



## IMMACULATE CONCEPTION PARISH

*Leading People to Jesus Through Worship, Community, Service and Devotion to Mary*

### Immaculate Conception Parish Pastoral Council Meeting

**January 14, 2026 in Marion Hall**

Rich Viertel called the meeting to order at 7:50pm. Paula Mong led the opening prayer.

**Attendees:** Council President Rich Viertel, Fr. Matthew Hoover, Principal Colleen Kent, Paula Mong, Jackie Curtis, Jack Griffin, Janet Wilks, Matt Hummer, Julie Clemens, Kendra Girardot, Robert Bevilacqua.

**Not present:** Deacon Chris Campbell, David Lyons, Max Herath.

#### Announcements – Council President Rich Viertel

##### • **Overall Theme for Council Discussions:** Levels of Participation

- Overall numbers for the parishioners indicate that we have over 1000 families that are spread over 36 zip codes. Many are not active on a regular basis. With the recent responses to offertory giving, Emmaus Road Scholarship, and directory sign-ups, we are currently seeing 20% or less participation. There is a danger that we could follow other parishes to the South that have been closed due to lack of participation.
- Kendra provided a Pope Leo XIV quote: “The problem is not the numbers — which, of course, make one reflect — but the increasingly evident lack of awareness in feeling part of the Church, that is, of being living members of the Body of Christ, all with unique gifts and roles, and not merely users of the sacred, of the sacraments, perhaps out of mere habit.”. How do we, as a parish, change that feeling in our parishioners? This seems like an unsolvable problem (like Gordian Knot or Schrodinger’s Cat). We need to create a strategy going forward.
- Pastors in smaller parishes have the ability to directly connect with everyone; Pastors at larger parishes are more challenged to do that. How do we get the word out?
- Initial strategies discussed include informing parishioners that there is an expectation for them to be involved; that a survey be sent out to assess the resources in the parish and allow them to participate based on their gifts.

#### Old Business

- **Initial Pastor Meeting with the Bishop:** This will occur in March. Father Matt indicated that his experience during a prior transition was not smooth. The Parish Council will be the key during any potential upcoming transition. Along with Parish-supplied data, we will need to be the voice of the Parish and help orient the new Pastor regarding who we are and what we do. Father Matt would like this to be as smooth as possible. More discussions will be needed on this topic.
- **DMI Survey:** The parish completed the Disciple Maker Index (DMI) survey in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2025. Results will be made available soon.
- **2025 Christmas Tree Lighting Feedback:** This new event was well attended. There were a few areas where we can improve for next year. Feedback included earlier planning for

installation of the lighting as the original decorator fell through and a last-minute replacement was needed; establishing a “Plan B” if the weather does not cooperate; and more food and drink options.

- **Parish Directory:** We may have just made our deadline of 100 more families. This is less than 20% of the families registered. Those that do not want photos will still be listed. It is not decided as to whether phone numbers and email addresses will be included.
  - Even with the low numbers we will proceed with publishing as contracts with the photographer have already been signed. If we decide to cancel, we will forfeit fees.
  - A request to parents to sign up will be announced at the upcoming parent-teacher conference at the school. Greeters at church can also hand out fliers and personally invite people.
  - Father Matt will investigate how we can include photos of homebound parishioners.

### **New Business**

- **Parish Council List:** The Council must update the list of council members and their date and terms. Term of service is defined as 3 years, but members are not limited to this as some have been on the Council longer.

### **Pastor’s Topics**

- **Novice Sister Adeline Lupita:** The story of a family supporting their daughter that was presented at the Commissions Meeting was heartfelt and compelling. It must be shared.
  - With family consent, the message of her journey will be included in prayers, talks, and teachings in the Parish.
  - When appropriate and with family consent, we will add Novice Sister Adeline Lupita to the vocation’s plaque in the gathering space.
- **New visitor to the Parish is a Deaconate in Formation:** We will have a visitor attending masses, events, and meetings. He was assigned here to experience how another parish functions and to learn from us. He is currently at St. Josephine Bikita (formerly St. Elizabeth) parish.

### **Commissions Meeting Notes**

- **Low attendance for the Triduum Speaker:** The planners suggest that this needs to be moved to earlier in the day as it occurred during cold weather after dark. It may also benefit attendance if there is childcare provided. Further discussion is needed.
- **Christmas Eve Mass:** The overflow seating plan worked well, but it was suggested that Marian Hall be decorated next year. We will provide poinsettias for Christmas Eve in Marian Hall: The deadline for ordering is the 1st week of October.

### ***Closing and Next Meeting***

Rich closed the meeting at 8:45pm. The next Parish Council meeting will be held at 7:30pm on February 11, 2026.

*Meeting minutes drafted and submitted by Robert Bevilacqua, Parish Council Secretary.*