

St. Matthew Parish Pastoral Council Constitution and Bylaws

Article I

Name

The name shall be the St. Matthew Parish Pastoral Council (the Council).

Article II

Authority and Guidance

The Council and the Constitution are established under the guidance of the document *Called to Serve* published by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Richmond (revised May 2010).

Article III

Purpose

1. The purpose of the Council shall be to enhance the quality of parish life and its pastoral activity. Specifically, the Council shall assist the Pastor as a prayerful consultative body in the following areas:
 - a. Pastoral planning and goal setting so as to carry out the mission of the Church in our parish and extended community
 - b. Developing and implementing pastoral programs to serve the needs of St. Matthew Parish
 - c. Improving pastoral services
 - d. Evaluating the effectiveness of pastoral programs by listening to the concerns of parishioners and encouraging and engaging in open communication with the entire parish community
2. The purpose of the Constitution is to provide for a set of operating procedures for the continuity of the Council. The purpose of the Bylaws is to provide for the conduct of the Council's meetings and activities.

Article IV

Membership and Terms of Service

A. Membership

1. The Council shall be composed of:
 - a. The Pastor
 - b. At-large members selected from the parish community
 - c. Additional at-large member(s) appointed by the Pastor
2. All members of the Council as defined above are voting members.
3. All members of the Council must be registered parishioners who regularly attend Sunday Mass and are active and contributing members of the parish, including attending parish activities and formation functions, such as Parish Missions and retreats.
4. Members of the Council shall attend regularly scheduled council meetings.
5. Members of the Council shall automatically lose their seats if absent three (3) consecutive meetings without sufficient reason.

B. Terms of Service

1. Terms of service shall usually be for three (3) years, except as stated elsewhere in the bylaws.
2. With the exception of the Pastor or clergy, a member of the Council may not serve more than two consecutive terms.

Article V Organization

A. Officers

1. The Pastor is the president of the Council. He has the final authority in all matters.
2. The Council shall have a Chair and a Vice-Chair who will serve for one year.
3. The Council officers shall be chosen annually by the voting members of the Council at the first meeting following the selection of new members.
4. The Chair shall appoint a member to serve as Secretary for a period of one year. That person shall keep the minutes of the Council meetings and provide for the timely distribution of pertinent materials.

B. Executive Committee

1. The Council shall have an Executive Committee consisting of the Pastor, the Chair, the Vice-Chair, and the Secretary. The Executive Committee shall be formed immediately following the selection of the officers of the Council.
2. The Executive Committee shall (if necessary) meet prior to the regular meeting of the Council.
3. The Executive Committee shall (if necessary) conduct such business as the Pastor or the Council assigns and shall participate in developing an agenda for the Council meetings. Further, the Executive Committee shall have the responsibility to act for the Council between regular meetings of the Council.
4. Three (3) members of the Executive Committee, one being the Pastor, present at a meeting shall constitute a quorum.

C. Standing Parish Committees / Ministries

The following committees /ministries meet the various needs of parishioners and will report to the Council: Liturgy, Religious Education and Formation, Evangelization, Parish Life.

D. Ad Hoc Committees

The Pastor and the Council may call upon individuals, or establish Ad Hoc committees, to meet certain needs of the Parish. When this is considered necessary and expedient, communication and accountability shall be carefully delineated.

E. St. Matthew Federal Credit Union

The Credit Union is a not for profit financial cooperative. It offers financial counseling and other resources to members and may report as necessary to the Council.

F. St. Matthew Catholic School Board

The Parish School educates children Pre-K3 through 8th grade and reports as necessary to the Council.

Article VI Selection of Members

1. The Council shall arrange for the selection/discernment of new at-large members.
2. The Bylaws shall stipulate the process to be used in these selections.

Article VII Meetings

1. The Council shall meet regularly during the year. Regular meetings may be suspended or rescheduled, and special ones called, at the discretion of the Pastor, the Chair, or at the request of a majority of the Council.
2. The time and date of Council meetings is placed in the Parish Bulletin and on the Parish website.
3. The agenda shall be realistically limited to allow time for prayer, formation, dialogue, and for achieving consensus. (See *Called to Serve*, p.33 for consensus building.)
4. Council members may submit additional topics for the agenda at the opening of a meeting, but for complex issues, the need for advance preparation must be considered.
5. All parishioners are welcome to attend Council meetings. Out of courtesy, parishioners are requested to advise the parish office in advance of their intention to attend a meeting so they may be placed on the agenda.
6. The quorum for a meeting shall be the members present at a scheduled meeting.

Article VIII Relationships

1. The Pastor forms and commissions the Council; it derives all of its duties and responsibilities from him. The Pastor has the authority to dissolve the Council and reconstitute the Council. Whenever a new pastor is appointed to the parish, the Council ceases. It is the responsibility of the new pastor to reconstitute the existing council or conduct a new election or selection of members.
2. The Council serves in an advisory capacity to the Pastor.
3. The Council can assign various concerns, issues and ordinary business to the appropriate committee as needed.
4. The Standing Parish Committees / Ministries work in consultation and collaboration with the Council.
5. The Parish Office provides insight into such areas as scheduling, resource availability, and coordination of parish activities.
6. The Finance Council is separate and distinct from the Pastoral Council. (See *Called to Serve* Appendix E for details.) It shall report on the state of the parish finances to the Council.
7. A representative from St. Matthew Catholic School Board shall report to the Council as necessary.

Article IX Bylaws

The Council shall develop such Bylaws as shall be necessary for its efficient operation.

Article X Amendments

1. This Constitution may be amended at any regular meeting of the Council by two-thirds vote of the voting members present provided that:
 - a. The amendment has been presented at a previous meeting of the Council meeting
 - b. A quorum of the Council is present
2. If the change is accepted, the Secretary shall distribute the revised constitution to all members and arrange to place a copy in the parish office.
3. Revision of the Bylaws shall be at the discretion of the Council.

BYLAWS

Article I – III None

Article IV - Membership

1. The Pastor is an ex officio member of the Council for the entire period of his assignment to the parish.
2. Twelve (12) parishioners of the parish are to be selected/discerned from the parish at large for membership on the Council. Members' terms shall be staggered to maintain some continuity with a portion of the members selected each year.
3. The Pastor, in consultation with the Council, may appoint one parishioner each year to serve a three-year term as a member of the Council. This parishioner should be selected to improve the geographic and demographic representation of the Council.

Article V – Organization

A. Officers

1. Selection of officers shall take place soon (within 4-6 weeks) after the selection of new members.
2. The Chair shall lead the Council and:
 - a. Lead meetings and be responsible for preparing an agenda for each meeting after consultation with the Pastor
 - b. Shall establish all Ad Hoc committees in consultation with the Pastor and members of the Council
3. The Vice-Chair shall assist the Chair and substitute for the Chair in the case of absence.
4. The Secretary shall be appointed by the Chair and Council members. S(he) shall:
 - a. Keep the minutes of all Council meetings
 - b. Read minutes of the previous meeting at Council meetings for approval
 - c. Post the approved minutes of the Council meetings in the Parish Office

B – C None

D. Ad Hoc Committees

1. Such committees may have whatever membership is necessary for completing their tasks.
2. Each group must have a written agreement as to time frame, result(s) expected, approval of expenditure of funds, etc.
3. When the Ad Hoc Committee shall have completed its task, it shall be disbanded.

E –F None

Article VI – Selection of Members

A. Nominations

1. At-large members of the Council may be chosen either through a discernment process or appointed by the Pastor. All must indicate a sincere and authentic call to serve, and the desire and ability to participate actively as a council member. Discernment will normally be conducted annually. This may be adjusted by the Pastor and the Council if needed.
2. A parishioner interested in serving on the Council may contact the parish office or the Pastor for discernment.
3. Council members may name parishioners whom they feel have gifts of servant leadership for the council.
4. If using the discernment process, three months prior to discernment an Ad Hoc nominating committee will begin planning the discernment process. (Please see Appendix C in *Called to Serve*.)
5. The parish will receive information about the selection/discernment process in the form of flyers, bulletin announcements and/or spoken announcements during Sunday liturgies.

6. Insofar as possible, the candidates shall represent a geographic and demographic cross-section of the parish and be concerned and work for the welfare of the entire parish..
7. Candidates must be active parishioners in the parish (in good standing).

B. Selection Process

1. The selection shall take place on a date designated by the Pastor.
2. The results of the selection shall be announced to the Council as soon as possible.
3. Letters of invitation will be sent by the Pastor to those named.
4. New members of the Council shall receive copies of the Constitution and Bylaws and *Called to Serve*.
5. At an appropriate time, such as a Sunday Liturgy, all council members are commissioned by the Pastor.

Article VII – Meetings

1. An agenda for each Council meeting shall be sent to all members at least a week before the next meeting.
2. The Council shall operate on a basis of consensus.
3. The agenda for each meeting should include:
 - a. Opening prayer
 - b. Approval of minutes of previous meeting
 - c. Confirmation of next Council meeting date
 - d. Committee reports
 - e. Old business
 - f. New business
 - g. Closing prayer and adjournment
4. The minutes of each meeting, once approved, shall be available in the Parish Office.

Articles VIII – IX None

Article X – Amendments

1. Proposed amendments to the Bylaws must be presented at one meeting and considered for action at the next meeting.
2. A majority of those present shall be necessary for amending.
3. When an amendment has been approved, a copy of the amendment shall be placed in the Parish Office.