

**CONSTITUTION OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL
OF THE
CHURCH OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES**

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this Parish Council shall be "The Parish Pastoral Council of the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes".

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

The purpose of the Parish Pastoral Council shall be to assist the Pastor and Parish Staff in serving the needs of the Parish in an advisory capacity.

ARTICLE III - FULFILLING THE PURPOSE OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

1. Seek to determine ways of including every parishioner in the apostolic work of the Church.
2. To assist in bringing together, through representatives, the clergy, religious, and laity in order to exchange ideas and increase the awareness of each group's needs as partners in the Church community.
3. To assist and seek ways to further unite the Parish as a family in Christ, and to do His work.
4. To provide decision-making leadership, direction and encouragement in implementing programs which will best achieve both the spiritual and temporal needs of the parish community.
5. To serve as a permanent structure through which the insights and concerns of any parish member may be received with constructive dialog.
6. To facilitate communication among all organizations and individuals in the parish community.
7. To cooperate in a spirit of Christian fellowship with other organizations and activities

ARTICLE IV - MEMBERSHIP

The voting membership of the Parish Pastoral Council shall be composed nine (9) duly elected or appointed parish representatives.

1. The Pastor, or his designated representative, shall vote in the event of a tie.
2. The Ex-Officio members of the Parish Council, by virtue of their office in the Church, shall be non-voting members and they shall be as follows:

- v Pastor
- v Parochial Vicar(s)
- v Deacon(s)
- v Pastoral Associate(s)

ARTICLE V - REPORTING COMMITTEES & BOARDS

Reports shall regularly be given to the Parish Pastoral Council in the following areas:

1. Finance Committee: This board deals with the finances of the parish. Its function is to monitor all income/expenses of the parish, and forecast its budget to the Parish Pastoral Council. In addition, the Finance Committee may also make recommendations on parish investments, fund raising, properties, church maintenance and other such financial matters.
2. Liturgy Committee (currently ad hoc): This Committee shall cooperate with the pastor, associate pastor, parish staff, ushers, lectors, music ministries, servers, and extraordinary ministers of communion in planning liturgical celebrations within the parish.
3. School Advisory Board: This board is charged with the responsibility of coordinating all parochial educational activities in the parish. With the pastors and the principal of the school, they shall implement programs and policies that insure that a quality education will be afforded every student in the parochial school pursuant to State Standards.
4. Religious Education & Formation Committee: This board is charged with the responsibility of coordinating all religious education in the parish outside the co-sponsored parochial school. With the pastor and the coordinator, they shall implement programs and policies that insure a quality religious education will be afforded every student not attending Catholic school.

A representative from each of the above areas or other Committees that are organized to support the Parish, shall be invited to report regularly to the Parish Pastoral Council, both orally and in writing. Upon completion of the report(s) from the respective board(s), the person(s) so reporting shall be excused from further attendance at the meeting of the Parish Pastoral Council.

ARTICLE VI - VACANCIES

Vacancies on the Parish Pastoral Council for any cause except termination of term of office shall be filled by Pastoral nomination, subject to the majority vote of all remaining members of the Council.

ARTICLE VII - OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF PARISH COUNCIL

Officers

Officers of the Parish Pastoral Council shall consist of a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and such other officers as the Council shall, from time to time, deem necessary. They shall be elected, after open nominations, by voice ballot, for one year, at the First meeting of the Parish Pastoral Council at the beginning of a new year of activities (September/October).

1. No newly elected member of the Parish Pastoral Council may be considered for the office of Chairperson.
2. Other officers shall be elected from the full Council membership.
3. A majority of votes cast by the authorized voting members shall elect the officers so designated.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee of the Parish Pastoral Council shall consist of the following:

- v The Pastor
- v Chairperson
 - i. Develops agenda based on anticipated discussions and inputs from Council members
 - ii. Opens the session at the time at which the assembly is to meet
 - iii. Responsible for keeping to the agenda
 - iv. To ensure that all members have input to the meeting
 - v. to state and to put to vote all questions which are regularly moved or necessarily arise in the course of the proceedings, and to announce the result of the vote
- v Vice Chairperson

- i. To assume all rights and duties of the Chairperson in his absence
 - ii. To assist in the development of the agenda
 - iii. To advise the Chair in any and all matters arising from the Council discussions
- v Secretary
- i. Keeps minutes of the meetings
 - ii. to keep a register, or roll, of the members and to call the roll when required
 - iii. to assist in the development of the agenda
 - iv. to notify and forward all details pertaining to meeting notices and documents required for the Council

They will agree and prepare the agenda for the scheduled meeting.

ARTICLE VIII - MEETINGS

1. Regularly scheduled meetings shall be set by the Parish Pastoral Council.
2. The agenda shall be communicated to each member at least one week prior to the next scheduled meeting.
3. The meeting times shall be announced in the Parish Bulletin the weekend before each meeting.
4. Additional meetings may be called by the Executive Committee as necessary.
5. A quorum of the voting members must be present for the conduct of business at any meeting of the Parish Pastoral Council
6. Any member of the parish requesting a specific matter or concern shall notify any member of the Parish Council. The item will be included in the next regular meeting's agenda.

ARTICLE IX - ELECTIONS

1. The nine (9) voting representatives of the Parish Pastoral Council shall be elected by the entire Parish membership voting for all open representative positions.

Elections will be held in September of each calendar year for those expired terms. An election will only be held if there are more candidates than open Council positions.

2. Each representative shall hold office for three (3) consecutive Parish Pastoral Council years, commencing at the first meeting following his/her election. Representatives shall hold office for a maximum of two consecutive terms of three years each. (For 2007 at the initial meeting, a drawing determined membership for one, two or three years, so there will be a rotation of membership in the future.)

ARTICLE X - POWERS AND LIMITATIONS

The powers and limitations of the Parish Pastoral Council shall be:

1. The Council shall have the authority and the responsibility to make decisions in all matters except those involving faith and morals or where specifically limited by Church or Civil Law.
2. The Council, as a body, shall have confidential access to relevant books, documents and records of the parish provided the privacy of individual persons is safeguarded.
3. Decisions of the Council shall be either ratified or vetoed by the Pastor.
4. Decision to declare a vacancy if a member of the Council misses 3 consecutive meetings with unexplained absences.

ARTICLE XI - AMENDMENTS

Amendments to the Constitution of the Parish Pastoral Council may be made by a majority vote of the voting membership of the Parish Pastoral Council.

Adopted by the Parish Pastoral Council on December 6, 2007

Purpose

The Pastoral Council is a leadership community rooted in prayer, open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, committed to patient listening and study, and working to recommend the plans and directions that will enable the parish to respond most fully to what Jesus asks of us in these times. It rests on the tripod of prayer, study and action.

Guidance

The Code of Canon Law indicates that Parish Pastoral Councils are to be governed by Norms determined by the Diocesan Bishop. The following guidelines are typical of those norms in this country:

Norms

1. The Pastoral Council is a consultative body, which makes recommendations to our Pastor.

As a consultative body, the recommendations of the Pastoral Council bear considerable weight. The Council is not a body, which neither makes binding decisions nor is it an advisory group,

which gives advice that, can readily be ignored. While our pastor is not obliged to follow the recommendations of our Pastoral Council, it is understood that he would do so unless there is an extraordinary reason to do otherwise.

2. The Council's recommendations will deal with pastoral plans and policies.

Our Pastor will consult the Pastoral Council on major pastoral concerns which affect the life and mission of the parish; namely, to proclaim the Word, to build up the community, to celebrate liturgy, and to serve all God's people. The Council strives to achieve consensual agreement on recommendations, which affect future directions for spiritual growth and pastoral activity.

3. The Council will not deal with acts of administration.

Matters of administration are distinct from pastoral policies and plans. Acts of administration concern the daily operation of the parish, which includes the implementation of pastoral plans and policies, parish programming, budgeting and personnel matters. Decisions relating to these are the responsibility of the pastor, the Staff or other persons designated by the Pastor, such as the Finance Committee mandated by Canon Law. (#537)

4. The Pastor will preside over the Pastoral Council.

By virtue of his office, the Pastor presides over the Pastoral Council. As presider, he fully participates in the deliberations of the Council and is involved completely in the planning and policy development. He will be responsible for the final approval of Council recommendations concerning pastoral plans and policies as well as for the implementation by parish staff and other groups.

5. The purpose of the Pastoral Council is to promote the spiritual growth of the parish community and to plan ways for the parish to carry out the mission of the church.

The Pastoral Council is a consultative body, which unites laity and clergy in a community of prayer, leadership, service and pastoral planning. All work together as they seek to listen to the Holy Spirit in discerning what is best for the parish in the light of the Gospel, the Church's teaching, and the experiences and needs of parishioners and the surrounding community. The Council can fulfill its role by encouraging a climate in which people can feel free to speak the truth with openness and love.

Spiritual Growth

The primary concern of the Pastoral Council is the spiritual growth of the parish community. In order to contribute to this ongoing spiritual renewal, Council members need to commit themselves to regular times of prayer and study centered on Jesus and the teachings of the Church. They should strive to build a Christian community with mutual trust and understanding among the members. Ideally they form a group, which serves as a model of prayer, cooperation, celebration and service.

Pastoral Planning

The Council is the pastoral planning body of the parish. It ensures ongoing collaboration in developing and renewing a pastoral plan for the ministries and life of the parish. This pastoral plan must promote the full mission of the Church: the priestly, prophetic and royal mission of Jesus. While other groups may focus on a specific area of the mission and ministry, the Pastoral Council is responsible for determining how the parish can be most effective in fulfilling its total mission. The Council discerns what needs to be supported, changed or developed to make the parish more faithful to the call of God.

Specific activities will include:

- Developing a parish mission statement
- Identifying key needs and concerns
- Synthesizing parish priorities into an ongoing pastoral plan.
- Recommending flexible strategies related to those priorities
- Evaluating progress in achieving the parish plan and goals