

CONSTITUTION
OF
THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL
SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI CATHOLIC CHURCH
AMHERST, VIRGINIA 22521

A. PURPOSE

1. To share with the Pastor and/or Administrator[1] the responsibilities which affect the direction, programs, issues and concerns that affect the life and ministry of the parish.
2. To encourage members of the parish to utilize their own gifts and talents for the service of the community.
3. To maintain parish property.
4. To help the Pastor and/or Administrator and the Bishop fulfill the missions and goals of the diocese.

B. MEMBERSHIP

The Parish Pastoral Council (Council) is composed of the Pastor and/or Administrator, nine members elected by the parish at large and the chairs of each standing committee (Committee). An elected Council member may not serve as the chairperson of a Committee. Only elected members of the Council shall have the right to vote. [2]

C. PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL STANDING COMMITTEES

Each of the Committees reports to the Parish Pastoral Council.

1. Worship Committee (Liturgy)

This Committee is responsible for planning, implementing and evaluating parish prayer and worship in accordance with diocesan policies and directions. The priest and the Music Minister must be members of this Committee. The planning of the Liturgy for all seasons of the year and the planning of special liturgical events are the responsibilities of this Committee.

2. Christian Education

This Committee is responsible for planning, implementing and evaluating parish religious education according to the needs of the parish in accordance with the educational policies of the Diocese of Richmond. This Committee is responsible for the following ministries.

- a. Adult Education
- b. CCD (Confraternity of Christian Doctrine)
- c. The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults
- d. Community religious programs

3. Parish Community Life (social)

This Committee is responsible for promoting Christian community in the parish and strengthening relationships of all individuals with the parish. It plans social gatherings and events and stirs community interest in such events.

4. Justice and Peace (Social Ministry)

This Committee responds to the needs of the poor, deprived, neglected, oppressed, sick and shut-ins of the parish and the community at large. This ministry includes Eucharistic ministers and prison ministers. This Committee also helps parishioners become more aware of the social needs of the community.

5. Parish Grounds and Maintenance [3]

This Committee is responsible for the care of the parish facilities, including the care and upkeep of the parish buildings and grounds. The Pastor and/or Administrator, in consultation with the Pastoral Council, may assign other related functions to the Committee, as circumstances require.

6. Planning and Development

This Committee is particularly concerned about reaching out to new members and involving them in parish activities. The Committee will establish a welcoming Committee for new people coming into the community and maintain an accurate membership census.

7. Family Focus

This Committee, imbued with the spirit of our patron saint, desires to go forth within the sphere of our church family, to bring support in goods and services, expressed in brotherly love, that will bring relief and aid to those who find themselves experiencing need and attention during life's stressful events. They also wish to bring joy and celebration when occasions require it, and throughout these act to bring deeper enrichment to the spirituality of themselves and the ones they serve.

8. Other Committees

The Pastor and/or Administrator and the Council may call on individuals or establish "special" Committees to meet special needs. When this is done, lines of communication and accountability shall be carefully defined.

D. RELATIONSHIP

1. The Parish Pastoral Council shall provide formation to enable its members to fulfill their roles effectively. The Council members shall be guided by the spirit of the Gospel, and committed to deepening their faith and sharing it with the parish community. Prayer is an integral part of the Parish Pastoral Council meetings. The Council calendar may include an annual prayer retreat or renewal experience.

2. The Committees, in conjunction with the guidance of the Pastor and/or Administrator and Council, contribute to the plan and the mission of the parish. Parish Committees shall develop long-range goals and short-range objectives. They also shall provide reports of their activities to the Council and to the parish at large as needed. The Committees shall provide their annual budget requirements to the Parish Pastoral Council in sufficient time for Council review and budget preparation before the May 15 submission to the Bishop.

3. The Parish Finance Council is separate and distinct from the Parish Pastoral Council. The Finance Council however does not determine which programs the parish will pursue. This is the role of the Parish Pastoral Council together with the Pastor and/or Administrator. The Finance Council advises on what is possible in light of the parish's financial condition. The budget process requires collaboration between the Pastoral Council and the Finance Council to insure that it is driven by the Parish Mission Statement and its goals and objectives. Neither Council is represented in the other, but nothing prevents a person from serving on both simultaneously. A financial statement will be provided to the Council on a regular basis. The Finance Council will arrange for the publication of the parish annual report. The Finance Council will develop the parish budget for each year according to the goals set by the Parish Pastoral Council and the Pastor and/or Administrator. The Bookkeeper will be a member of the Finance Council and will hold a long-term office.

E. OFFICERS AND DUTIES

1. Officers

The Officers of the Parish Pastoral Council are listed below. With the exception of the Pastor and/or Administrator, all are elected by the members of the Church. The elected members of the Parish Pastoral Council shall decide at the May meeting that begins each Council year who among them will serve in the capacity of Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary for that Council year.

- a. Pastor and/or Administrator
- b. Chair
- c. Vice-Chair
- d. Secretary

2. Duties

a. The Pastor and/or Administrator presides over the Parish Pastoral Council but entrusts the chairing of its meetings to an elected Chair. The Chair shall encourage the members of the parish and Council to share in the responsibility for making decisions which affect the direction, programs and purpose of the parish. The Chair presents to the Council, issues and concerns, which affect the life and ministry of the parish.

b. The Chair shall prepare the agenda and preside at all meetings of the Parish Pastoral Council as entrusted by the Pastor and/or Administrator . The Chair shall maintain order and follow the meeting by-laws and agenda. With the direction of the Pastor and/or Administrator and Council members, the Chair appoints special Committees as needed and reports Council activities to the parish.

c. The Vice-Chair shall perform all duties of the Chair in the absence of the Chair.

d. The Secretary shall keep the minutes of all Council meetings and distribute copies of the minutes prior to the next meeting. Upon approval of the minutes they shall be posted on the parish bulletin board.

F. TERMS AND RETENTION OF MEMBERSHIP

1. Terms of Membership. Each elected member of the Council is elected for a two year term. No member may serve on the Council for more than two consecutive terms.

2. Forfeiture of Membership. A member will lose his/her seat on the Council if he/she is absent from three (3) consecutive meetings without advance notification to and approval by the Council Chair.

G. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

1. Staggered Terms The terms of Council members shall be staggered to maintain some continuity, with three (4) members elected one year and four (5) elected the next year.

2. Nominating At the February meeting of the Council, members shall appoint three (3) church members as the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee may not contain any members of the Council. The Nominating Committee shall be informed of the number of positions to be filled.

3. Eligibility Only active registered members of the parish are eligible for election subject to the regulations of Canon 512.

4. Approval by Pastor and/or Administrator The slate of nominees shall be subject to the approval of the Pastor and/or Administrator .

5. Approval and Posting by Council At the April Council meeting, nominees will be approved and their names posted in the Church Bulletin.

6. Ballots and Elections The Chair and a designee will prepare ballots for the election to take place on the last weekend in April. The Chair and the designee will collect the ballots, count them and certify the election results.

7. Commencement of Member's Terms. The newly elected Council members will begin their terms in May. Each member must be prepared to take an active role on at least one standing Committee.

H. AMENDMENTS

The Parish Pastoral Council Constitution may be amended at any regular meeting of the Council by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of all elected members, provided that prior written notice of the amendment has been given to the Council published in the parish bulletin and posted on board for 30 days.

I. MEETING PROCEDURES

1. Meeting Notice. A notice of the Council meeting shall be posted in the Church Bulletin and announced at mass previous to the meeting date.

2. Bringing Topics Before Council. Anyone wishing to bring a topic before the Council must contact the Council Chair three (7) days before the meeting date so that an agenda can be prepared as required.

3. Meeting Format. Council meetings shall be conducted according to Robert's Rule of Order and shall follow the following format:

- a. Call to order by the Chair
- b. Opening Prayer
- c. Approval of the Minutes
- d. Financial
- e. Committee Reports
- f. Old Business
- g. New Business
- h. Closing Prayer
- i. Adjournment by the Chair

4. Duration of Meetings. A regular Council meeting should not continue more than one and one-half (1+1/2) hours, except by unanimous consent. All unfinished business will be carried over to the next Council meeting as Old Business.

5. Presentation of New Proposals. A presenter of a new proposal shall describe it fully. No questions are allowed until after the formal presentation. Council members should take notes for discussion.

6. Continuity of Meetings. The Chair may call a time limit on all proposals and discussions. If no agreement can be made in a reasonable time limit the topic should be tabled until the next meeting.

7. Voting Procedures. As a general rule all decisions made by the Council should be made through consensus. In cases where consensus cannot be reached the Chair shall call for a vote by the elected members according to the following procedures:

a. Quorum. A quorum is defined to be "more than two-thirds (2/3) of the elected members or their proxies being present.

b. Decisions. Parish Council decisions shall be reached by a 2/3 vote, provided that the members present constitute a quorum.

c. Proxy. If an elected Council member is unable to attend a meeting and desires to have his/her votes counted, he/she may notify the Chair and send a proxy to represent him/her. The proxy must submit proof of his/her proxy rights acceptable to the Chair.

d. Meetings with no quorum. At meetings where there is no quorum, the only business which may be conducted is

1. Approval of the Minutes
2. Approval of the Financial Report
3. Committee Reports
4. Discussion of Proposals
5. Motions to place particular proposals on the next meeting agenda

[1] Per Bishop Sullivan's appointment dated May 23, 2003.

[2] Clarification of voting privileges, updates to ensure that all references to members of the Council and Committees are inclusive, increase of the number of Council members from seven to nine, addition of the Family Focus Committee, and various other formatting changes to bring consistency to the document were made per Parish Pastoral Council approval on August 11, 2009.

[3] Voted and approved to revise per Parish Pastoral Council meeting December 17, 2003