

St. Michael Parish Pastoral Council

May 12, 2025 Minutes

Members Present: Fr. Marty, Fr. Robert, Deacon Ron, Mick Adamson, Nancy Finley, Barbara Judge, Linda Kinzer, Martha Kozub, Alice Lewinski, Mike Morley, Bob Solorio, Connie Solorio

Incoming Members Present: Joan Bullock, Jim Lesniak

Fr. Marty began the proceedings by reading from St. Basil the Great's sermon on the Holy Spirit. An opening prayer followed.

Per council tradition, incoming council members were invited to attend the May meeting. Those present welcomed Joan Bullock and Jim Lesniak, who introduced themselves to the group. Bob plans to meet with Joan, Jim and fellow newcomer Matt Wieser this summer to familiarize them with how the council operates, and Fr. Marty reminded all present that the council sometimes discusses confidential matters and occasionally has joint meetings with the Finance Committee should the situation arise. Barbara Anderson, Nancy Finley and Linda Kinzer will leave the council this summer after many years of dedicated service to the council and parish as a whole, and those present thanked the ladies for their hard work. Mike Morley, whose three-year term also was set to expire this year, re-discerned for a new three-year term. A list of 2025-2026 council members and their terms appears below:

Through June 2026: Lou Bufano, Martha Kozub, Bob Solorio, Connie Solorio

Through June 2027: Mick Adamson, Lisa Codo, Barbara Judge, Alice Lewinski

Through June 2028: Joan Bullock, Jim Lesniak, Mike Morley, Matt Wieser

Fr. Marty and Mike updated those present on the GIFT campaign. Mike reported that work on the school's HVAC project will begin shortly and is on track to be completed before the first day of school in August. Proceeds from the Grapes, Mash and Hops event held April 27 were not available at the time of this meeting, but those council members who attended the event said they enjoyed themselves and were among a crowd similar in size to the inaugural event held last fall.

A record number of new parishioners attended a recent welcome dinner at the rectory. Connie reported that 28 people joined Fr. Marty, Fr. Robert and a small group of veteran parishioners for a casual evening of food and fellowship, and some attendees have already joined ministries. Council members were pleased by the success of the event and grateful to those who planned it.

Martha updated those present on the diocese's migrant ministry plans for this summer. A dozen migrants will be arriving at Herr Farm shortly, and a welcome event is scheduled for May 17 at 6 p.m. Bishop McClory will preside and Fr. Eduardo Malagon will preach at a Mass on July 27 at 4 p.m. at Herr Farm with a pot luck supper to follow. Donations of clothing, shoes, toiletries and non-perishable food are being accepted for migrants, and the parish bulletin will promote ways parishioners can support the ministry in the coming weeks.

Linda, Barbara, Lisa and Martha recently met to discuss which ministries or activities have more of a missionary discipleship focus and which have more of an evangelization focus. Fr. Marty noted that all ministries or activities should have both elements, and Linda shared definitions of missionary discipleship and evangelization which should help provide clarity and guidance in this ongoing endeavor. It was determined that Hospitality, OCIA, Adult Catholic Education, Radiate, the Parish School (and associated organizations), Comforting Chefs, Labors of Love, Ministry of Hope and Consolation, Good Samaritans, Rebuilding Hope Mission Team and Respect Life Group had more elements of evangelization while ministries or activities not listed above had more elements of missionary discipleship.

Ministries, activities, missionary discipleship and evangelization will be key themes in the planning processes at the parish and diocesan level later this year. Bob is working with Ted Markiewicz to move the parish strategic planning process along, and he expects to hold SWOT analysis sessions this fall. Meanwhile, Fr. Marty, Fr. Robert, Bob, Jessica Cherry and Gary Kriepps have formed a parish leadership team for the diocesan strategic planning process. Fr. Marty and Fr. Robert were pleased that 85% of regular churchgoers completed the Disciple Maker Index survey, and various sessions for parish leaders (June 30, July 8, August 18, September 22, October 13, November 17) and other interested parties (September 8, October 27) are scheduled virtually or in-person later this year. Fr. Marty noted that in recent years several parishes and communities have completed (Merrillville, LaPorte) or are in the process of completing (Michigan City, Hammond/East Chicago/Whiting) related processes but that those events whose specific dates are listed above are being held for the sake of the entire diocese rather than the sake of a particular parish or community.

In commissions matters, Nancy and Martha reported that in the Parish Life Commission the Senior GEMS ministry has welcomed non-parishioners and made a donation to the Good Samaritans Ministry while Labors of Love remains active. Linda and Barbara reported that the Education and Formation Commission has completed updating their charter and strategies and has sent changes to Mike, who will forward them to Elizabeth Munoz for publication on the parish web site. Alice and Connie reported that the Spirituality and Worship Commission has also completed updating their charter and strategies. There were no updates from the Peace and Social Justice Commission or Stewardship Commission, the latter having its scheduled meeting postponed.

Looking ahead, the council plans to meet August 11 at 7 p.m. in one of the meeting rooms of St. Patrick Hall. Additional meetings for the 2025-2026 council year, including the council's annual retreat, will be scheduled shortly and take into consideration dates already reserved for parish and diocesan planning events. Before then, however, current and incoming council members will meet at the rectory on June 20 at 6:30 p.m. for the last parish council event of the year. The meeting adjourned after Fr. Robert led those present in a closing prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey Cox