

Saint Joseph Church (Limeport, PA) Parish Pastoral Council Bylaws

Approved at Council Meeting 12 SEPTEMBER 2023

1. Role and Function of the Parish Pastoral Council – Summary

1.1. The Parish Pastoral Council is made up of a group of parishioners who:

- Interface with, represent, advocate for and participate in ministries and functions within the parish;
- Provide recommendations and objectively advise the Parish Priest* (hereinafter “Pastor”) about issues of concern for the parish;
- Work with the Pastor and parishioners to carry out the parish mission.

2. Parish Pastoral Council - Definition

2.1. The Parish Pastoral Council (hereinafter “Council”) is a strategic thinking, planning, and working group that advises and assists the Pastor in developing and implementing plans to achieve the parish goals and objectives that flow from the parish Mission Statement.

3. Council Goals

3.1. The goals of the Council are to

- 3.1.1. provide a structure for participation and interaction of the clergy, staff, and parishioners, and a framework for parish planning;
- 3.1.2. encourage participation and foster a sense of community among all parishioners.

4. Council Responsibilities

4.1. The responsibilities of the Council are to

- 4.1.1. create, uphold, periodically review, and amend the parish Mission Statement, the Council bylaws and Strategic Pastoral Plan;
- 4.1.2. advise the Pastor on issues of importance to the parish, within the limitations of Canon Law;
- 4.1.3. identify and plan for current and future needs of the parish in collaboration with the Pastor and parishioners;
- 4.1.4. help communicate the parish objectives and activities to parishioners;
- 4.1.5. participate in committee work to develop and implement plans to achieve parish goals and objectives;
- 4.1.6. evaluate the effectiveness of parish ministries and programs, and make recommendations for improvement or suspension.

5. Mission, Strategy, and Plans

5.1. Each year, the sitting Council shall review and amend the parish Mission statement, as-needed.

5.2. The initial Council has adopted the following Mission statement for the Church of St. Joseph (hereinafter “St. Joseph”)

5.2.1. “The Saint Joseph Church is a Roman Catholic parish in the Diocese of Allentown committed St Joseph Parish is a family of faith that seeks to rejoice in and spread the love of God the Father as revealed through the grace of Jesus Christ, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit and the teachings of the holy Roman Catholic Church through word, sacrament and service.

5.3. Each year, the sitting Council shall approve or amend a document explaining the Mission statement to be used as a resource for parish communications.

5.4. Saint Joseph Church shall achieve its mission through ministries focused on pastoral care, parish life, liturgy and worship, faith education, and community service. These ministries shall be advocated by Council members, and supported by parish staff and active parishioners.

5.5. Each year, the Pastor should identify and discuss key elements of his vision for the parish, key issues, and work with the Council to define guidelines for the focus of Council activities.

5.6. The Council shall develop plans, and actions aimed at achieving the parish goals and objectives, consistent with the Mission Statement. This may take the form of a Strategic Pastoral Plan, or other document as appropriate. Action items, and progress shall be tracked by the Council and reviewed at Council meetings. Required completion dates are to be established as part of the plan and tracked accordingly.

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5.7. The Council shall regularly communicate its activities to the parish at least annually via the bulletin and/or parish website.

6. Selection of Council Members

6.1. Selection of council members has been established by direct pastoral appointment. The first 3 years of council membership have been made directly by the pastor. This pastoral appointment will continue on an annual basis as discussed and voted on by the council and approved by the pastor. All membership questions by parishioners will be directed to the pastor to address. Pastoral council members may resign at any time due to personal reasons. It is encouraged that members complete their assignments prior to resignation but extenuating circumstances may dictate otherwise. If the need arises to select council members from the parish at large, sections 6.2 through end of section 6 may be employed.

6.2. Selection of new members of the next Council from the parish at-large shall be achieved by a sequence of steps: (1) Publicizing the Council, (2) invitation to Information Nights, (3) Information Nights and Nominations, (4) Discernment/Selection, and (5) Commissioning.

6.3. Publicizing

6.3.1. The role, previous achievements and goals of the Council, the talents, skills, experience desired of Council members and eligibility criteria shall be publicized, and the entire parish will be requested to pray and discern if they or someone they know might have the gifts and desire to serve St. Joseph's parish as a Council member.

- An insert in the Sunday bulletin(s) and/or a publication on the parish's website will briefly explain the Council, and invite parishioners to attend Information Nights where the role, and goals of the Council will be explained. A nomination form will be appended.
- Announcements about the Council, including the talents, skills, and experience being sought, eligibility criteria, and announcements about the Information Meetings may also be made at Masses as deemed appropriate.
- Prayer for the future of the parish and the discernment process for the Council can be included in the petitions at Mass.
- Participants of ministries and committees within St. Joseph's will be encouraged to attend the Information Nights.

6.4. Certain qualities are desired of Council members. Council Members:

6.4.1. Are participating members of the parish, and Catholics in good standing

6.4.2. Have a working knowledge of the parish life

6.4.3. Are eager to carry out the parish mission

6.4.4. Have a desire for spiritual growth

6.4.5. Have a love for Jesus and His Church

6.4.6. Have an active prayer life including commitment to prayer for the parish, its ministries and its parishioners

6.4.7. Are open to the Counsels of the Holy Spirit

6.4.8. Have an openness to study and reflection

6.4.9. Understand their own unique personal talents, skills, and experience that are relevant to their contributing to the mission of the Council

6.4.10. Are at ease working in groups

6.4.11. Have good communication skills

6.4.12. Exhibit humility and honesty

6.4.13. Are willing to empower others

6.4.14. Demonstrate an ability to listen to others with respect and empathy

6.4.15. Are open-minded, objective, and receptive toward the views of others

6.4.16. Are willing to be decisive, and take action

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- 6.4.17. Have available time and energy to devote to the work of the Council
- 6.5. Information Meetings and Nominations
 - 6.5.1. Information Meetings shall be held where information about the Council will be discussed, and nominations solicited.
 - 6.5.2. Nomination forms should be completed and submitted immediately at the end of, or following the Information Meetings.
 - 6.5.3. Nomination forms should be submitted no later than the closing of the 12:00 noon Mass on the Sunday following the last Information Meeting.
 - 6.5.4. Pending the number and scope of nominations, direct solicitations from the major ministries/functions within the parish may be made by the members of the Selection Committee of the sitting Council (see below).
- 6.6. Discernment and Selection
 - 6.6.1. Nominees will be selected for membership on the Council based on a discernment process carried out by a Selection Committee and /or the initial appointed Council.
- 6.7. Commissioning
 - 6.7.1. Council members shall be announced and commissioned during Mass when new Council members are added, or whenever deemed appropriate by the Pastor.
- 6.8. Representatives of Finance Committee and St. Michael School
 - 6.8.1. The parish Finance Committee shall select one of its members to serve as the Finance Committee Representative on the Council, and another member as an alternate.
 - 6.8.2. St. Michael School shall select one of its members to serve as the St. Michael School Representative on the Council, and another member as an alternate.
- 6.9. Vacancies
 - 6.9.1. Council vacancies among the members selected from the at-large shall be filled by selection from a pool of suitable candidates from the parish at-large by the sitting Council.
 - 6.9.2. Council vacancies among the members selected from the parish Finance Committee and St. Michael School shall be filled by selection by the Finance Committee and St. Michael School, respectively.
 - 6.9.3. As of the date they join the Council, a person selected to fill a vacancy on the Council will be subject to the same term expectations and limitations as a newly selected Council member.
7. **Council Composition**
 - 7.1. The Council will be comprised of up to 12 members, including the Pastor, the Parochial Vicar** (hereinafter "Assistant Pastor") and/or designated clergy, a representative of the Finance Committee, a representative of St. Michael School, and up to 8 members chosen from St. Joseph parish at large.
 - 7.2. The Council is comprised of members taking on the following roles:
 - 7.2.1. Chair, responsible for
 - Fostering a climate of trust, openness and genuine respect for members' ideas and abilities,
 - Maintaining regular contact with the Pastor to ensure open communication,
 - Finalizing the agenda for all Council meetings, in consultation with the Pastor,
 - Conducting Council meetings in a Spirit of good Counsel
 - Working with the Secretary to finalize the draft meeting minutes for approval by the Council.
 - 7.2.2. Vice-Chair, responsible for
 - Assuming the duties of the Chairman in his/her absence or at his/her request,
 - Assisting at Council meetings to facilitate discussion, and keep the meetings on-track and on-agenda.
 - Note: The Vice-Chair may also hold another Council Liaison role.
 - 7.2.3. Secretary, responsible for
 - Keeping accurate notes of the discussion during each Council meeting,
 - Developing draft meeting minutes and action items for distribution to Council members.
 - Note: The Secretary may also hold another Council Liaison role.

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- 7.2.4. Representative of the parish Finance Committee, responsible for
 - Providing input to the Council on matters of financial importance, and interfacing between the Council and the parish Finance Committee.
 - An alternate to the Finance Committee Representative shall be selected by the Finance Committee.
- 7.2.5. Representative of St. Michael School, responsible for
 - Providing input to the Council on matters of importance to St. Michael, and interfacing between the Council and the School.
- 7.2.6. Liaisons to the various ministries, organizations, and committees of the parish, responsible for
 - helping their ministries, organizations, and committees understand the parish mission and objectives,
 - helping their ministries, organizations, and committees assess successes, and areas for improvement compared to the mission statement and parish objectives;
 - advocating for the needs of their ministries to the Council;
 - assisting in identifying resources for improvement;
 - working with the other Council members to determine how strengths in their ministry areas can be leveraged by other ministries to achieve the parish mission;
 - identifying the most impactful, cost-effective and implementable improvements aimed at helping the parish achieve its mission.
 - Youth or Young Adult member aged 18-25 from the parish to identify and help council understand the challenges and needs of the young adults in the parish.
- 7.2.7. Assistant Pastor, or designated clergy, responsible for
 - Providing input to the Council on matters of pastoral importance to the parish.
- 7.2.8. Pastor, responsible for the parish as a whole.
- 7.3. All Council members are expected to act in a support role for Liaisons and committees, as assigned.
- 7.4. Assignment and scope of the members' roles, the number and names of the Liaison roles, and the ministry groups and committees associated with each Liaison role should be agreed and documented annually after the commissioning of Council for that year.
- 7.5. Examples of the Liaison roles include the following, as presented in Appendix 1:
 - 7.5.1. Liturgy and Worship – ministries focused on liturgical support, especially celebration of Mass, emphasizing Word, Sacrament and community, e.g.
 - Altar Servers, Lectors and Commentators, Communion Ministers (Mass, assisted living homes, homebound), Sacristan, Ushers, Music ministry, Choir, Baptismal Preparation, First Friday Adoration, Funeral ministry.
 - 7.5.2. Pastoral Care - ministries focused on the pastoral care of parishioners, emphasizing service and community, e.g.
 - Career Network, Persons with Disabilities Representative, Transportation, Prayer Shawl, Respect Life, Bereavement and Prayer Cards (grief support), 3-C (widows & widowers), Giving Tree, Food Collection, Helping Hands.
 - 7.5.3. Parish Life – ministries focused on the life of the parish, emphasizing service and community, e.g.
 - Knights of Columbus, Prime Timers, Altar & Rosary Society, Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, Girl/Jr/Brownie Scouts, CYO, Summer Festival, Youth Group.
 - 7.5.4. Faith Formation – ministries focused on education in the Catholic faith, emphasizing Word, Sacrament and community, e.g.
 - PREP, RCIA, Adult Education, Vacation Bible School, Small Faith Groups, Vocations
 - 7.5.5. Communications – functions focused on parish communications and outreach, e.g.
 - Print and electronic communications, including parish Sunday bulletin, website, social media.
 - 7.5.6. Facilities – facility planning, and functions focused on providing, improving, and maintaining appropriate parish facilities, e.g.
 - Church building, Parish Life Center.
 - 7.5.7. Hospitality / Welcoming – activities focused on making our parish a more welcoming environment.

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7.5.8. Outreach / Evangelization – activities focused on reaching out to the de-churched or un-churched.

7.5.9. Accessibility – activities emphasizing accessibility in our parish family worship, ministries and groups.

8. Terms, Responsibilities, Evaluation of Council Members

- 8.1. Each member of the Council selected from the parish at-large shall commit to serve a 3-year term, and participate in an annual review process conducted by the Pastor, with contributions from the other Council members, to assess their contributions, and continuation of membership on the Council.
- 8.2. Representatives of the parish Finance Committee and St. Michael School shall commit to serve a 2-year term, and participate in an annual review process conducted by the Pastor, with contributions from the other Council members, to assess their contributions, and continuation of membership on the Council.
- 8.3. Normally, Council members may serve a maximum of two (2) consecutive terms. However, the Pastor, with recommendations of the Council, may deem it in the interest of the parish for a Council member to remain on the Council for additional time or term(s), based on the Council needs, including the number, experience, and skills of the parishioners interested in serving on the Council.
- 8.4. Council members are expected to attend all regularly scheduled general meetings of the Council (hereinafter “General Council Meetings”). Council members who are unable to attend a General Council Meeting are expected to advise the Chair of their anticipated absence. Members who are not able to attend six (6) General Council Meetings per year, or are unexcused from three (3) General Council Meetings per year may be asked to resign from the Council.
- 8.5. In addition to attending General Meetings, members of the Council are expected to work outside Council Meetings to advance the work of the Council. This includes individual work, participation in committee meetings, and ad-hoc meetings on special topics outside of general Council meetings.
- 8.6. Any conduct believed to be inappropriate for a Council member, either personally witnessed by another Council member or reported to a Council member by a parishioner, should be immediately reported, initially to the Pastor, or the Chair who will report to the Pastor. Any actions taken with respect to the incident shall preferably be discussed by the Pastor with the Council, however, under certain circumstances, further discussions may not be appropriate, and the Pastor has the discretion to dismiss the Council member.

9. Process for General Council Meetings

- 9.1. General meetings of the Council (hereinafter “General Council Meetings”) will be convened at least four (4) times per year, a schedule will be set up annually by the sitting Council.
- 9.2. The Pastor must attend all General Council Meetings.
- 9.3. General Council Meetings are intended to update the Pastor and Council members, and to advise and get feedback from the Pastor, not to carry out specific committee or project work.
- 9.4. Note: Special Council Meetings, comprised of all or part of the Council, may be held at the request of Council members or the Pastor.
- 9.5. General Council Meetings shall be held on the parish property unless the Pastor determines otherwise.
- 9.6. The Council shall generate and publish a meeting agenda and distribute it to Council members prior to the General Council Meetings.
- 9.7. Members of St. Joseph’s parish may request the introduction of agenda items and be granted time for discussion with the Council by making prior arrangements with the Council.
 - 9.7.1. Any Agenda items introduced by council members or other non-council members must be identified and communicated to the council members at least one week prior to the next scheduled council meeting. The agenda item must identify the subject, any requested decision and a discussion associated with the benefits and responsibilities associated with the topic.
 - 9.7.2. Any proposed agenda item that does not comply with section 9.7.1 will be tabled until the next council meeting after all of the requirements of section 9.7.1 are fulfilled.
- 9.8. Minutes of each General Council Meeting, including recommendations and actions to be taken, will be recorded and reported.

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Notes: Under the current code of Canon Law:

* the proper title of the Pastor is the “Parish Priest,”

** the proper title of the Assistant Pastor is the “Parochial Vicar.”

APPENDIX 1: Saint Joseph Church Ministries and Council Liaison Roles

| Liturgy & Worship | Pastoral Care | Parish Life | Faith Education |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Emphasis: Word, Sacrament, community</i> | <i>Emphasis: service, community</i> | <i>Emphasis: community, service</i> | <i>Emphasis: Word, Sacrament, community</i> |
| Altar Servers | <i>Career Network</i> | Knights of Columbus | PREP (Religious Ed) |
| Lectors/Commentators | <i>Persons w/ Disabilities</i> | Altar & Rosary Society | RCIA |
| Communion Min– Mass | <i>Transportation</i> | Prime Timers | <i>Bible Study</i> |
| Communion Min– Asst’d Living | <i>Prayer Chain</i> | <i>Youth Ministry</i> | Vacation Bible School |
| Communion Min– Homebound | <i>Respect Life</i> | CYO | <i>Vocations</i> |
| Sacristan | <i>Bereavement</i> | Summer Festival | Discover Christ |
| Ushers | <i>Prayer Cards (Grief)</i> | <i>Boy / Cub Scouts</i> | Women of Grace |
| Music | <i>3-C (Widows/Widowers)</i> | <i>Girl Scouts / Brownies</i> | |
| Choir | Giving Tree | | |
| First Friday Adoration | Helping Hands | | |
| Funeral Ministry | Food Collection (Cath. Charities) | | |
| Baptismal Prep | Ecumenical Food Bank | | |
| | Vocations | | |
| | Betty Lou’s Pantry | | |
| | <i>Parish Home Visitors</i> | | |
| | <i>Single (Again) Adults</i> | | |
| | <i>Catholics in Recovery</i> | | |

| Facilities | Communications | Outreach | Hospitality | Accessibility | Finance | St Michael’s School |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|----------|-------------|---------------|------------------------------|---------------------|
| Maintenance | Bulletin | | | | Finance Committee | |
| Cemetery Landscaping | Website | | | | Collection Counters | |
| Church Cleaning | Email Blasts | | | | Online/Direct Deposit Giving | |
| | <i>Social Media</i> | | | | | |
| | Facility Use Calendar - Web page | | | | | |

Proposed (for discussion), not currently on-going as of this date.