

The Constitution of the Pastoral Council of Saint Francis of Assisi Parish, Triangle, Virginia

September 21, 2019

PREAMBLE

MISSION: As parishioners of St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, our mission is to live the Gospel, celebrating our Franciscan Spirituality in the midst of a diverse and everchanging global culture. Led by the Spirit of God and blessed with great diversity, we joyfully welcome all people.

OUR VISION: As a community of faith, with the Sunday Eucharistic celebration as the source of our strength, and inspired by the vision of Saints Francis and Clare;

-We come together seeking the face of Christ in each person and respecting the dignity, and affirming the value of each individual.

-We come together as partners in ministry, reaching out in compassion and justice to people of diverse cultures, the poor, the elderly, the homebound, the immigrant, the lonely, single parents, children and young adults, those alienated, and all those who have felt un-welcome.

-We come together embracing and celebrating the gifts of each parishioner. Through God's grace, we are empowered to share these gifts with each other, with our community and with our Church.

-We come together to encourage one another to deepen our relationship with Jesus, who calls us to share God's love and to put our faith into action.

-We come together as a reconciling community, trusting in God who turns our minds and hearts to thoughts of peace. We stand as a people committed to seek the kingdom of God where enemies begin to speak to one another and those who are estranged join hands in friendship.

In these ways, we will strive to build up the Church, fulfill the message and mission of Jesus Christ, and to love God and all God's creation.

ARTICLE I

Name

Section 1.

This Pastoral Council will be known as the St. Francis of Assisi Pastoral Council, Triangle, Virginia.

Section 2.

The principal address of the Pastoral Council will be St. Francis of Assisi Parish, 18825 Fuller Heights Rd., Triangle, Virginia, 22172.

ARTICLE II

Role

Section 1.

The role of the St. Francis of Assisi Pastoral Council is to serve as a collaborative and consultative body, with the Pastor, for the life and mission of the Church in the Parish as follows:

- To consult with and make recommendations to the Pastor regarding issues and pending decisions that significantly affect how the Mission and Vision of the Parish are carried out in areas such as liturgy, outreach, faith formation, education, stewardship, and finance and administration;
- To develop, implement, and periodically assess and update a Parish Strategic Plan that has as its purpose implementation of the Mission and Vision of the Parish in areas such as liturgy, outreach, faith formation, education, stewardship, and finance and administration (cf. ARTICLE VIII, Section 1);
- To periodically review the appropriateness of the Mission and Vision Statements to address changes in the constituency and needs of the Parish and the surrounding community (cf. ARTICLE VIII, Section 1);
- To consult with and make recommendations to the Pastor in setting broad policy directions for the Parish;
- To provide an open and honest forum of communication and dialogue regarding parish affairs among Pastor, Associate Pastors, staff, and parishioners;

- To actively encourage vigorous and effective volunteerism and participation in the life of the Parish;
- To collaborate with other religious and civic groups in working for the common good of the community.

Section 2.

The responsibilities and commitment of Pastoral Council members will be as follows:

- Participate in consultative role to Pastor;
- Participate in planning and execution of, attend and assist as needed with Parish events;
- Attend monthly Pastoral Council meetings (usually the third Saturday);
- Greet and be available to parishioners at weekend liturgies;
- Represent parishioner concerns to the Pastoral Council

ARTICLE III

Membership

Section 1.

The Pastoral Council will consist of the following: Pastor, Parish Business Manager, Faith Formation Director, Social Outreach Director, School Principal, and twelve representatives elected from the parish at large.

Section 2

To be an elected member of the Pastoral Council the individual must be:

- A member of the Catholic faith, who has received the Sacrament of Confirmation;
- A registered parishioner of St. Francis of Assisi Parish; Adjudged by the Pastor to be in good standing (cf. ARTICLE VII, Section 4); At least eighteen years of age.

Section 3.

Members of the Parish Staff identified in Section 1 are permanent members based on their official parish functions.

Section 4

Only elected members of the Council have voting rights.

Section 5.

Pastoral Council members are to be elected by the Congregation in a general election through a process conducted by the nominating committee. This committee will solicit nominations from the parish at large through self-nominations or nomination by fellow parishioners. Newly elected members will serve for a term of four years with their term beginning at the November Pastoral Council meeting following the election.

Section 6.

Officers whose four-year term expires in October will automatically have their term extended until the election of new officers, normally in November.

Section 7.

Three consecutive and unexcused absences from regularly scheduled monthly meetings of the Pastoral Council will be considered a de facto resignation from membership.

Section 8.

Any elected or appointed member who chooses to resign may do so by submitting a letter of resignation to the Pastor and Chairperson.

ARTICLE IV

Officers

Section 1.

Pastoral Council Officers will consist of Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Recorder.

Section 2.

The Chairperson will be the chief executive officer of the Pastoral Council and will conduct all meetings.

Section 3.

The Vice-Chairperson will assist the Chairperson in the execution of his/her duties; perform the duties of the Chairperson in the Chairperson's absence; and if necessary, assume the office of Chairperson should it become vacant.

Section 4.

The Recorder will be responsible for the record of all proceedings of the Council. The minutes of the Council's proceedings will be reviewed by the Council membership at each subsequent meeting. The Recorder will post the approved minutes of the Council proceedings on the parish webpage. A copy of the minutes will be kept in the Parish Office by the Parish Office Manager.

Section 5

Officers will be elected by a simple majority of the elected members of the Pastoral Council in November of each year and will serve a term of one year.

Section 6.

Only members elected to the Pastoral Council are eligible to serve as Council Officers.

Section 7.

Council Officers are eligible for re-election to any office each year of their four-year term.

Section 8.

Should the office of the Vice-Chairperson or the Recorder become vacant at any time, the Pastoral Council will, at its next regularly scheduled monthly meeting, elect another Vice-Chairperson or Recorder who will be invested in office immediately upon election.

ARTICLE V

Executive Board

Section 1.

The Pastor of St. Francis of Assisi, the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and the Recorder will comprise the Executive Board.

Section 2

The Chairperson, in consultation with the Pastor, will be responsible to prepare the agenda for regular meetings of the Pastoral Council. In the event of a special meeting, the Pastor, Council Chairperson, or Committee Chairperson will determine the agenda.

The Council will give priority to matters presented to it by the Pastor for its advice but the members of the Pastoral Council are also encouraged to introduce other matters for the Council's deliberation by suggesting the matter to a member of the Executive Board prior to a meeting.

Section 3.

Any parishioner of St. Francis of Assisi who wishes to present a matter for the consideration of the Council may do so by:

- Submitting the topic in writing to the Chairperson at least one week prior to the meeting (cf. ARTICLE VI, Section 2);
- Describing the nature of the presentation and the desired action of the Council.

A member of the Executive Board will respond in writing to any member of the Parish who has submitted a written proposal for the Pastoral Council's consideration.

ARTICLE VI

Meetings

Section 1.

The Pastoral Council meetings will be held on the third Saturday of each month beginning at 9:30 AM. No meetings will be held during the months of July and December.

Section 2.

The Chairperson will ensure that notice of Pastoral Council meetings is published in the Sunday bulletin and the E-newsletter, as feasible, approximately two weeks prior to the meeting itself. (Cf. ARTICLE V, Section 3)

Section 3.

At least one member of the Executive Board must be present to hold a Council meeting.

Section 4.

A quorum for a meeting for the transaction of Pastoral Council business will require the presence of at least half of the voting members of the Council.

Section 5.

In accordance with ARTICLE V, Section 3, any parishioner who wishes to present a matter for the consideration of the Council may do so by submitting the topic in writing.

Section 6.

Any parishioner of St. Francis of Assisi who wishes to attend a meeting is requested to:

- Arrive prior to the planned start of the meeting and introduce him/herself to the Council Chairperson;
- Recognize that as an observer they will not provide comment or input unless specifically requested by the Council Chairperson.

Section 7.

If it becomes necessary to discuss confidential or sensitive topics, the Pastor or any elected member of the Pastoral Council can request a closed session. The Chairperson will move the meeting into closed session. At this time staff members and any guests will be asked to leave.

Section 8.

For a position to be a recommendation of the Pastoral Council to the Pastor, it must receive the vote of a simple majority of the elected membership of the Pastoral Council.

Section 9.

Since the purpose of the Pastoral Council is consultative to the Pastor, those participating in its deliberations should seek to achieve consensus rather than to focus primarily upon winning votes for particular positions.

ARTICLE VII

Elections

Section 1.

As discussed in ARTICLE III, Section 2, any registered member of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in good standing, who is Catholic, has received the Sacrament of Confirmation, and is eighteen years of age by the date of the election, will be eligible for election to the Pastoral Council.

Section 2.

The election of new members to the Pastoral Council will occur every two years in October with the new members taking office at the November Pastoral Council meeting. The general election is intended to fill all vacancies on the Pastoral Council due to members leaving after fulfilling their four-year term. If a vacancy occurs when a member leaves the Council before their full term is completed, those positions may be filled by appointments made by the Pastor with input provided by the Parish Pastoral Council.

Section 3.

A nominating committee will be appointed in June of the election year. The nominating committee will consist of at least three elected members of the Council. The nominating committee will:

- Solicit candidates through the Parish bulletin, E-newsletter, and other means as deemed appropriate;
- Submit a list of all nominees to the Pastor for approval;
- Contact prospective members;
- Accept a verbal statement of intent-to-serve from those so agreeable and nominated;
- Request completion of a candidate questionnaire;
- Conduct a general election at all Masses during a designated two-week period in October.

Newly elected members to the Pastoral Council will be notified by the Pastor. The Chairperson of the Pastoral Council will then contact the newly elected members and advise them to be present at the November Pastoral Council meeting. The Chairperson will also notify candidates not elected.

Section 4.

Former Pastoral Council members may run for office again. However, they may not run for a Pastoral Council position in the same election year in which they are vacating their present term of office.

Section 5.

Should a member of the Pastoral Council leave office unexpectedly prior to the completion of the term for which elected, the Pastor, with the advice of the Pastoral Council, will make an interim appointment to that office from the Parish. The person serving as an interim member may volunteer to stand for election to a regular position at the end of the interim appointment.

ARTICLE VIII

Standing Committees

Section 1.

Visioning Committee

The Visioning Committee will consist of six (6) Pastoral Council members: two (2) staff and four (4) elected. The Vice Chairperson of the Pastoral Council will chair the Visioning Committee.

The Visioning Committee will:

- Facilitate development and upkeep of a Parish Five Year Strategic Plan that has as its components the various ministries of the Parish, to include the Pastoral Council.
 - The objective of the Strategic Plan is to assist in fulfillment of the values embodied in our Mission and Vision.
- Recommend updates to Strategic Plan goals and objectives as appropriate and as recommended by the ministry subscribing to the goals and objectives.
- Annually assess the adherence of the various ministries of the Parish to the spirit and intent of the Parish Mission and Vision as reflected in the Strategic Plan.
- Propose changes to the Mission and Vision for the consideration of the Pastoral Council as deemed appropriate.
- The assessment will be in the form of a presentation to the Pastoral Council and will normally be presented at the January meeting in the year following completion of the assessment.
- A new Visioning Committee will be formed at the June meeting each year.

ARTICLE IX

Ad Hoc Committees

Ad hoc committees of the Pastoral Council may be formed in response to a specific event, question, or concern. The duration of a committee's existence will depend on the matter being considered and the process adopted by the committee.

ARTICLE X

Reserved

ARTICLE XI

The Constitution

Section 1.

This constitution will become effective and adopted as of September 21, 2019, as approved by the Pastor of St. Francis of Assisi Parish and the Pastoral Council.

Section 2.

Once this constitution is adopted any amendment must be submitted in writing to a regular monthly meeting of the Pastoral Council. It will then be placed on the agenda for discussion at the next regular monthly meeting of the Council. Subsequently, it will be voted at the second regular monthly meeting of the Council following its written submission.

Section 3.

To be adopted, a proposed amendment to the constitution must receive a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the voting membership of the Pastoral Council. Should there be a large number of changes to the Constitution a rewriting of the existing Constitution may be submitted for approval by the Pastor and Pastoral Council. However, as a matter of historical context, previous documents of the Constitution should be archived and saved as a matter of record for future Pastoral Councils.