

St. Mary's Parish Council Minutes
Rectory – Monday, January 26, 2026 – 7:00 pm

I. Call to Order - by Brian Serpan

II. Opening Prayer - 7:03pm

III. Roll Call:

Fr. Dana	(P) A	Brian Serpan	(P) A	Gary Luea	(P) A
Peggy Seibel	(P) A	Nancy Cunningham	(P) A	Gary Haas	(P) A
Allen Weber	(P) A	Curtis Weber	P (A)	Zachary Eck	(P) A
Patti Park	P (A)				

IV. Additions to Agenda: None

V. Corrections and approval of November 24, 2025 minutes: Reviewed. A couple corrections: Under Commission Reports, B. “formally” should be “formerly”, D. “Novemb30th” should be “November 30” and “December” is misspelled. Under Unfinished Business, A. “of” should be “off”. Peggy approved minutes from November 2025 with changes; Gary H. seconded. Passed 7-0.

VI. Public Discussion: Kent Hensley (waited until we got to Unfinished Business, B.)

VII. Commission Reports

- a. **School Report –Emily per Patti’s Notes:** Cletus installed the new sink and cabinets in the preschool room. On Monday, January 19, was Teacher in-service. Patti did state assessment training, (required by the State) with teachers who will be administering the state assessments. We will give state assessments to grades 3-6 during the state testing window of March 23-April 23, 2026. As stated in the bulletin, we will be looking to hire two teachers for the 2026-2027 school year. Two of our teachers will be moving out of town at the end of this school year (2nd & 5th grade).
This week is Catholic Schools Week! Our Soup Luncheon/Carnival has been moved to Sunday, Feb. 1st due to sub-zero temperatures and snow. All classes have been working on door decorations for their classroom door to celebrate the week! *Monday: Celebrating our Community* – Free Dress Day for students and staff when they give a free-will donations or non-perishable item, which will go to the Ellis Food pantry. Thanks to our wonderful families, \$126 in cash donations and 64 non-perishable items were collected today! *Tuesday: Celebrating our Students* – St. Mary’s Talent Show scheduled to begin at 2:00 in the school gym. *Wednesday: Celebrating Vocations* – Flash Forward to the Future! “Dress for the job or vocation you feel God is calling you to pursue.” *Thursday – Celebrating our Nation* – Wear a red, white, and/or blue shirt. During 8:10am Mass, students will carry American flags during the procession to celebrate our great nation with patriotic music and prayers. *Friday: Celebrate Staff & Volunteers* – TMP buses will pick up St. Mary’s students & staff at 9:15am to go to Immac. Heart of Mary for 10:00am Mass with the Bishop! Home & School will provide lunch for staff! In the afternoon, we will hold a Virtue Crew Roc Paper Scissors Tournament after afternoon recess, followed by a dance party, complete with lights!
On Friday, February 6th, students & staff may wear their favorite sports/team shirt for our “SOUP-ER BOWL Sports Shirt Friday”! Lunch that day will be soup for the students and teachers will have a small soup potluck in the office. Monday, February 9th is an in-service day; no school. The Ellis Co. Spelling Bee is at 7:00pm at FHSU Beach Schmidt auditorium. St. Mary’s representatives for the county bee are Shayden Boydston, Adalie Hann, Landon Schield, Shaylie Gaschler, and Ainsley Haas is alternate. Mrs. Park will be attending the KAIRS Conference in Topeka is Feb. 9-10.
- b. **Home and School Report – Emily per Patti’s Notes:** Discussion and decisions on the Soup Luncheon/Carnival on scheduling volunteers, picking up carnival and raffle prizes, and to bring meals from the Country Club for staff and volunteers on Friday of CSW. Next meeting was scheduled for February 9th, but has been moved up to February 2nd at 6:00pm due to schedule conflicts.

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- c. **School Council Report – Emily per Patti's Notes:** The next meeting will be following the Home & School Meeting on February 2nd at 7:00pm. A change of date from February 9th due to schedule conflicts.
- a. **Liturgy Report – Emily: Liturgy Report – Emily:** February 2nd is the Feast of St. Blaise. Fr. Dana will be blessing the throats this weekend at each Mass, Monday evening and again Tuesday morning for the students. February 8 is World Marriage Day – blessing of couples during each of the weekend Masses. “Continuing Formation Days” for all priests in the Diocese is Feb. 9-12th in Wichita. I have been invited to attend a Diocesan Fundraisers Meeting in Salina on Wednesday, February 11th. It's a meeting where the “paid diocesan development staff get together periodically to connect and share ideas. This round they want to spend a little time talking through auction tips, ideas, and what's worked well for others for those who do both parish and school.” The Parish Office will be closed that day. On February 15th, our 2nd grader will make their First Reconciliation. Ash Wednesday is February 18th – Mass times are 7am, 8:10am & 7pm. Stations of the Cross will begin on Fridays at 2:30pm with the students (when school is in session) and at 5:30pm with Fr. Dana.
- **Lenten Soup Suppers Dates:** February 27, March 13, March 27 (hoping D of I will take). We will be looking for help in hosting these, along with volunteers to provide soups and sides.
 - **Totus Tuus:** Emily sent in a request for the weeks of: June 7, June 21 or July 13. No promises to what we will get. It costs the parish \$1,500 for a team to come. Last year we had 17 grade school and 10 high school students attend. According to a survey that was sent out to parents following Totus Tuus week last summer, the main reason for low attendance was vacations during the month of July. We will hope that by moving it back to June, numbers will increase!
- d. **Parish Education Report:** Fr. Dana applauded Craig Seibel for his leadership and our other mentors for a job well done with our YDisciple! Fr. Dana, Craig and Emily met with H Dorian, a YDisciple Coach from NET Ministries who was touring the Salina Diocese last week. It was a great conversation talking about our faith, inspiring our young people and gathering ideas for the future. CCD and Confirmation is on schedule. RCIA is still going well.
- e. **Maintenance Report:** *Lilac Bushes* are gone. Fr. Dana decided after trying to clean out the old branches and leaves, many of the bushes were rotted out. He has leveled out the ground and built a “fence” line for the trash cans to line up against. High Plains Roofing came to repair the Rectory roof last week. The project was a little more detailed than expected, but they fixed it up properly and it looks really nice. An update on the sewer smell for the church basement, Nathan Baker with Plumb Simple but a filter on to help with the smell, it's a temporary fix until we can really figure out the solution.
- f. **Finance Report – Fr. Dana:** (handout) Fr. Dana believes the church and school budgets are on track for this time of year.
- a. **Increase Offertory Program:** The Diocese has asked for us to complete a Final Report with those parishioners who returned their pledge cards and if they plan to give a new pledge amount. The ending total was 69 parishioners, who plan to increase the collection by 21% in 2026, going forward. Which for us could possibly be a \$50,000 increase to our collection.
 - b. **Upcoming #iGiveCatholic:** As of 3:00pm today we have had 9 online donations – raising \$2,775, 27 unique donors – raising \$11,300.00. Totaling \$14,075.00. We have used \$11,100.00 of our Matching funds thus far! The Knights of Columbus Matching Funds are live right now and have \$2,400 remaining. We also have the Daughters of Isabella's Matching Funds that will become live on Giving Tuesday. I had another donor come in this week and donated an additional \$5,000 to be part of Matching Funds – that will go live once the Knights have been completed. That's a total of \$19,000 Matching Funds – the most we've had in a long time! I'm hoping to push giving over the Fall Break via Facebook post and bulletin information!

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VIII. Unfinished Business:

- a. **Parish Directory:** We are still working on the creation of the parish directory. We believe we have finally received all of the parishioners' photos who wish to be in the directory, now it's just a matter of putting everything together.
- b. **Security:** The keypad for the loft has yet to be installed. Zachary volunteered to get it installed very soon. Fr. Dana and Gary L sat in on a online webinar that discussed the topic of Active Shooters within Worship places. They took some thoughts from it and shared it with the Council, though the main take away was to be aware of your surroundings, your parishioners, and know your steps of action. The Parish Council discussed ideas and scenarios to keep our parishioners and guests safe while attending Mass. An idea of inviting law enforcement to come educate the Council, and possibly a few parishioners on scenarios within the church in case a situation was to arise, how to react to those situations, and protocols that may need to take place. Kent Hensley extended his appreciation to the council for talking about this topic, especially in today's society. He encouraged the Council to reach out to a couple of agencies who could do a walk-through our church and educate us on scenarios that could happen and how to handle them. Brian offered to reach out to a couple different agencies to see what they may be offer, with guidance from Kent.
- c. **Auction 2026:** The Procurement Committee is meeting on Tuesdays; could really use some help on this committee brainstorming ideas on items to procure and asking businesses for donations, whether it be via phone call or going to them in person. We sent out 325 business letters for potential donations – sponsorship via donation, purchase of a banner, or donating an item. The idea would be to collect between 150-200 items, comparing to our last couple of years attendance numbers. Father Dana would like to form a "Stirring" Committee, a group of people who make the decisions on what happens a the auction, some what like the "Planning" Committee that we had a couple years ago. The deadline for donations to be turned into the Parish Office is March 1st. The Auction website is ready but not active yet; should be by early next week.

IX. New Business: None.

X. Father's Comments: None.

XI. Parishioner Comments: None.

Next Meeting: February 23, 2026 @ 7:00pm

Closing Prayer: 8:23pm

_____ Minutes taken by Emily Mattheyer