



St. John Fisher - Parish Council

Minutes from Meeting – May 23, 2024

Parish Staff/Trustees		Parish Council		Other Attendees	
<u>Ex officio</u>					
Rev. Alvin J. LeBlanc	√	Jim Castellani	R		
Sr. Dcn. Em. John McKaig		Barbara Gaudette	√		
Dcn. Bill Gilles	R	Nancy Gianetti	√		
Marlene Luebeck (Trustee)		Julie Groene	R		
Peter Yorio (Trustee)	R	Aubree Jordan	R		
<u>Non-voting</u>		Melissa Jordan	R		
Janice Reska (DMM)		Paul Kriksciun	√		
Cindy Bryan (CFF)	√	Barbara Meyer (President)	√		
Helena Thomas (CFF, DYM)	√	Matthew Smigel			
	√	Jared Stearns			
		Gil Thompson	R		
		Christina Warchut	√		
		Matt Wilson (Secretary)	√		
		√=present	R=regrets		

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** – PC President, Barbara Meyer **7:00 PM**
- II. **OPENING PRAYER** – Father LeBlanc
- III. **REVIEW MINUTES of March 21, 2024** – All
 - Barbara Meyer provided a markup of the minutes. Paul Kriksciun made a motion to accept the March 21, 2024 minutes with Barbara’s changes, Chris Warchut seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved unanimously by voice vote.
- IV. **PARISHIONERS’ COMMENTS** – All
 - Barbara Meyer said that there was positive feedback on the “high tea” that Chris Warchut organized. The attendees were all women. There was hope expressed that this would be an annual event.
 - Barbara also said that she heard positive comments on the gardens, thanks to Donna Sawan.
 - Barbara said that she was told that St John Fisher parish is the largest contributor to the Marlborough Food Bank.
- V. **DEACON’S COMMENTS** – None
- VI. **PASTOR’S COMMENTS** – Father LeBlanc
 - Father LeBlanc said that First Reconciliation occurred March 30th.
 - Father LeBlanc said that Holy Week went well, the music was beautiful, and attendance at Easter Mass was higher than Christmas.
 - “Wine, Wisdom, and Wit,” an open Q&A forum, was held April 25th. Over 25 attended and enjoyed refreshments, the chance to ask and discuss questions and learn more about the teachings of our Catholic faith. It was requested that we hold these sessions periodically and the event received very positive feedback.
 - Father LeBlanc mentioned that there will be a Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis July 17-21, 2024, with processions by foot from four directions (one of them beginning in New Haven).
- VII. **ELECTION OF OFFICERS** – All

- Father LeBlanc asked Barbara Meyer how parish council members were recruited. Barbara said that she used to have an open recruitment, but people have not been coming forward in the numbers required to replace members that have left. In general, they need to be personally asked. Barbara said that we try to find a balance so that everyone in the parish is represented, e.g., students, young parents, different ages, and a balance of women and men.
- Barbara Meyer nominated Paul Krikscuin for Vice President; Matt Wilson seconded the motion. There were no other nominations. Approved by unanimous voice vote.
- Barbara Meyer nominated Matt Wilson for Secretary; Paul Krikscuin seconded the motion. There were no other nominations. Approved by unanimous voice vote.
- Matt Wilson nominated Barbara Meyer for President; Nancy Gianetti seconded the motion. There were no other nominations. Approved by unanimous voice vote.

VIII. **OLD BUSINESS – All**

- Soup Supper during Stations - we offered the soup supper option for participants of Stations on the Fridays of Lent. It was a great success and those attending had interest in continuing the offering. The ministry or faith formation group that hosted/read the Stations, also provided the homemade soup and bread. For those ministries or faith formation groups that did not offer the soup supper option, it was recommended that each Friday there should be an offering. Eileen Gilles has offered to be involved for next year to have the soup/bread offered each Friday (even if not by the group hosting).

IX. **NEW BUSINESS – All**

- Barbara Meyer spoke with Todd Giannetti who asked that we give him notice when we are scheduling an event, and he will help set it up. You can email him, or leave a note in the parish mailbox outside the office. Barbara Gaudette suggested a “Facility Use Request” form.
- Gil Thompson asked everyone to go to the website. Gil wants to do articles about Christian Outreach, Prayer Shawl Ministry, or other ministries.
- Nancy Giannetti asked if there a way to put on the website (with limited access similar to what is done with the Music Ministry) instructions on how to prepare and serve the meal at St Vincent De Paul.
- Cindy and Helena are going through Faith Formation Coordinator training, and are developing a vision for catechists, and a lifelong Faith Formation vision statement.
- Jim Castellani sent an email to Barbara with the following:
 - He asked, “How can KoC partner with ministries?”
 - There will be a golf fundraiser Thursday, September 19 at Blackledge Country Club. Donations and sponsors are needed.
- We would like to conduct outreach to former parishioners to inquire why they are no longer attending and what would bring them back.
- Children’s Liturgy of the Word would ideally be scheduled with 10:30 Mass. Need parents to volunteer. Kelly Henderschedt will work with Cindy Bryan on planning.
- We will try for a month to offer the Precious Blood, and will need all Ministers of Communion to participate.
- Need 2 volunteers to lead Youth Ministry.
- Summer Bible Camp is scheduled for August 5 through 8 (refer to flyer in Attachment 1).
- The Parish Picnic is scheduled for June 9. Jim Castellani and Jared Stearns are considering ribs.

X. COMMITTEE/MINISTRY REPORTS

PASTORAL CARE

- **Bereavement Ministry** – no comments
- **Christian Outreach Updates** - Barbara Meyer from May 2024 Christian Outreach Report:
 - We welcomed Tom Kriss as our newest member - Tom volunteered with the most recent St. Vincent dePaul Sunday Supper and answered Nancy Gianetti's invitation to join us. We currently have 26 members - with over 20 who are highly active in planning, managing and/or executing service opportunities for our parishioners.
 - Drive-Thru Cafe - in March, we hosted the monthly Sunday meal for patrons of the Marlborough Food Bank that is distributed at the Congregational Church. Our next and final meal for 2024 will be in June (the 30th). Melissa Jordan manages these events and we provide meals for 3 months each year.
 - Monthly Sandwich Making and Collection - we continue to collect sandwiches for St. Vincent dePaul in Middletown the last Thursday evening of the month. In addition, parishioners gather that same day after morning Mass to make sandwiches with Jen O'Neill via funding provided by the Knights of Columbus. Doug Meyer collects the evening sandwiches and delivers all the sandwiches to St. Vincent dePaul the following morning.
 - Weekly Food Drive - with moving the food and household collection to each weekend, the hope was to attract more donations and provide ease to the donors. Food and donations do come in each weekend but the amount is not significantly more. There was a suggestion to have a collection basket in the vestibule for single cans, etc. vs the need to fill a bag - we are considering this but also recognize the vestibule is small and other collections take place with bins in the same location - our aim is not to clutter but to support the ease of donations. John Noel continues to manage the transfer of these donations to the food bank, as he continues with his weekly volunteer role supporting the operations and as a board member.
 - Journey Home - Filling an Easter "Basket" - during Lent, parishioners were offered the chance to fill an Easter "basket" (aka laundry basket or cleaning bucket) with household cleaning or laundry supplies for patrons starting off in their new homes. This was a wonderful success and Journey Home complimented the concept as a Lenten service offering. Donna Sawan continues as the point person planning and offering opportunities to support the patrons of Journey Home.
 - St. Vincent dePaul Sunday Supper - our parish cooked, baked, delivered and served the Sunday meal on April 21st to approximately 80 + patrons. This is a large project to manage with many active participants - we continue to be blessed by the generosity of our parishioners and are pleased they enjoy this offering and actually want more like-opportunities. Paulette had managed these efforts in the past, with Nancy Gianetti taking over the management of this last offering and the initiative going forward. Nancy is creating a binder with operational specifics for the ease of anyone to refer to/help manage this effort. Our second and final offering this year is Sunday, September 29th.
 - Caring Families - Baby Shower & Hosted Speaker - we are currently hosting a baby shower to support young moms who are raising their babies. Caring Families is a faith-based pregnancy support organization offering parenting, mentoring, fatherhood classes and material support for babies. Caring Families is located in Willimantic with a new site opening in Manchester. We hosted Pieter Nijssen, from Caring Families, who came to speak to parishioners about the organization, what they do, why they do it and how we can help.
 - Coming Up - before we meet again in September, we will complete the baby shower with items delivered to the organization, coordinate and participate in the June Drive-Thru Cafe, reach out to MES to see if backpacks/school supplies are needed for the fall (with a July donation drive) and coordinate a Journey Home household goods, linens and furniture collection in August.
- **Community Garden** – Peg Filloramo from May 2024 Community Garden report
 - The St. John Fisher Community Garden has been meeting for a few Monday evenings now and will continue to do so into early October. The small but mighty volunteer team has been cleaning up the

area and getting a few seedlings planted. We have three new very large containers that were donated from a business in Colchester, Agri Sci. We hope these new planters will provide us with more growing opportunities.

- Over the next few weeks, we will continue to get seeds and seedlings into the spaces. All parishioners are welcome to join in on Mondays at five o'clock to help grow the garden and make a difference for those in need right here in Marlborough.

- **Lending Library** – Barbara Gaudette from May 2024 Lending Library Committee report
 - The Lending Library holds almost 700 books and offers them to all parishioners.
 - SJF Book Club will host a discussion of *The Four Winds* by Kristin Hannah on Wednesday, June 12, 2024 at 10:00AM in St. Thomas More Hall. We have 15 regular members. All parishioners are welcome.

- **Prayer Shawl Ministry** – Mary Horrigan from May 2024 Prayer Shawl Ministry report
 - The Prayer Shawl Ministry has distributed 6 Prayer Shawls, 2 Baptismal Blankets, and 12 First Communion Pocket Prayer Shawls since the last report. We meet monthly, on whatever Saturday afternoon works best for most of us. In addition to knitting and crocheting blankets and shawls, we make hats, scarves, mittens, socks which will be donated to clothing drives.

LITURGICAL

- **Altar Serving Ministry** – No report

- **Ministers of Communion** – Tom Reiser from March 2024 Ministers of Communion report
 - Home and Infirm Visits - We have taken another hiatus from the Marlborough Health and Rehab Center as they navigate through a Norovirus and Covid outbreaks. We continue with our visits to the By The River. We also have three homebound individuals that we will now be visiting.

 - As of June, we should be back to a 4 person/team rotation for the Ministers of Communion coverage. First Friday on the month, Melissa Jordan/Jen O'Neill, Second Friday of the month, Sue Hurley. Third Friday of the month, Peter Yorio. Fourth Friday of the month, Tom Reiser. Barbara Meyer covers the 5th Friday of the month, when they occur.

- **Liturgical Committee** – Father LeBlanc
 - Movement of the Tabernacle –
 - Father LeBlanc said that he was asked by a visitor attending Mass, "Where is the Tabernacle?"
 - Father Al met with parishioners on May 6th (morning and evening) to share, discuss and get feedback on the possibility of moving the tabernacle from our side chapel to the sanctuary in the church. Father LeBlanc explained that there was process for moving the Tabernacle.
 - Prior to this meeting, the Liturgist for the Archdiocese, Father Ruminski, came to church to see our setting and to provide input to the feasibility of relocating the tabernacle. The result of this meeting with Father LeBlanc, the deacons, and Barbara Meyer, was supportive of the possible movement of the tabernacle.
 - As far as the subsequent parishioner meetings, those supporting the transfer focused on the centrality of the Lord, furthering the focus on building the knowledge of the True Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus present in the Eucharist, having the tabernacle present in the sanctuary (as we worship, as we genuflect and for adoration) and some mentioning it "was about time".
 - For those concerned or not in favor, the overall themes were the use of chapel as it was designed for quiet prayer in the presence of the Eucharist and a concern that the overall atmosphere of the church - its welcoming nature, its conducive environment for informal greeting, conversation and fellowship - would be changed into a more formal setting.

- Father listened, discussed and addressed all the feedback, to include the concerns about the "feeling" and look of the church. Although there are some who are not in favor, the overall majority of those who participated (or who provided input outside of the meetings), favor the movement of the tabernacle.
 - Next steps are to provide an update to parishioners to include circling back with those who have concerns. The concerns about the "look and feel" - are very well taken and received - the efforts and practice ensuring our St. John Fisher worship setting will remain an open, welcoming and friendly environment are critical aspects of this successful transition - if it is to occur.
 - Father has recently sent a letter to Archbishop Coyne to review steps we have taken thus far, request his permission (if deemed acceptable), and now we will wait for a response.
- **Reader and Greeter Ministry** – Julie Groene from May 2024 Report
 - Paulette Adams coordinates the scheduling of the reader and greeter ministry; thank you Paulette!
 - As we close out the second quarter of the year, we thank all the volunteers for their work during the Easter Season.
 - We currently have 14 readers and 9 greeters (6 individuals, 2 couples, 1 family) participating.
 - **Music Ministry** – Janice Reska from May 2024 Music Ministry Report
 - Our Adult Choir began rehearsing for the Holy Week services in March and sang for Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, the Easter Vigil, and two Easter Sunday masses. Everyone seemed pleased with the song selections, especially the new choral pieces.
 - The Adult Choir will finish its choral season with the June 2 mass on Corpus Christi. Many people take vacations during the summer, so it is not practical to continue with the choir over the summer. The choir will resume with Wednesday night rehearsals and scheduled Sunday masses in late September. A few choir members have expressed interest in singing at mass occasionally during the summer. The hymn selections will be familiar songs from the missalette since we will only have a few members and choir practice will not be held.
 - We have lost one choir member due to a busy schedule, and another long-time member due to a move. A third choir member has taken a leave of absence to recover from a surgery. We welcome anyone who would like to sing with the choir at mass, and one new individual has expressed some interest. A young college student who is home for the summer may be joining the choir occasionally to sing and/or play the flute during the summer months.
 - Currently, we only have eight active members in our Adult Choir. Efforts to recruit choir members and cantors this year include:
 - Postings in our weekly church bulletin
 - Recruitment efforts at our Ministries in Motion event
 - Personal invitations extended to individuals in our congregation
 - Announcements at masses
 - Emails to former choir members inviting them to rejoin our choir
 - Apparently, choir membership across all denominations has decreased since the 2019 pandemic began. One area church, St. Andrew's in Colchester, has gone from over 60 choir members and cantors to less than 20. We will make efforts to recruit new members in early September.

EDUCATION & FAITH DEVELOPMENT

- **Faith Formation (Grades K,1,3,4,5,6)** – Cindy Bryan from May 2024 Faith Formation Report
 - Our final sessions of the season were on April 6 with the parents and on April 18 with just the children. There were approximately 10 children at both sessions. During the Parent talk with Kelly Henderschedt, we asked the parents to fill out a survey on how the year went. It was also sent to those not in attendance. Overall, they were pleased and expressed an interest in returning the following year. They really enjoyed the Parent sessions and were happy with the relationship their children were building with God through my sessions. There were a few suggestions which we will be taking into consideration as we develop next year's program. We concluded the month with the Family Mass followed by coffee and donuts after Mass.
 - I will be hosting the Summer Bible Camp during the week of August 5-8. It will be 9-12 Monday – Thursday. The theme as Father announced this week at Mass is “God's Week Of World Records” With God All Things Are Possible. During this week, we will introduce Saints that overcame difficulties through their faith, read and discuss Bible stories such as David and Goliath, and attempt to create records (in our Parish) or break records unofficially in the Guinness Book of World Records. On their final day, we have an award ceremony and Talent Show. I have attached the flyer given to families on the final day of Faith Formation.
 - As the summer weeks continue, I will continue to plan and improve upon the Family Faith Formation for next year.

2nd Grade and 9th Grade Faith Formation – Helena Thomas from May 2024 report

- 2nd Grade Sacramental Year: The 2nd Grade Faith Formation class had their retreat on April 27. We had four stations setup in the church hall: making a family name felt banner for their pew, decorating a felt fish with their name to be displayed on the “Jesus the Fisherman” hanging felt banner in the church, identifying the sacred vessels and other liturgical objects as they toured the church, and a little coloring of Bible events worksheets. The children also practiced receiving Holy Communion with unconsecrated hosts and singing “My Little Light of Mine.” We all finally enjoyed some cake to celebrate this momentous occasion of receiving the Sacrament of the Eucharist for the first time. The children rehearsed for the big day on Friday, May 3, after school. They received their 1st Holy Communion on May 4 at 10:00am. It was a beautiful Mass and the children, sitting together as a group, behaved perfectly. All the readers did a splendid job as well!
- 9th Grade Sacramental Year: On April 7, the 9th grade completed an additional Service Event which benefited ImmaCare homeless shelter in Hartford. The teens assembled about 125 brown paper lunch bags of breakfast food: water or juice, fruit, protein bar, muffins or Danish. The parish and families of the Confirmation teens were so generous with their donations!

The teens attended their mandatory Confirmation retreat on April 28 at the Holy Family Retreat Center located in West Hartford. It was a really nice experience for them. There were four stations. First topic was about “false obstacles to God's love” due to people feeling unworthy and inadequate about themselves because at some point in their life, someone told them that something was different and wrong about them. This translates to people not feeling worthy of God's love. But we were made in His image so we're already perfect in His eyes. When we feel unworthy, it causes us to look for things of this world to make us happy that typically lead to an illusion of happiness. Instead, we need to accept God's unconditional love for us and allow Him to decide what's best for our salvation. The teens also wrote a Who Am I poem, spent time reevaluating the things they thought were so important in their lives, and received Reconciliation. The retreat also included meatballs and pasta dinner, salad, and cookies!

- **Youth Ministry** – Helena Thomas from May 2024 Report
 - We have appointed two youth ministry teen leaders from the 9th grade Confirmation class for next year. We will meet during the summer to discuss the schedule for the year and the theme for each meeting.

- **Nurturing Seedlings** – Barbara Meyer from May 2024 Report
 - The team of Barbara Gaudette, Joleen Yorio, Megan Tracey and Barbara Meyer, completed the 5 week offering of the Nurturing Seedlings pilot program for young parents. We had 5 families participate and had the joy of providing childcare for their children as well. The program was well received by the parents who met for an hour each week at 9:30 AM on Sunday.
 - Our next steps are meeting with Kelly Henderschedt to provide feedback on the pilot and a summer gathering with the families hosted at Megan Tracey's home.
 - Kelly will use the feedback from the parishes that participated in the pilot to tweak the program for a formal launch across all parishes at some point.

- **Order of Christian Initiation for Adults/Adult Confirmation** - Jim Castellani from May 2024 Report
 - Two OCIA/RCIA Candidates:
 - CRYSTAL McMILLAN, (a Marlborough resident with Husband, Kevin, and 8-month-old son, Noah), and
 - ANTHONY POULIN, (also a Marlborough resident with wife Bea (pronounced Bay-a), and 13-month-old daughter, Chloe)
 - 02/18/2024 – Easter Vigil Mass at SJF Church, Fr Leblanc celebrant, welcome Crystal and Tony into the Church with the blessings of the Holy Eucharist and Confirmation and the Holy Eucharist. Alleluia!
 - I will be engaging both Crystal and Tony in the 4th Phase of the OCIA process, Mystagogy, as we examine their transitions and questions and provide further opportunity to seek explanation and understanding of our shared faith.
 - Please keep Crystal and Tony in your prayers.
 - Please pray for all who seek the Truth and have not stepped forward.
 - If anyone asks you about OCIA, please feel free to direct them to Fr Al, Dcns Bill or John, or me.
 - Adult Confirmation - No inquiries

ADMINISTRATIVE

- **Finance Council** – No report.
- **Maintenance Committee** – No report
- **Communications/Social Media** – no report
- **Web Ministry** – Gil Thompson from May 2024 report
 - For the period of 4/9/24 to 5/8/24 there were 13,321 visits to our website, down 5.1% from last month (3/9/24 - 4/8/24). Time spent on the website is pretty much evenly divided between the home page and events calendar. As usual, most visits are to the home page with few visits to other pages on the website. This is expected since most of the content is on the home page.

PARISH LIFE

- **Social Committee** – Christina Warchut from May 2024 Social Committee Report
 - The Spaghetti Dinner scheduled for April 27 was postponed. A new date has not been set as of yet.
 - The Spring Tea was quite successful. We sold 47 Tickets. The committee did a great job of decorating the tables and preparing all the food we served along with tea. A couple of games were

played and a door prize was awarded. From many emails and comments all who came had a lovely time and enjoyed themselves. The only drawback was that about 15 or more people that bought tickets did not show up. The amount to be given to Christian Outreach has not been determined since all expenses have not been accounted for.

- Coming up next is the Parish Picnic on June 9. The signup sheets are at the entrances of the church. Included on the signup sheets are signups for desserts and side dishes. We are considering doing some ribs or pulled pork along with the hamburgers and hot dogs.

- **Knights of Columbus** – Jim Castellani
 - Mike Schadle has been named our District Deputy overseeing 5 KofC Councils in Connecticut. Mike has actually been acting in this capacity since 7/1/2023 doing double duty for the Fraternal order at both the State/District and local council levels. Thank you, Mike, for your 5 years of dedicated and enthusiastic service and leadership.
 - Carlos Pina will be the new Grand Knight as of July 1, 2024.

- **Men’s Prayer Group** – Jim Castellani from May 2024 report
 - Regular Gatherings - We continue to meet in-person the 1st Thursday (7pm) and 3rd Saturday (7am) of each month. (NOTE: Meetings continue throughout the year.) Contacts - All are welcome to participate, just contact Jim Castellani or Pete Yorio to get on the mailing list or to have questions answered about the Group.
 - Men’s Retreat – April 12-14, 2024 - 6 men of the parish attended Retreat. An additional gentleman attended on a different date, more convenient. It was a wonderful weekend. The theme expanded on the phrase “Only say the Word...” Discussions were compelling and enlightening.
 - Women’s Retreat – The following week at Holy Family, over 200 women attended the same themed retreat. We encourage all women of the parish to consider attending a retreat at Holy Family in the next year. Although the best source of specific information about the Holy Family Retreat programs is the Retreat staff, our local promoter, Carlos Pina, would gladly help you initiate into the registration process.
 - Christmas Lights – Still have to remove and store the Christmas Lights on the BIG pine trees.
 - Bookmarks and Mission Cards – Both of these are located at the Exits of the church and are FREE to take. The latest bookmark offers the encouraging statement – “The Messiah is among you.”
 - Join the Men’s Group - Just come to any session and see if the experience is or you. God Bless.

- **Women’s Prayer Group** – Barbara Meyer from May 2024 report
 - We continue to meet the last Tuesday of each month with 16+ women (and a new parishioner who just joined) - we are working our way through Hearing God's Whisper by Sheri Dursin. We have created an affirming and supportive opportunity for women where we share prayer intentions, discuss and learn about our faith and travel the journey & blessing of our life stages.

- **Online Rosary Report** – Gil Thompson from May 2024 report
 - Small group of us continue to meet online Monday mornings at 8:30AM to pray the Rosary. The link to participate is on the web site, right column, click on the bible image and follow the prompts.

XI. **NEXT MEETING** - Thursday, **September 26, 2024 (7:00-8:30 PM)**

Email Committee Reports to the Parish Council email list by **September 19, 2024**

XII. **ADJOURNMENT** – **8:29 PM**

XIII. **CLOSING PRAYER** – Offered by Father LeBlanc

Attachment 1



GOD'S WEEK OF WORLD RECORDS

WITH GOD... ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE!

Summer Bible Camp

AUGUST 5-8

9:00AM-12:00PM

In the church hall and grounds

For ages children entering K- current 6th grade

- Learn about saints that overcame difficulties
- Read stories from the Bible of great things accomplished with God's help
- Play games to beat records (maybe even World Records)
- Healthy snacks to promote energy and perseverance
- Crafts to assist in record breaking and awards
- Talent Show and Award ceremony on final day



SAVE THE DATE

