

Saint Bridget Parish Council Minutes
Wednesday, Jan 21, 2026

Fr. Ken Shuping PRESENT ▾	Mike Wilder PRESENT ▾
Fr. Patrick Ssekibaala PRESENT ▾	Kristine Keeney PRESENT ▾
Meghan Hess, Principal PRESENT ▾	John Rogers PRESENT ▾
Bruce Slough, Chairperson PRESENT ▾	Maria Brown ABSENT ▾
Julia Williams ABSENT ▾	Stephen DeMauri PRESENT ▾
Pat Accardo ABSENT ▾	Mike Kozak ABSENT ▾
Avi PRESENT ▾	

Opening

- 6:00 PM – Meeting was called to order by Bruce Slough
- Opening prayer, Father Ken

Approval of Minutes

- Minutes were approved via email, this section will be removed in future meetings. These minutes will be regularly posted on the bulletin board in the commons as well as on the parish website under Parish > About Us > Councils and Committees

Liaison Reports

Liturgy – Mike Wilder

- Lessons and Corols
 - Debrief concluded that this went very well and should be repeated!
- Christmas liturgies
 - 5pm Mass (750 attending) - potentially moving the creche into the worship space, for the blessing of the Nativity so that the congregation doesn't have to move out of the church for it
 - Not as hot as last year, probably because we turned the heat off ahead of time
 - 5:15pm (552) - some concerns about conversation during Mass, probably need to give a reminder in future t
 - 8pm (500) - space got tight, may need to open commons for this Mass in the future
 - Midnight mass (150)
 - 10am (313)
 - Total of ~2250 attending, an increase over 2024
 - Giveaway books were all taken!
- Feb 1 - feast of St. Bridget, won't be celebrated as it is a Sunday
- Feb 2 - Presentation of the Lord, candle Mass
- Feb 3 - feast of St. Blaise, blessing of the throats

- Feb 7-8 - liturgical minister commissioning during Masses
- Feb also include multiple weekends that focus on the inquiry group coming into the Church at Easter
 - 35 total across multiple sacraments!
- Liturgical minister recruitment and training
 - Work to align weekends with Welcome table and weekends with donuts
 - Create one-pager to describe each of the liturgical ministries to create more clarity on what each one does and is required to do (e.g., ushers)
 - Make an informal how-to step before formal training, to increase interest and get people involved with face-to-face interactions rather than just sign-up sheets

Christian Formation-Kristine Keeney

- Women's retreat kicked off the year
 - Maxed out registration at 100 and had a waitlist
 - Between using MPH and the commons, found that the commons can't hold more than ~100 for these events
 - Still waiting on survey results from attendees
 - Some ad hoc feedback from attendees that there should be a similar event for the men of the church
- First reconciliation retreats on Jan 10 and this coming weekend (assuming the weather allows)
- Some coming website changes to highlight Formed more prominently
 - These may be slightly delayed due to staff turnover in the Communications role
- Retreats coming up Feb February 7th on the Diaconate, and March 7th and 8th Lenten Retreat with Dr. Barbara Harrington

Social Ministry- Julia Williams

This month has started off as busy as the year ended- BUSY!

Human Concerns grant- first of two distributions will be sent out at the close of Jan 26. Will review the current account with Joyce and I still plan on speaking on 2/28& 3/1 to promote the collection and its purpose. In addition, the school is going to do a collection for Ash Wednesday services and it will go to the Human Concerns grant and support all the awarded organizations. The team loved this plan and they will send home fliers with school families the week before Ash Wednesday.

In other grant news- I assisted the Fuel and Hunger Diocesan Grant process where 77 grants were received and was asked to help with the Respect Life Diocesan Grant over the Christmas holiday. We met just last week and that had 32 applications. We should be getting our notification of awards very soon. applications shortly.

Christmas Sharing- I have received tremendous feedback from all partners and all positive. We had one or two questions from families, but overall, all items were accounted for by the organizations/families..

Walking with Moms- was planning to visit Little Hands next Monday, the 26th. However, due to the impending weather, we have asked to reschedule this event. We are collecting diapers this month as well for them. They are our St. Bridget Spotlight organization. I also attended the Capitol Advocacy Day and some of our members did as well for this event, including Fr. Ken. Lastly, spoke this past weekend at all masses about the Diocesan Collection next weekend and the current statements from the Pope and from the VCC. Received positive feedback and good questions from church members.

Saint Bridget Builds- working to line up a service event due to the cold at the Richmond Tool Bank. Will also have an opportunity to assist in the “month of service” with our Work Camp mini session that will be occurring. That event will occur on 3/14/26.

Saint Vincent dePaul- we will be hosting a stuff the truck event here at Saint Bridget for members to bring household items and clothes to donate. It will occur on 1/31/26 from 9am-12pm. It will be hosted on the blacktop with a truck being brought by SVDP. The KoC will also be selling Brunswick stew and collecting groceries that day- so members can cross participate in any of these opportunities that day..

Day/Month of Service Project- there will be a calendar of events hopefully this week. It kicks off with the Ash Wednesday collection by the school, the KoC fish fry and more. There will be a full slate of events that school and parish families can choose to participate in all through Lent. Again, hope to have finalized this week.

Liberation Veterans- toured the facilities again with Diane Murray. Will be moving into new facility last weekend of Jan. Scheduled to begin delivery there in February and will plan how we proceed this week.

Social Ministry in RVA- We will be having our first Social Ministers meeting at CCC the first week of February. This will be a big help in all of us working together/communicating and using resources wisely here among the churches in RVA. CCC will also offer information about case management and referral process for their services.

Evangelization and Community Life - Mike Kozak

- Welcome table seems to be going well; got a record number of names to add to our tracking sheet
- Jo Ellen is looking forward to hearing more from the data support team about future survey efforts
- Engagement team meeting in Feb to discuss results from Welcome table so far and next steps
- Respect Life Holy Hour was well attended (Pulpit clergy announcements really helped)
- Jeff Caruso will likely come and talk to the parish, need to schedule timing with him
 - The VA legislature passed multiple amendments that will require a special election, including one to enshrine abortion rights as well as striking the previous amendment defining marriage as between one man and one woman
 - The VCC and the diocese are evaluating which points to raise awareness on most, for example the removal of parental rights or conscientious objections
- Planning for Lenten events has begun, e.g. on soup suppers and fish fry. No details yet.

Pastor Report - Fr. Ken

- We have received our incorporation papers and are officially a corporation!

Principal Report

- Set the budget based on 500 students but may be closer to 510
- Uncertainty about Catholic Schools Week next week due to weather

Old Business

- **Nursery / Children's Liturgy**
 - Maria met with Marisa to discuss a nursery survey; they are collecting questions and will add the survey to the website soon
 - Also discussed Children's Liturgy of the Word to see if the school can help support the ministry, perhaps by sourcing volunteers from the school parent community
 - Current volunteers are strained; several don't reliably show up, so we need to increase support or consider pausing the ministry
 - The council discussed signing up teens from the service team at St. Bridget
 - Marisa or Maria can reach out to Shaina Valez(?) to recruit 8th graders
 - And go through Patrick Steerman for high schoolers

New Business

- Parish goals: following up with a midway checkpoint
 - Upcoming weekends are crowded with announcements already! No obviously good time to give an announcement
- Feedback on Lenten planning: keep or change?
 - Soup suppers, fish fry, stations of the cross, veneration service Good Friday
 - Largely positive feedback and decided to keep these
 - Outdoor Stations of the Cross one time this year? Let's try it!
 - We'll start recruiting for sponsoring the soup suppers
- How did the book giveaway go?
 - The books all got taken and people asked at the office for more copies to give away and said they liked it!
 - The discussion got through about half and will need a second session

Parishioner Feedback/Suggestion Box

- Several parishioners have asked if we can add homilies to the website or weekly email

Formation

- Reviewed *Called to Serve*, appendix C which references writings by the Pope on the role of the parish, specifically areas that relate to the role of the parish council.

Adjournment

- Fr. Patrick said a closing prayer and the meeting adjourned 7:02 PM