

Saint Bridget Parish Council Minutes
Wednesday, Mar 18, 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 ABSENT ▾
Pat Accardo PRESENT ▾	Mike Kozak PRESENT ▾
Avi PRESENT ▾	

Opening

- 6:01 PM – Meeting was called to order by Bruce Slough
- Opening prayer, Father Ken

Liaison Reports

Liturgy – Mike Wilder

- (covering the Feb and Mar meetings of liturgy committee)
- Recruitment
 - Commission liturgical ministers on an annual basis
 - Make sure everyone involved in liturgical ministry is at that Mass
 - Same for altar servers
 - Murphy conference room will be reserved on occasion after the 9 and 11am Mass for conversations about ministry with interested folks
- Lenten reconciliation
 - Decision not to have a parish-wide service, but to extend weekly service 1/2 hour
- Some discussion on the fish fry, offering suggestions/improvements
 - Considering how to have a more Lenten character to this event
- Holy Week
 - Thurs 7pm service + adoration through midnight, need footwashing volunteers
 - Diocese again publishing guide to adoration for the “seven churches” pilgrimage
 - Good Friday 3pm service
 - Saturday morning blessing of Easter baskets
 - Vigil: 8pm fire on the terrace right before the vigil Mass starts
 - Sunday: making sure to be ready for use of commons at all Masses
 - Moving earliest Mass to 7am instead of 730
 - 9am and 915a church + MPH
- Railing - continuing to discuss a new railing on the right side and the aesthetics of it
- Mother's and Father's Day - going to offer spiritual bouquets
- Confirmed that use of the Murphy conference room to discuss liturgical ministry with individuals has been working! 3 new volunteers.

- Palm Sunday
 - No announcements before Mass
 - Signage in the commons to help direct folks to start out on the terrace
 - Language in the worship aid and lector announcements the week before to help drive understanding of this

Christian Formation-Kristine Keeney

- Feb talk with deacons was cancelled due to low interest + weather
- Lenten mission had 140 folks over 2 days, great feedback on the speaker
- VBS June 15-19, planning underway, expecting ~120 children
- In Sep/Oct, the Virginia Catholic Conference, talk with Jeff Caruso about the upcoming radical abortion amendment
- Nov - John Tucker will speak on the apostolate journey of St Paul
- Also looking to do a breakfast session separate from the pancake breakfast
- Women's retreat scheduled for Jan 2027!
- Last Saturday, 100+ volunteers did a day of service at the school and on grounds
 - Next service day in our month of service will be Mar 21 and focus on the planters that have replaced the garden boxes
- Sun Mar 22 children will be invited to gather after the 9am and 11am Masses to make Easter cards for residents at local nursing homes.

Social Ministry- Julia Williams

Social Ministry had a very busy March! We undertook a new, ambitious spin and held our first month of service. The parish, in partnership with the school, scheduled a slate of opportunities for individuals and families from the parish to have a chance to get involved in this Lenten season.

We have been pleased with the progress of this series of events and are so glad to have the opportunity to incorporate both school and parish families in this chance for service, fellowship and reflection.

In addition, our spotlight was on our Saint Vincent dePaul conference this March, which allowed the opportunity to incorporate the Stuff the Truck event we had to reschedule from January and the Spaghetti Dinner event we held in May last year.

We continue to see more people getting involved in activities and have just added a 4th option for our feeding ministry program. We are busy scheduling additional activities for Saint Brigid Builds, Walking with Moms, Blackwell and more. I have also just recently connected with another group that has some possibilities, Lighthouse RVA.

We have received the grant awards from the Diocese for Fuel and Hunger and Respect Life grants. The need in our community continues, and we do get calls each week to evaluate and consider for assistance or make a referral for a better fit program depending on the need.

I am also working with the area Catholic Churches Social Ministers to establish better communication between us regarding referrals and assistance calls. I am also working

to have a ministry group leader meeting to discuss barriers for people getting involved and how we can better help support their ministries. I am looking forward to having that gathering after the Easter celebrations and holiday.

Evangelization and Community Life - Mike Kozak

Engagement team: next meeting is Thurs Mar 26

- Review survey results
- Feedback so far has been positive, especially to the Welcome table

Mentorship

- Taking a break during Lent from new engagement to focus on better prayer and mentorship with folks already engaged. (especially given the number of Lenten events)

Community Life

- Biggest fish fry so far - over 550 meals served!
- Spaghetti dinner also had a huge turnout

Virginia March for Life

- Continuing to prep - we need to do more to drive awareness!
- Planning for bus transportation to leave from Grove Baptist Church
- Middle school (8th grade) will be joining the march!

Pastor Report - Fr. Ken

- Table in the commons set up by Saints and Sinners
 - Devotion to St Joseph to collect food
- Regional Youth Night (Mar 22)
 - St. Bridget hosting youth from 4-5 add'l parishes
 - Speaker, adoration, confessions
 - Hoping for hundreds of attendees
- Outdoor Stations!
 - Likely Mar 27 at 5pm, pending final confirmations
 - Done in addition to indoor stations at 5:30
 - Both end at similar time and soup supper is shared after
- Easter vigil
 - 14 baptisms, 21 confirmations
 - Record numbers coming into the church in our diocese! Beginning to strain our usual logistics for diocesan processes around that.
- National Eucharistic Procession
 - Over the summer, for USA 250th anniversary
 - From Florida to Boston and then Philadelphia
 - Plan is that they will come through Richmond June 3 and 4
 - Adoration at St. Benedict's, Mass at the cathedral
 - We should promote this!
- Adoration: do we need more?
 - Currently: Tuesday evenings, third Sunday evenings, first Monday mornings
 - Numbers are strong (except for Mondays)

- Could we publish other devotions better? Rosary after daily Mass Tues+Sat, Divine Mercy after daily Mass Fridays
 - Decided to start by advertising better
- Should we bring Fr. Godfred back again to talk about his work in Ghana and take up another collection?
 - Probably Yes due to the number of parishioners who were personally connected to him while he was here
 - Also, it's healthy to keep a variety of causes available in the second collection
- Jul 4th is a Saturday this year, and the 250th anniversary of the US
 - Because it's Ordinary Time we have the option to have a special Mass. Should we? Yes!
- Aug 1951 were the first school classes in the church basement, so the 75th anniversary of the school is approaching

Budget Considerations

- Evangelical Catholic to wind down after this year (three cohorts, ~24 leaders formed)
- Parish picnic: the food isn't cheap but there's a strong sense that these community events are worth the investment. We could charge a small amount like \$5 / head to mitigate costs.
- Disciple Maker Index survey (first run Oct 2024)
 - We will do this again Jan 2027. Strong agreement that the initiatives that came out of this (welcome table, retreats, mentors) have been effective.
- Garden rework
 - There is some necessary work happening, but also opportunity to invest in a more beautiful space.
 - There was strong agreement in investing more in the beauty of our outdoor spaces
- Donuts!! These have a particularly strong effect along with the Welcome table.

Principal Report

- Day of Service was much appreciated! Projects to clean the bus, redo flower boxes, show appreciation to teachers, and more.
- Organizing the 8th grade for the March for Life
- Continuing to seek enrollment and interview teachers for next year, esp elementary and middle school science

Old Business

- **Nursery / Children's Liturgy**
 - <Maria was out sick and we did not discuss this month>

New Business

- Nominations for next parish council
 - Nominations by Apr 15

Parishioner Feedback/Suggestion Box

- Request to say the St. Michael prayer after Sunday Mass
 - Unfortunately impractical compared to daily Mass, despite its pre-Vatican II history.
 - Unlike daily Mass, there isn't immediate quiet after Mass where the congregation can say it spontaneously.
 - And the priest should not lead it because he is supposed to avoid adding to the official liturgy
- The commons is becoming so loud before and after Mass (esp. 9am) that it's difficult for anyone who wants to pray in the church before or after Mass
 - Better practice around closing the doors once most folks have exited after Mass
 - And preferably a reminder that the commons is adjacent to a space where people are praying
- Feedback box:
 - Please lower the thermostat for 9am mass. It is stifling.
 - Would you consider placing paper toilet seat covers in each bathroom?
 - The amount of people gathered during large events and weekend masses calls for additional bathrooms to be built. The downstairs bathroom is not good for the elderly/handicapped.
 - Bathrooms in the main building need to be updated.
 - We discussed and agreed that in many ways this and other topics this month are feedback that the 9am Mass is getting quite large; it has about the attendance of any other two weekend Masses. We'll keep an eye on this and in upcoming meetings will consider possible ways to encourage load balancing, like changing religious education scheduling.
 - Can our Saint Bridget Parish host a Men's retreat similar to the Women's retreat? Maybe at the end of January?
 - Can follow up with Marisa on this, we should have one
 - Nursery with volunteers. CLOW weekly.

Formation

- (skipped this month due to the length of business)

Adjournment

- Fr. Patrick said a closing prayer and the meeting adjourned 7:23 PM