



ST. PAUL'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting – May 13, 2025

Elected Members Present: Gale Britto, Julie Laurenzi, Beth Schick, Chris Murphy, Marisa Block, Jim Lancellotti, Anne Savastano, Kate Gallaher-Carson and Joan Miller

Elected Members Absent: None

Ex-Officio Members Present: Fr. Sean Harlow, Deacon Carl Locatelli and Mark Carson

Ex-Officio Members Absent: Deacon Michael McCabe and Rosa Gonzalez

Recording Secretary: Deborah Botti

Others Present: Tony Mazzeo; Chris Worthington and Deb Harrison

The meeting began with prayer at 7:00 p.m.

The Minutes of the meeting of April 8, 2025, were approved and seconded, after correcting a typo.

Ministry Reports were given:

Administration and Stewardship

Jim Lancellotti's son-in-law is a carpenter and measured for a handicapped-accessible ramp to lead from the concrete walkway to the main entrance. The cost of the wood is estimated at between \$7,000 and \$8,000. The Town of Crawford was contacted and Jim was told the church would have to go before the Planning Board, and that architectural drawings and a building permit would be needed.

Discussion ensued as to whether the scope of this project really meets the planning board/building permit requirements. A follow-up phone call is warranted to clarify.

Also, it was noted on Holy Thursday that someone with a mobility issue was trying to enter through the Deacon John Hall door by himself. There is a one-inch bump to the second door, and the left door is difficult to open. The door structure is such that there is little clearance to easily enter because of the length of the panic bar. The door will be looked at.

Education and Faith Formation

- Nothing to report from Religious Education.

- The Adult Faith Formation Committee will meet after the 10 o'clock Mass on June 8. Patty Brooks, the coordinator, will be selling her home in the near future to relocate down South and is looking for a replacement.
- At this point, Chris Worthington and Deb Harrison joined the meeting at the request of Fr. Sean and discussed upcoming Youth Ministry events and plans:
 - A Teen Chat after Mass on May 18.
 - Attending the Renegades' Faith and Family Day on May 31, which is also a fundraiser. The custom QR code allocates \$5 per \$24 ticket to St. Paul's Youth Ministry, and the youth ministers report that no one has questioned the price.
 - Pop-up Bible Studies during the summer, to be held in locations such as a park or coffee shop.
 - A significant change on the horizon is to include youth from Infant Savior and then Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Our Lady of the Assumption. The intent is to share resources – including kids and chaperones – in order to grow family events. Infant Savior has a big stage that could be used for a talent show, for example. Youth from other parishes will be invited to summer's Teen Chats and Bible Study Pop-Ups
 - The words for the SPYM acronym will change so that it reflects broader youth ministry and not solely "St. Paul's.
- Chris and Deb left the meeting at 7:20 p.m.

Art and Environment

Easter went well, and the altar has been updated for First Eucharist.

Social Activities

- A proposal has been made to have Sarah Hart, a musician who has written many hymns, to come to St. Paul's to perform. Her starting fee would be about \$2,500 for airfare, housing and food. Is this something we should consider? Perhaps in conjunction with another church or churches? A lengthy discussion ensued:
 - The musical members of the Council were familiar with her work and applauded her talent and uplifting music, and believed all choir members would love to hear her. Would it be one performance or a day retreat? Would either justify the expense, especially in the context of the Listening Session priorities in which there was very little about music? And the cost could easily exceed \$2,500.
 - Several members voiced the opinion that other churches would need to be involved.

St. Paul's is a mission church so including OLMC and OLA makes sense - and there is uncertainty as to whether there would be enough interest among our parishioners to support this alone.

- The Parish Picnic is confirmed for September 21, and the paperwork and checks will be submitted to the Town of Crawford.

Christian Services

- Thanks to Fr. Sean's announcement from the altar and the blurb in the bulletin, there was great response to Food Pantry Sunday. Reminder posters are being printed at Staples and will be put in the vestibules monthly the weekend prior to Food Pantry Sunday to keep this outreach in the forefront of parishioners' minds. Also, last month, three new families reached out to request food.
- The Consolation Ministry reported that there were no funerals last month. However, as a result of the Consolation Ministry Spotlight, a few people contacted Julie Laurenzi for more information, and the concept of a Consolation Corner column was born. This will be an occasional feature in the bulletin to address various bereavement issues. The first one will discuss what to say – or not to say – to the grieving family. Columns on topics such as complicated deaths and suicide have also been requested.

Chairperson's Report – Gale Britto

- We have to get the ball rolling regarding the request for community events that was heard at the last Listening session. The parish elected us to do things for them, and socials after Mass is one thing we can do quickly. Discussion ensued:
 - Consistency is needed, perhaps the first or second weekend of each month? But what about on Sundays when there is Religious Education as the director prefers there are no other activities in the hall at the same time? A solution needs to be found. If classes were to begin at 9 a.m., that would free up the hall afterward, and perhaps families would stick around. How many families are registered for next year?
 - Perhaps monthly is too often. Bimonthly could also be considered consistent. And if there is another community event in a particular month – a pancake breakfast or international dinner – then the after-Mass socials could be skipped. Consistency is important, but it might not be a bad idea to mix things up. And what about the summer months when attendance drops? Do we continue? It will probably be a couple of months before we have a benchmark.
 - Can a ministry sponsor a social?
 - It was agreed that there will be wine and cheese available after Mass on Saturday,

May 31 and a coffee hour on Sunday, June 1.

- We also need to get younger people involved. Summer is the time to work with Religious Education to plan a children's or family Mass and have the children involved in the liturgy.
 - Grandparents are keeping the church alive. Too many parents are just dropping off and picking up their kids on Sundays. Getting the kids to participate in a family Mass might be a way to bring their parents back.
 - What other ministries can youth be involved in?
 - A Flocknote will be sent to parishioners that summarizes the Listening Session.

Vicar's Report – Fr. Sean

Nothing additional to discuss.

Other Business

- In terms of the sound system, what the congregation hears is different from what is heard on the altar. There have been a couple of complaints - in particular, the feedback and that only one person from the choir can be heard clearly. Is it the placement of the microphone?
- The Pine Bush Community Band concert is Monday, July 21. The Carsons will be away. Although the band takes care of returning the altar to its original state, other Council members will need to be on hand so the chairperson isn't there alone.

The meeting closed at 8:21 p.m. with a prayer.

Next Parish Council meeting will be Tuesday, June 10, 2025, at 7 p.m. via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted, Deborah Botti