

St. Joseph Parish Pastoral Constitution

(Rev. 10/09)

Article I: Name

Section A: The name of this body shall be St. Joseph Parish Pastoral Council.

Section B: The Parish Pastoral Council is established in accord with the Code of Canon Law and Diocesan norms concerning parish pastoral councils.

Article II: Purpose

Section A: ~~The parish pastoral council is the primary advisory group in the parish.~~ **The parish is a Washington Nonprofit Corporation.** The pastoral council is the primary advisory group in the parish. All other parish groups receive their mandate for pastoral activity from the pastor, ~~following the advice of~~ **in consultation** with the pastoral council. The Council shall strive to reach consensus concerning those issues which it addresses and the ordinary disposition of the pastor shall be to act in accord with the recommendations of the Council, unless there are overriding reasons which are to be made clear to the Council.

Section B: The purpose of the parish Pastoral Council is to foster pastoral activity and will include the following:

- a) To promote prayer, Christian formation and faith-sharing among its membership and within the larger parish community.
- b) To plan for the future of the parish, which includes identifying the parish needs and planning ways to meet those needs, and evaluate parish programs in light of the needs and obligations of the parish.
- c) To review, plan and evaluate the pastoral activities of the parish and its ministries, and to set forth practical conclusions concerning them so to conform the life and actions of the people of God with the Gospel and the tradition of the Catholic Church.

Article III: Functions

Section A: Through prayer, reflection and discussion within the Council and among the members of the parish, the Pastoral Council formulates a mission statement and develops a long-range pastoral plan of action for the parish. At least every 2 to 3 years, the Council reviews this plan of action and revises or rewrites it according to the changing needs and circumstances of the parish. The council shares this pastoral plan with the parish at large and with the Bishop.

Section B: The Pastoral Council develops and reviews parish policies and may make recommendations to the pastor. These policies are to be in harmony with the universal law of the Church and Diocesan norms and policies.

Section C: The Pastoral Council coordinates the work of parish committees and organizations by receiving reports of their activities and by calling forth cooperation of those groups in support of pastoral concerns and initiatives. The Pastoral Council may delegate one or more members to attend meetings of these groups occasionally and may request delegates from them to take part in Pastoral Council meetings when appropriate.

Section D: The Pastoral Council receives a recommended budget from the pastor's Finance Council and collaborates with this Council to plan the pastoral plan of the parish.

Article IV: Membership

Section A: The members of the Pastoral Council are to be Catholics of the parish who are mindful of the common good, compassionate, prudent, faithful in the stewardship of time, talent and treasure and who participate regularly in the worship of the community.

Section B: The Pastoral Council normally consists of 6 adult parishioners, each serving a 3-year term, 1 youth serving a 1-year term, the Religious Education Director and the pastor. Two members are replaced each year.

Section C: The members of the Pastoral Council are selected by means of a prayerful discernment process and by appointment by the pastor.

1. The qualifications and responsibilities of Council members having been presented, all members of the parish are invited to recommend persons to serve on the Council. Persons may recommend themselves.
2. Those persons recommended are then contacted by members of the Pastoral Council to ascertain if they are interested in serving, to be advised of the discernment process being used and to be invited to take part in the discernment process.
3. The Pastoral Council will then narrow the list to four, interview the four individually, meet and discuss the candidates, the gifts they have to offer and the best fit for the Pastoral Council.
4. The pastor may not reject anyone for service on the Pastoral Council without a serious reason.
5. A member serves for a single term of 3 years. A person is again eligible to serve after a year's absence.
6. In the event of a resignation from the Pastoral Council, the pastor may appoint a person to serve out the balance of that person's term.
7. The pastor is free to appoint one or two additional members to the Pastoral Council even if they have not been included in the discernment process. Persons appointed to the Pastoral Council serve at the pleasure of the pastor and do not have a set term of service. The terms of those members appointed by the pastor cease when a new pastor is appointed to the parish.

Article V: Meetings

Section A: The Pastoral Council shall meet ~~4 times a year~~ **monthly, September through May**, and at other times when called by the pastor. Committees may be formed and meet outside the regular schedule as needed.

Section B: Meetings of the Pastoral Council are open to parishioners and staff members unless the pastor has determined otherwise prior to a particular meeting.

Section C: The pastor is president of the Pastoral Council and, as such, presides over the Council.

Section D: The members of the Pastoral Council will elect a chair to plan the agenda in consultation with the pastor, to conduct meetings of the Council, and in general, to facilitate the work of the council.

Section E: Secretarial duties may be assigned to a person who is not a member of the Pastoral Council or the Council may select a secretary.

Article VI: Ratification

Section A: This Constitution ~~becomes valid upon approval by a majority of the Pastoral Council and acceptance by the pastor~~ **is first approved by a majority of the Pastoral Council and accepted by the pastor. It is then presented to the parish for a vote. If a majority of those voting approve, it becomes ratified.** A copy is sent to the Office of the Bishop.

Section B: Amendments to this constitution are subject to the same process of ratification.

Section C: By-laws or those more detailed procedures by which the Pastoral Council carries out its responsibilities must be approved by a majority of the Council and accepted by the pastor.

Article VII: Other parish groups, organizations, boards and ministries

Section A: After discussion with the Pastoral Council or the parish staff or upon direction of the Bishop, the pastor may form other parish groups or committees. The purpose, membership, duration, area of

responsibility and basic operating procedures of these bodies are to be put in written form, **and will be included as appendices to this Constitution.**

Section B: All these bodies are advisory or responsible to the pastor. He may determine the manner in which they will report to the parish Pastoral Council.

Article VIII: Suspension and Dissolution of the Council

Section A: Unless directed otherwise by the Bishop, the Pastoral Council ceases to function when the parish is without a pastor. A new pastor or administrator will call the Council into session within 1 month after appointment to office.

Section B: The Pastoral Council can be ~~dissolved~~ **dismissed** only with permission of the Bishop.