

**Sheboygan North Catholic Parishes
Pastoral Council Minutes
Thursday, December 11, 2025, 6:30 p.m., Dominican Hall, St. Clement Parish
Approved December 17, 2025**

Pastoral Council Members and Staff Present: Fr. Nick Baumgardner (Pastor), Fr. Dennis Beltré (Associate Pastor), Luanne Bemis (SC), Jeanne Bitkers (SD), Mary Jo Bugembe (HNJ), Tom Clarke (HNJ), Nick Devine (SD), Dan Duessing (SD), Anahi Escobar (SC), Don Holmes (SD), Lauren Jacobs (HNJ), Donna Karr (HNJ), Jeanne Kobuszewski (SC), Michele Konrad (HNJ), Mary Petrie (SNCP Pastoral and Administrative Assistant), James TenPas (SD) and Lori Woelfel (SNCP Office Manager, Bookkeeper, Safeguarding).

Excused: Danilo Batres (SC), Mary Greeneway (HNJ), Dcn. Jim Hall (SNCP), Tom Jetzer (SC), Bob Mair (SD) and Anne Skowlund (SC).

Opening Prayer: Dan Duessing

Mission/Vision Statements: Read by all

1. **Consent Agenda:**
 - a. **Minutes: October 23, 2025 (Online Approval: November 10, 2025)**
 - b. **Committee Reports**

i. SD Prayer & Worship, October 14, 2025

ii. SD Prayer & Worship, November 11, 2025

iii. SNCP Stewardship, November 18, 2025

No additional questions or concerns.

2. Guest Speaker: Jennifer Branecky, SNCP Director of Child and Youth Discipleship

There are currently 282 students enrolled in the SNCP Faith Formation Classes: 180 in the Child Discipleship program (K4-8th grade) and the remainder enrolled in the Youth Discipleship Program. The younger children meet on Wednesday evenings and older students meet on Sunday mornings.

This being her first year at Sheboygan North Catholic Parishes, Jennifer's primary goal is to first understand SNCP culture before making too many widespread changes to the Faith Formation classes. One change that was made, however, is that the high school students attend Mass prior to class each Sunday. Lessons from the homily and the Gospel each week naturally flow into the formation of the students who now have an opportunity to participate in smaller, more intentional groups.

Also, the Anchored program has been established for post-confirmation junior and senior students. In addition to fellowship, it offers an opportunity to explore scripture and talk about what it means to be part of the Church community. It was noted that programs like this are so important as the students are from different schools and this provides an opportunity for them to get to know each another.

One of Jennifer's long-term goals is to integrate SNCP youth into the broader parish community through more opportunities for joint prayer and service. Also, an important focus is for everyone to continually grow in their prayer and relationship with Jesus by always discerning, learning and growing.

Jennifer is extremely grateful to the catechists who generously share their time and talents with our youth each week. It was noted that there is always a need for additional substitute catechists.

The annual Mission Trip is also an area that could use support—both in fund raising efforts and a need for volunteer chaperones. One idea suggested was to form a special fund-raising committee.

Jennifer concluded her presentation by asking for prayers for our Catechists, staff and young people. Thank you Jennifer.

3.Pastor and Associate Pastor Reports

Fr. Nick Baumgardner

Thank you

Fr. Nick gratefully acknowledged the generosity of SNCP parishioners as evidenced by the substantial end-of-year contributions as well as over \$80,000 collected for various human concerns initiatives. Also, the Thanksgiving Food Box Project was a tremendous success this year. Through the generosity of parishioners as well as local businesses, 417 families (more than 1,700 individuals) were served.

Additional Revenue Sources

Fr. Nick also continues to seek additional revenue sources for the parish. One recent example is renting out the St. Clement kitchen, one to two days per week, to an individual who needed commercial kitchen space for her food service business.

St. Clement Property.

Sale of the St. Clement school building and parking lot to the City of Sheboygan is nearing finalization with an anticipated February closing date. The next step is to obtain approval from the Sheboygan County Board at their January meeting. Details will be shared once the transaction is complete.

Fr. Dennis Beltré

Parish Celebrations

December is an exciting time with a number of celebrations taking place including Our Lady of Guadalupe on December 12 and Posadas Navidenas beginning on December 15 through December 23. Thank you to everyone who helped with these celebrations.

Future Planning

To support a sense of ownership in SNCP, parishioners from the Hispanic community will be holding a planning meeting at least two times a year. In addition to developing a calendar of events, the group will continue to look for additional revenue opportunities for the parish such as the beverage sales at last summer's John Michael Kohler Arts Festival.

Follow-up on Lenten Charity.

During Fr. Dennis' recent trip to the Dominican Republic, he was able to visit with La Sagrada Familia Parish St. Vincent de Paul Society located in his hometown of Sabana Yegua. Fr. Dennis was able to see, firsthand, the fruits of the generosity of SNCP parishioners. He will be providing photos of this visit to be shared with our parish community.

4. Financial Report – Lori Woelfel

Lori reported on a number of new initiatives taking place around the parish. These include the installation of a reader board at Seton School, and a new computer, data base system and internet service at Calvary Cemetery. These upgrades will allow Calvary Cemetery board members to better manage the sale of lots and other administrative tasks that are currently being handled by the SNCP office staff.

Our parish is also exploring options for upgrading the parish IT system. Currently four quotes are being reviewed to determine which company will be the most cost effective and best able to meet parish needs. In addition, SNCP staff are also reviewing the parish's waste management contracts.

SNCP recently received nearly \$27,000 which represented the third quarter funds from the Love One Another campaign and end-of-year contributions, mainly from parishioners' IRA accounts, are also being collected.

November Mass counts for 2025 were 1233 compared to 1273 in 2024. The decrease is likely due to a winter storm during the last week of this month.

5. Book Discussion: *Why We're Catholic* by Trent Horn, Chapters 6, 7 and 8

Council members agreed the chapter on understanding the Holy Trinity was the most important. The author helped to simplify this belief by defining our terms: Being, Person and Nature.

All in all, especially the chapter on the Resurrection, the book is seen as a helpful resource when talking with those who have questions and might even be skeptical.

Council members were asked to read chapters 9, 10 and 11 for our next discussion.

6. Pastoral Council Goal: Building Community Among Our Three Parishes

Following are highlights of a robust discussion that took place among council members regarding this important goal. Many thoughts and ideas were put forth:

- There are different perspectives to the meaning of “building community”, i.e., fellowship, presence in the community, etc.
- What are examples of how we are building community already?
 - If we are doing a good job—build on it.
 - If there are gaps—how to close them.
- There are some very good things already happening.
 - Advent By Candlelight growing each year
 - New member registrations increasing
- Much of this work was addressed in *Come to the Table*, a 2021 document prepared for a Catholic Community Fund grant. It was suggested council members use this document as a starting point.
- One of the major challenges is identifying obstacles to overcome.
- It's important to embrace Seton School as an integral part of the parish. One way to do this could be to encourage parishioners to attend the school's events, i.e., Mane Event, pancake breakfast, etc. Also, many volunteer opportunities for parishioners are available.
- Focus on new parishioners is vital.
 - Particular attention should be paid to newer Catholics. Keep invigorating the fire within those who recently complete OCIA.
 - Also important are families who bring children forward for baptism. They are promising to raise the children as Catholics and this needs to be reinforced.
 - An example of engaging new members was given. One parish held a welcome dinner in a parishioner's home, asking those invited to bring a dish to pass.
 -

- Identify ways to increase volunteers
 - There is little turnover. It appears the volunteers are the same people, year after year.
 - An attitude of recruitment is necessary to reach out to new individuals.
 - Person-to-person requests seem to be the most effective. A recent example was a successful personal request made to a family to participate in lighting the Advent wreath.
 - A model for recruiting volunteers could be a gradual process: starting with Year 1: “I’ll be the lead; you follow” leading up to subsequent year(s): “You lead; I’ll follow”
 - More of an effort should be made to seek out new faces at Mass and other parish activities.
 - Hold an event where representatives from various ministries are present to answer questions and encourage participation.
- Find ways parishioners can experience “ownership” in SNCP
 - Celebrate people – Feature a family at Mass
 - A survey may help identify other ways people can feel it’s important to be an important part of the parish.

The discussion ended with a suggestion to consider inviting Kym Leibham, SNCP Director of Adult Faith Formation, to help identify potential ways to engage OCIA participants in parish activities. Also, the *Come to the Table* document mentioned above will be sent to all council members.

7. Old Business

a. Status Report – Pastoral Council Photos and Promotional Photos

Michele Konrad shared proofs of the photos she took of pastoral council members and a layout for a poster. Once all photos are taken, paper posters will be prepared to be posted in each church. Digital copies will also be made. Thank you, Michele.

a. SNCP Volunteer Recognition

As previously reported, a bingo night theme for a volunteer recognition event will take place on April 23. Council members were asked to put together some suggestions for discussion at the January pastoral council meeting.

a. Status Report – SC Fall Fest

The event held on November 9 at St. Clement was very well received and raised over \$3500 for the parish. There were very few expenses. Attendance was well representative of all three parishes. Plans for next year are to add chili dogs to the menu.

a. Status Report – SNCP Thanksgiving Food Box Project

Previously reported by Fr. Nick. See Item 3 above.

8. New Business

a. Upcoming Parish Events

- i. **Bambinelli – Blessing of Baby Jesus figurines to take place after Communion at December 13 and 14 Masses.**
- ii. **Seton School Christmas Concert – December 16 at 6:00 p.m. at Holy Name of Jesus Church**
- iii. **Women’s Retreat: Living the Heart of the Sacraments, January 9-10, Blessed Trinity Parish and Lakeland University Campus**

The Knights of Columbus will have “Keep Christ in Christmas” yard signs available at parishes starting the weekend of December 13-14.

Closing Prayer: Luann Bemis

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Jo Bugembe, SNCP Pastoral Council Secretary

December 14, 2025

Next Meeting Date: Thursday, January 22, 2026, Dominican Hall. Opening prayer: Nick Devine; Closing prayer: Mary Petrie

Committee Reports- Due by the 15th of the Month, Email to: mjbugembe@gmail.com (Mary Jo Bugembe, Council Secretary).