

OUR LADY QUEEN OF PEACE/ST. MARGARET OF CORTONA
PASTORAL COUNCIL

JUNE 15, 2026

Present: Father Jim Belogi, Kathy Barrans, Barbara Dunigan, Elizabeth Miller, Marsha Stewart, Maureen Colose, Sue Rudzinski, Ron Longo, Jim Dominelli, Shirley Neet, JoAnn Stankavage, Carmela Vecchio, David Collisson, and Linda Vaughn.

Absent: Deacon Joe Brennan, Deb Ploetz, Father Anthony Onu

The meeting began promptly at 6:30 pm by Kathy Barrans, Chair who welcomes us all.

An Opening Prayer was offered by JoAnn Stankavage with a scripture read by Sue Rudzinski.

Minutes were approved for the May Meeting.

Discernment for Pastoral Council was held and Katie LaPlante a young mother of three from St. Margarets has agreed to join for 1 year and see how it goes with child care. David Collisson is here tonight to see if he is interested in joining.

Committee Updates:

Building and Grounds- Ron Longo for OLQP- landscaping is all done but there is a maple tree in the front that is dead and Ron will investigate the removal cost and discuss with Father

Belogi. The automatic handicap door was discussed and it was suggested that it would be placed at the entrance closest to the parish meeting room. I suggested the Ford Avenue side since that is where a majority of the handicap park and sit. Because it is a two-door entrance, cost will be investigated. A suggestion was to revamp the Greeter Ministry and place people at each entrance to assist those in need.

Linda Vaughn talked about St. Margarets Building and Grounds. Volunteers do most of the work around St Margarets. The parishioners do the gardening and landscaping, mow the lawn, and basic minor repairs. Plants are donated by the parishioners. Insurance paid for repairs on the rectory after the repairs were done to the roof. Talk about selling the rectory but it contains the water lines to the Church. Talk about using St Margarets rectory for meetings as they have comfortable space to do so. Will make sure that there is nothing to prevent this.

Communication and Media- Jim Dominelli- a census got 78 additional website responses, not sure how many hard copy. Has collected some email addresses of parishioners which can be helpful. Deb Ploetz has agreed to call parishioners who have not responded but cannot do so until Fall.

After meeting with the Festa Committee, it was decided that money will be collected each night, 5-8 Friday and Saturday and 3-6 on Sunday. The collection station will be by the Bake Goods. Will need Volunteers to work the area. The money will

be divided among St. Lukes, Our Lady of Fatima and the Rotterdam Community Center. He will talk to Karen Vitgiano about how to keep track of the money and storing it for the 3 nights.

Elizabeth Miller shared that she and Marsha Stewart attended a Round Table at Rotterdam Community Center. They found that they serve 448 families in the Rotterdam area. They collect all types of food items and even have a refrigerator that is available for perishable items to people in the community. They also collect personal care items. Their board oversees the 12303, 12305 and 12306 zip codes.

Jim also discussed the possibility of us doing a food pantry now that we have the room where the nursery school was occupying. Will discuss again in the Fall.

Social Media- Barbara Dunigan- Instagram is up and running and we have 87 followers. We have a logo that was done by the young person who assisted in getting it up. Will ask her if we can trademark it. Community Calendar is ready to be used. A discussion will be had with Donna Denny and Father Belogi.

Barb put together a ministry list with descriptions of each ministry and a contact person. Will discuss the best way to share this.

An Overflow Corner will be shared through social media, things that cannot fit into the bulletin. Will be looking to formulate a

communication committee to gather the info and bring it to Father for approval to share.

City Mission- Deb Ploetz- scheduled to serve our first meal on 9/18 from 4:30-6:30 pm. It will be shared in the bulletin and opened for volunteers. Deb will reach out to Faith Formation to get those over 10, with parent, who might be able to participate.

Parish Planning Update- JoAnn Stankavage. 75 people attended the June 1st meeting

Feedback from Bulletin Inserts and the Parish Meeting

Welcoming:

Establish a Welcoming Committee to reach out to new members

Have a Welcome to the Church table/spot in the vestibule with information about the church and our practices (liturgical?), Faith Formation, maybe all the ministries with contact info

Have a Welcome Back initiative to reach out to parishioners who aren't coming via personal visits or mailings

Name Tag/Hello Sundays where folks wear name tags during Masses

Greet one another before Mass starts; have folks turn right and greet and left and greet

Sit in a different pew every now and then

Have visitors/newcomers stand before mass starts and have ushers give them a prayer card and information packet about our parish

Invite new people before mass to participate in any upcoming church sponsored events giving contact info

Offer a specific welcome to families with kids

Greeters who greet with a smile especially newcomers; greeters need a list of what to do

Connect better with new people – invite them to Hospitality/ Church events

Personal Invitations are the most effective - Invite friends and relatives to come to Mass with us; invite young people but all – we need more people to attend mass

More upbeat songs

Screens for words/music

More Children's masses with upbeat music; invite kids up at end of mass to sing final song with kid friendly instruments like tambourines/maracas

Send Congratulations Card after children/youth receive the sacraments; Baptism, First Penance, First Communion, Confirmation

Have a Family mass for all ages once a month with hospitality afterwards; include grandparents/extended family members

Offer a theme mass a few times/year for students with a special blessing and hospitality to follow

Ask a young adult/youth to coordinate advertising through various media programs/apps

Advertise in newspapers, radio – masses, events

Community Building:

Have a once/year gathering of parishioners to find out what is going on in our parish ministries with pamphlets

Need to determine what people will attend; try some different things, invite, and see what works; -

Offer Programs to fit our parishioners – find out who we are as a parish

Have the lector inform the parishioners before mass? At announcements? about the parish's current events/programs; we need better communications about our events (community calendar?)— we need to describe them so that parishioners really understand what we are doing

Put flyers for these and other parish events as bulletin inserts to be given away and post everything on Facebook/social media

Bring back the Evangelization Team

Parishioners need to personally invite someone to attend mass, hospitality, church events with them – let them know we need them. Encourage their particular talent and why we need them to participate.

Potential Programs/Activities:

Offer regular social events and gatherings to foster community connections; More small group type activities

Make OLQP hospitality like coffee hour at SMC

Family Pizza Night, Movie Night, bingo, Breakfast with St. Nicolas, Pancake Breakfasts

Christmas Party but charge a fee/donation

Day trips by bus to Auriesville, Pyramid Lake, Divine Mercy, St. Kateri, etc. to build community

Faith Formation/Bible Study aimed at Young Adults

Bible Study, Game Nights with Potluck suppers for Young Adults

Connect or build on the young adult group that meets at St. Gabriel's

Start a Men's club: have more activities for men

Volleyball for the community

Zumba classes or aerobics

Summer picnic on site

Have a multi-generational faith formation day where children learn and do a craft or service- related project and the parents/family members also participate

More programs for 20-40 year olds, young parents such as Bible Study with Fr. Mike on the Hallow App with a discussion/support group

Parents Night Out

Doing some kind of children's program during mass with a craft

Create a safe support type of group similar to Al -Anon and provide resources connections for those in need

Move from social to spiritual/sacramental level (include both dimensions?)

Social Justice Outreach:

Speak about Social Justice teachings and how this relates to everyday life with opportunities to put faith in action as a parish group – SICCM, City Mission, etc., summer lunch program

Create a group of parishioners to distribute food

Connect with the Rotterdam Community Center

Adopt a family and/or help other children

Festa:

Bring back the spiritual elements to the Festa such as blessing of the workers, prayer table, candles in church, etc. Outreach at the Festa – greet and invite the community members who attend to come back

Create a video of the Festa preparations and the Festa to present to the Bishop as a way of showing him how we as a community work together and outreach to the community at large

OLQP and SMC Together:

Share resources and talents between OLQP and St. Margaret's

Create opportunities to mesh the music ministries of the two churches

Have more activities/events where both OLQP and SMC get together such as Holy Thursday dinner or community breakfast, picnic, etc.

More Outreach/Service for the Homebound:

Provide a way for homebound to hear parish mass/prayer services/meetings by using cellphones

Mail or personally deliver the bulletins to those unable to attend weekly mass

Create a service booklet where parishioners can offer their services and those in need can contact them as needed (I can give a ride to church. Or I can bring the Eucharist to you. Or I can bring you a meal, etc.)

Provide a sign language interpreter for the deaf

Outreach to the Community at Large:

Create a mailing list for our geographic area and send an Outreach mailing to ALL our neighbors introducing OLQP and "our

mission is ..." and we would like your input, ideas, suggestions of how we can better serve our community

Vacation Bible Study for the community

Have more programs like the Driver Safety Class and the Elder Law Session open to the community

Have game nights (Card Party, Bunko) open to the community at large and advertise with flyers

Put up flyers in community businesses, Facebook, etc. advertising our church sponsored events

Have a Parish Open House with a tour of the church and our facilities with posters/cards to identify any special/interesting things (statues names, Stations of the Cross, Tabernacle, etc.) followed by hospitality (hot dogs, drinks and cookies or an ice cream social). Advertise throughout the larger community so people get to know who we are. And as we talk with them we can discover what we can do for the greater community.

Electric signs out front/Change the outdoor sign more often/Have the sign add a phrase or scripture verse

Involve 100% of all the active parishioners in some form of ministry – hold a ministry fair and sign up

Encourage better collaboration between the existing ministries

Larger presence of clergy at events

Investigate other parishes for their best practices and build on them

Spiritual Food/Holiness:

MASS:

Homilies, Mass and Prayer Services (Adoration, Stations)

More masses where we get together - Shared Triduum was nice
– do more services together

Reinstate the Handshake of Peace

Telecast Sunday Mass

Offer a Healing Mass

Have the homilies how to apply the Word of God to our daily lives, give us homework

Stress family responsibility for regular mass attendance;
encourage parents to set a good example

Prayer:

Personal Prayer; create a Prayer Group

Teach the power of Prayer; share stories of healing/miracles

Joint Rosary prayer night with active participation: Hold a public Rosary Rally inviting other community members to attend

Faith Formation:

Read the scriptures during the week before mass and get together to discuss; Have parishioners go more into depth with the Sunday readings

Young Adult Bible Study

Have a Catholic Bible Study during the summer

Bible in a year – Zoom ?

Vacation Bible Study

Sing the same song every week after communion until people know it

Ask Fr. Jim to write a column for the bulletin/website

Educate folks about resources like podcasts, Hallow App, etc.

Make use of Podcasts/Hallow App with a discussion/support group

Explore Social Justice Teachings and Actions

Initiate a “Question of the week” box and answer 1 question per week at mass; have a column with the answers on the website/Facebook, etc. Encourage folks to ask questions about the faith

Bring in speakers

Have Faith Formation Classes on Sunday; while kids are at Faith Formation classes have a coffee hour/discussion group for parents

Baltimore Catechism:

Create a discussion group around the study of the Baltimore Catechism

Put Spiritual thoughts in the bulletin like quotes from the Baltimore Catechism to help people know their faith

Provide possible study aids like Baltimore Catechism and give homework

Spiritual Growth:

Have Days of Spiritual Renewal – could coordinate them with the liturgical seasons like Lent

Connect with the Dominican Spiritual Life Center and attend their programs/Retreats

Finances, Buildings and Grounds

Finances:

Let the parishioners know each month where the collections monies are going and how much our expenditures are so they know what more needs to be raised each month.

Give a breakdown. Give a breakdown of contributions to provide more accountability for things like candle money, utilities and maintenance, memorial fund

Give us a plan for getting out of the deficit.

Put a monthly budget in the bulletin. And give a strong message from the pulpit.

List monthly expenses in the bulletin as compared to what we collect per month Make people aware of the needs; give specifics like new item/repair cost/supplies needed, etc.

Parishioners should be informed before big repair and maintenance decisions are made

Ask for an increase in weekly contributions

Invite those who can to pledge to increase their tithing by 10-20%

Set example of generosity and Thank the anonymous donors

Encourage folks to use various financial techniques – trusts, beneficiaries – to support the parish

Give people suggestions for what they might consider giving up so they can increase their offertory gift – snacks, fast food/drinks, etc.

Spend less on flowers

Other Fund Raisers:

Rent out various rooms/gym for parties/events

If rooms are rented out, give breakdown of how much we took in
Bingo

Bottle drives and advertise dropoffs

Hold a parish wide Basket Raffle to include community advertising

Buildings and Grounds:

Bring back the Resurrected Jesus Stature above the Altar with His arms open wide in invitation and display the Crucified Jesus in another spot in the church

Do not let the church properties fall into decline: “Walking into a well cared for church lifts our spirits.”

Handicap doors would be more welcoming/Automated doors especially for the Ford Ave. door; maybe assign someone to help open that door for elderly and handicapped folks

A beautiful, new, shiny Baptismal Font and cover to bring brightness to the altar

For the St. Anthony statue alcove – install smaller scale electric candle stand to replace what is currently there

Flooring needs replacement due to the repairs needed after the hearing aid coil was put in place

Thoroughly clean and repair pews and kneelers

Removal of old no longer useful heating elements lining church walls

Cleaning and painting of all walls

Repair broken and cracked stained glass windows

Repair or replace vestibule bathroom rusty heating element

Update outdoor pathway lighting – shorter lights, perhaps and adding some to the Ford Ave. side entry

Match the light colors/intensity of the lights near the entrance doors “so they glow together”

Better signage for OLQP since the current one is weathered

Concerns:

Nursery school – why leave out the 3 year olds move up to 4 year class?

Why did we close the Nursery School? How does the help build community?

Why can't we join OLQP and St. Margaret's into one strong church?

Sell St. Margaret's rectory

Don't send any money to Diocese (St. Clare's, Bankruptcy)

Speak more about Right to Life issues, Homosexuality

Having Name Tags may be too commercial/some people would like to pray

A discussion will be had to what should be prioritized.

The Diocesan Appeal- we have reached 96% of our goal. One final push. Deadline is June 30th.

Pastoral Council Chair for the upcoming year will remain Kathy Barrans, vice chair will remain Barbara Dunigan and the recorder will remain Carmela Vecchio. The new Trustees are

Connie Leonard and Jim Stagnetti both are waiting appointment.

Father Belogi said that we had a very productive year and now need to focus and facilitate the activity that will better our parish mission as disciples.

Closing Prayer done by JoAnn Stankavage.

The Next Meeting is usually the 3rd Monday in September at 6:30 pm. Elizabeth Miller will do the opening prayer and Marsha Stewart will do the closing prayer.

Respectfully submitted

Carmela Vecchio