

**ST. JOSEPH PARISH  
PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL CONSTITUTION**

**A. MISSION STATEMENT**

As the Parish Community in southern Portage County, which includes Randolph, Suffield and surrounding areas, we believe ourselves to be servants of God, called to be instruments of His peace, justice and love.

Aware of our roots and rural/family traditions, we pledge ourselves to be stewards of all God's creation. We further pledge to cherish the gift of life to foster personal spiritual growth and community liturgical worship. We commit ourselves to our long history of Catholic education and to providing opportunities for the enrichment of all. We accept the responsibility of preserving our historic Lourdes Grotto as well as authentic Marian devotion.

Aware of our mission, we prayerfully and purposefully dedicate ourselves to enable parish involvement in global, national, and local issues and to bring Gospel values to bear on all aspects of daily life.

**B. GOAL AND OBJECTIVES**

**1. GOAL**

This particular assembly of the People of God is called the Parish Pastoral Council of St. Joseph. Its goal is to respond to the movement of the Spirit within the parish, to work for a unified mission among its members, and to plan, coordinate and evaluate the pastoral goals of the parish.

**2. OBJECTIVES**

- a. To provide an open, honest and representative forum for full and free discussion of pastoral matters so that true consensus among the parish community may be achieved.
- b. To act as representatives of the People of God, making known their needs and aspirations.
- c. To assist the Pastor in formulating and implementing policies.
- d. To plan and set pastoral goals and priorities in response to the expressed needs and aspirations of the people, and to implement the Five-Year Plan.
- e. To coordinate and evaluate the direction of all parish organizations in light of the goals and priorities decided upon.
- f. To review the annual parish budget prepared by the Finance Council.
- g. To call upon appropriate parish committees, ministry groups and organizations to implement pastoral goals and priorities.
- h. To seek consensus of the Council on contemporary religious, ethical and social justice and to form a united voice with the Bishop and Pastor in speaking about them in the public forum.

- i. To initiate and support, with the Bishop and Pastor, positive action for the common good of the Church, other religious bodies and the civic community.

### C. POWERS

The Pastoral Council is consultative and advisory to the Pastor.

The powers of the Pastoral Council emanate from the unity within it, the unity of the Pastor with the representative group of the people of the parish community and the mandate of the Bishop.

The Pastoral Council, inspired by the theological principal of shared responsibility, as a ministerial community of faith, has neither canonical nor legal authority, nor does it need such powers to function effectively.

The Pastoral Council receives its formal mandate from its president, the Pastor, who, united with the Council as an indispensable member, shares his responsibility for achieving the Pastoral Mission of the parish in accord with Diocesan policy.

The Pastor has responsibility for the administration and pastoral ministry of the parish. This responsibility is given by the Bishop of Youngstown and the Canon Law of the Universal Church.

Although a member of Council, the Pastor (by virtue of his pastoral office) has the unique authority to ratify all that is done by the Council. In rare instances, and for serious reasons, the Pastor may veto a Council action. The veto must be prior to the next regular meeting of the Council.

The Council will reexamine the action and the reasons for the veto at its next regular meeting. If the Pastor and the Council cannot resolve differences, the Council may appeal the veto by referring the matter to the Bishop of Youngstown.

### D. MEMBERS

The Pastor of the parish, because of his role of pastoral leadership, presides over the Council and his consensus in any decision is required.

There are ex officio, selected, and appointed members of Council. At least fifty percent of the Council membership is to be selected by the parish at large.

Service on the Council is a special ministry to the parish. Pastoral Council members need to understand themselves as ministers to the parish community. Members should be baptized and confirmed Roman Catholics. Selected members must be registered in the Parish. Parish employees and staff persons, because of their service, are not to be considered as candidates for selection to the Pastoral Council. Professional staff persons, however, may serve as ex officio members or resource persons.

The term of membership will usually be for three years, each term beginning on July 1. Membership terms are addressed in the bylaws.

The nature of the discussions and actions taken by the Pastoral Council calls for faithful attendance at all meetings.

#### E. OFFICERS

The Pastor of the Parish serves as President of the Pastoral Council, a separate and distinct office from the Council Chairperson.

The Council will have a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Secretary. These officers will be selected by the Council at the July meeting and serve for a term of one year thereafter. They may be reelected.

The main function of the Chairperson, working closely with the Pastor, is to conduct all the meetings and attend to the organizational aspects of the Council. The Chairperson may make special appointments as deemed necessary.

The Vice-Chairperson shall conduct meetings in the absence of the Chairperson.

The Secretary shall perform clerical duties of the Council. Recording of minutes during the meeting may limit the Secretary's ability to participate in discussion. Therefore, a person who is not a Council member may be requested to perform this service for Council.

#### F. PROCESS FOR MEMBERSHIP

A Nominating Committee consisting of up to seven persons shall be appointed by the Council Chairperson from council membership or even the parish at large. The Chairperson of the Nominating Committee must be a member of the Pastoral Council.

The Nominating Committee shall be responsible for all matters concerning Pastoral Council nominations and selection/discernment within the framework set by Council.

#### G. MEETINGS

Normally the Council will meet every two months beginning in July. Special meetings may be called by the Pastor and/or the Chairperson.

In order for decisions/actions of a Council meeting to be considered official, a quorum must be involved in the discussion and deliberation.

The nature of the Council calls for free open discussion leading to consensus.

A Parish Council meeting includes: Prayer and Reflection, Formation, Public Forum, Reports, and Action Items.

## H. PASTORAL COUNCIL DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

The Pastoral Council should strive for consensus in all its decisions. If a consensus cannot be reached and an immediate decision is needed, the Chairperson may call for a vote. Vote-taking should, however, be a last resort.

## I. COMMITTEES

### 1. Standing Committees

The Council is challenged to develop and maintain a ministerial balance in its structuring of Standing Committees. The Standing Committee and Subcommittee structure should emphasize and reflect the Mission of the parish and the entire scope of pastoral concerns.

These Committees and their Subcommittees are the following:

- Stewardship
- Building and Grounds
- Christian Education
- Social Concerns
- Worship
  - Spiritual Life
  - Small Christian Communities
- Parish Life / Family Life
  - Pro-Life
- Evangelization
- Cemetery

### 2. Special Committees

Internal concerns, research, and information on matters which are not part of a Committee responsibility require the creation of an ad hoc or special committee. An *ad hoc* or *special committee* may be changed to *Standing Committee* or *Subcommittee* status if their function changes in scope.

## J. ADMINISTRATION/FINANCE

The Pastoral Council is to be concerned with the total stewardship of the parish including time, talent and treasure. This is witnessed by inclusion of a Stewardship Committee.

The Parish Finance Council, by Canon Law and by Diocesan directive, is constituted as a separate entity and, while it is an integral part of the Parish, it is not part of the Parish Pastoral Council.

The Finance Council's function is to prepare the annual parish budget, to minister to financial matters of the Parish, and to publish financial reports and related matters.

The Finance Council and the Stewardship Committee are to work together, sharing both the Finance Council's and the Pastoral Council's concerns.

K. AMENDMENTS

Amendments to the Constitution are to be introduced in writing by a Council member at a regular meeting of the Council. Acceptance or rejection of amendments shall not take place until the next regular meeting of the Council. Amendments to the Constitution will require a consensus of the Council in order to be adopted.

The parish community will be informed of any changes to the Constitution, and the rationale for these changes will be shared with them.

**ST. JOSEPH PARISH  
PASTORAL COUNCIL BYLAWS**

**A. OFFICERS**

1. President - Pastor

- Participates as an individual in Council discussions and decisions.
- May call special meetings as deemed necessary.
- Makes special appointments as authorized by the Constitution.
- Gives a Pastor's Report at each meeting, including relevant internal or diocesan developments affecting the parish.
- Is an ex officio member of any and all standing and special committees of the parish council.
- Pastor's approval is necessary for all Council decisions.

2. Chairperson

- Conducts all regular and special meetings of the Parish Council.
- Participates as an individual in Council discussions and decisions
- Makes special appointments as authorized by the Constitution.
- May be an ex officio member of any and all standing and special committees of the parish council.
- Contacts members who have been absent for two consecutive meetings and informs Council of their status.
- With the Pastor plans the agenda for each upcoming meeting; this agenda is forwarded to the Parish Office to be distributed with minutes before the next meeting.
- Reviews and orders corrections of minutes before publication.

3. Vice-Chairperson

- Assumes the duties of the Chairperson in his/her absence.
- Participates as an individual in Council discussions and decisions.
- Monitors implementation of the current five-year plan.

4. Council Secretary

- Maintains an attendance record of all Council membership, noting those absent and bringing to the Chairperson's attention those members missing two consecutive meetings.
- Keeps an accurate record of all minutes of the Council at the regular and special meetings.
- Publishes the minutes of the Parish Council meetings, submits for redaction, then corrects and forwards to Parish Office for distribution about one week before the next meeting.
- Provides secretarial assistance to the Council as deemed appropriate.
- Participates as an individual in Council discussions and decisions, if elected as a member of the Council.

**B. INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS**

1. Ex Officio Members (by *office* or by *job*)

- Pastor, Associate Pastor(s), Permanent Deacon(s)
- Professional staff, lay and religious, representing specific areas of service DRE, School Principal, and Pastoral Assistants.
- Attend all Council meetings and participate as individuals in Council discussions and decisions.
- Give periodic reports to the Council regarding the status and needs of the constituency represented.

2. Selected Members

- Discerned to provide true representation of all segments and groups of the parish, or
- Selected by and from the parish at large by a plurality vote of the parish members.
- Attend all Council meetings and participate as individuals in Council discussions and decisions.
- Give periodic reports to the Council regarding the status and needs of the constituency represented.
- Are expected to be members of Council committees or subcommittees.

3. Appointed Members

- Standing Committee Chairperson appointed by the pastor, or (see next item)
- Chairperson or another member of the Committee served selected/discerned by and from the members of the Committee.
- Attend all Council meetings and participate as individuals in Council discussions and decisions.
- Give periodic reports to the Council regarding the status and needs of the constituency represented.

4. Standing Committee Chairperson

- Acquaints all members with the Committee scope of concern.
- Informs the Parish Council of the Committee membership.
- Calls meetings of the Committee at least every other month, alternating with months of Council meetings or as circumstances dictate.
- Conducts all Committee meetings and prepares an agenda for such meetings.
- Appoints a Committee recorder who shall take minutes of each meeting and notify members of all meetings.
- Designates subcommittees as needed, subject to Council review.
- Plans, with the Committee, annual objectives, plans, and programs, and reports in writing to the Council for concurrence or modification.
- Submits an annual written evaluation to the Council with recommendations for future Committee directions and efforts.
- Cooperates in the preparation of the Committee's annual budget.
- Gives periodic written reports to the Council regarding Committee plans and programs.

C. COMMITTEES

1. Standing Committees

Standing Committees and their structures shall be the same as incorporated in the Constitution. Any updates to the Constitution will effect a like update to this list.



These Committees and their Subcommittees are the following:

Stewardship  
Building and Grounds  
Cemetery  
Christian Education  
Social Concerns  
Worship  
    Spiritual Life  
        Small Christian Communities  
Parish Life / Family Life  
    Pro-Life  
Evangelization

They will meet at least every other month (in August, October, December, February, April, and June).

For continuity in the parish, it is recommended that other parish organizations affiliate with one or more of the Parish Council Committees without jeopardy to their individual autonomy. All existing organizations and groups adhere to the policies of the Council in matters which affect the parish.

## 2. Administration/Finance Committee

The Parish Finance Council, by Canon Law and by Diocesan directive, is constituted as a separate entity and, while it is an integral part of the Parish, it is not part of the Parish Pastoral Council.

The Council recognizes, however, that this Committee is to sustain the mission and the ongoing development of the parish community by providing the necessary administrative and financial skills. Working closely with the Pastor, who is accountable for the administration of the parish, this Committee concerns itself with all parish resources, the annual parish budget, parish support, and the effective use and maintenance of parish facilities. The collaboration of this Committee with the Pastor, the parish staff, and the Parish Council is intended to free the Pastor for his role in spiritual leadership.

Areas of responsibility:

- Buildings and grounds
- Finance
- Prepare and publish the annual parish budget and financial report
- Stewardship of time, talent, and treasure
- Festival
- Ways and Means

3. Christian Education Committee

This Committee is to address the educational mission of the entire parish community: adults, young persons, and children. This approach assures that all members of the parish are served educationally, according to their needs, at a particular time in their lives.

These areas of responsibility normally fall under the realm of duties of the Director of Religious Education or the School Principal:

- Adult religious education
- Catholic school
- Religious education (CCD)
- RCIA
- Sacramental Preparation (Baptism, Reconciliation, Eucharist, Confirmation, Matrimony)
- Special education
- Youth ministry
- Young adults

4. Social Concerns Committee

This Committee is to examine human needs and social injustices, and to help the parish carry out its mission to alleviate those needs and correct those injustices. Education is very important in this work because awareness and knowledge must precede effective involvement.

Areas of responsibility:

- Human services (direct service)
- Peace and justice (social action)

5. Worship Committee

This Committee is to initiate and coordinate the Council's ministry of helping persons grow in faith. This Committee gives attention to how the parish community worships and celebrates the Liturgy.

- Planning parish Liturgies and Paraliturgies
- Liturgical environment
- Music
- Greeters
- Readers
- Ministers of the Eucharist
- Ushers
- Servers

6. Spiritual Life and Formation Committee

This Committee is to initiate and coordinate the Council's ministry of helping persons grow in faith. Since this Committee is concerned with spiritual formation for all persons in the parish, close collaboration with the Christian Education and/or Worship Committee is recommended when warranted.

Areas of responsibility:

- Bereavement
- Small Christian Communities
- Vocations
- Ecumenism
- Ministry formation

7. Parish Life / Family Life Committee

This Committee gives special attention to how the parish grows and how family life is strengthened in the parish.

Areas of responsibility:

- Welcoming new parishioners
- Parish picnic
- Pro-life activities
- Family advocacy
- Family Resource Library

8. Evangelization Committee

Through prayer and study the purpose of this Committee is to call themselves to live more closely to the Gospel message. As a Committee they call the parish to renewal. It is the ministry of the parish as a whole to be evangelized and then to be evangelizers.

9. Cemetery Committee

The Cemetery Committee looks after the day-to-day operation of the cemetery as well as the perpetual care.

10. Special Committees (Ad Hoc)

The Pastor or Council Chairperson shall appoint special committees of the Council as needed, including the Nominating Committee.

A special committee shall:

- Gather information.
- Recommend ways to address matters referred to it by the Parish Council.
- Carry out the mandate of Council.
- Automatically cease to exist on presentation of its final report to the Council.

#### **D. TERMS OF OFFICE**

Selected/discerned members of the Parish Pastoral Council may serve their terms in one of the following ways:

- One full three-year term.
- Serving two years or more as a replacement for a vacancy.  
Replacement for a shorter time does not constitute a full term.
- A serving member may be nominated/elected to a second full three year term. The above service must be followed by at least one year off Council.

Terms of office should be established so that one third of the selected members are normally replaced each year to ensure continuity.

#### **Premature Termination of Council Membership**

It is the Parish Council's responsibility to see that its members fulfill their duties fully and completely. A person moving out of the parish ceases to be a member of the Council. Council President may terminate a seat for two consecutive unexcused absences.

#### **E. FILLING VACANCIES**

Vacancies should be filled by replacements to serve unexpired terms. Vacancies can be filled in any one of the following ways:

- Appointment by a consensus of the Parish Council from the parish at large, or
- From the next highest vote getter in the latest elections.
- A new Chairperson may be discerned by Council.