

# **PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

**Tuesday, May 6, 2025 - 6:30 PM**

## **St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish Hall**

**Attendees:** Gabrielle Andrea, Father James Belogi, Christine Cioffi, Justine Crevetas, Bob Dicostanzo, Joan Duda, Deborah Fontes, Arthur Foo, Betsy Glasser, Teshia Gutchell, Anna Hartz, Richard Leet, Fran Mitchell, Nancy Moscheo, Rev Anthony Onu, Julius Pasquariello, Thomas Poznanski, Kathleen Riordan, Joanne Russell, Donna Simone, Kelly Sloan, Joanne Tuchovsky, Christopher Wertman

**Guest:** Chuck Slavik and Alessio Fasullo

**Excused:** Alyssa Sarrosa and Gloria Towle-Hilt

**Unexcused:**

Debbie Fontes presided over the meeting which began at 6:32 pm.

**Welcome -** Debbie Fontes

**Opening Prayer-** Anna Hartz

### **1.) Review of April 4, 2025 meeting minutes**

Motion to approve minutes by Anna Hartz, second by Teshia Gutchell with corrections.

Father Jim Comments-

Remove total debt comment due to inaccurate figures.

### **2.) Ministry Updates**

- Music Ministry - (Justine SMS)- See attached report
  - The Music Ministry purchased 5 new microphones and a new sound board thanks to two generous donors.
  - The Joyful Heart Choir (adult choir)
    - Sang for Christmas Eve mass- 40 minutes of carols.
    - Sang for Confirmation.
  - Youth Choir
    - Membership has increased from 6 members last year to 8 members this year.
    - All youth members have been able to cantor at least once over the past couple of months.
  - School Choir

- Has grown from 16 members last year to 20 members this year.
- Sing at school masses and three times per year for weekend liturgies.
- School Choir sang for Catholic Schools Beacon of Hope Gala on April 25.
- Cantors rehearse every 5-6 weeks on Wednesdays to prepare psalms and gospel acclamations for the upcoming masses.
- Justine and the National Council of Pastoral Musicians have organized an architectural, liturgical and organ crawl, including Saint Kateri, Saint John the Evangelist, Saint Lukes, and Saint Madeleine Sophie, for participants to view organs and worship space. The event will be held on June 1.
- Prayer and worship SGA (Joanne T.)
  - The Word Among Us booklets were picked up the first Sunday they were available and we needed to get more.
  - Minister signups for Ash Wednesday Mass went well.
  - The Masses were very well attended with 356 at the 12:15 and 200 at the 5:30 PM.
  - This was an increase over the 2024 Masses. [200 and 125 respectively.]
  - Stations of the Cross attendance overall was just slightly lower than last year with 176 attending. Last year was 189. Good Friday stations attendance was 55; last year was 38.
  - Palm Sunday Masses were well attended with 120 at the 7:30 AM and 248 at the 10:30 mass, totaling 368. Last year Palm Sunday was 75 and 251 totaling 326.
  - First time St. Gabriel completed sign ups for all masses, liturgy and foot washing.
  - A 10-minute rehearsal for Eucharistic ministers and lectors scheduled for Holy Thursday and Good Friday was held on Wednesday, April 16<sup>th</sup>. This served us well and instructed ministers of St. Madeleine Sophie in the communion pattern at St. Gabriel.
  - Rehearsals for Holy Thursday and Good Friday went well. Fr. Leo attended the rehearsal for Holy Thursday. Monsignor Rutherford presided on Good Friday.
  - There was representation of men, women and children for foot washing.

- The masses and liturgy were well attended:
  - Easter Sunday attendance at St. Gabriel was 190 and 406 respectively, totaling 596; last Easter attendance was 230 and 411 totaling 641.
- Reciting of the Rosary in front of Mary's statue outside on Tuesdays in the month of May.
- Getting ready for the Ascension of the Lord masses on Thursday, May 29<sup>th</sup>.
- A notice going in the bulletin, verbal announcements ready and signup sheets for liturgical ministers in the Gathering Area are ready.

### **3.) Old Business**

- Diocesan Appeal funding update/ May 5th small group meeting update (Father Jim)
  - Working on the final push for Diocesan Appeal.
  - Met last night (May 5th) for a small group meeting - waiting to understand what the Bishop's opinion is. Meeting of Parish Leaders and pastors on May 22nd should know more information after the meeting.
  - April 29th there was a meeting amongst the vicariates and the conclusion drawn was to await the Bishop's opinion on the best ways to proceed.
  - Diocese is being reconfigured and we will be a part of that process.
  - SMS- \$58,238 has been collected thus far towards the Diocesan Appeal the deficit is \$53,221.
- Fundraising working group (Bob)
  - Bob reported that:
    - Diocese assessment is based on a three year rolling average.
    - Diocesan Appeal seems to be better within parishes when discussed more frequently amongst parishioners.
    - Diocesan Appeal aids administrative responsibilities of Father Jim, Father Anthony, and Deacon Tom.
    - The McCloskey Society is reserved for people who donate over \$1000 to the Disocesan Appeal and we could reach out to those people to inquire if they would be willing to donate further towards the appeal.
    - Send mailers to lapsed givers or people who haven't given yet.

- Revitalization of Finance Committees and Councils (Father Jim)
  - Coordinating dates for SMS meetings to begin again.
  
- Updates on parish picnic (Anna)
  - Will be held on Sunday September 7th.
  - Committee meeting will be held in June, there is no date set in stone.
  - Open invitation for any helpers.
  - RSVPs in churches, sign up lists and sign up genius will be utilized again this year.
  - Last year we had over 100 attendees.
  
- Updates on 2025 Easter Carnival
  - 110 kids for Easter Carnival plus their families from all four parishes.
  - Play a game and the child would get an egg filled with candy.
  - The kids had a passport that would be marked at each game, when the passport was completed the kid got a prize!
  - \$195 in free will donations for Family Promise.
  - Food and monetary donations were collected by the food pantry.
  
- Updates on Schenectady Inner City Mission (SCIM) Crop Walk (Richard)- see attached report
  - The Crop Walk was a success, there was no rain and \$2,540 was raised!
  
- Pastoral Council Discernment (Anna)
  - No vacancies for SGA Seats.
  - No discernment for this year, we will reevaluate with the future.

#### **4.) New Business**

- Guest Chuck Slavik, expressed concerns about the bulletins financial reports. Discussed next fiscal year to update the format of the financial reports in the bulletin to make it easier for parishioners to read and understand.

## **5.) Community Events**

- May 6, 2025- Christ Child Society had a fundraiser at Bountiful Bread, parishioners from both parishes were in attendance
- May 17, 2025- Gala of Giving at the Edison in downtown Schenectady.
- Christ Child Society will be hosting a Fathers Day Raffle, which includes two tickets to a Boston College and Fordham football game in August, \$100 Wegmans gift card, and \$100 gift card Capital Grill.

## **6.) Pastor's Comments- Father Jim**

"I'm Good"

## **7.) Reminders for June meeting- Debbie Fontes**

- Ministry reports from faith formation and satin Madeleine Sophie schools.
- Chairs to be elected in the June meeting.

**8.) Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Betsy Glasser, seconded by Joanne Russell.**

**9.) Closing Prayer was read by Teshia Gutchell and everyone.**

**Meeting conclude 7:36 PM**

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Wertman

## Attached Reports:

### Crop Walk Report:

CROP WALK 2025 DONATIONS		
St. Madeleine Sophie	4:00 pm Liturgy	\$492.80
	9:00 am Liturgy	\$359.75
	7:00 pm Liturgy	\$219.00
		<b>\$1,071.55</b>
St. Gabriel's	7:30 am Litrgy	\$643.01
		<small>includes check Woman's Club for \$100.00 Includes donation from Faith and Spirituality Group for \$100.00</small>
	10:30 am Liturgy	\$292.00
		<b>\$935.01</b>
Our Lady Queen of Peace	4:00 pm Liturgy	\$124.00
	8:00 am Liturgy	\$211.00
		<b>\$335.00</b>
St. Margaret of Cortona	10:00 am Liturgy	<b>\$199.00</b>
total		<b>\$2,540.56</b>

### Music Ministry Report:

The SMS Music Ministry has had a busy and productive year so far! We have been able to continue our good work in our ministry because of the wonderful choir members and cantors who volunteer their time and talents. The Albany Chapter of NPM (National Pastoral Musicians) held a music and liturgy conference called "Singing the Liturgy, Renewing the Call" at St. Edward's in September. Several choir members attended workshops on cantoring, choral reading sessions from the music publishers, and attended keynote talks by Fr. Ricky Manalo who wrote many songs and the mass setting we are currently using at SMS. Some of the choir members also volunteered their voices for the Works of Mercy Prayer Service at OLQP in November for a well-attended Family Day for service. We also were able to purchase a new sound board/mixer as well as 5 near microphones for the music area by 2 generous donors since the previous mixer was very old and starting to fail. We are hearing many positives about the new sound, and it seems we can be heard even better now!

The Joyful Heart Choir (adult choir) sang for the Guilderland Interfaith Council's Lessons and Carols once again in December at Christ the King Church. It was a well-attended service and our attendance and well-prepared music was very appreciated. Lots of wonderful compliments were shared about our choir. The Joyful Heart Choir also prepared and sang wonderfully for 10pm Mass on Christmas Eve with 40 minutes of carols before Mass began as well as for the Confirmation Mass in November. We also once again combined with SGA for Holy Week which was held at SGA this year.

The Youth Choir has increased from 6 members to 8 for this year. We had hoped for 11 but some of our siblings weren't quite ready to join us yet. The Youth Choir has sung consistently for the 9am mass the first Sunday of each month and the parishioners always seem to enjoy and appreciate their singing and hard work. All the Youth Choir members this year have been able to cantor one or more things over the last several months. They have been cantoring gospel acclamations and even the psalm at the ambo. The School Choir has also increased from 16 to 20 students participating in choir which has been fun! We have been routinely rehearsing a couple times a month to prepare for school masses during the week and 3 times a year for weekend liturgies. We have mostly focused on holding our song sheets quietly, singing loud and proud while still being able to hear each other, and being a little more focused during Mass. The School Choir also once again had the opportunity to participate in the Catholic School's Beacon of Hope Gala last week on April 25<sup>th</sup> at June Farms. The students sang under the direction of their music teacher Mrs. Benninger while I accompanied the songs "Lean On Me" and "Go Out and Tell" as part of the entertainment for the Gala. They were so very excited and really put on a show for our great school!

Our Cantors have continued to rehearse about every 5-6 weeks on Wednesdays to prepare the psalms and gospel acclamations for the upcoming masses. Rehearsing together allows everyone to be prepared to fill in for each other in the event someone is ill or has

another conflict. I continue to record the music and share it through the choir portal on the parish website so all can be prepared regardless of attending rehearsal and throughout the summer.

I continue to work with Sydney Nicolson and mentor her by teaching her some liturgical music and mass settings for piano as well as go over the parts of the Mass. She has played at mass more this year playing the mass parts on piano while I join her on the organ.

Lastly, we have been showcasing liturgical ministries as part of hospitality each month. The SMS Music Ministry and Livestream ministry were showcased this last weekend and we hope to continue to grow membership in these ministries. We especially are in need of retirees or those available during the week for singing for funerals as part of the Resurrection Choir. Lots happening at SMS, and we hope to continue to grow the music ministry for years to come!

#### **Prayer & Worship report:**

**St. Gabriel Prayer & Worship Committee worked together with St. Madeleine Sophie's Liturgy Team to prepare for the Lenten Season, Holy Week and Easter.**

- **The Word Among Us booklets were picked up the first Sunday they were available and we needed to get more.**
- **Minister signups for Ash Wednesday Mass went well.**
- **The Masses were very well attended with 356 at the 12:15 and 200 at the 5:30 PM.**
- **This was an increase over the 2024 Masses. [200 and 125 respectively.]**
- **Stations of the Cross attendance overall was just slightly lower than last year with 176 attending. Last year was 189. Good Friday stations attendance was 55; last year was 38.**

**Palm Sunday Masses were well attended with 120 at the 7:30 AM and 248 at the 10:30 mass, totaling 368. Last year Palm Sunday was 75 and 251 totaling 326.**

#### **Holy Week Masses and Liturgy:**

**For the first time we [St. Gabriel] completed signups for all masses, liturgy and foot washing. Nancy and I coordinated and reviewed the masses and liturgy for holy week that were held at St. Gabriel this year.**

- **A 10-minute rehearsal for Eucharistic ministers and lectors scheduled for Holy Thursday and Good Friday was held on Wednesday, April 16<sup>th</sup> just before the rehearsal for Altar Servers and Ushers. This served us well and instructed ministers of St. Madeleine Sophie in the communion pattern at St. Gabriel. The pattern here is different than at St. Madeleine's. The stations of the cup and bread and procedures were reviewed and walked through several times.**
- **Rehearsal for Holy Thursday and Good Friday went well. Fr. Leo attended the rehearsal for Holy Thursday. Monsignor Rutherford presided on Good Friday.**
- **Rehearsals were well attended by the ministers who signed up. Some but not all volunteers to have their foot washed attended but things went smoothly during mass.**
- **There was representation of men, women and children for foot washing.**
- **The Easter Vigil rehearsal was very comprehensive. Every step was gone over several times to make sure all would go well at mass and it did.**
- **Men and women were lectors for the Vigil mass this year. This year a push was made to get more men to read. In past years only women signed up to read.**
- **The masses and liturgy were well attended; the church was very full but did not exceed capacity.**
- **Easter Sunday attendance at St. Gabriel was 190 and 406 respectively, totaling 596;**
- **Last Easter attendance was 230 and 411 totaling 641**

**I believe the difference was that more people attended the Vigil mass this year.**

#### **On other topics:**

- **Reciting of the Rosary in front of Mary's statue outside on Tuesdays in the month of May, but not in inclement weather.**
- **Getting ready for the Ascension of the Lord masses on Thursday, May 29<sup>th</sup>.**

- **A notice going in the bulletin, verbal announcements ready and signup sheets for liturgical ministers in the Gathering Area are ready.**

**Respectfully submitted**  
**Joanne Tuchovsky**