



**Saint Gabriel Catholic Church
Pastoral Council
Thursday, Sept. 25, 2025**

Attendance: Father James Boachie, Deacon John Blakeney, Nancy Wilson, Lourdes Mosley, Eileen Violante, Tom Tortoriello, Kathy Zehender, Clay Bigelow, Stephanie Cochran, Carroll Connolley, and Lisa Gorton

Absent: John Ambe and Richard Purdy

Meeting Venue: In-person, parish office meeting space

Opening Prayer: Father James led the opening prayer

June Meeting Minutes - Approved

Introduction of all Council Members

Old Business:

Music Ministry Position

- Emily Rosenberger filled this position when Barbara Chandler retired from the position.
- Jacob Berg, our accompanist will assist with things like the worship aid.

Strategic Plan

- Sent to the staff and Fr. James for review
- This draft will also be sent to the Pastoral Council for review
- Awaiting feedback from all.

Instagram Status

- There was a surge at the start of the school year and looking to post more soon.
- Fr. James did a live video, and it was well received
- Target audience: High School Youth and Young Adults
- Will seek to post for October – rosary month, have Fr. James do something for that. There may be something from Vatican to post as the Pope requested people to pray daily rosary for peace during October
- Also have a presence during Advent

Pastor Update – Father James:

Casino Night

- 136 tickets were sold for the event, forty sponsors and thirty-five prizes
- Visited the venue twice and has good space, lots to do and looking forward to having fun and being connected with fellow parishioners

- This is the main fundraiser of the parish, so it is a good start and hope for it to grow in the coming years

Status of Formation Center

- We are in the redemption period with \$960,000+ to date redeemed
- We met with architects who have completed more detailed plans that need to be brought to BARC (Diocesan Building and Renovation Commission) when they feel we are ready to discuss moving forward and breaking ground. Many factors determine this decision.
- Request from council members to keep messaging the importance of redeeming pledge. Question asked if pledge statements will be issues to show what has been received or is “due,” especially for those who are not doing electronic giving.

Chapel Candles

- Replacing with electric ones for safety and to meet diocesan risk management directives
- There have been fires in other churches and want to be safe.
- The electronic set should be here in the next month
- Request was made to have electronic candles for children’s liturgy and “altar cloth.” It was recommended to speak with Carole about the request.

Liturgy Council Initiatives

- The Rosary group donated a Marian and Joseph set of vestments

New Business:

Month of the Rosary (October) Plans:

- As during the Month of Mary: ministries to pray the rosary before the start of each meeting; resources at the Adult Formation Table and on Facebook, in bulletin; rosary exchange and ones to borrow if needed.
- We will have a Marian prelude before the start of each weekend Mass during the month
- Prayer leader announcements will be made before the prelude. Will shorten the prayer leader sheet so we can fit in the prelude without lengthening the Mass. Also, there will be no standing and welcoming before Mass begins during October.
- Procession at the 9 am Mass on last day in October – Fri. Oct. 31, 9 am. Mass.
- Would like to see if we could have a children’s procession for Mary to crown her in May.

St. Gabriel Day – Oct. 5

- All weekend Masses will celebrate the Feast of the Archangels - décor in white
- Parishioners with St. Gabriel T-shirts are encouraged to wear them to Mass. Request if we would have sales again soon. The vendor to provide a good price does bulk orders only. Suggested offering again next year.
- Picnic will immediately follow the 11 am Mass
- Special table set up outside for new parishioners to get to know others and so we can address questions they may have
- Ten ministries will provide games
- Knights will provide hamburgers/hotdogs and parishioners side dishes and desserts; parish beverages and paper goods

Mass of Healing and Hope – Oct. 7

- This is the annual Diocesan Mass for victims of child sexual abuse, and we were chosen to host this year. This is also an opportunity for the community to see the bishop at our parish and pray to support those who will come to the Mass.
- An hour before Mass and after counselors will be available in the chapel and confessional. Signs will be on doors.
- Refreshments will be offered after Mass
- Anticipate one hundred participants

Faith Formation for 2025-26

- One hundred families with 145 children and youth enrolled in faith formation.
- First Reconciliation and First Communion 32 children and youth enrolled
- Confirmation twenty-six youth enrolled
- OCIC 1 youth enrolled
- Children's Liturgy of the Word draws approximately forty children a week at 11 am Mass. During the summer, we still had 25-30 children! No movement yet on the 9 am Mass
- Adult Faith Formation Groups include: WINGS Women's Spirituality Group that meets twice a month, Fishermen Men's Spirituality Group that meets weekly, Lectionary Study and Friday morning Bible Study that meets weekly, Book Discussion Group happening three times a year, R&R Wednesdays – the group that meets monthly for faith formation and games, Couples in Christ that meets monthly and ROCK – program for Raising our Catholic Kids we have 263 adults engaging in ongoing faith formation (knowing there may be some overlaps between programs)
- In addition, we have Sacramental preparation for those seeking to join the church with eleven currently being formed and three awaiting annulments.
- Since the start of the fiscal year, we have provided baptism preparation for thirteen families that include the godparents and that is only going to grow as the year progresses.

Parish Mission

- Scheduled for Feb. 28/March 1 with Tom Cocoran, the pastoral associate at the Church of the Nativity near Baltimore. In 2013 Tom and the pastor published a book about how they were able to transform their parish titled Rebuilt. Since then, they have gone on to publish other books like rebuilding the message, tools for rebuilding, Church Money on rebuilding how to fund your mission as a parish and rebuilding faith. They have support afterwards to build upon what you learn. They have a website: Rebuildparish.com
- Tom will speak to the community on Sat. Feb. 28 from 10 – Noon about Rebuilding their Faith – giving tools on how we can learn or relearn about our faith and deepen our relationship with God. He will speak about investing in our faith life and the importance of connectedness and community. After that talk, leaders that include the councils and ministry heads will be asked to stay for a luncheon and discussion on how we as leaders can help our community connect, be transformed and grow in their faith and commitment to discipleship. The session on Sunday, March 1 from 6-8 pm will focus again on Rebuilding Faith and expand a bit for those who want to come back.
- The time shifted from previous missions based on parish feedback that some cannot attend if in the evening and weekdays are hard. Having on the weekend enables more to attend.

Name Tags

- Approximately three people approached Nancy requesting that the question of permanent name tags for registered parishioners be brought for discussion at pastoral Council
- Fr. James has also been approached by parishioners, and he has some who offered to cover the cost for the first set of name tags. Subsequent new parishioners it is unclear if they would pay or the church would incur the expense.
- Initial research places the cost per tag between \$7-10 each. At census we have a little over 1200 families and based on the last Mass count over last October, the count per weekend was around six hundred. We have another count coming this October to get a better picture of numbers each month.
- The purpose is to get to know one another better.
- It was decided to conduct a survey of parishioners to determine interest level to see if the response warrants moving forward with the idea.

New Parishioner Recognition

- A table will be set aside on fellowship weekend for newcomers to get to know each other and so parishioners can go to them and introduce themselves. Information will be provided at that table and questions can be answered.

Youth Mass Return – Sun. Oct. 19, 11 a.m. Mass

- Middle and High School Youth are being asked to serve in the liturgical ministries for this Mass with a focus on youth in music as well.
- The hope is that if this gets a good response, we can offer monthly.
- The liturgical ministers scheduled for this mass will be present as back up.

Multicultural Potluck

- At Pentecost we ask parishioners to come in ethnic garb and have prayers of the faithful in native languages.
- This Pentecost we want to add a potluck following the 11 am Mass where parishioners can bring ethnic dishes to share.

New Ideas/Comments from Council Members

Cross for Children's Liturgy of the Word

- Clay was approached to bring to the pastoral council the question of whether we can put a cross in the church meeting room for the Children's Liturgy of the Word.
- Lisa mentioned the first processional cross used by the parish that is currently kept in the chapel as a possible cross to use.
- Fr. James indicated he was aware of the request and looking at the best option.
- The request for altar with a cloth and candles was made and it is something that will be brought to Carole Cox, Children and Youth Faith Formation Coordinator.

Catholic Fest

- Diocesan event at Diamond in downtown Richmond
- Sat. Oct. 11, 10 am – 9 pm with 3 pm Mass that meets the Sunday obligation
- There will be booths, activities etc. throughout the day

Review of Important Dates in the Parish Calendar – calendar distributed to all council members with highlighted dates that include:

- Sat. Oct. 4, Noon- Blessing of the Animals by Deacon John
- Sun. Oct. 4 & 5 – all Masses for Feast of the Archangels with picnic following 11 am Mass
- Tues. Oct. 7 – Mass of Healing and Hope at 7 pm
- Sun. Oct. 19, 11 am – Youth Mass (note if you know of a youth interested, have them come to training on Sat. Oct. 18 9 – Noon)
- Sat. Nov. 1 & Sun. Nov. 2 – All Masses are for the Feast of All Souls (Note: The Feast of All Saints falls on Saturday, so it is not a holy day of obligation.) At these Masses parishioners can light a votive in remembrance of their loved ones who have passed before Mass begins. The Table of Remembrance will be in the Commons where photos of loved ones can be placed through Nov. 23.
- Thurs., Nov. 20, 7 pm – Next Pastoral Council Meeting

Closing Prayer/Blessing – Deacon John

Next Council Meeting: Thursday, November 20, Parish Office Meeting Room