS:**

St. Gabriel has two meeting rooms adjacent to the Gathering Area: the Council Room (fireplace) and the Annunciation Room (library). The use of these rooms is primarily for St. Gabriel parishioners.

The meeting rooms can be used by parish groups for meetings, for scripture study, and activities such as registration of new parishioners. The meeting rooms may also be used after masses to inform parishioners about ministries essential to our faith and witness, for example, sharing information about right to life and social justice initiatives, St. Vincent de Paul, or St. Ben's ministry.

Meeting rooms are available for parish groups and committees to use on a first come, first serve basis. Meeting Rooms shall be reserved by contacting the parish secretary. Rooms shall be reserved at least two weeks in advance.

No food or drinks are permitted in these meeting rooms.

## FELLOWSHIP HALL:

The Fellowship Hall is used for Religious Education; classes and activities for this parish ministry take precedence over other uses of this space.

The Fellowship Hall is also used for parish activities, for example refreshments, committee meetings, selling SCRIP and other fundraisers, collection of items for charities, etc.

The use of the Fellowship Hall is primarily for St. Gabriel parishioners. Ordinarily, parish facilities will not be used for private events such as wedding receptions/rehearsal dinners, etc. Funeral lunches/dinners may be held in the Fellowship Hall as this activity is offered to families as an element of our parish bereavement ministry.

A 2'x3' poster publicizing an event in the Fellowship Hall may be placed on a tripod in the Gathering Area at the hallway entrance to the Fellowship Hall. The purpose of the poster is to inform parishioners in the Gathering Area of an activity in progress; it does not announce future events. Posters may not be hand-written.

Parishioners shall reserve time and space in the Fellowship Hall by contacting the parish secretary. The Fellowship Hall and Kitchen shall be reserved at least four weeks in advance, if possible.

## CARE OF PARISH FACILITIES:

Good stewardship, respect and courtesy are important values in the life of our parish, and especially important when sharing the gifts of our parish resources. Therefore after using meetings rooms, the Fellowship Hall, and kitchen area, parishioners are asked to leave the facilities in good order:

Groups using **meeting rooms** are asked to:

- Arrange chairs neatly around tables. Line up extra chairs along the wall.
- Return any items that may have been moved to their normal place.
- Remove papers or other materials from the surface of the table.
- If the TV/VCR/DVD console is used, return it to the Fellowship Hall.
- Turn off lights and the fireplace. Extinguish candles if used for prayer or decoration.

Groups using the **Fellowship Hall** shall clean up at the end of the meeting/event:

- Arrange chairs neatly around tables.
- To prevent marks on the walls, please do not stack chairs against the wall.
- Wipe surface of tables, as necessary.
- Sweep the floor, as necessary. Mop the floor if beverages spilled.

Groups using the **kitchen** shall clean up at the end of the event:

- Wash all dishes and put them away; do not leave dishes in the sink.
- Clear and wipe countertops.
- Sweep and mop the floor as necessary.
- Food left in the refrigerator or freezer will be considered usable by everyone, unless labeled for a specific use.

All groups should take full trash bags out to the dumpster (south of bldg). New liners are in the drawer next to the refrigerator.

## General Scheduling Note:

*While every effort will be made to schedule the Meeting Rooms or Fellowship Hall on the date/time requested by parishioners and parish groups, some may not get their preferred date due to a previously-scheduled event, or their preferred location due to restrictions in this policy.*