

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL - ARTICLES OF GUIDANCE

Preamble

We the members of the Parish Council for Saint Bernard of Clairvaux Parish, consistent with the provision of Canon 536 of the Code of Canon Law, under the leadership of the Diocesan Bishop and Parish Pastor, commit ourselves to use our diverse talents and gifts to further the mission of Jesus Christ in our Parish community.

Article I. PURPOSE

The Parish Council is an advisory body to the Pastor, with consultative vote only, and functions in accordance with any norms that are established by the diocesan Bishop. The primary mission of the Council is to advise the Pastor on matters of parish policy, planning and other items at the request of the Pastor. The administration of the parish and the execution of parish policies are the responsibility of the Pastor and the parish staff.

Article II. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The principal responsibilities of the Council are:

1. To assist in the process of ongoing pastoral planning and the development and updating of the parish pastoral plan, by supporting the development and adjustment of goals and objectives and the assignment of priorities for the future of the parish.
2. To engage in an annual review and evaluation of the progress that is being made to implement the parish pastoral plan.
3. To provide guidance to the pastor in developing parish policies that will be executed by the parish staff.
4. To serve as an instrument of communication for the parish community, bringing issues of concern to the attention of the pastor.
5. To be actively involved in the life of the parish community and to ensure we are available to parishioners to receive comments and suggestions about parish ministries, policies and programs.
6. To make prayer for the parish an integral part of their personal and communal lives.
7. To demonstrate and inspire enthusiasm within the parish community by their leadership example.

8. To promote positive communications and understanding among parish organizations, consistent with the guidance of the Pastor.
9. To promote the unity and mutual good of the Council, and church community.
10. To review the annual budget and make recommendations to the Pastor prior to final budget adoption.
11. To review and propose programs and ministries that respond to needs that have surfaced within the parish community.

Article III. RELATIONSHIP OF THE COUNCIL WITH THE PASTOR

As noted in Canon 536.2, the “pastoral council possesses a consultative vote only and is governed by the norms established by the diocesan bishop.” While ultimately responsible for the spiritual and temporal affairs of the parish, the Pastor:

1. Assists in the formation of and gives approval to the Council agenda.
2. May call special meetings of the Council.
3. Seeks the guidance of the council in matters of parish planning and other matters affecting the life of the parish.
4. Does not vote when seeking advice from the Council on issues brought before it.
5. Provides formational opportunities to assist Council members to understand and exercise the responsibility that is entrusted to them.

Article IV. MEMBERSHIP

The Parish Council is made up of the following categories of membership.

1. Ex-officio Members:
Includes ordained clergy (priests and deacons) assigned to the parish.
2. Selected Members:
There will be a minimum of seven (7) and a maximum of nine (9) selected members. Each year any opportunities that arise to serve on the Council will be announced in the parish, along with application criteria. Those who meet the membership criteria will be eligible to submit their names for consideration. Selection by discernment according to the provisions of Article IX will determine membership. If the number of applicants who are accepted to serve exceeds the number of vacancies, the name(s) of individuals not selected will be retained for future consideration.
3. Member Terms:
 - i) Terms for those selected will be for three (3) years and may be renewed once.

- ii) Such renewal will require the written request of either the individual Member, or the Pastor. The full Council will review that request together, and deliver an opinion to the Pastor, who has final approval authority.
 - iii) If a Council Member has completed two (2) consecutive terms and desires to continue to serve, after an absence from Council for one year that Council Member shall be eligible to serve again. To do so will require the returning Member to submit a written application for review by the full Council, with a recommendation delivered to the Pastor for final disposition.
 - iv) Terms will be staggered to appropriately manage the percent of member turn-over in any given year, in order to maintain sufficient continuity.
4. Parish Council Recording Secretary: will be selected from a pool of applicants, solicited by invitation via parish bulletin, Flocknote, and web-site announcements. The Parish Council members will review the applications, and the Council President will submit a short-list to the Pastor for consideration and final selection. While not a voting Parish Council member, the Secretary will attend all Parish Council meetings, record the minutes of those meetings and make the minutes available to all members, maintain attendance and other records, and handle all correspondence for the Parish Council.
5. Parish Staff:
While not voting members of the Council, members of the parish staff may be requested to attend Council meetings to report on the status of parish programs and ministries for which they are responsible. They may also be invited to give informational reports, as requested by the Council. It will be up to the discretion of the Pastor whether to require staff members to participate in Council meetings.

Article V. MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA

Parish Council members must be at least eighteen (18) years of age and:

- 1. Be registered and active members of the parish for a minimum of one year (at the Pastor's discretion).
- 2. Have expressed special interest in the pastoral activity of the parish.
- 3. Have demonstrated qualities of leadership within the parish community by their past involvement in parish ministries and/or functions.
- 4. Have a willingness to invest themselves in the process of studying areas that relate to the parish pastoral plan.
- 5. All Parish Council members will participate in the Diocese of Phoenix Safe Environment Training ("SET") and background screening, as well as brief annual training updates. Prospective Council Members must satisfy the initial requirement prior to assuming an active role with the Council.
- 6. Are available to attend Council meetings regularly. (Three unexcused absences during one fiscal year will result in the loss of membership on the Council. To be excused, a member must first inform a Council Officer or the parish office prior to the meeting that he/she will not be able to attend and provide the reason for their absence. The Pastor alone will determine whether an absence will be judged to be unexcused.)

Article VI. OFFICERS

The officers of the Parish Council shall be: The Pastor, the President, and the Vice President. The members of the Council shall nominate the President and Vice President at the first meeting of the new fiscal year, vote on those nominations, and submit recommendations to the Pastor for final disposition. The term of office for the President position shall be two years, and the term of office for the Vice President shall be three years, to promote continuity during transition periods. No one may serve more than two consecutive terms in one of the two elected positions, unless requested by the Pastor.

1. The Pastor:

- a. Sets the agenda for each Council meeting in consultation with the Council President.
- b. Must approve any action affirmatively voted upon by the members of the Council before it becomes effective.
- c. Will provide Council members with the reason(s) why he has chosen not to accept any action item recommended to him by a majority of the Council members no later than the next scheduled meeting.
- d. May call special meetings of the Council as needed.
- e. May delegate oversight of a Council meeting to the Associate Pastor.
- f. Is responsible for oversight of policies that have received an affirmative vote of the Council membership and have been approved by him. Implementation of approved policies may be delegated by the Pastor to an appropriate member of the parish staff.

2. The President:

- a. Presides at all Council meetings, or may designate that role to the Vice President as necessary.
- b. Prepares the agenda for Council meetings in conjunction with the Pastor, and makes the agenda available to all Council members.
- c. Appoints chairpersons for any committees that are established by the Council.
- d. May revert to a Parish Council position to fulfill the third year of their Council term.

3. The Vice President:

- a. Presides at Council meetings in the absence of the President, and will chair the Nominating Committee.
- b. Succeeds, on an interim basis, the President should that Office become vacant during a fiscal year. Subsequent to that appointment the Council will offer a recommendation to the Pastor on whether the Interim President will complete the outgoing President's term, or if other Members should be considered. The Pastor will advise Council accordingly. The Council will then deliver to the Pastor their recommendation on potential members to complete the term of the Vice President.

Article VII. THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

All members of the Parish Council will comprise the Executive Committee.

Article VIII. MEETINGS OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

1. The Parish Council may meet in the absence of the Pastor, with his prior knowledge and approval of that meeting. The Pastor may designate another member of the parish clergy to represent him at a Parish Council meeting.
2. Parish Council Committees, established to review particular issues, may meet independently with the approval of the Council President, and the President may designate a Council member to chair such meeting(s).
3. Regularly scheduled meetings of the Council will be held on a monthly basis.
4. Special meetings of the Council may be called by the Pastor, or by the President with the approval of the Pastor.
5. A quorum consists of a simple majority of the selected voting members of the Council.
6. The minutes of Parish Council meetings and activities will be reviewed by the Pastor, and redacted as appropriate to produce a "highlights" piece that will be published on the Parish website.
7. Meetings shall follow the agenda approved by the Pastor and the President. Non-agenda items may be discussed at a meeting with the agreement of a majority of those members present and the consent of the Pastor.
8. Suggested agenda items are to be submitted by Council members in writing to the Council President no later than five (5) days prior to a scheduled Council meeting, and be subsequently approved by the Pastor.
9. Non-members of the Council may make a request to address the Council. Any such request must be made in writing to the Pastor or the President at least ten (10) days prior to the scheduled meeting and be approved by the Pastor.
10. The Secretary shall record the Minutes of each meeting and be responsible for maintaining accurate records of Council actions and correspondence. A copy of all Council Minutes will be provided to the Parish secretary for permanent retention in the files of the parish.

Article IX. SELECTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

1. A Nominating Committee, chaired by the Vice President and including two other Council members, shall: oversee the process of announcing Council vacancies and soliciting applications for same via the Parish website, bulletins, and Flocknote; collecting applications, and submitting those that meet the prescribed criteria for Parish Council membership to the full Council for review, discussion, and further screening as appropriate. This should take place no later than March of each year.

2. Subsequent to this full Council review, the prospective Council member applications selected from the pool of applications, will be presented to the Council President, who will discuss these findings with the Pastor. The Pastor will make the final determination on the suitability of all final candidates for the Council.
3. The final list of approved Council member candidates will then be subjected to a random draw, to select the new Council member(s).

Article X. VACANCIES ON THE COUNCIL

1. Any member of the Council who has three unexcused absences from scheduled Council meetings during any fiscal year shall have his/her membership on the Council declared vacant by the President.
2. A vacancy in the membership of the Council caused by death, resignation, a member leaving St. Bernard of Clairvaux Parish, or under the provision of Article X, 1, may be filled by Council delivering a candidate recommendation to the Pastor, from those who were identified as suitable candidates prior to the last selection process, to complete an unexpired term. If no such suitable candidates are available at that time, recommendations will be made pursuant to the selection process provisions of Article IX. The Pastor will make the final decision on the replacement.

Article XI. AMENDMENTS TO THESE ARTICLES OF GUIDANCE

1. Proposed amendments to these Articles of Guidance must be submitted in writing.
2. A vote on any proposed amendment will take place at the meeting following the one at which the amendment was presented.
3. A two-thirds majority of the selected members of the Council is required for the passage of an amendment.
4. All amendments to these Articles of Guidance must be approved by the Pastor.

Approved by: _____ Date: _____