

**Minutes of the 520th Meeting
Saint Stephen Cathedral Parish Pastoral Council
Conference Room at the Parish Office**

August 20, 2025

Members Present: Fr. John Thomas, Dirk Dooper, Joe Harris, Suzanne Padgett, Katie Pagan, Eddy McFarland

Members Absent: Russell Vaughn, David Danhaur, Daniel Best, Gary Gant, Margie Ebelhar

Parish Team: Deacon Conrad, Donna Murphy

I. Call to Order

Dirk Dooper opened the meeting at 6:02 pm.

II. Prayer

Fr. John Thomas led the PPC in prayer.

III. Approval of Minutes

The minutes were approved as written for the May 15, 2025, meeting.

IV. Liaison Reports – Dirk Dooper

A. Parish Finance Committee – Fr. John Thomas (on behalf of David Danhauer)

No report.

B. Liturgy and Worship – Suzanne Padgett

No report.

C. Social Concerns and Outreach – Joe Harris

Joe Harris stated the committee has planned a ministry open house for November 1 & 2.

D. Education and Formation/Spiritual Enrichment – Fr. John Thomas (on behalf of Daniel Best)

Pray & Play is taking a break and will resume in the fall.

Olivia Spears gave a wonderful presentation on how to live out your faith life within your family by explaining the 4 “legs” of the Faith Formation stool (Liturgical Living, Sacramental Life, Formal Catechesis and Personal Witness. She presented ideas on how to live these 4 areas. She challenged parents on how to support the parish and school initiatives regarding Catechesis. It was a lovely morning with coffee and conversation.

Faith Formation will start back up on September 7th. Registrations are coming in.

Our First Reconciliation Parent Night is August 26. There will potentially be 18 children preparing for First Sacraments this year.

Children’s Liturgy of the Word begins September 7 for children 4 years old through First Communion. First Friday Adoration is going well with parishioners signing up for the minimum 2 spots so that Jesus is not left alone in the church.

We currently have many families preparing for their children to celebrate the Sacrament of Baptism.

There are 9 children/babies who will be baptized later this year.

VBS had 47 children and over 40 volunteers. Our decorations were shared with LCC and then SPX.

Next year, we will be collaborating with SPX for decorations and tasks. Jamie Thompson, our VBS Decorating Director, moved away. Thankfully Sarah McCarter will be stepping up as director. Sarah has participated in VBS for the past two years, so she has a good understanding of the needs and work involved.

E. Youth – Katie Pagan

Both mission trips were successful. Our middle school mission around Owensboro helped prep for VBS, painted at the St. Pius ball fields, and helped at the Carmel home. The high school mission went to New Orleans where they helped a religious order at their early learning center and nursing home, the New Orleans children's museum, and a food pantry facility! They also got to eat some good food and see alligators!

This summer's middle school mission is already on the calendar and in the works. High school mission is still in the dreaming phase!

NCYC is November 20-22. SSC will take a group of 16 to Indianapolis for the conference and will soon be fundraising for that trip!

Cathedral youth ministry partnered with St. Pius for an end of summer pool day at Atlantis. It was a great day of fun and reconnecting before the new school year!

Youth Ministry is starting back up soon! We have a movie night this Sunday as a fun way to start the new year and is an easy starting place for new youth to come!

The Youth Ministry has restructured how we are running small groups. Small groups will now meet on their own time selected by the kids and their group leaders. Outside of that, there will be separate high school and middle school nights, with social events for all ages together.

Our new Young Adult Leadership Team met for the first time August 19. It is made up of 5 returning members and 5 new members. They will plan events for our young adults, as well as lead small groups in the parish.

We have a young adult holy hour on August 28th at 6pm at Saint Stephen with dinner at Mi Ranchito to follow.

Our September social will be a pickleball night at the courts at St. Peter's in Stanley.

A push for young adult small group sign-ups will begin after Labor Day.

Part of our team is beginning to look at a mission trip opportunity for young adults this summer.

F. Buildings and Grounds – Fr. John Thomas (on behalf of Russell Vaughn)

Bat remediation is scheduled. A/C on rectory main floor died and had to be replaced.

G. Community and Family Enrichment – Fr. John Thomas (on behalf of Gary Gant)

99th Anniversary celebration on September 6.

V. New Business

Eddy McFarland gave an update from the renovation committee. Phase I includes bat remediation to begin the first weekend of October (cost of \$80,000). The rectory is an immediate need with minimal improvements to it since it's completion in 1938 – electrical, plumbing, boiler system, not mobility friendly, etc. Repairs to the Cathedral windows is also an immediate need due to water issues. Williams Restoration and Waterproofing out of Nashville has inspected and priced repairs at \$180,400. Phase II would include renovations to the 80-year-old pipe organ & the parish hall. Phase III explores additional parking, a storage building/maintenance workshop, & improved lighting in the Cathedral.

Fr. John Thomas discussed the position of the preschool with an OCS interest in bringing it under the umbrella of OCS.

Pros: Both the diocese and the preschool need more space; SSC location is great for west side of town; it will allow for more structure, support, and opportunities for the preschool and would create a feeder program to K-3.

Cons/Concerns: Safety concerns at the SSC location; OCS has not finished the OCHS chapel project that has gone over budget; OCS has not fulfilled promises at their other campuses before school started; A long-term plan for the preschool has not been presented by OCS to Preschool Director Holly Pfeifer; There has been no discussion of tuition cost at the preschool level – concerns that it would isolate families who are served by the current structure.

Elections will need to happen soon. David Danhauer, Russell Vaughn, Dirk Dooper are rolling off. Gary Gant has requested to step down. Fr. John Thomas will meet with Daniel Best (vice chair) to handle elections as quickly as possible.

VI. Unfinished Business

Preschool vote

VII. Action Items

None

VIII. Pastor's Report

Fr. John Thomas announced Karina Romero will be working with Immaculate's Youth Group and ours in partnership. This will be great for both groups as it gives us access to a variety of spaces – a gym at Immaculate and the youth house at SSC. Her salary will be shared between the two parishes. Fr. Christopher Grief has settled into life at SSC and has been an amazing addition to the staff. He is committed to our community and willing to step in.

IX. Birthdays, Anniversaries, Ordinations, etc.

Happy August Birthday to Dirk Dooper.

X. Closing Prayer

Fr. John Thomas led the PPC in a closing prayer.

XI. Adjourn

The next meeting is Thursday, September 11, 2025. The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Katie Pagan