

Pastoral Council 3.12.26 Agenda and Notes

Members Present: Father Amberger, Father Cordonnier, Ed Kreiner, Marc Wells, Tina Stephens, Debbie Morrison, David Holden, Dustin Fussnecker, Gerry Faust, Anna Howell

Members Absent: Linda Defosse, Cathy Zurbuch

OLD BUSINESS:

On 11.13.25, the Family of Parishes Pastoral Council took a consultative vote and all voted in favor of Fr. Amberger proceeding with the process of asking the Archdiocese of Cincinnati for permission to alienate the property for not less than the lowest appraised value of \$110,000.00.

UPDATE: We received the letter from Archdiocese of Cincinnati. See attached.

NEW BUSINESS:

1) Beacons of Light Update:

a) **Parish Vision Statement: See Attached Sheet: Initial thoughts are that we like #4 but will discuss it at the next meeting too.**

b) **“Family Unity Discernment”:** See attached sheets

i) <https://resources.catholicaoc.org/offices/parish-vitality/family-unity-discernment>

c) **Expectation of a plan for Canonical Union for July 1, 2027**

i) <https://pathway.catholicaoc.org/modification-of-parishes/>

2) Concern from Parishioner

a) **See attached. There was a good discussion about communication in general and Ed Kreiner volunteered to talk to the good people at St. Michael to give an update on the Fish Fry, the Fish Fry building, and other updates.**

- 3) Possible Sacred Heart Parish Picnic on the Feast of the Sacred Heart being put together by the Knights of Columbus. Further details will be shared in the future.**
- 4) The issue of Mass schedules was brought up. This could be an issue that will be discussed during the Family Unity Discernment initiative that was recently announced. There was an idea about maybe having an evening Mass at one of our Churches.**
- 5) The proposal of tithing was brought up and how we can increase giving.**
- 6) Dustin has a hard time making the Pastoral Council meetings when they are regularly scheduled. Can the meeting be moved to 6?? Can we rotate parishes?**

Meeting ended with a prayer at: 636pm

Possible Options for the "Parish Vision Statement"

Option 1: The "Heart of the Home" (Warm & Relational)

"Rooted in the soil of rural Ohio and the traditions of our Holy Mother Church, our mission is to cultivate a community of unwavering faith and resilient families. We strive to be a spiritual home where every generation is nourished by the Sacraments and strengthened by neighborly love."

Option 2: The "Light on the Hill" (Direct & Action-Oriented)

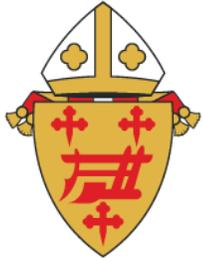
"To form strong families and bold disciples through the grace of the Eucharist. We commit ourselves to preserving our rural heritage, educating our youth in the Truth, and living as a steadfast witness of Christ's love in our community."

Option 3: The "Sower's Mission" (Metaphorical & Local)

"Sowing seeds of faith, growing families in grace, and harvesting a legacy of devotion. Our parish exists to protect the sanctity of the home and to ensure that the light of the Gospel remains the bedrock of our rural life."

Option 4: The "St. Joseph Model" (Short & Punchy)

"Building a legacy of Strong Faith and Strong Families under the patronage of the Sacred Heart of Christ, nourished through the Sacraments and sustained by fidelity to the Holy Catholic Church."



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[Home](#) > [Offices](#) > [Parish Vitality](#) > Family Unity Discernment



Family Unity

DISCERNMENT

As Beacons of Light progresses into its fourth year, the Center for Parish Vitality – after consultation with Archbishop Casey – will be working with all Families of Parishes to assist them in discerning the best use of all resources (especially physical, financial, and personnel) for the renewed mission of bringing the Gospel to our communities by forming and sending missionary disciples. Families of Parishes will consider, in a synodal way, if they have sufficient resources as well as how best to deploy or reconfigure those resources to do missionary discipleship and meet the challenge of our apostolic age. Families within a deanery will do this at the same time, between April 2026 and June 2027, to explore strengths gained from collaboration.



“In order for the journey of the Word to continue, the Christian community must make a determined missionary decision ‘capable of transforming everything, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation’... This means a pastoral activity that, through an effective and vibrant collaboration between priests, deacons, religious and laity, as well as among different Parish communities of an area or region, occupies itself with identifying together the questions, difficulties and challenges germane to evangelization, seeking to integrate ways, methods, proposals and means suitable to confront them.”

INSTRUCTION “THE PASTORAL CONVERSION OF THE PARISH COMMUNITY IN THE SERVICE OF THE EVANGELIZING MISSION OF THE CHURCH”, OF THE CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, VI 5, VI 123

THE PROCESS

The Family Unity Discernment (FUD) process has been designed to synodally discern the best use of Family resources (buildings, revenue, staff, etc.) towards meeting the mission of bringing the Gospel to their communities. This process includes:

Family

1

Preparation

The Center for Parish Vitality (CPV) will work with a point person at the Family to coordinate schedules, confirm participants, and initiate data gathering.

Deanery

2

Deanery Initiation ¹

CPV will facilitate an orientation to the Family Unity Discernment (FUD) process to all Family Leadership Team (FLT) and Family Pastoral Council (FPC) members for all Families within the deanery.

Family

3

Investigation

Family staff, assisted by CPV, will gather an inventory of Family churches, schools, and facilities along with analysis of financial, sacramental, and demographic trends of the Family as well as the territory served. This will include assessing deferred maintenance of all Family buildings. This assessment is best conducted by one team of parishioners across all facilities.

Family

4

Analysis

CPV will assist the Family Leadership Team (FLT) in using this data to conduct an analysis of opportunities to better serve the mission of the Church in this particular Family. This could include proposing alternatives for resources utilization and/or canonical unification as a starting point for broader review in the Reflect step.

Family

5

Reflect ^{1,2}

CPV will lead a synodal Reflect session of FLT, FPC, and parishioners using Conversations in the Spirit, to prayerfully discern questions posed derived from Analysis. The outcome of Reflect will be input to further discernment by the Pastor and Family Pastoral Council.

Deanery



Deanery Reflect ¹

All the Family Leadership Teams and Family Pastoral Councils within the deanery will gather to share the output of their Reflect sessions and collaborate across the deanery.

CPV and the Family point person will then prepare for the Family Pastoral Council and pastor to review in the Recommend step.

Family

Notes:

1: This will be a Saturday meeting to allow for FPC and or parishioner participation.

2: Note that if your Family of Parishes has a school, then it is essential to include school parents.

To minimize the impact of this process on Family pastors and staff and to foster regional collaboration, Family Unity Discernment will be conducted over an 8 to 10 week time period on a deanery by deanery basis. Collaborating with the deans, CPV has defined the following order and timing:

EMMANUEL DEANERY

Start date: 4/11/26

End date: 6/21/26

ST. JOSEPH DEANERY

Start date: 4/11/26

End date: 6/21/26

ST. JAMES DEANERY

Start date: 4/11/26

End date: 6/21/26

ST. MARY DEANERY

Start date: 4/11/26

End date: 6/21/26

ST. AUGUSTINE DEANERY

Start date: 4/11/26

End date: 6/21/26

CATHEDRAL DEANERY

Start date: 4/11/26

End date: 6/21/26

All Families of Parishes will participate in Family Unity Discernment, including single-parish Families and those Families who have already unified canonically. The work of discerning the best use of our buildings, our resources, and our personnel to serve the Gospel in the new apostolic age is an ongoing endeavor that requires the partnership of all Families within a deanery. The meetings and the work of Family Unity Discernment have been designed so as to not be an additional burden but rather to assist Families of Parishes in carrying forth the goals and objectives of Beacons of Light.

CPV has created detailed methodology documents, agendas, forms and materials and is currently piloting this process with one Family of Parishes. After this pilot, CPV will make all materials available on the Beacons Pathway.

Any questions, please contact Vitality@catholicaoc.org

IMPORTANT FORMS

All forms should be completed shortly before your deanery is scheduled for Family Unity Discernment.

Family Financial Data

This form is mostly data already in any Family annual report you share with your parishioners. It includes an overview of Revenue, Expenses, Debt, and Saving as well as Giving by Age Group and Giving per Household data. The form includes Mass attendance data which can simply be downloaded from your most recent [October Count – Archdiocese of Cincinnati](#)

This sheet can be completed shortly before your deanery is schedule for Family Unity Discernment using the most recent completed Fiscal Year's totals and the most recent submission to the Kennedy Directory. Even if this data is six months old it is sufficient for this high-level review.

Form Updated 3/12/2026



Deferred Maintenance Excel Checklist

This form is provided by the Finance Department as a method to inventory all campus buildings for possible deferred maintenance. This should be completed by members of your Finance Council and or Facilities Commission. We strongly recommend that one Family level team assess all buildings across the campus to ensure consistency.

If you don't have a current inventory of buildings and assessment of their maintenance needs, this will require significant effort but less effort to maintain over time.



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Fr. Cordonnier <vicar@ohioatholic.org>

Concern for Parish Communication, Leadership, and Stewardship

10 messages

Stephanie Slack <stephslack2@gmail.com>

Sun, Mar 8, 2026 at 1:34 PM

To: "Fr. Frank Amberger" <father.amberger@gmail.com>, "Fr. Cordonnier" <vicar@ohioatholic.org>

Dear Father Amberger and Father Cordonnier,

I am writing as a member of the Sacred Heart Family of Parishes. My family and I value our faith deeply, and our parish has long been an important part of our spiritual lives and the faith formation of my children. I share these concerns because I care deeply about our parish and want to see it remain a strong and welcoming spiritual home for families.

Over time, however, I have grown increasingly concerned about the lack of communication between parish leadership and the families of the parish. Clear and consistent communication helps parishioners feel connected to the life and mission of the Church, yet many parishioners feel uncertain about where to find information or who to approach with questions or concerns.

One example of this concern relates to the limited communication provided in the weekly bulletin. Bulletins are often one of the primary ways parishioners stay informed about the life of the parish, and when important updates, decisions, or developments are not communicated regularly, it can leave parish families feeling disconnected from the broader life and direction of the parish.

In particular, there also appears to be limited awareness among parishioners regarding the structure of parish leadership. Many members of the parish community do not know who currently serves on the parish council or how those members are selected. This has created confusion about how parishioners can appropriately engage with parish leadership or participate more fully in the life of the parish.

I am also concerned about the limited communication regarding parish financial matters. Parishioners faithfully support the Church through their time, talent, and financial contributions, and with that support often comes a natural desire to understand how parish resources are being stewarded. In many parishes, regular communication regarding financial reports, major financial decisions, and the role of finance councils helps foster transparency and trust within the parish community.

As an example, there has been limited communication surrounding the additional structure built at St. Michael in Mt. Orab, including the financial considerations and decision-making process involved. Without clear communication about projects of this nature, parishioners may struggle to understand how decisions are made and how parish resources are allocated. Greater openness regarding projects and financial decisions of this scale could help strengthen trust and understanding within the parish community.

Out of respect for the proper structure of the Church, I believe it is important to raise these concerns directly with parish leadership and to seek understanding and clarity.

As a parent raising children in the parish, I believe transparency and communication are especially important in helping families remain engaged and invested in parish life and in the future of our parish community.

Because I am deeply invested in the future of our parish and the faith formation of my children, I feel a responsibility to share these concerns respectfully and in good faith. My hope is that greater clarity, transparency, and communication can strengthen the sense of trust and unity within our parish community.

I would welcome the possibility of a parish update, meeting, or communication that could help parish families better understand parish leadership structures and financial stewardship.

Thank you for your time and for your continued leadership and ministry to our parish community. Please know that I raise these concerns with respect for the Church and with a sincere desire to see our parish community grow stronger for the families and children who are part of it.

Respectfully,

Stephanie Slack
St. Michael, Mt. Orab

Sacred Heart Family of Parishes

Fr. Cordonnier <vicar@ohioatholic.org>
To: Stephanie Slack <stephslack2@gmail.com>
Cc: "Fr. Frank Amberger" <father.amberger@gmail.com>

Sun, Mar 8, 2026 at 4:10 PM

Hi Stephanie, thank you for using these concerns.

1) Your Pastoral council representatives are Ed Kreiner edkreiner@gmail.com
and
Anna Howell <annahowell0621@gmail.com>

2) The Finance Council members are:
Brett Barber barberb21@aol.com
Gary Keller kellerg444@gmail.com
Dan Caudell dcaudell38@yahoo.com
Julia Clubb clubbfarm6@yahoo.com

You can reach out to them at any time for any questions, comments or concerns that you have.

3) We publish an annual financial report and also post it in the back of church. I will happily send you the financial reports from the past few years.

4) the building for the fish fry was something that has been requested of us since I got here in 2022. Currently, the village of Mount Orab has decided that we can no longer use that building until a fire suppression system is installed. This building was requested by the fish fry committee and discussed and approved by the finance council.

The fish fry committee:

Laura Martin <eyethings45@gmail.com>
Brian Decavitch <chicagotank45154@gmail.com>
Gary keller
kellerg444@gmail.com

Cheers

Fr Cordonnier

[Quoted text hidden]

Fr. Cordonnier <vicar@ohioatholic.org>
To: Stephanie Slack <stephslack2@gmail.com>
Cc: "Fr. Frank Amberger" <father.amberger@gmail.com>

Sun, Mar 8, 2026 at 5:10 PM

Sorry, I meant to say "thanks for sharing these concerns"

Sorry for the typo

Fr
[Quoted text hidden]

Stephanie Slack <stephslack2@gmail.com>
To: "Fr. Cordonnier" <vicar@ohioatholic.org>

Mon, Mar 9, 2026 at 7:07 PM

Thank you for your response.

I understand that a parish council meeting will be held on Thursday. I hope that these concerns brought forth will be presented. My hope and prayer is that the concerns shared will be thoughtfully considered and that the discussion may help strengthen communication, transparency, and trust within our parish community.

If possible, I would also appreciate the opportunity to review any notes or minutes from the meeting so that I may better understand the discussion and outcomes that arise from it.

I truly desire to see our parish continue to grow as a welcoming and faith-filled home for families.

Thank you again for your leadership and for taking time to reflect on these matters.

Respectfully,
Stephanie

[Quoted text hidden]

Fr. Cordonnier <vicar@ohioatholic.org> Wed, Mar 11, 2026 at 11:54 AM
To: Brett Barber <barberb21@aol.com>, Dan Caudell <dcaudell38@yahoo.com>, Lisa Beresford <lmcbesford@gmail.com>, Tiffany Aliff <office@ohioatholic.org>, Gary Keller St Michael Finance <kellerg444@gmail.com>, Julia Clubb <clubbfarm6@yahoo.com>

Finance council, for the sake of clarity, I am sending to you an email chain from Stephanie Slack and I. I know that she reached out to you with a different message as well.

I believe that her primary concern is that I have made this decision by myself without consultation which I not the case.

Please see the emails below.

Fr
[Quoted text hidden]

Lisa Beresford <lmcbesford@gmail.com> Wed, Mar 11, 2026 at 3:53 PM
To: "Fr. Cordonnier" <vicar@ohioatholic.org>
Cc: Brett Barber <barberb21@aol.com>, Dan Caudell <dcaudell38@yahoo.com>, Tiffany Aliff <office@ohioatholic.org>, Gary Keller St Michael Finance <kellerg444@gmail.com>, Julia Clubb <clubbfarm6@yahoo.com>

Hello Fr. Cordonnier,
I can see the email that Stephanie Slack has sent. Was there a response from you also attached? What are your thoughts regarding her request for the possibility of a parish update, meeting, or communication?
Thank you,
Lisa

[Quoted text hidden]

Fr. Cordonnier <vicar@ohioatholic.org> Wed, Mar 11, 2026 at 7:09 PM
To: Lisa Beresford <lmcbesford@gmail.com>
Cc: Brett Barber <barberb21@aol.com>, Dan Caudell <dcaudell38@yahoo.com>, Tiffany Aliff <office@ohioatholic.org>, Gary Keller St Michael Finance <kellerg444@gmail.com>, Julia Clubb <clubbfarm6@yahoo.com>

You may have to click on "show quoted text"
[Quoted text hidden]

Julia Clubb <clubbfarm6@yahoo.com> Wed, Mar 11, 2026 at 7:12 PM
To: "Fr. Cordonnier" <vicar@ohioatholic.org>

I don't have a show quoted text.. I see Lisa's response and Stephanie's this is the only one from you..

On Wed, Mar 11, 2026 at 11:54 AM Fr. Cordonnier <vicar@ohioatholic.org> wrote:

Finance council, for the sake of clarity, I am sending to you an email chain from Stephanie Slack and I. I know that she reached out to you with a different message as well.

I believe that her primary concern is that I have made this decision by myself without consultation which I not the case.

Please see the emails below.

Fr

~Julia Clubb

[Quoted text hidden]

Fr. Cordonnier <vicar@ohioatholic.org>
To: Julia Clubb <clubbfarm6@yahoo.com>

Wed, Mar 11, 2026 at 7:16 PM

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Fr. Cordonnier <vicar@ohioatholic.org>
To: Brett Barber <barberb21@aol.com>, Dan Caudell <dcaudell38@yahoo.com>, Lisa Beresford <lmcbesford@gmail.com>, Tiffaney Aliff <office@ohioatholic.org>, Gary Keller St Michael Finance <kellerg444@gmail.com>, Julia Clubb <clubbfarm6@yahoo.com>

Wed, Mar 11, 2026 at 7:19 PM

Please see the emails in a . PDF document attached. I'm not sure why it won't it to you

Fr

[Quoted text hidden]

 **Gmail - Concern for Parish Communication, Leadership, and Stewardship.pdf**
104K



Fr. Cordonnier <vicar@ohioatholic.org>

Concerns Regarding Parish Communication and Transparency

2 messages

Stephanie Slack <stephslack2@gmail.com>

Mon, Mar 9, 2026 at 7:46 PM

To: barberb21@aol.com, kellerg444@gmail.com, dcaudell38@yahoo.com, clubbfarm6@yahoo.com

Cc: "Fr. Cordonnier" <vicar@ohioatholic.org>

I hope you are all doing well. I am writing because I understand that you serve on the parish finance committee, and I wanted to respectfully share several concerns regarding communication and transparency within St. Michael, Mt. Orab. Fr. Cordonnier shared your email addresses with me so that I could directly state my concerns.

I care deeply about our parish and the role it plays in the faith life of myself, my children, and the broader community. Because of that commitment, I feel a responsibility to raise these concerns in the hope that they may contribute to strengthening the connection between parish leadership and parish families.

Over time, I have noticed what feels like a significant lack of communication with parishioners. Many families are uncertain about who currently serves on the parish finance committee, how members are selected, and how parishioners can appropriately engage with leadership when questions arise. This lack of visibility around parish leadership has created confusion for many who want to remain actively involved in the life of the parish.

I am also concerned about the limited communication surrounding financial decisions and major developments within the parish. For example, the additional structure built at St. Michael appears to have been a significant project, yet many parishioners have little understanding of the decision-making process or the financial considerations involved. When projects of this scale occur without clear communication, it can unintentionally create uncertainty among parish families who faithfully support the parish through their time, talent, and financial contributions.

In addition, weekly bulletins and parish communications rarely include updates that help parishioners understand financial decisions, parish initiatives, or overall financial stewardship. Because these are often the primary source of information for parish families, the absence of this type of communication can leave many feeling disconnected from the direction and priorities of the parish.

As part of seeking clarity around this project, I would also appreciate understanding whether the Archdiocese Property Management Office was consulted or involved in the planning and approval of the additional structure at St. Michael, as offices within the Archdiocese often provide guidance or oversight for projects of this nature. Additionally, I would appreciate knowing whether multiple bids—such as three bids—from reputable, licensed, and insured contractors were obtained as part of the process before moving forward with the project.

I share these concerns respectfully and in good faith because I care deeply about the future of our parish. As a parent raising children within St. Michael, I believe transparency and open communication are essential in helping families remain engaged, confident, and invested in parish life.

I would greatly appreciate any insight you may be able to provide regarding how the finance committee communicates with parishioners and whether there may be opportunities to improve transparency around financial stewardship and major parish projects. I also hope the committee may consider ways to more regularly communicate updates to parish families so that we can feel more informed and connected to the life of our parish community.

My hope in reaching out is to better understand these matters and seek clarity directly before feeling the need to pursue further steps for guidance.

Thank you for your time and for your service to our parish. I appreciate your willingness to listen and to consider the perspectives of parish families.

Respectfully,
Stephanie Slack

Fr. Cordonnier <vicar@ohioatholic.org>

Mon, Mar 9, 2026 at 8:17 PM

To: Father Frank Amberger <father.amberger@gmail.com>

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