

**Come to the Water ACC Pastoral Council Meeting**  
**Saint Nicholas Church, Belle River, MN**  
**March 24, 2026**

Present: Fr. Matthew Kuhn, Fr. Dan Ruprecht, Todd Wentworth, Mike Ponicki, Veronica Haavig, Leon Breun, Rodney Roers, Dan Eckstein, Josiah Aultman, Maria Lopau, Mark Maloney, Sandy Wussow, Craig Hight, Tonya Marthaler, Marianne Shrode, Bev Paul and Carol Gaffaney. Absent: Nathan Eisel, Darcy Thesing, and Adrian Panther.

1. Meeting called to order at 6:00 for Saint Nicholas representatives and 6:30 for the full council.
2. Opening Prayer.
3. Meeting minutes from February 17, 2026 were approved.
4. Individual Standing Committee Reports were reviewed with the following additions:
  - Board of Education – Maria reported the 6th grade Math Masters got 3rd place in Fergus Falls. Thirty-five students are signed up for kindergarten at this time; there is room for a few more. A Vacation Raffle will be part of The Gathering this year; \$50 a piece for a \$5000 travel voucher through Bursch Travel.
  - Evangelization – ICC is making personal contacts with new parishioners, visiting them in person when possible. SN is planning to visit new parishioners and follow up with a letter. SM needs to find people to lead and delegate responsibilities in the Evangelization plan.
  - Adoration – Josiah said they are trying to move to a 24/5 schedule of Eucharistic Adoration; they will do a public push.
  - Finance – Leon reported at St. Mary's the electronic giving program is growing. The finance council voted to put QR codes in the pews. Harvest Pack will be held April 24; the goal is 100,000 meals. Craig said the ICC bell tower will be worked on this year, plus some interior work at ICC. The bell tower project, because of the higher total cost, has received the required diocesan approval. Mike said St. Nicholas is looking at increasing the faith formation budget next year. The roofing project has received diocesan approval. Emergency Prep presentation will be held April 12 for parishioners after Mass. They discussed the need for speakers in the "cry area" (an area at the entry of the church) and in the basement.
  - Liturgy – Bev gave an update on the work being completed for an adoration chapel. They need a leader to establish an Adoration schedule. ICC has added 25 new ministers through its stewardship renewal efforts. Mike said their group discussed Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Easter Sunday logistics and getting new vestments. Mike has been training new ministers at St. Nicholas.
  - Parish Life – Bev reported they will have people attend the Safety meeting at St. Mary's. They discussed having a QR code in the pews. Their Fish Fry attendance was down due to an ice storm – they served 270 people. They served soup and sandwiches the nights they had Stations of the Cross. Veronica said they held a Community Meal with a Lutheran Church in Carlos. Their Fish Fry went well; they also served 270 people.

- Stewardship – Josiah said they brainstormed new ideas for stewardship. Veronica reported they are working to put together a formal Stewardship Committee.
5. Election Process
    - Nominations for vacant positions were held last weekend. The nominations will be reviewed to verify eligibility and then those names will be distributed to pastoral council members to make contacts. Voting will be completed May 3 at all 3 churches.
  6. Holy Thursday – Mike asked for volunteers to start the feet washing at the Holy Thursday service.
  7. Administrative Update
    - Work continues on the annual planning/budgeting process.
    - Pension Underfunding - Todd said they have met with employees and past employees. The committee is making progress on the Frozen Pension Plan and getting a new retirement plan going forward. The diocesan website is providing updates on the pension underfunding.
  8. Pastor's Perspective
    - Focusing on Evangelization; encouraged people to invite someone to Holy Thursday, Good Friday, etc.
    - A parishioner at ICC is sewing new altar server robes for all three parishes, starting with ICC.
  9. All Things New – Meetings are being held with Bishop Neary, clergy and staff about combining parish communities. Decrees are expected by the end of April.
  10. Several thank you cards were completed.
  11. Next pastoral council meeting will be held on April 28<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm at St. Mary's Church (6:00pm for SM representatives).

Meeting adjourned at 8:05 pm.