

ST. JEROME PASTORAL COUNCIL APRIL 8, 2026, MEETING MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Dan Jackson at 7:01pm.

Members present: Chairman Dan Jackson, Lucy Ehrhardt, Jan Gremaud, Kelly Houston, Tom Mines, Joel Petry, Gail Wolff, Brenda Neumann, Fr. Kevin Laughery

Members absent: Angee Clark-Hellon, Vice Chairman John Hopkins, Paul Baumgartner, Betsy Weinel

Opening Prayer was offered by Tom Mines.

Regarding the March 5 Minutes, Tom asked if Fr. Kevin could give a review of the “Islamophobic” meeting he had attended in Evanston last month. Fr. Kevin would do that if there is enough interest. A motion was made by Jan Gremaud and seconded by Tom Mines to accept the Minutes as presented; motion carried. Minutes approved.

Monthly Reports

Pastor: Fr. Kevin has been reviewing Evangelical Catholic materials and is assembling a core leadership team with a maximum of 5-9 people. Fr. Kevin then reported one thing that needs attention is an update on how we do funerals. Fr. Kevin, Brenda and funeral directors in the area will be attending a meeting for the Alton Deanery a week from tomorrow at 1:30 at St. Boniface. Bishop Paprocki will be there. He is requesting that we get back to night-before vigil services (visitations) at a funeral home, no longer having visitations in church and immediately before the funeral Mass. Changes will go into effect July 1. The Bishop is proposing that eulogies (words of remembrance) will need to be pre-approved by submitting a written copy that would be read at the funeral Mass by a priest or deacon. In the past, there have been eulogies given during funeral Masses that had inappropriate content. Fr. Kevin added that other eulogies could be given at the funeral lunch. Cremated remains are to be in their permanent place within 30 days of the funeral. Fr. Kevin is planning vacation on April 18-19 with some days off on either side of that weekend. Next month’s May 7 meeting will be held in the office conference room due to the St. Ann’s Spring Banquet being held that evening in St. Joseph Hall.

Written Monthly Reports: No questions on the written reports.

Old Business

Centennial Campaign – Capital Projects: Brenda reported that work on the ceiling and moveable walls in St. Joseph Hall will be starting May 18 for the following three weeks.

Lenten Speaker Series: Dan said that the Lenten Speaker Series was great. He had attended them all. Dan will send a thank you note to Lorraine for her assistance in setting it up. Jan suggested that we invite Fr. Jorge back maybe once a month or every other month, as he has other similar topics to present that add to his first presentation here. People liked listening to him. The Council agreed that Masses and services over the Triduum, Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday were beautiful. Jan read a note from St. Linda Mary who is getting acclimated and involved in her Springfield convent.

Campus Security: No report at this time.

New Business

Building and Grounds Committee: Dan explained that this proposed committee would be a sub-committee to the Finance Committee. He has been soliciting men and women in the parish to participate and asked the Pastoral Council for any suggestions. Our rationale is that now that we have the funds, we would like to help the Finance Committee and Fr. Kevin to set priorities so that we don't end up with this backlog of overdue maintenance. Jan questioned why Grounds was included in this effort as work is being done already on the current landscaping. Dan concluded that it is not just a committee for right now, but an ongoing effort. Discussion followed.

Proper Postures During Mass: Dan had a suggestion that perhaps Fr. Kevin could talk to us from the ambo and in the bulletin about proper postures during Mass. On Good Friday Dan said he noticed, after the Blessed Sacrament had been removed from the Tabernacle (its doors were open) and taken to another location, that people were still genuflecting and bowing to the empty Tabernacle. He thought we bowed to the altar. Also, after Communion, no one sits until the priest sits. Parishioners may have always done things the same way and have never been told how and why we do them. Dan said, "I was taught that crossing myself with holy water as I go out of church was to remind myself going out into the world that I am a baptized person." There was discussion about using holy water to make the sign of the cross both before and after Mass. A suggestion was made that perhaps we need a several-week series to explain these actions, what we do and why we do them. Jan added that we need a little more reverence when coming into church, especially kids running to their pews. Gail is concerned about the ongoing distraction adults engaging in loud personal conversations in the sanctuary before Mass. Fr. Kevin would like to hear from the Pastoral Council corporately as to what we are supporting him in establishing and maintaining regarding proper posture during Mass and silence before Mass. Personal conversations after Mass are fine with Fr. Kevin. Jan asked if he wanted our opinions about this and he said yes. Dan was okay with a little conversation; but as we get to five minutes before Mass, we should center ourselves and become quiet. Brenda added that today Steve (Music Director) had made such an announcement.

There being no further business, Tom offered the closing Prayer. The meeting adjourned at 7:42pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 7, 2026, at 7:00pm, in the Wayland Street office.

Respectfully Submitted,
Gail Wolff, Recorder