

PARISH COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL

ELMSFORD, NEW YORK

From the REVISED November 2002 Version

As amended in 2011 and 2012

Compiled February 2013

Amended January 18, 2016

CONSTITUTION AND BY LAWS  
OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL, ELMSFORD, NEW YORK

PREAMBLE

We the clergy, religious, and the laity of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, Elmsford, New York, recognizing our role as co-workers in the one apostolate of the church and desirous of establishing more effective dialogue and programs to fulfill that mission do hereby join in establishing a Parish Council.

ARTICLE I

NAME

The name of this organization shall be  
“Parish Council of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.”

ARTICLE II

The Parish Council shall be a consultative body with the following general purposes and functions:

A. To provide a means for laity, religious and priests to initiate, coordinate and participate in all spiritual and temporal works of the Parish and to give them an organized way of sharing in the teaching, sanctifying and governing of the people of God; work closely with the Archbishop and his representatives as a truly Christian Community in fulfilling the mission of Christ.

B. To provide a continuous and integrated survey of the spiritual and temporal needs of the Parish, the community and the Archdiocese, to consider the resources available to meet the parish needs; and, after setting priorities, to develop and implement programs aimed at meeting these needs.

## ARTICLE III

### ELIGIBILITY

All persons who have attained the age of sixteen and are registered members of the Parish, are eligible to be members of the Council.

## ARTICLE IV

### STRUCTURE

A. The Council shall consists of

1. Ex-officio members of the Parish Council because of their responsibilities:

Parochial Vicar

Permanent Deacon

Principal of School

Two Trustees – appointed by the Archdiocese

Religious Education Coordinator

2. At-large members shall be elected from among the eligible candidates, by lot at one of the Sunday Masses, according to procedures described in Appendix I to this Constitution, which may be amended by the same procedure as the Constitution itself.

3. The pastor/administrator may add members to reflect the make-up of the parish and address the need for different abilities and experience as needed, up to two members per year.

4. Each parish organization recognized by the pastor/administrator shall have one representative on the Council. The list of recognized organizations and their representative will be kept by the Council Secretary. The pastor/administrator shall provide a new list once a year.

B. Each member of the Council shall have one vote.

C. Terms of office of members:

1. The members acting under subdivision 1 of Paragraph A shall serve as long as they are in office.

2. Elected members serve for 3 years, re-electable once. Members who have served two consecutive terms are not eligible for election for one year.

Members appointed by the pastor/administrator serve for two years.

ARTICLE V

SELECTIONS and VACANCIES

[Editor's note: Procedures in Article V were replaced by Appendix I.]

ARTICLE VI

COUNCIL OFFICERS

The officers shall be as follows: Chairperson, Vice -chairperson, (each of whom shall be a selected member of the council) Corresponding Secretary, and Recording Secretary.

The above officers shall be elected by the members of the Council for one year terms with a maximum of two successive terms. If a vacancy shall occur, a replacement shall be elected by the Council to fill the unexpired term. The officers shall be elected by a simple majority of all voting members.

The officers shall be primarily responsible for the guidance and direction of the Council, the conduct of its meetings and the transaction of business, as well as the customary duties of their particular offices. The officers shall be known as the Steering Committee.

ARTICLE VII

COUNCIL MEETINGS

SECTION I – ANNUAL MEETINGS

The Council shall hold an Annual Meeting with the Parish at a time determined by the council for the purpose of reporting to the Parish the activities of the Council during the preceding year.

## SECTION II – REGULAR MEETINGS

The Council shall meet monthly. Written notice is to be mailed to all members one week prior to the meeting date. Meetings are open to all parishioners.

## SECTION III – SPECIAL MEETINGS

Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson when it is deemed necessary or when requested to do so by the Pastor, or upon written request of three members of the Council. Written or verbal notice of the purpose of the special meetings is required at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

## SECTION IV – QUORUM

A legally constituted meeting shall consist of at least twelve members of the Council and shall constitute a quorum.

## SECTION V – PROCEDURE

The general agenda is as follows: opening prayer, attendance, review of previous meeting minutes, old business, new business and closing prayer.

## SECTION VI – VOTES

A census of those present at a legally constituted meeting will be required for adoption of any proposals unless otherwise specifically provided for in this constitution. In the event that consensus cannot be reached on an urgent issue, the pastor in consultation with the Steering Committee will decide on the issue.

## SECTION VII

Any parishioner desiring to appear before any regular Council meeting must direct a written request to the Chairperson at least a week in advance of the meeting and indicate the subject matter he or she wants to discuss at the Council meeting. The names and subject matter shall be added to the agenda and mailed to all council members. The Chairperson may at his/her discretion, postpone the subject to the next regular meeting.

## SECTION VIII

Council members are strictly expected to attend all meetings of the council. If absence is necessary, a written or verbal notice must be submitted to the Recording Secretary prior to the meeting.

Three unexcused absences or repeated absences may constitute sufficient grounds for dismissal of Council members. A consensus of the entire Council must agree to dismissal. The Corresponding Secretary shall report to the council on attendance at each meeting.

## ARTICLE VIII

### COMMITTEES

The following standing committees are established to cover the various areas of activity necessary to accomplish the purposes of the Parish Council. Other committees shall be established as the council deems necessary. Each committee, within its area of interest and concern, shall study the needs of the Parish. Sources available to meeting such needs are recommended to the Council for approval. Specific policies and programs of action to be undertaken. The committee chairperson need not be a member of the council. Each committee chairperson shall convene and preside over all committee meetings and prepare a summary report for the Council. There shall be at least one member of the Parish council on each standing committee.

## SECTION I: PARISH COUNCIL COMMITTEES

1. EXECUTIVE: Composed of Pastor, Council Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Corresponding and Recording Scribes. Develops agenda; schedules and conducts the Parish Council meetings and facilitates implementation of Parish Council initiatives.
2. LITURGY AND SPIRITUALITY: The focus of this committee is to assist with coordinating parish liturgy, consistent with the recommendations and guidelines of the Archdiocesan Liturgical Commission. To study the liturgical needs of the Parish and to make recommendations for liturgies that may serve the needs of the parish. It will also suggest and assist in the development of programs of spiritual development to enrich the parish community. Committee will also evaluate liturgies and other spirituality programs.

3. **PARISH LIFE:** The focus of this committee is to support activities that support interactions within the parish community. It will also facilitate the scheduling of events. It will encourage collaboration between parish organizations when they have similar plans.
4. **SOCIAL ACTION:** The focus of this committee is to inform and advise the Council concerning community trends and problems, to develop and implement actions and programs to serve the needs of the community in coordination with parish organizations when appropriate. Also to work on the goals of the Archdiocesan initiatives for Pro-life and Social Justice. When appropriate we work with other faith communities towards common goals to the benefit of our local community.
5. **EDUCATION:** The focus of this committee is to assist all Parish educational pursuits in both OLMC School and the School of Religion. It will assure there are programs for adults to receive the Sacraments of Initiation and programs for family catechesis. It will also recommend and facilitate programs of continuing education in the faith and Scripture.
6. **PLANT AND MAINTENANCE:** The focus of this committee is to advise on the development and maintenance of all real estate, all physical structures and equipment. In coordination with other appropriate committees, make recommendations for maintenance, repair, expansion, replacement or disposition of existing facilities; to investigate the finances required, and evaluate the future needs of the Parish.
7. **YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS:** The focus is of this committee is to assist in the development of programs for teenagers and young adults. To encourage participation of teens and young adults in parish activities. To facilitate the development of leadership from among our youth.

## SECTION II- THE FINANCE COUNCIL

The Parish Finance Council shall exist as distinct entity as required by Canon Law and Diocesan Guidelines. The Parish Finance Council shall report its activities at regular Parish Council meetings.

## SECTION III- TEMPORARY COMMITTEES

The chairperson shall appoint temporary committees as needed.

#### SECTION IV – COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE AND OFFICERS

The chairperson of each committee shall be elected annually by simple majority vote. Term of office is one year. Committee Chairpersons may succeed themselves without limitation.

#### SECTION V – COMMITTEE REPORTS

All committees shall issue majority reports recommending specific action to be taken by the Council. Voting upon policy changes included therein shall be in accordance with Article VII, Section V (Council Meetings Procedure).

#### SECTION VI – COMPOSITION

Each standing committee shall meet a minimum of four times a year. Each committee shall be staffed by Parishioners from the open Parish ranks on a voluntary basis. The Council shall have the right to adjust the committee structure as it may determine. One more than half the committee members shall constitute a quorum.

### ARTICLE IX

#### AMMENDMENTS

##### SECTION I

Amendments to this constitution may be proposed in writing at any meeting of the Council by any member of the Council.

##### SECTION II

Amendments shall be proposed at one meeting but cannot be voted upon until the next meeting. A copy of the proposed amendment shall be distributed to each Council member for deliberation two weeks prior to the meeting at which the vote will be taken. A two-thirds majority vote of the total Council shall be necessary for adoption of a proposed amendment.

## Appendix I – ELECTION PROCESS

1. As a result of the terms of office, the terms of 1/3 of the elected members will expire each year. (If a vacancy occurs, the pastor/administrator may appoint someone for the balance of the term. That balance is considered a term of office.)
2. Each spring, the Council shall assemble an Election Committee to manage the process of nomination and election of members. The Election Committee will report to the Council Executive Committee and the Pastor/Administrator.
3. The Committee shall ask Council members and the Parish community to recommend to the Council the names of persons to be nominated for election to the Council. The pastor/administrator may also contribute names.
4. The Committee shall place announcements in the Parish Bulletin, and use other methods as needed, to invite members of the parish to submit their own names or the names of others for nomination. The pastor/administrator will determine if the nominees are eligible for membership in the Council. If the nominees accept, they will be announced in the Parish Bulletin. At least one week after the announcement of the candidates in the Bulletin, as many as five of the nominees shall be selected by lot to serve on the Council. This selection shall be done in the presence of the congregation at one of the weekend Masses.
5. In addition, after the annual elections, the pastor/administrator shall announce the names of the persons he has appointed and they begin their service at the next meeting of the Council.
6. At the time of the adoption of these rules, the terms of the existing members of the Council shall be extended as follows: One-third of those members shall have their terms extended for one year. A second third shall have their terms extended for two years and one-third shall have their terms extended for three years. The members whose terms shall end shall be selected by lot. They will be eligible to stand for election no sooner than one year after the end of their extended term.

END