

SHEBOYGAN NORTH CATHOLIC PARISHES

Pastoral Council — Meeting Notes

Thursday, September 24, 2026, 6:30 p.m., Dominican Hall, St. Clement Parish

Parish: Sheboygan North Catholic Parishes (Holy Name of Jesus, St. Clement, St. Dominic)

Date/Time: Thursday, September 24, 2026, 6:30 p.m.

Place: Dominican Hall, St. Clement Parish

Presider: Mary Jo Bugembe, Council Chair

Opening Prayer: Fr. Nick Baumgardner

Closing Prayer: Mary Jo Bugembe

Present: Fr. Nick Baumgardner (Pastor), Fr. Dennis Beltre (Associate Pastor), Luanne Bemis (SC), Adam Biebel (SD), Jeanne Bitkers (SD), Mary Jo Bugembe (HNJ), Brett Goebel, SD), Mary Greeneway (HNJ), Lauren Jacobs (HNJ), Donna Karr (HNJ), Jeanne Kobuszewski (SC), Michele Konrad (HNJ), Mary Petrie (SNCP), Leticia Pulido (SC), Anne Skowlund (SC), James TenPas (SD), Justina Torres (SC) and Andrew Ver Gowe (SD).

Guest: Rhonda Anderson, Principal, Elizabeth Ann Seton School

Absent/Excused: Dcn. Jim Hall (SNCP), Danilo Batres (SC), Tom Clarke (HNJ), Nicholas Devine (SD).

Opening Prayer

Led by Fr. Nick Baumgardner.

Mission/Vision Statements

Read aloud by those present.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Summary

- Chair Mary Jo Bugembe opened the 2026–2027 term, welcomed members back, and introduced new members.
- Members introduced themselves by parish, council role, and other parish activities.
- Before the formal welcome, Seton Principal Rhonda Anderson addressed the council. Highlights included:
 - Third year as principal. Seton’s mission, proposed with Fr. Nick: To form saints and scholars with the heart and mind of Christ.
 - Building refreshed (interior paint, artwork, parking lot). Preschool hallway features saints at child height. Open House Sunday, September 27, 10 a.m.–1 p.m.
 - Three new teachers, all active in local Catholic parishes.
 - Intentional faith integration across subjects, including STEM and gym.
 - New Virtue in Education and Art curricula.
 - Enrollment 75; generally, 75–80 over the past three years. About half of students are Wisconsin Parental Choice. Very few pay full tuition; others receive Choice or scholarship support. Modest tuition increases this year; no reported enrollment loss tied to it.
 - Younger grades: seven three-year-olds; ten four-year-olds.

- Challenges named by the principal: retaining a mix of experienced and younger teachers; need for a bilingual staff member to serve Hispanic families and reduce reliance on outside translation.
- Summer refrigeration/freezer failure and related food loss; replacement completed and covered by insurance.
- Home and School restarted last year. Brat fry and bake sale Saturday, September 26, 10 a.m.–2 p.m., Sheboygan Piggly Wiggly South.
- Tours have continued after the start of school; two families toured in the past week.

1.a. Administrative Tasks

Summary

- Open officer and liaison roles because of members leaving council: secretary; liaison to the Stewardship Committee; liaison to the Seton School Board. (Note: the latter has been filled subsequent to our September meeting).
- Secretary duties: attendance, minutes, and distribution. No one volunteered at the table. Members were invited to think it over and contact the chair.
- Stewardship Committee meets bi-monthly and focuses on time, talent, and treasure, including Welcome Weekend and related communications.
- Fr. Nick later proposed recording each meeting so a secretary can draft minutes with an AI summary, then send the draft to Mary Jo Bugembe for review. He asked anyone willing to speak with him after the meeting.
- The goal is to fill all liaison positions by the October meeting.

2. Consent Agenda

2.a. Council Minutes: May 28, 2026 (Online Approval: June 4, 2026)

Briefly noted on the agenda only. No discussion or further vote was captured on the recording. The agenda states the May 28 minutes were already approved online on June 4, 2026.

2.b. Committee Reports

Briefly noted. The agenda lists attached reports: SD Prayer & Worship, June 9, 2026; SNCP Stewardship Committee, September 8, 2026. No verbal walk-through of those attachments was captured. See New Business 7.a. for the plan to hear liaison summaries going forward.

3. Pastor / Associate Pastor Reports

3.a. Fr. Nick Baumgardner

Summary

- Catholic schools and demographics: at fall clergy day the Archdiocese cited census-based projections of about a 15 percent drop in school-age children across the ten counties from 2020 to 2035 (already five years into that window). Seton enrollment is stable, which Fr. Nick judged encouraging; the hope remains to grow into the 80s and someday past 100.
- Financial stewardship of treasure letter is planned later this year. Focus will be inspirational stories of people becoming Catholic, not only a request to increase giving. 20+ people are becoming Catholic across the parishes. Six were confirmed the past weekend at Holy Name; five of them also became Catholic at that Mass.
- St. Clement capital work before year-end: paint and plaster, then a new air-conditioning unit. A weekend flyer asked the community to help raise \$87,000. Fr. Nick expressed confidence the amount can be raised.
- Fiscal-year comparisons:

- Prior year-end: Holy Name about \$14,000 in the red; St. Clement about \$93,000 in the red; St. Dominic about \$40,000 in the red.
- Most recent fiscal year-end: Holy Name about \$75,000 in the black; St. Clement about \$20,000 in the red; St. Dominic about \$10,000 in the red.
- Helps to the bottom line this year: The Richardson School begins paying rent at St. Dominic in September and will share utility costs. Catholic Charities will pay a full year of rent at St. Clement (only a few months last fiscal year). St. Clement no longer plows its parking lot, a savings Fr. Nick placed at about \$11,000.
- On whether sale/endowment proceeds should fund the St. Clement projects: St. Clement has historically drawn about \$50,000 a year from its endowment to cover operating deficits. With sale proceeds added, the endowment is a little over \$1 million; at about 5 percent interest, that is roughly \$50,000 interest earned annually. Leadership prefers not to spend principal. Existing funds could cover paint, plaster, and air conditioning, but donors are being asked so the endowment can remain intact and continue to grow. About \$50,000 from St. Clement's Love One Another funds will also be applied.
- Year-to-date through two months of the new fiscal year: Holy Name up about \$10,000; St. Clement down about \$28,000, reflecting capital work already paid; St. Dominic up about \$2,000.
- Tabitha Hackney began August 24 as finance manager. Lori Woelfel has been helping to onboard. Staff described the transition as going well.

3.b. Fr. Dennis Beltré

No report at this time (none captured on the recording).

4. Financial Report

Summary

Covered within Fr. Nick's report (see 3.a.). Two months of the new fiscal year were available.

- Holy Name year-to-date: about \$10,000 positive.
- St. Clement year-to-date: about \$28,000 negative, attributed in part to capital spending already paid.
- St. Dominic year-to-date: about \$2,000 positive.

5. Courageous Conversations

Summary

Time for questions, concerns, or parishioner feedback. Items raised:

- Welcome Weekend (positive): A woman whose children had attended Holy Family years ago, and who later worshiped on the south side, sought out a council member to say she is excited to return and is considering a Northside parish. The helping priest that weekend spent substantial time with people.
- Sisters & Sips: A response to women parishioners asking for something like Fathers & Suds. First meeting is on October 8 at St. Dominic, in the St. Francis Room. Format is casual: a reading, conversation, and food.
- Safe environment / choir: From a Prayer & Worship conversation—if a minor joins an adult choir, every adult in that choir must complete Safe Environment training, unless the child's parent is present the entire time. Fr. Nick confirmed this is the Archdiocesan rule and can be a practical challenge for adult choirs.
- Bulletin advertising: A member noticed many empty ad slots in the online bulletin. Others wondered whether more online viewing is a factor; south-side bulletins were said to show a similar drop. Fr. Nick said the publisher's arrangement has not changed and the parishes still receive the bulletins under the current advertising model.

6. Old Business

6.a. Parish Security — Resume Discussion

Summary

- Fr. Nick did not have a new recommendation ready. Last year the council, meeting by parish, sketched modest door-locking ideas after the first reading, trying to avoid two extremes: doing nothing after recent violence at schools and churches, and locking every door in a way that is unwelcoming or shuts out latecomers.
- Holy Name's summer airflow depends on doors remaining open, so a winter-only lock plan would be inconsistent; members still have questions about that.
- Bruce Varick is the new Archdiocesan staff person for safety and security (began around June, near the end of last term). Fr. Nick has not yet contacted him, but intends to share last year's parish proposals and ask how to proceed.

7. New Business

7.a. Review process for reporting committee activities by council liaisons

Summary

- Committee minutes are already attached to the agenda and usually receive little discussion. For this term the chair asked liaisons to give a brief spoken summary of highlights from every committee meeting they attend.

Decision / recommendation

- Liaisons are to come prepared with a short statement summarizing the meetings they attend for the beginning of each meeting.

7.b. SNCP 2026 Annual Meeting

Summary

- Tentatively set for Thursday, October 22, 2026. The annual meeting (required corporate meeting: financial, administrative, and pastoral "state of the union") will begin at 6:00 p.m., not 6:30. Target: about 30 minutes of presentation and time for questions, keeping the gathering to about 45 minutes, followed by a short Pastoral Council meeting.
- Council members who can should arrive at 6:00 p.m.
- Hospitality: Consensus this year was to keep it simple (popcorn or light refreshments were suggested). Several noted that snacks often go uneaten.
- Mary Petrie and Fr. Nick will work on promotion and communication.

7.c. Recap of recent parish activities

i. New Member Welcome Weekend

- Described as a strong response. Sheboygan North welcomed 66 new families this past year, compared with 37 in 2025.
- Pastoral Council, Stewardship Committee, and parish welcome teams worked together.
- Stewardship Committee had asked for ideas for welcoming new parish families and how to help parishioners live their faith in the world by becoming involved in parish ministries and activities. Members were asked to think on that for a future meeting.

ii. Fall Fest

- Those who attended reported a good turnout. Children had fun. Bingo remains popular. Raffle prizes and gift baskets were praised.

iii. Faith Formation kick-off

- For now, classes are held in various locations at St. Dominic, including the church, PAC and parish office building. This is because of the ongoing renovations in the school building. When the changes are completed, we are hoping to share a number of the instructional areas with the Richardson school. This will provide more space for our Faith Formation classes.
- High school: renewed model launched this week. Families choose among seven small groups led by catechists with particular gifts (examples named: horse care, science, woodworking, sports and movement). All groups share ten common lesson cores and then use remaining time for the group's gift and relationships. Kick-off was well attended; catechist lists filled. Materials live in Google Classroom, with paper copies for those without technology. Students will also keep a simple digital record of Mass attendance and intentions.
- Large-group high school gatherings every other month (direct instruction, snack, seasonal activity, some service). Ninth- and tenth-grade confirmation preparation continues. Confirmation retreat October 3–4; Confirmation October 17. Some students already confirmed, or about to be, asked to join small groups; eleventh (and invited twelfth) graders may assist as models and receive service hours.
- Members were asked to keep those being confirmed in prayer.

7.d. Upcoming Parish Events

i. Seton School Brat Fry and Bake Sale Fundraiser

Saturday, September 26, 10 a.m.–2 p.m., Sheboygan Piggly Wiggly South. Brats, hamburgers, baked goods. Principal at opening; Donna at closing.

ii. Seton School Open House

Sunday, September 27, 10 a.m.–1 p.m. Council members were encouraged to attend and see the renovated interior and artwork.

iii. Trivia Night

Saturday, October 24, 5:30–9 p.m., St. Clement Dominican Hall. Donna Karr: tickets are on sale; seating is first come, first served; 14 tables of six; individuals will be seated with others; dinner included in one price.

iv. Pilgrimage Opportunities

- Camino de Santiago in Spain with Fr. Dennis and Kym Leibham, May 7–17, 2027.
- Sacred Sites in Italy with Fr. Nick, October 4–15, 2027.

Details are in the bulletin.

Additional announcement (not separately numbered on the agenda)

- Archdiocese Fall Parish Vitality Regional Meeting: Tuesday, October 13, Annunciation Parish, Fox Lake. Open to anyone interested. The chair offered to send registration information.
- Council photos: Michele Konrad offered to update the existing template. Plan is to take photos at the November meeting so they are posted before the holidays. October reminder to be ready.

Closing Prayer

Led by Mary Jo Bugembe. She noted 2026 as a jubilee year connected with St. Francis of Assisi (800th anniversary; feast October 4) and led a prayer for peace in his spirit. The prayer was written by Pope Leo.

Next Meeting

- Thursday, October 22, 2026. Annual meeting at 6:00 p.m.; short Pastoral Council meeting to follow. Dominican Hall, St. Clement.
- Committee reports due by the 15th of the month, emailed to Mary Jo Bugembe, mjbugembe@gmail.com.

Respectfully submitted from the meeting recording. Secretary office vacant.

Committee reports due by the 15th of the month: mjbugembe@gmail.com (Mary Jo Bugembe, Council Chair).