

CHURCH OF ST. GREGORY THE GREAT PASTORAL COUNCIL
Rules of Operation

July 2017

ARTICLE I – NAME

This parish leadership ministry shall be known as the Church of St. Gregory the Great Pastoral Council, hereinafter referred to as the “Pastoral Council” or the “Council.”

ARTICLE II – MISSION

The Pastoral Council is a faith sharing community. It serves as a visionary body, assisting the pastor in the evaluation of parish life and ministry. The Pastoral Council engages in both visioning and long-term planning through making recommendations to the Pastor.

The Pastoral Council assists in setting goals and priorities to respond to the pastoral needs of the parish. It is consultative to the Pastor. The Pastoral Council is not a coordinating committee. It is not concerned with the day-to-day administrative operations that are the responsibility of the Pastor, Parochial Vicar(s), deacons and parish staff.

ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP

The Pastoral Council shall consist of the Pastor, Parochial Vicar(s), parish trustees, any delegates to any Diocesan Pastoral Council formed by the Bishop of Trenton, and no more than 12 parishioners called forth from the community at large. They “make present” the wisdom of the various members of the parish. They do not represent certain ministries. They are not elected. The members are selected through a process of prayer and discernment and then appointed by the Pastor.

The process of discernment should include: a period of prayer for the whole parish community; education for the community on the role of the Pastoral Council; an explanation of the criteria and characteristics necessary to serve; an open invitation to identify those who might serve; a gathering for those identified to help them understand the commitment; and a discernment session to select the members. The aim of the process is to call forth those that are able and willing to commit the time needed for prayer, study and the work of the Council.

It is recommended that the at-large members (here forth referred to as “members”) of the Pastoral Council meet the following criteria including: being a baptized, practicing Catholic; being a registered member of the parish for at least two years and if possible, five years (a Diocesan recommendation); participating in the ongoing life of the parish, especially Sunday Eucharist; participating in at least one other recognized parish ministry; and being at least 21 years of age. They should also have the following types of characteristics: willingness to listen, honesty, enthusiasm about the future of the parish, a commitment to work toward consensus, a desire for personal spiritual growth and the growth of the community, flexibility, openness to new ideas, etc. The Pastor must commission all members. Members must actively participate in Pastoral Council functions as well as the liturgical and ministerial life of the parish. If a member does not attend two scheduled meetings in a calendar year without advance notice, the Council may review the member’s participation and recommend to the pastor that the member be relieved from service on the Council. The final decision whether to relieve a member from service on the Council is reserved for the Pastor, whether or not the Council recommends that a member be relieved from

service. If the Pastor relieves a member of service on the Council, the Pastor may appoint a replacement at his discretion.

The term of membership for a Council member shall be three years (July 1 through June 30). It is recommended that if a member serves two consecutive terms, the Pastor will not commission that member for another term until the expiration of one year. Every attempt should be made to stagger terms among the members so as to accommodate continuity of operations.

The Pastoral Council ceases at the transfer or death of the current Pastor. A newly named Pastor may invite former Council members to advise him. Their familiarity with the parish culture and relationship with parishioners can be a valuable asset to a new Pastor.

ARTICLE IV – LEADERSHIP

The Pastor presides at meetings of the Council. If the Pastor is not available, he may assign a Parochial Vicar to preside in his place.

The Pastor is assisted by the **Chairperson**. The Chairperson is responsible for:

- ❖ Assisting in the scheduling of Council meetings.
- ❖ Meeting with the Pastor, Vice Chairperson and Secretary to develop Council meeting agendas and other planning
- ❖ Representing the Pastoral Council, attending meetings at the request of the Pastor, and carrying on correspondence as appropriate.
- ❖ Assisting the Pastor with arranging for training and planning continuing spiritual formation for the Council.
- ❖ Assisting the pastor with the appointment of special committees.

The Vice-Chairperson is responsible for:

- ❖ Serving in the absence of the Chairperson.
- ❖ Assisting the Chairperson as necessary.
- ❖ Attending meetings with the Pastor, Chairperson, and Secretary to help set the Pastoral Council's agenda.
- ❖ Coordinating efforts of Council subcommittees.
- ❖ Presenting a monthly “dashboard” report to the Pastoral Council of key Parish activities as determined by the Pastor and Pastoral Council.
- ❖ Coordinating a quarterly presentation to the Pastoral Council, by Finance Council representative(s), of key Parish finances, financial activities and financial trends.

The Secretary is responsible for:

- ❖ Notifying the members of meetings.
- ❖ Recording and disseminating accurate minutes of meetings.
- ❖ Preparing and distribution of correspondence as directed by the Pastor.
- ❖ Maintaining an archive of Pastoral Council records in the Parish Office in the Rectory.
- ❖ Attending meetings with the Pastor, Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson to develop meeting agendas and other planning.

- ❖ Facilitating Pastoral Council-related marketing/public relations efforts in concert with the Communications Director.
- ❖ Securing plaques, awards or gifts to be given by the Council (e.g. plaques for members going off Council).

The Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Secretary are appointed by the Pastor for a one year term. It is recommended that they not serve more than two consecutive terms in their respective position.

ARTICLE V – PARISH LIFE

Pastoral Council members should see themselves as “stewards” of the parish’s mission to be a community forming disciples of Jesus Christ. Pastoral Council members should ask, “What kind of parish are we? What kind of parish does the Gospel call us to be?”

ARTICLE VI – MEETINGS

The Pastoral Council will hold monthly meetings in accordance with the schedule established at the beginning of each year. The schedule may be amended by the Pastor as the need arises.

ARTICLE VII – CONSENSUS

The Pastoral Council is consultative to the Pastor. Recommendations are developed by the Council through a process of consensus.

ARTICLE VIII – AMENDMENTS

The Rules of Operation may be amended at any meeting having a quorum (two-thirds of members present) by consensus of members present, providing a written notice of the proposed amendment(s) has been given to all members two weeks prior to the meeting. Proposals for amendments must be submitted, in writing, to the Chairperson at least one month prior to the meeting. The amendment must be approved by the Pastor prior to becoming final. Periodic review of the Rules should occur on a five-year cycle.