

St. Christopher Parish Pastoral Council Minutes

February 18, 2025

Opening Prayers

The Parish meeting opened with our traditional faith sharing and prayers. The Gospel for the upcoming weekend liturgies for the 7th Sunday in Ordinary Time was read aloud and reflected on by each individual Council member. Personal intercessions were prayed. We concluded Opening Prayer with collective participation in the Responsorial Psalm for the Sunday liturgy.

Welcome and Approval of Minutes

- Council's meeting minutes for November 19, 2024, were approved. They will be posted on the St. Christopher Parish website.
- Chris Rosati noted that the regularly scheduled January meeting of Parish Pastoral Council had to be cancelled due to wintry weather and unsafe travel conditions. Accordingly, the agenda for our February meeting tonight reflects the agenda originally prepared for January 21, 2025.

Ministries Issues and Concerns

Religious Education

- Sacramental preparation is well underway for those who will be making their first Reconciliation and receiving their first Communion.
- Confirmation preparation for young adults is well underway too. 58 students are preparing for Confirmation.
- Students from *The Way* PSR program have helped out at St. Colman and engaged in various other service programs – some in cooperation with the Social Concerns Committee.
- *The Way* junior high school students will be hosting the Parish Lenten Soup Supper on Tuesday evening, April 1st.
- The Order of Christian Initiation for Adults (OCIA) is preparing those who will be entering the Catholic Church and receiving the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Communion at Easter.
- The upcoming ***Belltower Beacon*** will provide updates on sacramental preparation. The publication will be available around the first of March.

Ladies Guild

- The Guild's January Water Bar Social drew a good turnout and the evening's guided meditation led by Claire Kaufman was spiritually moving and well received.

Mission Statement

We are the people of St. Christopher Catholic Church, a Eucharistic community of faith dedicated to. . .
Welcome, Celebrate, Care & Grow. . . in the image and likeness of Jesus.

- Sunday, February 23rd, the Ladies Guild will gather at the 11:30 Mass to remember in prayer living and deceased members.
- During Lent, on Wednesday, April 2nd, the Ladies Guild will gather in the Church to pray Mary's Way of the Cross – the stations as imagined through the eyes of Jesus' mother.

PATHS [Parents & Teachers Helping Students]

- PATHS annual 2025 fundraiser – *The Knight at the Oscars*– exceeded their fundraising goal and provided those who attended a memorable night of entertainment, dining and charitable giving.
- Upcoming PATHS events include ice skating, a father-daughter dance, and mother-son bowling.
- ***The Beggar and the Wolf*** a comedy based on the legend of St. Francis of Assisi will be presented on Thursday, March 27th in the Parish Center. Two free performances by St. Christopher School students will be offered: 9 AM for students and parents; and 7 PM for public. 24 actors and 16 crew are staging the performances with student talent from 1st to 7th grades.

Social Concerns

- This coming weekend, February 22 – 23, equal exchange coffee, tea and chocolate will be sold after all Masses to support a project to build housing for the needy of the Philippines.
- Collaboration with the Director of Religious Education, Sharon Armstrong, continues in support of *The Way* PSR service programs.

Social Concerns' Future

- Participation in noon meetings is now available remotely via TEAMS.
- Consideration of rebranding "Social Concerns" is ongoing and requires further assessment of the recommended name change to "Community Outreach".

J+Walkers Youth Group and Young Adults

- 6 members of the Youth Ministry attended this past weekend's overnight retreat – "I AM" – to explore their relationship with God and the presence of God within each of them. Logan Feldkamp facilitated with the Diocesan archivist.
- Regular programming will resume in March with a focus on Lent and Easter preparation.

St. Colman

- Pantry items are being donated at a steady pace.
- There are nine delivery driver volunteers – a combination of men and women.
- Friends of Rocky River Public Library have offered a donation of books to complement the food and personal care items donated now. St. Colman personnel need to determine if the required space is available to accommodate books.

- St. Christopher volunteers are already identified to deliver and serve St. Colman neighborhood meals on February 15th and March 22nd.
- Volunteers for upcoming neighborhood meals will be needed on July 19th and August 16th. Recruitment of meal volunteers will begin in May.

Grief Support

- 10 individuals are participating in the ongoing Grief Support group that is running for seven weeks that began January 9th.
- The next group will participate in grief healing for 7 weeks, April 3rd to May 15th.
- Grief support groups will be offered at St. Christopher every spring, summer, and fall/winter.

The Normandy Assisted Living Outreach

- Father Lito will celebrate Mass at The Normandy on Ash Wednesday. Pastoral Associate Melissa DiFini and St. Christopher volunteers to The Normandy will assist.
- A Communion Service at The Normandy is offered now twice a month – formerly once a month.
- Room to room prayer and communion are provided by St. Christopher volunteers to The Normandy. Bonnie Twitchell is the volunteer coordinator.

Mornings with the Word

- A core group of 10 – 12 meets twice a month to collectively review and reflect on the upcoming Sunday Mass readings.
- The group recently engaged in a fruitful discussion of Bishop Malesic's Pastoral Letter.

1st Friday Eucharistic Adoration

- Participation in this faith practice remains steady. Adoration extends from 11:30 AM to 3:30 PM in the Prayer Room. Prayer requests are honored by participants.

Holiday Cards

- Thanksgiving and Christmas greetings from PSR and St. Christopher School students delighted Parish homebound and nursing home residents and brightened spirits. The young people's Easter cards will send Easter joy in April.

Walking with Moms in Need

- A virtual Mother's Day weekend fundraiser to raise emergency funds is being planned by Melissa DiFini and Julie Mallett. This will replace last year's cookie sale.

Parish Mission

- The Parish Mission "60 Minutes with Jesus" took place in the Church on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, February 2 to 4, from 7 to 8 PM. Father Jim Sichko a Papal

Missionary of Mercy directed the Mission. He introduced himself in advance by serving as the homilist at each of the weekend liturgies.

- The Parish Mission was enthusiastically received. Father Jim generated great energy. The Church was full all three evenings.
- Father Jim offers a 2-year follow-up. His return will likely be planned for 2027.

Parish Lenten Retreat

- Deacon Mike Hayes will facilitate an upcoming Parish retreat – The Eucharist and Our Faith – on Friday evening, March 28th, and Saturday, March 29th. The retreat is billed as a way to enrich our Lenten journey.
- The agenda for Saturday includes Scripture sharing, presentations, praying the Rosary, and open discussions. Parish Council members who might be willing to volunteer to facilitate table discussions should contact Melissa DiFini. The planning committee includes Melissa DiFini, Maureen Bonifas, Colleen McKenna and Deacon Mike.
- On-line registration is required for Saturday retreatants. A \$30 fee will cover a continental breakfast, lunch, and program materials. The day will conclude with participation in 5:00 PM Mass in the Church. Registration for Friday evening's presentation followed by exposition of the Eucharist and benediction is not required.

Father John Updates and Concerns

- The ongoing rollout of the new Parish information technology platform continues apace – sometimes with “glacial” progress. A new application with an improved calendar has just been received.
- Watch the upcoming early March **Belltower Beacon** for content regarding the Parish Mission, sacramental preparations, and a whole host of Parish and School activities and programs. Take note of an article by Father Lito about his trip “home” to the Philippines.

Parish Pastoral Council

- Donut Sunday – February 2nd – was well attended after the morning Masses. Flyers promoting the Parish Mission were distributed. The new free-will offering collection box was put to good use.
- The “ST. CHRIS DONUT SUNDAY HOW TOs” was updated to include information about the storage of the percolator.
- Donut Sunday – March 2nd – Cheryl Selak and Kathy Rohn volunteered to oversee the upcoming event. Council members who can lend a hand are encouraged to come before and/or after the 8:30 and 10:00 Sunday morning Masses.
- A Parish Council retreat plan has been scuttled. The designated retreat committee found it impossible to engage a priest to lead an all-day Saturday retreat during Lent. Council members are encouraged to participate in the Parish Retreat planned for March 28 – 29.

- SCP Weekend is confirmed for the weekend of August 22 – 24, 2025. Kevin Tennant, Alex DiMichele and Sharon Armstrong have all committed to provide leadership support.
- Music Ministry – takeaways from November’s meeting with Music Ministry Director, Mayumi Naramura
 - It was noteworthy that Fr. Jim Sichko in conjunction with Parish Mission noted the high quality of the Music Director and the cantors leading the assembly in singing at Mass. It was also noteworthy that Fr. Jim Sichko pointedly criticized the lack of assembly participation in singing at Mass.
 - Questions were raised about the viability of adding pages to the music segment of the weekly Bulletin to make the music larger and more legible and to include not just the lyrics but the music too.
 - Concerns were raised about the complexity of some of the music, most especially the Gloria which is complicated to sing – “too many words” – and which comes at the beginning of Mass. Starting the Mass with a Gloria that is difficult to sing zaps the energy out of the congregation.
- Pastoral Letter from Bishop Malesic
 - Bishop Malesic’s Pastoral Letter will be the subject of the Parish Staff Day in June.
 - A process for discerning the Bishop’s Pastoral Letter, ***A Flourishing Apostolic Church***, is needed for Parish Council also.
 - The Letter is divided into four parts. There is an accompanying set of Group Discussion Questions addressing each of the four parts of the Pastoral Letter.
 - For Council’s March meeting, each Council member should be familiar with the Letter’s contents and the associated questions. Members will be expected to reflect upon their personal reading and reflection of the document. Then the expectation is that the logistics for future dialogue and discussion can be established at the April meeting. The goal is to focus on accomplishing the task in a complete and timely manner.
- Officer discernment will be in May. Father John, as usual, will absent himself from the discernment process.
- Chris Rosati recommends viewing ***The Veil Removed*** – an online “must see”.

Concluding Comments

- Additional agenda suggestions are welcome.
- Cheryl Selak will lead the closing prayer in March.

Closing Prayer and Mission Statement

Ken Szabo offered our Closing Prayer for our priests. Reading and reflection of the Parish Mission Statement concluded the meeting.

Next Business Meeting

Tuesday, March 18, 2025

7 – 8:30 PM – Parish Center

Parishioners are welcome to attend.