

Saint Mary Parish  
Franklin, MA  
Parish Pastoral Council  
Sacred Heart Hall

Minutes for September 22, 2025 (Approved November 10, 2025)

**Present:** Father Bob Poitras, Pastor; Father John Tanyi, Parochial Vicar; Jim Flanagan, Director of Family Faith Formation; Leo Racine, Pastoral Associate, Terry Kerr, Music Director

**Parish Pastoral Council Members:** Patricia Colford, Ed Croak, John Determan, Kara Gulla, Tim Hurdelbrink, Lauren Kelleher, Jim Lane, Lisa Oxford, Nan Rafter, John Ristaino, Thomas Seery, Pandora Carlucci, Paula Marano

**Youth Members:** Meghan Markarian, Matthew Colford

**Open Meeting** – Pandora Carlucci welcomed all to the meeting.

**Prayer** – Fr. Bob led the Council in reading Book of Blessings #552 (A prayer used before every session of Vatican 11)

**Welcome and Parish Updates** – Father Bob welcomed all to the meeting and provided parish updates:

- Welcome to Jim Flanagan, the parish’s new director of family faith formation. While the traditional religious education program will be run “status quo” this year, Jim and the team have many ideas to expand faith formation opportunities for all parishioners.
- Welcome to Meghan Markarian, the newest youth member of the council. Meghan is one of the parish’s ambassadors and was recently elected by her peers to be the Ambassador Captain. The newly created role of Ambassador Captain was created to facilitate communication within the team as well as other organizational functions.
- There is tremendous interest by young people in becoming ambassadors. There is currently a waiting list. Those interested in being added to the wait list should contact Fr. Bob.
- Bishop Reed recently confirmed 79 young parishioners during a well-attended ceremony.
- Fire Rehab project update – Nearly everything has been completed with the exception of a minor part of the organ and the parts necessary to allow live streaming to be possible. The project was extensive and involved unexpected complexities in addition to vendor and supply management challenges. There continue to be delays at the national level regarding the grant that would fund security upgrades for the parish. A new state level grant opportunity for the same purpose is being investigated.
- A Franklin Firefighter who was on scene during the fire spoke to Fr. Bob after Mass recently. He was impressed by the successful restoration of the church. Fr. Bob expressed the parish’s appreciation to him and all who assisted.
- The first youth ministry event of the season, a movie night, was deemed a huge success. Thanks to all who contributed to it, especially The Knights of Columbus who provided food and food prep services. Thanks also to Fr. John for his contribution of Cameroonian Goat Stew. The next event will be held on November 2<sup>nd</sup> and the format will be a more traditional prayer service.
- Plans are underway for the launch of the middle school youth group.

- The parish's grand annual collection is underway. It is hoped that families will respond with their customary generosity. The procurement and installation of a new and more welcoming sign may be possible with some of the funds raised through this collection.
- The St. Vincent De Paul Walk is upcoming. All are encouraged to participate, contribute and to spread the word.

### **Jim Flanagan**

- Jim introduced himself and provided information on his background. He expressed to enthusiasm for the role and shared some of his initial observation of things that set this parish apart from other parishes with which he is familiar. Jim encourages all to present ideas, wishes and dreams and to get involved.
  - He has already reached out to contacts at the Franklin Public Schools and non-profits in the area with the hope of establishing work study and volunteer programs for our young parishioners.
  - Based on his observations, the parish has a broad base of attendees at all Masses with diversity of ages represented.
  - There is more participation during Masses than is typical. Prayer responses and singing is audible.
  - Of particular note was the impressive number of those who were confirmed on Saturday who attended Mass on Sunday, with and without their families.

### **Revisiting Sub Committees**

- All members were asked to confirm that the subcommittee assignment on the attached listing was still accurate
- All three sub committees intend to meet during the month of October and share an update at the November PPC meeting.

### **Updates from Members/Lightning**

- The parish is actively recruiting volunteers of all ages with a particular focus on younger people. All ministries are in need of new participants. The ranks of altar servers is growing and their participation is welcomed and is believed to enhance the celebration of the Mass.
- An increase in the number of people attending Mass has been observed.
- More families, in particular families with young children, seem to be attending Mass regularly.
- A Dean College student group approached the parish to become involved.
- Fr. John is seeking volunteers to assist with the RCIA process. There are currently 20 people enrolled in this year's program.
- Can we arrange parish representation at town events such as the harvest festival?
- What is the schedule for the chiming of the bells?
- The number of high schoolers attending Mass in groups, by themselves or with their families is encouraging
- Can a Finance Council member attend a PPC meeting to share more details of the parish's financial health?
- What is the status of the Main St. property?
- The 9:00 Sunday Mass is missed. Can it be brought back?
- The choir is fantastic

- Is there a way to incorporate pre-high school aged young people as volunteers at Mass?
- There is encouragement that we're seeing signs of faith in action and that will increase with new family faith formation initiatives.
- Can more financial information be shared? People are asking about the fire fund and how the donations were used. Prior to the recent mailing, there had been no recent financial updates. There is a concern of secrecy.

**Closing Prayer** – Father John led us in a closing prayer.

Minutes compiled by John Determan