



St. John Fisher - Parish Council

Minutes from Meeting –January 15, 2026

Parish Staff/Trustees		Parish Council		Other Attendees	
<u>Ex officio</u>					
Rev. George Mukuka	√	Jim Castellani	R		
Sr. Dcn. Em. John McKaig	R	Pedro Cristavao	√		
Dcn. Bill Gilles	√	Barbara Gaudette	√		
Marlene Luebeck (Trustee)	R	Tim Geary	√		
Peter Yorio (Trustee)	R	Nancy Gianetti	R		
<u>Non-voting</u>		Julie Groene	√		
Janice Reska (DMM)	R	Paul Kriksciun (Vice President)	R		
Cindy Bryan (CFF)	√	Barbara Meyer (President)	√		
Helena Thomas (CFF, DYM)	√	Colin Tracey	R		
Todd Gianetti (Custodian)	√	Nancy Visco	√		
Jim Henderschedt (Maintenance)	√	Christina Warchut	√		
		Matt Wilson (Secretary)	√		

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** – PC President, Barbara Meyer **6:57 PM**

- II. **OPENING PRAYER** – Father Mukuka

- III. **WELCOME** – Barbara Meyer
 - Barbara announced Jim Henderschedt's appointment to be in charge of church maintenance.
 - The Parish theme for this year will be "Pillars of Faith."

- IV. **PARISHIONERS' COMMENTS** – All
 - Todd Gianetti said that four members of the Knights of Columbus (KoC) became Fourth Degree Knights at ceremony at St Patrick's Cathedral in Norwich. They were Father George Mukuka, Senior Deacon Emeritus John McKaig, Carl Cavalieri, and Subby Magro.
 - Todd Gianetti thanked Pedro Cristavao for installing motion sensors
 - Barbara Meyer said that Janice Reska had sewn and donated the rose-colored altar cloths and banner that were used for Advent.
 - Father Mukuka asked the council if the parish had sung songs with Latin lyrics before. After we sang Agnes Dei recently, Deacon Bill said that a parishioner expressed surprise afterwards. Jim Henderschedt said that previous Music Director Kathleen Filosa had led the parishioners in Agnes Dei, but with a different melody that he thought was more melodic and easier to sing. Jim sang a portion of it, which helped many of the council members to remember the melody. Father Mukuka said that the purpose was to heighten awareness of the liturgy.
 - Barbara Meyer said that Gil Thompson was having to use stock photos to populate the parish web site, and that he needed everyone to send photos. A discussion ensued about permission to post photos of people on the web site. Cindy Bryan said that she got permission from parents of children participating in the Christmas Pageant. Helena Thomas said that some teens are nervous about getting their pictures taken. Cindy said that parents will be asked to indicate whether they give permission for photos on the applications for Faith Formation.

- Julie Groene asked about plans to do another picture directory of parishioners so that people can associate a name with the faces they see at church. Last time a photographer was hired and people were asked to have a picture taken of themselves for inclusion in a printed book that could possibly be purchased this time around as a fund raiser. Nancy Gianetti said that she could look into getting a photographer.

V. **REVIEW MINUTES** of November 20, 2025 – All

- Barbara Meyer provided a markup of the minutes. Julie Greone made a motion to accept the November 20, 2025 minutes with Barbara's changes, Paul Kriksciun seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved with changes by voice vote.

VI. **PASTOR'S COMMENTS** – Father Mukuka

- Father Mukuka thanked everyone for their efforts during Advent and Christmas. The altar decorations were beautiful, and the KoC did an outstanding job on the outdoor lights.
- Father Mukuka said that having families light the Advent candles went well.
- Father Mukuka said that he received a letter from Middlesex Hospital offering training for bereavement counselling.
- Barbara Meyer said that ideas for many of the Advent events came from Father George, e.g., the blessing of the Christmas tree at the vigil during the first week of Advent, the children's choir, and the Christmas pageant.

VII. **DEACON'S COMMENTS** – Deacon Bill Gilles

- Deacon Bill said that Advent and Christmas went great.
- He said that Heather is inserting Mass intentions for strength and healing for individuals who are ailing. One of the reasons is that we should only do one for the general St John Fisher family each week. He said that we will do it for one person once a week. Father Mukuka said that he was in contact with the families. Julie Groene asked if there was an online mechanism for requesting intentions. Father George said that St. Teresa of Calcutta has a website where parishioners can choose a Mass for intentions and donate online.
- His Biblical school had 17 attendees total among the a.m. and p.m. classes.
- He said that we have 6 non-adult altar servers, and are looking for 6 adult altar servers. Julie Groene said that families might want to do it, but probably would only want to do it once a month.

VIII. **NEW BUSINESS** – All

- Barbara Meyer said that the mailbox outside the Parish office leaks, and mail can get wet. Jim Hendershedt said that he would look into it, and get a new mailbox, if necessary.
- Todd Gianetti asked if the outside steps to the Parish office needed to be covered by an overhang to prevent snow and ice from accumulating on the steps.
- Jim Henderschedt asked if there was any interest in using monitors to replace the boards with the hymn numbers.

IX. **PASTORAL CARE**

- **Christian Outreach Updates** - Barbara Meyer from January 2026 Christian Outreach Report:
 - Weekly/Monthly Collections – weekly food drives continue with John Noel being pleased with what is delivered to the foodbank; monthly sandwich making and collection take a break for November and December given the timing of the holidays.

- **Christmas Cards to the Bereaved** - the souls of those who were lost this year and their families were prayed for and Christmas cards written and sent to the bereaved families. About 24 cards were mailed.
- **Christmas Giving Program** – another very successful season of giving with six organizations supported both monetarily and with requested gift items. Jim Castellani and the Knights generously gathered the remaining tags and shopped for and donated 20 + items. The organizations supported include: Marlborough Healthcare & Rehabilitation, two By-the-River senior housing sites, St. Vincent dePaul, A Sacred Place, Catholic Worker and House of Bread.
- **The 2026 COC Parish Service & Outreach Plan** – shared in a separate attachment is the annual plan for parishioner participation in service and outreach efforts.
- **Community Garden** – Off season.
- **Lending Library and Book Club** – Barbara Gaudette from January 2026 Lending Library Committee report
 - We continue to accept and process books in our library. We are open to suggestions to increase the use of our wide variety of books. In December we discussed *Small Things Like These* by Claire Keegan. We welcomed Margaret Wilcox as our newest member and were once again delighted by a book review from Mary Horrigan. In March we will discuss *An Ordinary Grace* by William Kent Krueger.
- **Comfort and Warmth (Prayer Shawl) Ministry** – Barbara Gaudette from January 2026 Report
 - We continue to knit or crochet blankets and shawls.

X. LITURGICAL

- **Altar Serving Ministry** – Deacon Bill Gilles from January 2026 Altar Servers Report
 - We started with 9 interested altar servers and two have changed their minds. I am trying to collect family wishes for Masses and how often the servers would serve each month. I am still shooting to start on February 1st.
 - I will contact the (4?) adult volunteers this week for the same information.
- **Ministers of Communion** – No Report
- **Liturgical Committee** – Barbara Meyer from January 2026 Liturgical Committee Report
 - This committee has meet monthly to define and fine-tune all that comes to play in celebrating the liturgy. There will be a meeting this month to discuss and plan for Lent. Lenten soup suppers have been scheduled with various ministries taking the lead for Stations and the Soup Supper than comes before Stations. The 6 ministries are: (1) Men's Prayer Group & KOC, (2) Women's Prayer Group & Christian Outreach w/ Community Garden, (3) Prayer Shawl & SJF Book Club, (4) Family Faith Formation, (5) 7th & 8th Grade Faith Formation and (6) Confirmation.
- **Church Decorating Committee** – Barbara Meyer from January 2026 Church Decorating Committee Report
 - This is a new committee made up of Carol and George Bartok, Annie Mariano, Jan Fowler and Barbara Meyer will be managing the church decorations. Jason Schultz has kindly offered to take care of the plants in the church – and I need to get back with him to get the process finalized.

- **Reader and Greeter Ministry** – Julie Groene from January 2026 Report
 - Reader Ministry = 16 Total
 - Greeter Ministry = 15 Total
 - The schedule for the first quarter is being finalized; a schedule for the first two weekends of the quarter (January 3,4 and 10,11) has been published.
 - Training was completed for a new greeter, Bill Moreno and two new readers, Carol Stabile and Peggy Griffing. Thanks to Bill, Carol and Peggy for responding to the call at the Ministries in Motion event held in November.

- **Music Ministry** – Director Janice Reska from January 2026 Music Ministry Report
 - Our two new cantors, Susie Guarino and Angelica Lawrence, have been singing at mass on a regular basis. We greatly appreciate their help in leading the congregation in song.
 - The Adult Choir sang at the Christmas Pageant, which was held on Friday, December 12. This event was a wonderful way for our youngsters to get more involved in our church.
 - This year's Christmas Vigil mass at 4:00 pm featured the Young People's Choir, the Adult Choir, and Trevor Hooker on the trumpet, making the musical sound at this special mass glorious. Jack Stearn accompanied the Youth Choir on the digital keyboard during the preludes, and Andrew Batista accompanied the Adult Choir on Silent Night. I am deeply grateful to everyone who gave their time and musical talents to make this Christmas Eve mass very special.
 - We currently have about a dozen children signed up for the Youth Choir. Directed by Jim Henderschedt, they sing at the 8:30 am Family Masses on the fourth Sunday of each month.
 - Carlos Pina installed a third microphone in the sanctuary so that Father George and Deacon Bill can be better heard.
 - The Adult Choir continues to practice weekly and sing at Sunday services, alternating between the 8:30 and 10:30 masses to the extent possible. However, it has become apparent that there is a need for better coordination of schedules between areas, and also better communication of upcoming events to everyone who posts these activities. This issue will be brought up at the next Liturgy Committee meeting.

XI. EDUCATION & FAITH DEVELOPMENT

Family Faith Formation (Grades K,1,3,4,5,6) – Cindy Bryan from January 2026 Faith Formation Report

- In November both the younger children and Middle school children completed the requirement for the Safe Child (Virtus) courses. There were a few absent for the younger children due to illness and previously scheduled activities. The families were sent the material in advance and again after the session. The Middle School children were all present.
- Attendance for both groups is good. The Middle School remains at 6 and the Elementary group at 24 with varying numbers in attendance. Most parents are diligent in letting me know when their children cannot make it. Our Saturday sessions remain at about half the families in attendance.
- We skipped our sessions in December to have time to practice for the Christmas Pageant and to allow families to participate in the many festivities during the month. We asked for donations to the Catholic Worker House on the night of the pageant. We collected approximately \$430.00 that evening. We had a good turnout from the parish and guests of the children. The students as well as the adult choir did an excellent job. On a side note, I asked the students who performed

if they have a new perspective on the Holy Family and the meaning of Christmas. A few of the older children thought about it and said actually they did. I could not be prouder of my students!

- This month, Barbara Meyer was kind enough to conduct the parent session on the Domestic Church. She asked them questions to get a better idea of their needs and where they are in their faith journey to assist us with this year's theme of family and faith. I discussed with the children ways they could continue to practice their faith at home and with friends. They were given a mealtime prayer cube to use at home. The cube has 6 different mealtime prayers. At dinner, they can roll the dice to share a different prayer each night. This past Thursday, the children made bookmarks that say what they want everyone to know about God. Some looked up quotes from the Bible while others spoke from the heart. Once they are all done, they will be laminated and left out for parishioners to take.
- In February, Father George will be hosting the parent session on the Sacraments. The children's sessions will focus on the Sacraments as well. We will also begin discussing Lent. I will have Lenten calendars for them to follow beginning on Ash Wednesday.

2nd Grade, 9th Grade, and 10th Grade Faith Formation – Helena Thomas from January 2026 report

- 2nd Grade Sacramental Year:
 - Class attendance and participation continue to go very well with this group; most classes have all enrollees in attendance or one missing due to sickness.
 - The 1st Sacrament of Reconciliation is scheduled to occur on Saturday, January 17th at 11:00am. At our last class 1/7, I took the children upstairs to visit Jesus in the tabernacle and show them where they will receive this Sacrament. Each child was given a sheet of the Steps of Reconciliation to put their minds at ease along with age-appropriate questions to help them with their Examination of Conscience prior to receiving this sacrament. Please remember them in your prayers that they have a wonderful experience of God's forgiving love embracing them this day. May the Holy Spirit continue to guide them as they move onward towards their 1st Holy Communion which will happen on May 2.
- 9th Grade Confirmation Year:
 - Enrollment has decreased to 12 from the original 14 (one is changing parishes due to their parents' decision, and the other has decided to attend the Church of the Holy Family for personal reasons). Class attendance and participation continue to also go well with this group; classes have most enrollees in attendance (1 or 2 missing due to sickness).
 - This group completed another community service event on January 11 to benefit the Catholic Worker House and House of Bread both located in Hartford. The families brought in a multitude of breakfast items such as granola bars, fruit (oranges, apples), prepackaged muffins, juice boxes, and other food items. We also reached out to the parishioners for any donations. The teens assembled almost 175 brown lunch bags of breakfast items!
 - Our next Service Event will be held following class instruction on February 8. The recipient will be By the River. The teens will again make Valentine's Day cards and assemble care packages of goodies to eat (according to their diet restrictions), fun small activities and toiletries. I'd like to schedule a day later in February when the teens will meet at By the River and spend 2-3 hours conversing and playing games with the elderly residents. We tried this the last two years but the first year we cancelled due to teens and myself being sick and last year I attended with only one other parent to distribute the gift bags to the residents because the teens were unavailable due to their other planned activities. Hopefully this year it will work out better!

Youth Ministry – Helena Thomas from January 2026 report

- We continue having monthly meetings at the St. Columba meeting site. So far, only two of our STJF youth have attended multiple meetings. Our December 13 meeting was The Elf Cookoff which was fun and entertaining with the teens creating scenes from the movie Elf or a biblical scene using various candy, graham crackers, and spaghetti. We ended the class with a spiritual reflection on the Nativity. Our last meeting, January 10, was “The Fierce Women in the Bible.” We talked about what it means to be “fierce” in the biblical sense and reflected on Pope John Paul II’s words on the “feminine genius” of women who are born with special gifts of strength that the world needs. Women have the ability to notice people, create and protect life, notice things that are overlooked by others, love personally, and remain faithful. We talked about our best example, Blessed Mary, and other women in the Old Testament. We also talked about Servant of God Chiara Corbella Petrillo, born 1/9/1984 and died 6/13/2012 from cancer. While she was 7 months pregnant with her son, she was diagnosed with tongue cancer. She had the tumor removed but declined further treatment until after the birth of her son so her son wouldn’t be harmed from the medication. After the healthy birth of her son, it was discovered that the cancer had already spread to other parts of her body. She gave her life to save her son.
- Our next meeting is scheduled for Saturday, February 14, from 6:30 to 8:30.
- **Adult Faith Formation** – Tim Geary from January 2026 Report
 - The Ministry is making progress. In keeping with this year’s theme “Pillars of Faith” we are planning on covering the following topics:
 - The Mass
 - A more complete and better understanding of the Traditions
 - The Sacraments and Celebrations
 - We have reached out to the Office of Faith Formation and Parish life at the Archdiocese to find out:
 - What has been successful at other churches in the Diocese
 - Names and contacts for speakers
 - Jim Castellani has graciously offered his assistance to present at one of the Ministry sessions.
 - Questions going forward:
 - What would be the appropriate format for these sessions?
 - Are there any additional topics which parishioners would like to have covered?
 - What additional areas or suggestions do people have?
- **Order of Christian Initiation for Adults/Adult Confirmation** — Jim Castellani from January 2026 Report
 - Two “candidates” involved in the OCIA process; Cori Beaudry and Chuck Burkhardt.
 - 2-hour discussion sessions are being held every Sunday either after the 8:30 mass or before the 10:30 mass.
 - Have solicited discussion leaders from parish. 8 have responded favorably and 7 have selected topics. 3 have already led discussion sessions.

- Nov 30, 2025 – Advent Sunday at the 8:30 AM mass, the “candidates” received the blessings in the *Rite of Welcoming*. An informal reception was held afterwards. Bibles were presented to both candidates in the name of the STF parish community.
- **KNOW OF ANYONE?** If you know anyone interested in following their “*Journey of Faith*” through the OCIA process, advise Coordinator Jim Castellani at 560-295-9904, jcast3951@aol.com OR have the inquiry contact Jim or the parish office.
- Adult Confirmation - No active participants

XII. ADMINISTRATIVE

Finance Council – David Lenihan from January 2026 Finance Council report

- Key updates for the six months ended 7/1/25 to 12/31/25
 - We welcomed Richard Rego and Dave Wilcox who were appointed recently by Fr. George to the Finance Council
 - On the revenue side, we are about \$13,000 under budget. This is primarily due to timing of receipts in our Annual Collection. Please note that the goal for the Annual Collection is \$75,000 and, although we are making progress (currently collected \$51,400), we have a way to go to reach our goal. We encourage all who have not yet made their contribution to do so. This shortfall in the Annual Collection was partially offset by total offertory (including Christmas) and other donations that exceeded budget by \$9,500 and by \$6,000 respectively.
 - On the expense side, we are over budget by about \$8,500 in the church repair and maintenance account primarily due to the timing of needed repairs to all our outside doors and a down payment for a new railing at the handicap entrance. We also had an unbudgeted \$10,000 payment to the AOH to support new seminarians. These were partially offset by lower expenses for salaries and benefits (less hours and unfilled sexton position for part of the year).

Building Committee – Jim Henderschedt / Peter Yorio from January 2026 Report

- We’re excited to announce that Jim Henderschedt has joined church staff as our part-time Maintenance Coordinator as of December 1, 2025 and become a member of the Building Committee.
 - This is the work that was completed in the last 3 months:
 - Fabrication and installation of the new handrail for the handicap ramp is complete. The remaining elements of this project are planned for spring / early summer:
 - A back up in the hall Ladies Room floor drain occurred again. A toilet had to be removed in order to remove a rag that was stuck in the drain between the toilets. The Drain Company instructed us to avoid flushing anything other than toilet paper, even if the wipes are noted as “septic safe”. Thank you!
 - Lights over the soffit in the church were replaced with new LED lighting.
 - Annual furnace maintenance was completed.
 - Repairs to the tables in the hall was completed.
 - Parts were ordered for making repairs to chairs in the hall.
 - The outdoor nativity was disassembled packed away in the shed.

- Inspection of the roof at the church.
- A leaking fan box on the roof was patched.
- The following activities are planned for the remainder of this fiscal year:
 - Maintenance of the existing handrails at the office, main entrance and handicap ramp.
 - Replacement of the front walkway and handicap ramp, removal of the curbs in the handicap parking area.
 - Replacement of a stained ceiling tile in the outer office area.
 - Repair of the chairs in the hall.
 - Replacement of the fire panel. All parts have now been received.
 - Painting of the metal fan box on the roof.
 - Repair damaged siding and flashing on the roof on the back of the church.
 - Inspection of all fire extinguishers and emergency lighting.
 - Replacement of the drop-down ladder to the attic in the Sacristy.
 - Complete implementation of the Security and Camera systems.
 - Repair of an outlet in outer office area.
 - Test generator at rectory.
 - Complete weather-stripping updates.
 - Replacement of defective crash bar on external kitchen door.
 - Research is being done to look at installing a heating unit in the fireplace in the rectory.
 - Landscaping updates at the rectory.
- The next Building Committee meeting is scheduled for January 26 at 11:30.
- **Communications/Social Media** – no report
- **Web Ministry** – no report

XIII. PARISH LIFE

- **Social Committee** – Christina Warchut from January 2026 Social Committee Report
 - The December Coffee Hour was well attended. We are continuing purchasing our donuts, bagels and pastry rings from the Marlborough Bakery and Café. Sandy, the owner, donated our entire November order and has donated the donuts for the December Coffee Hour. The next Coffee Hour is January 25.
 - Tickets are being sold currently for the Spaghetti Dinner on January 31. We are hoping for a good turnout. Jim Henderschedt has offered his band “THE KEY OF H” to provide music for the evening.
 - The next scheduled event will be a Chili Bake Off and Build a Taco dinner on February 28. Plans are just starting and hopefully there will be a lot of interest.

- **Knights of Columbus** – Jim Castellani from January 2026 report
 - In Memoriam, Sir Knight Rodney Madore – The fourth memorial Mass was held December 21, 2025. The 5th memorial Mass is scheduled April 12, 2025 at 10:30 a.m.
 - 2025 Coat Drive Nov 8, 2025 – The drive was very successful. Coats are still available for distribution.
 - Christmas Lights with Men’s Group – The church display, with the addition of the creche built by brother Knight Jean Jacques, was especially beautiful this year. Thanks to brother Knights Magro, Pina and Cristovao for repairing the electrical outlets. Lights will be removed from the exterior of the church, hopefully in the days following the “Baptism of the Lord,” Jan 11, 2025. Jim Castellani will announce the date for removal and storage.
 - 2025 Keep Christ in Christmas Poster Contest – Posters are being evaluated. Posters were requested and submitted within 4 different “grade levels.” There are \$50 1st place awards available for each of the grade level categories. Our winners may be fortunate enough to advance to District, State, National and International level competitions.
 - 2026 Knights of Columbus Class of 2026 Scholarship – Scholarship process went active Dec 1, 2025. See the St. John Fisher website for details. Two \$750 scholarships are available. Application DEADLINE is March 31, 2026. Brother Knight Frank Daudish is coordinating this process.
 - 2025 Marlborough “Lights-on-the-Green” December 6, 2025 – The Knights again offered FREE POPCORN throughout the event in an effort to brighten the beginning of the Christmas season in our community. We went non-stop for the entire event.
 - Coming Up:
 - 2026 KofC 13th Annual Golf Fundraiser – Thursday, Sept 17, 2026 at Blackledge CC.
 - JOIN THE KNIGHTS – Contact Worthy Grand Knight Carlos Pina or any Knight. Informational materials are available in the vestibule.

- **Men’s Prayer Group** – Jim Castellani (co-Chairman with Peter Yorio) from January 2026 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 with any questions. Come to any session and see if the experience is for you. God Bless. Next sessions: 01/17/26 7:00am, 02/05/26 7pm, 02/21/26 7am, 03/05/26 7pm.
 - 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.”
 - Christmas Lights with Knights of Columbus – Will be removed from the exterior of the church, hopefully in the days following the Baptism of the Lord, Jan 11, 2025. Jim Castellani will announce the date for removal and storage.
 - Men’s Retreat – Mark your calendars for our next retreat scheduled for April 10-12, 2026. (FYI, Easter Sunday is April 5th.)
 - New Members – As a result of the Ministries-in-Motion effort, 2 new members have joined the Men’s Group.

- **Women's Prayer Group** – Barbara Meyer from January 2026 report
 - We continue to meet monthly on the last Tuesday evening of the month offering prayers of praise, intention, working through a given book on our Catholic faith and enjoying Adoration (sitting before the tabernacle) at the end of our meeting. It truly is an enriching group of supportive and faith-filled women.
 - In December we enjoyed a K-Love movie on Mary which was beautifully inspiring and deeply moving as we prepared for Christmas.

- **Online Rosary** – Gil Thompson from January 2026 report
 - About 8 parishioners have been attending Monday morning online Rosary, rotating readers depending on who volunteers. We have been praying our intentions and those forwarded to us via the prayer line. This is a very satisfying way to start the week. You can join the Online Rosary via a link on our website, all the way at the bottom, click in the red banner under "Links". That will put you in Zoom and if you haven't already done so, it will guide you to the steps needed to join us. Don't worry about bed hair or pajamas, you can turn off the video and you don't have to speak (actually prefer you go on mute unless you have intentions you want to offer for us all to pray). We had an opportunity to chat up Online Rosary at Ministries in Motion.
 - An article about the St John Fisher Online Rosary appeared on the Archdiocese web site. See Attachment 1.

- **Welcome Committee** – Midge Lenihan from January 2026 report
 - Three new members joined the Welcome Committee: Nancy Gianetti, Annie Mariano & Terry Parker. Father George & Barbara Meyer joined in the discussion.
 - The group agreed that reaching out to new members of the St. John Fisher parish is a priority. Back in June phone calls inviting new members to the annual picnic were well received. Recently, the group made 15 phone calls inviting new parishioners to the Spaghetti Supper 1/31/26.
 - We agreed this reach out should continue for the first year as a parishioner.
 - The group is also interested in working with other committees in contacting parishioners who are ill (i.e. get-well cards, phone calls).

XIV. ACTION ITEMS – Nancy Visco from February 12, 2026 email

1. Put a blurb in the bulletin regarding the 4 Knights who received the highest order (Todd to reach out to Heather) -Done
2. Photos to Gil or Nora for various ministries to put on the website or Facebook. (All)
3. Speak to Cindy re: sign-off by parents for approval to post pictures (Barbara)
4. Announcing at Mass about why we offer intentions and that there is information at the doors (Father George and Deacon Bill) Note: Information sheets need to be put out at the doors again.
5. The white metal mailbox outside of the office leaks. Get a new one? Overhang? (Jim H.)
6. Look into the possibility of TV screens in the front 2 corners of the church to help parishioners see the music numbers. (Jim H. to consult with Janice). This has already been decided against doing by the Liturgy Committee.
7. Follow up with Janice on the board which has the Mass parts to see if an explanation to the parishioners may make sense.
8. Ask Father Federico to come speak to the Parish regarding support of seminarians (Father George will ask the Archdiocese).
9. Look into process for the Prayer Line- ministry for prayer requests. Should requests go through the church office (phone/email)? (Barbara with input from Heather and prayer line participants).

10. Plaque for manger- recognizing the couple who donated the manger and what the plaque should say (Matt).

XV. **NEXT MEETING** - Thursday, **March 19, 2026** (7:00-8:30 PM)

Email Committee Reports to the Parish Council email list by **March 12, 2026**

XVI. **ADJOURNMENT** – **8:46 PM**

XVII. **CLOSING PRAYER** – Offered by Father Mukuka

NEWS FROM THE ARCHDIOCESE OF HARTFORD



Branches on the Vine

JANUARY 10 - 16, 2026



Gil Thompson, a parishioner of St. John Fisher Roman Catholic Church in Marlborough, hosts the weekly online rosary and reads a scriptural passage before each Hail Mary. SUBMITTED PHOTO

COME, PRAY THE ROSARY ONLINE

St. John Fisher Parish invites the homebound to join in.

Five years ago during the height of the coronavirus, Deacon John McKaig of St. John Fisher Parish in Marlborough was invited to join two parishioners to pray the rosary on a Zoom call.

"I was going through chemo at the time, and my wife Patty and I started joining them the following Monday," he recalls. "Nine months later, my cancer was in remission."

Every Monday at 8:30 a.m., the prayer community begun by Jennifer O'Neill and Kurt Filosa gathers online to pray the Scriptural rosary, and that half hour has been a source of solace for people who often can't leave home.

"The big advantage," says Gil Thompson, who hosts the prayer session, "is that if someone is too sick to come to church, they can sit at home with their laptop and pray with us. Some, who have cancer, can turn on their video and not worry about transportation. We could be anywhere in the world and pray together."

His wife Laurie recalls a member of the church who suffered from Lou Gehrig's Disease and was committed to praying with them.

"When he first joined us, you could see the impact it had on him," she says. "He asked to do the responses, and tears would be flowing from his eyes."

The community of 10 people was so committed they would often go to his home to get him up.

"He needed us and we needed him," Laurie says. "It got to the point where he could no longer speak, but two weeks before he passed, his caregiver brought him on." The group prays for many intentions, including those who are sick, new babies, job seekers, graduates and people who have overcome illnesses.

"We pray for everything," Gil says, "including our pastor, Father George Mukuka." Word of the online rosary ministry spread and parishioners often reach out with intentions.

"It's fulfilling to pray for people," Laurie says. "Parishioners who are ill are happy when they hear they're in our prayers. And whether they're here or not, they know we're praying for them."

"We're starting our week with prayer and thinking about people who are less fortunate because of health issues or whatever," Gil says, "And we think about them for the rest of the week."

During the rosary, Gil reads the Scriptural verse for each Hail Mary, while Laurie prays the response and others recite it at home.

"This method of praying the rosary keeps my mind focused on the Scripture reflections that the leader reads before each Hail Mary," Deacon McKaig says.

The beauty of the rosary, he says, is that it offers Catholics a way to meditate on the life of Jesus and the Blessed Mother, starting with the Annunciation when Mary said "yes" to God's invitation, and culminating in Jesus' Ascension and her Assumption.

"When we join others in this spiritual practice, it's a powerful way to live out our baptismal promises by living the Greatest Commandment to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul and mind and the Second Commandment, which is like it, to love our neighbor as ourselves," Deacon McKaig says. "This lets us always remember it's not about me. It's not about you. It's all about what we can do for someone else."

To join the rosary prayer group on Mondays at 8:30 a.m., go to St. John Fisher's website, stjfchurch.org, and click on the "Ministries" tile and then the link for "Online Rosary."

- Story by Joe Pisani

