

St. Mary's Parish Council Minutes
Rectory – Monday, September 22, 2025 – 7:00 pm

- I. **Call to Order** - by Brian Serpan
- II. **Opening Prayer** - 7:02pm
- III. **Roll Call:**
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|--------------|-------|------------------|-------|-------------|-------|
| 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:** Parish Comments: Sewer Smell within the Church; Security to Old Business
- V. **Correction and approval of August 25, 2025 minutes:** A small correction under Parish Comments: “Emily mentioned (and) shared the results...” Reviewed. Gary L. motioned to accept the minutes as presented; Peggy seconded, passed 6-0.
- VI. **Public Discussion:** None
- VII. **Commission Reports**
- a. **School Report –Patti: Building Update:** Two out of the three refrigerators in the kitchen went out at the same time. One has been replaced, the other is on order. There was no warranty on the old ones as they were purchased from a second dealership instead of directly from manufacture. They were commercial refrigerators and are being replaced with standard ones. Mulch from the flower beds in front of the church were beautified by the 6th Grade Class last spring, but with recent rains, some of the mulch washed up on the sidewalk and almost into the street. Mr. Tebo’s class had plans to sweep it back into place but soon found out that it was already taken care of by Barney Boos. **Staff Update:** All teachers are required by the State to be certified in LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading & Spelling). There are 4 units for this school year and another 4 units in 26-27. Because each teacher has to attend and Patti is attempting to keep them close for the training, for instance, traveling to Hays, substitute teachers will be more on demand. Teachers are gone for the entire day. **Updates:** The 6th Grade Class was the first class to have lunch in the LOFT for this school year, special guest was Mr. Cletus! The 4th Grade Class will eat there on Thursday. Picture Day is tomorrow (Tuesday, Sept. 23), 4th Grade travels to the Ellis Recycling Center in the morning to learn about what can be recycled in Ellis and then will come back and present to all classes on how to be good stewards for the earth. Hays Arts Council – Laughing Matters will be at school on Wednesday morning. Ellis Community Block Party is this Saturday (*more under Home & School Report*), No School on Monday, Sept. 29th for teacher in-service. Looking into October: On Oct. 1st we hope to have our Wellness Wednesday Walk to School Day, weather pending. Creed Repertory Theatre will be coming on Oct. 3rd; Pet Blessing will take place on that afternoon as well. October 8th the 4th Grade Class will travel over to Hays for Ag Day. First Care Dental Screenings will take place on October 9th. Ellis High School Homecoming is on Oct. 10th, we will walk students down to watch the parade.
- b. **Home and School Report – Patti:** No September Meeting due to the Fall Fundraiser still happening. A small group gathered to count the fundraiser and we ended up raising \$21, 235.20 (without expenses)! There is still some chocolate bars left over but not near as much as what there was last year! Ellis Community Block Party is this Saturday, Sept. 27th from 4-7pm at the Creekside Park! Home & School will have a booth with information and also the Ring-A-Pop Game; may also sell leftover chocolates. Next Meeting is scheduled for October 13th at 6:00pm.
- c. **School Council Report – Patti:** No September Meeting. Patti did share with them the video from Superintendent, Geoff Andrews, referencing the book “Seven Commitments for a Driven Team” to brainstorm on how to be better leaders for your school. Next meeting is October 13th at 7:00pm.

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- a. **Liturgy Report – Emily:** **Liturgy Report – Emily:** This Sunday, September 28 is Priest Appreciation Day. Thursday, October 2nd is the Feast of Guardian Angels. Friday, October 3rd is the Pet Blessing at 2:30pm in the school circle drive in honor of the Feast Day of St. Francis on October 4th. Coffee & Donuts will be on October 12th, hosted by Curtis and Mary Kay Weber. Nancy Cunningham is also hoping to get a Youth Choir assembled for that Mass as well so we hope to have a great crowd!
- b. **Parish Education Report:** CCD has 36 students enrolled, 1st-8th grade. YDisciples have had on average 20-25 students attending. RCIA currently has 2 couples with a possibly of 2-3 more joining. Bible Study is still going great! Discussion about Restored Order took place; it will be gradually changing within the next 3 years, we'll hopefully get guidance from the Diocese of how to make sure all students get the sacraments they need within that time period. Future Planning: The Diocese is hosting Holy Fire program on November 1st at FHSU for students in the 6th-8th grades. Fr. Dana has asked his Confirmation Class to make it a requirement to attend as their retreat, but we are also opening it up to our 6th and 7th graders as well!
- d. **Maintenance Report:** Father Dana has worked hard to remove as many stickers from the playground as he can by digging and pulling. Now it's time to consider pre-emergent with Mark Augustine. There are still leaks above the altar and in the choir loft. These last couple of rains has really made those two areas weak. Father hopes to get on the schedule with Eric Augustine to come and repair them before we have bigger problems. Rick Cunningham has offered to help repair the other areas around the church with his really high scaffolding. **South Side Ramp:** Fr. Dana asked Zachary what a time frame would be for Eck & Eck to get the job done if we would pursue with the idea. Zachary potentially thought in next Spring – this would leave us some more time to raise money for the project as well.
- e. **Finance Report – Fr. Dana:**
 - a. **2025-2026 Budget:** Father Dana presented August totals with the new budget numbers plugged in. After everything was entered, we are just about \$60,000.00 in the hole to begin the fiscal year which is a little better than what he predicted at last month's meeting.
 - b. **Increase Offertory Program:** The Diocese would like us to participate in the new pilot program to attempt to increase our offertory numbers. It's a 7 week program with the hopes that parishioners who are currently giving to review and increase their generosity to the parish and to encourage those not yet giving to begin to participate. Father Dana presented the timeline to the Council and what each week persists of: lots of communication with the parishioners. He and Emily plan to create a newsletter to send out to all registered parishioners with information and commitment pledge cards in hopes people will consider increasing their tithing. Looking at stats from the past 10 years, Fr. Dana found that our parish offertory has increased by 28%, an average of roughly 3% each year. That's not horrible for a small parish – we believe we are a steady parish, not really hurting for funds, but could always work to be better.
 - c. **Upcoming #iGiveCatholic:** Emily attended ZOOM training with the corporate office and they have moved to a new platform this year. Old one was GiveGab. The new system seems to be pretty easy to manage and could potentially be used for other "crowd-funding" opportunities if we wish. The platform will track donations through the advanced giving and a week after the Giving Day for offline giving. Just a heads up: Emily plans to reach out to the Knights, D of I and possible another donor or two to have Matching Funds available again this year since it's no guarantee that we have funds from the Diocese. My hope is to tell a story about "keeping the lights on" with the church but also tying it in with the candle burning through our students as well. Advanced Giving Days are November 17 through December 1st with the actually Giving Day on Tuesday, December 2nd!

VIII. Unfinished Business:

- a. **Parish Directory:** At the time of the meeting, no volunteers had stepped up to help organize or create the directory. Emily asked Taylor Seibel if she would be interested in taking pictures and with her busy school schedule and own photography business, she is completely booked. However she did mention she would help us design the cover and maybe some other pages within the book on the side.

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- b. **Security:** Table it for next month. Gary L. would like to keep it on the front thinking to make sure we have a plan in place or consider making our parish safer for the parishioners and guests attending.

IX. **New Business:** NONE

X. **Father's Comments:** NONE

XI. **Parishioner Comments:** Peggy mentioned that a couple weeks ago when she attended Mass she could smell a sewer smell in the sanctuary of the church. Process of a limitation, we thought maybe it was the same time a wedding was happening who utilized the church basement and the hot water a lot. As the smell was already seeping to the upstairs on Friday evening. Father has mentioned this problem to Plumb Simple, Nathan Baker many times; we just need to figure out the problem and how to fix it.

Next Meeting: October 27, 2025 @ 7:00pm

Closing Prayer: 8:20pm

_____ Minutes taken by Emily Mattheyer