

Pastoral Council Meeting; September 9th, 2025

In attendance: Father Chuck Adam, Bill Mausser, William Montag, Joan Maley, Mary Lu Callahan, Adam Summers, Wayne Fett, Logan Vittetoe, Tyler Rasmussen, Wade Long, Larry Van Steenhyse, Cece Roudabush, Meliza Wise

Approval of August 12, 2025, meeting minutes

Wayne motioned to approve and Joan motioned to second

Agenda Items:

Discussion: what **special memories** will you have from the new church dedication:

- A parishioner told Father Chuck that she was at every dedication of STM. She was unable to attend this one but her daughter took pictures.
- Mass was so busy—were people coming back to STM? Coming to look? To take pictures? All of these?
- W&S was questioning where they should stand during the Mass. Where should a person using a wheelchair or walker sit? Are there unseen anxiety issues that would preclude someone from moving to the middle? We should respect their decision to sit on the end.
- The Bishop was funny and awesome. He surprised many who had not met him yet.
- As an usher, it was awesome to see everyone in the church and so many had a place to sit!
- The incense ceremony was Meliza's favorite—seeing it go into the cupola.
- The lead singer was tremendous. The music encapsulated STM—the choices were excellent and represented us being in the place we will worship!
- Being in the choir and hearing the music so differently was wonderful.
- The acoustics were wonderful for the choir being in front of the church—engineered very well.
- When the candle rose, it was very emotional!
- It's louder in the anteroom—can we adjust that sound level?
- Should the back doors be open when Mass starts? HVAC says they should be open as long as it's not distracting to people in the back rows.
- Mic the deacon and other celebrants since only Father is on the speaker system. Use the mic jack on the altar.
- Dedication of the altar with representatives of every age was so moving.
- Fire system was turned off for incense.
- We served 600 people at the dinner!
- 1200 attended the Dedication Mass
- 700 at the weekend masses—seems full when they are spread out.
- Father liked the whole Dedication, the incense and John LePeau and wife lighting the candle. Vern created the altar. The priest procession from the back was tremendous.
- We need a box for the lights in the back of the church in case they go off from the automatic timer.

- At midnight, Meliza and husband saw the stations lit up—it was beautiful. Not intended to be on late at night but will be taken care of.
- People are coming to the Rosaries, maybe to see the Tabernacle, but there is more space to worship and pray. Many say it's their favorite room. The Devotional Room will be so nice, also (where the icons are at). Jorge is working on getting those icons installed.
- It was an all-around good day for Father Chuck and for the attendees. Cars were parking 2 blocks away by 11am.

Becoming the Good News: A New APPROACH TO Parish Evangelization: Ch. 1 and 2

Our parish's joy is our great introduction to this book. Our guide, Patrick, was able to take a tour with Mary Lu. He said the comments he heard echoes what we were saying. We set a fabulous example of "what it looks like to become the good news"!

A group member spoke about his children's move away from attending Mass. The information in the book helped them to see that it's a non-demonational issue, not just a Catholic issue. The number of non-denominational churches exceeds the denominational church (2 million more). Millennials and Gen-Z have a huge distrust for institutions, hospitals, financial firms and churches. We have lost 50% of our church-going population between the ages 10-20. They say in surveys that they do not have faith in their top 10 most important parts of their life.

Our goal should not necessarily be to get them to Mass—how do we reach out to that community? Perhaps focus on ages 45 years and up?. CYO brought people of all ages, especially young families—what was the secret sauce to keeping them involved in church. Schools were involved in prayer and connection. Should we connect with them through other settings? If we get them into the community, perhaps we will then inspire them to come to the Mass.

Priests were on the original committees attempting to figure out the problem. Father Chuck is a testament to what we need—a charismatic and engaging priest, smiles when he preaches. He is a BEACON for the success of STM! The music is amazing and draws people into a Mass (like the Newman Center). A group member recalled his church in California—the priest was either going to make them cry or laugh with an EMOTIONAL connection!

Patrick: JOY ATTRACTS! It's infectious.

A group member shared that their adult daughter attends a church in Illinois that fills the seats 3 times a weekend. There are 3 priests, 6 seminarians and 8 acolytes. His younger daughter hasn't been to church since Christmas but she

goes to a huge church in Des Moines. Her priest is very charismatic and the church is full. It doesn't seem like this is true about Iowa City.

Mary Lu asks "what does faith mean?". If you missed church, you were in mortal sin. You were somewhat motivated by guilt to go to church. As a child, she attended Mass quietly and went home quietly. We lost Catholics in the 70's-90's because they were not in a community. In the future, we must first attract the newcomer or returning parishioner—who answers the phone? Who talks to them when they come to arrange a Sacrament? Everyone in the Parish needs to welcome the new—we are the touchpoint.

What are we doing out in the community? We are the on-ramp; we embody the Good News! How you are personally may attract the attention of others and then they find out that you are Catholic and attend STM. Warmth, friendliness and welcome radiates also.

Patrick: a parishioner called every church in Davenport on a Saturday leaving a message that he was in town looking for a church. Only 1 called him back. He deserved that call-back! What fills your heart? What breaks your heart? Listen one-to-one to people's thoughts. STM had the most surveys completed of any church in our Diocese. Our current parishioners participated so well in the Synod that our Diocese was mentioned in Rome.

Focus Groups can tell us why parishioners are not participating. What would it take for them to take part in our Mass/church groups? Mary Lu talked about the cards and individual responses we collected.

Bill Mausser feels that Christians are being suppressed as an identifier. Are there any Missions occurring? We need more encouragement to attend Stations of the Cross, starting every meal with prayer with a family Rosary every night. Opportunities here are through the Family. What can we do to bring in the Family, not just having children and youth dropped off for Sacraments and RE.

Father Chuck appreciates our RE. Patrick stated that participating in RE looks different in different places. Often, Wednesday is Faith Formation night where the whole household comes for prayer, a meal and breakouts by age level with different age-appropriate content presented and take home materials. Takes place of RE in some churches, with some programs alternating Family Night with children and youth nights. It's important that they can come as they are—even in soccer shoes! The biggest concern for us might be how to hold the meals—Patrick has found that the Knights and others step up. We should consider "Houses of Faith" for building community in neighborhoods. First meal of the year they get a picture for someone to pray for and new one each time you come back. Mary Lu reported that Shannon tried family-based, RE and hybrid. There has been no perfect way to gather Community. Each parish has to find their own way—some will go if they don't like the model.

Patrick feels this should be a community-discerned decision. The practice of families who drop off their children and then leave is what we need to address. Make their participation low stakes. Hybrid might be a low-barrier return to the Church. Bill Mausser asked if the Diocese had sampled RE practices—what is the tradition? Is there somewhere we can look at an outline of the practice? Patrick feels that tradition is a verb more than a noun. Mary Lu posed the question of asking Shannon to present ideas. Is our program staffed to do hybrid practice? Shannon works so much—do we have support for Shannon? We need more RE teachers.

Father expressed appreciation of the discussion and that it should continue.

Patrick reminded us all that the **Deanery Kick-off will be Sunday Sept. 21 at St. Patrick's 2-5 pm? (P will confirm) Please attend!** We should outline our challenges first. If we sit in attention to the difficulty of the question, insights and creativity will emerge! What does it mean to be a Parish? Are we a fortress? A museum holding onto relics of the past? Are we an outpost that meets them along their journey and helps them along the way. What are our assumptions? Do they help us?

We will continue discussions in November and January. Patrick congratulates us again—it's a gift to be Catholic! Shall we read Chapter 3 and 4 for the book next month? Intro and Ch. 1 integrated with items in the survey. The link is a QR code that the diocese would ask you to use in completing their survey.

- Update on Church Use Policy – we will defer the discussion until after the Finance Council meets next Wednesday. How we could use this space is a huge touchpoint for the community—we are welcome to a wide variety of uses. Nominal fees have helped welcome others into church space. We should encourage others to come from outside the parish to use the space since space is not easy to find. Breakout sessions are possible in the main downstairs seating area, while breakout meetings could be in small side rooms with meals in the kitchen.
- Parish Safety Plan – Shannon questioned what our thoughts were on Parish Safety, from our past Faith Formation meeting. Due to the recent Minnesota tragedy at a school mass, we might need to revisit the topic that Mick was working on with a committee. He has a plan in his head which just needs to be written out. Having passwords did not work in other churches. We will have a keypad and keycards so we can get into the building when we need to. St. Pat's has one door open and it's one that can be locked. Are the defibrillators up and working? We need one in the new space. Fair Trade is meeting in a week to talk about how to use the closet as a 'store'.

Commission Reports & Discussion

- Church/Family Life – Euchre starts 9/11 after 5:15 pm mass. Coffee & Donuts ordered 15 dozen with NONE left after 11 am Mass! The 50's club had a **Kalona Chocolate presentation in September at Hills Bank**
- Faith Formation - The safety commission was discussed. **Jackie Russ** asked for feedback about bags for kids to use at Mass. Perhaps reusable bags that connect them with the Mass that is returned after Mass? Shannon and Mary Lu talked about it with the concern of who would disinfect the materials? Great idea but we need to consider this aspect. Perhaps Shannon has a resource that children can bring to Mass? If families don't have resources to buy items, perhaps there are alternatives? Maybe there are scholarships parents can apply for so everyone can participate? Christian speaker Chris Stepanek will be in Davenport--\$33/ticket at Sacred Heart Cathedral. He has a podcast that is super engaging! The Adoration of Mary in prayer and in presence will be built out further through FF.
- Racial Equity Initiative - no report
- **Social Justice** /Green Team -
Jay Gilchrist is to be thanked for his hard work to prepare for the Season of Creation and his recent interview with the Messenger. We will be sharing a survey asking Parishioners about our efforts to care for God's green earth.
- Welcome Commission has an expanded presence in the new foyer. They believe the Stewardship Form is less intimidating and more inviting. As always they are trying to schedule Greeters more concretely. How many doors do we need covered? Mary Lu and Jorge are working on that. "After the Plunge" continues to outreach families of recently baptized children. Ten households were added in June and thirteen in July. When is the Stewardship weekend being held? The Commissions would like to have that. We discussed having one big weekend or spotlight different weekends. Father likes the spotlight weekends best. It is possible that parents of young children may just want one due to business after Mass. The Gathering Space is fairly full--wasn't it nice to see people linger? Maybe start in October and end in November?
- Worship & Spirituality – upcoming events include Pet blessings after Mass. Less is more in the Worship space—it is beautiful as is! We need to issue a reminder that the spots in the circle are for ambulances and those that need to park there. There are already signs that the spots should be left for persons with limited mobility. How shall we reinstate the Children's Liturgy? W&S and FF will talk to each other about this. Eucharistic services are being discussed for 9/16 training in order to present the Eucharist at area nursing homes.

- Finance Council- ADA rating is 161. This is based on the percent of our donations. People who choose electronic donors are included. However, the loose donations collected are not included.
- Regina Board of Education report: Bishop Walsh will be rewriting the by-laws for all Catholic schools since all schools are different. Regina's new mascot is Reggie the Lion (Regal Lion).
- Youth Members Update – Tayler and Logan
- Knights of Columbus are training on how to use the kitchen in October. The stove is not signed off yet, so we can't cook yet.
- Stephen Ministry- Meliza reported that there are two additional care receivers for a total of 10, with 2 being males. Participants receive weekly care. There will be a presentation on the Camino de Santiago Pilgrimage on 9/19 at 7 pm in the former basement Mass space. There will be a presentation, pictures and mementos. The Eucharistic Procession for the Jubilee Year of Hope will be Sunday, Sept.14, 2025, 2 p.m.

Adjournment: Cece motioned to close the meeting and Joan seconded. All approved. Our meeting closed at 8:30.