Holy Family Parish Council/Commissions Meeting
Minutes

Date:	**August 6, 2026**
Time:	**6:30 PM – 7:30 PM**
Location:	**St. Mary's Education Center**

Attendees:

Liturgy	Faith Formation	Church/Parish Life	Justice, Peace & Social Action	Stewardship/ Evangelization	Family Life & Vocations
Barb Simon SM x Kim Cranston HT	Mary Ruth SM x Valli Ruggiero, HT Angie Goodwin SJ	Regina Snyder SM Marianne Schlabach HT Cathy Conway SJ	x Peggy Bush SM x Sandy Marner HT x Carolyn Rourke SJ	Dan Snyder SM x Rollin Secrest SJ x John Bush HT	Jessica Watts SM Paige Cortum SJ x Magdalen Ockenfels HT

Lay Directors:

Dee Simon, Lay Director	Junell Duwa, Lay Director

Staff:

x Rev. Benjamin Snyder, Pastor	x Deacon Derick Cranston, Pastoral Associate	
x Tami Plank, Financial Secretary	x Jane Duwa, Business Administrator	Kelly Schnoebelen, Youth Minister/DRE

Also attending was Beth Cody

Opening Prayer

Deacon Derick opened the meeting with a prayer.

Approval of May 7, 2026 minutes for Holy Family Parish Council/Commissions Meeting
Approval of agenda

Sandy Marner made a motion to approve the May 7, 2026 Holy Family Parish Council/Commissions meeting minutes. Kim Cranston seconded the motion. Motion was approved.

Pastor's Report

Father Ben reported on Totus Tuus, 25 children (K-6th grade); 7 children (7th-12th grade). The kids were really enthusiastic with the program. Kelly Schnoebelen started as of July 1st as Director of Religious Education and Youth Ministry. She met with the teachers on August 6th at 6:30 p.m. She is very enthusiastic and excited about the upcoming year. Father Ben's Installation Mass will be Sunday, August 30th, at 10:00 a.m. at St. Mary's. Bishop Walsh will preside at the Mass and Father Ben will be presented as Pastor to the Lay Directors, Finance Council, Parish Council/Commissions and staff. There will be a reception following Mass.

With our quarterly meeting coming up in a few weeks, I am looking for feedback. I know the commission system came about with the official creation of Holy Family Parish a few years ago. I've had a year now experiencing it and hearing some feedback already both pros and cons.

My overall impression is that there is still confusion and it is "functioning" but not thriving as intended. I would like our next meeting to be more discussion based rather than report based.

Before next meeting, either by email or in person, let me know:
1) What is one thing working well with the commission system?

2) What is one thing not working as intended or understood when the commissions came?

3) What would be one thing that would improve the commission system so that it could be a more effective outreach tool in our parish?

Thank you all for the responses to my questions. I think we had a constructive conversation at the last parish commissions meeting as well. Minutes will be coming but these are my thoughts and reflections.

1) What has gone well
- The commissions have brought the three churches together somewhat.
- There has been more communication between churches.
- They have helped put focus on the aspects of parish life.
- Has gotten people out of their "comfort zones" or "church traditions"

2) What has not worked as intended or well
- Confusion of roles
- How to get people involved/engaged when the perception has been "that's the commission head's job"
- Communication
- Are the commissions really doing what they are supposed to be doing?
- Collaboration between commissions has been lacking at times
- Multiple people doing the same thing or too much overlap/take over of roles

3) What is one thing to improve
- Getting more people involved, especially men and younger families.
- More resources and support to develop commissions. Social Action has been the most successful in forming around the intended plans and goals.

My thoughts:
I think the "commission idea" is important for the life of the parish. In the handbook for parishes that the Diocese has, it names these areas as "vital" for a thriving parish. Each "commission" puts focus on areas and there is overlap. The Stewardship and Evangelization Commission is really the odd one out though since the idea of stewardship underlies everything we should be doing in all the commissions.

Our mission as a parish (and as a Catholic Church) is to make disciples for Jesus Christ in our area of the Diocese. If we are just "doing what we always do" or hosting events or sticking to our "parish customs", that is not necessarily healthy in the long run. Some of those things may be off focus too. We have to be willing to be open to new ideas and new generations for the church to keep growing. I don't have a "magic solution" nor is it all "Father's job." But let's keep this conversation flowing. Brainstorm, ideas, ask me questions, pray over it, etc.

I think a lot of good intentions were laid out when the commissions were presented, but I don't think there has been as good a follow through. I believe Social Action has done the best at developing as the Commissions were envisioned. I would like to see more intentional development and coordination between commissions.

Two things between now and our November meeting:
1) Meet in some format as a commission and review the Diocese list of policies and guidelines for parish and finance councils. I attached it for review since it lays out "ideas" or goals for the various commissions. Brainstorm people who should be part of the commission across generations and churches who are currently active, semi-active, and especially not active. I have already met with the musicians and plan to incorporate them more into the Liturgy commission for example.

2) I am going to work on forming a more standard "parish council" to work alongside the commissions. Think of it more as a "parish/commission advisory" or support group rather than a "oh, they are in charge of everything." No. John Bush has already done things that I would say are a good example of what I am envisioning of this council (the Google calendar and working to promote/provide resources for the commissions). The Commissions will still exist! This is not replacing or changing systems. A "parish council" is a resource we need to help keep us focused on the mission of the parish. Again, this does not change or replace the Commissions. I am working on details and what that can look like which we can discuss more in November when we meet.

Overall, thank you for your willingness to serve on commissions. I know some of you have expressed the desire to step back and I respect that. It can feel like a lot "doing everything" or getting burnout from discouragement at lack of participation. My hope is that if we are mission and discipleship focused, we can get to the point where we can hand off the reigns to future parish leaders and volunteers. We are all navigating together where we are at as a society and as Catholics in rural US Midwest. We plant seeds, but God gives the growth.

Commission Updates

Reminder – Please use reimbursement forms for Commission expenses.

Stewardship/Evangelization Commission
Faith Formation Commission
Liturgy Commission
Church/Parish Life Commission
Justice, Peace, Social Action Commission
Family Life and Vocations Commission

Finance

ADA 2025-2026

Goal - $55,942.00
Pledged - $68,768.00 Received - $66,278.00
Total Over - $12,826.00 Over - $10,336.00

Father briefly discussed that August 17th the Diocese will release ADA Impact Report which will include what ADA money is spent on.

Repair Projects

Wellman Parking Lot
Rollin Secrest will be meeting with Mid-America on Wednesday, August 5th to see what is causing the crack in the parking lot and what is needed to repair it.
St. Mary's anti-slip protection deteriorating/quote
Have received a quote of $5700 to repair.
PLC fire system update & deck
Mike pointed out that the PLC fire system is 20 years old and will need to get quotes as to getting a new system.

Cemetery

Holy Trinity Cemetery
Jim Hauth has been checking with Mike Stumpf into the property line issues of the cemetery. Is also checking into using the service that the City of Kalona uses for their cemetery.

Next Meeting

November 12, 2026 at 6:30 p.m.

Closing Prayer

Father closed the meeting with a prayer.

Liturgy Commission:
The piano in the Holy Trinity Parish Life Center has been taken to West Music for repairs. Since it was a memorial, it will be put back in Holy Trinity Church and the piano now in the church will be moved to the choir and the one in the choir moved to the Parish Life Center. The piano in the Education Center at St. Mary's will be repaired and move back to the church.

Faith Formation Commission:
Father met with Kelly regarding Faith Formation for upcoming year. Kelly is meeting with teachers and coordinators on August 6th. Father and Kelly are finalizing events for youth ministry.

Church/Parish Life Commission:
No one present from Commission.

Justice, Peace & Social Action Commission:
Rosary Project – we meet on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at the PLC in Richmond.
We have distributed 4000+ rosaries. These are being distributed to members of our parish, in the states and overseas. Food pantry hours are changing 8:00 – 10:00 am on 2nd Saturday. No hours on Friday.
Update to our Second Collection for September:

- July – Local Food Pantries
- August – Make A Wish
- September – Laboure Society
- October – Catholic News Station
- November – The Backpack Program for local schools (food or school supplies)
- December – NAMI National Alliance for Mentally Ill
- January – MOPS
- February – Rice Bowl
- March – Rice Bowl
- April – The Catholic Worker House
- May – Local Food Pantries
- June – Hospice of Washington County

We will continue to meet monthly during our rosary project.
Future Projects

- Community Thanksgiving Dinner
- Patriotic Rosary
- Angel Tree

Stewardship/Evangelization Commission:
Posters for promoting and evangelizing are close to being finished. Plan to promote during Labor Day celebration.

Family Life & Vocations Commissions:
Planning to do Trunk or Treat. Sending cards to people who have received sacraments.