

Saint Patrick, Cedar Falls Pastoral Council Constitution

Preamble

We, the pastor and members of St. Patrick Parish, Cedar Falls, Iowa, recognize that we are called to union with God not merely as individuals but as a holy community, the People of God. The Spirit has given a variety of ministries and gifts to this community, which enables all to work for the good of the whole.

Formed by the Word of God, we recognize our unity of faith and love, and we accept our common responsibility for the mission of Christ. To proclaim our unity of mind and purpose and to more effectively perform our responsibilities to God and neighbor, we unite to form a parish pastoral council.

We affirm and accept communion with the Archbishop of Dubuque and with our pastor. We declare ourselves willing to accept their authority and to share their pastoral concerns so that together we may carry out the saving mission of the Church.

Article I. Name

The name of this body is: The Pastoral Council of St. Patrick Parish.

Article II. Nature and Purpose

Section A. Nature

The pastoral council offers counsel to and collaborates with the pastor to provide the long-range planning which will guide the parish toward its future.

Section B. Purpose

1. To facilitate a process by which the mission of the parish is determined and to serve as stewards of that mission.
2. To implement the mission by engaging in pastoral planning, which includes assessing parish needs, identifying resources, determining priorities.
3. To collaborate with the finance council to maintain appropriate stewardship of resources in implementing the mission of the parish.

Article III. Membership

Membership consists of those who are ex officio, 9 elected parishioners, and 2 appointed members, as delineated in the bylaws.

Article IV. Officers

The officers of the pastoral council are: the pastor, the chair, the vice chair, and the secretary.

Article V. Executive Committee

The officers of the pastoral council constitute the executive committee.

Article VI. Meetings

Meetings are held regularly as specified in the bylaws.

Article VII. Committees

The required standing committees are defined in the bylaws. The chair appoints ad hoc committees as needed.

Article VIII. Amendments

Because a constitution is a foundational document, any amendments to this constitution require a vote as delineated in the bylaws and approval as specified in the norms for pastoral councils.

Saint Patrick, Cedar Falls Pastoral Council Bylaws

Article I. Membership

Section A. Ex Officio Members

The pastor is an ex officio, non-voting member of the pastoral council. The chair of the finance council, a member of the faith formation commission, a member of the stewardship committee and a School Board member are ex officio, voting members of the pastoral council.

Section B. Appointed Members

The pastor may appoint to the council for a one year term two registered parishioners who are baptized, confirmed, and practicing Catholics. Appointed members are voting members. One will be an adult (18 or over), the second will be a youth.

Section C. Elected Members

Registered parishioners who are baptized, confirmed, and practicing Catholics are eligible for election to the council, as well as for voting in the elections, unless they are impeded by Church law from holding office.

Section D. Election Procedure

1. Elections are held annually on or before the third Sunday of May.
2. Nominations are sought publicly from all registered parishioners.
3. The executive committee of the pastoral council determines and promulgates election procedures.

Section E. Terms of Members

1. Terms of members begin at the June meeting of the Pastoral Council and end July 1 of the respective year.
2. Elected member terms are for a period of three years; appointed members for one year.
3. Members serve no more than two consecutive terms to which they have been elected or appointed.
4. If the representative's term on the deanery council extends beyond his or her term on the pastoral council, the representative continues as a voting member of the pastoral council until the term on the deanery council is completed (see Article XI, Deanery Council Representative).

Section F. Vacancy

1. A vacancy may occur by death, resignation, termination of membership in the parish, or by incurrance of an ecclesiastical penalty (as defined in canon law) rendering a person ineligible for office.
2. Membership on the council may be terminated for cause by a vote of at least three-fourths of all the members of the pastoral council present and voting at any regular or special meeting of the council.

3. A member who is absent from three meetings may be asked to reconsider membership on the council. The chair or a delegate will approach this member to mutually assess continued membership.
4. Before the next regular meeting of the council, the pastor will appoint someone to complete the vacated term of an elected or an appointed member. Consideration is given to the person receiving the next highest number of votes in the previous election.

Article II. Officers

Section A. Officers

1. The pastor presides over the council.
2. Other officers are: the chair, the vice chair, and the secretary. A recorder may be appointed from outside the membership of the council to take minutes, but s/he is neither an officer nor a voting member.

Section B. Selection and Terms of Officers

The chair, the vice chair, and the secretary are elected to one-year terms by a majority vote of the members present and voting at the June meeting of the council, taking effect July 1. The Chair should be a returning council member.

Section C. Vacancy

The council itself elects a member to complete the term of a vacated elected office. The Chair or pastor appoints a nonmember to fill the vacancy of a recorder.

Article III. Executive Committee

Section A. Duties

The executive committee prepares the agenda for council meetings and performs such other duties as the council shall assign.

Section B. Powers

The executive committee may act in the name of the pastoral council when recourse to the entire council is not possible.

Article IV. Responsibilities of Officers

Section A. The Pastor

1. Presides at meetings of the pastoral council.
2. Calls special meetings of the pastoral council.
3. Places matters of concern on the agenda.
4. Approves or vetoes recommendations of the council.
5. Promulgates approved recommendations
6. Serves as the secretary-treasurer of the parish civil corporation

Section B. The Chair

1. Chairs the meetings of the council.
2. Convoles the executive committee as needed.
3. Organizes and coordinates the activities and processes of the council.
4. Appoints ad hoc committees or task forces.
5. Motivates the various members/groups of the council to fulfill their specific responsibilities.
6. Serves as a lay director of the parish civil corporation.

Section C. The Vice Chair

1. Assumes the duties and responsibilities of the chair when the latter is absent or incapacitated.
2. Performs such other duties as may be assigned by the chair or the council.

Section D. The Secretary

1. Records and publishes the proceedings of all council meetings.
2. Notifies the members of all meetings.
3. Handles correspondence relevant to council activities.
4. Files all records, reports, communications, etc.
5. Forwards the name of the parish pastoral council chair to the Archdiocesan Office of Leadership Development and Pastoral Planning immediately after the election.
6. Performs such other duties as the council or the chair shall assign. A recorder may perform, some of the duties listed above.

Article V. Responsibilities of the Council

1. To listen to and represent the wisdom of parishioners and parish staff as part of the planning process.
2. To determine priorities and develop a plan for both implementing and evaluating them.
3. To develop goals and objectives which further the mission of the parish.
4. To evaluate regularly the goals and objectives of the council and of its subgroups.
5. To recommend policies which are supportive of the mission of the parish.
6. To call forth the gifts of individuals and groups/committees in the parish to carry out its mission.
7. To cooperate with neighboring parishes in regional planning for the future of the Church in the local area.
8. To collaborate with the stewardship committee to conduct a parish census periodically.

Article VI. Decision-Making

Section A. Procedure

The desired procedure for decision-making is consensus to draw forth the support of all.

Section B. Quorum

A simple majority of the total membership of the council shall constitute a quorum for either reaching consensus or conducting a vote if needed.

Section C. Outcome

Except when otherwise specified, a decision is reached by consensus of the quorum or, if necessary, a simple majority vote.

Section D. Principles

In either consensus or voting, members solicit the wisdom of the group—inviting all to speak, listening to each other with respect, being open to the Holy Spirit, thus reaching the best decision for the good of the parish.

Article VII. Approval of Council Recommendations

Section A. Effective Date

*In accordance with Canon 536, recommendations adopted by the council become effective when approved by the pastor.

Section B. Pastor's Role

The pastor responds to a recommendation within two weeks of its presentation to him by the council.

*Canon 536

Paragraph 1: If the diocesan bishop judges it opportune after he has heard the presbyteral council, a pastoral council is to be established in each parish, over which the pastor presides and in which the Christian faithful, together with those who share in pastoral care by virtue of their office in the parish, assist in fostering pastoral activity.

Paragraph 2: A pastoral council possesses a consultative vote only and is governed by the norms established by the diocesan bishop.

Article VIII. Committees

Section A. Standing Committees

1. Liturgy
2. Faith Formation Commission
3. Stewardship
4. Social Justice
5. Parish Life
6. Finance Council

Section B. Committee Procedures

1. Each committee selects its chairperson.
2. The pastor, in collaboration with the pastoral council, determines the process for selection of committee members.
3. Terms for committee membership normally do not exceed two consecutive three-year terms.
4. The chair of the council forms ad hoc committees as needed.

Section C. Pastoral Council Membership

1. The chair of the finance council, a member of the faith formation commission, a member of the School Board, and a member of the stewardship committee are ex officio voting members of the pastoral council.
2. The chair of the council appoints one or two of its members as liaison to each committee who report to the pastoral council monthly.

Article IX. Meetings

Procedures

1. Regular meetings of the pastoral council are normally held on a monthly basis.* Special meetings may be called by the pastor or the chair or by a consensus of a majority of the council.
**Exceptions to this might be situations where parish pastoral council meetings alternate with cluster pastoral council meetings. It is also common that a council decides not to meet during July. To be a visionary planning body, however, at least six meetings per year should be held.*
2. The meetings of the council are open to all members of the parish. However, by consensus or a majority decision, the council may go into executive session.
3. The minutes of all regular meetings are made available to all parishioners. The council should identify the method(s) for communication that permit easy access, e.g., published in the parish bulletin, Web site, e-mail, newsletter, posting.
4. If the executive committee decides not to place on the agenda an item submitted for that purpose, the secretary reports that decision to the members at the next regular meeting. That report includes the nature of the requested item, the person, persons, or organization requesting its inclusion, and the reason for excluding it. At the council meeting, any member may move for inclusion of said item on the agenda, and the council may by consensus or a simple majority vote add the item to the agenda.
5. Nonmembers of the council may address the council by a prior request to the chair and placement on the agenda.
6. The June meeting will be a joint meeting of all current and the newly elected Pastoral Council members. Following the regular meeting, the Chair shall close the meeting with the current members and immediately open a meeting of those on the Pastoral Council for the following year. The election of officers will take place, followed by a call for adjournment. The sole purpose of this meeting is to have an election of officers and to set the next meeting date.
7. The Chair and the Pastor are encouraged to conduct an orientation session for new members immediately prior to the June meeting.

Article X. Amendments to the Constitution and ByLaws

Procedures

1. Proposed amendments are presented to the members of the Pastoral Council at the meeting prior to the meeting at which the vote is to be taken
2. A vote on a proposed amendment requires a quorum.

3. Proposed amendments become recommended amendments by the vote of two-thirds of the members present and voting
4. All recommended amendments require ratification by the pastor
5. Upon ratification by the pastor, all recommended amendments are forwarded to the Archdiocesan Office of Leadership Development and Pastoral Planning for review. This office will forward its recommendation and the proposed amendments to the Archbishop for final approval.

Article XI. Deanery Council Representative

Section A. Selection

Prior to July 1 of every third year, the council selects one of its members to represent it on the deanery council. The council also selects an alternate.

Section B. Term

1. The representative to the deanery council serves a term of three years.
2. If the representative's term on the deanery council extends beyond his or her term on the pastoral council, the representative continues as a voting member of the pastoral council until the term on the deanery council is completed.

Section C. Vacancy

In case of a vacancy of the parish deanery council representative or alternate, the pastoral council selects one of its members to serve out the unexpired term.

Approved by the St Patrick Pastoral Council – March, 2013; June, 2015

Approved by Father Dennis Colter – March, 2013; October, 2015

Approved by Dan Rohner, Director, Leadership Development & Pastoral Planning - August 25, 2015

Approved by Most Rev. Michael O. Jackels – October, 2015

Note: These ByLaws are modeled after the Dubuque Archdiocese Model ByLaws of 2009; revised in 2015.