

MINUTES of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Parish Pastoral Council Meeting

held Thursday, 12 February 2026

Meeting commenced: 7:00 pm

Present: Fr Tru Nguyen, Br Daniel Magadia, James Nield (Chair), Margie Hourigan (Deputy Chair), Julie Lean, Chloe Kelly, Matthew Garton, Megan Smith, Michael Carberry, Peter Osborne, Stephanie Stewart.

By invitation: Dr. Vanessa de Kauwe – Agenda Item No. 6 only.

Apologies: Jo Reed

1. Opening & Welcome – James

James welcomed all members of the OLSH Parish Pastoral Council to its first meeting of 2026, especially the new members, Br Daniel and Chloe. All members then re-introduced themselves at the meeting. The Council also thanked and farewelled three members – Carl Madsen, Maureen Burgess and Pam Connor – who resigned before the commencement of this meeting. **Action:** It was discussed at the meeting that a letter thanking them for their service and acknowledging their significant contribution be sent to all three previous members, as written by the Chair.

2. Prayer and reflection – Beginning Again (Margie)

Volunteer for next meeting – Stephanie

3. Review and acceptance of previous meeting minutes - 13 November 2025 – Julie. The minutes of the meeting were accepted by the PPC with no alteration.

6. Any Other Business (AOB) – Brought forward item on the Agenda

• Disability and Education Advocacy (Vanessa)

Vanessa addressed the Council regarding her expertise in disability and education, noting her professional associations with the ACT Down Syndrome and Intellectual Disability Association and the CSIRO. She outlined three primary areas of potential collaboration to support the schools and the combined OLSH Parish.

- **Youth NDIS Support:** Vanessa offered assistance to youths over the age of 16 who are currently on the NDIS and experiencing significant life transitions or difficulties. She is available to facilitate referrals to specialised support programs.
- **Inclusivity Training:** Funding is currently available to provide school staff or volunteers with disability inclusivity training. This is accessible for up to 20 participants, twice per annum.
- **Vocational Gardening Project:** Vanessa leads a team of young adults with special needs seeking to maintain a large garden space.
 - **Phase 1:** The team would provide ongoing maintenance for a selected site for an initial six-month period.
 - **Phase 2:** Following this successful period, Vanessa would seek grant funding to transition the area into a permanent sustainable/native garden.

The PPC identified the STA church and school grounds as a possible location for the grant project due to its expansive area and level terrain. **Action:** Michael (as STA's mass centre representative) and Matthew (as the STA school representative) will meet offline to discuss the feasibility of the garden project at the STA site. They will then contact Vanessa through Sharon Greaves, our Parish Officer once they have confirmed the suitability of the STA grounds.

4. Agenda Items

- **Standing Item 1: Safeguarding (Margie)**

Margie advised the PPC that formal risk assessments must now be conducted for all parish events and activities. The PPC noted that if the Vocational Gardening project proceeds, a risk assessment will be required before commencement. The PPC also discussed the potential separation of the parish administrative functions (possibly to STA) and residential functions (possibly to SJA). This is in early discussions only at this stage.

- **Standing Item 2: Evangelisation (all)**

- **Alpha Program Update (Chloe)**

Chloe informed the Council that the Archdiocese will be conducting an Alpha Program in June/July of this year. The PPC was invited to either join the Archdiocesan initiative or model its own program based on their framework. Following a detailed discussion, the PPC resolved that the OLSH Parish will conduct its own independent Alpha Program. The proposed timeline for the parish program is from late April to mid-June 2026. The Council discussed the "Train the Trainer" requirements for program facilitators. Chloe advised that her husband is available to assist in training the parish team. **Action:** A dedicated OLSH Alpha Team was then established to oversee the program's implementation. The Team would initially consist of Chloe, Michael and Cathy Madsen and Jeanne Lean, both of whom are parishioners who have expressed an interest in facilitating the program. The Alpha Team will then release an Expression of Interest which at this stage will go only to the two mass centres and two schools to gauge community participation and volunteer support.

- **Item 3: PPC 2026 Forward Work Plan (James)**

The PPC discussed the Forward Work Plan in detail and it was resolved that the PPC will prioritise the following three thematic areas in the immediate term:

1. Listening and Parish Snapshot: Gathering data to understand the current state of the community.
2. Communication and Welcome: Enhance how the parish interacts with new and existing parishioners.
3. Volunteer Culture and Sustainability: Building a robust and enduring framework for parish service.

To establish a baseline for these priorities, the PPC determined that a parish survey would be required. The survey would target key metrics, including school attendance trends and demographics, age profiles and ethnic backgrounds and current levels of volunteer engagement and interests. **Action:** James will lead the development of the initial survey and Chloe will provide James with existing Archdiocesan data from the 2020-21 census to assist in identifying trends.

It is to be noted that Fr Tru has advised the PPC that the preparatory work for the Parish Assembly work is currently ongoing and not yet ready for presentation or implementation.

- **Item 4: Revitalising Parish Relational Life (James)**

James has advised that he will work to integrate this document with the Work Plan (specifically the Communication and Welcome and Volunteer culture themes) and drafts and updates will be circulated to the PPC via email for feedback.

- **Item 5: Gospel Study Group (James)**

The PPC noted that both mass centres currently host active study groups. STA's groups meet after 9.30am Mass on Wednesday (Men) and Thursday (Women) and SJA's Men's

Group meets following Friday 9.30am mass. **Action:** The PPC discussed expanding the reach of scripture study through digital platforms and resolved that a pilot online Scripture Study Group be trialled and conducted on Teams over a period of 6-7 weeks. Some discussion also ensued about speaking to the existing groups to gain some experience on running these groups. James will manage this work.

- **Item 6: 2026 Lenten Fundraising (James)**

James will review materials from Caritas Australia to identify practical suggestions for fund raising activities during the Lenten Season. The PPC also discussed and endorsed the idea of collating a collection of meat-free recipes.

5. Action Items and Next Steps

- Review the status of existing actions: The PPC are to review the current Action List as distributed by Julie before this meeting and action as required.
- Assign tasks and responsibilities from this meeting: This has already been done (please see above).
- Set deadlines for new action items: Also see above.

6. Any Other Business (AOB)

As discussed above.

7. Summary and concluding prayer:

- The meeting concluded after prayer at 8.35 pm.

8. Next meeting:

- The next meeting of the **OLSH PPC** will be on the 2nd Thursday of March 2026 – 12 March 2026 at 7pm.